

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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CONTENTS

- 125 **The 2017 Summer Bird Count**
Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins
- 152 **2016 Fall Hawk Watch**
Steve Mayo
- 163 **Connecticut Field Notes**
Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik
- 175 **Photo Challenge**
Julian Hough

ON THE COVER

Virginia Rail

The Summer Bird Count motivates birders to search for secretive species such as the Virginia Rail, rendered for our cover by Paul Carrier of Harwinton

THE 2017 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

By Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins

Note: Any evidence of nesting by state-endangered (E), threatened (T) or special concern (SC) species should be reported to the COA Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) Project. This will ensure that the best available information can be taken into account in land-use decisions.

Introduction

The Summer Bird Count (SBC) is our most intensive inventory of breeding birds in Connecticut. This volunteer led effort, now in its 26th year helps us to gauge the changing status of breeding birds in the state and provide insight into the dynamic nature of the distribution and status of our breeding birds. Such broad scale monitoring efforts will only grow more important as we attempt to better understand how birds react to the changing landscape of Connecticut. Shifting development patterns, maturing habitats or their alteration by weather events, emerging forest pests and pathogens, the spread of invasive species, climate change and a whole host of other factors can alter our bird life and the habitats they depend on in the state. Your efforts are essential if we hope to detect and better understand the changes that result from these and other factors. Thank you!

State listed species are marked as (E) for endangered, (T) for threatened and (SC) for special concern. Details on any potential breeding state-listed species should be reported to the state's Natural Diversity Database in addition to being recorded for the count.

Results

This year 178 count-day species were recorded. This is slightly below average (98%) and four less than the last year's count. Two additional count period species were observed: **Red-throated Loon** in Greenwich/Stamford, and **Red-headed Woodpecker** in Woodbury/Roxbury. Litchfield Hills had the most species with 135 (remarkable for an inland



Mark Szantyr photo
Barred Owls were reported in record numbers,
with 139 found during the 2017 SBC.

count to have the highest total!) and Hartford and Storrs tied for the fewest with 107. There were 263 observers, in 152 parties. The number of observers was down by one compared with last year, and represents the third highest number of participants ever. Volunteers tallied 1384.5 party hours, with 1336.5 being daylight hours and 48 night hours.

There were 112,153 individual birds recorded, which is 2,415 below last year's record total. The ten most abundant species were, in descending order: **American Robin**, **European Starling**, **Gray Catbird**, **Red-winged Blackbird**, **Common Grackle**, **Canada Goose**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **House Sparrow**, **Cedar Waxwing** and **Song Sparrow**. All but one of these repeat from the last year, with **Cedar Waxwing** (11th last year) replacing **Mourning Dove** and (13th this year).

Fifteen species were represented by a single individual: **Ring-necked Duck**, **Black Scoter**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Rud-**

dy Duck, **American Bittern** (E), **Least Bittern** (T), **Little Blue Heron** (SC), **Northern Harrier** (E), **King Rail** (E), **Red Knot** (T), **Sanderling**, **Wilson's Snipe**, **Mourning Warbler**, **Boat-tailed Grackle** and **Pine Siskin**.

Non-nesting Species

There were 24 species recorded on the count days that do not regularly breed in Connecticut and can be considered either late migrants or non-nesting visitors:

Brant, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Lesser Scaup**, **White-winged Scoter**, **Black Scoter**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Ruddy Duck**, **Red-throated Loon**, **Black-bellied Plover**, **Semipalmated Plover**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Red Knot**, **Sanderling**, **Dunlin**, **Least Sandpiper**, **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Wilson's Snipe**,

Laughing Gull, **Ring-billed Gull** and **Blackpoll Warbler**

The underlined species are potential nesters that nest in nearby states, but in the absence of additional sup-

porting evidence they will be considered non-nesting visitors.

Noteworthy among these: A lingering **Ring-necked Duck** was a great find from Woodbury/Roxbury, Two **Lesser Scaup** were a first for New Haven and their **Black Scoter** was only the second SBC occurrence since 1997. Greenwich/Stamford's **Ruddy Duck** was a great find for that area. Eleven **Black-bellied Plovers** from those two coastal counts made for a new ten-year statewide high. A **Red Knot** (T) in New Haven represents the fourth record since 1997 and the **Sanderling** from Greenwich/Stamford the fifth. Both coastal counts recorded **Dunlin**. Greenwich Stamford had four **Least Sandpipers** and New Haven had seven **White-rumped Sandpipers**. Surprisingly there have been more occurrences of the latter species (8) than the former (5) since 1997. Two **Short-billed Dowitchers** in New Haven were a great find and only the second record since 1997. The **Wilson's Snipe** from New Milford/Pawling was only the third statewide record since 1997. A **Mourning**

Warbler for Greenwich/Stamford was certainly a migrant, not a nesting bird considering the coastal location.

Notable Nesting Species

While not uncommon on northern counts, **Common Mergansers** were great finds for New Haven and Greenwich/Stamford (2) where they had not been seen since at least 1997. Barkhamsted found the only **Ruffed Grouse** (4) for the count, a species that is getting much harder to find in our area.

Least Bittern (T) in Litchfield Hills and **American Bittern** (E) in New Milford/Pawling were great birds to find. Both have been recorded in each of the last ten counts, but could easily be missed. A **Little Blue Heron** (SC) for Greenwich/Stamford is only the 4th since 1997. A **Snowy Egret** (T) away from coastal haunts was a good surprise for Woodbury/Roxbury. Litchfield Hills recorded a **Northern Harrier** (E), a species which may not even nest in the state anymore.

A **King Rail** (E) for Greenwich/Stamford is a candidate for the best bird of the entire count. This individual was regularly seen for several weeks in an odd location along the Scalzi River Walk in Stamford, much to the delight of birders throughout the state. **Sora** has been missed in three of the previous ten counts. Single birds were recorded in Hartford and Greenwich/Stamford. Hartford again contributed **Upland Sandpiper** (E) (2), which was a surprise considering the intensive mowing of much of Rentschler Field that occurred this season. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** (SC) were found in Litchfield Hills and amazingly in Greenwich/Stamford. New Haven and Litchfield Hills recorded **Common Nighthawks** (E).

Woodbury/Roxbury's **Red-headed Woodpecker** (E) for count period was another shocking surprise when an adult briefly visited a feeder at the Audubon Center at Bent of the River. A **Hermit Thrush**, away from their normal upstate range was a great find for New Haven. Hartford had eight **Grasshopper Sparrows** (E), a species that has become more difficult to find in the state **Saltmarsh Sparrows** (SC)



Mark Szantyr photo

Red-breasted Merganser was one of the non-nesting species recorded on the 2017 Summer Bird Count. It is also one with potential to breed in the state.

were recorded by Greenwich/Stamford and New Haven One **Boat-tailed Grackle** was found in Greenwich/Stamford only the second SBC record since 1997. Litchfield Hills found one **Pine Siskin**, only the sixth since 1997.

Species Recorded in Above Average Numbers

Glossy Ibis (SC) didn't just break the all-time SBC record, they shattered it with 40 beating the old high count of eight. This was all the more remarkable that they were seen inland on the Hartford count, the first ever for this count. They likely represent a late migrating flock. **Turkey Vultures** and **Osprey** both set new all-time highs, though not when corrected for party hours. New Haven had 216 of the 226 **Semiplumbed Sandpipers** for a new ten-year high for this Arctic-nesting migrant shorebird. The all-time high occurred in 2000 with 349.



Bruce Finnan photo

Black-throated Green Warbler was found in record low numbers, perhaps because its breeding range is receding northward.

Barred Owl had a new all-time high count with 139. Two species of woodpecker hit new highs as well, **Red-bellied Woodpecker** and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**. These two species are an interesting contrast with Red-bellied expanding into our area from the south and sapsucker expanding southwards from its traditional northerly range. **Acadian Flycatchers** are another species that has moved northwards into our state in recent decades and came in at a new all-time high count. **Eastern Pheobes** seem to be doing well with another all-time high count. **Yellow-throated Vireos** also turned in a new all-time high. All of our swallows came in with above average numbers, but **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** gets the prize for a new all-time high. **Tufted Titmouse**, **Worm-eating Warbler** and **Hooded Warbler** also reached new high points, with titmouse representing an all-time high. Each of those species has been moving their range northward into Connecticut over the last few decades.

American Redstart achieved an all-time high and **Prairie Warbler** also had a new ten-year high; good news from the early successional suite of species that had been doing so

poorly for a while. **Chipping Sparrow** and **Field Sparrow** also fit in that category and had new ten-year high counts.

Species Recorded in Below Average Numbers

Only five species reached new lows, and none of them all-time lows. **Least Terns** (T) continue to struggle and this year's results reflect this with only two found. This species was missing from the count between the years of 1978-1987, before the addition of the New Haven count area, but this is a new low mark since that time. **Monk Parakeet** numbers have been languishing in the SBC coverage area, but seem to be doing fine overall. **Black-throated Green** and **Canada Warblers** represent species that appear to be moving their way northwards out of our area. **Scarlet Tanagers** seem to have had quite a few poor showings in recent years, with this year's only being 88% of their ten-year average. Other species with poor showings but not reaching ten-year lows include **Common Tern** (SC) (29% of ten-year average), **Black-crowned Night-Heron** (31%), and **Ruffed Grouse** (39%). Also of note were the scarcity of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Winter Wrens** with each coming in at 53% of their ten-year averages. **Eastern Whip-Poor-Will** (SC) was missed for only the third time since 1997. Also missed was **White-throated Sparrow**, for the first time since 1991.

Thank you

On behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, we would like to thank all of the volunteer observers, captains and compilers for all of your hard work. The data that you provide is critical for understanding our summer bird abundance and distribution!

