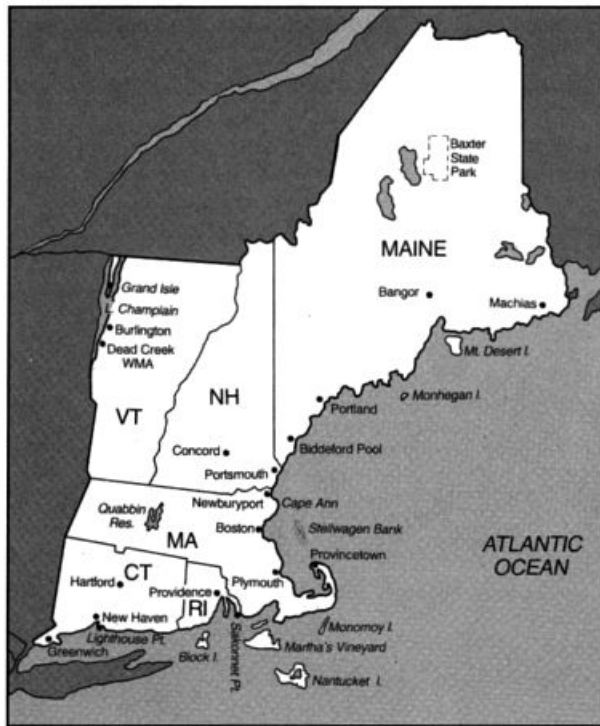


New England



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If it is possible to describe anything as dynamic as New England birdlife as “average,” this autumn’s avian events came close. Most general trends continued to hold (e.g., appearances by several *Selasphorus*, low tallies of spruce-budworm warblers), and most other patterns shifted only slightly. The season’s weather was a bit cool; Boston maintained a streak of eight consecutive cooler-than-average months through November, and it was also drier-than-average. However, a wet spring and early summer kept water levels high enough to dampen the inland shorebird migration. Cold fronts induced many of the major migration fallouts. A major front falling precisely at mid-month in September was followed by a good migrant push 17 and 18 September. Other fronts associated with migratory fallout occurred 5–6, 15, 18, and 26 October. A storm bringing heavy rain 10–11 November correlated with excellent counts of seabirds and waterfowl along the coast and inland. A strong Thanksgiving cold snap appeared to cause a heavy hard-weather move-

ment to the outer coast by bluebirds, robins, and White-throated Sparrows.

Broader avian trends included the best all-around November alcid flight in many years, good but not great flights of far northern owls and shrikes, and apparent widespread breeding by White-winged Crossbills south to the Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts. Low-density migrants from the Midwest, such as Western Kingbird, Dickcissel, and Clay-colored and Lark Sparrows had good seasons, but Yellow-headed Blackbird dropped from sight. On the other hand, southern strays were even scarcer than usual. Lake-watching continues to reveal that waterbird migrations on Lake Champlain are more diverse and spectacular than heretofore appreciated. The number of rarities seemed lower than in recent falls, but birders were compensated with a regional third Tropical Kingbird in Massachusetts, Garganey, and Mountain Bluebird among many others with greater regional precedent.

Abbreviations: Charlotte (Charlotte, Chittenden, VT); Gay Head (Gay Head, Martha’s Vineyard, Dukes, MA); Monhegan (Monhegan I., Lincoln, ME); Plum I. (Plum I., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA); Rockport

(Andrew’s and Halibut Pts., Rockport, Essex, MA); S. Beach (South Beach I., Chatham, Barstable, MA).

Loons Through Herons

Strong inland flights of loons have been well-documented on L. Ontario and Cayuga L. in New York; as lake-watching efforts increase on L. Champlain we are gaining a better understanding of the size of flights on this easternmost Great Lake. Maxima from Charlotte were 61 Red-throats 12 Nov and 379 Commons 29 Oct (TGM et al); until recently the Red-throated Loon was considered an uncommon transient in Vermont. High coastal counts of loons included an impressive 2500+ Red-throats at First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable, MA, 12 Nov (KH), and 350 Commons at Chilmark, MA, 28 Nov (VL). A juv. Pacific Loon was identified at Plymouth, MA, 22 Nov (†S & J Dinsmore). Modest numbers of grebes were reported. Early Red-necked Grebes included one heading s. at Charlotte 6 Aug (TGM) and one at Gloucester, Essex, MA, 13 Aug (RH). This year’s Eared Grebes were the Niles Beach, Gloucester, MA, bird back 2 Oct for its 6th winter (JS, m.ob.), and one on Block I., RI, 23 Sep–1 Oct (S. Tsagarakis, R. Fox, et al.).

