

Exotics

An Eur. Goldfinch stayed at a feeder at Saint-Thomas, *Joliette* July 7–9 (P. Garceau).

Addendum

A first spring ♂ Blue Grosbeak was reported from Anticosti I., May 9, 1993 (†DM).

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New England Region

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In many ways, New England's hot, dry, and generally sunny June and July weather mirrored conditions last summer. In Massachusetts, the average heat during the period was 74.7° F—a new record—beating 74.4° F set in 1983. A Boston heat wave between July 19–26 tied for the second longest on record. June and July were respectively the third and second hottest in 124 years; June was also the tenth driest. At least breeding birds did not have to contend with a cool, rainy nesting season!

Preliminary information obtained from the National Biological Survey's 1994 Atlantic Coast Colonial Waterbird Survey provided some interesting insight into changes in southern New England cormorant and heron populations. When completed next year, this data base should prove invaluable in assessing Regional trends in colonial waterbirds when it is compared with similar census efforts conducted in 1977 and 1984. Similarly, grassland birds in Massachusetts continued to receive closer scrutiny than ever before as the Massachusetts Audubon Society continued to census grassland bird populations and to develop management strategies for their protection.

Among the unexpected rarities of early summer, outstanding luminaries included **White-faced Storm-Petrel**, Little Egret, a first ever Regional Snowy Plover, Black-tailed Godwit, breeding Henslow's Sparrows, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

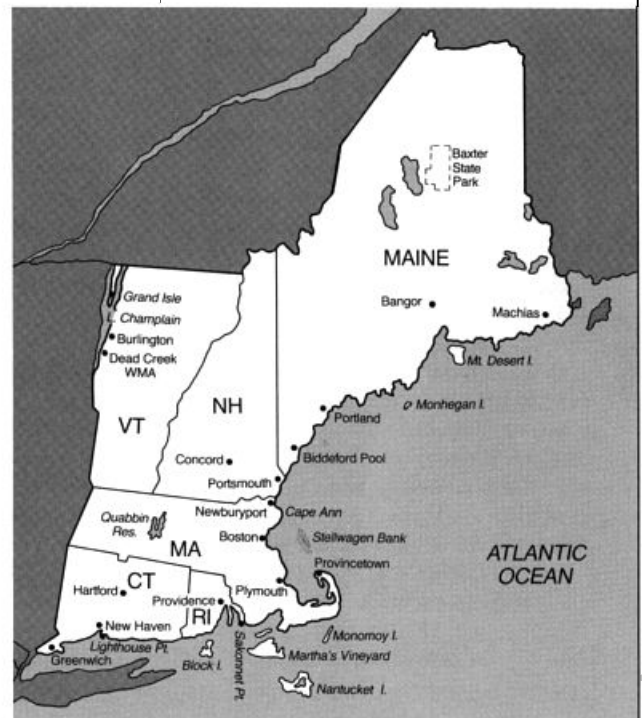
Loons to Cormorants

Among the scattered reports of summering Red-throated Loons, one at Milford Pt., CT July 16–31 was locally uncommon so late in the season (BK). Undoubtedly the most surprising grebe report was the successful nesting of Pied-billed Grebes in the Fenway section of Boston, where a

pair raised one young at Leverett Pond during June and July (E. Crowley, v.o.). This not only represents the sole breeding confirmation in Massachusetts this year, but also the first in Boston in at least several decades.

Tubenose reports were scattered and numbers were inconsistent throughout the period—a continuing condition since the collapse of local sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.) populations in the early 1980s. The single N. Fulmar report was one off Mt. Desert Rock, ME July 9 (Z. Klyver). The warm-water shearwaters, Cory's and Audubon's, were best represented by >120 of the former off Nantucket I., July 28 (B. Perkins) and three of the latter 30 mi. s. of Block I., RI (DF, CA). On a charter trip from Gloucester, MA to the continental shelf edge near Hydrographer Canyon, 600 Greater Shearwaters and 55 Leach's Storm-Petrels were recorded July 5–8 (MD *et al.*), while on Stellwagen Bank, a maximum count of 50 Greater Shearwaters was tallied July 31 (B. Volkle). Wilson's Storm-Petrel numbers were unimpressive except for >1000 close to shore at Nantucket I., July 20–25 (B. Perkins) and 254 at Jeffrey's Ledge July 24 (D. Chickering). More outstanding was a White-faced Storm-Petrel in the vicinity of Oceanographer Canyon July 6 (MD *et al.*). The affinity of this species for warm water upwellings near the continental shelf edge seems to be increasingly apparent.

