

Autumn 2002 began with a continuation of July's hot and dry conditions. The heat held into September, producing the second-warmest August-September combination in Boston's records. A series of frontal systems dropped more rain in the north than in the south of the Region, creating strong passerine flights during 12-17 September and concentrating the peak Broad-winged Hawk flight into 16-18 September. October cooled rapidly, and approaching fronts brought 2000 warblers to Bluff Point, Connecticut on the 15th and over 20,000 mixed passerines, mostly sparrows, there on the 21st. November continued cool and wet, including a 23-cm snowfall in Burlington, Vermont on the 18th. A major loon flight was noted at both Lake Champlain and coastal Massachusetts on the two preceding days. The coastal flight also included notable numbers of other marine migrants.

Elevated numbers of shearwaters, Northern Gannets, and other seabirds close to shore garnered comments from Maine to Connecticut. The flurry of such observations was apparently caused by a superabundance of Menhaden and Herring in coastal waters, in many cases pushed inshore by tuna and other large predatory fish.

The season produced its share of rarities, including three Regional firsts: Calliope Hummingbird, Broad-billed Sandpiper, and Elegant Tern, all in Massachusetts. White-faced Storm-Petrel, Magnificent Frigatebird, two Red-necked Stints, Yellow-legged Gull, Cassin's Kingbird, Lark Bunting, and Shiny Cowbird rounded out Massachusetts's rarity collection, while Connecticut birders found a late-season Black-throated Gray Warbler and witnessed a huge Cave Swallow incursion.

Abbreviations: Appledore (Appledore I., Kittery, York, ME); C.T.B. (Charlotte Town Beach, Charlotte, Chittenden, VT); D.C.W.M.A. (Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison & Panton, Addison, VT); First Encounter (First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Barnstable, MA); Gay Head (Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, Dukes, MA); Missisquoi (Missisquoi Bay, L. Champlain, Highgate/Swanton, Franklin, VT); Plum I. (Plum I., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA); A.P. (Andrew's Pt., Rockport, Essex, MA); S. Beach (South Beach I., Chatham, Barnstable, MA).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Red-throated Loons all seemed to move at once on the weekend of 16-17 Nov, with unprecedented counts at several locations. Record counts of Red-throated Loons have been frequent in recent years: are they really increasing, or are observers getting ever better at being on hand to witness late-autumn seabird flights? The Massachusetts record

New England



fell with 3060 at A.P. 16 Nov (RH) and fell again with a resounding crash on Cape Cod the following day, with 8200+ at Sandy Neck, Barnstable, and 9740 at Corporation Beach, Dennis (BN, PF). Very high inland counts included a record 80 at C.T.B. on L. Champlain 16 Nov (TM) and the following day 21 on Onota and Pontoosuc Lakes, Pittsfield, Berkshire, MA (E. Neumuth) and 16 on L. Waramaug, New Preston, Litchfield, CT (E. Ashe). Several alternate-plumaged Pacific Loons were noted passing migration watch points in Oct, with singles 3 & 12 Oct at A.P. (RH, JT), another at First Encounter 14 Oct (JT), and one on L. Champlain at C.T.B. 13 Oct (†TM, AS, LH). Another alternate-plumage ad. was reported at Scituate, Plymouth, MA 1 Nov (RT). Peak counts of migrating Common Loons were remarkably similar between coastal and inland watch points, with 280 at A.P. 17 Nov (RH) and 275 at C.T.B. 24 Nov (TM).

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Early Red-necked Grebes included 2 at C.T.B. 18 Aug (TM) and 4 on Cherry Pond, Jefferson, Coos, NH 25 Aug (D. Govatski, B. Hall). Inland, the maximum was 10 on three Pittsfield, MA lakes 3 Nov (TG et al.) and coastally 50+ at Bar Harbor, Hancock, ME 24 Nov (B. Duchesne). Up to 2 Eared Grebes was an average showing. The E. Gloucester, Essex, MA bird returned for its 7th winter 13 Oct (ph SM et al.); another was seen at Plum I. 25 Nov (RH, D. Duxbury-Fox). Another excellent find on Plum I. was a Western Grebe 10 Nov (BV, S. Moore).

