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ON THE COVER

LeConte's Sparrow

The Avian Records Committee of Connecticut reviewed reports of 45 species for its 26th annual report, which appears in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*. Mark Szantyr captured the beauty of one of them, the LeConte's Sparrow, to grace our cover.

THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

2021: To Kathleen Van Der Aue

Denise Jernigan and Steve Broker prepared the following for the 37th annual meeting of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, which was held virtually on Saturday, March 20, 2021 due to the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

The Mabel Osgood Wright Award is named for the woman who founded the Connecticut Audubon Society and became its first president, created the Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield, and was an influential nature writer and a life-long champion of birds and environmental conservation.

So it is particularly fitting that this year's recipient of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award is Kathy Van Der Aue of Fairfield, who is also a nature writer, a passionate advocate for birds and the environment, and a long-time bird bander at the same Birdcraft Sanctuary, where she is emeritus member of the Fairfield Regional Board of Governors, having served at Birdcraft and the Fairfield Nature Center for twenty-two years. She is also a shorebird monitor for American Oyster-



*Alex Burdo photo
Kathy Van Der Aue with a Bcknell's Thrush during a Connecticut Young Birders Club trip to Vermont*

catchers, Piping Plovers, and Least and Common terns at Connecticut Audubon Society's Coastal Center at Milford Point on behalf of the Audubon Alliance for Coastal Waterbirds. She has served as President, Vice-president, and Board member of the Connecticut Ornithological Association and is the current Chair of the State Board of Directors of the Connecticut Audubon Society.

Kathy's passion for bird and habitat conservation, as well as her skill in dealing honestly and fairly with people, was instrumental in securing the preservation of shorebird pools for migrating birds at Hammonasset Beach State Park, and saving the "sparrow lanes" at Silver Sands State Park. Through her patient and purposeful collaboration with the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the staff of DEEP's Wildlife Division, both during and after her term as COA President, these important bird habitats were conserved throughout the planning of park improvements. They have proven to be crucial stopover points for a wide variety of sandpipers and sparrows, including Baird's Sandpiper and American Golden-Plover at Hammonasset and Lark Sparrow at Silver Sands. Kathy also played a key role along with DEEP staff in the development of exhibits at Hammonasset's new Nature Center, and convinced park staff to allow early morning access for birders and photographers. In addition, she participated for six years in The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Birds and Forested Landscapes" study of forest thrushes and the effects of forest fragmentation on their nesting productivity. Done in conjunction with the Connecticut office of The Nature Conservancy at Devil's Den, this led to a U.S. Congressional inquiry into fragmented forests and bird productivity.

She was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of COA's Mini-grants program, which began in 2012 with a modest total of \$250 in grants and now awards \$6,000 annually. As Chair of the Mini-grants Committee, she and her committee members set out guidelines, review grant applications that prove beneficial to birds, make awards, and follow up with grant recipients. This program has become an essen-

tial and successful extension of COA's mission of promoting interest in Connecticut's birds and supporting their conservation.

Kathy's appreciation for Connecticut's ornithological history and her talents as a writer are evident in her excellent article in *The Connecticut Warbler*, "The History of Connecticut Audubon Society's Birdcraft Sanctuary and Museum" (Volume 36, Number 1, January 2016), which received COA's Betty Kleiner Award in 2017 for outstanding contribution to Connecticut ornithological literature. She is a frequent contributor to Connecticut Audubon's blog, Natural Selections, and also has written articles for the *COA Bulletin*. Her examination of the many woodpecker visitors to her home bird feeders, "How Many Downy Woodpeckers Come to My Feeder?" (Volume 27, Number 4, Winter 2012) remains one of the publication's most popular articles.

Always looking ahead to the future of Connecticut birding and birders, Kathy has a particular respect and affection for young birders, much as Mabel Osgood Wright did. In 2015, Kathy accompanied a group of four enthusiastic young Connecticut birders to northern Vermont on a quest for boreal specialties, and she delighted in their joy at each new species. She is always happy to share her knowledge and experience with any child or young person she meets during her shorebird monitoring or banding sessions.

Kathy's dedication to ornithological education, habitat preservation, environmental conservation, and her genuine love of birds and nature strongly reflect the impressive legacy of Mabel Osgood Wright, making her the perfect recipient of this well-deserved award. COA extends its congratulations and sincere thanks for all of Kathy's work and efforts on behalf of Connecticut's birds and their environment.

TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT



By Greg Hanisek, Jay Kaplan and Frank Mantlik

This is the 26th report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC). In the last report (see the 25th Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, Connecticut Warbler Vol. 39 No. 2), a single species, Brewer's Sparrow, was added to the state list to bring the total to 445. This year three new birds were added: Common Ringed Plover, Pacific Golden-Plover and Townsend's Warbler, bringing the total to 448.

At the committee's annual meeting on Feb 28, 2021, 65 records were voted on, a substantial increase from 32 in 2020 and 29 in 2019. Digital photography allowed the committee to expedite and accept many of these records unanimously at the meeting, held virtually for the first time due to constraints placed upon gatherings by the Covid-19 pandemic. Several of the accepted records were submitted by beginning birders, demonstrating that rarities are not necessarily found by experienced observers. Updated information on how to submit a report may be found on the committee's web page on the COA web site (<https://www.ctbirding.org/arcc/reporting-rare-sightings/>).

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The committee depends on observers to submit their reports of species on the Review List (species marked with an asterisk on the COA checklist plus any species new to the state). The most recent State List and Review List may be viewed on the COA Website at www.ctbirding.org. Submit reports along with documentary material to Jay Kaplan, ARCC chair (jaybrd49@aol.com), and co-secretaries Frank Gallo (

Frank Mantlik photo
This second-year male Western Tanager visited a feeder in Stratford from 16-20 Apr 2020.

aol.com) and Phil Rusch (philiprusch@charter.net). Greg Hanisek, ARCC secretary for 20 years, announced his retirement from that position at the meeting, but he will remain a member of the committee.