Tube-nose numbers seemed about average, although 600 Sooty and 25 Manx Shearwaters at Stellwagen Bank n. of Cape Cod 5 Aug were good late summer tallies (EN). We usually do not consider shearwaters predators of birds, but some were seen 14 Oct on Nantucket Shoals giving chase to a passerine that eventually succumbed to a Great Black-backed Gull (SP). A single Audubon’s Shearwater was encountered at Block Canyon far off Rhode Island 27 Aug (WP et al.). What was the story with **Northern Fulmars**? Few were seen on salt water, but 3 turned up ashore, in a Mount Desert I., Hancock, ME, parking lot in early Oct (*vide* J. Markowsky, JD), flying over land on the Kennebunk Plains, York, ME, 27 Oct (†LB), and one seen by lake-watchers at Charlotte 23 Nov (†TGM), providing the 2nd record for the Green Mountain State. This fall’s inland Northern Gannet hung around n. L. Champlain at Charlotte from 16–31 Oct (†TGM, †P. Gillis et al.). An American White Pelican was reported without details at the mouth of the Connecticut R. on Griswold Pt., Old Lyme, New London, CT, 14 Sep (P. Spitzer). Two Great Cormorants strayed inland, with one above the fall line at Concord, Merrimack, NH, 11 Nov (RQ).

Relatively few Great Egrets ventured northward and inland; one 11 Nov at Bristol, Lincoln, ME, was late (M. Libby *vide* KG). Noteworthy Snowy Egret reports were a single

inland sighting from Longmeadow, *Hampden*, MA, 27 Aug (BB), and one late and northerly 18 Nov at Back Bay, Portland, *Cumberland*, ME (R Eakin *vide* KG). Little Blue Herons were widespread and numerous, with 2 in Vermont, one in w. Massachusetts, and August high counts of 24 in coastal Maine (B. Crowley), 8 in Connecticut (PC), and 13 in Rhode Island (R Bowen). The Cattle Egret high count again originated from the Champlain Valley's nesting population; 3 late birds seemed to have been displaced by the same conditions 14–17 Nov, with sightings from New Hampshire (SM), Rhode Island (SMi et al.), and Connecticut (W. Schultz). Black Vulture reports included single birds at W. Springfield, *Hampden*, MA, 17 Oct (N. Eaton), and Bourne, *Barnstable*, MA, 19–23 Nov (H. Willoughby, J. Kricher).

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Geese were limited to s. New England, but still totaled 6, with 3 each in e. Massachusetts and Connecticut 10 Oct–19 Nov. Snow Geese continue in high numbers, with massive Champlain Valley flocks up to 15,000 and hundreds reaching the outer Coastal Plain. Ross's Geese again reached Vermont, with 1–2 at Dead Creek W.M.A., *Addison*, 5–26 Oct; also at Dead Creek were 1–2 presumptive Ross's x Lesser Snow Goose hybrids (m.ob.). Brant again had a good inland showing, with the first on 24 Sep at Grand Isle, VT, a maximum of 300 there 5 Oct (DH), and many scattered flocks and individuals in the interior, including 65 at Pittsfield, *Berkshire*, MA, 18 Oct (E. Neumuth). On the coast, 8 early Brant were at Stellwagen Bank 26 Aug (ML et al.), a good flight of 398 was detected in Hampton, *Rockingham*, NH, 7 Oct (SM), and, not least, a **Black Brant** (*nigricans*) was found and photographed in Plymouth, MA, 2 Nov (JT, ph.). The only Tundra Swans were 4 at Acoaxet, *Bristol*, MA, 18 Nov (P. O'Neill).

Nine Eurasian Wigeons 9 Oct+ included one in New Hampshire (A&BD), one in Rhode Island (*vide* J. St. Jean, DE), and the rest in e. Massachusetts, with a maximum of 3 on 19 Oct at Marstons Mills, *Barnstable* (J. Liller). A much scarcer Eurasian visitor was an eclipse-male **Garganey** at Plum I. 4–11 Aug (RH, ph. DL, m.ob.). Although the bird's origin cannot be absolutely assured, the cryptic eclipse-plumaged male and hen have seldom been detected in North America and there is no reason to hypothesize these plumages should be less likely than breeding plumage. The Sterling, *Worcester*, MA, Tufted Duck returned 3 Oct for its 6th season (F. McMenemy, m.ob.). The 600 Lesser Scaup counted at W. Swanton, *Franklin*,

VT, 18 Nov was an excellent tally for L. Champlain (FAP).