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT Valley Hfd	Upland SBCs:			Northern			2017 State Totals	2007-2016			
	GS	NH		Mid-state WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Average		obs.	Ave	Low	High
Anhinga										0%	1	0.1	0	1
American Bittern									1	34%	8	2.9	0	6
Least Bittern								1	1	56%	10	1.8	1	4
Great Blue Heron	42	36	55	43	64	49	50	35	374	123%	10	305	211	375
Great Egret	126	35		1					162	74%	10	218	120	345
Snowy Egret	87	23		1					111	132%	10	84	66	117
Little Blue Heron	1								1	77%	3	1.3	0	2
Cattle Egret										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Green Heron	16	7	7	9	13	5	6	4	67	85%	10	79	59	113
Black-cr Night-Heron	43	14		4					61	31%	10	194	48	449
Yellow-cr Night-Heron	3	3							6	130%	10	4.6	1	10
Glossy Ibis			40						40	909%	8	4.4	0	8
Black Vulture	2	13	6	4	12	1	9	cp	47	140%	10	36	21	59
Turkey Vulture	40	45	22	51	62	99	87	68	474	126%	10	389	292	463
Osprey	101	64	6	7	1	3	3	5	190	142%	10	142	90	184
Mississippi Kite										0%	1	0.1	0	1
Northern Harrier									1	143%	4	1.5	0	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	2		1	1	2		8	68%	10	12	7	18
Cooper's Hawk	3	4	5	3	4	17	7	1	44	118%	10	41	23	58
accipiter species														
Northern Goshawk										0%	7	3.7	0	7
Bald Eagle	8	7	6	7	2	16	6		52	202%	10	34	20	52

Red-shouldered Hawk	6	8	3	32	11	24	29	11	124	153%	10	93	55	135
Broad-winged Hawk		1		4	10	29	21	4	69	117%	10	64	45	96
Red-tailed Hawk	76	29	42	52	16	31	32	23	301	104%	10	289	217	360
King Rail	1								1	100%	3	0.1	0	1
Clapper Rail	9	1							10	111%	10	9	4	17
Virginia Rail	2		2	1	2		10	2	19	79%	10	27	13	53
Sora	1		1						2	200%	7	2	0	6
American Coot										0%	5	2	0	5
American Oystercatcher	55	12							67	150%	10	56	37	78
Black-bellied Plover	1	10							11	275%	8	4	0	9
Semipalmated Plover		13							13	217%	9	6	0	15
Piping Plover		12							12	75%	10	16	5	24
Killdeer	45	19	36	20	16	22	17	27	202	91%	10	223	10	297
Spotted Sandpiper	4	7	31	3	1	9	5		60	115%	10	52	31	66
Solitary Sandpiper	cp	4							4	0%	5	0.5	0	1
Greater Yellowlegs	14	11							25	125%	9	2	0	5
Willet			2						2	43%	6	4.7	0	14
Upland Sandpiper									11	275%	9	4	0	11
Ruddy Turnstone	5	6							3	13%	3	8	0	22
Red Knot		1							1	50%	4	2	0	4
Sanderling	1								1	100%	6	3	0	11
Dunlin	1	2							3	0%	1	0.1	0	1
Purple Sandpiper									4	11%	5	35	0	73
Least Sandpiper	4								5	250%	7	2	0	6
White-rumped Sandpiper		5							2	0%	2	0.4	0	2
Pectoral Sandpiper														

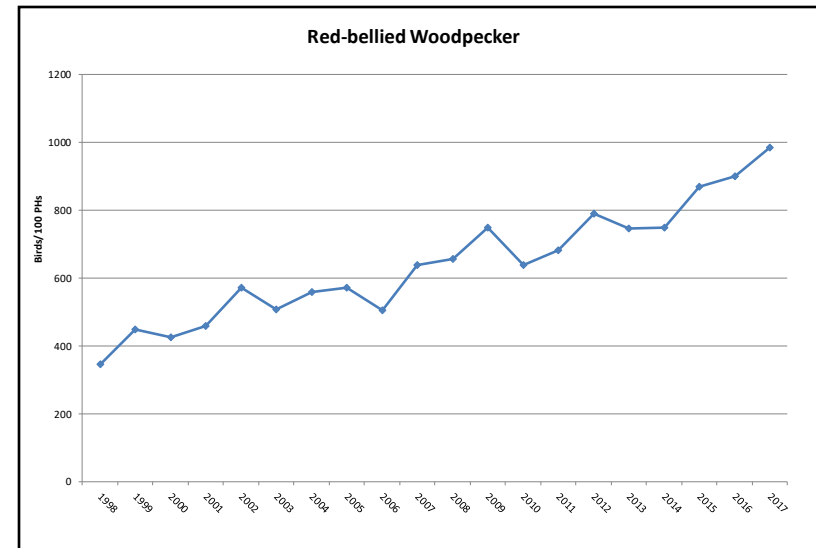
SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT Valley Hfd	Upland SBCs:			Norther			2017 State Totals	2007-2016 yrs			
	GS	NH		WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Average		obs.	Ave	Low	High
Semipalmated Sandpiper	10	216							226	359%	8	63	0	215
Short-billed Dowitcher		2							2	286%	1	0.7	0	7
Wilson's Snipe				1					1	500%	2	0.2	0	1
American Woodcock				1					16	100%	10	16	8	30
Bonaparte's Gull									7	0%	1	0.1	0	1
Laughing Gull	7	110	1						7	21%	9	34	0	111
Ring-billed Gull	77	110		7	1	5			201	68%	10	295	87	411
Herring Gull	429	258							687	104%	10	663	413	975
Great Black-backed Gull	108	51	1						160	82%	10	195	105	373
Least Tern		2							2	1%	10	155	13	334
Gull-billed Tern											1	0.2	0	2
Caspian Tern											2	0.4	0	3
Black Tern											1	0.1	0	1
Common Tern	87	3							90	29%	10	311	82	547
Forster's Tern											9	2.8	0	7
Royal Tern											2	0.4	0	2
Black Skimmer											6	5.9	0	13
Rock Pigeon	128	80	80	103	29	109	100	44	673	69%	10	971	578	1420
Mourning Dove	434	289	296	375	212	331	328	169	2434	96%	10	2541	2072	3114
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	25	8	8	1	12	5	46	108	230%	10	47	11	115
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	4		11	4	19	12	16	68	234%	10	29	10	74
cuckoo species	1	2					2	1	6					
Eastern Screech-Owl	6			4	5	6	6	3	24	59%	10	41	19	59

Great Horned Owl	9		3	1	4	0	3	4	24	104%	10	23	14	36
Barred Owl	11	1		30	17	37	22	21	139	139%	10	100	70	132
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1						1		2	83%	8	2.4	0	4
Nighthawk, Common							1		3	103%	10	2.9	1	6
Eastern Whip-poor-will											8	6	0	11
Chimney Swift	183	164	69	128	61	597	86	135	1423	142%	10	1000	554	1747
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	18	7	7	20	28	78	40	27	225	97%	10	233	157	335
Belted Kingfisher	8	3	8	15	3	41	14	4	96	103%	10	93	69	118
Red-headed Woodpecker	245	105	98	137	88	195	58	58	984	133%	10	742	639	900
Red-bellied Woodpecker														
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	140	60	54	69	85	380	119	2	656	121%	10	541	387	649
Downy Woodpecker	74	27	24	71	90	236	70	56	777	91%	10	857	667	1095
Hairy Woodpecker	173	44	82	31	43	85	31	16	331	117%	10	282	235	356
Northern Flicker	173	44	82	48	36	55	52	23	513	100%	10	515	436	613
Pileated Woodpecker	27	12	14	35	34	65	38	14	239	138%	10	173	118	242
American Kestrel				6	3		4	4	17	133%	10	13	6	21
Merlin	1	6	1			1			9	113%	3	0.5	0	2
Peregrine Falcon	9	4							13	25%	10	52	22	78
Monk Parakeet											7	5	0	22
Olive-sided Flycatcher	134	88	74	114	83	124	175	88	880	124%	10	712	592	891
Eastern Wood-Pewee											2	0.2	0	1
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	3		1	22	7	5	6		44	165%	10	27	16	35
Acadian Flycatcher				7	2	30	96	3	138	143%	10	97	62	139
Alder Flycatcher	39	49	40	24	45	38	91	16	342	121%	10	282	224	366
Willow Flycatcher				14	14	57	43	26	154	113%	10	136	75	188
Least Flycatcher														

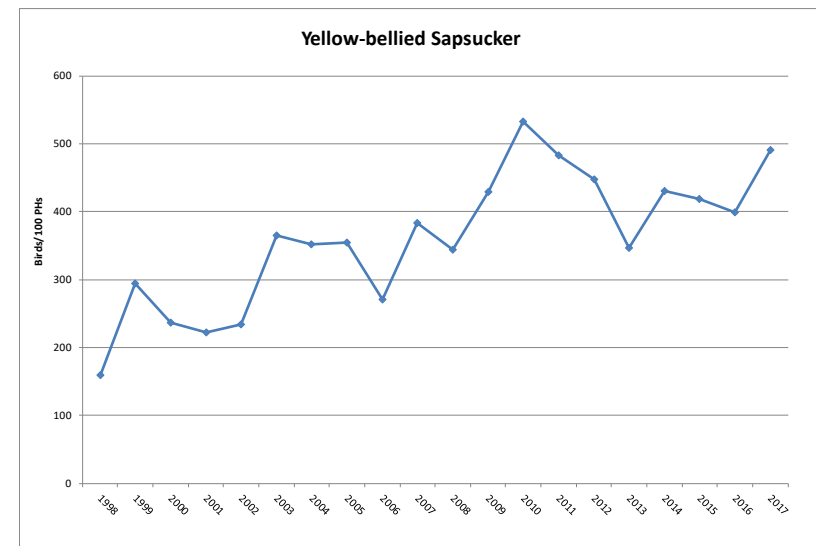
SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT Valley Hfd	Upland SBCs:		Norther			2017 State Totals	2007-2016			
	GS	NH		Mid-state WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St		Average	obs.	Ave	Low
Blue-winged Warbler	39	39	9	63	29	32	50	58	319	10	309	276	326
"Lawrence's Warbler"										2	0.2	0	1
"Brewster's Warbler"										2	1.5	0	2
Black-&-White Warbler	4	28	4	58	30	248	185	35	592	10	558	432	624
Nashville Warbler		1							1	7	1.1	0	2
Mourning Warbler										6	1.3	0	3
Kentucky Warbler										2	0.2	0	1
Common Yellowthroat	190	75	89	169	165	549	426	107	1770	10	1904	1706	2092
Hooded Warbler	30	14	37	27	37	4	4	2	74	10	51	34	72
American Redstart				214	149	500	499	134	1577	10	1376	1131	1566
Cerulean Warbler					1	1	18	7	27	10	16	4	28
Northern Parula						4	3		7	10	6	2	10
Magnolia Warbler				2		86	16		104	10	105	75	139
Blackburnian Warbler				9	4	157	72		242	10	215	152	274
Yellow Warbler	430	128	198	241	190	250	572	223	2232	10	2055	1868	2297
Chestnut-sided Warbler	14	1	2	57	67	239	244	29	653	10	620	529	666
Blackpoll Warbler	1			1	1		2		5	10	3.7	0	7
Black-throated Blue Warbler				6	1	152	52		211	10	228	162	298
Pine Warbler	33	22	26	40	8	190	99	32	450	10	447	398	512
Yellow-rumped Warbler						56	22	3	81	10	99	66	129
Prairie Warbler	47	7	15	48	9	23	2	22	173	10	112	80	167
Black-thr Green Warbler	1		2	33	4	118	100	10	268	10	333	273	416