A Connecticut report of an Am. White Pelican at Sherwood Island S.P., June 17 (C. Barnard, R. Soffer, R. Winkler) was unique in the Region. The growth of Rhode Island's



Double-crested Cormorant population was reflected by a nest count of 2087—an increase of nearly 6% from last season (RF, JM). Despite this increase, no significant decline was detected in the numbers of long-legged waders cohabitating with cormorants at 2 of the state's most important heronries—Gould I. and Hope I. At the Weepocket I. cormorant colony in Buzzards Bay, MA, a total of 1878 nests represented an increase of 332%(!) since 1977 (*fide* BB).

Heron to Waterfowl

Ironically, Least Bittern reports in s. New England are almost as numerous as Am. Bittern reports these days. As many as four Least Bitterns were noted at Plum I. throughout the period (*fide* B.O.); three were in Wayland, MA during June (SA); and 3 additional single reports were received from elsewhere in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine. A pair of breeding Great Egrets at Stratton I. was apparently the first such record for Maine (*fide* JD), *contra* *The A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds* (1983). A total of 138 nests in Rhode Island during a June census continued a generally increasing trend, despite a slight dip from last season's 160 nests (RF, JM, *fide* DE). In Massachusetts this increase was notably echoed by a total of 58 pairs at 6 major island sites—Kettle, Eagle, Middle Brewster, Sarah, Sampson's, and S. Monomoy—where only a decade ago there were zero pairs at the same localities (*fide* BB). By contrast, Rhode Island Snowy Egret numbers have shown a net decline since 1978, and this year's nest count of 148 was 27.5% below last year (*fide* DE). At the Massachusetts heronries listed above, a Snowy Egret total of 553 pairs showed over a 100% increase in the past decade (*fide* BB). A Little Egret at Nantucket I. held over from May until at least June 30 (K. Roy *et al.*). A tally of five Tricolored Herons at Plum I., June 13 (D. Oliver *et al.*) was one of the highest counts in several years, while a total absence of breeding Cattle Egrets in Rhode Island punctuates a steadily declining trend since that species' original influx into the state during the late 1970s (*fide* DE). An inland concentration of 150 post-breeding Black-crowned Night-Herons at Sudbury, MA July 7 (E. Taylor) was unusually high, as was a nest count total of 1121 at the 6 coastal sites previously detailed. This figure is nearly triple that obtained for the same colonies in 1984 (*fide* BB). Four ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at Plum I., July 17 (WP, v.o.) and a juvenile there July 2 (RH) gave every indication of breeding at that location. The ever-changing status of the Glossy Ibis manifested itself by a nest count of 244 in Narragansett Bay—an 18% de-

crease from last year, yet well above a comparable count of 100 in 1978 (*fide* DE). In Massachusetts, 42 ibis pairs were recorded at 4 sites (*fide* BB). Clearly, explaining the fluctuations in the numbers of colonial waterbirds at the periphery of their range is a mysterious exercise.

The continued presence of \leq six Whooper Swans in the Plum I. area throughout the period (*fide* B.O.) did little to offer a clue as to the origin of the birds. The continued burgeoning of the Mute Swan population in Rhode Island was demonstrated by a record count of 580 birds at Briggs Marsh July 16 (DE). Lingered Brant included four at Freeport, ME June 21 (*fide* WT) and two at Milford Pt., July 5 (SM).

