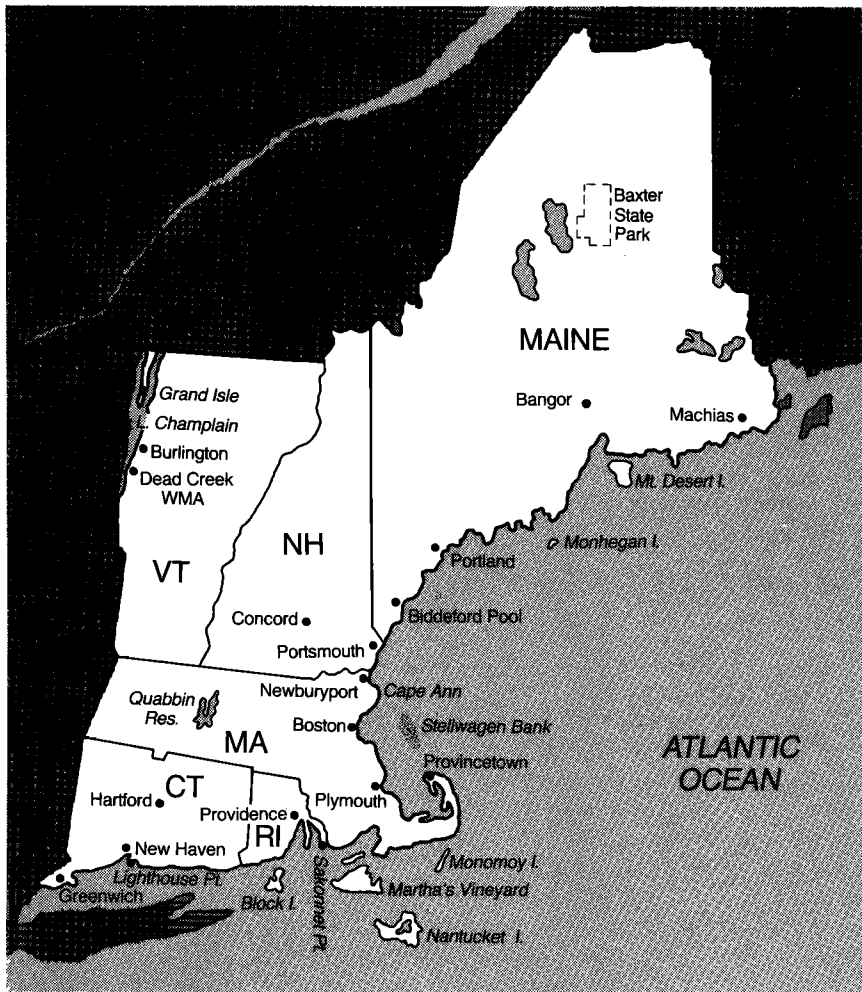


# new england region



## WALTER G. ELLISON and NANCY L. MARTIN

Much of the autumn of 1997 continued a trend set in spring, with little rain and somewhat low temperatures. This turned around abruptly in November, when conditions turned sharply colder and wetter, including significant snowfall November 14. Indeed, from October 25 to November 22 there was nary a weekend without a nor'easter. This produced some of the best circumstances for late season sea watching in the Region in several years. Diligent efforts in New Hampshire and Massachusetts produced many good counts, some of these records or near misses. A few marine birds (e.g. Roseate Tern, Black-legged Kittiwake) turned up inland after the storms of November 1 and 8.

On the other hand, the even-tempered climate of much of August through mid-October led to a lackluster landbird migration. This, combined with the perceived decline of many staple long-distance migrants (e.g., Tennessee Warbler, Swainson's Thrush) caused an unavoidable chorus of concerned rumblings from many observers. The fallout of the season was October 7–8 when warm northwest winds suddenly turned cold and easterly. Thousands of Yellow-rumped Warblers and sparrows were grounded, with exceptional counts ranging from Monhegan Island, Maine, to Bluff Point, Connecticut.

General bird population trends of the fall included good numbers of continental shelf water specialties in the Gulf of Maine, especially Cory's Shearwaters in Massachusetts Bay; a poor winter raptor flight

with no Gyrfalcons, no northern owls save for a few Snowies, few Rough-legged Hawks, and few shrikes (an honorary raptor); and, the event of the season for many, an early and diverse invasion of boreal seed eaters. The latter phenomenon began with mid-August coastal movements of a few White-winged Crossbills and large numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches. By season's end these were joined by all the other finches, including redpolls and Pine Grosbeaks.

Rare birds were present, but most were those with strong Regional precedent. Perhaps the best find of the season was a Long-billed Curlew on Cape Cod. A booby of indeterminate species seen at Nantucket in November also was notable. Other rarities with short Regional track records included Black-tailed Gull, albeit back for its 3rd consecutive year, and MacGillivray's Warbler, which is being reported with increasing regularity. Noteworthy for its absence, given a recent upward tick in numbers, was Northern Wheatear.

