

Autumn 2004 was characterized by near-normal temperatures but quite variable rainfall in New England. The remnants of seven of the named storms of the very active 2004 hurricane season affected the Region, giving August and September well-above-average rainfall amounts. Few hurricane-borne seabirds were detected, but southbound waterbirds put down in numbers in mid-August and mid-September. In northwestern Vermont and central Massachusetts, *Frances*-associated rainfall on 9 September caused major shorebird fallouts and shifted kittiwake and jaeger migration down Lake Champlain the next day. Three periods of southerly air flow in November once again brought Cave Swallows to the Region, and strong north winds associated with a storm on 28 November brought impressive alcid flights to the Massachusetts coast.

The undisputed star of the season was the Red-footed Falcon, which delighted thousands of observers on Martha's Vineyard during its prolonged stay. Other rarities included state-first Snowy Plover and Little Stint in Connecticut. An Ash-throated Flycatcher and a Hermit Warbler in Massachusetts and two Black-throated Gray Warblers in southern New England may have arrived with the same weather systems that brought Cave Swallows to the coast as far north as New Hampshire.

**Abbreviations:** A.P. (Andrew's Pt., Rockport, Essex, MA); Charlotte (*Chittenden*, VT, on the L. Champlain shore); D.C.W.M.A. (Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison and Panton, Addison, VT); Gay Head (on Martha's Vineyard, Dukes, MA); Hammonasset (Hammonasset Beach S.P., Madison, *New Haven*, CT); Monhegan (Monhegan I., *Lincoln*, ME); S. Monomoy (South Monomoy I., Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA); Plum I. (Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA); Race Pt. (Provincetown, *Barnstable*, MA); S. Beach (South Beach I., Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA).

### LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Pacific Loons have become annual in the colder months from Oct to Apr, and they have also increased: 12 were reliably reported in fall from 2002–2004 versus 8 from 1998–2001. Whether this increase in reports reflects a shift in distribution is not clear. With increasing observer awareness and skill comes increased responsibility to identify and carefully document suspected Pacific Loons; we receive few sets of details that distinguish putative Pacifics from Common or Arctic Loons. The most convincing Pacific Loon sightings for autumn 2004 were: one at A.P. 22 Oct (RH); one at Sherwood I., Westport, *Fairfield*, CT 8 Nov (FM); an ad. at Scarborough, *Cumberland*, ME 7–15 Nov (ph. DL, m.ob.); an ad. at Race Pt. 21 Nov (PF, ph. BN); and one at Plymouth, Ply-

# New England



mouth, MA 23 Nov (JT). Encouraging reports of Pied-billed Grebes included a brood of 7 chicks at D.C.W.M.A. throughout Aug (R. Payne, m.ob.) and 29 counted on a w. *Berkshire*, MA lake survey 20 Oct (E. Neumuth et al.). Also encouraging was an impressive count of 150 Red-necked Grebes at Birch Pt. S.P., Owls Head, *Knox*, ME 28 Nov (C. Fichtel), the best count in the Region since 1996. Five Eared Grebes was the best seasonal tally since 1998; these included an early one on S. Monomoy 27 Aug (WP et al.); at least one at Block I. 10 Oct–6 Nov (m.ob.); a bird at Gay Head 24 Oct (†AK); one seen with a Horned Grebe at Grand Isle, *Grand Isle*, VT 27 Oct (†DJH); and the venerable Niles Beach, Gloucester, Essex, MA bird, back for its 10th consecutive year 15 Nov (W. Drummond).

Inshore baitfish, and thus Gulf of Maine seabirds, continued a now two-year low period. Greater Shearwaters peaked at just 3000+ s. of Mt. Desert I., *Hancock*, ME in

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late Jul through early Aug (WT); outside the Gulf, there were “thousands” of Cory’s and Greater Shearwaters s. of Martha’s Vineyard 3 Sep (VL et al.). On the Continental Slope, 3 Audubon’s Shearwaters were at Veatch Canyon 28 Aug (RH, B.B.C.), with 9 at Oceanographer Canyon 2–3 Oct (RD). Also found far offshore on the Veatch Canyon trip was a *Band-rumped Storm-Petrel* 28 Aug (RH, B.B.C.). A *Manx Shearwater* flying w. along the Long Island Sound shore at Stamford, *Fairfield* 7 Aug (P. Dugan) furnished a

**SA** The A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature complicated matters for most birders by giving its blessing to the long-anticipated division of Canada Goose between its large boreal and temperate subspecies and smaller tundra-nesting subspecies—into Canada Goose and Cackling Goose, respectively. Small Canada Geese provided considerable fodder for discussion and controversy in New England during the fall. Part of the problem is lack of readily available information on variation *within* Cackling Goose and Canada Goose subspecies, and information about vagrancy in these subspecies. The images presented at Pierre Bannon's website (<[www.pbase.com/pbannon/hutchins](http://www.pbase.com/pbannon/hutchins)>) show that nominate *hutchinsii* (Richardson's Cackling Goose) is quite variable in size, bill shape, and plumage details. In spite of debate, it is possible that several much-discussed small white-cheeked geese in e. Massachusetts were Richardson's. A bird photographed at Keene, NH 26 Sep (ph. †JPS) raises the confounding possibility that Lesser Canada Goose (*B. canadensis parvipes*) also occurs in our Region. Birds reported as "straightforward" Cackling Geese in Vermont were one with Snow Geese (a typical association) at Dead Creek, Addison 8–17 Oct (R. Crowley, †TGM) and one 29 Oct at Brattleboro, Windham (JPS). Birds considered probable or debatable were at Waltham, Middlesex, MA 8–19 Nov (ph. J. Forbes, m.ob.) and 3–4 in Acton, Middlesex 26 Nov (ph. JPS).