The largest autumn flight of Northern Fulmar in many years was one of many indications of the abundance of baitfish in the Gulf of Maine. High counts included 15,000 48 km s. of Winter Harbor, Hancock, ME 2 Oct (WT) and a mind-boggling New England seawatch record count of 830 at A.P. 16 Oct, including twice the usual percentage of dark-morph birds (RH). Very intriguing was the observation on 7 Aug of an all-dark petrel, possibly a *Bulweria* petrel (Bulwer's or Jouanin's Petrel), 37 km s. of Winter Harbor, ME (WT); there are five or six May through Aug reports of Bulwer's Petrel between Nova Scotia and Florida 1969—1998, one of these photographed. Greater Shearwater counts included 4000± 37 km s. of Winter Harbor, ME 7 Aug (WT), 5900 from shore at Hampton, Rockingham, NH 28 Sep (A&BD), dwarfed by the amazing 35,000 at A.P. the same day (RH), and 10,000 off Plum I. 1 Oct (SP), normally a place where one would be fortunate to see even a few. Good counts of other shearwaters included 11 Audubon's at Atlantis Canyon 21 Sep (RD et al.) and 50 Manx 28 Sep at A.P. (RH).

For the 2nd consecutive year, coastal Wilson's Storm-Petrel numbers were elevated virtually throughout the Region. High counts included 375 along New Hampshire's short coastline 20 Aug (SM, MS), 1150 off Cape Ann, Essex, MA 24 Aug (RH), 31 at Pt. Judith, Washington, RI 1 Sep (G. Williams), and even 22 within Long Island Sound at Groton, New London, CT 3 Sep (C. Taylor). Ninety-eight percent of an enormous concentration of 200,000-500,000 storm-petrels 37 km se. of Winter Harbor, ME on 7 Aug were Wilson's (WT). Although two per cent doesn't sound like a lot, it translates to an impressive 4000-10,000 Leach's Storm-Petrels in the same aggregation. Although still very rare, well-timed searching over deep water has shown White-faced Storm-Petrel to be an annual visitor; one was seen at Atlantis Canyon 7-8 Sep (RD et al.).

Northern Gannets joined other marine birds in providing an entertaining inshore show, with birds sometimes occurring close enough to shore to allow observers to see

them swimming beneath the surface after plunge-dives. Highest counts were 20,000 and 18,000 at First Encounter 27 Oct and 7 Nov (BN et al.); numbers even reached 1000 and more in Rhode Island and Connecticut coastal waters. Single juv. gannets were seen on L. Champlain at C.T.B. 16 & 19 Nov (†TM et al.). An American White Pelican was seen Down East on the Penobscot R. at Veazie, Penobscot, ME 23 Sep (J. Markowsky). A single Brown Pelican also reached the Region 1 Aug at Milford Pt., New Haven, CT (D. Sosensky). Completing a rare "trifecta" of vagrant totipalmates was a cooperative female Magnificent Frigatebird that toured mid-Cape Cod from Hyannis to Chatham 1-4 Sep (m. ob.).

A scant two Least Bittern reports included an ad. and a juv. in Ipswich, Essex, MA continuing into Aug from the nesting season (JB) and at least one on n. L. Champlain at Missisquoi 9-13 Sep (RL). Heron reports revealed a relative dearth of s. herons on the coast and the best inland flight of Great Egrets since the legendary 1948 flight. Numbers of Great Egrets in the Champlain Valley exceeded 40, with a maximum of 27 at the drawn-down Brilyea Impoundment at D.C.W.M.A. 5 Sep (J. Arrowsmith). Other impressive high counts at Brilyea were 126 Great Blue Herons 24 Aug and 67 Black-crowned Night-Herons 1 Sep (TM). Other notable inland counts of Great Egrets included 5 at Turner, Androscoggin, ME 1 Aug (P. Ledlie), and 12 at Longmeadow, Hampden, MA 11 Sep (J. LaPointe et al.). Coastal maxima included record counts of 80 at Hampton Falls, Rockingham, NH 31 Aug (RS) and 46+ at Pine Pt., Scarborough, Cumberland, ME 12 Aug (GC). North of Connecticut, just 8 Tricolored Herons were reported, although one made a very rare inland appearance at Arlington Res., Middlesex, MA 7 Sep (D. Arvidson et al.). Inland Glossy Ibis reports included one at D.C.W.M.A. in Aug (fide DJH) and an impressive 14 at Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester, Worcester, MA 18 Aug (BV et al.). A single Black Vulture reached Warren, Knox, ME 10 Sep (BP), and good numbers continue to be seen in sw. Massachusetts, where confirmation of breeding has been elusive.

