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ON THE COVER
Marsh Wrens

Birders of a certain age remember when this issue's two subjects were both marsh wrens – Long-billed (top) and Short-billed (bottom). A lot of taxonomic water has flown over our checklists since then. The presence of the rarely reported Sedge Wrens this summer in Pomfret made Mark Szantyr's portrait of this secretive species, paired with a Marsh Wren, a perfect subject for the July cover.

Stephen P. Broker

The 118th edition of the National Audubon Society sponsored Christmas Bird Count was conducted from Dec 14, 2017 through Jan 5, 2018. Twenty CBCs were held in Connecticut, several of them extending into adjacent New York and Rhode Island. This year, weekend counts predominated, with 12 CBCs held on Saturday, Dec. 16 and Sunday, Dec. 17, two CBCs on Saturday, Dec. 23, and six CBCs on the long weekend of Saturday, Dec. 30 through Monday, Jan. 1. Sixteen of these counts have been conducted for each of the last 30 years. Napatree (RI/CT/NY) ran its 14th CBC, Guilford-Long Island Sound ran its 3rd, and Bristol its 2nd in the modern era. Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood has held a CBC each year since this count's inception in 1986, save for the 2004-2005 count year. There has been remarkable consistency in the Connecticut CBCs, with many compilers heading up the efforts for years, chief among them Ray Belding, Bob Dewire, Roy Harvey, Jay Kaplan, Chris Loscalzo, Steve Mayo, Steve Morytko, and Dave Tripp, Jr., as well as such previous compilers as Buzz Devine, Sibyll Gilbert, Ed Hagen, Jay Hand, Marilyn Higgins, Frank Mantlik, Bob Moeller, Joe Morin, Gary Palmer, Steve Rogers, Wilford Schultz, Dave Titus, and Chris Wood. Within each count circle, area captains also have led their field observers year after year in the same count areas.

For 30 years, the number of total observers has remained fairly even, as have total party hours and total party miles. Statewide results for birds recorded on count days have ranged from 155 to 177 species, with an average per year of 166 species - another mark of consistency in coverage. Run by seasoned, veteran birders all these years, the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count data collected from the 1987-88 CBC through this year's 2017-18 CBC allow for identification of broad, early winter, 30-year population trends in the state

avifauna. Following a summary of weather conditions for the Christmas Bird Counts, I'll provide an overview of the statewide results for this year's CBCs with comments on related taxa. Then, I'll identify some apparent population trends evident from a 30-year examination of data.

In general, the weather during the three weekends of counts was cooperative, with seasonal temperatures, absence of gale force winds, and little or no precipitation on field observers. Exceptions will be noted for those CBCs that were held toward the end of the count period. Saturday, Dec. 16 brought temperatures of 15-35 degrees Fahrenheit to coastal New Haven, northwest winds of 5-15 mph, partly open still water and partly frozen moving water, partly cloudy morning and partly clear afternoon skies, ground cover of 1-3 inches snow, and no precipitation during the day. New Haven compiler Chris Loscalzo wrote, "As is often the case, weather played a prominent role in the outcome of the census (as it did last year when we endured snow and rain). This year, the count day was mostly sunny and unusually cold, with a moderate northerly wind. In the days leading up to the count, it was cold and snowy. This led to the freezing of much of the still water in the interior portions of the count and the covering of the ground and trails throughout the area. So, birds that prefer fresh water were less plentiful and hiking was slower and more deliberate." Woodbury-Roxbury temperatures mid-state were a slight bit cooler, with light northwest winds, frozen still and partly frozen moving waters, mostly cloudy skies throughout, and similar snow cover from earlier storm passages. Compiler Ken Elkins wrote, "The water bodies in the area had just begun to freeze over, so large lakes were not frozen, and moving water was open. This led to more waterfowl in our count area than most years, including Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Long-tailed Duck, and Greater Scaup that are rarely found on the count." In the northern tier, temperatures at Storrs ranged from 4 to 34 degrees F., variable wind gusts up to 22 mph (that couldn't have been pleasant), frozen to partly frozen water bodies, and snow depths of 0-4 inches.

Sunday, Dec. 17 was stacked once again with nine Connecticut counts. Coastally, Greenwich-Stamford experienced near balmy temperatures of 28-32 degrees F., negligible winds, frozen still and partly open moving waters, cloudy skies, snow depths of 0-2.5 inches, and no precipitation. Westport temperatures ranged from 18 to 37 degrees F., with moderate northwest winds, partly frozen to partly open waters, partly clear morning skies and clouds appearing in the afternoon, 1.5-2.5 inches of snow on the ground, and no precipitation during the day. Napatree temperatures were from the high teens to the low 30s, with northwest winds gusting to 20 mph (making for a cold coast), frozen to partly frozen waters, clear skies, and an absence of rain or snow fall.

At Oxford, observers dealt with 10-30 degree F. temperatures, moderate northwest winds, clouds throughout the day, and no precipitation. Conditions were much the same at Quinipiac Valley, although morning skies were clear, and some areas had as many as 6 inches of snow cover. Salmon River mirrored these conditions on either side of the Connecticut River. Among northern counts, Lakeville-Sharon temperatures started as low as 7 degrees F., with similar partly frozen waters, snow depths up to 3 inches, and clear morning skies. Litchfield Hills was similar, but with snow depths to 8 inches in some areas and heavy morning rains complicating birding. In comparison, Hartford had clear skies in the morning and no precipitation. Jay Kaplan and Steve Davis wrote, "Every Christmas Count is different. Our findings are influenced by the weather leading up to the count, not to mention count day weather itself; food supplies including abundance of seed and fruit; and the success of the breeding season for a variety of species, both those that breed here in Connecticut and those that migrate from the north to winter in our area. Count Day weather also determines our number of field observers. Unlike in 2016, when the day began with ice and fog and the afternoon brought rain, this year's count featured dry, although somewhat colder weather with highs never getting out of the low thirties."

The ever creatively scheduled Stratford-Milford and



Mark Szantyr photo

The Hartford Christmas Bird Count produced one of the season's top rarities, this Ross's Goose that lingered in the vicinity of the Farmington Meadows.

Barkhamsted CBCs were held on Saturday, Dec. 23. While Stratford-Milford was near-toasty in the morning (a low of 32 degrees F.), northeast winds carrying heavy to light rains through much of the day crushed spirits and reduced afternoon birding hours. Barkhamsted avoided these conditions under cloudy skies that were free of rain. Counts resumed on Saturday, Dec. 30 along the coast at Guilford-Long Island Sound and New London and in the north at Bristol. Here's where conditions became much more challenging for field observers. At Guilford and into the adjacent Sound, temperatures remained below 20 degrees F. throughout the day. Snowfall was light to heavy in the morning and heavy in the afternoon. Winds were moderate from the north. Co-compiler Tom Kelly stated, "The weather was cold throughout the day. The low recorded temperature was 5 degrees F., and it struggled to get to the mid and high teens. Fortunately, the wind speeds were low. Cloud cover was the norm from beginning to end. Snow started to fall mid-morning and continued during the course of the day, with 1.02 inches of

snow recorded. The low wind speeds made the day tolerable, if dressed appropriately." It wasn't much warmer at New London, with light snowfall in morning and afternoon. Those birders who took the New London to Orient Point, NY ferry in search of pelagic birds were thoroughly bundled up against snow and wind, but the payoff in Razorbills and Black-legged Kittiwakes in Connecticut waters made the effort well worth it. Bristol started the day at 0 degrees F., temperatures rising in the afternoon to a high of 22 degrees F., and had to deal with light snow throughout the day. Compiler Jack Swatt wrote, "The light snow and biting cold didn't hamper the enthusiasm of the participants of the 28th Bristol CBC, but it did make it harder to find the birds. Our total number of species was 68, four more than last year. With all the iced-in lakes, the only significant waterfowl beside's the Ross's Goose were two Wood Ducks and one American Wigeon, all three being new to the Bristol count."

On the last day of 2017, Old Lyme-Saybrook avoided precipitation but spent the day with cold temperatures of 4-16 degrees Fahrenheit and steady cloud cover. The final two CBCs were on New Year's Day at Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT and Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood. The first day of the new year continued sub-20 degree temperatures, strongly gusting winds and 2-6 inches snow cover at Pawling/Hidden Valley, which fortunately was free of precipitation. Still, Angela Dimmitt, compiler for the Hidden Valley, Connecticut portion of the count circle, wrote "It was a miserably cold day, and all the ponds were frozen, the only open water being the Housatonic in New Milford, so waterfowl were at an all-time low. There was considerably more feeder watching than usual by the participants . . . but Connecticut tallied 64 species versus 2017's 61." Conditions were fairly similar in the northern count of Trail Wood.

A total of 347,353 individual birds were counted on the 2017-2018 CTCBC, including 170 species seen on count days and 4 species found only during count week (also called count period), those species seen the three days before or three days following designated count days. The count week birds

statewide were Pink-footed Goose at Napatree, King Eider at New London, Sandhill Crane at Litchfield Hills and also at Quinnipiac Valley, and a *Selasphorus* hummingbird at Woodbury-Roxbury. Caution was used in identifying the hummingbird only to genus, based on a "short visit to an empty hummingbird feeder" but a good description of a hummer with orangish body and pointed tail feathers. CBC participants included 769 field observers and 70 feeder watchers for a combined total of 839 CBC observers. Along the way, 2,023.25 party hours and 8,776.96 total party miles contributed to the CBC effort.

Hartford once again led northern counts with 89 count day species found, followed by Litchfield Hills with 82 species. Hartford also led with 97 total observers. Among mid-state counts, Woodbury-Roxbury had 89 count day species located by 47 total observers, with Quinnipiac Valley second at 84 count day species and 45 observers. Along the coast, Napatree had a dazzling 126 count day species found by 76 observers, while Westport had a 30-year high total of 125 count day species with 68 observers. Total party hours were highest at Hartford, Woodbury-Roxbury, Pawling/Hidden Valley, Greenwich-Stamford, and New Haven.

Twenty-five bird species were unique to a single count, an indication of it taking a village to generate the statewide list of species. Most notable among these were Pink-footed Goose CW, Pacific Loon, Black-headed Gull, and Hooded Warbler at Napatree, Ross's Goose at Bristol (extremely well described and documented by the observer), Semipalmated Plover at Greenwich-Stamford, King Eider CW and Red-headed Woodpecker at New London, Harlequin Duck and European Goldfinch at Westport, Ruffed Grouse, Short-eared Owl, and Northern Shrike at Litchfield Hills, a *Selasphorus* hummingbird at Woodbury-Roxbury, Clay-colored and Lincoln's sparrows at New Haven, and Dickcissel at Oxford. The biggest misses this year were six species that have been sighted at least 20 times out of the last thirty: American Bittern, Great Egret, Northern Goshawk, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat and Evening Grosbeak. The last of these fun-



Julian Hough photo

Although some predatory birds continue to do well based on CBC results, American Kestrels remain on the decline.

damentally changed its wintering range more than 20 years ago. Such a small number of the remaining likely species not seen during the count period this year indicates how unlikely it is to record many more than 170 species on the Connecticut statewide count.