2nd Connecticut sight record.

There were some nice late-season coastal flights of Northern Gannets, including 7200 passing A.P. 24 Oct (RH) and 570 in Long Island Sound seen from Hammonasset 13 Nov (J. Connolly). Two Bay State observers commented on the high percentage of ad. gannets in larger coastal flights. As almost all inland vagrant gannets are juvs., the absence of inland sightings was likely correlated with the low counts of young birds along the coast. Eight Great Cormorants were encountered away from salt water, including juvs. far from the sea 24 Oct at L. Madawaska, Aroostook, ME (BS) and 29 Oct at Charlotte (RBL), plus an ad. (rare inland) at Laconia, Belknap, NH 20 Nov (PH). A count of 9 American Bitterns at Tuftonboro, Carroll, NH (PH) was the best Regional post-breeding count in over a decade; 31 others were reported. All 5 of the Least Bitterns reported were seen in the first week of Aug in w. Vermont and n. Connecticut. The best Great Egret count was of 139 in Westport and Acoaxet, Bristol, MA 10 Oct (ML). Very late Great Egrets were found 7 Nov along the Missisquoi R. in W. Swanton, Franklin, VT (RBL) and 26 Nov in Gloucester, MA (F. Bouchard). Inland Snowy Egrets were 2 young birds at Sterling, Worcester, MA 17 Aug (ML) and at least one at two Champlain Valley, VT locations 22 & 26 Aug (M. Cosgrove, V.B.A.). A count of 30 Little Blue Herons at Scarborough, ME 28 Aug (LB) was most impressive. By contrast, Tricolored Heron has declined from uncommon to rare, with only 3 reported in Massachusetts and none to the north. Just 3 Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were reported in Massachusetts, but 30 at Milford Pt., New Haven 5 Oct (FM) was a record high for Connecticut. A Glossy Ibis in the upper Connecticut R. Valley at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham, Windham, VT 15 Aug (V.B.A.) was the only one reported far inland this autumn. Black Vultures

continued to increase, with singles n. to Bar Harbor, Hancock and Warren, Knox, ME; seasonal totals of 26 were reported in Massachusetts and 4 in Rhode Island.



Greater Shearwaters were in short supply in inshore waters of New England this autumn; however, this one strayed far up Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, seen from 13 August through 5 September (here) 2004. Photograph by Geoff Dennis.

## WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Geese have tended to be found mostly in s. New England in recent years, with most records coming from Connecticut. This autumn, 7 were found there, with one other in Rhode Island. Snow Geese peaked in the Champlain Valley 14 Oct, when a Regional record 40,000 funneled down the lake near Isle La Motte, Grand Isle (TGM); few were seen to the east. Massachusetts's 3rd Ross's Goose was well photographed in the company of Canada Geese at Turner's Falls 21–25 Oct (†M. Fairbrother, m.ob., ph. PB et al.), while more expected were 2–3 in Vermont, where a rare blue morph and an accompanying Ross's Goose x Snow Goose hybrid were documented 16 Oct at D.C.W.M.A. (TGM, †HK, ph. J. Kaestner et al.). A Barnacle Goose in Machias, Washington, ME continued from Jul and was last reported 11 Sep (B. Southard, NF, G. Raynor); the summer date may indicate a bird of captive provenance, as there are very few other reports for the continent at this season.

Tundra Swans were sparse as usual, with 5 trading between Brattleboro, VT and Hins-

dale, Cheshire, NH 5–11 Nov (HG, ph. JPS et al.), and one at Coventry, Kent, RI 26 Nov (M. Tucker). An eclipse or imm. male Eurasian Wigeon at Exeter, Rockingham, NH

2 Oct was rather early, but given the subtlety of this plumage, the species could be overlooked at this time of year (SM et al.); 5 others included singles in Massachusetts and Connecticut, another on Great Bay in New Hampshire, and 2 in Rhode Island. Canvasback and Redhead both remain scarce; the maximum for the former was 46 at Fresh Pond, Cambridge, Middlesex, MA 23 Nov (O. Spaulding). The only Redheads were a hen at Milford, New Haven, CT 4 Nov (D. Varza) and a drake at W. Alburg, Grand Isle, VT 13 Nov (TGM, RBL et al.). A Greater Scaup on S. Monomoy 27 Aug was either summering or a very early arrival (WP). Tufted Duck

failed to show in the Region for the first time since 1994. Eight King Eiders appeared along the coast 13 Aug+. A female returned to Hammonasset for its 4th winter 16 Nov (J. Maynard, G. Rafford, B. Zuraw). The largest inland scoter flight took place 27 Oct, with 290 Surf, 1060 White-winged, and 4650 Black Scoters passing Charlotte (TGM et al.), and 600 Black Scoters on the Connecticut R. at Moore Dam, Littleton, Grafton, NH (R. Bradley). Another impressive inland sea duck count at Charlotte was of 757 Long-tailed Ducks headed down the lake 1 Nov (TGM). Further indication of L. Champlain's waterfowl numbers were 1500 Common Goldeneye in W. Alburg 14 Nov (TGM, RBL, FAP). Beginning 4 Nov, 7 Barrow's Goldeneye were found in the Region: singles in Vermont and Massachusetts and 5 in Maine. Although Ruddy Duck nested on Monomoy this summer, numbers were low during their late-autumn passage, the highest count reported being of 120.