The 6 King Eiders reported were all from the coast, beginning at Pt. Judith, *Washington*, RI, 22 Oct (SMi). Harlequin Duck numbers continue to burgeon at traditional sites; an early arrival was noted 12 Sep at Gay Head (AK) and high counts were 76 at Rockport 10 Nov (KH) and 42 in York and Ogunquit, ME, 25 Nov (J. Suchecki *vide* KG). A record 50,000+ Surf Scoters were reported from Chilmark, MA, 26 Oct (AK). Excellent inland scoter tallies included 46 Surfs on Cherry Pd., Jefferson, *Coos*, NH, 1 Nov (D. Govatski), 500 White-wingeds 5 Oct at Addison (BP), followed by 488 White-wingeds and 940 Blacks at Charlotte 15 Oct (TGM). Long-tailed Ducks were also numerous inland, with 115 and 117 at Charlotte 12 & 30 Nov, respectively (TGM), and 19 on Quabbin Res., MA, 28 Oct (TG). The Nantucket I. Long-tailed Duck spectacle peaked 23 Nov at 185,000 (A. Charder). Single Barrow's Goldeneyes made late Nov appearances in New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts. Ruddy Duck numbers were mixed; they were low in Rhode Island but continued numerous in n. New England and Massachusetts. High counts included 12 in Highgate, *Franklin*, VT, 12 Oct (RBL), 360 on Sabbatus Pd., *Androscoggin*, ME, 3 Nov (D. Mairs), 105 on Beaver L., Derry, *Rockingham*, NH, 5 Nov (A&BD), and 959 at Marlboro, *Worcester*, MA, 1 Nov (ML et al.).

Raptors Through Cranes

The Sharp-shinned Hawk migration peaked in mid-Oct, centering around 20 Oct, when high counts were noted in coastal New Hampshire (SM et al.) and Granville, *Hampden*, MA (T. Swochak). A remarkable leucistic Cooper's Hawk awed observers at Lighthouse Pt., *New Haven*, CT, 9 Oct (GH et al.); the bird was almost entirely white with black portions of the plumage replaced by buff. The Broad-winged Hawk flight had a less discrete peak than usual, as high counts were wrapped around a mid-Sep low; the best counts occurred 13, 16, 18, and 22 Sep. Connecticut hawk enthusiasts found the season's 2 Swainson's Hawks 30 Sep at Naugatuck, *New Haven* (MS), and Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, *Fairfield*, 13 Oct (D. Manwaring). If a Rough-legged Hawk irruption was in the offing, fall reports offered no clue, with only 25 reported beginning 13 Oct. On the other hand, good numbers of Golden Eagles were reported, the two dozen including an unprecedented season total of 10 at Putney Mt, *Windham*, VT (via Bird Source) and an equal number in eastern Massachusetts 10

Sep–20 Nov (*vide* MR). The Merlin is quietly becoming a Regional permanent resident, albeit scarce in summer and winter; indicative of this trend were reports of 9th Aug and 24th Nov from e. Massachusetts. Three gray Gyrfalcons were reported at Turner, *Androscoggin*, ME, 2 Nov (†JD), at Plum I 18 Nov–Dec (R. Harlow, †RH, m.ob.), and at Shelburne, *Chittenden*, VT, 27 Nov (S. Miller)

Spruce Grouse were again encouragingly well-reported, with 12 from n. New Hampshire and 2 from ne. Vermont, where they are state-endangered. Although seemingly self-sustaining Northern Bobwhite populations are limited to a small portion of the s. coast, apparently released birds continue to appear in strange contexts, such as 3 haunting the summit ridge of Mt. Mansfield, *Lamoille*, VT, in mid-Aug (C. Rimmer et al.). Rare rails included Purple Gallinules 13–14 Oct at Exeter, *Rockingham*, NH (J. Mittermeier, ph. SM), and one found dead 25 Oct at Westboro, *Worcester*, MA (*vide* B. Blodget), and a late Yellow Rail at Nantucket 28 Nov (*vide* ER). Common Moorhens continue to dwindle, with only 7 reported. Two Sandhill Cranes were found, the first 21–26 Aug in Enosburg Falls and Berkshire, *Franklin*, VT (S. Faccio et al.), and 2 Nov at Gill, *Franklin*, MA (B. Coyle *vide* D. Small).