**Abbreviations:** Appledore (*Appledore I Kittery, York Co., ME*); Block I. (*Block I., RI*), Bluff Pt. (*Bluff Pt., Groton, New London Co., CT*), Dead Creek (*Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison and Panton, Addison Co., VT*); First Encounter (*First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable Co., MA*); H.B.S.P. (*Hammonasset Beach S.P., Madison, New Haven Co., CT*); Monomoy (*Monomoy N.W.R., Chatham, Barnstable Co., MA*); Plum I. (*Plum I., Parker River N.W.R., Newburyport, Essex Co., MA*); Rockport (*Andrews & Halibut Pts., Rockport, Essex Co., MA*). Note: County names will be given the first time each locality is mentioned in the text.

## LOONS TO IBIS

Red-throated Loons had a starring role in the seabird wrecks associated with the November nor'easters; high counts reached record proportions with counts of 2178 at Sandy Neck, *Barnstable*, Nov. 8 (ML), and 2000+ at Rockport Nov. 23 (RL, GL). Fourteen in Vermont, almost all on L. Champlain, represented a good seasonal total inland. Impressive Com. Loon high counts were 250 on Maquam Bay, Swanton, *Franklin*, VT, Oct. 12 (E. Alton, R. Barnes), and 231 at Rockport Nov. 8 (SP). Encour-

aging counts of Horned Grebe included 198 on a survey of central L. Champlain Oct 30 (TM), and 257 at Bourne, *Barnstable*, MA, Nov. 28 (MS). Red-necked Grebes were well reported both inland and coastally; exceptionally early high counts inland were 13 Sept. 4 at Whitefield, *Coos*, NH (IM), and 30 Sept. 14 at Grand Isle, VT (DJH). Coastal maxima included 34 Nov. 7 at Rockport (RH), 102 at Biddeford Pool, *York*, Nov. 18 (NM, P. Comins), and 66 on the *Rockingham*, NH, coast Nov. 28 (A&BD). This year's Eared Grebes were in Gloucester, *Essex*, MA, Sept. 26–Nov. 30+ (v o); at Trustom Pond N.W.R., *Washington*, RI, Oct. 13–23 (ST, DK); and another at Little Compton, *Newport*, RI, Oct. 31 (DE) Rhode Island was also graced with the season's lone W. Grebe Nov. 18–20 in S. Kingstown and Narragansett, *Washington* (DK)

Reports of tubenoses were highlighted by sea watch counts during nor'easters. A good count of 175 N. Fulmars Oct. 21 from the Gulf of Maine ferry *M. V. Prince of Fundy* (D. Nickerson) was eclipsed by storm-driven counts of 225, including eight dark morphs, at Rockport Nov. 1 (RH) and 200 Nov. 27 at First Encounter (JA). A decidedly lost **Northern Fulmar** turned up in w Long I. Sound off Stamford, *Fairfield*, CT, Sept. 14 (PD, A. Mocchio, A. Collins); this provided only the 2nd Nutmeg State record. Cory's Shearwaters penetrated the s. Gulf of Maine in good numbers, although they did not seem to get very far down east: 150 were counted at Rockport Sept. 29 (RH), and 12 lingered into November with the last two at Provincetown, *Barnstable*, Nov. 28 (SH). Reflecting a good fall for counting Greater Shearwaters from shore were 2130 at Rockport Nov. 1 (RH), and one that strayed into Great Bay at Durham, *Strafford*, NH, Oct. 5 (SM). There were several good inshore counts of Manx Shearwater, including a New Hampshire record nine at Ragged Neck, Rye, *Rockingham*, Aug. 21 (A&BD); this was overshadowed by 52 on the same date at Rockport (RH). Even that Gulf Stream associate the Audubon's Shearwater turned up closer to shore than usual, with two on Stellwagen Bank Aug. 10 (T. Leverich et al., *fide* MR). More typical were six out at Hydrographer Canyon Sept. 6 (G. d'Entremont et al.), and one on Cox's Ledge s. of Block I. Aug. 23 (ST et al.). Numbers of Leach's Storm-Petrels were modest, with a maximum of 12 at Sandy Neck Nov. 8 (VL). A storm-petrel seen on L. Winnepesaukee Nov. 2 may have been Leach's, but details were inconclusive.

Based upon testimony on flight behavior, size, and coloration, a bird seen closely, but briefly, Nov. 12 & 13 at Nantucket, MA, was a booby, although the description fails to distinguish the species (*fide* SP). The N. Gannet migration was very heavy in late October, with 8000 at First Encounter on Oct. 28 (BN). American White Pelicans included one at Plum I., MA, that arrived in July and remained until Oct. 16 (v.o.); another (?) was seen in s. coastal Rhode Island from Oct. 18–19 (CR, A. Richards). Continuing a recent trend, four Great Cormorants were found well inland from Sept. 28 to Oct. 29.

