



The Connecticut Warbler

The Journal of The Connecticut Ornithological Association



October 2023

All about the Winter 2022-2023 Christmas Bird Counts
Winter 2022-23 produced a nice array of rarities
Getting a grip on look-alike vireos.

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ON THE COVER

Ross's Goose

A Ross's Goose cruising on the water's surface is beautiful; this one photographed by Alex Sauerbrunn in full descent on Day Hill Road in Windsor on Jan. 18, 2023 is spectacular.

The 2022-2023 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count

By Stephen P. Broker



This Black-chinned Hummingbird, the state's second record, visited a South Windsor feeder over an extended period that included the Hartford CBC on Dec. 18. Of course it was new to the state's all-time CBC species list. (Matt Bell)

A Christmas Bird-Census

“It is not many years ago that sportsmen were accustomed to meet on Christmas Day, ‘choose sides,’ and then, as representatives of the two bands resulting, hie them to the fields and woods on the cheerful mission of killing practically everything in fur or feathers that crossed their path - if they could.

“These exceptional opportunities for winning the laurels of the chase were termed ‘side hunts,’ and reports of the hundreds of non-game birds which were sometimes slaughtered during a single hunt were often published in our leading sportsmen’s journals, with perhaps a word of editorial commendation for the winning side. We are not certain that the side hunt is wholly a thing of the past, but we feel assured

that no reputable sportsman's journal of today would venture to publish an account of one, unless it were to condemn it; and this very radical change of tone is one of the significant signs of our times.

"Now, BIRD-LORE proposes a new kind of Christmas side hunt, in the form of a Christmas bird-census, and we hope that all our readers who have the opportunity will aid us in making it a success by spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds and sending a report of their 'hunt' to BIRD-LORE before they retire that night. Such reports should be headed by the locality, hour of starting and returning, character of the weather, direction and force of the wind, and the temperature; the latter taken when starting. The birds observed should then be added, following the order in which they are given in the A.O.U. 'Check List,' with, if possible, the exact or approximate number of individuals of each species observed."

With those words, published in the December 1900 issue of *Bird-Lore*, the bi-monthly magazine "devoted to the study and protection of birds" and "the official organ of the Audubon Societies," Frank M. Chapman issued an environmental call to arms to try to save our vanishing avian wildlife. Early in his career at the American Museum of Natural History, he served as assistant to ornithologist Joel A. Allen and had already published two early field guides to the birds and several dozen papers on birds and mammals. Chapman established *Bird-Lore* and assumed the role of editor in 1899.

Bird-Lore and its successor publications *Audubon Field Notes* and *American Birds* have published 123 years of Christmas Bird Counts held throughout North America and beyond. The results of the first 25 pioneering Christmas Bird Counts in 1900 were published in the January-February 1901 issue of *Bird-Lore*. These first bird censuses took place in Canada (2, in New Brunswick and Toronto), New Hampshire (1), Massachusetts (3), Connecticut (2), New York (2), New Jersey (3), Pennsylvania (5), Ohio (1), Illinois (1), Wisconsin (1), Missouri (1), Louisiana (1), Colorado (1), and California (1).

The Christmas Census of 1900 held at Arnold Arboretum in Boston extended over five hours and included the observation of birds during a snow squall. The count in Central Park, New York City took place under clear skies and light west winds. Christmas Bird Count founder Frank Chapman did his birding in Englewood, New Jersey, where he recorded 18 species and 320 individuals. Connecticut sent to *Bird-Lore* the results of two counts for this inaugural CBC.

The Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA) has covered the Christmas Bird Counts that have taken place in the state since the formation of COA in 1980. The January 1982 issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* includes an article by Fred Sibley titled "Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts 1900 to 1909: The First Decade." Fred's



Northern Cardinal was among the species absent from the first Connecticut CBCs in 1900 because they had not yet extended their ranges northward into New England. (Bruce Finnegan)

article began, "On Christmas Day in the year 1900, George P. Ellis of Norwalk started off at 8 A.M. on an unseasonably warm day to conduct the first official Connecticut Christmas Count. Following Dr. Frank Chapman's suggestion (*Bird-Lore* 1900:192) of 'spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds', George braved 60 degree temperatures for several hours and before retiring for the night sent his first and last report to *Bird-Lore* for publication. His total of eight Herring Gulls, three Crows, 11 Tree Sparrows, 18 White-breasted Nuthatches, and five Chickadees was typical of the early counts. Thus was launched the first of 66 counts [in Connecticut] for the decade."

Fred Sibley's article continued, "Counts varied greatly in quality and many more were little more than backyard counts. Censuses were taken in seven of the present day (1982) count circles but only those in Waterbury, New Haven, and Westport went beyond the backyard and even here counts of less than 10 species and less than 100 individuals were regular." A second Connecticut count in this inaugural year of the Christmas Bird Census was conducted by Frank Bruen and Royal Ford at Bristol. Their field work located seven species and 68 individuals over a three hour period. Two additional species were added to the Bristol results in the days prior to Dec. 25, Bluebird seen by Bruen and Ford and Towhee seen by B.A. Peck. Fred described

Bristol's holding ten counts in the first nine years of this new bird census as "an excellent effort."

Fred Sibley's article indicates that a total of 75 bird species were recorded in these first ten years of the Connecticut CBC. The birds seen did not include southern species that had not yet expanded their ranges into Connecticut (Tufted Titmouse, Northern Mockingbird, Northern Cardinal), species not yet introduced to the Eastern United States (Mute Swan, House Finch), a northern species that hadn't yet expanded its range southward (Great Cormorant), several waterbirds missed as the consequence of "weak game laws of the time and the hunting of shorebirds", and a general scarcity of gulls at that time in our state. The complete article by Fred Sibley is available on the COA website, ctbirding.org.