## RAPTORS THROUGH CRANE

Broad-winged Hawks once again had a

**SA** It was the "perfect storm" of an avian rarity—unprecedented for North America, attractive and dashing, a long-stayer (8–24 Aug), easy to observe, and photogenic: what wasn't to like about the Martha's Vineyard **Red-footed Falcon** (*Falco v. vespertinus*)? Originally located by Vernon Laux and at first thought to be a somewhat odd-looking Mississippi Kite, its identity was worked out two days later, through photographs sent to Jeremiah Trimble at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. This celebrated raptor brought renewed publicity for birding and birds, even in the heat of summer during a presidential election year, making national news and even landing Mr. Laux a celebrated appearance on ABC World News Tonight as its "Person of the Week" 27 Aug.

The falcon also occasioned fascinating debate about its route to e. North America. Might it have arrived across the far North Atlantic via Iceland, where the species has strayed on four occasions? Could it have hitched a ride on a trans-Atlantic ship from England or Ireland? It was not a big year for Red-footed Falcons in northwestern Europe; thus there is less support for these scenarios than if there had been more falcons straying westward, but the species is annual in England and was recorded there in 2004, so a misoriented vagrant across the North Atlantic, ship-assisted or otherwise, is certainly conceivable. The route to North America across the Atlantic Ocean between West Africa and northeastern South America has at least as much to recommend it in this case: a favorable easterly wind direction; documented vagrancy by Red-footed Falcons in West Africa, e.g., to Senegal; and the growing body of documented Eurasian/Eurafrican vagrants in the West Indies. The Europe–Iceland/Greenland–North America and Africa–South America/Antilles–North America vagrancy routes are both plausible in this case, but it will be for the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee to weigh these possibilities against the question of ship assistance. It should be noted here that the American Ornithologists' Union has no explicit policy that bars listing birds theoretically so assisted.

rather lackluster and diffuse migration, with two rather broad peaks from 11–14 and 18–21 Sep. The highest count reported was of 3734 from 13–14 Sep at Mt. Waticus, Worcester, MA. The number of Swainson's Hawks reported regressed to the mean of one or 2, with one at Greenwich, Fairfield, CT 20 Oct (B. O'Toole) and another at Essex, Middlesex, CT 23 Oct (A. Griswold). Two unusual reports of dark-morph *calurus*-like Red-tailed Hawks coincided: an ad. 26 Nov (†JT) and a juv. 27 Nov (†ML) on the same road in Barnstable, MA. Rough-legged Hawks were reported in low numbers away from their cen. Champlain Valley regional stronghold, where 12–13 were counted 11 Nov (E. Masterson, I. MacLeod). An impressive one-day count of 30 Peregrine Falcons was tallied at Nomans Land I. 13 Oct (N. Smith et al.).

Rare autumn reports of large rails included single King Rails in the Berkshires at Stockbridge 8 Aug (ML) and S. Egremont 19 Sep (ML et al.), and a somewhat unusual Bristol Clapper Rail at Westport 10 Oct (ML et al.). Common Moorhen reports increased to 20 ads. and 7 dependent young Regionwide. The breeding confirmations came from the species' New England population center in the Champlain Valley, with broods spotted at D.C.W.M.A. in early Aug (FAP, C. Pratt, m.ob.) and Richville Pond, Shoreham, Addison 5 Sep (R. Payne). A very late moorhen was found at Pt. Judith, Washington, RI 23–27 Nov (ST et al.). Sandhill Crane numbers went through the roof: over 20 birds were reported from all six states, including post-nesting families in cen. Maine and a migratory family of 5 at Carver, Plymouth, MA 5 Oct (L. Robinson). One hopes

that this elegant bird will continue to increase now that it has nested for a several consecutive years in New England.

### SHOREBIRDS

There was much concern after reports of cold and wet summer weather in the e. American Arctic and anecdotal information about low shorebird nesting success that there would be few juv. shorebirds seen dur-

Black-bellied Plovers at Edgartown, Dukes, MA 11 Sep that appeared "too greenish" to be an American had several characters consistent with Pacific Golden-Plover (p.a., †AK); if accepted, it would furnish only the 2nd for Massachusetts and the 3rd for the Region. Only the 2nd ever recorded in the Region and a first for Connecticut, a Snow Plover graced the beach at Sandy Pt., W. Haven, New Haven 1 Oct–16 Nov (ph. †JH,

m.ob.). Record counts of Semipalmated Plovers in two states were associated with the remnants of tropical storms, including 920 at Little Compton, Newport, RI 14 Aug in Bonnie's wake, and 170+ in Alburg and Swanton, VT in the rains of Frances 9 Sep (RBL). Many lingered late this year, including 20 at Scarborough, ME 15 Nov (S. Walsh), 15 at S. Beach and S. Monomoy 20 Nov (RS et al.), and 3 at Plymouth, MA to 23 Nov (JT). Autumn maxima of American Oystercatcher creep ever higher on Cape Cod's "elbow," with 195 at S. Beach 25 Aug–2 Sep (BN). American Avocet reports included one at Middletown, Newport, RI Jul–5 Aug (m.ob.), up to 2 at the