Forty Am. Bitterns were just below recent averages. Least Bitterns went unreported. Cattle Egrets were generally scarce; the maximum was 22 Sept. 21 at Tiverton, *Newport*, RI (R. Emerson), and a late one was at nearby New Bedford, *Bristol*, MA, Nov. 3 (GL). A surprisingly high count for the date was five Green Herons Nov. 2 in E. Boston, *Suffolk* (RHS). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons included three on the Massachusetts coast, and an immature at Scarborough, ME, Oct. 1–11 (GC et al.). Far afield was a *Plegadis* ibis seen in Holeb Township, *Somerset*, ME, from mid-July to Aug. 28 (†R. Joseph).

#### WATERFOWL

A high total of 13 Tundra Swans was greatly abetted by a flock of nine at the mouth of the Connecticut R. Nov. 28 (DP); others included three in Rhode Island (*fide* DE), and one in Massachusetts. The feral Whooper Swan population in Essex, MA, continues to produce offspring, given the presence of six adults and two immatures on Plum I. in November (W. Drew et al.). The Greater White-fronted Goose is increasing as a visitor to this Region; 12 were reported, including New Hampshire's 6th Nov. 21 to December (†A&BD, †SM), three in Framingham, *Middlesex*, MA, Nov. 13 (SH), and four each in Connecticut (*fide* GH) and Rhode Island (*fide* DE). Snow Goose numbers continue to burgeon in the Champlain Valley. Ross's Geese also continue to accompany the Snows of Vermont, with at least one Oct. 6–14 at Dead Creek (†TM, †JMN, †DJH). A very small, dark Canada Goose at Dead Creek from Oct. 3–14 was probably of the race *minima* (†, ph. DJH).

An Eur. Green-winged Teal in Exeter, *Washington*, RI, Nov. 28 (J. Murphy) was the only one found. An impressive 200 Blue-winged Teal was seen on Christina Res., Fort Fairfield, *Aroostook*, ME, Sept. 22 (BS). It was the best Eur. Wigeon autumn in

over 20 years with at least 20 reported, including four in New Hampshire, one in Maine, four in Rhode Island, and 11 in Massachusetts, with a maximum of five through November at Carver, *Plymouth* (MS). American Wigeon also seemed especially numerous, with a record 215 on New Hampshire's Great Bay Nov. 21 (A&BD), and 920 on E. Providence Res., RI, Oct. 19 (DE). Canvasbacks and Redheads continue scarce with no count of the former exceeding 170, and only a dozen of the latter reported. Ring-necked Ducks arrived in late August and built to excellent numbers, with a high count of 1114 Oct. 19 at Southborough, *Worcester*, MA (ML). The only Tufted Duck was the Sterling, *Worcester*, MA, male returning for the 3rd consecutive year Oct 13–Nov. 11 (v.o.).

At least 20 King Eiders were recorded, commencing with five that apparently summered in 3 states. Inland occurrences included an ad. male at Worcester, MA, Nov. 22–23 (ML, F. McMenemy et al.), and Vermont's 7th, an imm. male at W. Addison Nov. 30 (†FAP, EBP, †TM). Good numbers of Harlequin Ducks were found at many traditional sites; the best counts were 52 Nov. 18 at Chilmark, *Dukes*, MA (VL et al.), and 60 on both shores of the Sakonnet R. at Sakonnet and Sachuest Pts., RI, Nov. 28 (R. Bushnell). A drake also made a rare appearance on L. Champlain at Button Bay, Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, from Nov. 1–5 (†TM et al.).

Oldsquaw were well reported on L. Champlain, including 63 at Panton, *Addison*, Nov. 9 (J. Peterson). The annual Oldsquaw concentration at Nantucket built to 100,000 by Nov. 19 (*fide* ER). Excellent scoter counts were 13,830 Surfs Oct. 27 at Rockport (RH), and 3123 Blacks at Sandy Neck Nov. 8 (ML). Eight Barrow's Goldeneyes included single reports from Vermont and New Hampshire, two in Massachusetts, and four in Maine. Common Mergansers peaked at 2000 Nov. 20 in Errol, *Coos*, NH (P&J Casey). Ruddy Ducks continue in better numbers than in the 1980s, although this was more evident in the south; the best count was 750 Nov. 5 at Little Compton, RI (DE).

#### RAPTORS TO CRANES

Black Vultures appear to be established in w. Connecticut; northward pioneers included five in Sheffield, MA, over the autumn, and singles Oct. 4 at Amesbury, *Essex*, MA (S. Arena), and Oct. 16 at Westwood, *Norfolk*, MA (J. Clancy). *Essex*, MA, had its first modern breeding record for

Osprey, with successful fledging at a nest on Plum I. Aug. 3 (JB) giving evidence of the fish hawk's recovery. Also noteworthy were the 11 ad. and 17 imm. Bald Eagles at Merrymeeting Bay, ME, in mid-September (M.A.S.). A superb count of 41 N. Harriers was achieved in Deering, *Hillsborough*, NH, Oct. 13 (IM); otherwise, harrier reports seemed modest to a bit low. The Broad-winged Hawk migration peaked in most locations Sept. 15–16, with 14,000 at 2 sites in e. Massachusetts (*vide* PR); the Vermont maximum was a week earlier Sept. 8, when 1730 were counted from Mt. Philo, Charlotte, *Chittenden* (TM). Three Swainson's Hawks included one that summered at Provincetown, MA, remaining until Oct. 11 (v.o.), and light-morph immatures at Lighthouse Pt. Oct. 1 (GH et al.) and Mt. Wachusett, *Worcester*, MA, Oct. 18 (PR).