Shorebirds

The shorebird migration appeared average along the coast, and spotty inland due to a wet spring and early summer. No Eurasian rarities spiced the season. American Golden-Plovers were widely reported in modest numbers, the best count was 38 in Hadley and Northampton, *Hampshire*, MA, 24 Sep (SS). Good numbers of golden-plovers were noted regularly on sod farms in Rhode Island, where farmers are converting from potatoes as a defense against and concession to sprawl (*vide* DE). A golden-plover photographed at Grand Isle 6 Sep (ph. †DH) proved controversial, as the finder firmly held that it was Vermont's first Pacific Golden-Plover, but others could not agree on the bird's identity. Whatever it was, the bird proved once more that some birds are not identifiable without recourse to in-the-hand examination. Piping Plovers had a poor nesting season; this fall's staging maximum at Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA, was only 46, versus 200 in 1999. American Oystercatchers still summer at the n. tip of their range at Scarborough, *Cumberland*, ME, but nesting success has been poor (*vide* JD), an excellent count of 170 was achieved at S. Beach 2 Sep (BN); the last there was seen 27 Nov (DL). American Avocets were found 13–19

Aug at Plum I. (GW et al.) and 12 Oct at Hammonasset Beach SP, Madison, *New Haven*, CT (D. Provencher et al.).

Upland Sandpipers were scarce, especially in n New England, where only one was reported, the best count was 14 at Bedford, *Middlesex*, MA, 4 Aug (R. Lockwood). The early August Hudsonian Godwit peak in Chatham, MA, was average at 109 (BN); other reports included up to 3 at Highgate, VT, 2–15 Oct (RBL et al.) and 3 for the season in Connecticut 11 Sep–22 Oct. Virtually all of this season's 13 Marbled Godwits were found at the elbow of Cape Cod late Jul–Dec; the lone exception was at Sandy Pt., *New Haven*, CT, 11 Sep (F. Mantlik). Good counts of largely adult White-rumped Sandpipers included 260 at Plum I. 30 Aug (RH) and 250 at S. Beach 2 Sep (BN); a good inland count of juveniles was 29 at Highgate, VT, 8 Oct (RBL, WS). Two late White-rumpeds turned up 25 Nov at S. Beach (RD) and, remarkably, at Button Bay, Ferrisburgh, *Addison*, VT (WS, TGM); not surprisingly the latter bird bore an injured leg. The total of 25 Baird's Sandpipers was about average but the fewest since 1996; one on Mt. Watatic, Ashburnham, *Worcester*, MA, 9 Sep (BN) was at a strange location. Stilt Sandpipers made a poor showing in n. New England, but were numerous to the south, with state maxima of 73 at Plum I., MA, 2 Aug (RH) and 28 on the same date at Wood River Junction, *Washington*, RI (S. Hempstead). The 48 Buff-breasted Sandpipers was the best total since 1996, these included a Vermont record 5 juv. at Charlotte 15–16 Sep (†TGM et al.), a maximum of 9 at Newburyport, *Essex*, MA, 19 Sep (JS, RH et al.), 2 in w. Massachusetts, 8 in Connecticut, and 3 at Richmond, *Washington*, RI, 3 Sep on an aforementioned sod farm (PB). Only 5 Wilson's Phalaropes were reported, a far cry from totals in the 1970s and 1980s.

Jaegers Through Alcids

For the first time in many years neither skua species was reported. Good counts of Pomarine Jaegers included 15–20 on the Grand Manan Banks 9 Sep (LB et al.), 20 on Stellwagen Bank 10 Sep (BN), and an impressive and late count of 44 at Rockport 27 Nov (RH). Terns staging on S. Beach attracted great numbers of Parasitic Jaegers, with a maximum of 70 on 23 Sep (BN). A 27 Aug trip to the edge of the Continental Shelf produced an impressive 6 Long-tailed Jaegers, with 2 at Atlantis Canyon and 4 at Block Canyon (WP et al.). Jaegers were again observed in large numbers on L. Champlain, with at least 16 reported 27 Aug–8 Oct (TGM, DH); no details were submitted on the sightings, although given the rel-

atively early dates most were likely Parasitics. Clearly a fairly regular phenomenon has been discovered.