Ross's Geese can be hard to find and identify among Snow Geese. This white morph associated with Canada Geese at Turner's Falls in Gill, Massachusetts 21–25 (here 24) November 2004, for the state's third documented record. Photograph by Phil Brown.

ing fall migration. As is often the case, the warning led to much observation and to mixed reports. In Maine, the species most affected appeared to be Short-billed Dowitcher (*fide* JD); in Massachusetts, Hudsonian Godwit numbers were very low; also less numerous were White-rumped Sandpipers. The majority of American Golden-Plovers reported were grounded by the remnants of Tropical Storm Frances 9 Sep. High counts included 23 at S. Windsor, Hartford, CT (T. Antanaitis), 60 at Northampton, Hampshire, MA (TG), and 101 in Alburg and Swanton, VT (RBL). A lone juv. golden-plover with

Charlestown Breachway, Washington, RI 21–28 Aug (ST), and one at E. Boston 23–26 Sep (D. Hunneman et al.).

Late Willets, presumably both Western (*inornatus*), were at S. Beach 27 Nov (BN, PF) and in Scarborough, ME 2 Nov–Dec (G. Carson, m.ob.). Of the 19 Upland Sandpipers, maxima were just 4 each at Phippsburg, Sagadahoc, ME 9 Aug (P. Vickery) and at Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, Rockingham, NH 10 Aug (M. Harvey). Observers achieved an excellent count of 49 Whimbrels passing Little Boar's Head, Hampton, Rockingham, NH 1 Aug (SM, JL); inland



Two Red Phalaropes were observed at Shelburne Bay, Vermont 18 (here) and 19 October 2004. Both pelagic phalaropes occur almost annually in small numbers on Lake Champlain. Photograph by Dennis Abbott.

birds were 2 in Addison, VT 30–31 Aug (RBL, DKL et al.), a juv. in Addison 6 Sep (ph. E. J. Elithorpe), and one at Northampton, MA 10 Sep (A. Magee). The mid-Aug and mid-Sep shorebird fallouts produced impressive counts of Hudsonian Godwits, with 18 at Old Lyme, New London, CT 16 Aug (H. Golet) and 43 in Alburg and Swanton, VT 9 Sep (RBL), the highest Regional count this autumn; 3 more were seen in Vermont at Missisquoi N.W.R., Franklin 28 Oct (A. Zelley). Eighteen Marbled Godwits included one with the Whimbrels 1 Aug at Hampton, NH (SM, JL); 2 at Reid S.P., Georgetown, Sagadahoc, ME 28 Aug–10 Sep (M. Mahnke et al.); up to 7 in Chatham, Barnstable, MA through much of the season (BN, m.ob.); one in Scituate, Plymouth, MA 12 Sep (D. Crockett); 4 in Rhode Island 24 Aug–4 Oct (fide RF); and 3 in Connecticut in late Aug. A late Sanderling lingered at Grand Isle on L. Champlain through 23 Nov (DJH). Excellent inland counts of Semipalmated Sandpipers were made during the 9 Sep fallout, with 254+ in nw. Vermont (RBL) and 310 in the Connecticut R. Valley in Massachusetts (m.ob.). Another Connecticut first was the Region's 7th Little Stint at Sandy Pt. 1 Aug (JH). Additional impressive Sep fallout totals were 582 Least Sandpipers in Alburg and Swanton 9 Sep, 59 White-rumped Sandpipers there 12 Sep (RBL), and 40 White-rumped at Northfield, Franklin, MA 8 Sep (CG). Baird's Sandpipers continue to be relatively numerous, with 60 reported overall and a high count of 6 at Phippsburg, ME 4 Sep (LB); a late bird was at Plum I. 11 Nov (RH). Two Purple Sandpipers were found on L. Champlain at Grand Isle 10 Nov (DJH).

Curlew Sandpipers in Massachusetts in-

cluded an ad. at S. Beach 27 Aug (R. Clem et al.) through 7 Sep (BN et al.) and another at Scituate 17 Sep (D. Furbish et al.). Thirty-eight Buff-breasted Sandpipers was above average; a notably early one at the Ompompanoosuc Flats, Norwich, VT 14 Aug was extremely rare for the upper Connecticut Valley (†S. Sturup); 7 were at S. Beach 3 Sep (PF et al.). The remnants of Frances downed 2 Buff-breasteds at Swanton, VT 10 Sep (RBL et al.) and 9 in w. Massachusetts, including up to 7 at Northampton 9–11 Sep (TG et al.). A Ruff blessed Chatham, MA with its presence 8–12 Sep (G. Goodrich, BN). Long-billed Dowitchers were noted farther ne. than usual, with a record 10 in Maine for the season (fide JD). Only 5 Wilson's Phalaropes were found 22 Aug–25 Sep, continuing a downward trend. Five Red-necked Phalaropes were seen at Charlotte 14 Aug–10 Sep (TGM); other inland Red-neckeds included one at Hatfield, Hampshire, MA 22 Aug (H. McQueen), a juv. at Great Meadows N.W.R., Concord, Middlesex, MA 9 Sep (T. Allison et al.), and a remarkable 5 at Turner's Falls, MA 9 Sep (A. Richards). Lake Champlain hosted the season's inland Red Phalaropes: 2 at Shelburne Bay, Chittenden 18–19 Oct (ph. RBL, DA et al.).