Each year the committee evaluates the species on the Review List. The committee is currently reviewing the criteria it uses in order to determine what constitutes a review species and is looking at what other state committees are now doing. This review is ongoing. The committee also documents the occurrence of rare species' breeding records. Currently, all such breeding records are being submitted to the ongoing Connecticut Breeding Bird Atlas Project. In other action, the committee has, as expected, removed the originally introduced Ring-necked Pheasant from the state list. It has been extirpated as a breeding species in Connecticut.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members, in addition to the authors, who voted on records in this report are Nick Bonomo, Frank Gallo, Tina Green, Julian Hough, Dave Provencher, Phil Rusch, Dave Tripp and Glenn Williams.

FORMAT

This report continues the format of previous reports. In the case of accepted records, only observers who submitted

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reports are listed, with the original finder listed first followed by an asterisk. Photos are acknowledged with ‡. Hyphenated numbers are the ARCC file numbers. For reopened files, an “R” follows the numbers. The species are listed in order according to the American Ornithological Society (AOS) Checklist. Multiple records of a particular species are listed chronologically. Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

OLD RECORDS

The committee has undertaken a long-term project to document historical occurrences of rare birds in Connecticut. Committee members Phil Rusch and Frank Gallo are spearheading this effort. The following five records are part of the result.

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) A bird discovered on 7 or 8 Oct 1978 by the late John Maynard, and present into January 1979, is listed by Zeranski & Baptist as the first documented record. A photo provided to the committee by Chris. S. Wood confirmed the bird as a Western Grebe. At the time of this observation the taxon had not been split into Western and Clark’s Grebes. 2020-41.

BLACK RAIL (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) A potential breeder was captured by Noble S. Proctor, photographed and then released on 25 June 1980 at a wetland in Cromwell. An account with photo appeared in *American Birds* in November 1980 and the record is listed in Zeranski & Baptist. 2020-48.

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) A first state record was found and photographed by William Burt on 9-10 Nov 1974 in Old Lyme. The record and a photo appeared in *American Birds* in February 1976. Burt provided a photo copy to the committee. 2020-57.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) One was present 17-22 May 1977 in Old Lyme, where it was photographed by William Burt, who provided a copy to the committee. The record and a photo appeared in *American Birds* in September 1977. 2020-58.



Jeff Spendelow photo
This Lark Bunting, the state's first, was banded on 8 Oct 1978 at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven.

LARK BUNTING (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) The first state record was banded by Jeff Spendelow on 8 Oct 1978 at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. It remained in the area until at least 24 Oct. Spendelow provided a series of in-hand photos with accompanying documentation to the committee. 2020-35.

ACCEPTED CURRENT RECORDS

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) Two were found on 24 Oct 2020 at Great Pond in Simsbury and remained through 15 Dec 2020, there and at nearby farm fields (2020-26 Doug Beach*‡). Starting with the first fully documented record for the Lower 48 in Mansfield, CT in 1998, there have now been 12 state records.

“BLACK” BRANT (*Anser bernicla nigricans*) This western form was found on 1 Dec 2020 at Sandy Point in West Haven (2020-21 Alex Lin-Moore*‡). It was the sixth state record.

TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*) A female was found on 22 Dec 2020 at Captain’s Cove in Bridgeport (2020-45 Aidan Kiley*‡ Frank Gallo‡). The same bird is believed to have been present here for five consecutive winters and six out of the last seven. It was present into mid-March 2021.

EARED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*) One was found on 2 Jan 2021 at the western end of Saville Dam at Barkhamsted Reservoir in Barkhamsted (2021-08 Glenn Barger*‡).

WESTERN GREBE (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) One as found on 5 May 2020 off Cove Island Park in Stamford (2020-40 Tina Green‡).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) One visited a private feeder in Old Saybrook 10-11 Apr 2020 (2020-42 James Sherwonit). One was found on 11 Oct 2020 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (2020-17 Jerilyn Duefrene*‡).

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Anrostomus carolinensis*) One was heard and recorded in the early morning hours of 1 June 2020 near Hoydens Hill Open Space in Fairfield (2020-08 Chris Petherick*). It is the 10th state record.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD (*Selasphorus calliope*) A female was at a feeder in Stamford on 15-23 Oct 2020 (2020-46 (Patrick Dugan,* Frank Gallo‡, Dave Winston‡). It is the sixth state record.

YELLOW RAIL (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) One was brought to the Connecticut Audubon Society Coastal Center at Milford Point on 15 Oct 2020 (2020-18 Frank Mantlik‡). It was originally found stunned in a nearby neighborhood, and spent time resting out in the open, allowing numerous observers to see this secretive species. It was subsequently safely coaxed into the nearby marsh.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) One was seen well on 25 Aug 2020 at Stratford Point, Stratford as it flew in to inspect a large flock of foraging gulls and terns (2020-14 Frank Mantlik*‡).

DOVEKIE (*Alle alle*) One was released on 26 Dec 2020 at Hammonasset Beach State Park by a wildlife rehabber, Christine Cummings (A Place Called Hope www.aplacecalledhoperaptors.com), after she received it from a North Branford resident that morning (2020-37 Frank Mantlik‡). This small alcid no doubt “wrecked” at the inland yard as a result of a Dec 24-25 storm with strong south winds and rain.

THICK-BILLED MURRE (*Uria lomvia*) One was seen on 9 Jan 2021 at the Avery Point campus of UConn in Groton (2021-03 Jory Teltser*). It was at the mouth of the Thames River in the company of several Razorbills.

BLACK GUILLEMOT (*Cepphus grylle*) One was discovered 3 Jan 2020 by a birding couple at Bluff Point State Park, Groton, then relocated the next day (2021-02 Phil Rusch, Frank Mantlik‡). It remained in the area through 14 Jan.

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) Two were

found on 30 May at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area, Stonington (2020-31 Glenn Williams*‡). This is the seventh state record.

PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER (*Pluvialis fulva*) A molting adult was found on 29-31 Oct 2020 at Sikorsky Memorial Airport in Stratford (2020-23 Frank Mantlik*‡). This was the first state record. There are now about 15 records for the eastern states.

COMMON RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*) Identification of this first state record was based largely on the diagnostic call of this small plover, which is very similar in appearance to the abundant Semipalmated Plover (2020-13 Nick Bonomo*).