WATERFOWL

Recent trends in waterfowl continued to hold this autumn: most geese seem to be increasing, decreasing species remain down (e.g., Redhead and Canvasback), increasing species generally continue in good numbers (e.g., Harlequin Duck), but Ruddy Duck fluctuated modestly downward. At least 12

Greater White-fronted Geese represent the 3rd time a dozen have been reported in fall in the Region over the last 11 years: as recently as 1992, none were found for the season. Half of the total was represented by a family of 2 ads. and 4 juvs. at Rochester, Plymouth, MA 24-25 Oct (MM et al.). Two more were seen in Rhode Island and 4 in Connecticut. Snow Goose maxima were 17,000 at D.C.W.M.A. 17 Oct (RL) and a Massachusetts record 4558 over Pittsfield 5 Oct (R. Ferret). Ross's Geese were limited to the Champlain Valley, with several reports of single birds 5-27 Oct at D.C.W.M.A. (m. ob.). A major inland flight of Brant 8 Oct produced a record count of 1729 at C.T.B. (TM, J. Osborne) and a rare flock in the Upper Connecticut R. Valley with 60 over Hanover, Grafton, NH (S. Sturup). The origin of a wary Barnacle Goose at Ipswich, MA 7-11 Nov (RH, JB, ph. D. Lawson, m. ob.) is not known. Just 3 Tundra Swans were reported, with a rare *Berkshire*, MA bird at Pontoosuc L. 17 Nov and 2 at Plymouth, MA 24 Nov (both E. Neumuth).

Sightings of Eurasian Wigeon bounced back to 15 after two years with fewer than 10; the first was seen 21 Sep in Rhode Island (5 total), with other reports from Connecticut (4), New Hampshire (2), and Massachusetts (4). Two reports of hybrid American x Eurasian Wigeon were received. Rarely reported in recent years, a Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was seen at Plum I. 10-19 Nov (m. ob.). Taking advantage of the shallow pools of the Brilyea draw-down at D.C.W.M.A. 25 Aug, 100+ Blue-winged Teal provided the first triple-digit count of this diminutive duck in several years (R&DL). Excellent counts of Ring-necked Ducks included 1300 at Mud Pond, Pittsfield, MA 30 Oct (TC) and 1100 in Monmouth, Kennebec, ME 7 Nov (DM). Tufted Ducks returned to Bourne, Barnstable, MA 3 Oct (RT) and Sterling, Worcester, MA 6 Oct (F. McMenemy, m. ob.), the latter for its 8th year. Noteworthy among 9 King Eiders were a first-year male at Grand Isle, VT 6 Oct (†DJH) and a female returning to Hammonasset S.P., Madison, New Haven, CT 30 Nov for its 3rd year (C. Rafford). Harlequin Ducks continue numerous at favored wintering spots, the seasonal maximum being 100 at seldom-visited Isle au Haut, Knox, ME 26 Oct (J. Markowsky). An impressive gathering of sea ducks at Chilmark, Dukes, MA 24 Oct included 25,000 Surf, 5000+ White-winged, and 5000+ Black Scoters. The best inland reports of scoters were 2500+ passing C.T.B. 21 Oct, including 1086 White-winged (RL), and 130 Black Scoters at

Turners Falls, *Franklin*, MA 22 Oct (M. Taylor). At least 9 Barrow's Goldeneyes were encountered 9 Nov+. A very good count of Hooded Mergansers was 483 in the Blackstone R. Corridor in Massachusetts and Rhode Island 27 Nov (ML et al.).

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES

Back in the 1970s, immediately after the banning of DDT, counts of 40 Osprey and 11 Bald Eagles at Mt. Philo, Charlotte, *Chittenden*, VT 16 Sep (TM, PR) would hardly have been deemed possible, nor would seasonal totals of 256 Osprey and 103 Bald Eagles at Blueberry Hill, Granville, MA (JW et al.). As is often the case, the peak of the Broad-winged Hawk flight was pronounced, with most high counts falling on 18 Sep in e. Vermont, s. New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, including an impressive 9647 at Mt. Wachusett, *Worcester*, MA. The Champlain Valley flight peaked two days earlier, with the 1069 at Mt. Philo 16 Sep (TM, PR) perhaps reflecting differing population sources and flight conditions in nw. New England. Connecticut recorded a remarkable 5 Swainson's Hawks for the season (*vide* GH). The numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were modest, with arrivals in Vermont and Massachusetts 21 Oct and no more than 6 per day. Golden Eagle numbers were about average, with 19 reported, beginning with 2 at Putney Mt., Putney, *Windham*, VT 17 Sep (*vide* DJH). An American Kestrel hitched a ride 25 Oct aboard the cruise ship *Norwegian Sea* from Nova Scotia waters to Bar Harbor, ME (WT). Good numbers of Peregrine Falcons included 34 at Morris I., Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA between 28 Sep and 31 Oct (D. Manchester) and 5 at Boston 2 Nov (RS); the latter count probably reflects the rise in resident breeders rather than migrants.