Canada Warbler				1		9	16		26	10	51	39	75
Wilson's Warbler										2	0.2	0	1
Yellow-breasted Chat										2	0.3	0	2
Eastern Towhee	69	40	24	107	77	196	141	56	710	10	580	446	726
Chipping Sparrow	356	147	95	303	294	1069	461	291	3016	10	2601	2330	2957
Field Sparrow	35	4	11	46	22	19	13	14	164	10	119	77	156
Verper Sparrow										1	0.1	0	1
Savannah Sparrow				5	1		12	10	88	10	81	55	106
Grasshopper Sparrow									8	10	6	2	19
Nelson's Sparrow	3	1							4	3	0.3	0	1
Saltmarsh Sparrow										10	4.2	1	11
Seaside Sparrow	508	211	286	378	327	709	491	131	3041	5	1.8	0	3
Song Sparrow	6		13	9	45	87	165	8	333	10	333	245	463
Swamp Sparrow									0	10	7	1	22
White-throated Sparrow									68	10	54	35	70
Dark-eyed Junco						50	18			10	127%		
Scarlet Tanager	88	34	28	113	53	199	110	61	686	10	782	715	888
Northern Cardinal	463	183	189	271	189	497	235	167	2194	10	2025	1814	2247
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	40	39	48	81	61	93	107	65	534	10	482	385	577
Blue Grosbeak										1	0.1	0	1
Indigo Bunting	90	44	29	108	66	142	57	44	580	10	581	490	698
Dickcissel										2	0.2	0	1
Bobolink		3	44	94	36	11	238	10	436	10	485	366	703
Red-winged Blackbird	731	490	637	502	384	350	869	518	4481	10	4874	4291	5453
Eastern Meadowlark			7	1		1	3		12	10	16	9	26
Common Grackle	1433	496	400	278	212	570	494	244	4127	10	4746	3502	6534

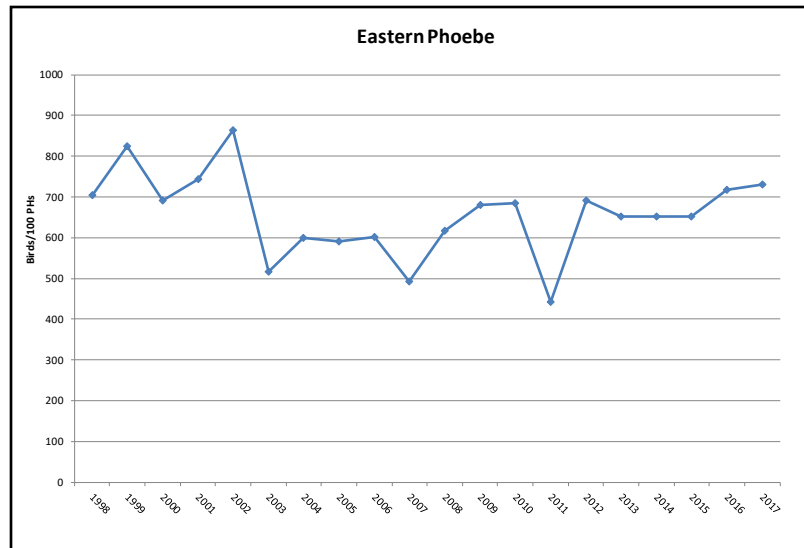
SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT Valley Hfd	Upland SBCs:		Norther			2017 State Totals		2007-2016 yrs			
	GS	NH		WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Average	obs.	Ave	Low	High	
Boat-tailed Grackle	1								1	1	0.1	0	1	
Brown-headed Cowbird	226	88	106	171	114	189	174	163	1231	10	1144	928	1534	
Orchard Oriole	13	12	9	46	10	9	4		103	10	85	68	126	
Bullock's Oriole										1	0.1	0	1	
Baltimore Oriole	257	131	97	197	66	181	111	117	1157	10	1094	930	1226	
House Finch	153	151	97	129	128	220	117	81	1076	10	996	776	1198	
Purple Finch			1	6	6	63	34	1	111	10	152	102	200	
Red Crossbill						1			1	1	0.1	0	1	
Pine Siskin						1000	297	137	2697	5	14	0	50	
American Goldfinch	384	122	245	223	289				117%	10	2297	1737	2836	
Evening Grosbeak									101%	1	0.7	0	7	
House Sparrow	984	399	523	215	250	455	328	234	3388	10	3360	1869	4194	
other unidentified/hybrid														
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	20812	9690	8422	12613	9315	25352	17661	8288	0	111%	106659	90180	114573	
CD Species	134	129	107	125	123	122	135	107	178		98%	182	174	188
CP Species	3	1		1				1	3		1.8	1	4	
DEGREE OF EFFORT														
Observers	40	42	40	23	24	31	49	14	263		104%	254	229	277
Parties	32	18	23	16	15	22	16	10	152		107%	141	116	170
Party Hours	310	157	115	130	85	284	195.5	107	1385		103%	1338	1184	1417
Day Party Hours	302.5	156	114	126	82	280	180	96	1337		104%	1284	1124	1358
Night Party Hours	7.5	1	1	4	3	4	15.5	12	48		88%	54	32	68



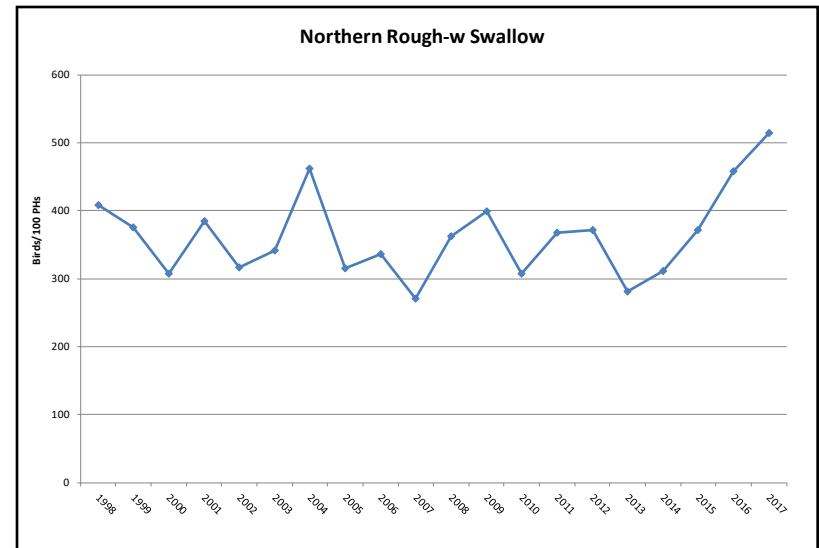
If only every species had a trend so easy to interpret. Red-bellied Woodpeckers are certainly being recorded in greater numbers.



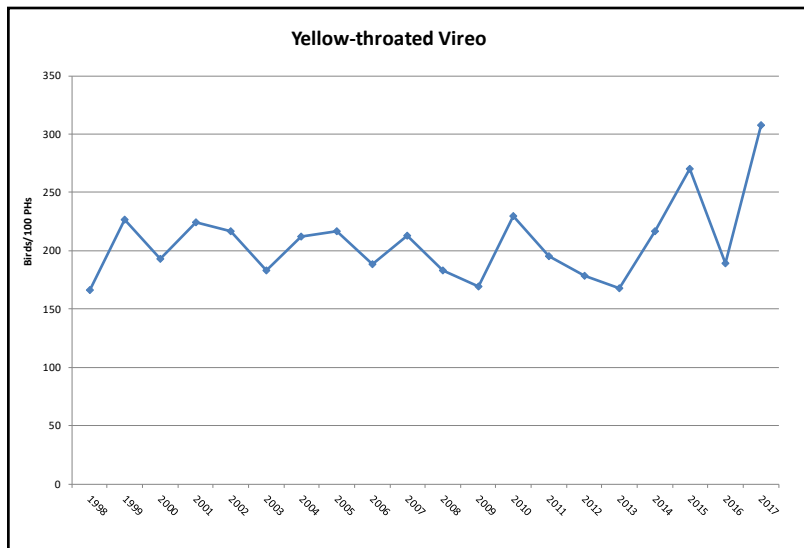
Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers appear to have more year to year variability, but overall are being found in greater numbers than they were 20 years ago.



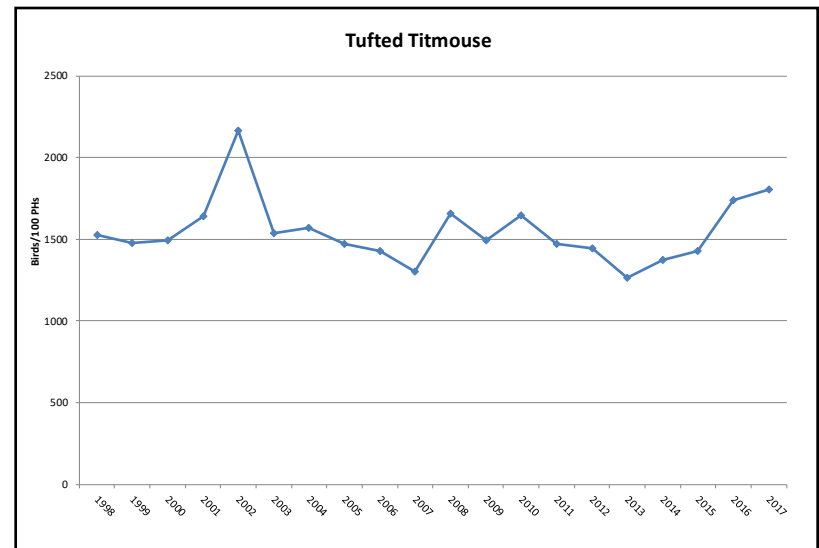
While Eastern Phobes came in at an all-time high, that does not hold up when corrected for party hours spent in the field. The trend appears to be fairly flat overall when that is taken into account.