RUFF (*Calidris pugnax*) A juvenile was present one day only on 7 Sep 2018 in the West End shorebird pools at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (2020-06 Bill Batsford*‡).

ROSS'S GULL (*Rhodostethia rosea*) A second-cycle was found 16 Jan 2021 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (2021-06 Micky Komara*‡, Nick Bonomo). Word was gotten to the public, allowing dozens to see this rare one-day “wonder.” There's is one previous state record, from 11-22 Apr 1984 in West Haven.

FRANKLIN'S GULL (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) A first-alternate bird was found on 5 Jun at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (2020-59 Dave Provencher*‡). There are three previous records of single birds, in addition to the historic eastward flight in mid-Nov 2015 when dozens were found along the Connecticut coast and many more throughout the Northeast.

MEW (COMMON) GULL (*Larus canus canus*) A first-basic bird of the nominate race was found on 9 Dec 2020 at Green Harbor Beach, New London (2020-27 Nick Bonomo*). This is the first Mew Gull of this age class found in the state. There are six previous records of *L. c. canus*.

CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*) An adult in winter plumage was found on 3 Jan 2021 at Bradley Point in West Haven

for a third state record. (2021-01 Julian Hough*‡). It was seen sporadically into March.

SOOTY TERN (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) There were a series of reports on 4 Aug 2020 associated with Hurricane/Tropical Storm Isaias. One adult was seen from Sniffens Lane in Stratford at the mouth of the Housatonic River (2020-19 Frank Mantlik*‡). Two adults were seen from Shippan Point, Stamford (2020-43 Frank Gallo,* Patrick Dugan*). Five adults were seen from Point Folly on Bantam Lake, Litchfield (2020-51 Nicolas Main*‡, Fran Zygmont). One adult was seen from Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (2020-54 Dan Rottino*).

GREAT SHEARWATER (*Ardenna gravis*) Two were seen from Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook on 11 July 2020 after the passage of Tropical Storm Fay (2020-10 Nick Bonomo,* Phil Rusch). One was seen on July 11 2020 from Stonington Point, Stonington (2020-32 Glenn Williams*).

MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus puffinus*) One was seen on 30 Sep 2020 from Stonington Point, Stonington (2020-12 Dave Provencher*, Phil Rusch). It is the third state record.

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) An immature first photographed on a car hood in Old Saybrook 26 Jan 2021 was then relocated the next day in a cove of the Connecticut River in Essex (2021-07 Frank Gallo‡). The weak bird was easily captured by state environmental staff, transported to a local rehabber, and eventually flown to another rehab facility in Florida.

GREAT BLUE HERON, WHITE MORPH ("Great White Heron") (*Ardea herodias*) One found 27 Sep 2020 in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich remained through 20 Dec 2020, when it was found deceased the next day (2020-24 Frank Mantlik‡, Sean Murtha). The carcass has been deposited at Yale Peabody Museum.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) One was seen 17-20 Aug 2020 on private property at Samuel Bargh Reservoir in North Stamford (2020-38 Frank Mantlik‡). It is the 10th state record.



Chris S. Wood photo
This adult male Bullock's Oriole was found on 22 Nov 2020 at a feeder in Hebron.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) One was present on 25-26 May 2020 at Samuel Bargh Reservoir in North Stamford (2020-20 Al Collins*, Max Collins*‡). This species, once a regular migrant and winter visitor throughout the Northeast, has become very rare along with the precipitous decline of the most northerly subspecies, *L. l. migrans*.

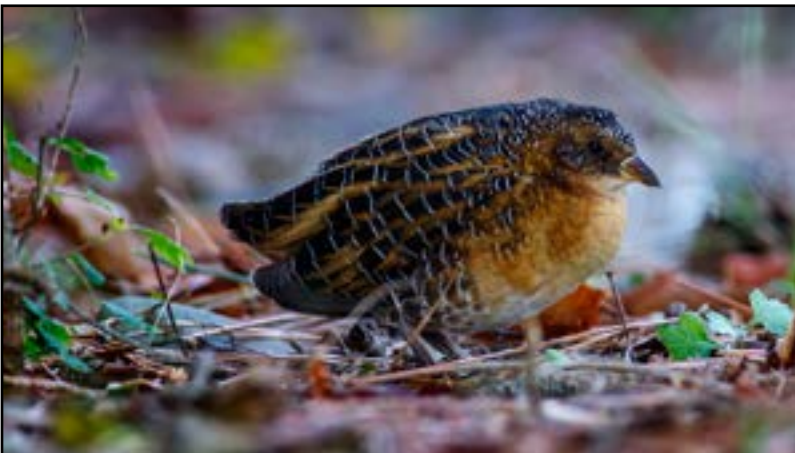
BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii*) One was found at Silver Sands State Park, Milford on 22 Oct 2020, and subsequently seen by many through 1 Nov 2020 (2020-15 John Oshlick*‡).

SEDGE WREN (*Cistothorus platensis*) A singing male found on 26 Jul 2020 in a field in Newtown was present to 27 Sep (2020-50 Patrick Dugan*‡, Frank Gallo). Although the habitat was appropriate for breeding, a mate was never observed.

HOARY REDPOLL (*Acanthis hornemanni*) An unprecedented incursion generated several reports, some of which were sent to a second round of voting for further consideration of identification issues. Accepted were one at Station 43, South Windsor, on 16 Dec 2020 (2020-33 Tom Marsan-Ryan); one at Sniffens Lane, Stratford, on 31 Dec 2020 and 1 Jan 2021 (2020-34 Frank Mantlik‡, Julian Hough); one found on 13 Jan 2021 at Nod Brook Wildlife Management Area in Avon and present into March (2021-05 Gillian Smits*‡, Alex Lin-Moore). Two previously unsubmitted records from the 2013 flight were accepted: a bird at a Barkhamsted feeder on 19 Jan 2013 (2020-55 Julian Hough*‡) and a different individual at the



Gerry Hauser photo
 This Bell's Vireo was a long-stayer from 22 Oct to 1 Nov 2020 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford.



Julian Hough photo
 This Yellow Rail, believed to be injured, proved otherwise as it performed for a crowd at Milford Point on 15 Oct 2020.