In the next issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*, April 1982, Roland Clement provided some commentary on Fred Sibley's article. Roland described the early counts as "casual sorties intended mostly to demonstrate an interest in birds and provide a little publicity for the new bird conservation movement launched by the newly formed State Audubon Societies." He listed several factors to explain the significant increases in species numbers recorded on Connecticut CBCs over the course of the ensuing 70 years. They included the development of superior field skills in the identification of birds using field marks as pioneered by Massachusetts ornithologist Ludlow Griscom, the improved quality and wide availability of binoculars, and Roger Peterson's illustrations using the field mark technique for the identification of birds, introduced in 1934 in his groundbreaking *A Field Guide to the Birds*. Drastic habitat changes due to an expanding human population and overall agricultural abandonment also played a significant role in the successful search for birds in the field. The widespread use of automobiles during bird counts helped birders cover more territory, and more quickly. Roland attributed the much higher species counts made in later decades to "better training in identification, better tools of the trade, competitive enthusiasm, and, perhaps even more so, a result of the better organization which has characterized these counts in recent years."

The Christmas Bird Count has undergone close to a century and a quarter of maturation. It's worth taking a moment to review the overall development and expansion of this remarkable citizen science movement. In Connecticut, nine counts were held on the tenth (1909) Christmas Census, including five in the present day New Haven count circle and individual counts in New Canaan, Waterbury, West Hartford, and New London. On the twenty-fifth Christmas Census (1924), a review article in *Bird-Lore* read, "The first Census, that of 1901 (actually, 1900), was made up of twenty-five reports, twenty-seven observers cooperating. This year (1924) there are 176 printed reports, from over 400 observers, and 34 states and one province are represented." Connecticut continued to run a total of nine CBCs at this time, with multiple counts in Fairfield and New London.

The 50th Christmas Bird Count, published in the April 1950 issue of *Audubon Field Notes* (Bird-Lore's successor), states, "It is indeed regrettable that Dr. Frank M. Chapman, the originator of the Christmas Bird Count, could not have lived to witness the fiftieth annual observance of this American ornithological tradition. By the time of Dr. Chapman's death the original Christmas census experiment, in which 27 persons participated the first year, had expanded into the greatest cooperative ornithological project in North America. . . In 1945, the year of Dr. Chapman's death, 2300 persons participated in the Christmas Bird Count. On the fiftieth count, four years later, there were more than twice this number!"

The 1950 national CBC review article stated, "Some readers may wonder how much scientific value there is in this great assemblage of Christmas Count data. Surely there exists no comparable record of fifty years of observation at a given season over so wide an area. On the other hand, so many variable factors are involved that statistical analyses must be approached with considerable caution." The first statistical analyses of North American CBC results took place around the time of the completion of the 40th CBC. Shortly after the second half-century of CBCs got underway, the Port Chester, New York CBC was renamed the Greenwich-Stamford CBC in 1956 with the note added, "essentially Port Chester, N.Y. count of 35 years standing moved slightly."

When we jump to the 75th Christmas Bird Count (1974-75), then published in *American Birds* and "incorporating *Audubon Field Notes*", the Audubon CBC review article states, "this issue sets a number of new records. In it are published the results of 1102 counts taken in the United States, Canada, Middle America and the West Indies (up 58 counts from last year); the result of the combined efforts of 27,184 observers (up 2321 from last year)." Regional editor Davis Finch, a former co-compiler with Noble Proctor of the New Haven CBC, wrote the count summary for New England's 79 CBCs. Davis noted that "in many respects the CBCs of a decade ago seem like ancient history. Since that time, New England counts have increased 61%, observers 96%, parties 115%, party-hours 146%, party-miles 148%."

The 75th Connecticut CBC (1974-75) included 15 separate counts: Greenwich-Stamford; Hartford; Hidden Valley Region, Conn.-N.Y., later named Pawling (Hidden Valley); Lakeville-Sharon; Litchfield Hills; New Haven; New London; Old Lyme-Saybrook; Oxford; Quinnipiac Valley Region; Storrs; Stratford-Milford; Waterbury; Westport; Woodbury-Roxbury. By the mid-1970s, this list of Connecticut counts began to resemble those of the ensuing decades. The Waterbury CBC was disbanded. In 1975-76, the Salmon River CBC was added to our list of statewide counts.

The 100th Christmas Bird Count (1999-2000) included "An Important Reminder About Dates." CBC compilers and participants were advised that, "Beginning with

the upcoming 101st Christmas Bird Count, all future Christmas Bird Count dates will be: December 14th through January 5th (inclusive dates). As always, compilers may schedule their counts any time during the official count period."

The 100th CBC was one of the last for which the National Audubon Society would publish the complete results of all counts submitting data to American Birds. Since the mid-1990s, all count results going back to the first year of the CBC have been available online. By 2001, only the regional summaries would make it into hard copy, and that continued for 12 years or so. Wayne Petersen has been the regional editor for New England for the Christmas Bird Count issues of American Birds for the last 39 years, providing brilliant coverage of early winter population trends, sightings of rare or out of season birds, identification issues, and a host of valuable information on the changing landscape of birds in our region of North America.

Christmas Bird Count director Geoff LeBaron wrote in his summary of the 100th count, "When Frank Chapman thought up the original 'Christmas Bird Census' in the fall of 1900 it seems unlikely he expected his brainchild to out-last the 'Side Hunt' he hoped it would replace. The origins of the Side Hunt may be steeped in the fogs of time, but over the last 100 years participants in the Christmas Bird Counts have certainly counted far more birds than were ever shot on all Christmas Day hunts combined." Geoff LeBaron continued, "Far from having evolved into 'just' another holiday tradition, the Christmas Bird Count is increasingly accepted by ornithologists and conservationists alike as the best, if not only, tool available for assessing the long-term trends in the early winter bird populations of North America." The 100th CBC involved 52,471 total observers participating in 1,823 CBCs in the United States, Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Guam. In Connecticut, new count circles had been established in the 1980s at Barkhamsted (1982) and at Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood (1984).

Geoff LeBaron's review article for the 122nd CBC is the most recent that I can find on-line. Geoff states that there were 2,621 counts involving 76,886 total observers, and 2,554 species observed that year, with 672 species recorded in the United States. Connecticut observers working in 17 count circles recorded 163 count day species and a total of 360,026 individual birds. Four new Christmas Bird Counts taking place wholly or in part in Connecticut have been added in the new millennium. They are Napatrie, RI, NY, CT (new in 2002), Guilford-Long Island Sound (2015), Bristol (2016), and Norwich (2019). Let's now turn to this year's Connecticut Christmas Bird Count.