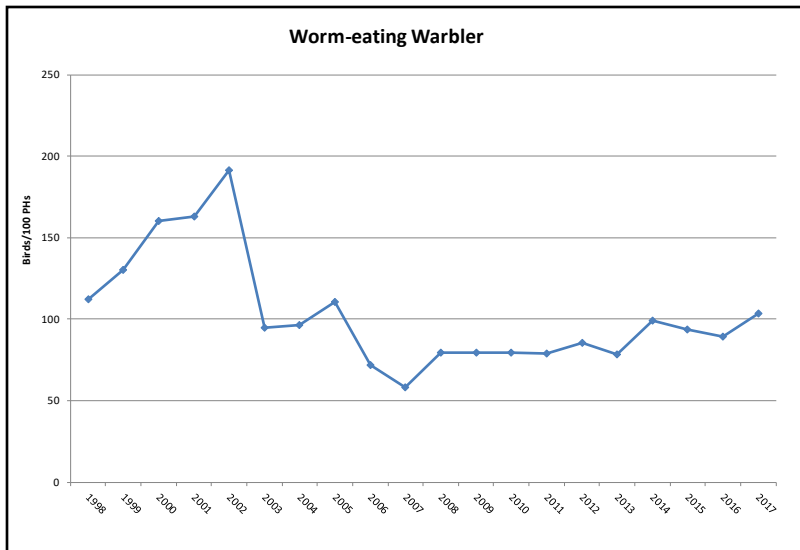
Northern Rough-winged Swallows appear to be doing well in recent years.



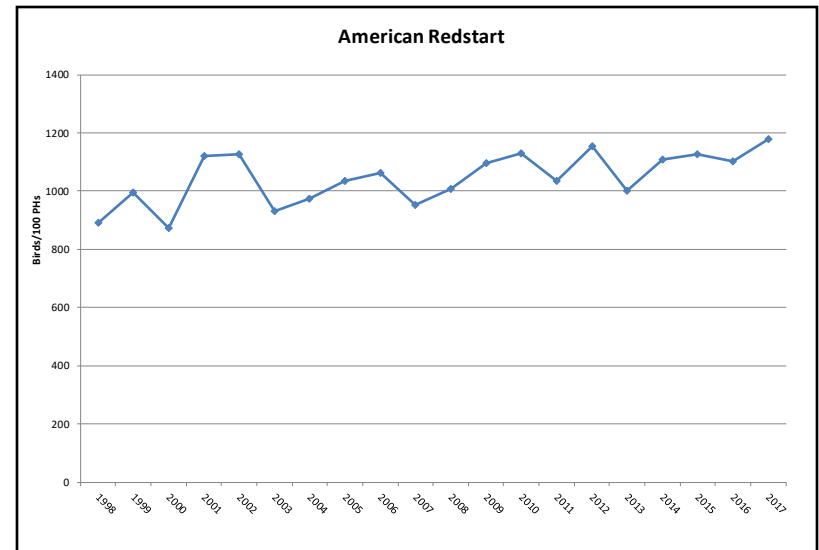
There sure seems to be a jump in the numbers of Yellow-throated Vireos that were found this year and it remains an all-time high when corrected for party hours.



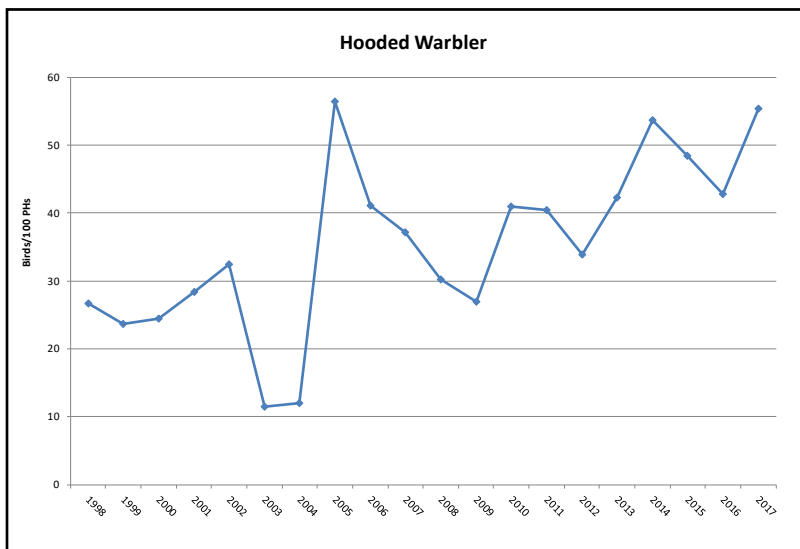
While our numbers of Tufted Titmouse hit an all-time high, the record does not hold up when corrected for party hours because of a large number that were found with less observer effort in 2002.



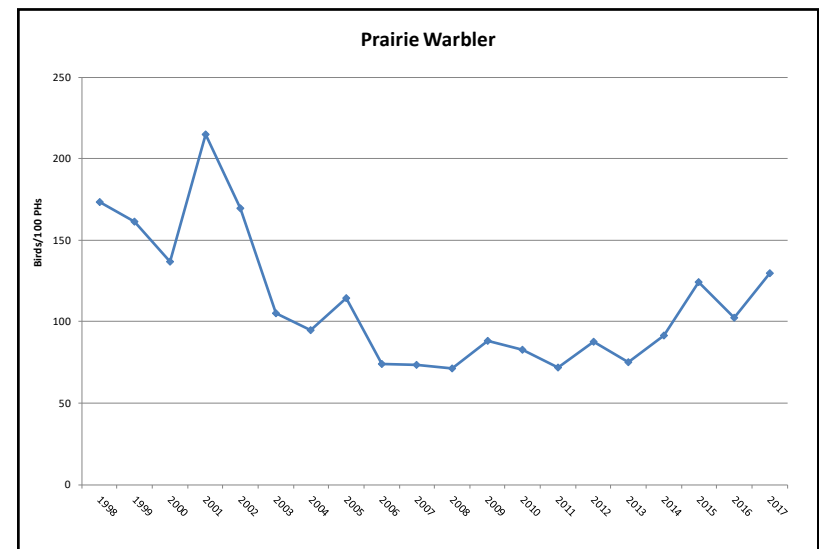
Worm-eating Warbler presents an interesting graph. With an apparent steep climb at the beginning of the 20 year period then an apparent decline and leveling off. This year was a ten-year high, but pales in comparison to some earlier counts when corrected for party hours.



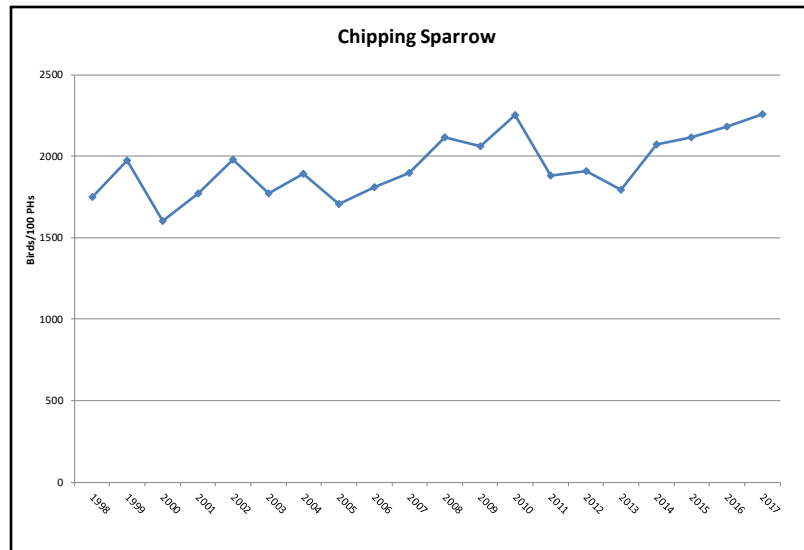
The all-time high count for American Redstarts this year holds up even when corrected for party hours. Overall any trend appears to be slight however.



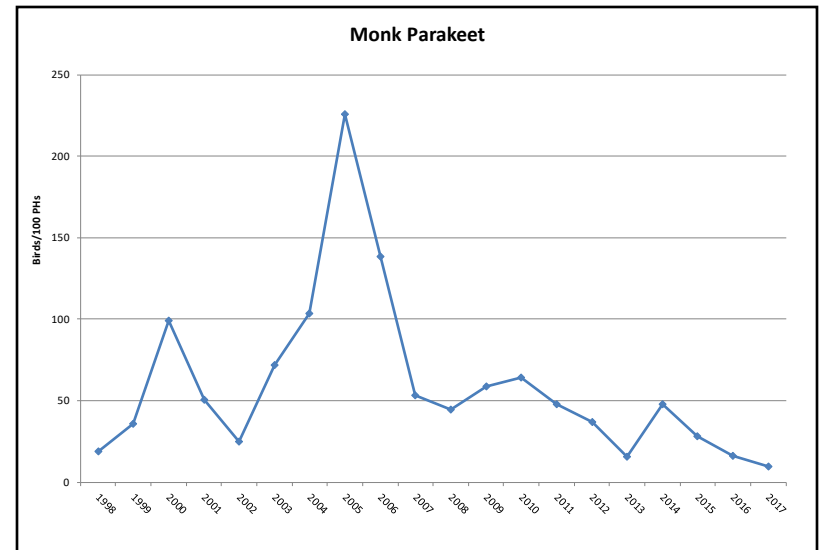
There appears to be much year to year fluctuation in the numbers of Hooded Warblers found on the count.