For the 2017-2018 CTCBC, the statewide effort produced high numbers of the more common goose species (Canada Goose and Brant) as well as several rare species (Pink-footed Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose). Dabbling ducks were in average or representative numbers, the exception being low numbers of American Black Duck. Diving ducks were counted in high or record high numbers, including Common Eider, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck and Hooded Merganser. Among phasianids, Ring-necked Pheasant was in short supply, only one Ruffed Grouse was recorded, and there were no Northern Bobwhites seen or heard for the 7th consecutive year. Red-throated and Common Loons set new 30-year high counts, and Red-necked Grebe num-



Julian Hough photo
Some species just stay on an even keel. Brown Thrashers, while never abundant, produce consistent results overall on the state's CBCs.

bers were elevated. Northern Gannet continues to be seen in unprecedented numbers along the Connecticut/Rhode Island coastline since ca. 2010. Diurnal raptors fared very well, with record high totals for Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Peregrine Falcon and robust numbers for Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Merlin. The three diur-

nal exceptions were Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk (missed 1st time in 30 years), and American Kestrel.

Most shorebirds were in short supply, including Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone and Wilson's Snipe. In the post-landfill period, the three common gull species are being sighted in significantly reduced numbers, including Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull and Great Black-backed Gull. Bonaparte's Gulls can be added to this list of declining gull numbers, as they once were fairly commonly seen but no longer are. Monk Parakeets were at their second lowest total in three decades. It was a very good count period for owls, with Great Horned Owl showing well, another impressive irruptive year for Snowy Owl especially along the coast, record-setting high numbers of Barred Owls, and very respectable detection of Long-eared Owls.

Among woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpecker maintained elevated numbers this year, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker drilled through the roof, and Pileated Woodpecker also reached new heights. The story is mixed for corvids, with continued lower



Bruce Finnan photo
Woodpeckers lead the list of species showing marked increases. Red-bellied Woodpeckers are riding a long-term upward trend.

numbers of American Crow, higher numbers for Fish Crow, and very high numbers of Common Raven. Several small cavity nesters did not fare well, with record low numbers of Black-capped Chickadee and many fewer Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. Carolina Wren, however, continued its three-year rebound from the harsh winter of 2014-15. Hartford co-compilers Jay Kaplan and Steve Davis addressed the issue of low numbers of some of our more common birds. "It may require more research to explain the paucity of Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, and American Goldfinch. Might food supplies have some bearing for some of these species?" While chickadee numbers were depressed statewide, part of the answer is that Pawling/Hidden Valley and New London CBCs grabbed up substantial flocks of Red-wings, and across all the counts Downy Woodpeckers, American Robins, Northern Cardinals, and American Goldfinches were not in exceptionally low numbers.

Eastern Bluebirds were counted in lowest numbers in 8 years, while Hermit Thrush was above the average count. The year-to-year pattern for American Robin is high variability, this year's total being slightly below average. Northern Mockingbird was reported in 2nd lowest numbers in 30 years. Nine Brown Thrashers statewide made for an average showing. This was not a big wood-warbler year, with the sole exception of two Hooded Warblers, new to the all-time statewide count. Grassland and open field sparrows were poorly represented, including American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, and to a lesser extent Savannah Sparrow. Flocking birds were in unusually abundant supply, such as Red-winged Blackbirds, Rusty Blackbirds (!), and Common Grackles, these flocks pulling Brown-headed Cowbirds along for the ride. Another year passes without a good showing of winter finches. Purple Finch was at record low numbers, only one Common Redpoll was reported, and Pine Siskin was largely absent from the state. Jay Kaplan and Steve Davis: "In spite of early reports of winter finches moving southward and what appeared to be a good cone crop, not a

single winter finch was reported on the Hartford count."

Eighteen bird species were counted in 30-year record high numbers. They are shown here, with the new high total followed by the previous 30-year high count given in parentheses: Greater White-fronted Goose (8/6), Canada Goose (56,819/55,953), Brant (4,201/3,844), Common Eider (2,613/2,006), Black Scoter (222/197), Bufflehead (2,849/2,472), Red-throated Loon (764/511), Common Loon (968/753), Northern Gannet (1,203/250), Bald Eagle (181/180), Cooper's Hawk (217/181), Red-shouldered Hawk (244/210), Peregrine Falcon (39/32), Laughing Gull (35/17), Barred Owl (109/70), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (340/265), Pileated Woodpecker (193/172), Rusty Blackbird (337/300). As noted above, geese, diving ducks, diurnal and nocturnal raptors, and woodpeckers figured prominently in these current year high counts. Far less optimistically, Rusty Blackbird is recognized as experiencing a severe population decline nationwide in recent years. This year's record total is an anomaly. The species description for Rusty Blackbird on *Birds of North America Online* cites Christmas Bird Count data that indicate a 5% per year decline in Rusty Blackbirds across their entire winter range, with negative impacts due to collisions, degradation of habitat, competition with grackles and red-wings, intentional disturbance at roost sites, and chemical contamination.

Nine species were reported in 30-year record low numbers. They are, with new low total followed by previous low: Black-crowned Night-Heron (4/4), Northern Goshawk (0, missed 1st time in 30 years/1), Black-bellied Plover (10/10), Greater Yellowlegs (2/1), Wilson's Snipe (2/2), Ring-billed Gull (8,623/9,538), Eastern Phoebe (2/2), Black-capped Chickadee (5,936/6,283), and Purple Finch (28/50). Goshawks have become difficult to locate, but in the years from the late 1980s to about 2000 as many as 8, 10, and 14 goshawks were countable each year during the CBC season. The depressed numbers of Black-capped Chickadees call for closer examination of a possible trend for this species listed as abundant year-round in Connecticut.

Two Hooded Warblers seen at Napatree add yet another parulid winter rarity to a 30-year list that also includes Tennessee, Yellow, Cape May, Black-throated Gray, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Yellow-throated, Prairie, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird, MacGillivray's, Northern Parula, and Wilson's Warbler. All these species have made very rare occurrences during Connecticut's CBCs, usually once, twice, or three times at most, yet taken as a group they illustrate the role that is played by lingering early winter or vagrant species in the all-time list of Connecticut CBC species. Four count day and one count week rarities were found this year: Pink-footed Goose CW (seen twice in 30 years), Ross's Goose CD (seen three times), the non-native Muscovy Duck CD (seen twice), Semipalmated Plover CD (seen 4 times), and European Goldfinch, also not on the official state list, CD (seen twice). Other species worthy of mention include Yellow-crowned Night-Heron CD and Sandhill Crane CW (each seen 6 times in 30 years), and the *Selasphorus* hummingbird, adding to seven separate years of Rufous Hummingbird sightings. National Audubon records this as a Rufous/Allen's hummingbird, but Allen's has never been confirmed as occurring in Connecticut, so let's not contribute to anyone's blood pressure rise. The 30-year total for birds reported on Connecticut's combined CBCs is a sizable 261 count day and 5 count week species, the latter ultra rare early winter birds being Pink-footed Goose, Gyrfalcon, Purple Gallinule, Piping Plover, and Western Kingbird.

A Run-Through in Approximate Check-List Order. Let's review the 2017-2018 statewide results for Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts in the context of identifiable 30-year trends. For some of the following species, I compare the total number counted during the five year period 1988-89 through 1992-93 with the number counted during the most recent five-year period, 2013-14 through 2017-18 for a quick indication of changing early wintering populations. This is not high level mathematics, but it does suggest that for some species, the times they are a changing.

Waterfowl. While Canada Goose was at a 30-year high total

statewide, its numbers fluctuate from year to year, and there are no clear trends of an increasing early winter population. Greater White-fronted Goose has been seen throughout the last three decades, usually just one or two in any given year. Large associations of Brant are a decidedly new phenomenon of the last decade and a half. Pink-footed Goose and Ross's Goose are exciting recent additions to the all-time CBC list. Mallards have outnumbered American Black Ducks 3:1 for the past 30 years. As Black Duck numbers continue to slip, the Mallard to Black Duck gap widens. The days of 500-1,400 wintering Canvasbacks are long gone. We've had nine straight years of double digit Canvasbacks and this year just three at New Haven and one count week at Stratford-Milford, a very unwelcome downward trend. Some years ago, Noble Proctor cited this as due to loss of habitat in prairie pothole country. Common Eider numbers are increasingly robust due to the contributions of the open waters outside Long Island Sound on the Napatree count, with New London's eastern coastal position adding a few more eiders for good measure. Hooded Merganser is the diving duck species with the most dramatic increase in early winter numbers. Twenty to thirty years ago, we counted fewer than 1,000 hoodies per year. Now, we're consistently between 2,000 and 3,000.

Phasianids. The Ring-necked Pheasant population is dependent on restocking efforts by hunt clubs. It would be interesting to explore the changing membership sizes in Connecticut hunt clubs. (A pheasant farm in Moodus, CT always has a pen filled with birds, none of which seem to escape when the Moodus group drives by in search of species for the Salmon River CBC.) From '88 to '92, a combined total of 574 pheasants were counted on statewide CBCs. The past five years, 140 were counted - a decline of 75%. The native phasianid, Ruffed Grouse, was at a high point in 1988-89 with 117 birds reported. This year, one grouse was detected at Litchfield Hills following a 20-year downward slide in numbers. Northern Bobwhite now is listed as not having a sustaining breeding population in Connecticut. This species has made the CTCBC list just 3 years out of the last 18, with

none counted in the last 7 years.

Loons. Wintering Red-throated and Common loons have seen a remarkable increase over the past three decades, from a few dozen in the late 1980s to hundreds in each of the last 15 years, with 99% of each species being seen on Long Island Sound.

Gannets. Small numbers of Northern Gannets had been reported on coastal CBCs more than 30 years ago, but with the addition of the Napatree count 14 years ago, they have a much larger presence on the statewide list, again due to Napatree's direct exposure to Atlantic waters. Still, there is no question that gannets make their way into Long Island Sound in increasing numbers.