2022-2023 Connecticut CBC - Weather Conditions

The Connecticut CBC review article for last year summarized weather conditions for each year going back to the 2011-12 Christmas Bird Count. Several years involved birders tromping around the countryside in deep snow or under blizzard conditions,

particularly in 2012-13 and 2020-21. Rain also has factored in for some coastal and inland counts over the past decade. Last year, two northern counts had light deposits of snow. Balmy temperatures, cloudy skies, and some temporary light rain resulted in fog on several counts. Generally, the foreboding weather forecasts for the 2021-22 count period did not materialize.

This year, weather conditions were fairly benign, with no rainfall and no snowfall for just about all of the 20 count circles. New London had to deal with light morning and afternoon rain, with the balmy weather (a temperature range through the day of 48-54 degrees Fahrenheit!) producing confounding fog throughout the day. Compiler Bob Dewire wrote, "I am sure you all agree that weather conditions for the New London count were pretty dismal. Pretty much all day fog and rain and/or mist kept visibility and activity low. Individual numbers were very low in many cases, especially waterbirds, since you couldn't see very far offshore." Despite those tough birding conditions, New London birders persisted and tallied 119 count day and two count week species, an impressive total.

Thirteen counts had low temperatures in the 20s, and five had lows in the 30s. In northwestern Connecticut, Barkhamsted's count began with a low of 15 degrees F. Several counts had wind gusts up to 20-30 mph, and overall most winds were from the Northwest. The entire count period was characterized by open or partly frozen still water (ponds, lakes, pools) and open moving water (rivers, streams, etc.). Partly cloudy and cloudy morning and afternoon skies prevailed.

Compiler Jay Kaplan summarized Hartford's Dec. 18 count with these words. "The weather was delightful, with temperatures reaching into the low 40s with light winds. It should be noted that less than a week following the Count, a major rainstorm pummeled the area, and temperatures then plummeted into the single digits. We lucked out!" Jay also gave thought to how weather will affect count results. "While a count day storm will certainly impact participation and birds seen that day, the November-December weather leading up to the count also plays a major role in determining the movements of migrants that may or may not linger into early winter. Seed and berry crops also determine numbers, especially when it comes to sparrows and birds like cedar waxwing."

The Weather Channel provides detailed historical weather data for numerous locations around the state, including two consulted for this review article: the East Haven, CT Weather History recorded at Tweed New Haven Airport Station and the Windsor Locks, CT Weather History recorded at Bradley International Airport Station. The data from each of these stations, one coastal and the other in northern Connecticut, show some wild swings in temperature and significant divergences from historic average temperatures through the pre-CBC period.

The first 13 days of November at Tweed ranged from 8 degrees to 22 degrees above historic averages, while the Bradley station recorded temperatures from 3 degrees to 23 degrees above historic averages during the same interval. Nov. 7 saw a high of 79 degrees F at Tweed New Haven, while temperatures reached 77 degrees F at Bradley on Nov. 7 and 9. Temperatures dropped considerably during the second and third weeks of November, ranging from around 30 degrees to highs of 50 degrees at Tweed each day. At Bradley, temperatures dipped into the mid-20s. The last week of November saw a second series of seasonally warmer days. The month produced 1.18 inches of precipitation along the coast and 3.76 inches of precipitation at the northern weather station. Snow depth was nonexistent in each location.

December continued this warm trend, especially in the first and third weeks, just in time for the Christmas Bird Count season. Maximum temperatures of 58 to 59 degrees F were achieved in Week One of December at both weather stations. During the first weekend of Connecticut CBCs, when 12 counts were conducted, temperatures ranged from 2 to 7 degrees above historic averages. A cold snap preceded the counts held on Dec. 26 at Stratford-Milford and Barkhamsted. Not unexpectedly, Barkhamsted thus achieved the coldest count day conditions. Warmer weather predominated for the stretch weekend counts held on Friday, Dec. 30, Saturday, Dec. 31, and Jan. 1. In fact, Jan. 1 was characterized by temperatures 18-19 degrees above historic averages. The month of December received 1.47 inches of precipitation and no accumulated snow depth at Tweed, while the northern inland station at Bradley received 4.81 inches of precipitation and 3.00 inches of snow. Wind speeds were highest for the New Haven and Storrs CBCs on Dec. 17 and the New London CBC on Dec. 31.

Highlights of the 2022-2023 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count

Twenty count circles submitted results for the Dec. 14, 2022-Jan. 5, 2023 period. A total of 785 field observers and 79 feeder watchers devoted 2,107 party hours and covered 8,200 total party miles. We recorded 173 count day and four count week species. The count week birds were a White-winged Dove at New Haven, a Brown Pelican at Greenwich-Stamford, a Red-headed Woodpecker at Norwich, and a Painted Bunting at Napatrie. The 270,361 total individuals counted represent a 30-year low total for the state.

Eight species and one subspecies were recorded at 30-year high totals, including Clapper Rail, Common Raven, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, and Savannah 'Ipswich' Sparrow. Six species were at 30-year low totals. Among the low counts were those for Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard, Long-eared Owl, Cedar Waxwing, and American Goldfinch. Black-chinned Hummingbird at Hartford and Brown Pelican count week at Greenwich-Stamford were new to the 30-year count. The eight rarities this year were the aforementioned White-winged Dove seen count week at New Haven, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Salmon River, a Townsend's



Good news from the saltmarsh. The CBCs recorded Clapper Rails at a 30-year high.
(Bruce Finnigan)

Solitaire at Old Lyme-Saybrook, two Black-and-white Warblers at Westport, a Tennessee Warbler count day at Greenwich-Stamford and count week at New London, a Northern Parula at Stratford-Milford, and Yellow Warbler count day and Painted Bunting count week at Napatrie.

A 30-year look at some of the taxonomic groups reveals a mixed bag of gains and losses. Waterfowl in lower numbers included Mute Swan, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Canvasback, and Common Goldeneye, while Brant, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, and Hooded Merganser continue their surges or steady growth in early winter numbers. Both the non-native or feral Rock Pigeon and Mourning Dove have been in some decline.