### SKUAS THROUGH ALCIDS

Great Skua reports included an undescribed individual 24 km s. of Schoodic Pt., Hancock, ME 9 Aug and 2 on Nantucket Shoals 28 Aug (RH, ph. JT). All of this autumn's South Polar Skuas were found in Bay State waters, with one at Chilmark, Dukes 5 Aug–3 Sep (AK, P. Harrington), one on Nantucket Shoals 28 Aug (RH et al.), and a final sighting 2–3 Oct at Oceanographer Canyon (RD). Coastal jaeger reports of interest in-

cluded a good seawatch count of 37 Pomarine Jaegers during the 28 Nov storm at A.P. (RH) and a late Parasitic off Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, ME 21 Nov (DL). Four Long-tailed Jaegers including a juv. were noted 16 km e. of Chatham, MA 24 Aug (S. Perkins et al.); 2 juvs. were w. of Cox's Ledge 8 Sep (ST et al.), and another was seen on a trip out of Bar Harbor, Hancock, ME 19 Sep (LB et al.). Lake Champlain saw its best jaeger flight yet, with 26 recorded 17 Aug–20 Oct, among them: ad. and juv. Pomarines 17 Aug at Grand Isle (DJH) and 1 Sep at Charlotte (TGM et al.), respectively; at least 12 Parasitics 31 Aug–20 Oct, with a maximum of 4 juvs. 10 Sep (TGM et al.); and 5 Long-taileds 23 Aug–15 Oct, including 2 ads. 23 Aug at Grand Isle (†DJH) and 2 juvs. at long-range from Charlotte 10 Sep (TGM).

Reports of Eurasian hooded gulls included good numbers of Little Gull from Vermont (8), Maine (2), New Hampshire (2), and Massachusetts (14), while Black-headed Gulls numbered up to 9 in New Hampshire, 7 in Massachusetts, 2 each in Maine and Rhode Island, and at least one on L. Champlain. A bird fitting the field characters of a Mew Gull of one of the Eurasian races was seen off Bar Harbor, ME 30 Oct (WT, C. Whitney). A gull carefully observed at Burlington, Chittenden, VT 28 Nov (†TGM, †AS) showed the characters associated with first-winter Thayer's Gull. Iceland Gulls arrived in coastal New Hampshire 28 Oct and built to good numbers during Nov, with 6 at Rochester, Strafford 16 Nov (SM) and 8 on Nantucket 26 Nov (ER). Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to increase, although all were limited to the coast; a Regional record high count of 106 was made at Nantucket 26 Nov (ER). Eight Sabine's Gulls marked the best Regional total since 1999; these included ads. at A.P. 15 Aug (RH); on Upper Narragansett Bay, RI 29 Aug (G. Dennis); w. of Cox's Ledge, RI 8 Sep (ST et al.); on Stellwagen Bank 11 Sep (BN et al.); and 2–3 Oct at Oceanographer Canyon (RD). Three juvs. entertained observers at Charlotte 23 Sep (TGM et al.). There is much we do not know about Black-legged Kittiwake migration; about 1100 in pelagic waters off Rhode Island 8 Sep seemed a high count for mid-Sep (ST et al.). Frances produced a huge inland flight of 20 juvs. and one ad. on L. Champlain 10 Sep, with a single juv. in advance of the flight 8 Sep at Charlotte (TGM, HK et al.); 5 other kittiwakes were seen on L. Champlain 12 Sep–25 Nov. Kittiwakes may have experienced poor nesting success this summer, if the dearth of juv. kittiwakes on late-season seawatch counts is any indication.



Halibut State Reservation in Rockport, Massachusetts often features fine seawatching opportunities in autumn through winter. This image taken 28 November 2004 shows many Razorbills and a few Common Murres accompanying four "pseudo-alcids" (Long-tailed Ducks, lower left)—a nice chance to compare these species in a single image. Photograph by Jim Barber.

Over 50 Caspian Terns reported included a maximum of 9 at Dorchester, *Suffolk*, MA 20 Sep (RD) and a rare w. Massachusetts sighting at Quabbin Res. 16 Aug (ML). The active hurricane season pushed 7 Royal Terns into the Region, including one at Biddeford, *York*, ME 3 Aug (P. Sanborn), 2 banded birds in Rye, NH after tropical storms *Bonnie* and *Charley* had passed by 15 Aug (ph. DA, ph. SM), 3 on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket 6 Aug–3 Sep, and one at Charlestown Breachway, RI 14 Aug (D. Finizia). The lone Sandwich Tern of the season appeared 12 Aug at Edgartown, MA (AK et al.), a site with multiple prior reports. Two Common Terns were notable on the Connecticut R. at Turner's Falls 16 Aug (M. Tay-

lor), and they lingered in greater-than-usual numbers on Cape Cod: 85 in Eastham, *Barnstable* 14 Nov (BN et al.) and 20 at Wellfleet harbor, *Barnstable* 21 Nov (BN, RF) were high counts. Only 3 Forster's Terns strayed n. of the Merrimack R., but they reached triple-digit counts in the three s. New England states, with of maximum of 150 at Westport, MA 10 Oct (ML). A Bridled Tern was a very nice find on Nantucket Shoals 28 Aug (RH, ph. JT). Black Skimmer is a very localized Regional breeding bird; good counts from known nesting areas included 14 at S. Beach 15 Aug (BN) and 30+ at Sandy Pt., W. Haven, CT 30 Aug (G. Nichol).