Bonaparte's Gull numbers were lower this fall, especially on L. Champlain, where counts were less than half recent maxima; perhaps high lake levels affected biotic productivity or the high cormorant population has somehow affected the small bait-fish favored by the smaller gulls. Little Gull numbers were also down at L. Champlain, with a seasonal tally of 12+ from 5 Sep–18 Nov; other Little Gulls included 4 from Maine, 3 in New Hampshire, and 10 in Massachusetts, with a high count of 4 at Katama, *Dukes*, 10 Nov (VL). Thirteen Black-headed Gulls were reported—both of those found in Vermont antedated the seven prior records for the state with birds 1 Aug at Grand Isle (†DH) and 15 Sep at Charlotte (TGM); others were single reports from coastal Maine and New Hampshire and 9 in e. Massachusetts 10 Aug–Dec, with one in Newburyport and 4 each on Cape Cod and in Boston Harbor. An ad. **Thayer's Gull** was early 5 Nov at Chappaquiddick, *Dukes*, MA (VL). New England has generally lagged behind the rest of the East Coast in the numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls reported, but the region is catching up. Up to 80 frequented S. Beach and N. Monomoy I. in early Aug (BN, RH et al.), ≤8 haunted the New Hampshire coast 29 Aug–27 Nov (*vide* SM), and 3 at Hadley, MA, 19 Nov was a good inland tally (SS). Among the gulls at S. Beach 3 Sep was a bird believed to be a Herring X Lesser Black-backed hybrid (SP); perhaps some nesting Lesser Black-backeds are hiding in North American gull colonies. Leucistic gulls can produce headaches for would-be gull identifiers. Witness a black-billed, entirely white, young Great Black-backed Gull at Biddeford, *York*, ME, 15 Oct (PC). Sabine's Gulls included at least one inland 28–29 Sep at Charlotte (*TGM) and 3 from Stellwagen Bank, 2 on 10 Sep (BN) and one 30 Sep (D. Clapp). Another benefit of late-season lake-watching in Vermont was the best autumn Black-legged Kittiwake flight ever for L. Champlain, with at least 5 juv./first-winter birds at Charlotte and Burlington, *Chittenden*, 4–12 Nov (†TGM, †BP et al.).

Forty-two Caspian Terns included sightings of birds associated with probable nesting in Vermont in Grand Isle and Milton, *Chittenden*, to 5 Aug (RBL), and high counts of 9 at N. Hampton, *Rockingham*, NH, 23 Sep (ph. SM) and 7 at the Charlestown Breachway, *Washington*, RI, 24 Sep (J. Murphy). A lone Royal Tern was reported at S. Beach 19 Aug (BN), and a single Sandwich Tern was reported from Chappaquiddick 10 Sep (MP). Peak

counts of the endangered Roseate Tern were 2000+ at S. Beach 3 Sep (SP) and 400 at Napatree Pt., *Washington*, RI, 21 Aug (CR) News of Common Terns was encouraging, with an impressive count of 1060 at Seabrook, *Rockingham*, NH, 4 Sep (A&BD), apparently linked to the great success of tern reintroduction in New Hampshire's Isles of Shoals at White and Seavey I. (*vide* SM). Staging at S. Beach topped out at a staggering 25,000 on 5 Aug (RH et al.). Numbers of Forster's Terns were rather low, with only 5 in New Hampshire and Maine, and a low maximum of 3 in Rhode Island (*vide* DE). An ad. Sooty Tern made a pass over the White and Seavey I., NH, tern colony 11 Aug (†V. Saint-Amant, †M. Charette, DD). Although we usually expect these tropical terns in the aftermath of tropical storms and hurricanes, summer visitation of tern colonies by strays is not unprecedented.