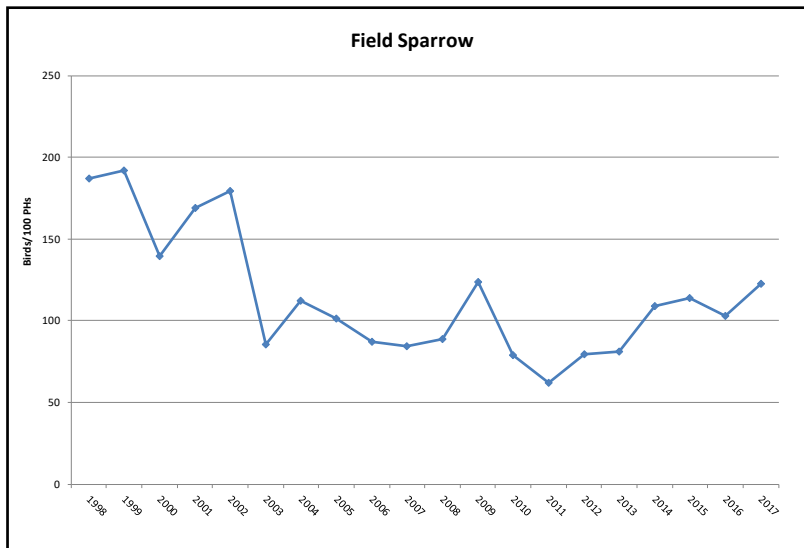
While this year had a new ten-year high for Prairie Warblers, there are fewer being recorded than were in the first five years of the period.



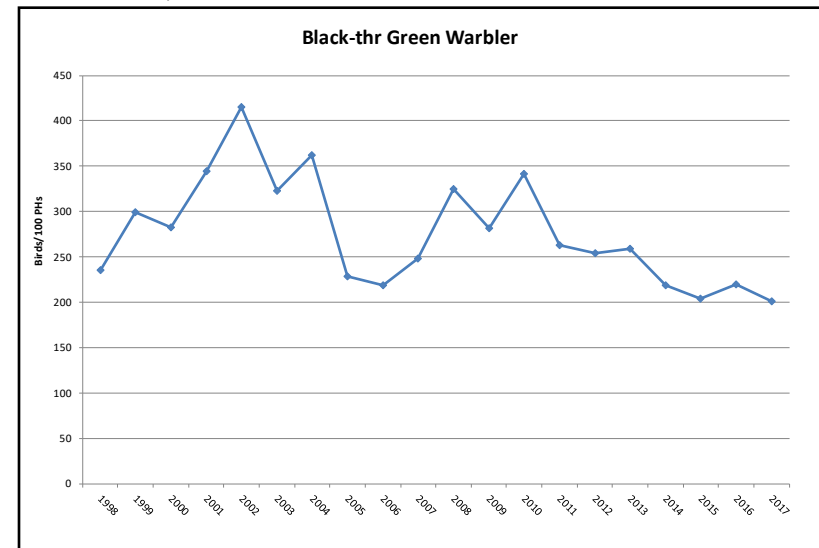
Chipping Sparrow hit a new all-time high in raw numbers, but 2010 had more when corrected for party hours.



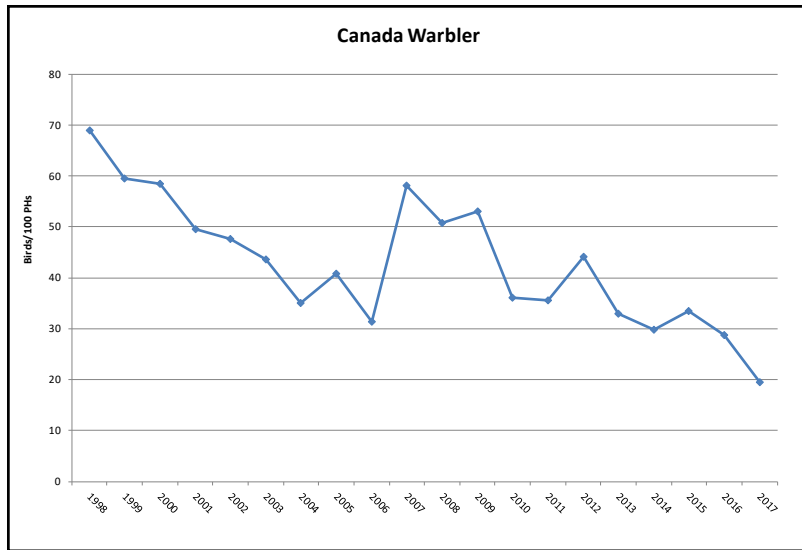
There was a big spike in the numbers of Monk Parakeets in 2005, but overall they don't seem to be turning up in the count areas, with a new low count in 2017.



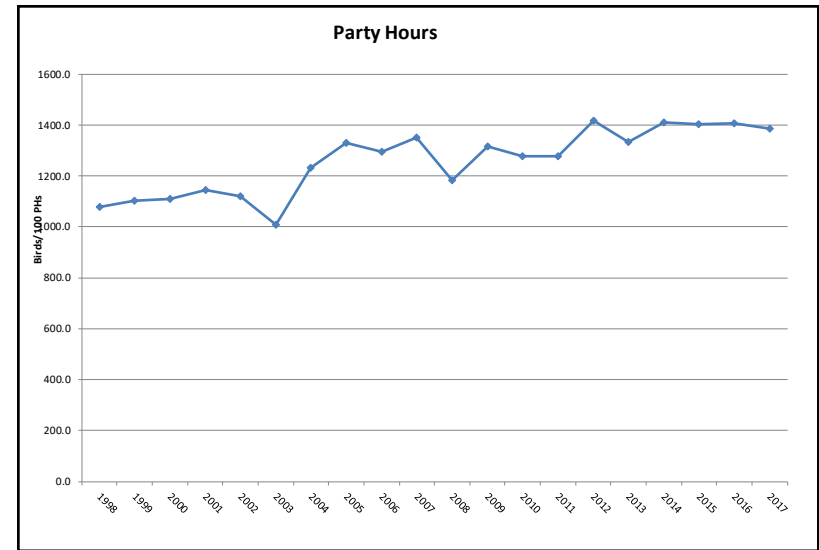
While Field Sparrow had a new ten-year high, they appeared to be more numerous in the late '90's and early '00's.



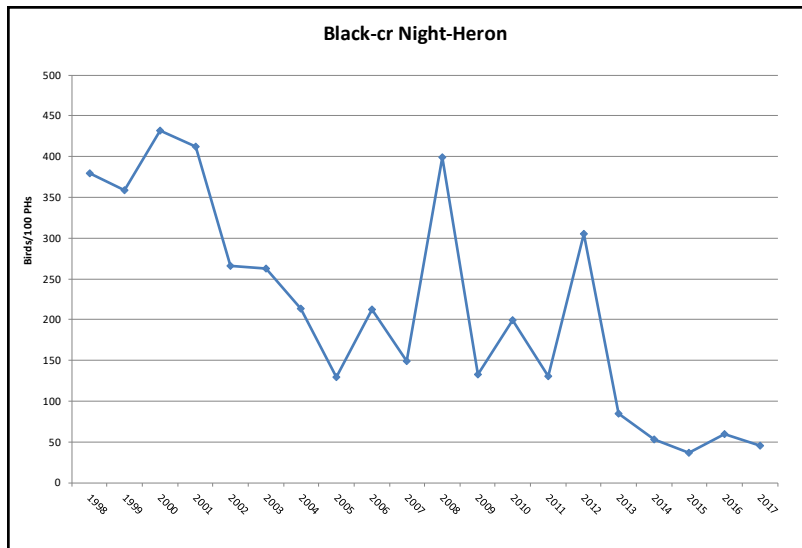
Black-throated Green Warblers have been harder to find in recent years and there was a new all-time low in 2017. Not surprising considering the declines in Eastern Hemlocks in our region. While not an all-time low in raw numbers it is a new low point in the past 20 years when corrected for party hours.



Canada Warblers do not seem to be showing up in the numbers they used to.



Party hours have been relatively flat since 2012, but overall there is more effort being logged than the earlier years of 20 year period.



Not surprisingly there are peaks and valleys for Black-crowned Night-Herons in some years. Overall 2017 was not a record low, but there have been few recorded in the last five years compared to earlier counts.

2016 FALL HAWK WATCH

By Steve Mayo

What is the best time to watch hawks in Connecticut? For Quaker Ridge (Greenwich), Boothe Memorial (Stratford) and all the far-inland sites, migrant Broad-winged Hawks flock together in kettles of several to several hundred individuals, on light northerly winds or just after light northerly winds. This flight peaks in Connecticut during the second and the third week of September. For Lighthouse Point Park (New Haven), watchers and photographers know to gather around Columbus Day. The time to go see hundreds of hawks, some even at shoulder level, is after blocking weather that is followed by strong, northwest winds. For Southern Connecticut sites such as Boothe Memorial, Quaker Ridge and Lighthouse, there can be a huge Buteo or vulture push on bitterly cold, powerful, northerly November winds.

If these weather conditions don't correlate with these specific calendar dates, the hawk flight can be lackluster at best. This appeared to be the case for the 2016 fall season. As with any season, 2016 brought spectacular days of hawk watching. Unfortunately, the records that were set tended to be record lows.

THE BROAD-WINGED HAWK FLIGHT

Booth Hill (West Hartland) had the lowest seasonal total and lowest coverage hours since 2011. Why stay if there are no hawks moving? Botsford Hill (Bridgewater) had average coverage hours, but the lowest Broad-winged totals since 2005. Chestnut Hill (Litchfield) did a little better with 1509 Broadies for the season, including 380 on September 14 and 403 on the 21st. But still, it had its lowest season total since 2006. Johnnycake Mountain (Burlington) also had good coverage and a seasonal total of 1010, the lowest since 2010. The best day was on September 15 with 246 on light north-east winds. With the exception of 184 Broad-wings on September 14, Middle School (Torrington) missed the flight in



Julian Hough photo
A Northern Goshawk, like this well-marked juvenile, is a desired addition at every hawk watch.

spite of good coverage. It had the worst totals in its 17 year history. Suffield Wildlife Management Area (Suffield) had 44 Broad-winged Hawks on September 21 and 53 on September 24. White Memorial (Litchfield) managed a very early Golden Eagle on September 16, but missed out with a total of only 15 Broad-winged Hawks in 20 hours of coverage.

On the afternoon of September 14, Quaker Ridge had 331 Broad-winged hawks on north winds shifting west, just ahead of a thunderstorm. The next day moderate winds from the north, then east, then south, brought the 2016 daily record of 1014 Broad-winged Hawks. On September 21, another 691 passed the site, and 667 went over on the 24th. These days contributed to a season total of 3484. Also on the 15 of September, Lighthouse managed 25 Broad-winged Hawks, some in loose kettles with Osprey. Boothe Memorial logged no Broad-wings for the month of September. Hopefully low coverage hours will rebound in future seasons. Boothe Memorial has in the past, logged seasonal record numbers of raptors.