Among shorebirds, Killdeer, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, and Purple Sandpiper were in reduced numbers, and Red Knot has not been reported for 15 years. There has been a mere total of eight Red Knots in 30 years. Black-bellied Plover and American Woodcock were found in comparatively good numbers. Bonaparte's Gull was missed last year for the first time since the 1940s, but this year the handsome, gracile gull species rebounded with 73 sighted on three coastal counts. The majority were seen at Napatrie. Iceland Gulls were well represented. Ring-billed Gull and Great Black-backed Gull have nose-dived in numbers. Common Loons were at a third highest 30-year total.



Eastern Screech-Owl was at the second lowest total in 30 years. (Hank Golet)

Black Vultures continue their northward range expansions, with the second highest total this year. Among diurnal raptors, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, and Red-shouldered Hawk were well represented. Among the falcons, American Kestrels tallied their highest total in 20 years, while Merlin and Peregrine Falcons continued their early winter population growth. Peregrine pairs that have nested successfully in the state will persist through the year near their breeding sites. Eastern Screech-Owl was at the second lowest total in 30 years, and Barred Owl numbered on the high side once again among the nocturnal raptors.

Woodpeckers continue to thrive in early winter, especially Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, and Pileated Woodpecker. However,

Northern Flicker was counted in below average numbers, and CBC data suggest a gradual decline in the state. Monk Parakeets first appeared as count week individuals along the coast in the 1970s. They began a remarkable increase in numbers by the mid and late 1980s. Over the course of the ensuing 25 years, the CBC numbers for this colonial nester soared to a record high of just over 1,200 individuals on five coastal counts (all but New London) in 2004-2005. Since then, their numbers have come back down to Earth, with a low of 23 individuals in 2020-2021 and a slight uptick to 59 birds this year. One gets the feeling that Monk Parakeets are not fully appreciated in places where these colorful but admittedly noisy and messy birds choose to build their large stick nests.

The corvids included low numbers of Blue Jays and growing numbers of wintering Fish Crows. Common Raven was at a new all-time high count yet again. Both Black-capped Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse were down in numbers. Cedar Waxwings ranked tops on the missing avians list, with a mere 382 waxwings counted statewide (13% of last year's total and 13% of the 30-year average). Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, and Carolina Wren were counted in good numbers.

There has been some concern about declining early winter populations of Northern Mockingbird, but this year these namesake many-tongued mimics came in at an 11-year high count. European Starling, a species which has been in precipitous decline, recorded its highest total in 14 years. American Robin shows great variability in its year to year numbers, as is the case for all flocking bird species. This year, robins were at 27% of last year's total.

Among winter finches, we've recorded no Pine Grosbeaks in the last ten years and no redpolls this year. Pine Siskin was at its second lowest 30-year total. American Goldfinches were quite difficult to see or hear in their usual numbers, setting a new 30-year low total statewide. Red Crossbills (21 total this year) had a modest incursion for the seventh time in 30 years. Considering just one of our coastal counts, House Finch first appeared as a CBC bird at Westport in 1957 with the compiler's note, "colony near Fairfield." By 1964, House Finch was listed as "rapidly increasing" in Westport, with 241 individuals reported. A year later, their numbers were reported as "50% above last year." Such is the case sometimes with species introduced from elsewhere. Not all sparrows fared well this year, with continuing reduced numbers of Field Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Savannah Sparrow.

One hopes that the 57 Eastern Meadowlarks observed at New Haven, New London, and Norwich represent some rebound for our region's long-declining grassland species. Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, and Common Grackle continue the trend of high year-to-year variability among species of flocking birds. This year, their numbers were down again. The Connecticut statewide count recorded 11 wood-



Wood warblers were a highlight of the 2022-23 state CBC with 11 species. This Northern Parula was found on Jan. 4 at the Stratford Greenway on the Stratford-Milford CBC. (Frank Mantlik)

warbler species, and the 30-year list includes a remarkable 23 warbler species. More and more, we seem to be entering a new period of wood-warblers lingering into early winter in southern New England.

Northern Cardinal numbers remain fairly consistent from year to year, even though this year's total was third lowest in the last three decades. Dickcissels were seen at Greenwich-Stamford, Old Lyme-Saybrook, and Westport. This species was present on a near annual basis from the 1950s to the 1970s and more recently has been reported on a Connecticut Christmas Bird Count about 50% of the time. Connecticut Birds: Distribution and Status by Season (2023) lists Dickcissel as uncommon through September and October and rare through the rest of the year.

Further Comments on Noteworthy Birds

The 10 Snow Geese seen at Lakeville-Sharon represent a good number for this species. Stratford-Milford boasted the only Blue-winged Teal this year, the first time

in six years that the species has been sighted. A single Eurasian Wigeon also was seen at Stratford-Milford. It tends to be a dabbling duck of the coastline. Redheads were recorded count day at Litchfield Hills and count week at Greenwich-Stamford. The 341 Common Eiders seen at Napatrie pale in comparison with the high counts at Napatrie in previous years. With its Atlantic shoreline exposures, Napatrie accounts for more than 90% of all eiders seen in the year-to-year statewide survey. Single Harlequin Ducks were seen count week at Barkhamsted (a rare inland sighting) and count day at New London.

Northern Bobwhite was last recorded on a Connecticut CBC in 2010 on the Salmon River CBC (!). Twenty-one Ring-necked Pheasants at New London were notable in the present day. Connecticut Birds: Distribution and Status by Season states, "Northern Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasant, although present in the state, no longer have wild sustainable breeding populations. Their continued presence relies on the annual release of game birds." One Red-necked Grebe was recorded at New London. A White-winged Dove count week at New Haven (Beacon Hill Preserve, Branford) was not located on count day. This is the second occurrence of this southwestern species since 1950, the first one being sighted in 2010, also at New Haven.

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird photographed and positively identified at Salmon River was one of the highlights of this year's count. This is the second time ever that Ruby-throated has been recorded on a Connecticut CBC. The first time this species lingered into the CBC season was in 2019 at Stratford-Milford. Zeranski & Baptist (1990) describe Ruby-throated Hummingbird as "an uncommon migrant from early May to June and from late August to late September, very rarely into October. They list latest fall dates of November 22, 1978; November 11, 1961; November 1, 1950.

If Ruby-throated was a surprise find, the big shock to the system came with a report of a Black-chinned Hummingbird on the Hartford count. Let's refer to Jay Kaplan's comments on this remarkable find from his summary of the Hartford CBC.