New World Vultures, Eagles, Hawks, and Falcons. Both Black Vultures and Turkey Vultures have seen dramatic increases in numbers, Black Vultures being reported on CT CBCs every year since 1995-96, often in roosts of dozens of birds. Turkey Vultures have been more variable from year to year. The seventh edition of the AOU Check-List of North American Birds lists Black Vulture as resident from New Jersey south and Turkey Vulture as wintering from Maryland south, though casually north to southern Canada. Both species clearly now have many individuals that can be considered resident in our state. Bald Eagle is one of the many great success stories of the Endangered Species Act, with a record high 181 eagles counted this CBC, nearly four times as many as in the late 1980s. Red-shouldered Hawk has increased nearly ten-fold to a record high 244 individuals, with greatest representation on coastal and mid-state counts. While American Kestrels have plummeted more than 80% over the past 30 years, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon numbers continue to soar. Merlins have outnumbered kestrels for 15 years. Nesting peregrines, which tend to remain on their breeding grounds through the year rather than migrate south, have expanded in the state from one pair in 1998 to more than 14 pairs in 2018. Many of the peregrines counted on CBCs are resident birds.

Shorebirds. Black-bellied Plover and Killdeer have been harder to locate in recent CBC years. The same is true for Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, and to an extent, American Woodcock.

Gulls. Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed Gulls are found throughout the state, with two-thirds of these CBC-counted gulls thriving along the coast and equal numbers found mid-state or on northern counts. Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls have greater representation along the coast than they do inland (70-75% being birds seen on the coast). All three regions of the CT CBC map have seen dramatic drops in gull numbers over the past 10-15 years, and this usually is attributed to the closing of the state's landfills. Ring-billed Gulls reached a new 30-year low total this year (a 42% decline from the period 1988-89 through 1992-93 to the most recent 5 years. During the same time intervals, Herring Gulls have declined 65% and Great Black-backed Gulls 71% by this admittedly imprecise measure.

Owls. Try to locate a Barn Owl in the state these days. Great Horned Owls are variable from year to year, with the current count of 125 individuals being good representation. Irruptive Snowy Owls showed well this year, mildly reminiscent of the big irruption winter of 2013-14. Barred Owls set an all-time record high count of 109 individuals, smashing the previous 30-year high of 70 birds. From Ken Elkins: "Barred Owls were another high count [at Woodbury-Roxbury]. We did not have a larger owling effort than in other years I have compiled. I think that the area captains having remained. The same helps us figure out territories to concentrate our owling efforts. Also, we're a few years past the October snow and Tropical Storms Sandy and Irene that left lots of canopy damage in our section of the state. I think that has created more larger cavities as suitable nesting habitat. I'm interested to see if other counts in Connecticut had higher Barred Owl numbers." They did!

Woodpeckers. While Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers maintained average numbers through-

out our region, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and Pileated Woodpeckers reached lofty new heights this year. Both Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have seen an 800% increase in their numbers of the last 5 years as compared with the period 1988-89 through 1992-93. These are among the most dramatic increases in early winter bird populations of any species in the state. It will be very interesting to see the extent of change in breeding ranges documented during the field component of the new Connecticut Bird Atlas. Pileated Woodpeckers are becoming incrementally more common in the southeastern parts of the state.

Corvids. Blue Jays were counted in above average numbers this year, but American Crows continue their lower totals of recent years, reflecting a 20% decline in the CBC-data early winter populations. West Nile Virus has been attributed in part to the reduced numbers of crows. A large percentage of the crows counted on CBCs is at known roost sites, and these tend to shift within count circles from year to year. Take heart. Jay Kaplan and Steve Davis write, "No Hartford Christmas Count would be complete without mentioning the crow roost on the Hartford-West Hartford line. The crows are still there! Anyone who wants to see a lot of crows should take a ride over the ShopRite Plaza parking lot just down the road in Hartford. It is a pretty impressive scene at dusk!" The 263 Common Ravens reported this CBC season represent a second highest 30-year total. Nesting ravens that have been followed at a New Haven County cliff site for the past 16 years annually fledge 4 to 5 young, just one example of the raven's ability to repopulate a state in which a century ago Sage, Bishop, and Bliss (1913) listed the raven as very rare and as an accidental vagrant.

Chickadees. While year to year fluctuations in early winter bird populations are to be expected, many species appear to maintain fairly steady numbers over a 30-year period. For most of the last 20 years, Black-capped Chickadees have been such a species. We need another few years of data to begin to draw inferences, but when comparing the CBC period 1988-



Mark Szantyr photo
Scrubland birds such as American Tree Sparrow (here) and Field Sparrow have been in decline on Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts.

89 through 1992-93 with 2013-14 through 2017-18, one sees a 38% decline in chickadee numbers in Connecticut. It's based on a limited set of numbers, but this species is worth watching in the future.

Mockingbirds. The Northern Mockingbird population has been declining for the past 12 or more years, this year reaching the second lowest total in 30 years. This is a 67% decline in numbers.

Starlings. Yes, it's an introduced species. Yes, starling numbers have represented a major percentage of all birds reported on Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts for a long time. Yes, we still record nearly 40,000 starlings on our counts. But, the European Starling is claiming a smaller and smaller

share of total bird biomass in recent years - a 71% decline in numbers from the first five to the last five years of the CT CBC.

Sparrows. Although Eastern Towhees were at 3rd lowest totals this year, there is no clear trend evident in Connecticut CBC data. The Scrubland habitat American Tree Sparrow and Field Sparrow have not fared well. Tree Sparrows have dropped some 10% over the last decade, while Field Sparrows have been low in numbers for at least 8 years and show a decline of more than 80% since the late 1980s. *Birds of North America Online* states for American Tree Sparrow: "Widespread change in land-use in recent decades (e.g., agricultural intensification and forest maturation) across much of the wintering range has likely resulted in extensive habitat loss for overwintering birds." Breeding Bird Survey data indicate a strong population decline of 53% between 1970 and 2014. More research is needed as to causes, one contributing factor possibly being climate change. *BNA* for Field Sparrow: "Based on Breeding Bird Survey data, significant declines in breeding populations, 3.2% per year ($p < 0.00001$) between 1966 and 2003." One factor appears to be loss of habitat due to the regrowth of forested lands since the late 1800s.

Meadowlarks. In the first five years of this 30-year CBC period, CT CBCs counted 490 Eastern Meadowlarks. For the past 5 years the total has been 103 individuals. That's a 21% decline. It's another species of grasslands and fields. *Birds of North America Online*: "Management of the species must be closely integrated with management of range land, pastures, and other grassland communities."

Finches. Purple Finches were among those Massachusetts species that showed the sharpest declines in numbers during the 2007-2011 Mass Breeding Bird Atlas 2. Their CBC numbers for Connecticut are equally downward trending, with a record low 28 individuals seen this year. Totals of 250-300 Purple Finches were not uncommon 20 or more years ago. *BNA*: "Decline of 50% in breeding population in the north-eastern U.S. and southern Canada, 1966-1994", based on

Breeding Bird Surveys. This is an understudied species, and "declines of northern and eastern populations require monitoring".

Here's to future years of the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. Over the course of the next three years, our Christmas Bird Count results will contribute significantly to the winter portion of the new Connecticut Bird Atlas, and previous years of CBC data will provide important information on the bird species known to occur in the state during the early winter months.

Count By Count Summary of Results:

Northern Christmas Bird Counts (7)

Barkhamsted, CT CBC (December 24, 2017)

Compiler: David Tripp, Jr. (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

12,500 total individuals, 72 count day + 1 count week species (Sharp-shinned Hawk)

22 field observers + 5 feeder watchers = 27 total observers

79.50 total party hours, 559.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Peregrine Falcon (2/1), European Starling (2,927/1,927)

30-year low counts (1): Black-capped Chickadee (569/654)

New species (2): Virginia Rail, American Pipit

Rarities (3): Peregrine Falcon (2X), Fish Crow (3X), Pine Warbler (4X)

Other noteworthy species (1): Merlin (6X)

30-year total = 126 count day + 1 count week species (Long-tailed Duck)

Bristol, CT (December 30, 2017)

Compiler: Jack Swatt

9,948 total individuals, 68 count day + 1 count week species (Northern Pintail)

36 field observers + 5 feeder watchers = 41 total observers

100.25 total party hours, 462.25 total party miles

New species (8): Ross's Goose, Muscovy Duck, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Merlin, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird,

Savannah Sparrow

2-year total = 75 count day + 3 count week species (Great Black-backed Gull, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow)

Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood CBC (December 31, 2017)

Compiler: Susan Harrington (Natchaug Ornithological Society)

3,374 total individuals, 53 count day + 0 count week species

12 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 12 total observers

35.75 total party hours, 210.00 total party miles

29-year high counts (4): Wild Turkey (128/121), Great Blue Heron (29/20), Bald Eagle (7/4), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (11/5)

29-year low counts (2): Great Black-backed Gull (1/1), Blue Jay (54/54)

New species (!): Golden Eagle

Rarities (0)

Other noteworthy species (0)

29-year total = 121 count day + 0 count week species

Hartford, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Jay Kaplan, Stephen Davis (Hartford Audubon Society)

42,625 total individuals, 89 count day + 1 count week species (Snowy Owl)

91 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 97 total observers

200.00 total party hours, 505.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (3): Wood Duck (26/20), Hooded Merganser (108/87), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (29/18)

30-year low counts (8): Herring Gull (74/95), Great Black-backed Gull (22/31), Mourning Dove (647/654), Downy

Woodpecker (137/156), Hairy Woodpecker

(23/29), Black-capped Chickadee (246/320), Northern Cardinal (228/303), American Goldfinch (318/328)

New species (0)

Rarities (2): House Wren (2X), Eastern Meadowlark (5X)

Other noteworthy species (1): Cackling Goose (6X)

30-year total = 147 count day + 7 count week species (Tundra Swan, White-winged Scoter, Osprey, Virginia Rail, Snowy

Owl, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat)

Litchfield Hills, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compiler: Raymond Belding (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

17,505 total individuals, 82 count day + 5 count week species (Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Loon, Northern Harrier, Sandhill Crane, Glaucous Gull)

40 field observers + 8 feeder watchers = 48 total observers

124.25 total party hours, 762.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (5): Snow Goose (4/4), Cooper's Hawk (12/11), Barred Owl (24/130), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (28/18), American Robin (2,648/2,310)

30-year low counts (2): Herring Gull (1/2), American Tree Sparrow (92/104)

New species (1): Short-eared Owl

Rarities (1): Redhead (4X)

Other noteworthy species (0)

30-year total = 142 count day + 3 count week species (Blue-winged Teal, Glaucous Gull, Peregrine Falcon)

Lakeville-Sharon, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Zachary Adams, Robert Moeller (Audubon Sharon)

11,160 total individuals, 80 count day + 0 count week species

27 field observers + 2 feeder watchers = 29 total observers

64.50 total party hours, 421.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (7): Bufflehead (12/11), Bald Eagle (11/11), Red-shouldered Hawk (2/2), Barred Owl (9/5), Red-bellied Woodpecker (64/64), Yellow-bellied