The most notable puddle duck report was the occurrence of 2 broods of Am. Wigeon at Grand I., VT for the 6th consecutive year (D. Hoag). A scattering of a dozen Oldsquaws at various points on the Connecticut coast throughout June (*fide* BK) was considerably more than usual, while totals of 22 Black and 12 Surfscoters in Rhode Island's Sakonnet R. mouth July 7 (DE) were similarly inflated. Could these tardy sea ducks possibly have been belated survivors (?) from this winter's Chesapeake Bay avian cholera epidemic? Equally unseasonable was a Com. Merganser in the Sakonnet R., June 22 (RF, JM).

Raptors

The sole Black Vulture report was four at New Milford, CT June 4 (GH), and the presence of one–two Turkey Vultures at Pittsburg, NH in mid-June (*fide* DD) reflects the continued northward spread of this wide-ranging carrion eater. New England Osprey breeding success maintained a positive trend again: New Hampshire, 29 nests produced 44 young (*fide* DD); Vermont, 13 nests produced 23 young (*fide* S. Parren); and Rhode Island, 44 nests produced 44 young (*fide* L. Suprock).

Southern New England Bald Eagles are now turning out young at a healthy annual rate, and an increasing number of wandering immatures during midsummer suggests the potential for even greater success in the future. This year Massachusetts eagles produced eight young in 6 nests (*fide* TF) and Connecticut's single breeding pair at Barkhamsted Res. fledged two young (*fide* BK).

Four Rhode Island Sharp-shinned Hawk reports during June (*fide* DE) were intriguing since the species was unconfirmed as a breeder in the Ocean State during the Rhode Island breeding bird atlas (1982–1987). More seasonably inexplicable were Merlin reports at Woodbury, CT June 4 (*fide* BK) and Plum I., July 22 (RAF). Similar to Bald Eagles, reestablished Peregrine Falcons are holding their own in the Re-

gion and at least 43 chicks were banded in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts (*fide* TF).

Rails to Shorebirds

Once again, a calling Yellow Rail in Maine, this year at Moosehorn N.W.R., June 6–15 (*fide* WT), tantalized railophiles with the possibility of the species nesting in Maine. A Clapper Rail was presumed to be breeding at Jerusalem, RI June 6–7 (JM), and more unusual was the continued presence of a calling King Rail at Wayland, MA June 4–16 (SA). Although no Com. Moorhens were suspected of nesting in w. Massachusetts this season, the appearance of an adult with four young at Plum I., July 18–31 (*fide* B.O.) provided the first confirmed breeding at that locality in approximately 15 years. Almost of equal interest was the presence of two birds at Delaney W.M.A., Stow, MA July 31 (RB). This season, Sandhill Cranes made cameo appearances at Galilee, RI June 3 (M Golden) and Barnstable Airport, Hyannis, MA July 7 (AJ).

Highlights among nesting shorebirds in the Region included the presence of 353 pairs of Piping Plovers in Massachusetts—a 23% increase over 1993; the attempted (although unsuccessful) nesting of Am Oystercatchers at a new n. terminus at Stratton I., ME (*fide* JD); and the presence of respectable numbers of Upland Sandpipers at several localities in June, *e.g.* 100 at Westover A.F.B., Chicopee, MA (*fide* S. Melvin); 15 pairs at Bradley Int'l Airport, CT (*fide* BK), and 10–12 pairs at Pease Int'l Tradeport, NH (DD).

SA Without question, the most outstanding shorebird event of the season was the first ever Regional occurrence of a Snowy Plover in Massachusetts. An itinerant male made 2 one-day appearances at different Piping Plover breeding areas at South Beach, Chatham June 11 (Z. Boyajian) and Popponesset Beach, Mashpee June 21 (K. Spectre) before finally assuming a more leisurely lifestyle at Seagull Beach, Yarmouth June 23 through the 2nd week of July (ph., S. Hecker *et al.*). The bird's white lores and absence of any trace of rufous on the cap indicated that it was undoubtedly one of the New World races—most probably from the Gulf Coast *tenuirostris* population, based on the overall paleness of the back. A remarkably scarce vagrant n. of the Gulf Coast, the only (?) other Atlantic Coast records n. of Florida include single individuals at North I., SC Jan. 9, 1992 and Sapelo I., GA Apr. 17, 1993 (*fide* AB).