"A few days after the Count, I received a call from Phil Rusch, Secretary of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut. Phil informed me that a hummingbird had been frequenting a feeder within our Count circle since October. When the bird persisted into late fall, the homeowner began to question its identity. She contacted a bird photographer, who came to her condominium and photographed the bird under the provision that neither the location nor her name be revealed. The photos were sent to several of Connecticut's leading birders, who independently studied them and agreed that this was a female Black-chinned Hummingbird. There is only one record for this species in Connecticut, a bird found in autumn 2013 in Fairfield. Needless to say, this was shocking news and will likely be THE BIRD of the 2022 Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts. . . We were fortunate the bird was

brought to our attention at all. It makes one wonder what other birds may pass through our state each year without being seen or heard."

The report filed in ARCC records reveals that the Black-chinned Hummingbird was coming to a feeder in South Windsor and that it was last seen on Dec. 22. One can speculate that the cold spell that came in just after the weekend of the Hartford CBC was not helpful to this bird.

The only American Oystercatcher observed on this year's statewide count was one at Napatrie. Napatrie also reported two Black-headed Gulls. Stratford-Milford had the only Glaucous Gull. Brown Pelican was recorded as a count week bird at Greenwich-Stamford, the first ever appearance on a Connecticut CBC. The pelican was seen at a distance and was photographed on Saturday, Dec. 17 off Byram Park in Greenwich. It first was seen flying to the west, and half an hour later reversed course and disappeared to the east. This certainly ranks as one of the more significant finds of the count.

One American Bittern was found on the Old Lyme-Saybrook count. Small numbers of this rare and elusive marsh bird get reported most years, with an all-time statewide high count of eight in 1973-74. A high count of 140 Black Vultures was made on the Storrs CBC. The 548 Black Vultures tallied statewide this year fall just 10 birds short of the record high set in 2020-21. Two Golden Eagles were seen at Pawling/Hidden Valley and one at Napatrie. The only diurnal raptor species less likely to be seen on any of our counts is Broad-winged Hawk. Long-eared Owl always is considered a bonus bird for a count. One was seen this year at New London. More difficult to find is Short-eared Owl, but one was reported at Hartford.

Norwich compiler Allison Black provided the following comment in her summary of this CBC in its fourth year. "Despite having a record low number of participants in the field this year, the Norwich Christmas Bird Count prevailed once again. Eight field participants managed to uncover 78 species (tying our record from 2020), with an extra species added for count week, Red-headed Woodpecker."

Swallows have been recorded infrequently in past years of the statewide count as far back as the 1950s. They include three species: Tree, Northern Rough-winged, and Cave swallows. This year, New Haven reported six Tree Swallows. Another major highlight of the count was a Townsend's Solitaire seen by many over a period of weeks at Hammonasset Beach State Park. This is the sixth appearance on our statewide CBC of this high mountain country bird of western North America. The bird was first found on Nov. 21 and persisted at HBSP at least through February 2023.

Quinnipiac Valley produced the only Evening Grosbeak of this year's count. What has been going on with this species in the state? Birds of the World states that Evening



Only one Evening Grosbeak was found on the CBCs, but this species has a long and complicated history of appearances in Connecticut. (Chris S. Wood).

Grosbeak underwent a major range expansion from the Rocky Mountains eastward beginning in the mid-1800s and continuing through the mid-1900s. Beginning in 1943, very small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks began showing up on Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts. George Clark's species account for Evening Grosbeak in The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut (Bevier, 1994) indicates that "the species began to invade the northeastern states from the midwest in the latter half of the nineteenth century; this invasion of the east has been attributed to human planting of box elders, a favored source of food for these grosbeaks. The earliest recorded occurrence of the Evening Grosbeak in Connecticut came in 1890. A major increase in records in Connecticut and nearby states came after 1940." George Clark continues, "The first record of breeding in the state came from Chaplin in late May and early June of 1983 when a pair built a nest in an oak tree. The second record came in 1986 from Ashford" (references given).

Evening Grosbeak is a classic winter irruptive species. By the early 1960s and through the mid-1980s, it was not uncommon to have 2,000-4,000 Evening Grosbeaks on the Connecticut statewide count. In the early '80s, I frequently had small flocks of grosbeak's coming to my feeders in New Haven. Their numbers began to plummet by the early 1990s as the result of a range contraction or a weakening of their irruptive behavior.

Birds of the World states further, “By [the] 1920s [Evening Grosbeak] was considered a regular winter visitor in New England . . . Irruptions are no longer erratic but occur each year, albeit differing in geographical and numerical extent. In New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, however, the number of wintering birds peaked between 1940s and mid-1980s but has declined drastically since (the) mid-1980s.” Hence, while we once had so many as 4,000 Evening Grosbeaks in a given CBC year, we now have mini-irruptions of 17 or 41 or 55 individuals, or just one.

The thirteen Lapland Longspurs on the Westport CBC represent an impressive total, but one not so unique when one considers that 82 were reported in 1953-54, 34 in 1986-69, 46 in 1973-74, 45 in 1980-81, and 53 in 1999-2000. Clay-colored Sparrow is a rare but annual visitor to Connecticut during the spring migration and in the fall migration from latest August through earliest March. During October, this species is uncommon in the state. One Clay-colored Sparrow was seen count week in Glastonbury on the Hartford count, and one was found count day at Long Beach Boulevard Pond, Stratford on the Stratford-Milford count. The only Vesper Sparrow was seen in Northford on the New Haven count. Six Yellow-breasted Chats at New London equal the record high for this count. A lingering Baltimore Oriole was seen visiting an Ansonia feeder on the New Haven CBC.

This was another stellar year for finding Christmas Bird Count wood-warblers, with eleven species observed. In addition to the near-annual occurrences of Orange-crowned, Palm, Pine, and Yellow-rumped warblers, and Common Yellowthroat, some rare and uncommon warblers were counted by vigilant observers. Greenwich-Stamford boasted an Ovenbird, a Tennessee Warbler, and a Nashville Warbler, while Westport added two Black-and-white Warblers and two Nashville Warblers. Tennessee Warbler also made an appearance during count week at New London, and Nashville Warbler was seen count day at New Haven. Northern Parula made for a rare find on the Stratford-Milford CBC, and Yellow Warbler appeared on the Napatrie CBC.