No Rough-legged Hawk invasion was in the offing. Merlin continue to establish new breeding sites in the n. country; a pair was observed feeding three young at the nest in Wentworths Location, *Coos*, NH, Aug. 2 (M&R Suomala, R. Quinn). Given the increase at the s. edge of the range, it is possible that increases in late August migrants are related to this range expansion, e.g. 12 were counted Aug. 31 at Cutler, *Washington*, ME (BS). Numbers of Peregrine Falcons remain healthy; up to 20 were seen at Monhegan Oct. 8–13 (SS).

The success of Wild Turkey reintroduction continues unabated, with flocks reaching the outer coastal plain at Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, MA (ML), and Pascoag, *Providence*, RI (T. McCleish). All three Yellow Rails reported were found on the Massachusetts s. shore from Oct. 17–19 (*vide* RHS). An imm. Purple Gallinule appeared at Hingham, *Plymouth*, MA, Sept. 20–24 (N. Swirka, v.o.). Only 15 Com. Moorhens were reported, but Am. Coots remained common after the dearth of the 1980s. Two Sandhill Crane reports brightened the birding in w. Connecticut at Litchfield Sept. 22 (R. Smith), and Greenwich, *Fairfield*, Oct. 13 (S. Smith, F. Larkin).

## SHOREBIRDS

The shorebird migration generally appeared unremarkable, with average coastal counts of most species and only a few inland hot spots. American Oystercatchers continue in their northern outpost at Scarborough, ME (*vide* JD), and 130 at Monomoy Aug. 26 (BN) was impressive. American Avocets included one that stayed in Eastham, MA, from Aug. 22–Sept. 30 (v.o.); another at Bremen, *Lincoln*, ME,

Sept. 2 (T. Fiore), and the last Oct. 2 at Barn I., Stonington, *New London*, CT (L. Kendall, R. Preston). The 600 Greater Yellowlegs in Eastham, *Barnstable*, MA, Aug. 15 (ML) was an excellent tally away from Newburyport. The Lesser Yellowlegs migration appeared to run later than usual, with the last Nov. 16 at Newburyport (RH).

Autumn counts of Willet continue to grow on Monomoy, with 200 there Aug. 14 (BN). Upland Sandpipers reports fell to 43 birds with a high of 18 Aug. 6 at Hanscom Field, Bedford, *Middlesex*, MA (RL). A **Long-billed Curlew** at Nauset, *Eastham*, MA (A. Donovan et al.) was a rare treat; there have been fewer than 10 well-supported 20th century reports in the Bay State. Hudsonian Godwits occurred inland in w. Massachusetts and c. Connecticut, and lingered to Nov. 24 at H.B.S.P. (v.o.).

The Chatham Bar-tailed Godwit first seen in July stayed until at least Sept. 13 (v.o.). Twenty-three Marbled Godwits was in line with recent autumn reports. Red Knot numbers were low, no count exceeded 1800, and very few were found in Maine.

There was an impressive Aug. 11 shorebird fallout at Dead Creek when 600 Semipalmated and 13 White-rumped sandpipers were counted (TM, DJH). White-rumpeds lingered well into November, with the latest Nov. 28 at Edgartown, *Dukes* (VL). Thirty Baird's Sandpipers was a bit low; two were seen in Vermont, and one was very late Nov. 11 at Tiverton, *Newport*, RI (DS). Pectoral and Stilt sandpiper numbers rebounded somewhat from 1996. Pectorals occurred in decent numbers in October on inland mudflats, including up to 90 at Great Meadows N.W.R., and tarried to Nov. 27 at Middleborough, *Plymouth*, MA (M. Faherty). Stilt Sandpipers were seen in low average numbers, including inland appearances at Great Meadows N.W.R. and Sebasticook L., *Penobscot*, ME, where three were found Oct. 4 (W. Sumner).

A Purple Sandpiper was located on Savage I., *Grand Isle*, VT, Oct. 21 (FAP, RBL). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were abysmally low with just 12 found; four were discovered inland, including a late one at Great Meadows N.W.R. Oct. 9–12 (RL et al.). A juv. Ruff also made its way to Great Meadows N.W.R. Oct. 11–30 (H.C. Floyd et al.). The 17 Wilson's Phalaropes represented a good total for the last decade, but was well short of reports from the 1970s. One turned up at Dead Creek Aug. 4 (DJH), and two were late at Little Compton, RI, Sept. 21 (RB). Several Red-necked Phalaropes were discovered inland, including up to

four at Dead Creek Aug. 11–15 (v.o.), one photographed at Little Pd., Litchfield, CT, Aug. 24 (J. Feldman), and one on L. Champlain at N. Hero, *Grand Isle*, Aug. 25 (FAP, RBL). In a more usual setting were 100,000 e. of Mt. Desert Rock, ME, Aug. 3 (ZK, *vide* WT). The best Red Phalarope count also came from Maine, with 2000 on a pelagic trip out of Bar Harbor, *Hancock*, Sept. 2 (WT).

## JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

Jaegers and skuas were well reported, with several noteworthy counts from shore-based watches. Pomarine Jaegers were reported late August–November, with the best totals at season's close including up to 230 on outer Cape Cod Nov. 27 (JA, BN) Parasitic Jaegers were more widely reported and generally more numerous in August and September; maxima were 20+ at S Beach, Chatham, MA, Sept. 6 (SM), and 25 at First Encounter Nov. 27 (JA), a remarkable count for the date. Outlanders included one in w. Long I. Sound off Stamford, CT, Sept. 12 (PD), and a juv. dark-morph that turned up on L. Champlain at W Addison Nov. 1–7 (†TM, †FAP, †S. Morrill). The brief passage of a thunderstorm put down a welcome surprise at Sandy Pt., W Haven, *New Haven*, CT, Aug. 29, where an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger tarried for a short time (J. Mehmel, A.B. Smith).

Up to five Great Skuas were detected by e. Massachusetts sea watchers Oct. 27–Nov 27, most at Rockport. Remarkably, given their usual limitation to the outer banks, this autumn's South Polar Skuas were in the n. Gulf of Maine, with two or more observed on pelagic voyages out of Bar Harbor from Aug. 24–Sept. 8 (WT, ZK, C. Duncan). Little Gull reports were average 10 were on L. Champlain, eight in Massachusetts, and three in New Hampshire and Maine. Nineteen Black-headed Gulls were reported on the coast from Maine to Connecticut. Rhode Island's famous **Black-tailed Gull**, now an adult, made a return engagement at Sachuest Pt. from Aug 30–Oct. 12 (R. Larsen, P. O'Neill, v.o.) Lesser Black-backed Gulls went unreported in n. New England and Rhode Island, nonetheless, a solid 27 were found, including four inland in Massachusetts.

Two Black-legged Kittiwakes in *Berkshire*, MA, Nov. 9 (*vide* SK) were presumably downed by a nor'easter. Four Sabine's Gulls were seen in Massachusetts, beginning Sept. 6 until a late adult at Rockport Oct. 18 (RH). A juv. **Sabine's Gull** on L. Champlain at Milton, *Chittenden*, Sept. 12

(†FAP, ph. RBL) was Vermont's 6th. The 54 Caspian Terns was the best autumn total reported in over 20 years; amazingly, 43 of these occurred from Oct. 4–5, including 30 seen in Rye, *Rockingham*, NH, Oct. 4 (SM et al.). Royal Terns were sparse, with five found from Aug. 13–Sept. 29, including a rare Granite State observation on the latter date at Rye (ASBD). Fortune smiled on the observer who located the season's two Sandwich Terns at Charlestown, *Washington*, RI, Aug. 1 (ST). Roseate Terns staged impressively at S. Beach, Chatham, with the 4500+ Aug. 8 outnumbering Com. Terns by a thousand (RH). Very late Roseate Terns included an amazing inland sighting at Worcester, MA, Nov. 2 (ML et al.), and one at coastal Martha's Vineyard from Nov. 15–20 (VL et al.). There was another poor autumn visitation by Forster's Terns, with just two venturing N of Massachusetts. A Black Tern seen in "mid-August" at Pontook Res., Dummer, *Coos*, NH, was a good find (D. Paulus).

Indicative of the decline of Dovekie as a winter visitor to inshore waters in New England was a mere 38 seen this autumn, in spite of some of the best conditions for a wreck in some time. Thick-billed Murres are also largely fond memories; only 12 were reported. Common Murres included singles on a Bar Harbor pelagic trip Oct. 12 (LB et al.), Oct. 27 at York, ME (NM), and Nov. 7 & 18 at Rockport (RH, J. Soucy). Ra-

zorbills are now by far the most common alcid inshore, with over 600 reported in November, mostly in Massachusetts. A Black Guillemot strayed up the Piscataqua R. to Newington, NH, on the exceptional date of Aug. 29 (†M. Amaral, M. Bartlett). Just four Atlantic Puffins were reported, including storm-driven birds at Rockport Oct. 27 and Nov. 7 (RH).