Sapsucker (11/9), Tufted Titmouse (196/190)

30-year low counts (1): Horned Lark (0, missed 1st time in 30 years)

New species (3): Cackling Goose, Long-eared Owl, American Pipit

Rarities (4): Golden Eagle (5X), Red-shouldered Hawk (5X), Merlin (4X), Peregrine Falcon (4X)

Other noteworthy species (2): Northern Pintail (6X), Ruby-

crowned Kinglet (6X)
 80 count day species = 30-year high total
 30-year total = 129 count day + 0 count week species

Storrs, CT CBC (December 16, 2017)

Compiler: Steve Morytko (Natchaug Ornithological Society)

8,365 total individuals, 77 count day + 1 count week species (Common Goldeneye)
 30 field observers + 2 feeder watchers = 32 total observers
 99.00 total party hours, 520.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (3): Red-shouldered Hawk (25/14), Ring-billed Gull (465/441), Pileated Woodpecker (11/8)
 30-year low counts (0)
 New species (0)
 Rarities (3): Iceland Gull (3X), Peregrine Falcon (5X), Yellow-rumped Warbler (4X)
 Other noteworthy species (1): White-crowned Sparrow (6X)
 77 count day species = 30-year high total
 30-year total = 131 count day + 1 count week species (Short-eared Owl)

Mid-State Christmas Bird Counts (5):

Oxford, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compiler: Roy Harvey

9,929 total individuals, 72 count day + 0 count week species
 23 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 23 total observers
 70.80 total party hours, 391.10 total party miles
 30-year high counts (8): Bufflehead (7/6), Cooper's Hawk (10/7), Bald Eagle (7/7), Rock Pigeon (472/472), Barred Owl (7/5), Long-eared Owl (2/2), Common Raven (22/7), Common Grackle (900/789)
 30-year low counts (2): Herring Gull (18/22), Great Black-backed Gull (1/1)
 New species (1): Dickcissel
 Rarities (2): Common Loon (4X), Long-eared Owl (4X)
 Other noteworthy species (0)
 30-year total = 136 count day + 0 count week species

Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT CBC (January 1, 2018)

Compilers: Carena Pooth, Angela Dimmitt (Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club)

13,567 total individuals, 73 count day + 5 count week species (Mute Swan, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Common Loon, Great Black-backed Gull)
 39 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 45 total observers
 101.30 total party hours, 540.35 total party miles
 30-year high counts (5): Red-shouldered Hawk (16/14), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (37/33), Pileated Woodpecker (38/33), Blue Jay (530/511), Red-winged Blackbird (5,055/3,145)
 30-year low counts (4): Canada Goose (66/398), Ring-billed Gull (34/73), Herring Gull (5/12)
 New species (0)
 Rarities (0)
 Other noteworthy species (2): Golden Eagle (6X), American Pipit (6X)
 30-year total = 133 count day + 3 count week species (Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Pine Grosbeak)

Quinnipiac Valley, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Melissa Baston (Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society)

12,039 total individuals, 84 count day + 4 count week species (Wood Duck, Northern Harrier, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl)
 34 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 40 total observers
 94.05 total party hours, 415.41 total party miles
 30-year high counts (5): Red-bellied Woodpecker (80/79), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (15/14), Peregrine Falcon (2/2), Fish Crow (27/18), Rusty Blackbird (220/79)
 30-year low counts (2): Ring-billed Gull (237/311), Herring Gull (2/9)
 New species (1 count day + 2 count week): Long-tailed Duck, Sandhill Crane CW, Snowy Owl CW
 Rarities (2): Greater Scaup (2X), Vesper Sparrow (4X)
 Other noteworthy species (2): Greater White-fronted Goose (6X), Chipping Sparrow (6X)
 30-year total = 149 count day + 2 count week species (Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl)

Salmon River, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Sharon Dellinger, Doreen Jezek (Mattabeseck Audubon Society)

6,300 total individuals, 69 count day + 0 count week species
 41 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 47 total observers
 78.50 total party hours, 355.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (3): Mute Swan (241/159), Cooper's Hawk (6/6), Red-shouldered Hawk (24/21)
 30-year low counts (4): Great Blue Heron (1/1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1/1), Ring-billed Gull (33/65), Black-capped Chickadee (255/261)
 New species (1): Orange-crowned Warbler
 Rarities (1): Black Vulture
 Other noteworthy species (0)
 30-year total = 138 count day + 2 count week species (Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Crossbill)

Woodbury-Roxbury, CT CBC (December 16, 2017)

Compiler: Ken Elkins (Western Connecticut Bird Club)

19,496 total individuals, 89 count day + 2 count week species (Common Goldeneye, Rufous Hummingbird)
 30 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 34 total observers
 108.25 total party hours, 594.75 total party miles
 30-year high counts (10): Cackling Goose (2/2), Greater Scaup (2/1), Bufflehead (15/5), Hooded Merganser (67/47), Ruddy Duck (43/14), Barred Owl (18/9), Peregrine Falcon (4/1), Fish Crow (22/16), Common Raven (23/15), Common Grackle (2,772/1,855)
 30-year low counts (2): Herring Gull (27/35), American Tree Sparrow (61/70)
 New species (1): Northern Shoveler, *Selasphorus* Hummingbird CW
 Rarities (4): Cackling Goose (5X), Greater Scaup (3X), Long-tailed Duck (4X), Peregrine Falcon (2X)
 Other noteworthy species (0)
 30-year total = 145 count day + 4 count week species (Brant, *Selasphorus* Hummingbird, Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager)

Coastal Christmas Bird Counts (8):

Guilford-Long Island Sound, CT CBC (December 30, 2017)

Compilers: Tom Kelly, Lorrie Shaw (Menunkatuck Audubon Society)

5,639 total individuals, 63 count day + 0 count week species
 31 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 32 total observers
 13.00 total party hours, 80.00 total party miles
 New species (4): Gadwall, White-winged Scoter, Pileated Woodpecker, Marsh Wren
 3-year total = 98 count day + 1 count week species (Black Vulture)

Greenwich-Stamford, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Cynthia Ehlinger, Joseph Zeranski (Audubon Greenwich)

30,235 total individuals, 103 count day + 3 count week species (Greater White-fronted Goose, White-winged Scoter, Glaucous Gull)
 64 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 68 total observers
 226.70 total party hours, 701.30 total party miles
 30-year high counts (5): Northern Shoveler (2/1), Bald Eagle (15/7), Cooper's Hawk (35/25), Red-shouldered Hawk (17/12), Red-tailed Hawk (126/121)
 30-year low counts (2): Red-breasted Merganser (117/127), Gray Catbird (3/3)
 New species (1 count day + 1 count week): Semipalmated Plover CD, Glaucous Gull CW
 Rarities (1 count day + 1 count week): Greater White-fronted Goose CW (4X), Cackling Goose CD, (5X)
 Other noteworthy species (1): Northern Shoveler (6X)
 30-year total = 190 count day + 7 count week species (Pink-footed Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Purple Gallinule, Sanderling, Lincoln's Sparrow)

Napatree, RI-CT-NY CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Shai Mitra, Glenn Williams

43,987 total individuals, 126 count day + 2 count week spe-

cies (Pink-footed Goose, Snow Goose)
 34 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 35 total observers
 130.15 total party miles, 341.05 total party miles
 14-year high counts (24): Greater White-fronted Goose (3/1),
 Canada Goose (5,001/4,081), Green-winged Teal (26/11),
 Wild Turkey (104/104), Red-throated
 Loon (503/215), Common Loon (565/564), Northern Gan-
 net (1,197/1,092), Double-crested Cormorant (83/69), Black
 Vulture (29/20), Bald Eagle (4/4), Northern Harrier (19/19),
 Cooper's Hawk (18/13), Red-shouldered Hawk (12/9), Red-
 tailed Hawk (43/27), Merlin (6/6), Peregrine Falcon (5/4),
 Ring-billed Gull (913/481), Long-eared Owl (3/3), Belted
 Kingfisher (16/16), American Crow (292/257), Common
 Raven (7/3), European Starling (11,387/7,868), Common
 Grackle (6,909/365), Baltimore Oriole (4/1)
 14-year low counts (3): Razorbill (1/1), Marsh Wren (0,
 missed 1st time in 14 years/1), Eastern Towhee (6/15)
 New species (1 count day + 1 count week): Pink-footed
 Goose CW, Hooded Warbler CD
 Rarities (3): Greater White-fronted Goose (2X), Northern
 Shoveler (2X), Laughing Gull (2X)
 Other noteworthy species (2): Ring-necked Pheasant (3X),
 House Wren (3X)
 43,987 total individuals = 14-year high total
 34 total field observers = 14-year high total
 35 total observers = 14-year high total

New Haven, CT CBC (December 16, 2017)

Compiler: Christopher Loscalzo (New Haven Bird Club)

26,896 total individuals, 121 count day + 3 count week spe-
 cies (Barrow's Goldeneye, Black-bellied Plover, Orange-
 crowned Warbler)
 7 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 76 total observers
 170.00 total party hours, 612.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (4): Bald Eagle (15/14), Yellow-bellied
 Sapsucker (23/22), Pileated Woodpecker (7/6), White-breast-
 ed Nuthatch (219/198)
 30-year low counts (5): American Black Duck (253/316),
 Double-crested Cormorant (0, missed 1st time in 30 years/2),

Great Black-backed Gull (53/63), American Crow (607/663),
 Eastern Towhee (1/1)
 New species (0)
 Rarities (6): Common Eider (3X), Barrow's Goldeneye (3X),
 Red-necked Grebe (5X), Snowy Owl (4X), Clay-colored Spar-
 row (5X), Lincoln's Sparrow (4X)
 Other noteworthy species (0)
 26,896 total individuals = 30-year low total
 30-year total = 197 count day + 7 count week species (Black-
 legged Kittiwake, Boreal Chickadee, Veery, American Red-
 start, Wilson's Warbler, Seaside Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole)

New London, CT CBC (December 30, 2017)

Compiler: Robert Dewire

36,088 total individuals, 119 count day + 1 count week spe-
 cies (King Eider)
 47 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 51 total observers
 115.50 total party hours, 605.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (7): Bufflehead (780/756), Red-throated
 Loon (108/74), Pileated Woodpecker (8/7), Fish Crow
 (89/68), Horned Lark (176/88), Winter Wren (15/15), Brown-
 headed Cowbird (2,467/946)
 30-year low counts (5): Sharp-shinned Hawk (6/6), Great
 Black-backed Gull (70/102), Northern Mockingbird (41/46),
 Cedar Waxwing (14/17), Eastern Towhee (4/4)
 New species (1): Greater White-fronted Goose
 Rarities (2 count day + 1 count week): King Eider CW (2X),
 Black-legged Kittiwake CD (5X), Red-headed Woodpecker
 CD (2X)
 Other noteworthy species (1): Snowy Owl (6X)
 30-year total = 188 count day + 3 count week species (Osprey,
 Western Kingbird, Black-and-white Warbler)