Far from usual haunts was this ♂ Snowy Plover, a first for New England, at Seagull Beach, Yarmouth, Massachusetts, June 20, 1994. Photograph/Scott Hecker.

Among the season's more unusual shorebird reports were an unseasonable Am. Golden-Plover at N. Monomoy I., June 17 (BN); Am. Avocets at Jerusalem, RI June 18 (E. Weinheimer) and N. Monomoy July 27–31 (R. Prescott); the continued (from May) presence of a **Black-tailed Godwit** at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, S. Wellfleet, MA June 1 (J. Sones); an early W. Sandpiper at N. Monomoy I., July 1 (BN); a Curlew Sandpiper at Plymouth, MA July 29–31 (MK); and single Ruffs at N. Monomoy I., June 3 (BN), Newburyport, MA July 2 (RH), and Penikese I., MA July 5 (TF).

Adult Arctic-nesting shorebirds arrived on schedule at favored Massachusetts coastal sites on Cape Cod and the Newburyport/Plum I. area, and by the end of the period nearly all of the regularly occurring species had appeared in what could best be characterized as good numbers. Tallies of >1200 Black-bellied and >1500 Semipalmated plovers at N. Monomoy I., July 31 (ML) were respectable for this date, while two fledgling Killdeer at Nantucket I., June 20 (J. Papale) represented only the 2nd confirmed breeding for the island after last year's precedent. A total of 700 Lesser Yellowlegs at Newburyport July 22 (RAF) represented the maximum count for the season, and a maximum of 200 Willets at N. Monomoy I. during July (BN) reflects the magnitude of that island's population density. The N. Monomoy I. Whimbrel roost peaked at 626 July 30 (W. Harrington), and eight Marbled Godwits at 3 Massachusetts localities (*fide*

B.O.) and one in Connecticut (*fide* BK) represented a better-than-average total for so early in the season. Red Knots distinguished themselves with counts of 400 at Duxbury, MA July 26 (MK) and 900 at N. Monomoy I., July 30 (BN), and a flock of 16 Sanderlings at Longmeadow, MA July 18 (H. Allen) was unusual in *Hampden*. Of the peeps, a Baird's Sandpiper in Holden, MA July 30–31 (RB) was notably early. At their traditional breeding station at Plum I., a maximum total of four Wilson's Phalaropes was observed June 28 (*fide* B.O.).

Jaegers to Alcids

A scattering of Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers began to appear at Cox's Ledge and the fishing grounds s. of Block I., RI by late July (DE, CA); more unusual was an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger in the vicinity of Hydrographer Canyon on the curious date of July 6 (MD). A Laughing Gull at Clinton, MA July 12 (RB) was a first for *Worcester*, while 11 nesting pairs were on location at the Bay State's newest colony at Plymouth (*fide* BB). Wandering first-summer Little Gulls in Massachusetts included singles at N. Monomoy I., June 2–July 19 (RAF, BN); Plum I., July 21 (J. Hoye); and Scituate July 22 (D. Clapp). Also in Massachusetts, at least four Com. Black-headed Gulls were seen during June and July (*fide* B.O.). A Caspian Tern at Pittsfield, *Berkshire* MA June 24 (D. St. James) was unusual both as to date and locality. Total numbers of Massachusetts breeding tern pairs were within the traditional range of variation for recent years—Roseate, 1340; Common, 9290; Arctic, 5; Least, 2594; Black Skimmer, 5 (*fide* BB). Additionally, a pair of Forster's Terns at Plum I., July 2 (RH) marked at least the 4th year of probable breeding at that lo-

cation. Perhaps the most positive sturnid story of the season pertains to events at Ram I. in Buzzards Bay, MA. Ram I. last hosted breeding terns in 1972, at which point gulls completely displaced terns. Beginning in 1989–1990, a gull control program to remove 800 pairs of gulls was initiated by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service in an attempt to restore breeding tern populations—especially Roseate Terns—to the island. This year the fruits of that effort were abundantly realized by the nesting of 76 pairs of Roseate and 160 pairs of Common terns (*fide* BB). This reoccupation of Ram I. by Roseate Terns could prove critical in helping this Endangered species disperse from its nearly exclusive Regional Bird I. colony site. The sole alcid report of the season was a slightly extralimital Com. Murre at Nantucket June 20 (J. Papale).