New England saw its best late-autumn alcid flight in a very long time 28–29 Nov. To-

tals from A.P. on 28 Nov included 8 Dovekies, 288 Common Murres (an almost unprecedented total), a Nov record 24 Thick-billed Murres (normally not numerous until Jan–Feb), 975 Razorbills, 11 Black Guillemots, and 5 Atlantic Puffins (RH et al.). On 29 Nov at First Encounter Beach, Eastham, 20 Dovekies, an astounding 2200 Razorbills (likely far more, given 3000 unidentified large alcids), and 24 Atlantic Puffins were counted (BN). A Black Guillemot was far s. at Block I. 16 Nov (S. Mitra et al.).

#### DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Two White-winged Doves appeared in Nov: Rhode Island's 3rd was at Watch Hill, Westerly, *Washington* 4 Nov (CR et al.), and one was at a Nantucket feeder 17 Nov+ (K. Blackshaw). An Eastern Screech-Owl heard in Dresden, *Lincoln* 20 Nov provided Maine's 2nd autumn report in 10 years. Nine Snowy Owls was a respectable season total for a non-flight year. The increase in Northern Saw-whet Owl banding stations is increasing our understanding of their

**SA** The reasons for this season's massive dispersal of both Red-headed and Red-bellied Woodpeckers remain obscure: perhaps a combination of high survivorship of young fed on Brood X cicadas with a poor mast crop. At least 66 Red-heads were reported, 19 of these in n. New England, n. to Dixmont, *Penobscot*, ME (B. Barker). Red-bellied Woodpecker flights have been harder to detect in recent years, as the species now nests in s. New Hampshire and s. and w. Vermont. Nonetheless, 200 individuals from all counties in Maine save *Piscataquis* represent an unprecedented total; the farthest n. was photographed in Woodland, *Aroostook* (BS).



Connecticut Warbler, an uncommon migrant in New England, is rarely seen in downtown Boston. This first-year bird was in Post Office Square 19 September 2004. Photograph by Glen Tepke.

movements. The station in Uxbridge, Worcester, MA had five foreign recoveries on top of 165 new owls banded this season: two from e.-cen. Ontario; one from Williamstown, Berkshire banded two weeks earlier; one banded in 2003 on Assateague I.; and one tagged 99 km to the s. on Block I. eight nights before its recapture in Uxbridge (S. Wheelock)—on that very night, the Block I. team caught an Uxbridge owl banded two days previously.

The Common Nighthawk flight was diffuse 22–28 Aug, with a high count of 1000–2000 at Westbrook, Cumberland, ME 23 Aug (R. Foley). Secondary peaks were observed on 7 & 10 Sep; 1070 migrants were tallied at Stamford, Fairfield, CT on the latter date (P. Dugan). A Chuck-will's-widow was among a number of landbirds alighting on the *Friendship V* out of Bar Harbor, ME 4 Oct (WT). This autumn's Rufous Hummingbird show was limited to Rhode Island, where an imm. male took up residence in a Little Compton yard 15 Oct; it was joined by an imm. female 10 Nov, and both remained to the end of the season (ph. G. Dennis); another, an ad. male, graced a Charlestown, Washington yard 29–31 Oct (ph. G. Matteo). Two Black-backed Woodpeckers wandered from breeding areas, to Monhegan 22 Sep–3 Oct (SM, v.o.) and to Tunbridge, Orange, VT 17 Nov (*fide* K. McFarland).

### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS

The season's only Say's Phoebe was encountered at Wasque Pt., Dukes, MA 3 Oct (†AK), while the only Ash-throated Flycatcher lingered at Halibut Pt., Rockport,

MA 26 Nov–4 Dec (T. Burke, ph. T. Murray, ph. PB). Seven Western Kingbirds in Massachusetts and Connecticut, a below-average seasonal total, nonetheless represented a modest improvement over the two previous years. Northern Shrike populations are known to fluctuate greatly from year to year, and 35 total this season following 60+ in 2003 was expected. An undescribed shrike observed at Gay Head 24 Aug (S. Whiting et al.) could have been the first autumn Loggerhead Shrike reported in New England since 1995. Stray White-eyed Vireos in Maine were found at East Pt., Biddeford 10 Oct (TV et al.) and Schoodic Pt., Winter Harbor, Hancock 16 Oct (A. Pellegrini); the latest in the Bay State was at Plum I. 26 Oct (RH). A tardy Philadelphia Vireo was seen at Plum I. 26 Oct, while other lingering vireos included single Warblings in Boston (B.B.C., RS) and Granville, Hampden (J. Weeks) 3 Oct, a Yellow-throated in Boston 25 Oct (RD et al.), a Blue-headed at Mt. Auburn, Cambridge 23 Nov (RS et al.), and a Red-eyed at Machiasport, Washington, ME 24 Nov (NF). Vireo high counts for the season were 14 Warblings at Woburn, Middlesex, MA 4 Sep (MR et al.) and 75 Red-eyeds at Bluff Pt. 30 Sep.