The late-season alcid flight was more diverse and widespread that it has been over the last decade, including 100 Dovekies, with an early sighting 14 Sep on Stellwagen Bank (BB), over 70 region-wide 11–12 Nov, and a maximum of 35 in Wellfleet harbor, *Barnstable*, MA, 11 Nov (S. Miller et al.) Shoreline Common Murres included one 26 Oct at Scarborough, ME (J. Davis *vide* KG), one at Rye, *Rockingham*, NH, 18 Nov (A&BD), and 5 in Massachusetts, with a high count of 3 at Rockport 3 Nov (JS et al.) Razorbills remain the most numerous alcid, with an early bird s. of regional breeding colonies 9 Sep at Rockport (R. Guthrie) and maxima of 680 at Race Pt., Provincetown, *Barnstable*, MA, 12 Nov (KH) and 300 at Rockport 27 Nov (GW). Atlantic Puffins included an early 12 Aug bird at White and Seavey I., NH (DD et al.), and singles at Sandy Neck, *Barnstable*, MA, 11 Nov (D. Comeau et al.) and 4 at Race Pt. 12 Nov (KH).

Dove Through Woodpeckers

The growing population of **White-winged Dove** continued to cast off distant prospectors, this autumn produced 2 such pioneers. One 2 Sep was Vermont's first; although it was a rather brief single-observer encounter, the details clearly supported the identification at Chimney Pt., *Addison* (†RBL). Another seen 29 Oct at Edgartown, *Dukes*, MA, was less unprecedented, but later than most Bay State reports (†MP). Northern owls made a good showing. Twenty-one Snowy Owls occurred in all states save for New Hampshire, beginning 2 Nov. A Northern Hawk Owl was reported 3 Nov at Weld, *Franklin*, ME (*vide* JW) Rounding out the north-woods owls were 2 Boreal Owls; one found 21 Oct in the Back Bay

area of Boston (KHu et al., ph. MR) might have been the long-staying bird seen in the same neighborhood in the winter of 1996–1997. Another was captured for banding at Freeport, *Cumberland*, ME, 3 Nov (JW). The continued great success of owl banding at Freeport was also documented by the 367 Northern Saw-whet Owls caught there 25 Sept–7 Nov (JW). Numbers of migratory Common Nighthawks continued a slow downward spiral, with a maximum of 1500 at Worcester, MA, 24 Aug (ML et al.); no other count exceeded 500, although a 27 Aug total of 400 at New Hartford, *Litchfield*, CT (J. Grohoski) was one of the best recent ones for the Nutmeg State. Hawkwatchers at Lighthouse Pt., CT, 5 Sep achieved an impressive count of 47 migrating Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (GH). Most of the autumn's *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were eventually identified as Rufous, including the venerable female at Agawam, *Hampden*, MA, back for her 4th fall 24 Aug–30 Nov (L. Fieldstad, et al.), and 3 females determined from photographs and in-hand measurements (*fide* MS) in Connecticut at Avon, *Hartford*, 27 Oct–21 Nov (*fide* B. Kleiner), Cheshire, *New Haven*, mid-Sept–Dec (A. Norwell), and Stratford, *Fairfield*, mid-Sept–Dec (K. Barron). Unspecified rusty hummers were a first-year male at W. Hartford, CT, 29 Sep–15 Oct (E. Fried) and one at Worcester, MA, 7 Oct–19 Nov (A. Pax, ML). Red-headed Woodpeckers were scarce, with only singles in Maine and Massachusetts reported. Eleven Red-bellied Woodpeckers were encountered in n. New England, including juveniles at Colchester, *Chittenden*, VT (J. Marsh), and Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, ME (V. Scamman, *fide* KG), giving hope of true breeding confirmation in the near future.

Flycatchers Through Wrens

A juv Olive-sided Flycatcher at Monhegan 7 Oct (LB) was about three weeks beyond the expected departure date for the species. Connecticut birders visiting Monhegan the next day located the season's only Say's Phoebe at Pulpit Rock; it remained to 10 Oct (†M. Root et al.). Massachusetts birders found a belated Great Crested Flycatcher in Hingham, *Plymouth*, 18 Nov, while seeking a **Tropical Kingbird** first discovered at Worlds End 8 Nov (S Avery, v.o., tape, ph.). The kingbird, a first for Massachusetts, remained to the end of the month. It was a good season for the more expected Western Kingbird, with 17 total in the region, including one in New Hampshire, 3 in Connecticut, and the balance in Massachusetts. A respectable 67 Northern Shrikes were nonetheless about half 1999's

total. A White-eyed Vireo in Scarborough, ME, 17 Sep was well n. of its nearest breeding areas in se. MA (G. LaRiviere *fide* KG), and a Warbling Vireo in S. Boston 5–7 Nov was tardy by a month (RD et al.). Common Ravens continue to prosper, with maxima of 35 in Manchester, *Bennington*, VT, and 27 at Mt. Watatic, MA. Lone wanderers reached Truro, *Barnstable*, MA (E. Samella et al.), Chepachet, *Providence* (found dead, *fide* C. Raithel), and Saundersonston, *Washington*, RI (PB).