Julian Hough photo
 This female Calliope Hummingbird visited a feeder in Stamford on 15-23 Oct 2020 for a 6th state record.



Micky Komara photo
 This sub-adult Ross's Gull, Connecticut's 2nd, made a spectacular one-day appearance on 16 Jan 2021 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

same feeder on 20 Jan 2013 (2020-56 Nick Bonomo*‡).

DARK-EYED (OREGON) JUNCO (*Junco hyemalis*) A male visiting a private yard with feeders was first noticed in mid-Jan 2021. On 2 Feb it was then re-sighted, identified and photographed. (2021-09 Ann and David Fiske*‡). It remained for at least an additional month.

LeCONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammospiza leconteii*) One was found on 27 Sep 2020 in Newtown (2020-49 Patrick Dugan*‡).

HARRIS'S SPARROW (*Zonotrichia querula*) A very cooperative individual was found on 23 Feb 2020 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (2020-07 Micky Komara*‡, Greg Hanisek). The last known report of this long-staying bird, seen by many observers, was 10 May 2020. It is the 12th state record.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) One was found on 13 June 2020 at Glastonbury Meadows, Glastonbury (2020-52 Andrew Dasinger*‡, Jason Rieger*‡). The observers submitted very detailed and well-illustrated reports to confirm this difficult identification. This is the fourth state record.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) Adult males were present at feeders on 15 Nov 2020 in Ledyard (2020-47 Deborah Vessels*‡) and 22 Nov 2020 and beyond in Hebron (2020-36 Joyce Managerr*‡, Frank Mantlik*‡, Tina Green*‡).

YELLOW-RUMPED (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) One was seen well 8 Nov 2020 at Stratford Point, Stratford (2020-60 Stefan Martin*‡).

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) The long-awaited state first, an SY female, was present and seen by many 17-19 Apr 2020 at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Wethersfield (2020-09 Paul Desjardins*‡). Remarkably, the second for the state, believed to be an adult female, was seen on 26-27 Oct 2020 at Nathan Hale Park in New Haven (2020-22 John Oshlick*‡, Frank Mantlik*‡).

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) A second-year male visited a feeder in Stratford from 16-20 Apr 2020 (2020-25 Frank Mantlik*‡).

PAINTED BUNTING (*Passerina ciris*) Three adult males were reported: one found on 19 Dec 2019 at a feeder in Stamford (2020-29 Cindy Safian*‡, Frank Gallo); one at a Darien



Doug Beach photo
These two Pink-footed Geese were present in Simsbury from 24 Nov to 15 Dec 2020.

feeder from 1 Feb to c. 7 Apr 2020 (2020-28 Cleo Abrams-Horsburgh*‡, Frank Mantlik*‡); one at a feeder in Branford on 11 Oct 2020 (2020-30 Eileen Becker-Dunn*‡).

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

CORY'S SHEARWATER (*Calonectris diomedea*) Reports of two different individuals (2020-11, 2020-53) lack sufficient detail, primarily because of the short duration of the observations and/or distance.

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*) (2020-39) Distance and hazy conditions were cited in taking a conservative approach to a difficult identification.

Correction

The following record was inadvertently omitted from the 18th Report:

Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacifica*): One was reported on 15 December 2012 from a beaver marsh in Chaplin (2012-42). Two experienced observers saw and heard a dark "Winter" type wren. They provided detailed notes and sketches. Intriguing as the sighting was, given the absence of photographs or recordings, and the fact that this record would be the first confirmed record of the species east of the Mississippi River, the committee did not accept the record.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik

Fall Season, Aug 1 through Nov. 30, 2020

It was a season packed full of action, with two first state records and a significant irruption of northern finches. In keeping with recent trends, a number of species lingered beyond expectation.

The first two **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found on Oct. 21 at the always-reliable Broad Brook Mill Pond in East Windsor (DP, m.ob.). There were reports, mostly of singles, at five other locations through the end of the month. Unheard of in the lifetimes of many birders, two **Pink-footed Geese** – now almost annual – were found in Simsbury

on Nov. 24 and remained into December (DBe et al.). A **Barnacle Goose** present on Oct. 20 at Broad Brook Mill Pond was accompanied by four hybrid Barnacle X Cackling Goose immatures (TC). Far inland a flock of 75 Brant flew over Station 43 in South Windsor on Oct. 25 (PDe), and 200 flew over Southbury the same day (RN). The first report of Cackling Goose was



Bruce Finnan photo

This juvenile King Rail was unexpected and quite oblivious to birders during several days in October at Allen's Meadow in Wilton.

on Oct. 9 in Westport (PL et al.). An unusually good showing by Tundra Swans consisted of five (including three juveniles) on Oct. 29 at Holly Pond/Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu) and five (all adults) on Oct. 29-30 at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (NM et al.). Five were at Batterson Park Pond in Farmington on Nov. 28 (DP et al.) Those flew off and were later seen flying by Ecology Park in Branford (NB). A group of seven was at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton/New Hartford the same day (JMe et al.).

Five Blue-winged Teal were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield on Aug. 30 (GHa). Also that day the first Northern Shoveler was in Fairfield (JJ). A returning **Eurasian Wigeon** was first reported on Oct. 10 at 14-Acre Pond in Norwalk (TG). An easily overlooked female was at Oak Lawn Cemetery in Fairfield starting on Nov. 4 (AK et al.); a female also as found at a Law High School pond in Milford on Nov. 8 (JOs). All of them remained into winter. Green-winged Teal made their first appearance Aug. 19, with three at Milford Point (FM). A **Harlequin Duck**

was at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford on Oct. 27 (DP). Others were in Westport on Nov. 21 (TG) and in East Haven on Nov. 22 (JHo). An unusually large inland flock of Long-tailed Ducks numbered 40 on Nov. 2 at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton (JMe). The first **Barrow's Goldeneye** was on the Connecticut River in Enfield, a regular spot for the species, on Nov. 27 (PDe). A Common Goldeneye was unexpected Aug. 22 on the Farmington River in Collinsville (JMe). The first three Ruddy Ducks were at Bantam Lake in Litchfield on Sept. 10 (NM); another that summered on Saugatuck Reservoir in Easton was still present on Sept. 21 (JN). A massive flock of 500 was at Broad Brook Reservoir in Cheshire on Oct. 24-25 (SB et al.).