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

A **White-winged Dove** found on Monhegan Oct. 2 (*vide* P. Vickery) was the 7th or 8th for Maine. A tardy Yellow-billed Cuckoo appeared Nov. 12 at Sachuest Pt., *Newport*, RI (R. Weaver). Only nine Snowy Owls were reported in the Region, and only four each of Long-eared and Short-eared. Of interest was a Long-eared Owl that landed on a ship 120 mi SE of Nantucket Aug. 19 (S. Gamsby). In contrast, N. Saw-whet Owls staged an impressive flight with 160 netted in a backyard in Freeport, *Cumberland*, ME (J. Walker), seven located at H.B.S.P. Oct. 18, and 16 banded at 3 locations in Rhode Island Oct. 21 (*vide* P. Paton). An average flight of Com. Nighthawks in w. Massachusetts peaked at 1740 from Aug. 26–27. To the east the peak date was Aug. 30, with 3200 total reported from 6 locations. A Chuck-will's-widow in the nets Sept. 16 surprised banders at Manomet, *Plymouth*, MA (TL-E). An observer in Hudson, *Middlesex*,

MA, found a large Chimney Swift roost, counting 2200 Sept. 13 and detecting lingerers to Oct. 11 (E. Taylor).

Another influx of Rufous Hummingbirds in the Region included an ad. male at E. Kingston, *Rockingham*, NH, in mid-August, last seen Aug. 23 (v.o., ph.), and a female in Agawam, *Hampden*, MA, Sept. 15–Nov. 28 that returned to the same feeder where it had appeared as an immature in 1996. Once again it was captured and deposited in the same Northampton greenhouse to overwinter (L. Fieldstad). A hummer reported as this species was submitted without details from Newton, *Middlesex*, MA, Sept. 20 (*vide* MR), and another seen very briefly Aug. 1 in Grand Isle, VT, was nonetheless accepted by the Vermont Bird Records Committee.

Reports of 18 Red-headed Woodpeckers included records from breeding locations in Bridport, *Addison*, VT (FAP, EBP), and Malden, *Middlesex*, MA (C. Jackson); most others were coastal migrants. Red-bellied Woodpeckers in n. New England were seven in New Hampshire and two in Maine, including one offshore on Monhegan I. (SS). Two Three-toed Woodpeckers were found in the White Mts. Aug. 6 in Bethlehem, *Grafton* (†J. Batt), and Aug. 8 in Success, *Coos* (G. Wallace, *vide* JD). A wandering Black-backed Woodpecker appeared at Gate 40 at Quabbin Res., *Worcester*, Sept. 16 (R. Murphy).



**The great majority of inland records of Sabine's Gulls involve birds in juvenal plumage in fall. This individual, representing a sixth record for Vermont, was at Milton on Lake Champlain on September 12, 1997. Photograph/Richard B. Lavallee**

## FLYCATCHERS TO KINGLETS

Flycatchers straying to Massachusetts included a Say's Phoebe Sept. 20 in N. Scituate, *Plymouth* (TL-E), and two Ash-throated Flycatchers, at S. Monomoy Sept. 14 (BN, ph.) and S. Dartmouth, *Bristol*, Nov. 23 (A. Poole). Nearly as late was a Great Crested Flycatcher at Seekonk, *Bristol*, MA, Nov. 19–20 (DS, *fide* DE). At least 16 W. Kingbirds were found along the coast from Monhegan I. to Connecticut, and an E. Kingbird lingered to Oct. 26 at Edgartown, *Dukes*, MA (M. Pelikan). A census of staging swallows in Grand Isle, VT, was rewarded with record counts of 450 Purple Martins Aug. 28 and 70 N. Rough-winged Swallows Aug. 31 (DJH). Tardy Barn Swallows were reported Nov. 4 at Sachuest Pt., RI, and Nov. 8 at Eastham, *Barnstable*, MA. The upward trend in Com. Raven numbers continues, illustrated by e. Massachusetts counts of 26 in Ashburnham Oct. 17 (T. McCullough) and 24 at Mt. Watatic Oct. 26 (J&B Chiasson).

A very heavy flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches was detected beginning in late August. A total of 184 banded on Appledore I. was 62 more than the previous record (DH). Elevated numbers continued into the winter in stands of white pines laden with cones. Carolina Wrens showed signs of recovery with individuals n. to Brandon, Rutland, VT (S. Wetmore); Ashland, *Grafton*, NH (J. Williams); and Veazie, *Penobscot*, ME (B. Guidotti). There was a maximum of 34 on s. Cape Cod Nov. 23 (RHS). The lone Sedge Wren of the season turned up at E. Gloucester, MA, Nov. 28–30 onward (SP et al.). A good mid-October kinglet flight produced maxima of 500 Golden-crowns at Eastern Pt., Gloucester, Oct. 8 (R. Cressman), and 100 of each species at Monhegan I. Oct. 8–13 (SS).