This season saw several good Blue Jay counts of 400–600 migrants in late Sep–early Oct in s. New England, indicating a possible exodus from the n. woods. Swallow congregations are usually largest along the coast, so a Tree Swallow aggregation estimated at 100,000 in Northampton, MA 29 Aug (CG) was noteworthy, as was a count of 50+ Cliff Swallows from Cheshire, Berkshire, MA

22 Aug (ML). Hopeful late-season swallow-watchers have learned that conditions conducive to bringing an influx of Cave Swallows may produce other species as well. This Nov brought a Cliff Swallow to Napatree Pt., RI 15 Nov (CR) and a Barn Swallow to Grand Isle, VT 24–25 Nov (ph. †DJH). The anticipated Cave Swallows appeared as well; although the magnitude of the flight did not reach those of the past two years, the timing was very similar to that of 2003. The first 2 appeared at Napatree Pt. 4 Nov (CR); over the next five days, singles were reported from Napatree Pt. and Sachuest Pt., RI and Lighthouse Pt., CT (GH). An unidentified *Petrochelidon* appeared at Lighthouse Pt. 14 Nov, and 3 Caves were at Napatree 15 Nov (CR). After a ten-day interval, more widespread reports ranged from Greenwich Pt., Fairfield, CT (7+ on 25 Nov; M. Sampson); Moonstone Beach, S. Kingstown, Washington, RI (one 27 Nov; ST); Cotuit, MA (one 26 Nov; JT); and Chatham, MA (2 on 27 Nov, ph. JT et al.). New Hampshire's 2nd state record was furnished by a single at N. Hampton S.B., Rye 26 Nov (DA, †D. Donsker). One of the Sedge Wrens discovered over the summer at Ferrisburgh, Addison, VT remained to at least 8 Aug (†AS), while single wanderers appeared at four widely scattered Massachusetts locations from Sheffield, Berkshire 5 Sep (D. St. James) to Nomans Land 13–14 Oct (AK).

### KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS

The peak of kinglet migration was recorded 30 Sep, when 500 mixed kinglets passed Bluff Pt. Golden-crowned Kinglets were still moving 11 Oct, when 173 were counted on Plum I. (J. Forbes). The first Northern Wheatear of the season was reported from Cadillac Mt., Bar Harbor, Hancock, ME 16 Sep (S. Schellenger) while the second paused at Plymouth Beach, MA 1–3 Oct (Jake Walker, ph. PB, m.ob.). *Catharus* thrush numbers, except of Hermit, remain abysmally low, with single-digit high counts. Careful documentation of the American Robin roost at Bolton Flats, Worcester, MA has led to ever-larger counts, peaking this year at 11,400 on 22 Aug (S. Sutton). Birders at Bluff Pt. did not intercept any large mid- to late-season warbler flights but did note some days of good diversity and numbers, with over 600 warblers of 19 species 1 Sep and 800 warblers of 15 species on 30 Sep. The 1 Sep flight at Bluff Pt. included the state's only 2 Golden-winged Warblers of the season, while 2 late-Aug singles were seen in Massachusetts. The change in status of Tennessee Warbler from one of the most common migrant warblers in the 1970s and 1980s to one of the least numerous is illustrated by a seasonal total of only 13 birds reported by the Bay State's birders. A total of

37 Orange-crowned Warblers across the Region was below recent averages. Significant high counts of migrant warblers included 35 Northern Parulas at Bluff Pt. 1 Sep; 39 Black-throated Green Warblers along the Ware R., Hampshire, MA 12 Sep (ML et al.), and 55 at Monhegan 21 Sep (LRB et al.); 33 Palms at Sandwich, Carroll, NH 30 Sep (TV, R. Ridgely); 44 Blackpolls near Quabbin Res. 3 Oct (ML et al.), late for such a count; 30 Black-and-whites on Monhegan 22 Sep (MI et al.); and 186 American Redstarts at Bluff Pt. 1 Sep and 45 on Monhegan 21 Sep (LRB et al.). The discovery of a Chestnut-sided Warbler feeding 2 fledglings at Mt. Philo, Charlotte, Chittenden, VT 24 Aug (TGM) was remarkable, as the species' migration peaks in late Aug. Prairie Warblers are seldom numerous as migrants in New England, so a count of 8 in Nahant, Essex, MA 26 Sep (E. Morrier et al.) was noteworthy. Rare in the Pine Tree State was a Louisiana Waterthrush at Gray, Cumberland 18 Aug (G. Neavoll).

There was some coincidence of dates between Cave Swallow reports and those of late, reverse-migrant and vagrant warblers. Notably, 26 Nov produced Black-throated Blue Warblers in E. Brunswick, Cumberland, ME (G. Sergeant et al.) and Mattapoisett, Plymouth, MA (M. Sylvia) and a Wilson's at World's End, Hingham, Plymouth, MA (J. Liller). Other late Nov warblers were a Blackpoll 16 Nov (RS) and a Prairie 20 Nov (*fide* RS) at Mt. Auburn, MA, a Northern Waterthrush in Bourne, Barnstable, MA 20 Nov (RS), and a Black-and-white Warbler in Boston 28 Nov (G. Tepke). Two Black-throated Gray Warblers appeared in mid-Nov: the first was in Nahant, MA 15–19 Nov (D. Wilkinson, RH et al.), and Connecticut's 9th was found in Derby, New Haven 17 Nov (M. Stockmal). Another w. stray was a plausibly described male Hermit Warbler from Holyoke, Hampden, MA 29–30 Nov (A. & L. Richardson, *fide* SK; L. Pivacek). Among s. wanderers this season were single Yellow-throated Warblers on Monhegan 22 Sep (*dominica*; MI et al.) and at Chilmark, MA 15 Oct (L. McDowell et al.) and a young male Cerulean Warbler banded in Wells, York, ME 11 Aug (JW, J. Ficker). Prothonotary Warblers did their wandering in early and mid-season, with 2 each in Maine and Massachusetts and singles in Connecticut and Rhode Island between 6–8 Aug and 21–23 Sep. Three of the 4 Worm-eating Warblers of the season were offshore: on Nantucket, on Star I., NH, and at sea off Bar Harbor, ME; the other was seen in Wellfleet, MA. Three Kentucky Warblers were located in the Bay State between 22 Aug and 17 Oct, and one appeared in Connecticut 22 Aug. The banding station at Joppa Flats, Newburyport, MA is gathering valuable information on the secretive Connecticut Warbler. Several of the 12

