

## THE BIRD OBSERVER SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER

When November arrives we realize that the fall migration has nearly ended. However, for the sharp-eyed observer there are always a few stragglers to find along with the newly arrived winter birds. Weather was rather unsettled in November with several "northeasters" creating some excitement birdwise, but one had to be at favored spots coastwise to appreciate it. Inland, the feeling was that winter would be severe as many species were departing from yards where normally they last through December. All in all there were many interesting observations during the month.

A fine count of 75 Ruddy Ducks was made by N. Powell on the 1st at Accoxet. Also on the first at Squantum E. Simmons found 62 Laughing Gulls while nearby George Wilson observed 6 White-crowned Sparrows, both species being holdovers from the greater numbers of October. Seven Redheads were seen at Horn Pond, Woburn, by M. McClellan while 35 Canvasbacks remained at Braintree Great Pond from the 1st through the 23rd. Shorebirds continued into the month with a Marbled Godwit coming to Newburyport on the 3rd and 2,000 Dunlin on the 4th. The 4th also produced Red-necked Grebe at Plum Island where Phil Parsons saw a Common Egret. A minor flight of Northern Shrikes occurred on the 4th with 3 at Plum Island and 5 others reported, including one banded at Middleboro, and one singing in Annisquam. At Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, Concord, over 300 Mute Swans were gathered and a Rusty Blackbird was seen. Tree Sparrows were noted coming in on the 4th and the annual early winter flock of 500 Snow Buntings was at Salisbury.

A Brookline Bird Club trip on the 5th, led by Steve Grinley, noted a Cooper's Hawk at Fall River airport. In the Westport area they observed a Rusty Blackbird and a Tree Swallow. Their observation of 20 Red Crossbills was followed by sightings of many small groups throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Dick Forster saw a Cooper's Hawk in Orleans on the 5th. On the 6th a final Snowy Egret was seen at Plum Island while an interesting Goshawk was observed by Ed Homer at Mount Auburn Cemetery. This species occurred more frequently than usual this fall with 7 reports in our area mostly at the end of the month.

On the 7th the news of a Monk Parakeet using an old squirrel's nest and reshaping it to fit its needs was made public. The bird had been present in Braintree since the summer and was in the company of a smaller parakeet. Several Monk Parakeets have been observed in our area in the last year and apparently some of them are "wild" birds from the more southern colonies of New York or Virginia. Perhaps before we run to our lists to check them off we should investigate wherever possible as it was learned that the Braintree bird had indeed escaped from a neighborhood cage. The first Glaucous Gull reported was from Niles Pond, Gloucester, November 9 where an uncommon Vesper Sparrow was also found. Stella Garrett saw the season's first recorded Snowy Owl on the north shore on the 9th, although Wallace Bailey saw one as early as the 2nd at Provincetown.

Next came one of the northeast storms which conveniently produced many birds for the birders out during the 10th through the 12th. When the northeast wind which blows the pelagic birds into Massachusetts bay swings around to the northwest then they are blown close to land at First Encounter Beach, Eastham. Many birders were there from B. B. C., Belmont Bird Club, Needham Bird Club, and South Shore Bird Club. Highlights of the pelagics were: Manx Shearwater, 1000 Gannets, 1000 Brant, 50 Red and 9 Northern Phalaropes, 1 Pomarine and 6 Parasitic Jaegers, a Skua, 75 Greater Shearwaters, Sabine's and Little Gulls, 3,000 Kittiwakes, 3 Razorbills, 150 Dovekies. A Leach's Petrel was picked up hurt at Menemsha, Martha's Vineyard, and later died. Thousands of Gannets flowed past Nantucket, with a Wood Duck at Race Point, Provincetown. Other interesting birds observed because of club activity included: a Western Kingbird at Nauset by Sibley Higgenbotham, a Red-eyed Vireo at Truro by Robert Fox, 15 Field Sparrows at Truro, a Solitary Vireo and 8 - 10 Pine Grosbeaks at Monomoy by Paul Millotis and Wallace Bailey, Golden Plover at Monomoy, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Brace's Cove by Helen Bates and the Allen Bird Club, Peregrine at Plum Island and Baird's Sandpiper

at Newburyport. Inland at Littleton Jim Baird saw 65 Ringnecked Ducks and 5 Common Mergansers.