Old Lyme-Saybrook, CT CBC (December 31, 2017)

Compiler: Barbara Hawes (Potapaug Audubon Society)

10,791 total individuals, 98 count day + 5 count week species,
 1 count week subspecies (Brant, Northern Shoveler, Lesser
 Scaup, Brown Thrasher, Savannah 'Ipswich' Sparrow, East-
 ern Meadowlark)

45 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 46 total observers
 68.00 total party hours, 239.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (2): Fish Crow (5/4), Fox Sparrow (30/24)
 30-year low counts (6): Great Blue Heron (4/7), Hairy Woodpecker (3/3), Black-capped Chickadee (196/199), Hermit Thrush (2/2), Northern Mockingbird (8/9), Field Sparrow (1/1)
 New species (0)
 Rarities (1): Black Vulture (5X)
 Other noteworthy species (0)
 30-year total = 192 count day + 4 count week species (Gyr Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Piping Plover, Painted Bunting)

Stratford-Milford, CT CBC (December 23, 2017)

Compiler: Steve Mayo

13,300 total individuals, 95 count day + 7 count week species (Wood Duck, Canvasback, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Eastern Bluebird)
 26 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 27 total observers
 91.75 total party hours, 354.00 total party miles
 30-year high counts (2): Brant (537/494), Peregrine Falcon (5/5)
 30-year low counts (10): Horned Grebe (0, missed 1st time in 30 years/1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1/1), Ring-billed Gull (998/1,084), Herring Gull (846/1,170), American Crow (72/90), Fish Crow (4/6), Black-capped Chickadee (54/81), Northern Mockingbird (20/22), American Tree Sparrow (23/41), Savannah Sparrow (1/1)
 New species (0)
 Rarities (2): Greater White-fronted Goose (2X), Cackling Goose (3X)
 Other noteworthy species (2): Glaucous Gull (6X), Palm Warbler (6X)
 30-year total = 183 count day + 1 count week species (Sandhill Crane)

Westport, CT CBC (December 17, 2017)

Compilers: Mardi Dickinson, Townsend Dickinson (Con-

necticut Audubon Birdcraft Museum)

13,609 total individuals, 125 count day + 1 count week species (Greater Yellowlegs)
 27 field observers + 2 feeder watchers = 29 total observers
 52.00 total party hours, 107.25 total party miles
 30-year high counts (6): Lesser Scaup (169/51), Bufflehead (545/410), Common Loon (56/56), Red-shouldered Hawk (9/9), Peregrine Falcon (5/4), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (22/18)
 30-year low counts (0)
 New species (3): Greater White-fronted Goose, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, European Goldfinch
 Rarities (7): Cackling Goose (3X), Harlequin Duck (5X), Barrow's Goldeneye (4X), Red-necked Grebe (2X), Pine Warbler (2X), Vesper Sparrow (4X), Eastern Meadowlark (5X)
 Other noteworthy species (3): Redhead (6X), Snowy Owl (6X), Orange-crowned Warbler (6X)
 125 count day species = 30-year high total
 29 total observers = 30-year low total
 30-year total = 181 count day + 2 count week species (Sandhill Crane, Red Crossbill)

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Stephen P. Broker

Cheshire, Connecticut

| SPECIES | NORTHERN COUNTS | | | | MIDSTATE COUNTS | | | | COASTAL COUNTS | | | | STATE TOTAL | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 12/24/17 | 12/30/17 | 12/31/17 | 12/31/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 |
| Eastern Screech-Owl | 8 | 2 | 4 | 23 | 13 | 1 | 24 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 171 |
| Great Horned Owl | 2 | 6 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 125 |
| Barn Owl | 5 | 5 | 1 | 24 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 109 |
| Long-eared Owl | 5 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 18 |
| Northern Saw-whet Owl | 5 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 152 |
| Screech Owl | 68 | 63 | 28 | 144 | 96 | 64 | 86 | 82 | 114 | 80 | 59 | 134 | 16 | 204 | 30 | 112 | 76 | 1572 |
| Belted Kingfisher | 13 | 10 | 11 | 29 | 28 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 37 | 15 | 14 | 30 | 2 | 36 | 9 | 23 | 15 | 340 |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | 106 | 109 | 62 | 137 | 139 | 65 | 114 | 100 | 111 | 96 | 103 | 121 | 17 | 182 | 73 | 150 | 103 | 1933 |
| Downy Woodpecker | 33 | 24 | 12 | 23 | 38 | 17 | 22 | 21 | 39 | 14 | 9 | 35 | 1 | 53 | 5 | 21 | 10 | 404 |
| Hairy Woodpecker | 17 | 11 | 8 | 103 | 19 | 6 | 16 | 26 | 29 | 52 | 23 | 53 | 5 | 52 | 27 | 39 | 44 | 569 |
| Pileated Woodpecker | 9 | 11 | 1 | 20 | 16 | 11 | 6 | 38 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 15 | 2 | 16 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 193 |
| American Westral | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Peregrine Falcon | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Montk Parakeet | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Northern Shrike | 582 | 482 | 54 | 722 | 735 | 1 | 310 | 395 | 451 | 530 | 416 | 646 | 91 | 700 | 197 | 415 | 314 | 41 |
| Blue Jay | 485 | 624 | 108 | 1300 | 1274 | 507 | 377 | 577 | 604 | 604 | 417 | 2011 | 72 | 469 | 292 | 507 | 487 | 72 |
| American Crow | 2 | 20 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 2 | 27 | 2 | 22 | 1 | 45 | 2 | 204 | 89 | 5 |
| Crow sp. | 36 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 21 | 18 | 22 | 21 | 24 | 21 | 24 | 23 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 19 | 6 | 34 |
| Common Raven | 569 | 268 | 152 | 246 | 771 | 233 | 386 | 287 | 398 | 269 | 255 | 372 | 29 | 324 | 341 | 216 | 432 | 196 |
| Black-capped Chickadee | 273 | 299 | 123 | 399 | 337 | 196 | 416 | 318 | 353 | 289 | 329 | 329 | 62 | 314 | 162 | 220 | 293 | 191 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 11 | 114 | 48 | 185 | 57 | 130 | 110 | 131 | 17 | 68 | 130 | 142 | 13 | 232 | 50 | 219 | 107 | 58 |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | 6 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 |
| Brown Creeper | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 26 | 10 | 8 | 15 | 1 |
| Marsh Wren | 28 | 15 | 9 | 54 | 11 | 3 | 12 | 26 | 43 | 30 | 30 | 8 | 1 | 26 | 10 | 8 | 15 | 3 |
| Carolina Wren | 56 | 24 | 22 | 40 | 2 | 28 | 46 | 20 | 24 | 15 | 26 | 36 | 3 | 99 | 59 | 71 | 76 | 22 |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | 133 | 21 | 23 | 36 | 101 | 69 | 97 | 80 | 102 | 71 | 140 | 258 | 9 | 21 | 18 | 41 | 51 | 73 |
| Eastern Bluebird | 7 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 16 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 18 | 12 | 9 | 24 | 6 | 6 | 19 | 6 | 21 | 41 |
| Hermits Thrush | 896 | 197 | 43 | 404 | 2648 | 336 | 311 | 77 | 493 | 149 | 182 | 511 | 34 | 1318 | 1100 | 654 | 205 | 206 |
| American Robin | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 30 | 7 | 12 | 1 |
| Gray Catbird | 10 | 7 | 3 | 99 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 17 | 20 | 28 | 7 | 17 | 3 | 79 | 42 | 1 | 4 | 20 |
| Brown Thrasher | 837 | 432 | 214 | 2829 | 1352 | 1564 | 1062 | 904 | 1980 | 904 | 109 | 109 | 573 | 1704 | 1187 | 3636 | 1269 | 2168 |
| Northern Mockingbird | 292 | 632 | 14 | 18 | 579 | 209 | 95 | 132 | 58 | 61 | 198 | 715 | 26 | 119 | 104 | 137 | 14 | 52 |
| European Starling | 632 | 312 | 14 | 18 | 579 | 209 | 95 | 132 | 58 | 61 | 198 | 715 | 26 | 119 | 104 | 137 | 14 | 52 |
| Cedar Waxwing | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Lapland Longspur | 20 | 20 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Orange-crowned Warbler | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Pain Warbler | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Pine Warbler | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Yellow Warbler | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| SPECIES | NORTHERN COUNTS | | | | MIDSTATE COUNTS | | | | COASTAL COUNTS | | | | STATE TOTAL | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | 12/24/17 | 12/30/17 | 12/31/17 | 12/31/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | 12/17/17 | |
| Chipping Sparrow | 42 | 21 | 16 | 281 | 92 | 60 | 40 | 29 | 36 | 50 | 48 | 61 | 1 | 13 | 58 | 38 | 41 | 33 | |
| Clay-colored Sparrow | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 31 | 1 | |
| Field Sparrow | 1699 | 1082 | 511 | 1106 | 1647 | 571 | 946 | 669 | 1194 | 401 | 544 | 1128 | 60 | 1031 | 342 | 498 | 421 | 422 | |
| Dark-eyed Junco | 151 | 187 | 142 | 482 | 541 | 192 | 208 | 704 | 712 | 448 | 338 | 655 | 109 | 1288 | 642 | 661 | 345 | 404 | |
| White-throated Sparrow | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| Vesper Sparrow | 50 | 75 | 64 | 500 | 90 | 42 | 113 | 272 | 94 | 167 | 129 | 194 | 31 | 392 | 327 | 440 | 265 | 138 | |
| Savannah Sparrow | 3 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 30 | 31 | 25 | 7 | |
| Swamp Sparrow | 179 | 184 | 86 | 228 | 143 | 72 | 156 | 187 | 268 | 170 | 179 | 236 | 58 | 374 | 285 | 285 | 217 | 151 | |
| Lincoln's Sparrow | 16 | 5 | 441 | 33 | 13 | 54 | 150 | 505 | 11 | 108 | 275 | 17 | 109 | 120 | 413 | 5944 | 485 | 12 | |
| Eastern Towhee | 237 | 3 | 48 | 67 | 240 | 22 | 26 | 22 | 61 | 2 | 41 | 78 | 92 | 11 | 11 | 2 | 14 | 2 | |
| Red-winged Blackbird | 94 | 191 | 28 | 241 | 167 | 77 | 107 | 178 | 267 | 204 | 136 | 273 | 40 | 195 | 611 | 186 | 270 | 363 | |
| Common Grackle | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Baltimore Oriole | 4 | 733 | 202 | 318 | 368 | 153 | 197 | 233 | 259 | 168 | 133 | 260 | 91 | 271 | 99 | 283 | 218 | 80 | |
| Pine Siskin | 312 | 470 | 283 | 817 | 389 | 127 | 447 | 359 | 381 | 421 | 277 | 178 | 1162 | 515 | 1439 | 639 | 406 | 556 | |
| American Goldfinch | 12500 | 9948 | 3374 | 42625 | 17505 | 11160 | 8385 | 9929 | 13567 | 12039 | 6300 | 19496 | 5639 | 30235 | 43987 | 26896 | 36088 | 10791 | |
| European Goldfinch | 72 | 68 | 53 | 89 | 82 | 80 | 77 | 72 | 73 | 84 | 69 | 89 | 63 | 103 | 126 | 121 | 119 | 98 | |
| House Sparrow | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | |
| Starling | 22 | 36 | 12 | 91 | 40 | 27 | 30 | 23 | 39 | 34 | 41 | 30 | 31 | 64 | 34 | 70 | 47 | 45 | |
| Tree Sparrow | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 1 | |
| Chipping Sparrow | 27 | 41 | 12 | 97 | 48 | 29 | 23 | 23 | 45 | 40 | 47 | 34 | 32 | 68 | 35 | 76 | 51 | 46 | |
| Common Nighthawk | 79.5 | 100.25 | 35.75 | 200 | 124.25 | 64.5 | 99 | 70.8 | 101.3 | 94.05 | 78.5 | 108.25 | 13 | 226.7 | 130.15 | 170 | 115.5 | 68 | |
| House Sparrow | 559.5 | 482.25 | 210 | 505.5 | 762 | 421.5 | 520 | 391.1 | 540.35 | 415.41 | 355 | 594.75 | 80 | 701.3 | 341.05 | 612 | 605 | 239 | |
| TOTALS | STATE TOTAL |