A Red-necked Grebe was early on Aug. 8 at Barn Island in Stonington and remained to at least Aug. 19 (MC, CEI et al.). A Horned Grebe still in breeding plumage was early on Sept. 17 at Millstone Point in Waterford (DP). An **Eared Grebe** was found on the unexpected date of Aug. 30 at Bantam



Chris S. Wood photo

This female Rufous Hummingbird was photographed on Nov. 5 at a feeder in Middlefield.

Lake in Litchfield (GHa et al.). A **White-winged Dove** was a seasonal highlight on Oct. 11 at Harkness Memorial State Park (JD). The first southbound Common Nighthawks were seen on Aug. 13 in Windsor Locks (PDe) and Newtown (JL); the high count was 500 on Sept. 3 in Willimantic (KT). Four Eastern Whip-poor-wills were still vocal Sept. 6 in North Madison (SR). A Chimney Swift roost at Woodbury Middle School held 590 birds on Aug. 14 (RN). A **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a South Windsor feeder from Sept. 24-26 (BK). One was at a Middlefield feeder Oct. 17 to at least mid-November (PCh); banding indicated it

was a hatch-year male (MSz). Another banded on Nov. 9 at a feeder in Monroe was an adult female (fide MSz); it was present c. Oct. 28 to at least Nov. 29 (fide CP). A *Selasphorus* sp. was at a feeder in Canterbury on Oct. 4 (fide DP) and at a feeder in Durham on Oct. 24 (fide FG). A female **Calliope Hummingbird** visited a feeder in Stamford from Oct. 15 to Oct. 23 (PDu, FG et al.).

A surprisingly cooperative juvenile King Rail was easy to find in relatively dry habitat Oct. 12-15 at Allen's Meadow in Wilton (EK, DW et al.). Even more cooperative was a Yellow Rail that had been captured Oct. 15 in

Milford in the belief it was injured. Taken to the Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center at Milford Point, it hopped out of its container and for hours entertained a growing throng of admirers by standing motionless along the buiding crawspace and eventually walking into the marsh of its own volition (SMr, m.ob). A **Common Gallinule** was very cooperative Sept. 9-14 at Pistol Creek in Berlin (JS et al.). A cluster of Sandhill Crane sightings included flyover flocks of three on Oct. 25 at Light-house Point Park in New Haven (JC) and five on Oct. 27 in New Haven (FG). The largest flock was 10 on Nov. 22 over Fairfield (CP), and eight flew over Wilton on Nov. 27 (JB).

An **American Avocet** was at Milford Point on Aug. 14 (BO). Perhaps the same bird appeared Aug. 17 at Plum Bank Marsh in Old Saybrook, where it was seen through Aug. 25 (JOg). Another was at Milford Point on Oct. 2 (JG). Staging American Oystercatchers numbered 85 on Sept. 9 at Milford Point (FM). A **Common Ringed Plover**, a state first, gave its characteristic calls on Oct. 2

at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, hereafter HBSP (NB). The first American Golden-Plovers were reported on Aug. 22 at Rocky Hill Meadows (RS et al.) and Sandy Point in West Haven (RS et al.); five juveniles were flybys at HBSP on Sept. 17 (PDe); and a late one was at Merwin Point, Milford, on Oct. 27 (FM). The bird of the season was the state's first **Pacific Golden-Plover** that was seen by a number of observers Oct. 29-30 at Sikorsky Memorial Airport in Stratford (FM et al.). An Upland Sandpiper made a rare migratory stopover on Aug. 25 at Cove Island Park in Stamford (PDu), and one flew by Bluff Point State Park in Groton on Oct. 20 (DP). A Whimbrel was a good inland find Aug. 1 at Mansfield Lake (PR). Hudsonian Godwits were found Sept. 24-25 at Eastern Point, Groton (RA et al.); on Oct 29-31 at Sikorsky Airport (FM et al.) and Nov. 6-9 at Milford Point (GHo, PDe). There were three Marbled Godwits for the season, including one seen by many from Sept. 7-15 in Waterford and New London (BM, m.ob.)

The high count for Red

Knots, a species in steep decline, was three each on Aug. 5 at Milford Point (SZ et al.) and on Aug. 15 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (DP); the last report was one on Sept. 13 at Milford Point (NB). All reports of Stilt Sandpiper involved single birds, with the last one at the warehouse pond in Stratford on Oct. 12 (FM). The first report of Baird's Sandpiper was Aug. 21 at Mansfield Lake (PR), with another inland one the next day at Colebrook Reservoir (BD); all other reports through Sept. 19 were of one or two birds (NB, JMe et al.). A White-rumped Sandpiper was late Nov. 6-7 at Great Pond in Simsbury (JMe, DL et al.). The first Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at HBSP on Aug. 23 (MK); up to five were there on Aug. 28 (DP et al.) and up to two were at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on Sept. 29-Oct 3 (TG et al.).

The high count of 12 Pectoral Sandpipers was at Sandy Point on Sept. 10 (CLO); the latest ones were at Sherwood Island on Nov. 13 (TG) and at Station 43 in South Wind- sor on Nov. 14 (MP). Four juvenile Western Sandpipers were at Milford Point on

Aug. 28 (NB) and five were at Griswold Point on Sept. 4 (DP). A Long-billed Dow- itcher offered good viewing opportunities on Oct. 6-11 at Mansfield Lake (PR). A nice count of 15 Solitary Sand- pipers was made at Horse Pond in Madison on Aug. 22 (GHO). Aside from the fallout from Hurricane Isaias (see related article), **Red-necked Phalaropes** included one on Aug. 26 at Milford Point (RS); one on Sept. 6 at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Plainfield (DW, m.ob.); one at Little Pond in Litchfield on Sept. 12 (NM, FZ et al.); and one at HBSP on Sept. 20 (KG, m.ob.).