Wild Turkeys far to the n. included 5 at Brighton, *Essex*, VT 5 Aug (FP) and 14 in Jefferson, NH on the same day (D. Govatski). Always a prize, Yellow Rails were found at Sherwood Island S.P., Westport, *Fairfield*, CT 13 Sep (R. Soffer) and in the Neponset Marshes, Dorchester, *Suffolk*, MA 18 Sep (†RD). Rare good tallies of migrant rails included 20 Virginias at Nomans Land, *Dukes*, MA 18 Sep (RLo et al.), 11 Virginias in Rowley, *Essex*, MA 28 Sep (JB et al.), and 7 Soras found with a bird-dog's aid in the Squamscott R. Marshes, Stratham, *Rockingham*, NH 29 Sep (SM et al.). Only 18 Common Moorhens were reported; the only evidence of breeding was provided by 4 juvs. at D.C.W.M.A. 6 Aug (TM, AS). One was notably late 10 Nov at Lenox, *Berkshire*, MA (SS). American Coot numbers were very low, the "maximum" reported being only 17. Reports of Sandhill Cranes included the annual summering bird at Monroe, *Grafton*, NH, last seen 17 Oct (*vide* S. Turner),

another at S. Lancaster, *Worcester*, MA 6 Sep (D. Sutton), and one over the Blueberry Hill Hawkwatch 9 Nov (JW).

SHOREBIRDS

As usual, the shorebird season was a mixed bag. Many of the regular common migrants were reported in good to very good numbers at coastal hot spots, but several regular migrants were reported in lackluster numbers, particularly American Golden-Plover, Stilt Sandpiper, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Species diversity, however, was excellent, with a number of choice rarities. Inland shorebirding was less productive than drought conditions might have presaged, but it had been dry for so long that many mudflats had become meadows. A notable exception was the Briley Impoundment at D.C.W.M.A. South Beach at Cape Cod's "Elbow" remains the Region's preeminent shorebird venue, with such excellent counts as 3600 Black-bellied Plovers 27 Aug, 3700 Semipalmated Plovers 15 Aug (both BN), 2800 Red Knots 1 Aug (RH), and up to 4 Wilson's Phalaropes during Sep (BN et al.). Other good local counts were 203 Killdeer at Harvard, *Worcester*, MA 4 Oct (T. Pirro), 270 Lesser Yellowlegs at D.C.W.M.A. 23 Aug (RL, FP), 20 Spotted Sandpipers on White and Seavey Is., Rye, *Rockingham*, NH 8 Aug (D. Hayward, K. Bixler), 450 Dunlin inland at Sabattus Pond, Wales, *Androscoggin*, ME 14 Nov (DM, PV), 10 Stilt Sandpipers at D.C.W.M.A. 17 Aug (BP), and 123 Wilson's Snipe at Missisquoi 10 Sep (R&DL).

Six American Avocets was the best total since 1996: single birds were at S. Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, MA 1 Aug (L. Bostrom), Eastham, *Barnstable* (perhaps the same bird) 16-18 Aug (BN), Plum I. 21-25 Aug (A. Ankers, m. ob.), Plymouth Harbor, MA 23 Aug (M. Allaire), Wells Harbor, *York*, ME 24 Aug (ph. A. Aldrich), and 7 Oct (late) at Nantucket (ER). A Solitary Sandpiper was extraordinarily late at Westport, *Bristol*, MA 24 Nov (RH, BN, JT, WP, K. Anderson). Upland Sandpipers were dismally reported, with 34 in Massachusetts and only one reported in the

other five New England states. Hudsonian Godwit numbers were also poor at traditional Massachusetts staging areas, while 6 were reported well inland during Oct in Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts, one was reported in Rhode Island (B. Fogg), and 3 were seen in Connecticut (*vide* GH). An average tally of 19 Marbled Godwits was reported from Maine (one), Massachusetts (14), Rhode Island (2+), and Connecticut (2) between 1 Aug and 26 Nov.