Northern Counts
 BA = Barkhamsted
 BR = Bristol
 EW = Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood
 HA = Hartford
 LH = Litchfield Hills
 LS = Lakeville-Sharon
 ST = Storrs

Mid-State Counts
 BA = Oxford
 PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT
 OV = Quimiac Valley
 SR = Salmon River
 WR = Woodbury-Roxbury

Coastal Counts
 GL = Guilford-Long Island Sound
 GS = Greenwich-Stamford
 MA = Naperville, RINNYCT
 NH = New Haven
 NL = New London
 OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook
 SM = Stratford-Milford
 WE = Westport

Legend
 CW Count/Week/Count Period
 XX New 30-Year High Count - Gradient Fill
 XX New 30-Year Low Count - BOLD
 XX New Species for Count - Underlined
 XX Rare Species for Count - Italic
 0 First Time Not Seen, 30 Years - 30-Year Low

2017 FALL HAWK WATCH

By Steve Mayo

The lack of moderate northerly winds in the fall of 2017 was a repeat of the previous season. Six northwestern Connecticut sites (Booth Hill, Botsford Hill, Chestnut Hill, Johnnycake Mountain, Middle School, White Memorial) provided coverage in September. Two watches (Quaker Ridge, Lighthouse Park) were open for business from August to December. Two 2016 sites (Suffield WMA, Boothe Memorial Park, Stratford) went unreported in 2017.

THE BROAD-WINGED HAWK FLIGHT

Connecticut's Broad-winged Hawks had a solid early September start, but then the flight stalled. Light winds were predominately from the north from September 9-13. September 9 highlights were 179 (Botsford Hill, Bridgewater) and 597 (Quaker Ridge, Greenwich). On September 10 Broad-winged Hawk totals included 462 at Johnnycake, Burlington and 732 at Quaker Ridge. On the 11th, Botsford Hill had another 495, Chestnut Hill, Litchfield had 601, Johnnycake tallied 505 and Quaker Ridge had 639. September 12 numbers included 339 at Middle School, Torrington, 395 at Botsford Hill, and 264 at Chestnut Hill. On September 13, Booth Hill and Middle School had 202 and 203 respectively. There was little movement after this. Post Hurricane Jose winds on September 21 resulted in a push at Botsford Hill (151) and Chestnut Hill (223). Quaker Ridge counted 344 Broadwings the following day. Connecticut season totals were essentially similar to those of the previous year. Quaker Ridge had 3,008 Broad-winged Hawks which was the second lowest total in over 30 years of full-season coverage. Their season included a Broad-winged hawk spotted on the remarkable date of December 1.

QUAKER RIDGE and LIGHTHOUSE PARK

Quaker Ridge continues to lead the state in hawk numbers

and coverage. An afternoon flight on September 21 brought the daily American Kestrel total to 85. The season total of 418 approached the ten-year average. A season count of 321 Osprey and 1,532 Sharp-shinned Hawks were both lowest since 2003. Only 86 Northern Harriers were tallied, the lowest total since 1992. Big October and November flights pushed Turkey Vulture numbers to a site all-time season record of 1,743. The Red-shoulder flight was a repeat of the phenomenal 2014 late season. Most (763) of the season total 1,006 were seen on November 4, 7 and 8. Quaker Ridge was the only site to report Golden Eagles. Eight of these western raptors were counted in November.

Lighthouse also hosts a wide variety of diurnal migrants, and was also plagued by the lack of northerly winds. Of note were three Short-eared Owls, all on November 4. American Kestrels rebounded from the 2016 and 2015 seasons. Post Hurricane Jose winds brought 356 on September 22, which helped raise the season count to 1,070. Northern Harrier totals (277) were below the 10-year running average (336). Most 2017 totals for other species were on the low end of ten-year seasonal averages. Only 2,136 sharp-shinned Hawks were counted for the entire season, setting another record low since full-season coverage began in 1980. Seasonal totals recorded in the early 1980s to early 1990s frequently exceeded 9,000 or 10,000 of these small woodland accipiters. Forest habitat destruction, reduction in prey, acid precipitation and migratory short-stopping may be implicated in the decline of this species. But reductions at Lighthouse appear to be related to the lack of strong cold fronts. These were historically, regular occurrences in Connecticut. In October 2017, there was a single day with 3 hours of northwest winds exceeding velocities of 10-20 km/hour.

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

Matt Alexander, Clementino Amodio, Mark Aronson, Jim Asmuth, Blake Auchincloss, David Baade, Renee Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Dan Barvir, Steve Beal, Raymond Belding, John Berman, Tedy Berman, Gail Benson, Jay Boll, Nick Bonomo, Polly Brody, Steve Broker, Christina Buccieri, Tom Burke, Mark Burton, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier, Charlotte Catalono, Jim Cortina, Kathy Davies, Rita Dempsey, Ayreslea Denny, Paul Desjardins, Luke Douglas, Amy Dworetzky, Cynthia Ehlinger, Chris Finlay, James Fischer, Bobbie Fisher, Anne Fiske, David Fiske, Frank Gallo, Jay Gartner, Ted Gilman, Nancy Glynn, Tina Green, Carole Griffiths, Carol Goertz, Frank Guida, Lynn Willow Gulli, Ed Haesche, Greg Hanisek, Carol Hannan, Dennis Hannan, John Hannan, Carol Harrington, Richard Harrington, Roy Harvey, Julian Hough, Brenda Inskeep, Lynn James, Keith Johnson, Jonathan Kane, Eric Kaufman, Anne Kehmna, Marie Kennedy, Sulmaan Khan, Greg Kosakow, Steve Kovari, Deb Krall, Silva Laan, Bob Lamotte, Merriam Levin, Ryan MacLean, Jim MacLean, Andrew Magee, Matt Male, Frank Mantlik, Jerry Marcellino, Mike Marsano, Jeff Martin, Shaun Martin, Stefan Martin, Steve Mayo, Robin McAllister, Kevin McGrath, Ken Merrifield, Chris Mignone, Ken Mirman, Alan Mizrahi, Frances Moore, Judy Moore, Don Morgan, Tom Murray, Frank Nejame, Gina Nichol, Peter Nixon, Mike O'Brien, Emma Olsen, John Oshlick, Gary Palmer, David Peake-Jones, Ron Pelletier, Janet Petricone, Patti Picard, Matt Popp, Tim Reed, Anne Ribolow, Phil Ribolow, Paul Roberts, Johnny Rodriguez, Jack Rothman, David Salmon, Taylor Sanders, Ronnie Santo, Sol Satin, Scott Slora, Will Schenk, Dori Sosensky, Steve Spector, Howie Sternberg, Kelsey Sudol, Bill Tischler, Carol Titus, Bill Tonner, Tony Tortora, Andy Towle, Bill Wallace, Mike Warner, Chris Weintraub, Al Welby, Jack Wells, Steve Wolter, Richard Yaus, Sara Zagorski, Joe Zeranski

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2017

| Lookout | Town | Hours | BV | TV | OS | BE | NH | SS | CH | NG | RS | BW |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|------|
| Booth Hill | West Hartland | 9 | | 12 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 10 | | | 3 | 380 |
| Botsford Hill | Bridgewater | 44 | | | 19 | 12 | 2 | 60 | 4 | | | 74 |
| Chestnut Hill | Litchfield | 74 | | | 10 | 17 | 1 | 27 | | | | 1631 |
| Johannycake Mt. | Burlington | 30 | 13 | 5 | 27 | 15 | 3 | 13 | 5 | | 2 | 1144 |
| MiddleSchool | Torrington | 52 | 6 | | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | | | 890 |
| White Memorial | Litchfield | 14 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 6 | | 12 | 98 |
| INLAND TOTAL | | 223 | 19 | 19 | 68 | 60 | 11 | 116 | 21 | 0 | 17 | 4217 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 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 2017

| Lookout | Town | Hours | RT | RL | GE | AK | ML | PG | uR | TOTAL |
|----------------|-------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Booth Hill | W. Hartland | 9 | 4 | | | 16 | | | | 442 |
| Botsford Hill | Bridgewater | 44 | 1 | | | 15 | 6 | | 7 | 1393 |
| Chestnut Hill | Litchfield | 74 | | | | 14 | 1 | | 3 | 1704 |
| Johnnycake Mt. | Burlington | 30 | 4 | | | 9 | | | | 1240 |
| MiddleSchool | Torrington | 52 | | | | 6 | | | 5 | 932 |
| White Memorial | Litchfield | 14 | 3 | | | 1 | 2 | | 9 | 136 |
| INLAND TOTAL | | 223 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 61 | 9 | 0 | 24 | 5847 |

| 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 | | | |

Broad-winged Hawk Flight - Connecticut - Fall 2017

| Lookout | Aug | Sept | 10 | 11 | 12-14 | 15-17 | 18-20 | 21 | 22-24 | 25-30 | Oct | Nov | Total |
|------------------|-----|------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|
| INLAND GROUP | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Booth Hill | 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Botsford Hill | | 178 | | | 202 | | | | | | | | 380 |
| Chestnut Hill | | 83 | 25 | 495 | 429 | 67 | | 151 | 97 | | | | 1264 |
| Johnnycake Mt. | | 16 | 221 | 601 | 379 | 55 | | 223 | 56 | 13 | | | 1631 |
| Middle School | | 5 | 118 | 155 | 542 | 60 | | 4 | 6 | | | | 1144 |
| White Memorial | | | | 21 | 19 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 41 | 1 | | | 890 |
| "COASTAL" GROUP | | | | | | | | | | | | | 98 |
| Lighthouse Point | 1 | 71 | 58 | 16 | 18 | 9 | 20 | 65 | 98 | 85 | | | 441 |
| Quaker Ridge | 21 | 622 | 732 | 639 | 71 | 289 | 33 | 85 | 393 | 76 | 45 | 1 | 3007 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | | | 8855 |