A significant rarity in Long Island Sound, a **Long-tailed Jaeger** was documented with photos on Aug. 25 at Stratford Point (FM). A **Black-headed Gull** was back in Stonington on Nov. 17 (RS). A Lesser Black-backed Gull returned to its regular wintering spot in Westport on Sept. 24 (TG). A noteworthy gathering of gulls on Sept. 17 at the Stratford Point breakwaters included 1055 Laughing Gulls (90% juveniles), 150 Herring Gulls and 410 Great Black-backed Gulls (FM). An assemblage of 1200 Common

Tens on Aug. 15 at Griswold Point also held four Black Terns, 10 Roseate Terns, six Forster's Terns and two Least Terns (DP). A Caspian Tern was a nice inland find on Sept. 12 at Bantam Lake (BD). Two experienced observers found one of the state's few well-documented **Manx Shearwaters** on Sept. 30 at Stonington Point (PR, DP).

Breakwaters at Stratford Point held 1775 Double-crested Cormorants on Sept. 17 (FM). A **white form Great Blue Heron**, a second for the state if accepted, was found on Sept. 27 in Greenwich (JMu et al.). Its long stay ended when it was found dead on Nov. 21 (SMr). A high inland count of 24 Great Egrets was made on Aug. 16 at Riverside Park in Hartford (PDe). Little Blue Herons occasionally turn up inland, but three on Aug. 1 in North Windham were unusual (PR). There were scattered inland singles as usual, with the latest on Sept. 21 at Saugatuck Reservoir in Easton (JN). The best location for Little Blues in the state, the Plum Bank Marsh area in Old Saybrook, held at least 30 – 17 of them juveniles - on Aug. 9 (JOg); the late date

overall was Nov. 7 at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme (MW). A late Green Heron was still at East Shore Park in New Haven on Nov. 24 (NB). Inland Black-crowned Night-Herons included three fly-overs on Aug. 19 in Portland (TA) and one the same day at Bantam Lake in Litchfield (NM). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was an inland rarity on Aug. 15 at Stratton Brook Park in Simsbury (CH).

A juvenile Golden Eagle, an age-class known for occasional early appearances, was at Boothe Park in Stratford on Sept. 18 (SK); another was at Marvelwood School in Kent on Sept. 25 (LD). The state's lone **Mississippi Kite** nest, in northeast Fairfield County, fledged one young on Aug. 12 (JHI). The first sign of Broad-winged Hawk migration was five on the move on Aug. 17 at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven (GHa). Steady northwest winds on Oct. 8 produced 868 raptors at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven, including a falcon flight until 5:30 p.m. that logged 178 American Kestrels, 71 Merlins, seven Peregrine Falcons and 40 unidentified falcons



This juvenile Mississippi Kite, shown here in August, was fledged from a nest in western Connecticut.

(SMa et al.).

An early Snowy Owl was seen on Nov. 7 in Bethlehem (fide FZ); one was at Sikorsky Airport on Nov. 14 (FM, m.ob). Oct. 30 was a good day for Short-eared Owls, with five at Long Beach in Stratford (AK) and two at HBSP (RS). A Long-eared Owl was found at Hoydens Hill in Fairfield on Nov. 2 (FM). It was a good season for Red-headed Woodpeckers. These handsome and rather enigmatic birds were reported from about a dozen different locations, but an apparent family group of at least three in Salem drew the most attention, with dozens of birders enjoying them from Oct. 13 through the end

of the period (RS, m.ob.). A morning flight near the Saugatuck River in Westport recorded 300 Northern Flickers on Oct. 9 (PL).

Western Kingbirds were nice finds on Sept. 4 at West Thompson Lake (MSh); on Nov. 8 in Vernon (MB); on Nov. 18 at Fort Nathan Hale in New Haven (JOs); and on Nov. 21 in N. Stonington (GW). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was a great find on Aug. 17 at Bargh Reservoir in Stamford (SMr, PDu). The first Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported Aug. 12 at Greenwich Point (AS), and the first Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was seen Aug. 20 at Wooster Park in Stratford (FM). Single Northern

Shrikes were found on Nov. 9 in Durhan (SB); Nov. 19 in Higganum (EC) and on Nov. 21 in Mansfield (KT). An exciting find, in a season full of them, was a very cooperative **Bell's Vireo** present Oct. 22 through at least Nov. 1 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (JOs m.ob.). Common Ravens are now widespread, usually in small numbers, but occasionally they form flocks such as the 23 at Lighthouse Point on Oct. 10 (SMa). A Purple Martin was late on Oct. 12 at the Sherwood Island mill pond in Westport (TG). The now-regular staging by Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the Connecticut River in the Hartford area included 156 on Aug. 22 at Windsor locks (DBi). A modest flight of **Cave Swallows** began with one on Nov. 16 in Stonington (FM et al.). Singles were reported from four other coastal locations through Nov. 18 (PL, NB et al.).

A morning flight of migrating Black-capped Chickadees on Oct. 4 at Bluff Point numbered about 250 (GW). The beginning of a major Red-breasted Nuthatch irruption was noted Aug. 13 in Easton (JN) and Windsor

Locks (PDE); multiple birds were seen over the next few days, with counts such as 15 on Aug. 20 at Whittemore Sanctuary in Woodbury (CW) and 20 on Aug. 23 at McLean Refuge in Granby (JW). The latest House Wren was Nov. 26 in Westport (PL). A **Sedge Wren** was present in potential breeding habitat from July 26 to Sept. 27 in Newtown (PDu, FG). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher lingered at Silver Sands State Park through the Nov. 30 season until at least Dec. 15 (SS et al.). A very late Veery on Nov. 12 in Coventry appeared to be injured (LRu). An Oct. 3 morning flight at Bluff Point produced 200 Swainson's Thrushes (GW).

The most iconic of the northern irruptives, Evening Grosbeaks remained widespread but rather scarce after the first two arrivals at Pomfret Center on Oct. 11 (PR); the high counts were 44 flying by Ecology Park in Branford on Oct. 31 (NB, JHo); a total of 53 at various Southbury locations the same day (RN); and 80 on Nov. 30 in Woodstock (AB). A highlight of the northern finch irruption was an early appearance by a Pine Grosbeak on Oct. 11 in



Scott Whalen photo

This Lapland Longspur was an early arrival on Sept. 21 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

East Hartland (FZ); as usual in a flight year this species appeared in small numbers in northerly locations. A vanguard of the season's major Purple Finch irruption included a single bird as early as Aug. 23 at Trout Brook Valley in Easton (JN). The first significant arrival of Common Redpolls was c. 40 on Oct. 31 at Long Beach in Stratford (DT et al.). The main push of Red Crossbills started with 15 in Avon on Nov. 1 (DL).