Distressingly few Purple Martins were reported, including in Grand Isle, VT, which has been the species stronghold in the Champlain Valley. Coastal maximum of Tree Swallows were one-third their usual size (30,000 vs. 100,000), although inland counts of 10,000 at Northampton 27 Aug and Hadley, MA, 1 Sep were noteworthy (TG). Also noteworthy were 4 Bank Swallows lingering to 3 Oct in Isle La Motte, *Grand Isle*, VT (RBL). Carolina Wren numbers continue to build in s. New England, but only 12 were reported from the n. mainland. Northern outposts were *Grand Isle*, VT, and Waterville, *Kennebec*, ME. The only Sedge Wren this season was very late on Nantucket 28 Nov (*fide* ER). Golden-crowned Kinglets left the n. country in much higher numbers this year, with a maximum count of 95 on Cuttyhunk, *Dukes*, MA, 8 Oct (T. Raymond).

Thrushes Through Warblers

A Northern Wheatear was reported without details 20–21 Sep in Longmeadow, MA (L. Kendall et al.). Eastern Bluebirds concentrated in good numbers on coastal islands in late November, with 70 in Chilmark, MA (*fide* VL) and 69 on Block I., RI (CR et al.). A male **Mountain Bluebird** found at a water-treatment plant in Concord, *Middlesex*, 27 Oct furnished a 6th Massachusetts record and delighted observers until 2 Nov (ph. †MR, v.o.). Listening for characteristic nocturnal flight calls has become a preferred method of detecting migrating thrushes and can produce impressive high counts, such as the 250 Veeries and 25 Wood Thrushes over Westwood, *Norfolk*, MA, 2 Sep (EN), plus 80 Swainson's over Northampton, MA, 15 Sep (SP et al.) and 50 over Portsmouth, *Rockingham*, NH 6 Oct (SM, J. Matthews). Coastal locations gave indications of a good American Robin winter to come, with counts of 6000+ at Gay Head 26 Oct (JT et al.) and 8500+ at S. Kingstown, *Washington*, RI, 24 Nov (SMi). American Pipits arrived early in opposite corners of the region, at Grand Isle 16 Aug and at Napatree Pt., RI, 21 Aug. Bohemian Waxwings were scarce, save for in Maine, where 1000+ were tallied in Roque

Bluffs, *Washington*, in late Nov.

The season's 11 Golden-winged Warblers were divided between Massachusetts (7) and Rhode Island (4). Forty Orange-crowned Warblers were more spread out, with 2 in Vermont, singles in New Hampshire and Rhode Island, 7 in Maine, and the balance in the Bay State. There were 3 reports of lingering Nashville Warblers: 29 Oct at Northfield, *Merrimack*, NH (†P. Hunt), 11 Nov in Concord, NH (RQ), and 9–29 Nov in Melrose, *Middlesex*, MA (D.&I. Jewell). The first was described as a western *ridgwayi* individual, but subspecific identification of such birds may have to wait until identification experts and authors come to a consensus on usable field characters. More easily identified strays from the west were a male **Black-throated Gray Warbler** at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, *Middlesex*, MA, 27 Sep–2 Oct (†K.&T. Kresser, v.o., ph.) and a **Townsend's Warbler** at Gay Head 28 Sep (†MP). Southern representatives included Yellow-throated Warblers making their way n. to New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, a Prothonotary in Rhode Island, a single Cerulean and 3 Kentuckies in Massachusetts, and lone Hoodeds in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The only migrant count from Bluff Pt., Groton, *New London*, CT, received this year was of 4000 birds, 98% of which were Yellow-rumpeds, 12 Oct (*fide* GH). Large numbers of Yellow-rumpeds were still moving along the coast 14 Oct, including 850 far offshore headed nw (toward land) over Nantucket Shoals (SP) The 14 Connecticut Warblers reported were distributed across the Region, while 30 Yellow-breasted Chats were concentrated along the coast from Maine southward. Other notable Nov warblers included a Magnolia in the Boston Public Gardens 19 Nov (KHu), an American Redstart in Melrose, MA, 4 Nov (P.&F. Vale) and 4 Wilson's Warblers in Massachusetts.