QUAKER RIDGE

Quaker Ridge continued to have excellent hourly coverage,

with many exciting raptor and non-raptor finds. But the lack of “good hawk weather” continued, resulting in a record-low October count. November brought almost daily sightings of Turkey Vultures, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Coopers Hawks, Red-Shouldered Hawks and Red-tailed Hawks. All totals were within 10 year average values for the month of November. For the first time in the Count’s long history, coverage officially went into December. On December 1, an adult Northern Goshawk went by, the eighth Gos’ of the 2016 season. The season ended with Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk and total hawk numbers all lowest since 2003. Northern Harriers (104) were lowest since the 1992 season. This species continues its decline in the Eastern United States. American Kestrel season totals (284) were the lowest in three decades of full-season coverage.

LIGHTHOUSE POINT PARK

Lighthouse fared only slightly better than its record-low 2015 season. There were some highlights however. On September 24, 447 raptors (13 species) were tallied. Another 358 (12 species) were counted on September 25, before winds went onshore the next day. September numbers for Sharp-shinned Hawk (570) and American Kestrel (210) were the worst September totals since full-time coverage began in 1980. On October 9, a cold front picked up moisture from Tropical Storm Mathew and there was steady rain throughout Connecticut. Northwest winds and clear skies followed on October 10. The 888 hawks counted that day included 445 Sharp-shins, 107 Cooper’s Hawks, 161 American Kestrels and 43 Merlins. This was one of few highlights for the month and 3804 hawks for October was a near-record low.

In early November the hawks joined the expected hundreds of thousands of migrating blackbirds. On November 6, a late Accipiter push on moderate northwest winds resulted in 251 hawks for the day. The next day the winds from the north-northwest were lighter, but 305 hawks including 137 Red-tailed Hawks, were counted, along with almost 200,000 Common Grackles. Lighthouse ended up with 7314 hawks



Julian Hough photo
Sorting out local Ospreys from migrants can be a challenge, especially early in the season, at Lighthouse Point in New Haven.

for the season. Again, this is only slightly better than the 2015 season total of 6780.

Additional data including daily, monthly and seasonal summary reports, may be obtained from the Hawk Migration of North America website, hawkcount.org. Summaries for Connecticut and the rest of New England, can also be obtained from The Northeast Hawkwatch, <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/>.

WATCHERS

Mark Aronson, Renee Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Martin Barris, Dan Barvir, Steve Beal, Raymond Belding, Gail Benson, Debbie Bishop, Nick Bonomo, Polly Brody, Steve Broker, Tracy Brown, Kaleigh Bryden, Tom Burke, Mark Burton, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier, Veronica Colacrio, Al Collins, Jim Cortina, Annette Cuniffe, Louisa Cunningham, Mark Danforth, Kathy Davies, Rita Dempsey, Ayreslea Denny, Paul Desjardins, Brian Donovan, Rich Donovan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Bruce Finnan,

Chris Finlay, James Fischer, Bobbie Fisher, Anne Fisk, David Fisk, Steve Foisey, Ethel Follett, Jared Franklin, Barry Freed, Frank Gallo, Ted Gilman, Nancy Glynn, Tina Green, Carole Griffiths, Frank Guida, Carol Goertz, Ed Haesche, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, John Hannan, Carol Harrington, Richard Harrington, Roy Harvey, Pasha Hogan, Julian Hough, Brenda Inskeep, Lynn James, Keith Johnson, Anne Kehmna, Aiden Kiley, Greg Kosakow, Scott Kruitbosch, Bob Lamotte, Michael Lee, Ryan MacLean, Jim MacLean, Matt Male, Frank Mantlik, Joh Marcellino, John Marshall, Mike Marsano, Jeff Martin, Shaun Martin, Stefan Martin, Steve Mayo, Robin McAllister, Kevin McGrath, Dan Mercurio, Karen Mercurio, Ken Merrifield, Nancy Meyer-Lustman, Chris Mignone, Ken Mirman, Jim Moore, Judy Moore, Marty Moore, Don Morgan, Tom Murray, Brendan Murtha, Sean Murtha, Mike O'Brien, Ben Oko, Emma Olsen, John Oshlick, Brian O'Toole, David Peake-Jones, Ron Pelletier, Carol Perault, Janet Petricone, Andrea Petrullo, Patti Picard, Matt Popp, Tim Reed, Anne Ribolow, Phil Ribolow, Rick Roach, Johnny Rodriguez, Paul Roberts, Dan Rotino, Ed sadowski, David Salmon, Olaf Saltau, Meredith Sampson, Ronnie Santo, Sol Satin, Jeff Seneca, Scott Slora, Albert Shol, Jeff Sonshine, Ruth Sonshine, Dori Sosensky, Howie Sternberg, Christine Sweeney, Paul Swigat, Jory Teltsen, Tony Tortora, Ellen Valle, George Walker, Jackson Walker, Bill Wallace, Chritine Walker, George Walker, Steve Walter, Mike Warner, Chris Weintrab, Al Welby, John Wojtanowski, Joseph Wojtanowski, Sara Zagorski, David Zomach

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2016

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
INLAND GROUP												
Booth Hill	West Hartland	18	0	21	11	17	0	18	0	1	0	414
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	53	0	0	14	9	3	51	4	0	0	885
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	83	0	0	18	36	2	59	5	0	0	1509
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	66	35	109	48	49	2	56	42	0	5	1010
MiddleSchool	Torrington	78	1	0	9	1	1	7	7	0	0	277
Suffield WMA	Suffield	59	0	24	10	4	29	11	5	0	2	101
White Memorial	Litchfield	20	0	0	4	7	2	7	18	0	27	15
INLAND TOTAL		377	36	154	114	123	39	209	81	1	34	4211

BV-Black Vulture	SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk	BW-Broad-winged Hawk	AK-American Kestrel
TV-Turkey Vulture	CH-Cooper's Hawk	RT-Red-tailed Hawk	ML-Merlin
OS-Osprey	NG-Northern Goshawk	RL-Rough-legged Hawk	PG-Peregrine Falcon
BE-Bald Eagle	RS-Red-shouldered Hawk	GE-Golden Eagle	uR- Unidentified Raptor
NH-Northern Harrier			

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2016

Lookout	Town	Hours	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	uR	TOTAL
INLAND GROUP										
Booth Hill	W. Hartland	18	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	485
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	53	0	0	0	7	5	0	11	989
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	83	1	0	0	24	0	1	16	1671
Johnnycake Mt.	Burlington	66	18	0	0	46	2	2	0	1424
MiddleSchool	Torrington	78	0	0	0	3	3	0	17	326
Suffield WMA	Suffield	59	7	0	0	20	5	5	0	223
White Memorial	Litchfield	20	4	0	1	7	4	0	1	97
INLAND TOTAL		377	30	0	1	110	19	8	45	5215

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2016

Lookout	Town	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
COASTAL GROUP												
Boothe Memorial	Stratford	13	0	0	27	2	0	2	0	0	0	1
Lighthouse Point	New Haven	611	10	496	764	234	294	2434	1013	7	155	213
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	733	24	673	461	159	104	1600	343	8	566	3484
COASTAL TO-TAL		1357	34	1169	1252	395	398	4036	1356	15	721	3698

BV-Black Vulture	SS-Sharp-shinned Hawk	BW-Broad-winged Hawk	AK-American Kestrel
TV-Turkey Vulture	CH-Cooper's Hawk	RT-Red-tailed Hawk	ML-Merlin
OS-Osprey	NG-Northern Goshawk	RL-Rough-legged Hawk	PG-Peregrine Falcon
BE-Bald Eagle	RS-Red-shouldered Hawk	GE-Golden Eagle	uR-Unidentified Raptor
NH-Northern Harrier			

Lighthouse Point, New Haven - Fall 2016

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	uR	Total
August	14	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	0	1	12
September	186	1	50	611	95	102	570	198	0	13	165	25	0	1	210	81	41	102	2265
October	235	6	301	150	98	128	1612	654	4	44	44	108	0	1	245	176	78	155	3804
November	167	3	144	3	35	59	249	151	2	82	2	286	1	1	2	45	29	80	1174
December	9	0	1	0	6	2	3	9	1	16	0	14	0	0	0	1	0	6	59
Total	611	10	496	764	234	294	2434	1013	7	155	213	433	1	3	460	305	148	344	7314

Quaker Ridge, Greenwich - Fall 2016

	Hours	BV	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	uR	Total
August	66	0	0	31	8	3	3	1	0	0	11	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	63
September	260	1	1	393	82	49	878	58	0	6	3463	5	0	0	214	36	41	25	5252
October	217	14	455	36	46	35	639	232	4	227	9	77	0	2	63	31	13	23	1906
November	183	9	211	1	22	16	79	52	3	331	1	114	0	5	2	6	4	14	870
December	7	0	6	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	14
Total	733	24	673	461	159	104	1600	343	8	566	3484	197	0	7	284	75	58	62	8105

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring Season, March 1 through May 31, 2017

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik

The season began with the now-expected array of rare geese carrying over from winter. Overall an extensive list of rare and uncommon species kept observer interest high, and seasonal movement progressed at a crisp pace. Heavy and varied migration occurred during the last five days of April, which brought a flood of first arrivals.

These included two American Redstarts on April 26 in Lyme (DPe), and two Least Flycatchers on April 27 at Boston Hollow in Ashford (DMo). On April 28 these included 12 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, hereafter HBSP, (CI, AP) and one at Stratford Point (PCo); Blackburnian Warbler at Boston Hollow (DMo); Veery at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (TG), in Stratford (SK) and in Colchester (EHr); Worm-eating Warbler at East Rock Park in New Haven (JOs); and Blue-winged Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler at multiple locations.

April 29 arrivals included Common Nighthawk in Durham (FG); Yellow-throated Vireo at the Racebrook Tract in Woodbridge (CL); Tennes-

see, Nashville and Chestnut-sided Warblers at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford (DMc, PCi); and Scarlet Tanager at multiple locations. A highlight of this movement was the discovery of **Prothonotary Warblers** at two locations, Edgewood Park in New Haven on April 29 (LRo) and Fisher Meadow in Avon on April 30 (BT). First arrivals on April 30 included Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos in Lyme (TC); eight reports of Swainson's Thrush; and Lawrence's Warbler in Chaplin (ADe, AB), Magnolia Warbler in Boston Hollow (DMo) and Cape May Warbler in Wilton (JB).