Two ad. Red-necked Stints somehow found each other on S. Beach 1-2 Aug, marking the Region's 8th and 9th records; one wonders if one was the bird seen at S. Beach last Aug. Eighty Baird's Sandpipers may represent a record Regional total. Noteworthy high counts included 11 at D.C.W.M.A. 20-21 Aug (TM, R&DL), 9 at Longmeadow, MA 20 Aug (S. Kellogg), and 7 at Napatree Pt., RI 18 Sep (M. Parenteau). Two photogenic Curlew Sandpipers included one at S. Beach 15-28 Aug (ph. BN, m. ob.) and a juv. at Thomaston, *Knox*, ME 3-4 Oct (M. Libby, ph. LB). Extraordinary was the first Regional report of Broad-billed Sandpiper, well described but not photographed at Plum I. 10 Sep (p.a. †RH); there is one other record for the East Coast. The Regional total of 22 Buff-breasted Sandpipers was about average for recent years; half of these were reported in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Two Ruffs were found early this autumn, a Reeve at Scarborough Marsh, ME 27 Jul-3 Aug (LB, m. ob.) and one at the Quonochontaug Breachway, Charlestown, RI 3 Aug (*vide* RF). Wilson's Phalaropes may be bouncing back Regionally, with 19+ the best seasonal total since the late 1970s. At least 3 were seen at D.C.W.M.A. 5-23 Aug (TM, FP, m. ob.), birds remained at Maine's nesting site at Scarborough to 27 Aug, at least 10 were reported in Massachusetts, and 2 in Rhode Island. Inland reports of saltwater phalaropes included at least 2 Red-necked in Vermont and one at Longmeadow, MA 2 Sep (SS), plus a Red at S. Hadley, *Hampshire*, MA 2 Oct (H. Allen).

SA Like the persistence of memory, hopeful sightings continue for the possibly extinct Eskimo Curlew. In the nineteenth century, Eskimo Curlews were occasionally put down in great numbers on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket during fall migrations, especially between late August and September during easterly gales with rain. On 27 August, John and Andrew Nelson encountered a bird they identified as an **Eskimo Curlew** on Martha's Vineyard, in the marsh fringing Shear Pen Pond, observed from the long sand spit that runs north along the outside of Chappaquiddick heading north toward Cape Pogue. The bird was studied for about an hour. Perhaps it was a ghost haunting the century-old killing grounds, or an optimistic assessment of a juvenile Whimbrel, or even the first East Coast Little Curlew. The description of the bird was consistent with Eskimo Curlew, including a study of the cinnamon underwing coverts and distinctive, golden-plover-like call, but the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee found the documentation insufficient to support this extraordinary claim. Whatever the identity of the Martha's Vineyard bird, the question remains: if Eskimo Curlews *do* still exist, how are they hanging on in such infinitesimally small numbers?

SKUAS THROUGH ALCIDS

One to 2 Great Skuas haunted the waters between Bar Harbor and Mt. Desert Rock, ME from 3 Sep to 5 Oct (WT), while another skua nearby on the Grand Manan Banks 21 Oct was identified as a South Polar (*fide* WT), a late date for the species. Other skuas, including 2 seen from the *Scotia Prince* in the Gulf of Maine 22 Oct (SM, J. Lawrence) and one seen at A.P. 17 Nov (†RH), may have been dark-morph Greats, but the observers alertly raised the specter of the Subantarctic Skuas recently recorded in the U. K. and wisely left the birds unidentified. There were good numbers of Pomarine Jaegers in the Gulf of Maine all season, but the best show was during late-season sea-watching. The relationship between North Shore and Cape Cod counts was well-illustrated by counts of 77 and 107 at A.P. 6 & 17 Nov (RH), followed by counts of 55 and 102 at First Encounter 7 Nov (BN) and 18 Nov (RH). Parasitic Jaeger high counts were 50+ some 38 km se. of Winter Harbor, ME 9 Aug (WT) and 25 at Chatham, MA 27 Sep (RH). A Parasitic Jaeger at Avery Pt., Groton, CT 15 Sep was a nice find in Long Island Sound (*fide* GH), while an unidentified jaeger was seen at Stamford, *Fairfield* 17 Nov (PD). A juv. Long-tailed Jaeger was photographed in the same frame as the Chatham frigatebird 1 Sep (ph. †BN)! Six jaegers were seen on L. Champlain from 6 Sep to 5 Oct; observers suggested that 2 were Pomarine, one Parasitic, and one 11 Sep was a "probable" Long-tailed (DJH, TM, RBL et al.).

This season's lone Franklin's Gull was at Small Pt., Phippsburg, *Sagadahoc*, ME 8 Sep (P. Vickery). Little Gulls were more numerous than in the past two autumns, with over 44 reported. Eight or more graced L. Champlain at *Grand Isle* from 3 Aug to 20 Nov (DJH, RL), 2 each were seen in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and 3+ in Maine, with the remainder in the Bay State, including 8 on Cape Cod, where the species is quite scarce, 17 Nov (JT, PF, BN et al.). Close to the recent average, 12 Black-headed Gulls were shared among Maine (5), Rhode Island (2), and Massachusetts (5). A bird believed to be a *Michahellis* Yellow-legged Gull was photographed at Eastham, MA 6 Oct (ph. †PF, JT). Although frequently reported in Newfoundland in recent years, no confirmed Bay State record exists for this relatively recent split from Herring Gull. Nearly 50 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were almost entirely confined to the coast, with a maximum of 8 at Edgartown, MA 16 Oct (VL et al.). The only Sabine's Gull observed this year was an ad. on an A.P. sea watch 31 Aug (RH). Lake-watchers detected a juv. Black-legged Kittiwake at C.T.B. 16 Nov (†TM, LH), and the coastal maximum was 3600 at First Encounter 27 Oct (BN).