Cuckoos to Thrushes

Several contributors in Massachusetts commented on better-than-average numbers of both Black-billed and Yellow-billed cuckoos, and at least one observer specifically mentioned inflated numbers of tent caterpillars in Vermont (JP).

Barn Owl productivity at Middletown, Middlefield, and New Haven, CT was up 13 young from the same sites in 1993 (G. Zepko), while at Nantucket a Short-eared Owl sighting June 18 (AJ) is only modestly encouraging since this moorland species is quietly slipping into oblivion as a breeding bird in New England. A most unusual report of a Chuck-will's-widow came from *Washington*, ME, where one was well seen and carefully described at Great Wass I., June 3 (R. Eakin, *fide* WT). This season's high count of 31 Whip-poor-wills was made at Myles Standish S.F., Plymouth, MA June 16 (Gd'E).

Rufous Hummingbirds made rare New England appearances when single males appeared at feeders in Warner, NH July 27–31 (S. Mirick, D. Abbott, v.o.) and South Acton, MA July 26–31 (T. Blackshaw). Summer occurrences in the Region of this wide-ranging species have precedent in several New England states.

The only evidence of breeding by Red-headed Woodpeckers in New England came this year from Bridport, VT (*fide* JP) and Sherborn, MA (E. Taylor, *fide* B.O.). As a breeding bird in the Region, the Olive-sided Flycatcher appears to be showing some indications of serious decline, particularly in Massachusetts where the species is all but gone as a breeder. New England observers are encouraged to watch this species especially closely in the seasons ahead. Possible nesting of the elusive Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in Massachusetts again challenged observers with the presence of birds in

Florida and Heath, *Berkshire* and *Franklin*, in mid-June (*fide* SK).

In New Hampshire, where the species is scarce as a breeder, a count of 15 Purple Martins at a colony in Laconia June 13 (A & BD) was of note. Even more uncommon were five Fish Crows at Concord, NH July 11 (*fide* DD). Numbers of Carolina Wrens were said to be considerably down in Connecticut from recent past summers, undoubtedly the result of the harsh previous winter (*fide* BK), and many Massachusetts birders echoed the same sentiment. The 1994–1995 CBC may ultimately provide the best evidence for the veracity of these impressions. The optimism expressed by Perkins in the spring report over the breeding potential of a pair of Sedge Wrens at Wayland, MA in May was borne out when young were discovered in late July (N. Patterson). Additional Sedge Wren nestings undoubtedly occurred at Windsor, MA when 2–3 pairs appeared June 26–July 31 (*fide* SK), but the outcome of a bird at Cutler, ME June 11 (*fide* WT) was indeterminate.

A Golden-crowned Kinglet at Burlington S.P., July 31 (CR) was rare for the Ocean State at one of only 2 sites where the species is thought to breed in Rhode Island. As interest in “Bicknell’s” Gray-cheeked Thrush continues, a total of 36 birds at 10 New Hampshire sites in June and early July (*fide* DD) was noteworthy. Less encouraging were Rhode Island reports of breeding Veeries at study sites at Arcadia W.M.A. and the Tiverton-Little Compton area. Declines of 21% over 4 years at the former locality (CR) and 11% at the latter (DE) strongly suggest that something is not well somewhere within this species’ range.

Vireos to Warblers

The scattered, if not regular, presence of breeding Solitary Vireos on the s.e. Massachusetts coastal plain was indicated by reports of two each at Freetown June 21 and Fall River July 19 (TA). This season not a single breeding confirmation report was received for Golden-winged Warblers in New England. Next summer, the editor urges anyone having evidence of confirmed nesting to submit their data to *National Audubon Society Field Notes* in an effort to fully document the Regional demise of this species. For the 2nd consecutive season, a seemingly early migrant Tennessee Warbler was noted in July—this year a molting adult banded at Woodstock, VT July 22 (C. Rimmer, *fide* JP). As related by Perkins in the spring report, N. Parulas attempted to nest in Rhode Island’s Great Swamp this spring, and June 2 nest building was observed; however, by June 27 the nest had been preyed upon and abandoned (CR, R. Enser). A ♂