banded there this season stayed for several days, gaining substantial fat, probably in preparation for a Blackpoll-like overwater flight to the Amazon; in addition, an ad. first banded in 2003 was recaptured (B. Johnson). Hooded Warblers, which nest sparingly in the s. of the Region, wandered n. to two locations in Maine in mid-Oct and four coastal Massachusetts sites in Aug and Oct. Yellow-breasted Chats were less numerous this season, with only 25 reported.

### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

For the 2nd time in three years, a Summer Tanager appeared at Gay Head, MA, this one 4 Oct (S. Anderson); another was found on Plum I. 18 Oct (D. & I. Jewell). The 1 Sep flight at Bluff Pt. included 55 Scarlet Tanagers, a number hardly attained in a single location on the East Coast anywhere in recent years. A tardy female was found in Cape Elizabeth, ME 27 Nov (J. Jordan et al.). A few American Tree Sparrows were notably early, appearing in Nahant, MA 26 Sep (E. Morrier et al.) and Strafford, Tolland, CT 1 Oct (C. Barnard). Thirty-seven Clay-colored Sparrows were mostly along the coast, as expected, except for one of the Grand Isle, VT nesters. A possible Chipping Sparrow x Clay-colored Sparrow hybrid was described from Monhegan 23–24 Sep (†MI). At least 21 Lark Sparrows Regionwide was a better-than-average showing, and the 6+ from Maine were just short of the past decade's record there. An estimated 200 Chipping Sparrows in Eastham, MA 21 Sep (RH) must have kept the observer busy; some 600 Savannah Sparrows in Keene, NH 29 Sep (JPS) was equally impressive. As many as 5 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found inland this season, with one in Keene, NH 29 Sep (S. Lerman, ph. JPS), repeated encounters near Shelburne Bay, VT 3–18 Oct (†TGM, †AS, †FAP, †RBL), and another at the Retreat Meadows, Brattleboro, Windham, VT 20 Oct (†H. Galbraith). Lincoln's Sparrows seemed more numerous than usual, with several double-digit counts 21 Sep–4 Oct. An imm. Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow was reported from Ipswich, MA 18 Oct (RH). Snow Buntings arrived in good numbers across the n. country in early Nov, with 600 along the New Hampshire coast 11 Nov (SM).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were moving on 1 Sep, when 24 were tallied at Longmeadow, Hampden, MA (J. Hutchinson et al.). The status of single Blue Grosbeaks at four Massachusetts locations (three inland) in the first half of Aug was unclear, as neither age nor sex was reported. About 15 others in Sep–Oct were along the coast from Maine to Connecticut, and a very late one appeared inland in Northampton, MA 4 Nov (B. Bieda). Rhode Island's third-latest fall Indigo

Bunting record came from Westerly 7 Nov (G. Williams et al.), while one on 11 Nov in Falmouth, Cumberland (JW, ph. L. Seitz) tied last year's Maine record. The Regional total of 71+ Dickcissels was well distributed, with 2 in Vermont, 6 in Rhode Island, 13+ in Connecticut, 17+ in Maine, and 33 in the Bay State.

Bobolink concentrations included 275 at Plum I. 9 Aug (RH) and 250 in Durham, Strafford, NH 12 Aug (SM, JL). A Yellow-headed Blackbird lingered at Edgartown, MA 10–12 Aug (T. & S. Baird), and an ad. m. was discovered with a flock of Red-wingeds in Bowdoinham, Sagadahoc, ME 2 Nov (*fide* S. Walsh). A count of 110,000 Common Grackles at Lighthouse Pt., CT 8 Nov was indicative of the regular massive movement of icterids observed here in early Nov. Also illustrating the coastal concentration effect was the tally of 40 Baltimore Orioles at Bluff Pt. 1 Sep. Pine Grosbeak reports were few and confined to the far n., except for 2 in Windsor, Berkshire, MA 7 Nov (ML et al.). Other n. finches were sparsely reported, with only a handful of each crossbill; scattered small flocks of Common Redpolls, mostly in far n. Maine; and somewhat greater numbers of Pine Siskins, which appeared to be dispersing out of the Region. Widespread Evening Grosbeak reports probably represented only the Region's small nesting population rather than an influx from Canada.

### EXOTICS

A banded Trumpeter Swan appeared in Natick, Middlesex, MA in Oct. The peak count of Monk Parakeets in Warwick, Kent, RI was 22 on 1 Aug (D. Wilson). A male European Goldfinch was photographed at a Gilmanston, Belknap, NH feeder 28 Nov (J. Stockwell).

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