November 15, 16 saw more evidence of wind-driven seabirds and these were spiced with some uncommon fall waifs. At First Encounter Beach there were 2 to 3 Fulmars, 25 Greater Shearwaters, one Manx Shearwater, 13 Leach's Petrels, 150 Red Phalaropes, Forster had one Pomarine and 4 Parasitic Jaegers and a Skua, 1500 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 25 Razorbills and one Thick-billed Murre. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was in Tewksbury. Late shorebirds included a Hudsonian Godwit in Newburyport and Quincy by David Brown and 3 Short-billed Dowitchers in Edgartown, M. V. According to Wayne Petersen a Clay-colored Sparrow was at Corn Hill, Truro, between the 16th and the 18th. Although only 4 Redpolls had been reported Brown found a flock of 25 in Walpole on the 16th. One of the best birds of the month was a Black-headed Grosbeak which spent one day at Mrs. Johnson's feeder in Rockport. Herman D'Entremont and Paula Butler were fortunate and confirmed this bird.

On the 18th Robert Stymeist found 211 Snow Buntings at Crane's Beach, Ipswich, and watched a Fulmar move by Andrews Point, Rockport. Twenty-five Red Crossbills were in West Newbury and Ipswich Sparrows were found in Marshfield (3) and Plum Island (2). Petersen counted 50,000 scoters off Monomoy, mostly White-winged, and had 18 Hooded Mergansers also, on the Monomoy ponds, and later a Goshawk at Fort Hill, Eastham. On the 19th two European Widgeon were found on Sider's Pond, Falmouth by the Maxims. Five Gadwalls were at Corn Hill and 2 Long-billed Marsh Wrens were seen. Petersen reported a Gyrfalcon at the south end of Monomoy sitting on a post, probably the same bird seen by Bailey on the 12th. Clapper Rails could be found at several spots on the Cape at high tide when they were forced to walk on high ground. There was a fine flock of 100 White-winged Crossbills in Cambridge on the 20th. Also on the 20th an Ipswich Sparrow was found again at the Boston Harbor Marina in Squantum. This species is almost an annual event there in the marshes or field opposite the Squantum causeway. Being considerably away from sand dunes or open ocean water the locality is a bit unusual for Ipswich Sparrow.

The last week of November continued what was certainly a fine month of bird observations. A Red-necked Grebe could readily be found at Plum Island and 50 Great Cormorants were found at Cape Ann by the Brookline Bird Club on the 25th. They had displaced the Double-crests at last, although there were still several Double-crested Cormorants lingering into November in Wollaston Bay. An American Bittern was observed on Plum Island on the 25th following the careful count by Petersen and Goodrich of 16,550 Black Ducks of the 24th! A Goshawk was found in the Newburyport-Plum Island area on the 24th and 25th by Petersen, Gerald Soucy and others. In fact, the 25th was an exciting day around Eastern Massachusetts as the following birds will show: 700 Brant at Eastham (B.B.C. - D'Entremont), Gadwall at Orleans (Petersen), European Widgeon at Niles Pond, Gloucester (B.B.C. - Grinley), Barrow's Goldeneye at Emerson Inn, Rockport (C. Baines), a Greater Yellowlegs at Nauset (Petersen), a COMMON MURRE at Provincetown by Bailey was one of the two very rare alcids to visit our state and one that requires close examination by experienced eyes, a Great Horned Owl was calling in mid-afternoon in Eastham (Petersen) and the rare Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was observed at Truro by Bailey. There were several reports throughout the state on that occasion evidencing an arrival from northerly areas although the birds did not stay. Two other outstanding finds were cataloged for the 25th and 26th. A Varied Thrush appeared for one day in an area where the local resident did not wish people to come in and disturb the yard. Unfortunately this has happened several times in the last year or so. At least two Varied Thrushes appeared within easy driving distance of Boston but the people having them preferred not to advertise. We certainly can't blame them for this and we are reminded to always be discreet when visiting a feeder. We should not enter a yard unless invited and certainly not in a maddening crowd. We should also be quiet and still and give the birds a chance to use the feeder. Most of us observe these simple rules of etiquette but I can remember visiting one home where 22 people were standing together, talking in loud voices, gesturing with their hands, all within 10 feet of the suet feeder. If I were a rare bird I certainly would not come close to that feeder and this one did not, nor was it seen