Black-throated Blue Warbler feeding a fledgling at Weston, *Middlesex* in mid-June (M. Frankle) was most unusual and represented what was probably the first such event for e. Massachusetts. In Vermont this year, new possible breeding stations for Cerulean Warblers included Sandgate, Ira, Benson, and Camel’s Hump Mt. (*fide* JP). An unmated ♂ Prothonotary Warbler continued from May+ at Great Meadows N.W.R., Concord, MA (*fide* B.O.). The Worm-eating Warbler population described last year at Freetown S.F., Freetown, MA, held at least eight individuals this year, including a pair with two young June 21 (TA). Notoriously scarce as a fall migrant in New England, a Louisiana Waterthrush in downtown Boston’s Fenway area July 27 (TA) was most unusual, while a Kentucky Warbler at Russell, *Hampden*, MA June 22 (SK) apparently showed no indication of breeding. An aberrant Mourning Warbler at Williamsburg, *Hampshire*, MA June 10–early July (C. Quinlan, *et al.*) matched closely a probable hybrid Mourning Warbler x Com. Yellowthroat that was described at Mt. Greylock, MA during June 1991 (see *AB* 45:1096) and which appeared remarkably like at least one additional published account of this phenomenon. Is there something regularly going on out there that we should know about?

SA The Henslow’s Sparrow has been virtually extirpated as a breeding bird throughout most of the Region for many years. In Massachusetts, the Region’s only recent bastion for attempted nesting, the last confirmed breeding occurred in 1973 and 1974. The presence of four singing males at a single w. Massachusetts site in 1983 had been the only subsequent hint of possible New England breeding for this retiring and elusive grassland species [Veit and Petersen, *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993)]. Consequently, the discovery of two Henslow’s Sparrows in a hayfield in Lincoln, *Middlesex*, MA June 28 was a matter of considerable excitement. Through patient and careful observation, Lincoln conservationist Steve Ells discovered, identified, and ultimately confirmed the breeding of the sparrows in July. He also assisted in coordinating local conservation and land-holding groups to make it possible for the sparrows to breed successfully and for large numbers of interested birders to observe them without any apparent impact on nesting success. Kudos to Ells and the Town of Lincoln for their enlightened species management!

Buntings to Finches

A Painted Bunting continued from May at a feeder at Cutler, *Washington*, ME until June 2 (*fide* WT). For the 2nd consecutive year a singing Clay-colored Sparrow appeared at Myles Standish S.F., June 11–July 5 (Gd’E *et al.*) If only one of these increasingly regular prospecting males could find a mate, the nesting of this species in Massachusetts would undoubtedly be assured. Results from the 2nd consecutive year of an extensive grassland bird survey being conducted in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Audubon Society (*fide* AJ) suggested that an estimated 98 pairs of Vesper Sparrows at 29 sites and 330 Grasshopper Sparrows at 31 sites currently exist in the Bay State. To underscore the importance of key sites to certain grassland birds, it should be pointed out that of the 330 Grasshopper Sparrows recorded in 1993–1994, 247 were at only 2 sites.

An exceptionally late Fox Sparrow lingered at Middlebury, VT until June 24 (M Hitchcock), while a breeding pair of Lincoln’s Sparrows at Florida, *Berkshire*, MA June 16 (R. Rancatti, R. Daub, *fide* SK) was at the same site as last year’s nesting, which was also the site of the state’s first fully documented breeding occurrence in 1981. A remarkably out of season Dark-eyed Junco was on Cape Cod at Osterville, MA June 24 (TA). Even more incredible was the discovery of a Lapland Longspur and a ♂ Chestnut-collared Longspur in breeding plumage together at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, CT June 7 (GH, *fide* BK). Almost as interesting is the fact that an 1876 Massachusetts specimen of a Chestnut-collared Longspur was obtained in July and that others from Connecticut (1968) and Maine (1886) were taken in August. Were these all wandering Atlantic Coast wintering birds or do they represent some form of summer dispersal from the West?

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