Always rare in the Region, 2 Gull-billed Terns included one continuing from Jul to 2 Aug at South B. (BN, m. ob.) and another at Nantucket 8 Aug (E. Ray). Forty-six Caspian Terns represent a better-than-average season, 4 were seen in Vermont to 6 Sep (RL), 3 each were noted in Maine and New Hampshire, 4 were found in Rhode Island, and the rest were in Massachusetts, highlighted by 11 in Randolph, *Norfolk* 26 Sep (T. O'Neil, m. ob.). The only Royal Tern reported was an individual at the Charlestown Breachway, RI 11 Aug (*fide* RF). A strong contender for the best find of the season was a first-summer *Elegant Tern* present 4-28 Aug at S. Beach but not definitively identified until 17 Aug (G. Wood, BN, ph. D. Lawson). The origin of *Elegant Terns* on the East Coast (Virginia and Florida have multiple records) is an open question, although it seems probable that some cross over Central America (Caribbean Sea records), though recent records in New Mexico suggest that cross-continental vagrancy is not out of the question. Numbers of Forster's Terns were above average, although the count of 9+ n. of Massachusetts was unremarkable. High counts were 80+ at Eastham, MA 15 Sep (BN) and 100+ at the mouth of the Connecticut R. in Lyme 11 Oct (H. Golet). Two Bridled Terns seen at Atlantis Canyon 7-8 Sep (†RD et al.) made an excellent find; the species is probably regular in small numbers in pockets of Gulf Stream water far offshore. Good finds in the Pine Tree State were 2 Black Skimmers 5 Aug at Pine Pt., Scarborough (GC) and another photographed at Ogunquit, *York* 23 Sep (G. Kidder).

For the most part alcids were reported in small numbers, not peaking until later in Dec; nonetheless, all six species were reported. Three Common Murres at A.P. 6 & 16 Nov were nice finds (RH). Rejuvenated breeding colonies in the Gulf of Maine have led to ever-increasing counts of the once very scarce Atlantic Puffin, high counts this fall being 75+ between Bar Harbor and Petit Manan I. 10 Aug (WT) and 104 at A.P. 12 Oct (RH).

CUCKOOS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Presumably reverse-migrant Yellow-billed Cuckoos seemed particularly numerous this autumn, as a record 13 were banded at Appledore in Aug—Sep (DH), and late birds were found 27 Oct at Ledyard, *New London*, CT (F. Norton) and 9 Nov at New Boston, *Hillsborough*, NH (B. Linscott). After invading the Region in force in 2001, Snowy Owls stayed n., with only one reported by the end of the season. Fifteen Short-eared Owls were reported from five states, with 3 at D.C.W.M.A. 24 Nov (*fide* DJH) and 2 at Moonstone Beach, S. Kingstown, *Washing-*

ton, RI 26 Nov (J. Murphy). High counts of migrating Common Nighthawks ranged from 21 Aug to 4 Sep, with a maximum of 2500 on the latter date at Stamford, CT (PD). Late calling goatsuckers included a Chuck-will's-widow 27 Aug at Sharon, *Norfolk*, MA (RT) and a Whip-poor-will 3 Oct at Durham, *Middlesex*, CT (N. Morand). Fifty-five Chimney Swifts made an impressive number for 27 Oct at Hanover, *Plymouth*, MA (WP).

A record 13 *Selasphorus* hummingbirds blanketed the Region, including a Rufous at Chester, *Windsor*, VT 23 Aug—4 Oct (V. Freeman, m. ob.), 2 imm. female Rufous banded at Darien, *Fairfield* and Guilford, *New Haven*, CT (M. Szantyr), an unidentified bird at Hancock, ME Oct—3 Dec (S. & K. Noddin), and 3 Rufous and 6 indeterminate *Selasphorus* in Massachusetts, with 2 at a single Newbury feeder 9-15 Nov (S. Stichter, ph. S. Carroll, ph. P. Brown). Close on the heels of the remarkable New York sighting last winter, the Region's first *Calliope Hummingbird* arrived at an Eastham, MA feeder around 1 Nov, but the imm. male had been thought to be a Ruby-throated by the first observer until it was accurately identified by Nikula and Petersen 15 Dec on the Cape Cod C.B.C. (WP, ph. BN, ph. JT).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS

The season's only Say's Phoebe was found in Northampton, *Hampshire*, MA 18 Sep (†C. Gentes). The Bay State's 3rd Cassin's Kingbird spent 1-2 Nov along the Whately/Deerfield, *Franklin* town line (B. Packard, RH, ph. DA, v.o.); this record is remarkable, inasmuch as the species has almost no history of vagrancy on the East Coast n. of Florida. After five years of double-digit tallies and counts of 25 to 54 in the late 1970s, a low count of 5 Western Kingbirds was reported, 2 from Maine and 3 in Massachusetts. Northern Shrike numbers were modest, only 21 were noted in the four n. states. After Appledore banders tagged their 2nd White-eyed Vireo in 2001, they doubled their total in Sep 2002 (DH). Not unexpectedly, 2 Blue-headed Vireos lingered: to 10 Nov in Northfield, *Merrimack*, NH (PH) and to 28 Nov in Wethersfield, *Hartford*, CT (J. Meyers). Not quite as late as a Yellow-throated Vireo on Nantucket 27 Oct (J. Carlson). Five Philadelphia Vireos in Wellfleet, MA 14 Sep (RS et al.) and 6+ at Bluff Pt., Groton, CT 18 Sep (DP) were good counts of this uncommon migrant.

Fish Crows continued to increase, with inland Granite State tallies of 9 in Concord (R. Quinn) and 7 in Windham (MH) and reports from three Connecticut Valley towns in Massachusetts as well as one from the Berkshire Hills. Increasing from the opposite direction, one to 2 Common Ravens contin-

ued irregular appearances on the beaches of Eastham, MA through the season. Northern Rough-winged Swallows showed a continued propensity to linger, with 50 at Great Meadows N.W.R., Concord, Middlesex, MA 14 Oct (K. Hartel), 3 of which remained to 31 Oct (C. Caron). An impressive congregation of 2200 Bank Swallows was documented at Longmeadow, MA 24 Aug (TG). November 1999 proved to be merely an appetizer for Connecticut birders, as a much greater wave of Cave Swallows hit the central coast this year 23 Nov. In the words of subregional editor Greg Hanisek, Cave Swallows that day were "present at Lighthouse Point from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Up to 30 [at once] ... with estimates ... for the day ranging from a conservative 50 to a plausible 200." Most observers noted "100+" minimally. The next day, flocks of 50 to 60 were reported from Stamford and Greenwich, Fairfield, and a few were present to 27 Nov.

Carolina Wren populations continue to prosper in the North Country, with numerous reports from nw. Vermont, cen. New Hampshire, and the s. third of Maine. The lone Sedge Wren of the season resided in Deerfield 2-11 Aug, a rarity for w. Massachusetts (B. Packard, v. o.).

KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS

A remarkable flight of migrants flowing off of Bluff Pt., CT 21 Oct included 1500 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 60 Hermit Thrushes, and 5000 American Robins (DP). The Methuen, Essex, MA gathering of blackbirds included 10,000-12,000 robins 2 Nov (RS, JH). Banders in Manomet, Plymouth, MA were delighted to find their first-ever Varied Thrush, an imm. male, 8 Nov (*vide* MR). The single report of Bohemian Waxwing was of 2 at Wilton, Franklin, ME 18 Nov (J. Dwight). The only Golden-winged Warbler of the season was an exceptionally late female at Plum I. 15 Oct (JB). In the now-familiar litany, Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers were scarcely detected by field observers. On the other hand, at least 45 Orange-crowned Warblers were distributed across the Region, including one way "down east" at Great Wass I., Washington, ME, and Appledore's 2nd ever (DH). Nashville (35), Yellow (101), Black-throated Blue (39), and Blackpoll (49) Warblers were all handled in above-average numbers during Appledore's six-week banding season (DH). Field observers found migratory maxima of 7 Nashvilles 16 Sep, 9 Black-throated Blues 18 Sep, and 120 Blackpolls 23 Sep in Windham, Rockingham, NH (MH), 9 Black-throated Blues 15 Sep in Provincetown/Truro, MA (RS et al.), 58 Blackpolls 18 Sep near Quabbin Res., MA (RLo), and 53 Yellow Warblers at Plum I. 10 Aug (RH). Among other regular

migrants, counts of 34 Black-and-white Warblers 27 Sep and 58 American Redstarts 14 Sep in Medford, Middlesex, MA (MR) were noteworthy, as were totals of 25 Palm Warblers in Concord, Merrimack, NH 6 Oct (R&MS) and 53 in Lincoln, Middlesex, MA 20 Oct (MR).