Lighthouse Point, New Haven - Fall 2017

| | Hours | BV | TV | OS | BE | NH | SS | CH | NG | RS | BW | RT | RL | GE | AK | ML | PG | uR | Total |
|-----------|-------|----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| August | 13 | | | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | 12 |
| September | 211 | 2 | 25 | 890 | 84 | 133 | 1383 | 445 | | 8 | 355 | 26 | | | 917 | 177 | 52 | 153 | 4650 |
| October | 202 | 2 | 238 | 179 | 57 | 56 | 454 | 454 | 1 | 15 | 85 | 54 | 2 | | 149 | 75 | 39 | 140 | 2000 |
| November | 160 | 8 | 244 | 9 | 39 | 72 | 293 | 179 | 1 | 273 | | 158 | | | 4 | 24 | 33 | 86 | 1423 |
| December | 3 | | 20 | | | | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 5 | | | | | | 1 | 35 |
| Total | 588 | 12 | 527 | 1084 | 181 | 263 | 2136 | | 2 | 298 | 441 | 243 | 2 | 0 | 1070 | | 124 | | 8120 |

Quaker Ridge, Greenwich - Fall 2017

| | Hours | BV | TV | OS | BE | NH | SS | CH | NG | RS | BW | RT | RL | GE | AK | ML | PG | uR | Total |
|-----------|-------|----|------|-----|-----|----|------|-----|----|------|------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-------|
| August | 79 | | | 38 | 16 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | 21 | | | | 4 | 1 | | | 88 |
| September | 234 | | 5 | 231 | 76 | 54 | 920 | 62 | 1 | | 2940 | 6 | | | 339 | 58 | 7 | 21 | 4720 |
| October | 205 | 12 | 797 | 52 | 52 | 18 | 405 | 179 | 0 | 54 | 45 | 32 | | | 72 | 24 | 12 | 27 | 1781 |
| November | 188 | 12 | 896 | | 25 | 12 | 202 | 135 | 1 | 922 | 1 | 261 | | 8 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 27 | 2517 |
| December | 13 | | 45 | | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | 29 | 1 | 5 | | | | | | | 85 |
| Total | 719 | 24 | 1743 | 321 | 172 | 86 | 1532 | 378 | 2 | 1006 | 3008 | 304 | 0 | 8 | 418 | 93 | 21 | 75 | 9191 |

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Dec. 1, 2017 through Feb. 28, 2018

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik

A **Pink-footed Goose** turned up Dec. 21 along the Pawcatuck R. in North Stonington (BG, DPe et al.) and remained through at least Jan. 3. **Greater White-fronted Geese** were reported from at least 12 locations, with multiples that included three each on Jan. 27 at Union Pond in Manchester (BA, JM) and on Jan. 21 in Griswold (NB, ABl) and up to two on

various dates in December and January in North Stonington (MAr et al.). Flocks of 70 and 100 Snow Geese were over downtown Torrington in the dark on Dec. 11 (DT). The flight continued in rain and fog the next day with 220 on Bantam L. in Litchfield (MD) and 300 in the evening at Twin Lakes in Salisbury (BR). There was no let up on Dec. 13 with 910 over Sharon



Chris Wood photo
This Barnacle Goose and Cackling Goose were almost joined at the hip as they moved around the Fairfield area in January.

Audubon (ZA), 100 at 9 p.m. over Milford (SH), and 50 at night over Westport (LM). At the other end of the season, a flock of 17 was at Seaside Park in Bridgeport on Feb. 23 (FM). A **Barnacle Goose** was present Dec. 6-10 at Fisher Meadow in Avon (PM, VM et al.), and one was seen almost daily in Fairfield and nearby Westport Jan. 3-18 (JTe et al.). One, and in a few cases two, Cackling Geese were reported from about 15 locations throughout the season.

Here is the **Ross's Goose** rundown: an adult in North Stonington and Ledyard Dec. 27-30 (PW et al.); a juvenile Dec. 30-Jan. 3 in Farmington (DMo, MAn et al.); an adult and a juvenile Jan. 10-Feb. 17 at Lake Zoar in Southbury (RN et al.); an adult Jan. 14-29 in Stratford, Milford and Fairfield (AD, FM et al.); an adult Feb. 2-3 in Suffield and Enfield, with presumably the same bird in Storrs Feb. 12-22 (DH, AP); and one on Feb. 21 at Bantam L. in Litchfield (BDe). The big goose flight over Sharon on Dec. 13 was accompanied by 12 **Tundra Swans** (ZA). At the other end of the season, 21 flew over Westport on Feb. 24 (PL); 10 passed over Bantam

Lake Feb. 26 (MD), with one at Seaside Park in Bridgeport the same day (NB, JTe); and 12 flew by Shippan Point, Stamford, on Feb. 27 (PDu).

A good winter count of 25 Wood Ducks was noted Dec. 24 at Goodwin Park in Hartford (JHr). In an unusually sparse winter for **Eurasian Wigeon**, the only report was of one in the Greenwich harbor area in January (AC). A high count of 29 Northern Pintails was at Station 43 in South Windsor on Feb. 26 (PDe). Small numbers of Redheads scattered along the coast were topped by up to four throughout the period at Grass Island in Greenwich (CE, m.ob.). Inland one was at the Donald W. Barnes Boat Launch on the Connecticut R. in Enfield Jan. 2-13 (JW, PDe, et al.). A female **Tufted Duck** found Jan. 1 in Bridgeport remained through at least Feb. 18 (JN, m.ob.). This is the second year in a row that presumably the same individual wintered in the Captain's Cove area.

Twenty years ago King Eiders were rare but the more regular of the two eider species. Today Common Eider has become regular to

at times abundant in eastern Long Island Sound and King remains rare but regular. This was a good winter for **King Eider**, starting with an immature male found at Ocean Beach in New London on Jan. 7 (DPe). A female was in Stonington on Jan. 9 (RS), and the species appeared at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP)on Jan. 28 when three females turned up (MAr). An immature male was there the next day (DMc). An adult male **Harlequin Duck** was off Westport Dec. 17 (LF). Another male began a long stay Jan. 30 near the Oyster R. mouth in West Haven (LB et al.), staying into March, and the season's third was at Sunken I., Fairfield on Feb. 10 (AK). Two Long-tailed Ducks were a good find Dec. 16 on Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury (BDe), as was a total of three on the Connecticut River in Wallingford and Middletown on Dec. 17 (fide MB). The long-staying, multi-year adult male **Barrow's Goldeneye** arrived Dec. 13 at Tuxis I., Madison (HS). It remained through period's end and beyond. In a good season for the species, others were found the next

day at Sherwood I. State Park in Westport (TG), on Dec. 17 off East Haven (GN), on Dec. 24 at Mumford Cove in Groton (DPe), on Jan. 13 at Bluff Point in Groton (DRo) and on Jan. 17 a male and a female were at Sherwood I. (TG).

A morning flight at Shippan Point, Stamford, on Dec. 6 produced 432 Red-throated Loons and 61 Northern Gannets (PDu). The next morning brought 122 Red-throated Loons, 34 Northern Gannets and seven Razorbills (PDu). Inland Red-necked Grebes were at Barkhamsted Reservoir on Dec. 2 (DRs) and on Lake Saltonstall in Branford on Dec. 6 (GN). An **Eared Grebe** in Stonington harbor offered excellent viewing opportunities Feb. 4 through the end of the period (DW et al.). An **American White Pelican** was a flyby on the Thames River in New London on Dec. 20 (RK). After a widespread presence of Great Egrets in December, one lingered to Jan. 2 in Norwalk harbor (LF). The next report was of an early arrival Feb. 10 at West River in West Haven (SU, KZ).

An outstanding roost of 116 Black Vultures was in



Tommy Self photo
 These Sandhill Cranes made a brief showing in Mystic on Jan. 11, 2018.

Canaan on Dec. 20 (JDr); 59 were in New Milford on Dec 24 (JDu). An immature Golden Eagle was seen sporadically Dec. 31 – Feb. 2 in Plainfield (RD et al.). The only other report was from Hadlyme on Feb. 3 (DRa). A late Broad-winged Hawk, an adult, offered good views to an experienced observer Dec. 1 at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (RM). Rough-legged Hawks were widely reported, both inland and along the coast, beginning in mid-December. All reports were of single birds except for two on Jan. 6 at Milford Point (CL, MV). **Sandhill Cranes** included four on Dec.16

in Warren (RP), a flyover Dec.12 in Wallingford (fide MB); and two on Jan. 11 in Mystic (GW). Winter reports of Clapper Rails included two on Dec. 23 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (SB, MB); up to two Jan. 28-31 at Indian River Cemetery in Clinton (SB, TG) and one at Great Island in Old Lyme on Feb. 28 (JSh). Of particular instance was one videotaped being caught and eaten by a Snowy Owl on the frozen Great Meadows salt marsh, Stratford, on Jan. 11 (fide SMr).

A Semipalmated Plover lingered again at Greenwich Point starting with a report

on Dec. 14 (SC). It was last reported on Jan. 1 (CE). A Lesser Yellowlegs was late Dec. 10 at Barn I. in Stonington (BDw). American Woodcocks were displaying Feb. 20-21, both inland and along the coast, with the arrival of 70 F temperatures on the former date (GN, JTe et al.). The now-regular winter presence of Razorbills in Long Island Sound was illustrated by eight on Jan. 12 along a ferry crossing from New London (PR). One of the season's best – and most cooperative birds – was a **Thick-billed Murre** found Feb. 4 in Stonington harbor (AV, m.ob.).