Ovenbird has been recorded in 11 years since 1950, Black-and-white Warbler in 12 years, and Nashville Warbler in 16 years, so these species do make periodic appearances. Tennessee Warbler was seen only for the second year, having been first recorded in 2015-16 at Westport. Northern Parula has been found in only two previous years, in 2012-13 at Napatrie and in 2020-21 at New Haven. Yellow Warbler was found for the first time in 2011-12 at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and was recorded again count week at Napatrie. The current bar graphs for Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Northern Parula, and Yellow Warbler now show these species lingering rarely through December (COA. 2023), while the bar graphs of the 2000s indicate that these four species were all but unknown in Connecticut for most of November and December (COA. 2005.). The times they are a-changin’.



This Clay-colored Sparrow, which wintered at the Long Beach Boulevard Pond in Stratford, was logged on the Stratford-Milford CBC. (Bruce Finnern)

A Painted Bunting count week at Napatrie was another outstanding find for the CBC season. Finally, single Dickcissels were reported from Greenwich-Stamford, Old Lyme-Saybrook, and Westport. This species has been reported less frequently since the 1980s than was the case from the 1950s through the 1970s. Birds of the World states, “During the nineteenth century, the Dickcissel . . . was a common breeder in agricultural grasslands in eastern North America from New England through mid-Atlantic states to South Carolina. It appeared regularly in small numbers as far north as maritime Canada and as far south as Florida. The Dickcissel largely abandoned this eastern extension of its breeding range by the end of the nineteenth century, after which only sporadic breeding of smaller numbers of birds has been recorded in the East. After most extensive agricultural grasslands in the East were abandoned and began reverting to forests, Dickcissels no longer found the area as attractive.” The fewer occurrences of Dickcissel on our Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts undoubtedly reflect the continuing loss of grassland and open spaces in Connecticut.

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Acknowledgements

Ray Belding has stepped down as the compiler of the Litchfield Hills Christmas Bird Count. Ray served Litchfield Hills Audubon Society in this organizational position for 45 consecutive years, from his first year as compiler of CTLH on the 1977-78 Christmas Bird Count through last year's 2021-2022 CBC. Ray succeeded Neil Currie in this role, following Neil's duties as compiler over a period of eleven years, from 1966-67 through 1976-77. Ray now is succeeded at Litchfield Hills by Dave Tripp, Jr., who also continues to lead the Barkhamsted CBC. There are very few who have provided such continuous leadership to a Connecticut Christmas Bird Count as has Ray Belding. Connecticut birders are grateful for his years of service.

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Connecticut Field Notes

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik



This White-winged Dove visited a feeder in Branford on Dec. 7-19. The most recent records were in Waterford and Old Saybrook in 2020. (Steve Mayo)

Winter Season: Dec. 1, 2022 to Feb. 28, 2023

A **Ross's Goose** was present Jan. 18-19 on Day Hill Road in Bloomfield/Windsor (C, AS, JFe et al.). One was at Seaside Park in Bridgeport from Feb. 25 on into March (SW, RS et al.). Two **Pink-footed Geese** were found on Feb. 5-12 in Vernon and Ellington (DM et al.). Two Tundra Swans found on Jan. 7 at Goodwin Conservation Center in Hampton stayed through season's end (PR, et al.). A **Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal** was at Birdseye boat ramp in Stratford on Feb. 4 (BR, FM). An impressive total of 1560 Ring-necked Ducks was tallied at L. Wononpakkok in Salisbury on Dec 4 (GWa). A female King Eider was at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) on Jan. 10 (KJ). In a good season for Harlequin Ducks, a female was found on Dec. 17 at Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford (JA, KM et al.); a male was present Dec. 26 through at least Feb. 19 at Stonington Town Dock, a regular spot for the species (RS, m.ob.); an adult male was in Waterford on Dec. 31 (AD); a first-year male was at Ender's Island, Stonington, on Jan. 29 (CL, MV); a female was at Ocean Beach Park, New London, Feb. 7-9 (RS et al.); and an



Harlequin Ducks are rare visitors to our coastal waters, even more so inland. So these two females wintering in the Farmington River in Barkhamsted were an unexpected treat. (Chris S. Wood)

adult male was at Attawan Beach in Niantic on Feb. 21 (JFa). Of special interest were two females found on Dec. 28 in the Farmington River in Barkhamsted (AS, m.ob.). They stayed through Feb. 7. A Common X Barrow's Goldeneye was at Sandy Point in West Haven from Jan. 7 through Feb. 26 (BR, SU).

In addition to the usual single Red-necked Grebes on the coast, two were inland at Barkhamsted Reservoir on Dec. 13 (NM). An adult **Eared Grebe** at Stonington Point on Jan. 18 to Feb. 20 has wintered there since 2017 (RS m.ob.). A **White-winged Dove** was at a feeder in Branford on Dec. 7-19 (DB fide SMA). The state's second **Black-chinned Hummingbird**, found in mid-October 2022 at a private residence in South Windsor, was present to Dec. 23 (fide MB). An American Oystercatcher was present Jan. 6-25 at Stonington Point (SK, et al.). A Semipalmated Plover, unusual in mid-winter, was at Ocean Beach in New London Jan. 9-Feb. 27 (DM, et al.). A good count of 38 Purple Sandpipers was made on Jan. 9 at Harkness (DM). A rare mid-winter Spotted Sandpiper was at Pine Creek in Fairfield on Jan. 22 (ST). An American Woodcock on Jan. 21 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford apparently wintered (DK).

Eight Razorbills were seen in CT waters from the New London-Orient, NY, ferry on Dec. 9 (SMi). A nice collection of alcids at the Thames River mouth in New London in mid-January was highlighted by a **Black Guillemot** from Jan. 19-Feb. 19 (JO et al.). Also present in the area were as many as eight Razorbills (m.ob.), a **Common Murre** from Jan. 19 to Feb. 2 (JO et al.) and a **Dovekie**, the latter seen briefly and at great distance on Jan. 21 (PR). A flurry of **Black-legged Kittiwakes** consisted of one on Dec. 19 at Stonington Point (RS); two off Shippian Point, Stamford on Dec. 23 (PDu, AC); and one at Harkness Memorial State Park on Dec. 24 (JA). A Bonaparte's Gull was unexpected on Jan. 7 at Lake Wononscopomuc in Salisbury (GWa). **Black-headed Gulls** were at the New Haven landfill on Dec. 17 (ALi) and at Riverfront Park, Hartford, the next day (AP). A Laughing Gull lingered to at least Feb. 3 at Czeck Marina in Stamford (PDu).