Following is a list of first arrivals for a selection of other regular spring migrants: Great Egret – March 24 in Milford (GH) and Guilford

(CH); Snowy Egret – March 24 in Guilford (CH); Tricolored Heron – April 3 in Old Saybrook (JOg); Little Blue Heron – April 2 in Madison (JMo); Green Heron – April 16 in Stonington (RT); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron – March 25 in Westport (TG); Glossy Ibis – April 1 in Madison (KM); Virginia Rail – April 14 in Madison (EHa); Sora – April 11 in Westport (TG); Semipalmated Plover – April 27 in Milford (SSp); Piping Plover – March 18 in Milford (MB); Least Sandpiper – April 14 in Milford (SSp); Pectoral Sandpiper – March 29 in Madison (CH); Short-billed Dowitcher – April 24 in Stonington (DPe); Spotted Sandpiper – April 17 in West Hartford (PDe); Solitary Sandpiper - April 15 in Portland (LN); Willet – April 14 in Milford (SSp); Least Tern – May 1 in Stratford (SMa); Common Tern – April 24 in Greenwich (WS).

Also Chimney Swift – April 19 in Stonington (RD); Ruby-throated Hummingbird – April 16 in Salem (CTa & PTa); Acadian Flycatcher – May 6 in Easton (JN); Alder Flycatcher – May 16 in Southbury (NB); Great Crested Flycatcher – April 23

in Ashford (DMo); Eastern Kingbird – April 19 in Wolcott (JSw); White-eyed Vireo – April 19 in Guilford (GH); Blue-headed Vireo – April 11 in Norfolk (RB); Warbling Vireo - April 24 in six locations; Barn Swallow – April 5 in Westport (PL); Northern Rough-winged Swallow – March 29 in Litchfield (MD); Purple Martin – April 9 in Stonington (PR); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 5 in Westport (PL); Wood Thrush – April 23 in East Hampton (DCi).

Also Ovenbird – April 23 in Ashford (DMo); Northern Waterthrush – April 17 in Ashford (DMo); Louisiana Waterthrush – April 3 in Killingworth (GH); Black-and-White Warbler – April 16 in Plainfield (RD) and Ashford (DMo); Northern Parula – April 16 in Mystic (JRe); Cerulean Warbler - April 27 in Lyme (AV, TC); Bay-breasted Warbler – May 5 in Darien (TG, CEh); Yellow Warbler – April 18 in Litchfield (BS); Blackpoll Warbler – May 1 in New Haven (JOs, m.ob.); Palm Warbler – April 5 in Seymour (ES) and Wilton (MW); Prairie Warbler – April 10 in Southbury (BR); Black-throated Green War-

bler – April 17 in Litchfield (GH); Wilson's Warbler – May 7 in New Haven (GM); Saltmarsh Sparrow – May 6 in Stratford (FMa); Lincoln's Sparrow – May 1 in Westport (JT); Indigo Bunting – April 26 in Hamden (FMc); Rose-breasted Grosbeak – April 19 in Greenwich (ADo); Bobolink – April 29 in Redding (MF); Boat-tailed Grackle – March 29 in Stratford (FMa, RS); Orchard Oriole – April 27 in Stratford (PCo) and Woodbridge (JMo); Baltimore Oriole – April 17 in East Haven (JRI).

A **Pink-footed Goose** on the Connecticut River and nearby fields in the Enfield area in February carried over to March 10 (m.ob.), then one appeared March 11-13 at Southport Beach (AK et al.). Another report from Enfield March 15 indicated two different birds were probably involved (DH). A total of seven **Greater White-fronted Geese** included four, likely a family group, March 24 at Leetes Island Road in Branford (CH). A March 11 cold front produced multiple sightings of Snow Geese including 60 in the Short Beach area of Stratford (MW). These were dwarfed by a

March 24 flight that included 500 over Guilford (PWo), 450 over Canton (JMe) and 350 over Woodbury (RN). A **Ross's Goose** wandered around Westport March 6-15 (TG et al.). A **Black Brant**, the western North American subspecies, was at Seaside Park in Bridgeport on March 26 (NB). In addition to a handful of singles, two Cackling Geese were at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford on March 15 (NB).

The only report of a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** came from Shell Beach in Guilford on March 26 (CL). A sea-watch March 25 in Stratford produced 5,000+ Greater Scaup, 350 Long-tailed Ducks and 53 Surf Scoters (PCo). Four Redheads were on Coventry Lake on March 13 (AV), but the big day was March 29, which produced 12 at Milford Point (TM), five at Captain's Cove in Bridgeport (JHu) and four at Wethersfield Cove (PDe). The high counts of Ring-necked Ducks were 850 on March 24 at Twin Lakes in Salisbury (RB) and 550 on March 16 at Lake Mamasasco in Ridgefield (AW). A female **King Eider**, noted for spring appearances, was at Long Beach in



Bruce Finnan photo
 One of several in the state during the season, this Prothonotary Warbler visited Dunlap Lake in Darien May 4-9.



Julian Hough photo
 This stunning Lapland Longspur, shown here on April 23, performed for many observers in late April at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Bruce Finnan photo
 This is one of a pair of Least Bitterns in residence at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in late May and into the summer..



Andrew Dasinger photo
 This adult female Red-necked Phalarope visited Glastonbury Meadows, a private location, on May 21.

Stratford May 11-20 (FMa et al.). A **Barrow's Goldeneye** that wintered at Tuxis Island off Madison was present to at least March 30 (HS et al.). A significant gathering of 102 Hooded Mergansers was at Bantam Lake in Litchfield on March 6 (BD).

A Pied-billed Grebe unexpected May 21 at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford (MMo). A wintering **Eared Grebe** remained at Nathan Hale Park in New Haven through at least April 11 (RS et al.). Another was off Greenwich Point on March 8 (SMa, MMc), and a second long-staying one was in Stonington to at least March 29 (DPr). The high inland count of Red-necked Grebes was six on Bantam Lake in Litchfield on March 31 (MD); eight were at Greenwich Point on March 13 (MMr). Single **shearwaters** May 20 in West Haven (JMe) and May 29 in Norwalk (ID) were likely Manx Shearwaters. An incredible showing by Northern Gannets included 65 in a single binocular view and more than 100 during a 20-minute period on April 7 at Stratford Point (SMa); 400 to 500 passing Stonington Point in two hours on

April 9 (DPr), and 800 on the water off Stratford Point on April 12 (SMa). An **American White Pelican**, always a bit of a heart-stopper, visited the Thames River in Groton on April 6-7 (AV et al).

American Bitterns were reported from nine locations in five counties, both coastal and inland. A Least Bittern, found injured April 22 in a cul-de-sac in Stamford, perished despite efforts to get it to a rehabber (SMa). One found away from likely breeding locations presented itself to a number of observers May 20-21 at Ash Creek in Fairfield (AK et al.). A pair was discovered May 30 at McKinney NWR in Stratford (FMa). Great Blue Herons occupied five nests as early as March 21 at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford (MMo). They were also still on the move April 3 with flocks of 17 and seven over Cromwell (JSh) and 13 over Madison (GH). An adult Little Blue Heron made an unexpected inland visit to the Heritage Village Golf Course in Southbury on May 18 (GH). An exceptional count of three Tricolored Herons was at Barn Island Wildlife

Management Area in Stonington on May 17 (AV). An adult Little Blue Heron X Tricolored Heron hybrid returned to HBSP on April 17 (FMa). One of the now sporadic visits by a Cattle Egret occurred on April 18 in Westport (TG); others were at HBSP on May 7 (CK) and in Stratford May 18 (FMa et al.). A Yellow-crowned Night Heron April 15 at Barn Island in Stonington was well east of its state stronghold in the Stratford-Milford area (PR). The now predictable appearances by **White-faced Ibis** began with two found April 19 along Route 1 on the Clinton-Westbrook town line (GH, BBa, BF). Scattered reports continued through the season with two in Mystic on

May 17 (DPe).

Mississippi Kite reports involved one on May 17 at Durham Fairgrounds (LB); two on May 21 over New Haven (JHo, DF); and one May 30 in Fairfield (PL). An early Osprey visited Wethersfield Cove on the Connecticut River on March 2 (PCo). A few Rough-legged Hawks lingered into March, with reports from five southeastern locations to March 22 (RD, DPe et al.). A **Common Gallinule** showed itself May 14 at Wimisink Marsh in Sherman (ADi), and one found May 26 at Little Pond in Litchfield remained through season's end (TM et al.). Up to four **Sandhill Cranes** were in North Ca-



Paul Fusco photo
This is one of two Mississippi Kites seen over New Haven on May 21.



Chris Wood photo

This Sandhill Crane passed over Bent of the River Audubon Sanctuary in Southbury on May 16.

naan March 11-13 (KK, BF et al.). Other reports were of two over Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury on May 16 (KE, CW) and two on May 28 at Benedict Pond in Norfolk (JMa).

A remarkable flight of Whimbrels, usually seen as scattered singles in spring, produced a flyby flock of at least 50, but possibly significantly more, on May 22 at HBSP (SSt), the same day 11 were at Milford Point (RS). Then on May 24 a flock of 40+ flew by Compo Beach in Westport (TG), followed by 13 flying northwest at Sherwood Island (TG). Red Knots again occurred in minimal numbers in May, with most reports of one or two and

none higher than five (NB et al.). A White-rumped Sandpiper was early May 1 at Milford Point (FMa), and the high count was 13 on May 30 at a marsh in Stratford (FMa). A nice flock of seven Pectoral Sandpipers dropped in at Portland Fairgrounds on April 28 (TA). After a major snow storm the day before, March 15 dawned with American Woodcocks scattered all over the state; a high count of 39 were at HBSP including six around the edge of the traffic rotary (MK, EHa et al.). A **Red-necked Phalarope** showed well May 21 at Glastonbury Meadows (ADa, DJ).