A Lapland Longspur was early on Sept. 21 at HBS (SW). The first **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found on Sept. 18 at Trout Brook Valley (JN); thereafter its now-regular status was on display with reports from 11 other

locations through Nov. 15 (m.ob.). **Lark Sparrows** were found on Sept. 20 at Sherwood Island State Park (TG); on Oct. 2 at Mansfield Lake (PR); and on Oct. 6 in a Danbury yard (LRc). A **LeConte's Sparrow** was found on Sept. 27 in Newtown (PDU). The first reports of Lincoln's Sparrows came on a typical arrival date of Sept. 15 at five locations (WS et al.). The first Fox Sparrow was a bit early on Oct. 9 in Coventry (KT). Single Yellow-breasted Chats were reported from 13 locations over all four months of the season..

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Cassidy Road in Southbury on Nov. 3 (BB) and in Pomfret on Nov. 12 (DP, PR). Six Eastern Mead-

The Fallout From Hurricane Isaias

On Aug. 4 Connecticut birders were on a mission to find birds carried here by Hurricane Isaias. The following summary illustrates their success:

Sooty Tern: five at Bantam Lake, Litchfield (FZ, NM et al.); one at Stonington Point, Stonington (RS); two at Shippan Point, Stamford (FG, PDU, AC); one at Sniffens Lane, Stratford (FM, LO); one at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (DRt), three at St. Mary's, Bridgeport (JHu), one at Doolittle Park, Milford (MA).

Cory's Shearwater: one at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (MB, AG, DRt).

Great Shearwater: two at Stonington Point, Stonington (RS).

Sooty Shearwater: one at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (MB); one at St. Mary's, Bridgeport (JHu).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: one at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (MB).

Red-Necked Phalarope: 40 at Southport Beach, Westport/Fairfield (JT, TG, AK). 1-2 at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook (MB).



Frank Mantlik photo

This adult Sooty Tern was one of several found on Aug. 4 in conjunction with Hurricane Isaias. It was at the mouth of the Housatonic River in Stratford.

owlarks, in steep decline as breeders, were in good habitat on Aug. 12 in Bridgewater (SF). Baltimore Orioles were at 12 locations in November, with two at a feeder in Niantic to at least Nov. 16 (LRi). Adult male **Bullock's Orioles** visited feeders in Ledyard on No. 15 and beyond (DV) and in Hebron on Nov. 22 and beyond (fide Matt Bell). The first reports of a Rusty Blackbird were on Sept. 19 from Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven (SU, CLi) and at Bolton Notch (DM)..

Bluff Point in Groton produced a flight of 1200 warblers on Sept. 5 (CEl et al.); 500 warblers there on Oct. 3 included 15 species, an excellent variety for that date (GW). On Oct 4 Bluff reported 570 warblers of 11 species (GW). A late Ovenbird was at a Suffield feeder on Nov. 15 (NF). The now-rare Golden-winged Warbler was at Greenwich Point on Aug. 31 (CEh). Joining what became a late parulid parade was a Black-and-White Warbler on Nov. 25 in Niantic (MVi). Both Tennessee Warbler and Nashville Warbler were present through the end of the season and well into

winter (m.ob.). A Northern Parula found on the late date of Nov. 21 in Branford remained deep into winter near a water treatment plant (CLO, MVa et al.). A late Yellow Warbler was at East Shore Park in New Haven on Nov. 24 (NB). The first migrant Palm Warbler was reported from Litchfield on Aug. 17 (NM). Sept. 5 was a big day for Cape May Warblers with 10 reported at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (RM) and 14 at Brodie Park in New Hartford (DR). A **Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler** was found at Stratford Point on Nov. 8 (SMr). A late Black-throated Green Warbler was at Pine Creek in Fairfield on Nov. 20 (JP). On the heels of the state's long-awaited first **Townsend's Warbler** in April, the second was found on Oct. 26 at Fort Hale Park in New Haven (JOs. m.ob.). A Wilson's Warbler lingered to Nov. 19-20 at Silver Sands in Milford (JOs, SS).

A female **Summer Tanager** was a good find on Oct 9 at Assumption Cemetery in Westport (TG). An adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited a feeder in Branford Nov. 5-7 (C &GL). The now regular **Blue Grosbeak** was

reported from six locations from Sept. 25 to Oct. 15, with two each at Allen's Meadow in Wilton on Oct. 2 (VG) and at Smith Richardson Preserve in Fairfield on Oct. 3 (PCo). The latest Indigo Bunting was seen on Oct. 18 at Hoydens Hill Open Space in Fairfield (AK). An adult male **Painted Bunting** visited a Branford feeder on Oct. 11 (EB). The first Dickcissel was reported on Aug. 25 at Allen's Meadow in Wilton (JB). Many reports through Nov. 26 included at least five flyovers on Oct. 2 at the Lighthouse Point Park hawk watch (JHo, DC).

Observers – Robert Anderson, Tim Antanaitis, Mark Aronson, Bill Banks, Doug Beach (DBe), Joe Bear, Eileen Becker-Dunn, Matt Bell, Deb Bishop (DBi), Nick Bonomo, Aaron Bourque, Steve Broker, Dana Campbell, Michael Carretta, Polly Chace (PCh), Linda Clancy, Elena Coffey, Tim Coffey, Al Collins, Patrick Comins (PCo), Jim Cortina, Andrew Dasinger (ADa), Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine, Laurie Doss, Jerilyn Dufrene, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Chris Elphick

(CEl), Jeff Fengler, Suzanne Fitch, Nate Fuller, Paul Fusco, Frank Gallo, Karen Gallo, Vincent Gallogly, Tina Green, Janet Greenwood, Andy Griswold, Tina Green, Greg Hanisek (GHa), William Hobbie, Gary Hodge (GHo), Conor Hogan, Janet Holt (JHl), Julian Hough (JHo), Jim Hunter (JHu), Jim Jacques.

