

Guest Editorial

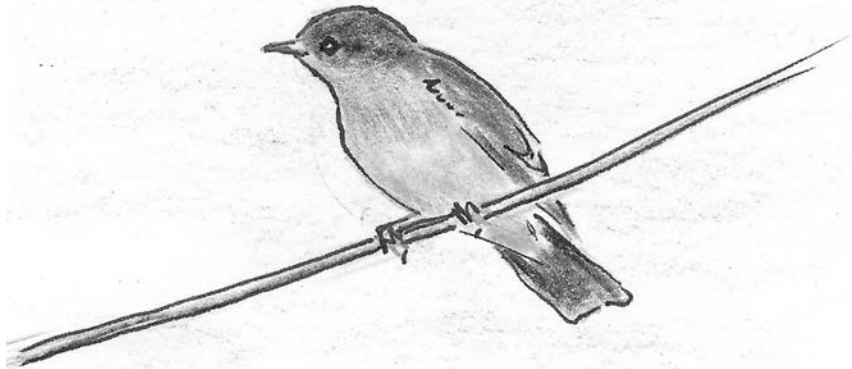
In the fall of 2002, an “invasion” of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds showed up in the northeast, including one at the feeder of artist Barry Van Dusen. To document this sighting, he submitted copies of his sketches and notes to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC). To lead off this special issue on rarities and the MARC, we feature one of these field sketches on the cover.

When you read the MARC Annual Report, you will see it was an exceptional year for rarities in Massachusetts. Six new species were added to the official state list, more than the previous three years combined. Rick Heil’s article on the discovery of three first state records on Plum Island is a textbook example of how to write a rare bird report. Leslie Bostrom’s article on the Eurasian Kestrel (only the second state record for this species) shows a very different but entirely acceptable approach. A report of an Eskimo Curlew, although not accepted by the MARC, is intriguing reading – was it, or wasn’t it? Should you need additional suggestions on how to write a report, read Mark Lynch’s article on documenting rarities.

But what is the MARC, and how do they decide whether or not to accept a record? The Committee is comprised of 9 voting members and a nonvoting secretary. Voting members may only serve for two 3-year terms and then must rotate off the Committee for at least one year. This is of value, keeping new blood constantly coming into the MARC.

Species listed on the MARC’s Review List should be written up and submitted to the MARC. In order for a report to be accepted, it must receive at least eight “accept” votes, but if a majority of members accept without reaching that threshold, the report circulates through three reviews and is ultimately discussed at a meeting, giving members the chance to discuss it face to face.

For more information on the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, visit the web site at: <Massbird.Org/MARC/>. *Marjorie Rines*



SAY'S PHOEBE BY JIM BAIRD