A **Common (Kamchatka) Gull**, the Asian race that has become a surprising Connecticut speciality with 11 total records, was found Jan. 25 and seen to March 6



This beautifully documented Northern Shrike, a juvenile found on Jan. 29 in Tolland, was the only one reported this season. (Laura B. Netro-Price)

at three Stamford locations – Cove Island Park, Holly Pond and Cummings Beach (PDu, FM et al.). Presumably the same bird was at Seaside Park in Bridgeport on Feb. 4 (JN). A **Common (Eurasian) Gull**, the nominate race with nine total records, was a stunning find for the Northeast Corner where it moved around locations in Tolland and Windham counties from Jan. 17 into March (DM, m.ob.). The third record of **Short-billed Gull**, split from the Common/Mew Gull complex in 2021, was at Holly Pond, Stamford, on Jan. 30 (PDu, AK). A **Brown Pelican** was at Westcott Cove, Stamford on Dec 1 (FM, AK et al.) and then Dec. 17 at Byram Park, Greenwich (SMr). The autumn 2022 invasion of **White Ibis** spilled over into this season with one juvenile present in Stratford to Dec. 13 (FM et al.).

An immature Red-headed Woodpecker visited feeders in Goshen on Jan. 12-Feb. 1 (DH et al.). One visited a feeder in Norwichtown Dec. 13-15 (GG). A late Broad-winged Hawk was at Quaker Ridge in Greenwich on Dec. 1 (HW). An early Tree Swallow was at Silver Sands in Milford Feb. 11 (JFa). The only documented Northern Shrike was in Tolland on Jan. 29 (LN). There were three reports of House Wrens in 2023, with the latest on Feb. 10 in Mansfield Center (NR). The long-staying **Townsend's Solitaire** was present through the season and beyond at HBSP (Scott Roxbrough, m.ob.). In a winter with few boreal finch reports, the high counts for Evening Grosbeaks were nine in Willington on Dec. 3 (JC) and coincidentally the same number on Jan. 8 in East Haddam (DR et al.). A few Red Crossbills were present to mid-January, with the only notable concentration of 10 to 12 in early December in People's State Forest in Barkhamsted (KS, AS). Pine Siskins were widespread in very small numbers; most reports were of single birds. Yellow-breasted Chats wintered at Pine Creek in Fairfield (AK et al.) and at Harkness Memorial (DM et al.). Singles were at four other coastal locations in December (GWi, JS et al.).

A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was a nice find on Dec. 4 at Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor, with two present on Dec. 9 (JeJ, JfJ, JFe); both remained there and in nearby Ellington to at least Jan. 10 (m.ob.). Another was in Glastonbury on Jan. 28 (AD). Exciting high counts for the declining Eastern Meadowlark were 16 on Dec. 17 at Augurs Ice Pond in Northford (MC et al.); 21 on Dec. 18 in Preston (SK et al.); and 10 on Feb. 1 at Circle Beach boat ramp in Guilford (KJ, BR). Three Vesper Sparrows were at Rosedale Farm, Simsbury Jan. 13 (DBi, SG). A **White-crowned (Gambel's) Sparrow**, a western subspecies, was found Dec. 10 at Long Beach Blvd. Pond in Stratford and over-wintered (AK, m.ob.). A Clay-colored Sparrow also overwintered there (AK, FM, m.ob.). Rare in mid-winter, a Lincoln's Sparrow was at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on Jan. 28 (JO). An adult **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco** wintered in Bethany (AF). The state's third **Green-tailed Towhee**, and first since 1991, was found on Jan. 13 at Veteran's Park, Fairfield, to the delight of many birders, and remained through the end of the season (JP, m.ob.).



This hungry Orange-crowned Warbler shows how an impressive group of warblers thrived deep into winter at the Norwalk Esplanade. (Bruce Finnigan)



This juvenile Tennessee Warbler was a surprise find Jan. 24-29 at a sewage treatment plant far inland in Enfield. (Jamie Meyers)



This handsome Nashville Warbler was one of three of this species that joined the warbler extravaganza at the Norwalk Esplanade, another place where a treatment plant provided a welcoming habitat. (Abby Sesselberg)

A late Ovenbird turned up in Pomfret on Dec. 13 (AR) and another was in Fairfield on Dec. 18 (WS). A Northern Parula lingered to Jan. 4 at the Stratford Greenway (FM et al.). Two Orange-crowned Warblers were at Silver Sands State Park in Milford on Dec 12 (JO). Two more were at the Stratford Greenway Jan. 3 (FM). A juvenile Tennessee Warbler was quite a surprise Jan. 24-29 at the water pollution control facility in Enfield (JM et al.). In accordance with the changing nature of the winter season, two species that historically were significant rarities produced multiple December records – six Nashville Warblers and three Tennessee Warblers (m.ob.). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was unique for the season on Dec. 17 at Lake Mohegan in Fairfield (ALu). Of special interest was a wintering flock of warblers at the Norwalk Esplanade, a walkway at the wastewater plant. Highlights included a Tennessee Warbler, three Nashville Warblers and two Orange-crowned Warblers, along with Yellow-rumped, Palm and Pine Warblers (BM, FM, m.ob.). A female **Painted Bunting** was in Old Saybrook on Dec. 9 (NJ, JA, MB); and an adult male was at Lord's Point, Stonington, on Dec. 22-Jan. 24 (SP et al.). Single Dickcissels were in Groton on Dec. 11 (CD), in Greenwich on Dec. 12 (CEh), and in Old Lyme Dec. 1 - Jan. 22 (MP, m.ob.)..