The two **Black-headed Gull** reports were both on March

5, one at Maynard's (aka Ingham Hill) Pond in Old Saybrook (RD et al) and one at Barn Island in Stonington (JRi et al.). Extending a two-year run in which three subspecies of Mew Gulls were found in Connecticut, a **Mew (Kamchatka) Gull** was photographed in Stratford on March 20 (NB). A **Gull-billed Tern**, a hard species to come by in Connecticut, made a brief visit to the Stratford shoreline on May 18 (FMa). Reports of single Caspian Terns were scattered through May (FMa et al.). The season's only Black Tern was at Compo Beach in Westport on May 16 (TG). The first two Forster's Terns, infrequent in spring, were found May 11 in Greenwich (SMu). A high count of 11 Black Skimmers was made at Cokenoe Island in Westport on May 26 (TG). Also noteworthy were nine on May 21 at Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk (BMu).

A **White-winged Dove** visited Bradford Nature Preserve in East Haven on May 9 (EHa, TG). The nearly non-existent Barn Owl was found in Old Saybrook on May 28 (GW et al.). A Whip-poor-will was early April 12

in Lyme (HG). Red-headed Woodpeckers continued their recent elevated presence in the state, with reports from at least 12 locations and most of them present for extended periods (m.ob.). A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** seen briefly on May 17 in Southbury was a good candidate for bird of the season (fide TZ). The season's only Northern Shrike was found on March 18 in Norfolk (PCa). A very early Cliff Swallow on April 2 in Collinsville was at a spot where the species breeds (DL); two more on April 11 at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton were still early on that date (PDe). A Red-breasted Nuthatch on May 20 at HBSP was late for that location (PDe). An early Gray-cheeked Thrush was banded at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield on May 2 (DMr). A stunning breeding plumaged Lapland Longspur entertained visitors to HBSP beginning on the late date of April 18 (EHa, JC, m.ob.). It was seen through at least April 28.

An Orange-crowned Warbler, present since Dec. 10, remained in Mystic to at least April 1 (LRe). An uncommon spring migrant Orange-

crowned sang its easily overlooked little trill May 6 in Ridgefield (AW). A **Kentucky Warbler** was a quality addition to the May 13 flight at East Rock Park in New Haven (RW, JOs et al.). Another sang May 21-22 in Niantic State Forest in Lyme (GW et al.). Overshooting Hooded Warblers sometimes arrive here well ahead of our local breeders. Such was the case with one found April 7 at Cove Island in Stamford (VD). A nocturnal flight call recording station in Westport picked up two early Mourning Warblers on May 10 and two more on May 16 (PL). All were backed by spectrogram analysis. More cooperative than the April birds, a **Prothonotary Warbler** found May 4 at Dunlap Lake in Darien showed itself for many birders through at least May 9 (WS et al.). In an excellent season for this uncommon species, others were reported from Durham on May 14 (MG) and at Little Pond in Litchfield on May 27 (LS). **Yellow-throated Warblers** were a good find in Colebrook on April 18 (WH) and at Miller Pond State Park in Durham on April 23 (AF), a typical range of dates for

this overshooting southern species. A Black-throated Green Warbler on March 28 in Derby presumably wintered somewhere well north of its typical locations (BBa, GH).

The discovery of an adult male **Summer Tanager** on May 1 at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven brought birders in for a look, and it was found to be accompanied by a female (ST, GH et al.). They were present to at least May 5. Another male turned up the next day in Coventry (KT); one was at Selleck's Woods in Darien on May 10 (SK et al.); and one was present May 15-17 in Sherman (BBi fide BD). A Seaside Sparrow was early April 19 at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford, where it was only the second record for the site (PDU). The Bent of the River Audubon feeders attracted eight Fox Sparrows in the aftermath of the March 14 snow storm (KE). Four Yellow-breasted Chats for the season included a very cooperative one seen by many May 19 through season's end in Coventry (KT, Pth et al.). A female **Blue Grosbeak** visited a home in Wallingford on



Bruce Finnan photo

This American Woodcock, at Hammonasset Beach State Park on March 17, was part of a statewide fallout after a March 15 snowstorm

April 28-May 10 (TB et al.), and a female was at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme May 3 (BMA). A female **Painted Bunting**, a species making increasing appearances in coastal Fairfield County, visited a yard in Darien on April 8 (DA). The season's single **Dickcissel** was at Trout Brook Valley in Easton on May 20 (JN).

Female **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were reported from Ferry Point in Old Saybrook on March 18 (DCi) and at Southport Beach on March 19 (TG). An immature male remained at Stratford Point May 5-20 (SMa, FMa et al.). The high count of Boat-tailed Grackles in their Stratford

breeding stronghold was 33 on April 7 (FMA). Two were at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on April 11 (TG), and five were at Clinton Town Beach on May 13 (DCi). The wintering Evening Grosbeaks in Canaan still numbered 19 on April 6 (CEI). A Barkhamsted feeder still held 75 Pine Siskins on March 14 (FZ).

Exotics – A Black-backed Oriole, a species native to Mexico, was seen briefly May 14 at Shippan Point, Stamford (PDU, AC). A European Goldfinch visited feeders at Bent of the River Audubon in Southbury on March 14 (GS), and one was in Madison on May 24 (PW).

Observers: David Alpeter, Tim Antanaitis, Bill Banks, (BBa) Tom Baptist, William Batsford, Joe Bear, Ray Belding, Barb Binzen (BBi), Nick Bonomo, Aaron Bourque, Matt Bradshaw, Leslie Bulion, Donna Caporaso (DCa), Jim Carr, Paul Carrier (PCa), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), Dan Cimbaro (DCi), Christina Clayton, Al Collins, Patrick Comins (PCo), Tom Cordock, Andrew Dasinger (ADa), Vanessa David, Paul Desjardins (PDe), Ian Devlin, Alex Delehanty (ADe), Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Robert Dixon, Ani Dorian (ADo), Mike Doyle, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Ken Elkins, Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Chris Elphick (CEI), Daniel Field, Bruce Finnan, Andrew Foerster, Mary Fox, Frank Gallo, Hank Golet, Michael Good, Tina Green, Ed Haesche (EHa), Greg Hanisek, Ernie Harris (EHr), William Hobbie, Tom Holloway, Dorrie Holmes, Julian Hough (JHo), Chris Howe, Jim Hunter (JHu), Chuck Imbergamo, Denise Jernigan, John Johnson, Aidan Kiley, Jeffrey Kimball, Cindy Kobak, Micky Komara, Kateri Kosek, Scott Kruitbosch, Dave Lawton, Chris Loscalzo, Preston Lust, Bob MacDonnell (BMa), Andrew Main, Charles Makarewich, Frank Mantlik (FMa), John Marshall (JMa),

Stefan Martin (SMa), Gail Martino, Flo McBride (FMc), Mark McGrath (MMc), Deborah McTigue (DMc), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Darlene Moore (DMr), Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore (MMo), Michelle Moore (MMr), Don Morgan (DMo), Keith Mueller, Tom Murray, Brendan Murtha (BMu), Sean Murtha (SMu), Jeremy Nance, Russ Naylor, Larry Nichols, Anders Ogren, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs); Dylan Pedro (DPe), Annie Perko, Dave Provencher (DPr), Brendan Reilly, Larry Reiter (LRe), James Restivo (JRe), Jason Rieger (JRI), Lesley Roy (LRO), Phil Rusch, Ed Sadowski, Sol Satin (SSt), Sam Saulys (SSa), Will Schenck, Jannie Shapiro (JSh), Lucy Shephard, Russ Smiley, Glenn Somogie, Ben Sonnenborg, Steve Spector (SSp), Howie Sternberg, Jack Swatt (JSw), Mark Szantyr, Christine Tamborra (CTa), Pat Tamborra (PTa), Charley Taney (CTn), Jory Teltser, Steve Thomas, Kevin Thompson, Peter Thompson (PTh), Tim Thompson, Brian Toal, Robert Turnbull, Anthony Vicciarelli, Mike Warner, John Weeks, Alan Welby, Glenn Williams, Ryan Wirtes, Paul Wolter, Chris Wood, Priscilla Wood, Sara Zagorski, Tom Zissu, Fran Zygmunt.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough

While on a routine tern survey on an offshore island, you are shocked to see a dark-backed tern fly past. You fire off a few shots as it flies away. You know the bird is either a Bridled or a Sooty Tern and you wrack your brain in the midst of panic trying to recall the salient points: which one is the darker one?; which one is bigger than a Common Tern?; which one has more white on the forehead? Reviewing the images, the upperparts are grayish brown, contrasting with a jet black crown, separated by a pale nuchal area... it has to be a Bridled Tern! A look at the forehead patch reveals a more linear white forehead patch, again cementing the identification.

Bridled Tern and Sooty Tern, while superficially similar, are easily separated given decent views. Even when not seen well, with experience, the overall tone to the upperparts is the best feature, being paler above and not so coal-black, a good indicator of Bridled before plumage features can be deduced. Bridled are also smaller than Sooty Tern, a feature often useless on a lone bird, but if the bird in question is Common Tern-sized, it's likely a Bridled Tern.

On closer views, the white supercilium extends back to the



Julian Hough photo



Cedric Duhalde photo

eye in a line, whereas on Sooty Tern, the patch is larger, more rhomboid-shaped. The black cap merges uniformly with the back, giving a uniformity to the upperparts, lacking any contrast between the mantle and the cap. In flight, although hard to see in the field unless close, the pattern of the underwings is different. Bridled has the white bleeding down the primaries while on Sooty Tern, the white ends at the primary bases and is well delineated. (See accompanying Julian Hough photo.)

This Bridled Tern was discovered on July 28 by researchers Cedric Duhalde and James Heuschkel on Falkner Island in Guilford. The original Challenge Photo was taken by Cedric. This is the second state record; the first was in 1992 coincidentally also at Falkner Island. Word got out quickly and allowed many motivated birders to charter boats out to the island. The bird was faithful to the jetty on the west side, and a lot of birders were able to connect and get great views of this rare tern.

Bridled Terns are extremely rare in the Northeast, and often involve summering birds at tern colonies. Sooty Terns are the default tropical tern associated with hurricanes and tropical storms, often occurring inland, whereas, the slighter Bridled Tern is rarely found inland. Even when good numbers of Sooty Terns occurred during Hurricane Irene, no Bridled Terns were found in Connecticut - even though many were seen along the south shore of Long Island - the latter seemingly a big geographical door stop, preventing many pelagic species from entering Long Island Sound.



Photo Challenge No. 99

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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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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Volume 37, No 4, 2017

The 2017 Summer Bird Count

Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins125

2016 Fall Hawk Watch

Steve Mayo152

Connecticut Field Notes

Greg Hamisek and Frank Mantlik163

Photo Challenge

Julian Hough175

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