again!! Fortunately the next bird appeared in a yard where the polite birders were invited in for a close scrutiny. An apparent ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER occurred at Eastern Point, Gloucester where it was identified by people familiar with it in the west (Stephen Hartey, B.B.C. et al). This would probably be the first sight record of the species from Massachusetts. It was noted to be smaller than a Crested Flycatcher, having a rufous tail, whitish wing bars, and was heard calling. It was attracted to Yew berries and as there was sufficient cover in the neighborhood it stayed until at least the following weekend when it responded to a tape recording for Alvah Sanborn.

Other interesting birds for November included a Snowy Owl at Plum Island on the 24th which has remained the only reliable one in Eastern Massachusetts this winter. Don Alexander saw 20 Pintails on Plum Island on the 27th, and a Peregrine at Salisbury on the same day. On the Cape, 3 Common Terns had remained until the 26th (B.B.C. - D'Entremont) while Lesser Scaups were in Brookline and an Iceland Gull at Niles Pond, and a Laughing Gull in New Bedford (Dorothy Briggs). Birds of prey included an Osprey on the 22nd at Mashpee by Wilson, a Bald Eagle at Plum Island on the 27th, and we just received a report of an immature GOLDEN EAGLE observed as close as 30 feet by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hale of Rockport.

So far we have left out the wood warblers inasmuch as documenting the tardy individuals would be confusing if we didn't present them together as a family: Nov. 6th, a Tennessee Warbler at Vineyard Haven; 7th Black-throated Blue at Concord; 12th a Yellow at Ipswich; 17th Black & White at Tewksbury; 18th Black-throated Green at Rockport; 25th a Prairie at Rockport; there were 6 reports of Orange-crowned warblers with one dead one found in Carlisle, 4 Nashvilles, one Magnolia, one Chestnut-sided, one Blackpoll, 2 Pine, 11 Palm and 9 Yellowthroats being reported.

Other reports coming in for November showed at least 9 Winter Wrens, mostly seen on the North Shore. Two Indigo Buntings were late but then several species that come in fall either late in arriving or not present. Only one Pine Siskin was reported, few House Finches were reported, just 6 Fox Sparrows were reported and Lapland Longspurs were quite scarce, even at Salisbury were they normally occur in late fall.

Two other species are worth mentioning for November. The area covered by our reporters is primarily that shown in the front of the magazine, the counties making up Eastern Massachusetts. There is excellent coverage for the western half of the state and a journal already publishes these. We feel, however, that there is a number of people that enjoy seeing rare birds in any part of the state so from time to time we will mention them. On November 12 at Pelham a GRAY JAY began frequenting several feeders in one location and has been readily seen by many. We encourage everyone to freely report their finds and we have a central Clearing House with Mrs. Ruth P. Emory, 225 Belmont St., Wollaston, Mass., 02170. She would like to hear from anyone on their birds and she can supply details where to find the rarities such as the above-mentioned Gray Jay. Her phone number is 617-472-7848. The second bird, an Arctic Loon, we will comment on in the previews section.