Observers: Joe Attwater, Dan Barvir, Matt Bell, Joseph Cala, Michael Carpenter, Al Collins, Andrew Dasinger, Catherine Downie, Paul Desjardins (PDe), Patrick Dugan (PDu), Chris Elphick (CEl), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Jo Fasciolo, (JFa), Jeff Fengler (JFe), Ann Fiske, George Gavalla, Greg Hanisek, Dorrie Holmes, Nick Jacome, Kimberly Jannarone, Jeff Joffray (Jf), Jen Joffray (Je), David Kaempfer, Sky Kardell, Aidan Kiley, Alex Lin-Moore (ALi), Chris Loscalzo, Alec Lurie (ALu), Nic Main, Frank Mantlik, Stefan Martin (SMr), Dave Mathieu, Steve Mayo (SMA), Don McGregor, Kelly Meineke, Jamie Meyers, Shai Mitra (SMi), Tom Murray, Brendan Murtha, Jeremy Nance, Laura B. Netro-Price, John Oshlick, Sue Palmer, Annette Pasek, James Purcell, Bill Rankin, Noah Reid, Laurie Reynolds, Dan Rottino, Andy Rzeznikiewicz, Alex Sauerbrunn, Barbara Scavatto, Will Schenck, Kris Scully, James Sherwonit, Russ Smiley, Susan Thomsen, Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahey, Harry Wales, George Wallace (GWa), Glenn Williams (GWi), Stuart Winquist, Sara Zagorski.

You can find the 2022-23 Christmas
Bird Count data table at the website
of the COA:

<https://www.ctbirding.org/birds-birding/ct-bird-count-data/>

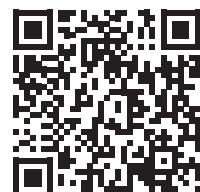


Photo Challenge

By Jeremy Nance



The quiz bird (Jeremy Nance)

A quick look at a yellowish, warbler-sized bird in the fall can trigger sudden panic – was it one of our many expected but frequently challenging-to-identify fall warblers, or perhaps something rarer? Our quiz bird could certainly fit this bill, and to make matters worse, it's partially hidden by a leaf. Where should we begin to narrow down the ID? One of the most important features to consider when first scrutinizing an unfamiliar bird is the size and shape of the bill. Is it conical like a finch or sparrow, thin and pointed like a warbler, or somewhere in between? A close inspection of our quiz bird's bill reveals that it is definitely not conical but also not thin and pointed, and at the tip there is a slight hook. Yes, our first solid clue! This bill structure, most notably the hooked tip, reveals that our quiz bird is a vireo.

Vireos are pretty plainly marked; they lack streaks and are washed with some combination of gray, green, and yellow tones. Half of our regularly occurring vireos (Bell's Vireo, an extremely rare fall vagrant seen in the state only a few times, is not considered here) have obvious white wing bars (White-eyed, Yellow-throated, Blue-



A Warbling Vireo (Jeremy Nance)

headed) while the remaining three species lack them (Warbling, Philadelphia, Red-eyed). Although there is no evidence of a wing bar in the very small bit of the upper wing that we can see on our quiz bird, much of the wing is unfortunately masked by a leaf, so it's best to move on to other field marks. Two of our vireos - Red-eyed and White-eyed - are so named for their distinctive eye color. It might be tempting to immediately exclude these species since our quiz bird has a dark chocolatey eye, but immature Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos have dark eyes.

The face pattern of vireos offers lots of useful identification clues. Our local vireos can be parsed into two broad groups based on whether they have, or lack, bold white or yellow spectacles (paler feathers that encircle the eye and extend to the bill). Blue-headed, Yellow-throated, and White-eyed Vireos each have bold spectacles (yellow on Yellow-throated and White-eyed Vireos, white on Blue-headed Vireo). By contrast, our quiz bird has a white supercilium that extends from behind the eye to the bill,

and a dark wedge-shaped line that runs from just behind the eye through the lores to the base of the bill. There is also a white line below the eye and the lores, but no obvious spectacles. This facial pattern rules out Blue-headed, Yellow-throated and White-eyed Vireos.

At this point, we are left with Warbling, Philadelphia, and immature Red-eyed Vireo as possibilities. All three of these species have a combination of green, gray, and yellowish coloration. However, Red-eyed Vireos are largely pale below; fall birds typically show a yellow wash on the flanks and undertail coverts, but not the extensive yellow underparts of our quiz bird. In addition, Red-eyed Vireo has a dark lower border to its blue-gray cap, which is absent in our quiz bird. This leaves us with two very similar species – Warbling Vireo and Philadelphia Vireo. ‘Philly’ Vireos are rare spring and very uncommon fall migrants in our region. I typically find one or two a fall, and they are always a treat to see.

Separating Warbling and Philadelphia Vireo, particularly in the fall when many Warbling Vireos have a significant yellow wash on the underparts, can be challenging. Both species are fairly similar in color, shape and size, and there is quite a bit of variability in their appearance. This is where field guides, which depict ‘typical’ plumages and not the full range of variability, reach their limit of utility. When faced with a challenging ID such as this one, it’s often necessary to rely on several field marks that in combination support your identification.

One of the important distinguishing field marks mentioned in field guides is the pattern of the lores. In Philadelphia Vireo, the lores typically have a dark, wedge-shaped line running through them, narrowing in width from the eye to the base of the bill. Our quiz bird has this field mark. In comparison, Warbling Vireo usually has pale or only weakly marked lores, and if there is dark feathering, it is typically more uniform in thickness. However, this field mark is variable and should not be used alone to separate these species. For example, the photo below shows a fall Warbling Vireo that clearly has darker and somewhat wedge-shaped lores (although this bird's lores are not as dark as those of a typical Philadelphia Vireo).

Another important feature that distinguishes Warbling and Philadelphia Vireo is the distribution of yellow on the undersides. Warbling Vireos can have significant yellow below in the fall, but the strongest yellow coloration is on the flanks, which are more brightly marked than the breast (this pattern is evident on the Warbling Vireo in the photo below). On Philadelphia, the most intense yellow coloration is in the region of the upper breast and lower throat. The rich yellow on our quiz bird is indeed most intense just below the throat. This field mark, in combination with the dark, wedge-shaped lores, clinches the ID. This Philadelphia Vireo was photographed on September 24, 2022 in the Trout Brook Valley orchard in Easton – an excellent spot to search for this elusive fall migrant.



Next Challenge Photo

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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