Warblers lingering to Nov at coastal Massachusetts localities included 4 Nashvilles to 24 Nov, 2 Black-throated Blues to the 14th, and 2 Wilson's to the 23rd, as well as a Blackpoll in Stratford, Fairfield, CT to 21 Nov (C. Barnard) and an ad. male Hooded found in Matunuck, Washington, RI 28 Nov that stayed into Dec (C. Nunes et al.). A Louisiana Waterthrush was in the Boston Public Gardens 1-4 Oct, at least four to six weeks past its expected departure date (ph. D. Wilkinson, m. ob.). The warbler rarity of the season was the first Black-throated Gray for the Region since 1999, found 24 Nov at Hammonasset Beach S.P., Madison, New Haven, CT, which obligingly stayed into winter (m. ob.). The regular "southerners" were represented by a Yellow-throated Warbler far inland in Pittsfield, MA 31 Oct (D. StJames), a Cerulean in Brewster, Barnstable, MA 4 Aug (S. E. Finnegan), Prothonotary Warblers at Bluff Pt., CT 12 Sep (DP) and Plum I. 16-18 Sep (D. Chickering, v. o.), and additional Hoodeds at Appledore 8 Sep (DH), at four locations in Massachusetts in Aug-Sep, and 2 on Block I, RI 7 Oct (J. StJean). Among the near-record 41 Connecticut Warblers reported this season were a remarkable 6 at Cumberland Farms, Middleborough, Plymouth, MA 23 Sep (MM). Yellow-breasted Chats seemed surprisingly numerous, with at least 35 found by field observers and a record 26 netted on Appledore (DH).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

The season's 2 Summer Tanagers put in appearances at Gay Head 21 Sep (VL et al.) and at Providence, RI 24 Sep (R. Emerson). Several notable counts of migrant sparrows made this season began with 107 Chipping Sparrows in Wellfleet, MA 19 Sep (RS). Numbers of sparrows frequenting weedy fields behind the Concord, NH Post Office built to 450 Savannahs, 300 Songs, 250 Swamps, and 600 White-throateds on 6 Oct (R&MS) while the majority of 15,000 migrant sparrows passing through Bluff Pt., CT 21 Oct were White-throateds (DP). Twenty-one Clay-colored Sparrow reports was the poorest showing for the Region since 19 in 1996. Also poorly represented was Vesper Sparrow at 16 individuals, while 15 Lark Sparrows was an expected total for the Region. The sparrow rarities of the season were a Lark Bunting at Edgartown, Dukes 2 Sep (A. Keith, M. Pelikan), a Le Conte's Sparrow at Daniel Webster W.S.,

Marshfield, Plymouth, MA 2 Oct (†D. Furbish), and a Harris's Sparrow that frequented a feeder in Campton, Grafton, NH 16-21 Nov, much to the delight of state birders (ph. C. Johnson, ph. SM, m. ob.). Out-of-range subspecies included 3 Gambell's White-crowned Sparrows and an Oregon Junco in Massachusetts. A White-crowned Sparrow at Gay Head 31 Aug (S. Whiting et al.) was two weeks earlier than last year's early bird. Whatever factors combine to bring vagrant Blue Grosbeaks to New England were not in place this season, as only 11 were tallied, although one appeared far inland in Longmeadow, MA (TG). The tally of ~50 Dickcissels was also a let-down from totals of the past two autumns. A Hanover, Grafton, NH feeder hosted a tardy Indigo Bunting 6-11 Nov (†V. & R. Lunardini).

A post-breeding census of 63 Eastern Meadowlarks was made in Bedford, Middlesex, MA 5 Aug (RLo et al.), while a 2 Nov roost of Common Grackles and European Starlings in Methuen, MA was estimated to contain "millions" of birds (RS, JH). There were 2 Yellow-headed Blackbirds reported in Massachusetts. Brewer's Blackbird included a female photographed in Ipswich, MA 9 Nov (L. Ferrarese, ML et al.) and a male reported in Waterford, New London, CT the next day (DP). A male Boat-tailed Grackle was seen briefly far to the n. in Newburyport, MA 27 Oct (†RH, J. Smith), and the Region's 2nd and the Bay State's first Shiny Cowbird showed up at Katama, Martha's Vineyard 14 Oct (†VL et al.). A juv. Orchard Oriole at N. Truro, Barnstable, MA 29 Sep was about six weeks overdue for its southward migration (†ML et al.). Finches were nearly absent in New England this autumn. Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finch, both crossbills, Common Redpoll, and Pine Siskin were all represented by a handful of reports, mostly from Maine.

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