## THRUSHES TO VIREOS

After a hiatus in autumn reports, two Townsend's Solitaires were reported, with one high in the mountains of Franconia, *Grafton*, NH, Oct. 6 (†S. Ricketts, C. Kingery) and another on the coast at Truro, *Barnstable*, MA, Nov. 2 (J. Hoye et al.). Reports of *Catharus* thrushes continue low, except for Hermit Thrushes. A Varied Thrush occurred at Bedford, *Hillsborough*, NH, Nov. 19–26 (†K. Mandeville), and another **Varied Thrush** at Kingston Nov. 28–30 through the period (DK, v.o.) provided a 2nd record for Rhode Island. Bohemian Waxwings were more widespread than last year, but hardly at 1995's levels, with only about 90 reported from Mas-

sachusetts north. Northern Shrikes showed a similar geographic spread, with a modest 19 reported beginning Oct. 9 at Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, ME (KG). The only vagrant White-eyed Vireo was an immature at S. Londonderry, *Windham*, VT, Sept. 10 (†W.J. Norse). Late Red-eyed Vireos were found in S. Duxbury, *Washington*, VT, Nov. 10 (†FBP, EBP) and in Melrose, *Essex*, MA, Nov. 19 (D&I Jewell).

## WARBLERS

Many observers continue to comment on the scarcity of warblers; Tennessee, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll warblers were in very small numbers. Nine Golden-winged Warblers were reported from Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, with three "Brewster's" also located in the Bay State. Another excellent total of 35+ Orange-crowned Warblers was tallied in the Region from Sept. 17–Nov. 28. Several of our more common migrants lingered into mid-November, with a Nashville on Block I. Nov. 13 (CR); a Yellow at Barnstable, MA, Nov. 19 (†RH) tying 1994's record date; a Chestnut-sided in Hamden, *New Haven*, CT, Nov. 16 (A. Brand); and a Magnolia in New Haven, CT, Nov. 23 (P. Hamback). Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were mind-boggling, with 4000 at Monhegan Oct. 8–13 (SS) being dwarfed by 10,000 departing Bluff Pt. Oct. 7 (DP).

Southern warblers found n. of their breeding ranges this autumn included three Yellow-throated, two Cerulean, five Prothonotary, three Kentucky, and six Hooded. Individuals of the first 3 species were banded at Appledore Aug. 20–22, followed by a Kentucky Aug. 29. Banders there also netted a Bay-breasted Aug. 15 that was recaptured 3 weeks later, after completing its molt (DH). Very late Louisiana Waterthrushes were found in Derry, *Rockingham*, NH, Sept. 18 and offshore on Star I. Sept. 27 (A&BD). For the 3rd consecutive year, a **MacGillivray's Warbler** turned up, this one an immature at Manomet, MA, Sept. 9 (*fide* TL-E). An excellent 36 Connecticut Warblers and a more expected 28+ Yellow-breasted Chats rounded out the warblers for the season.

## TANAGERS TO FINCHES

For the first time in several autumns, both species of vagrant tanager appeared in the Region. A male Summer Tanager was found in Portland, ME, Sept. 6 (S. Pollock), and Westerns appeared at Bluff Pt. Oct. 4 (DP) and Nantucket Oct. 19 (*fide* ER). A noteworthy total of at least 29 Blue Grosbeaks

were distributed along the coast, with four in Connecticut, 21 in Massachusetts, and the rest in the Ocean State. About five of the 55 Dickcissels noted were well inland, a female Sept. 27 in Addison, VT (†FAP), and others in Northampton and W. Springfield, MA, in early October (*fide* SK). Migrant E Towhees put on a show, with 200 counted in Providence, RI, Oct. 6 (R. Farrell) and 300 at Bluff Pt. the next day (DP).

Massachusetts birders provided most of the maxima of other widespread migrant sparrows, including 130 Am. Tree Sparrows in Marshfield Nov. 23 (D. Clapp), 150 Chippings in N. Truro Sept. 27 (WP), 260 Savannahs in Newbury Oct. 7 (RH), 23 Foxes in Northborough Nov. 23 (B. Volkle), 29 Lincoln's in Bolton Flats Oct. 4 (RL), 115 Swamps there Sept. 28 (ML), and 1000 White-throateds in Gloucester Oct. 8 (G Wood). Other states contributed 4000 White-throated Sparrows and 5000 Dark-eyed Juncos at Bluff Pt. Oct. 7 (DP), and 3000–5000 White-crowned Sparrows and 5000–10,000 juncos on Monhegan Oct. 8–13 (SS). Both Fox and White-crowned sparrows were considered to be in above-average numbers over much of the Region.

Among the scarce but regular migrant sparrows, 29+ Clay-colored Sparrows were above average but consistent with recent autumns. Twenty-two of these were in e. Massachusetts, and 13 others were recorded from New Hampshire (two), Rhode Island (two), and Maine, where the maximum of four was found at Monhegan Oct. 8–13 (SS). Ten Lark Sparrows was a bit low, two arrived in August, including one Aug. 25 at Providence, RI (S. Reinert). The lone Lark Bunting of the season visited Nantucket Sept. 8–10 (N. Brooks, v.o.). A Savannah Sparrow of the normally coastal Ipswich race strayed inland to Middleborough, MA, Nov. 29 (WP). An encouraging post-breeding count of 33 Grasshopper Sparrows was made Aug. 7 in Lancaster, *Worcester*, MA (RL). A **Henslow's Sparrow** on Monhegan Oct. 3 was the 6th or 7th for Maine (BN, VL, S. Jones). Another was at Gay Head Oct. 8 (L. McDowell). After a 2-year autumn absence from the Region, a Le Conte's Sparrow was found in Northampton, MA, Oct. 12 (*fide* SK).