It remained through Feb. 16, offering many birders a rare opportunity to see one from land in Connecticut. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was seen from the New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry on Dec. 30 (FM, JOs et al.). Another, or the same, Kittiwake was seen from the Waterford shore that same morning (TA). A **Black-headed Gull** was a one-day visitor to the Birdseye boat ramp in Stratford on Jan. 1 (JN). Another that has been a regular in the Stonington area for several winters was found Jan. 24 and seen through the season (BDw). The high count of Iceland



Maggie Peretto photo
 This flock of Black Vultures found in Manchester on the Hartford Christmas Bird Count take on an almost Shakespearean sense of foreboding.



Bruce Finnan photo

Photographers couldn't get enough of this winter's Snowy Owls, such as this one at Long Beach in Stratford on Dec. 4, 2017.

Gulls was four on Jan. 18 at HBSP (KM). Glaucous Gulls were reported from about 10 locations, including one inland on Dec. 14 at Lake Waramaug in New Preston (GH).

It was a good season for **Snowy Owls** with the majority of reports from the Stratford-Milford area, including up to three at various times at Long Beach, Stratford (FM, m.ob.). The next most observations were from HBSP (CL, MV et al.), and an array of other coastal sites included Lighthouse Point (GM) and Long Wharf (AL et al.), both in New Haven; the Norwalk

Islands (LF); Sandy Point in West Haven (CL, MV); Waterford (DL); Old Lyme (AV); Brazos Road in East Haven (CH); and Stonington Point/Barn Island (PR, m.ob). Inland birds appeared in Windsor Dec. 11 (BKu); in Hartford on Dec. 15-16 (TB et al.); in Wallingford Dec. 16 (MM); and at Thomaston Dam on Feb 13 (BDe).

A *Selasphorus* hummingbird visited a feeder Dec. 15 in Southbury (fide KE). Contrary to recent trends, Red-headed Woodpeckers were scarce. One was at Peace Nature Sanctuary in Mystic on Dec. 30 (JR), and one was

along the Hockanum River Linear Trail in East Hartford on Jan. 31 (JTr). Nine reports of Eastern Phoebes included the latest at Bent of the River Sanctuary in Southbury on Jan. 20 (KE). The only Northern Shrike report came from Goshen on Dec. 17 (NH, SSl). Egg-laying by Northern Ravens was noted Feb. 26 at West Rock Ridge State Park in New Haven (SB). The only inland reports of Marsh Wrens were one on Dec. 17 at Glastonbury Meadows (BA) and up to two at Laurel Marsh in Manchester Jan. 23-26 (AP).

A late flurry of warblers included a Black-and-white Warbler Dec. 1 at Union Pond in Manchester (DF); a Yellow Warbler Dec. 7 at HBSP (JHu); a Northern Parula Dec. 10 at HBSP (MG); a Northern Waterthrush in Litchfield (DMA) and a Prairie Warbler at Griswold Point, Old Lyme (JHa), both on Dec. 11. Especially noteworthy with 6 inches of snow on the ground were two Hooded Warblers attracted to a heat vent at a house in Stonington Dec. 10-18, with one lingering to Dec. 27 (J&SP fide GW). A Black-and-white Warbler on Dec. 17 at

HBSP was the highlight of a five-warbler day that also included the more expected Orange-crowned, Pine, Palm and Yellow-rumped (JOs). An Orange-crowned was also at Haddam Meadows State Park in Haddam that day (EP).

A Grasshopper Sparrow, rare in winter, was found Jan. 1 at Stratford Point and remained through at least Jan. 11 (PF et al.). Chipping Sparrow is no longer a winter rarity, but five on Jan. 24 in Griswold was a remarkable number (RD). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** Dec. 3-16 in Woodbridge was the only one reported (CL et al.). The season's two **Dickcissels** were in Shelton on Dec. 17 (KE et al.), and at a feeder in Darien Dec. 28 through Jan. 4 (JL et al.)

An unusual winter flock of seven Eastern Meadowlarks landed in a field at the Audubon Center in Pomfret on Dec. 3 (JV). Other multiple bird reports were of three at Saltwater Farm Vineyard in Stonington (PR et al.) and two at the Hartford landfill (DMo), all on Dec. 17. The season's three **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** were found Dec. 2 in Colchester (DC); in

Preston on Dec. 30- Jan. 14 (DPr); and at Vibert Road, South Windsor, on Jan. 28 (JK, SF). The reliable Rusty Blackbird flock at a Hamden feeder numbered 25 on Jan. 20 (JZ). The high count of Boat-tailed Grackles was 35 going to a roost in Stratford on Jan. 14 (FG). The eight reports of Baltimore Orioles were all in December with the exception of one at a Waterford feeder on Jan. 2 (JSi). All were singles except for two at a Niantic feeder on Dec. 16 (KG). In a season lacking in winter finches, Pine Siskins managed to muster scattered reports of just one to four throughout the season.

Exotics – A Eurasian Goldfinch was at Nyala Farm in Westport on Dec. 17 (JTe, PL).

Observers: Zachary Adams, Mark Aronson (MAr), Michael Aronson (MAAn), Bill Asteriades, Tom Auer, Michael Aurelia (MAu), Melissa Baston, Tom Baptist, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Doug Beach, Allison Black (ABl), Nick Bonomo, Andy Brand (ABr), Steve Broker, Alex Burdo (ABu), Sarah Carline, Dan Cimbaro, Chris Chinni, Annette Cuniffe, Vanessa David, Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Angela Dimmitt, Robert Dixon, Mike Doyle, Paul

Desjardins (PDe), Jacob Drucker (JDr), James Dugan (JDu), Patrick Dugan (PDu), Cynthia Ehlinger, Ken Elkins, Sarah Faulkner, Larry Flynn, David Funke, Paul Fusco, Frank Gallo, Karen Gallo, Barbara Gearhart, Miles Goldenberg, Tina Green, Jack Halibozek (JHa), Nicki Hall, Greg Hanisek, Stacy Hanks, Julie Hart (JHr), Dorrie Holmes, Julian Hough (JHo), Chris Howe, Jeff Hullstrung (JHu), Jay Kaplan, Robert Kelsey, Aidan Kiley, Brian Kleinman (BKl), Brian Kulvete (BKu), Dave Lawton (DLa), James Leone, David Leiper (DLe), Alex Lin-Moore, Chris Loscalzo, Preston Lust, Ryan MacLean, Frank Mantlik, Paul Margiott, Vicky Margiott, Deb Martin (DMa), Stefan Martin (SMr), Gail Martino, Steve Mayo (SMa), Don McGregor (DMc), Leslie Meredith, Jamie Meyers, Darlene Moore (DMo), Marty Moore, Keith Mueller, Brendan Murtha, Jeremy Nance, Russ Naylor, Gina Nichol, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs), Annette Pasek, Elaine Payne, Dylan Pedro (DPe), Bob Pelkey, Ron Pelletier, John Periera, Sandy Periera, Dave Provencher (DPr), David Rauch (DRa), Brendan Reilly, James Restivo, Dave Rosgen (DRs), Dan Rottino (DRo), Phil Rusch, Tommy Self (TSe), James Sherwonit (JSh), Jeff Simms (JSi), Sam Slater (SSl), Russ Smiley, Steve Spector (SSp), Howie Sternberg, Jory Teltser (JTe), Tim Thompson, Dave Tripp, Jonathan Trouern-Trend (JTr), Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahey, Anthony Vicciarelli, Jamie Viditch, Doug Warner, Mike Warner, John Weeks, Glenn Williams, Paul Wolter, Sara Zagorski, Jim Zipp, Kristof Zyskowski

CONNECTICUT BIRD ATLAS NOTES

Amassed mergansers on the Pomperaug



Chris Wood photo/text
This gang of 29 Common Merganser ducklings with, apparently, one adult female on the Pomperaug River below my house in mid-June. The average total count on the Woodbury/Roxbury June Count over the last 25 years is 39; in 2017 the total was 87 (highest ever). Brood amalgamation (or "crèche formation") is common in this species. Typical egg clutch is 9-12, but I've only seen broods of 5 and 6 this year, so this amalgamation probably represents 4 - 6 broods. Atlasing provides the incentives to watch closely even in your back yard; despite the brazenness of this gang, and despite daily checks, I only saw it one other time as they roamed their territory up and down the Pomperaug River and eventually split up.

Atlasing As Blood Sport

Rose Hill Wildlife Management Area falls into one of my blocks and also straddles the Preston/Ledyard border. One section of the WMA has been cut over while leaving the existing cedars intact. As vegetation is growing back in, Prairie Warblers have taken advantage of the habitat for nesting. This is the only area that I know of in this atlas block that has Prairie Warblers on territory. I was pushing my way through the vegetation to try to get nesting confirmation and

it seemed I was finding every thorn that existed in there. My pants and shirt ended up torn and I availed myself of my entire vocabulary of colorful language as my skin was shredded by the thick tangles of thorn clad greenery. Confirming Prairie Warbler nesting was truly going to be a bloody proposition!

I finally found a good observation spot and was licking my wounds when I suddenly heard a distinctive call. I recognized it immediately as a Yellow-breasted Chat. Quite soon I was watching the Chat doing its display flight and song over and over again. My cuts and scratches forgotten, I just stood there and enjoyed a show rarely seen in Connecticut. Over the coming days I would return several more times to this spot (and donate quite a bit more blood) to see if the Chat would find a mate. Unfortunately it didn't, but I was compensated by finding a Lawrence's Warbler in the same area as well. That particular section of the WMA has extracted a fair bit of pain from me, but it remains one of my favorite new local spots. And of course, I was able to confirm Prairie Warbler nesting as well as on my last visit I witnessed juvenile warblers being fed by adults!

Dave Provencher

Atlas Notes will be a regular feature during the Connecticut Bird Atlas. Submissions are welcomed.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Greg Hanisek



If this bird would just lift up its head and fly, identification would be a lot more straightforward. But that's part of the challenge and the fun of birding. The birds don't always cooperate. This is an especially diabolical photo. I know this because I once used it as a blog quiz. The answers not only encompassed a range of incorrect species. They were spread over a range of bird families! When dealing with any kind of unknown situation, it always pays to deconstruct things. The clues usually lie in the constituent parts. In this case one feature immediately offers some clarity by eliminating a huge range of possibilities. Look at those dinky little legs. Not many birds have legs that short. And as a result this bird must rely heavily on flight. The most flight-reliant of birds include swifts near the top of the list. Since this Challenge centers on local birds, only the Chimney Swift would

be a possibility, but this bird's light underparts rule that out. How about swallows? They fit, and only one species presents this combination of brown above and white below with a suffusion of buff on the breast – Northern Rough-winged Swallow. This one was captured in a very atypical posture by Mark Szantyr.



Photo Challenge No. 102

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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