Also Jay Kaplan, Emily Keating, Aidan Kiley, Micky Komara, Scott Kruitbosch, Brian Kulvete, Michael LaBossiere, Dave Lawton, James Leone, Cody Limber (CLi), Carol Lemmon (CLE), Gary Lemmon, Chris Loscalzo (CLO), Preston Lust, Ryan MacLean, Nicolas Main, Frank Mantlik, John Marshall (JMa), Stefan Martin (SMr), Steve Mayo (SMa), Dave Mathieu, Jamie Meyers (JMe), James Muchmore (JMu), Jeremy Nance, Russ Naylor, John Ogren (JOg), Ben Oko, Linda Olsen, John Oshlick (JOs), Maggie Peretto, Chris Petherick, Dave Provencher, James Purcell, Luanne Rice (LRi), Loree Richter (LRc), Tim Riley, Dave Rosgen (DRo), Dan Rottino (DRt), Scott Roxbrough, Phil Rusch, Linda Ruth (LRu), Will Schenck, Jannie Shapiro, Mary Shar-



Bruce Finnan photo

This juvenile Dickcissel was at Settler's Park in Southbury on Oct. 4.

key (MSh), Russ Smiley, Paul Smith, Steve Spector, Anastasia Stefanou, Mark Szantyr (MSz), Jory Teltser, Kevin Thompson, Dave Tripp, Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahay (MVa), Debbie Vessels, Anthony Vicciarelli, Mary El-

len Viggiano (MVi), Michael Walter, Doug Warner, John Weeks, Scott Whalen, Chris Wood, David Woolery, Sara Zagorski, Fran Zygmunt.

Compiled by Frank Mantlik

**Some Thoughts about Birding at
Windham Airport / Mansfield Hollow Lake in 2020
By Phil Rusch**

The late summer and early fall drought of 2020 brought extremely low water levels, and the most exposed mud, to Mansfield Hollow Lake since the epic year of 1995. While 2020 didn't have Long-billed Curlew, Sabine's Gull, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Northern Wheatear or Swainson's Hawk, I did manage to record 156 species of birds this year on the mud, grass, water and pavement of the Airport/Mansfield Hollow Lake Trail. Or as it has become known to locals. "The Dam."

The top highlight for me was a Whimbrel that spent 16 days

from 17 Sept.- 2 Oct. fattening up on grasshoppers, while giving some close flybys as it moved from the mud of the reservoir, over the dam to the grasslands of the airport. Given that Whimbrels are known for their proclivity to stay for minutes, 16 days was incredible. I am still amazed that it was able to actually become airborne after consuming all those grasshoppers.

Other highlights were:

Getting all five "grasspipers" (Upland, American Golden, Black-bellied, Buff-breasted and Baird's) from The Dam this year. Thanks to Dave Provencher for the phone call about the Black-bellied Plovers.

Adding Long-billed Dowitcher to my personal shorebird list of 26 species for The Dam. The total for the site is 29 species. We're waiting for Willet and/or Marbled Godwit for Number 30. Red Phalarope would also do it.

Watching a Peregrine Falcon chase the Long-billed Dowitcher and Dunlin into Tolland County. Two new county birds!

Managing to get 20 species of shorebirds and 157 species overall at "The Dam" in 2020. It goes to show that if you are willing to visit a site once, or sometimes three times a day, you will be rewarded. You will also be rewarded for sitting in your car waiting for the thunderstorms to clear enough so you can run up on the dam itself to check on storm knock-downs. That included four Sanderlings on the airport runways after a particularly nasty storm on 27 Aug.

In addition to the shorebirds, other notable birds were three Little Blue Herons, a singing Common Nighthawk at 3 a.m. in mid-June, a tooting Northern Saw-whet Owl twice in June, six species of swallows staging on the tarmac of the airport, Lark Sparrow in October, and Cackling Goose and Rough-legged Hawk in early November.

Some low lights were:

Losing several Grasshopper Sparrow nests to early mowing,



*Dave Provencher photo
This Whimbrel was noteworthy for its inland location at Mansfield
Hollow Lake and for an unusually long stay during September 2020.*

and no Eastern Meadowlark nested for the first time that I can remember.

Searching the Pectoral Sandpiper flock on a daily basis and not finding Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. I really thought this was the year.

And, for those of you that have visited the site, and have returned home frustrated at trying to identify birds at a quarter or half mile away, I offer a couple of hints.

- Bring a scope. Binoculars are not enough.
- Learn to identify a Killdeer at any distance. It is by far the most numerous shorebird at this site. Numbers have reached over 100 individuals.
- Do not get frustrated when you hear a shorebird calling and you cannot find it. I still need to learn that myself
- It can be easier to identify shorebirds from above. Think White-rumped Sandpiper. It can also be much more difficult. See Number 1.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Nick Bonomo

It is springtime, and you're birding the sandbars and mudflats at the mouth of the Housatonic River. Egrets and herons have recently arrived from their wintering quarters to our south, and you are enjoying watching them stalk small bait fish in the shallows at low tide. Several of our two common egret species, Great and Snowy, are present. Great is obvious by its large size and bright orange-yellow bill, while Snowy Egret stands in contrast as much smaller with a black bill.

While you are scanning the scattered flock, you notice that one of the egrets standing away from the group has a starkly bicolored bill. Ah, this must be an immature Little Blue Heron that has not yet begun to acquire dark feathers. But that assumption doesn't sit quite right with you, especially when you notice the bird's fierce expression emphasized by a pale iris against rather dark lores. As you're trying to figure out exactly what you are looking at, the egret spots a fish and



leaps into action, wildly strutting through the tidal pool with its wings spread open.

At that point you have flashbacks to your recent winter "I'm sick of snow and cold" vacation to Florida, where you saw Reddish Egrets dancing in a similar manner on the tidal flats. At that point the final details fall into place. Blackish legs including the feet, stringy neck plumes, and size somewhere between Snowy and Great Egret. Check, check, and check. The estuary at Milford Point has delivered yet another "first state record," a white morph Reddish Egret. I photographed this one in February 2016 in Florida.



Photo Challenge No. 113

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a computer disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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