Unprecedented describes the tally of 352 Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows in Newburyport Sept. 28 (RH). By Oct. 7, Nelson's Sharp-taileds had begun to outnumber the Saltmarsh species at this location, 40+ to 35, respectively (RH). August reports of Nelson's from Great Bay, NH, marshes may be indicative of breeding, in-

troggression, or post-nesting dispersal from Maine populations (†PH, †SM). A Seaside Sparrow on Monhegan in early October was out of place (SS). Recognizable western forms of common species reported included a "Gambel's" or intergrade White-crowned Sparrow in W. Newbury, MA, Oct. 29 (†RH), and one "Pink-sided" and two "Oregon" juncos. Rounding out the sparrows was a peak count of 800 Snow Buntings at Plum I. Nov. 12-18 (SP).

Four Yellow-headed Blackbirds were distributed from Monhegan Aug. 31 (*vide* KG), Yarmouth, ME, Sept. 15 (LB); Wakefield, *Carroll*, NH, Sept. 25 (ph. K. Connell), to Edgartown, MA, Sept. 7 (VL). A Nov 17 female Orchard Oriole in Warren, *Bristol*, RI (RB, *vide* DE), was one of the latest ever found in New England. A Bullock's Oriole at Plum I. Sept. 16 (RH) was one of many from the Bay State, but an ad. male **Bullock's Oriole** at a feeder in Goshen, *Litchfield*, from late October into December (ph J. Lang) provided only the 2nd fully documented Connecticut report.

Good numbers of most northern finches pushed into New England this fall. Pine Grosbeaks were first reported in Vermont Oct 31 and had reached n.w. Connecticut by Nov. 25. Over 300 were tallied in Maine for the season. Flocks numbering 12 or fewer Red Crossbills were scattered across the Region. White-winged Crossbill numbers were more impressive. Sample high counts included 150 at Maddison, *Carroll*, NH, Nov. 22 (J. Hadam), and 160 at Gay Head, MA, Nov. 18 (VL). Massachusetts had its first August reports since 1969, with singles at Tuckernuck, *Nantucket*, Aug. 30 (SP) and Warwick, *Franklin*, the next day (BN).

Common Redpolls trickled in from mid- to late October and arrived in force in November. The highest counts were 760 (500 in one flock) at Quabbin, MA, Nov. 23 (SS) and some 1000 at H.B.S.P. Nov. 29-30 (m ob.). Numbers of Pine Siskins were modest, with the exception of 143 in Lebanon, *Grafton*, NH, Oct. 24 (PH). American Goldfinches received little mention except in Connecticut, where there were "huge numbers everywhere," and counts of 1000-3000 per day at coastal points in late November. Finally, Evening Grosbeaks were widespread in modest numbers, with no large flocks reported.

**UNCONFIRMED REPORT**

A report of a pair of Shiny Cowbirds at a feeder in the heart of Vermont's Green Mts, present for 10 days after 2 mid-

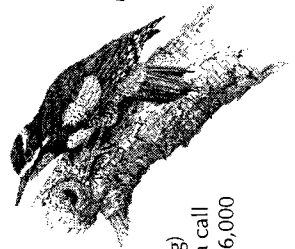
November snowstorms, seemed plausible, although the submitted details were not entirely unassailable. Given the biological significance of the species' invasion of the United States and the need for reflective, not reflexive, contemplation of the details, we cannot include this report with unqualified support. To the best of our knowledge, this would be the first inland report for an e. seaboard state n. of the Carolinas.

**Compilers (in boldface), contributors (in italics), and cited observers:** John Askildsen, *Jim Berry*, Richard Bowen, Lysle Brinker, Gloria Carson, *Alan & Barbara Delorey*, **Jody Despres**, P. Dugan, **David Emerson**, K. Gammons, Greg Hanisek, *Rick Heil*, S. Hennin, *David J. Hoag*, *David Holmes*, *Peter Hunt*, **Seth Kellogg**, Zack Klyver, Doug Kraus, Vernon Laux, Richard B. Lavalley, G. Levandoski, Trevor Lloyd-Evans, *Ron Lockwood*, Mark Lynch, Ian MacLeod, *Maine Audubon Society*, N. McReel, **Steve Mirick**, *Ted Murin*, **Julia M. Nicholson**, Blair Nikula, **Simon Perkins**, Wayne Petersen, Eleanor Pratt, *Frederick Pratt*, Dave Provencher, C. Raithel, E. Ray, **Marj Rines**, Paul Roberts, Bill Sheehan, D. Speicher, **Robert H. Stymeist**, *Scott Sumner*, M. Sylvia, William Townsend, Scot Tsagarakis, **Vermont Institute of Natural Science**.

**Walter G. Ellison** and **Nancy L. Martin**, Department of Biological Sciences, University of New York, Albany, NY 12222.



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