Tanagers Through Finches

Two Summer Tanagers were found, on Monhegan and in Connecticut. Vermont's first Clay-colored Sparrow pair fed nestlings until 6 Aug, and an ad. and juv. were seen for another two weeks (DH, ph.). About 50 others were scattered along the coast, 45 in Massachusetts. Among the less-common migrant sparrows were 31 Vesper, 16 Lark, 12+ Grasshopper, and 2 November Henslow's Sparrows. One or two Le Conte's Sparrows were reported without details from Northampton, MA, 1 & 16–17 Oct. This season's high count of Ipswich Sparrow was 15 at South Beach 25 Nov (RD et

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al.) Impressive maxima for mainland Savannah Sparrow were 340 in Newbury, Essex, MA (RH) and 200+ in Northampton, MA (B. Packard et al.), both 7 Oct. The Lincoln's Sparrow maximum of 18 came on the same date in W. Bridgewater, Plymouth, MA (S. Arena). A tardy Lincoln's was in Lexington, Middlesex, MA, 25 Nov (†MR). White-throated Sparrow maxima were not as impressive as in 1999, but good numbers seemed to settle in to winter, evidenced by a count of 133 in Cambridge/Boston 25–26 Nov. At least 2 (perhaps 4) young Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows were found in Newbury, MA, 14–20 Oct (†RH). An early Lapland Longspur surprised observers on Star I., Rockingham, NH, 18 Sep (†R. Suomala, I. Hayward).

Twenty Blue Grosbeaks were mostly in coastal Massachusetts 16 Sep–21 Oct; the exception was in Connecticut. The Indigo Bunting high count corresponded with those of several sparrows: 60 on Martha's Vineyard 7 Oct (JT et al.); the last was at Cunnaquid, Barnstable, MA, 2 Nov (S. Miller et al.). Dickcissels put on a strong showing of 70+ birds, the first at Milford Pt., CT, on the early date of 5 Aug (GH).

Good numbers of Bobolinks made their usual departure for the pampas in Aug and early Sep, although one lingered to 15 Nov in Sudbury, Middlesex, MA (KH). For the first fall season since at least 1975, no Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found. The species has shown a declining trend in the region since the mid-1980s; is this trend reflected in other areas? The boreal-nesting Rusty Blackbird gathered in good numbers on migration in Massachusetts, with maxima of 100+ at Provincetown 7 Oct (BN) and 220+ at Newburyport 14 Oct (RH); 75 were still present at Bolton Flats, Worcester, 14 Nov with 1800 Red-wingeds (KH). A male Brewer's Blackbird was reported without details from Gay Head 22 Oct (VL). In Connecticut, a female Boat-tailed Grackle at Milford Pt., New Haven, 27 Aug (D. Sosensky) was thought to be the same individual that stayed into Dec in Stratford (m. ob.); another was farther afield in Waterford, New London, 12 Oct (T. Hendrickson). An enormous roost of 66,500 Common Grackles was at Portsmouth, NH, 8 Nov (SM et al). An imm. Orchard Oriole that appeared on Monhegan mid-Sep to early Oct (B. Boynton *vide* KG), about six to eight weeks past the species' usual departure date, may have been a reversed migrant.

Purple Finches appeared in moderate numbers, with 60 in Hingham 12 Nov the highest count in the Bay State. White-winged

Crossbills were widespread and seem to have bred across n. New England s. to the Berkshires of Massachusetts. The largest flocks encountered were 50 in Bethlehem, Grafton, NH, 5 Aug (J. Williams) and ≤20 in Windsor, Berkshire, MA (G. LeBaron et al). Two reached as far s. as W. Hartford Res., CT, 6 Aug (P Cianfaglione). Given no other reports, a count of 100 Common Redpolls at New Braintree, Worcester, MA, 25 Nov was remarkable (J Baird). Only 70 Evening Grosbeaks were tallied region-wide, leaving the sunflower-devouring flocks of the 1960s and 1970s a fading memory.

Exotics

Up to 3 Whooper Swans continue in residence in Ipswich, Essex, MA (JB, RH). Eight Monk Parakeets in S. Dartmouth, Bristol, MA, were not far from Rhode Island populations.

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