

# Records of Vermont Birds

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

## FALL SEASON 1991

1 August to 30 November

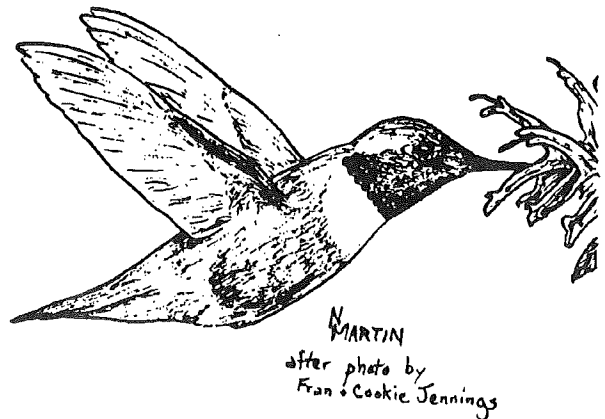
*Terry Hall, Seasonal Editor*

What may have seemed to be a routine or unexciting fall migration turned out to be one of the best responses to Records of Vermont Birds (hereafter RVB) ever in terms of species reported. The 248 species resulted from a combination of good coverage of shorebird habitat, excellent hawk watch and banding results, and a few discoveries of new or unusual species. No dramatic population shifts were noted in this reporting period. The main channel of Dead Creek within Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA) was drawn down earlier in the summer, exposing large areas of mud flats and shallow water, especially at Stone Bridge Access in Panton. This area attracted a steady stream of shorebirds and their predators through August and the first half of September.

August's weather was punctuated by Hurricane Bob which brushed through Vermont on 8/19 bringing heavy rain and wind and causing an exciting fallout of shorebirds both at Dead Creek and along the Connecticut River where 270 individuals of 9 species were reported that afternoon by Walter Ellison, a record for that area. Ruddy Turnstones and Red-necked Phalaropes were reported from both sides of the state. The rest of the month's weather was unremarkable with the ordinary succession of highs and cold fronts with thunderstorms. Severe storms on 8/28 produced high winds and hail. August saw some unusual bird sightings, including a first state record of a Selasphorus hummingbird, most probably a RUFIOUS, found in Starksboro the first week and photographed very well. Another stray, far east of normal range and possibly blown in by Hurricane Bob, was a WESTERN TANAGER found in Panton by some sharp out-of-state birders 8/22 and described very well. Other notable finds were Glossy Ibis and Great Egret at Dead Creek early in the month and Hudsonian Godwit there later. On Lake Champlain (hereafter LC) a very early Little Gull was with Bonaparte's 8/3, Caspian Terns were in the Highgate area 8/11 and an incredible 5000 plus Double-crested Cormorants were around Young Island 8/11. Away from Lake Champlain, a strange occurrence of BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE was reported from the Retreat Meadows in Brattleboro, a bird was seen there 8/8 and later found dead.

September weather was colder than normal, with above average rainfall and even a dusting of snow on Mt. Mansfield at the end of the month. The warmest period was mid-month, and in general there were no major storm systems. Birding activity centered around banding operations and hawkwatching, with banding results the most encouraging in years. According to Chris Rimmer, a record number of birds were banded at VINS with most warbler species high and the rest near or above average.

*Rufous Hummingbird*



Highlights included both Connecticut Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat banded the same day, and Orange-crowned Warbler banded late in the month. Other notable warbler records were from Bill Norse who saw a Cerulean on 9/1 in Winhall and a hybrid Brewster's type in S. Londonderry mid-month. In the Champlain Valley, 2 well-photographed Red Phalaropes were found, one by Dwight Cargill in St. Albans Bay and another on Grand Isle by David Hoag. Also in the Islands, a rare vagrant WESTERN KINGBIRD was reported in South Hero, but no documentation has been received to date.

The warm weather that characterized the summer of 1991 returned during October, most of it occurring between the 1st and 5th, and reappearing the 22nd through the 27th. Precipitation was again above normal, with heavy rains on the 6th followed by freezing weather. There was a fair amount of wind in the Burlington area, especially toward the end of the month, and the NW direction aided migrants. Again, no violent weather patterns developed and no spectacular bird observations resulted. The fall waterfowl migration began in early October and observation was disrupted as usual by the hunting season. Some highlights of the month included early Purple Sandpiper reports from Dick Lavallee on the 17th, the first of this fall's Ross' Goose sightings at Dead Creek the same day, up to 7 more Hudsonian Godwits in the Champlain Valley, and a female Ruddy Duck present in Addison for a week or so. In other areas, a Great Cormorant was well described from L. Morey on the 13th, and 2 Gray Partridges were spotted in Alburg by Pat Pratt, a real trick without snow on the ground! The first Snowy Owls of a record invasion arrived the last day of the month.

To quote the NOAA weather bulletin for November: "(the month) was ushered in by cold temperatures, but ended with unseasonably warm weather." In fact, the end of the month saw record high temps. in

Burlington and Montpelier. An intense storm front blew into the region toward mid-month with freezing rain causing treacherous conditions. The colder weather persisted to the end of the month except for a warm spell on the 19th. The normal late migrants were present, and a few early arrivals for winter were special. A family group of 6 Tundra Swans hung around Colchester early in the month, a very early Barrow's Goldeneye appeared in Burlington 11/17, possibly one of the same birds that has been there for the past few years, and to round out the waterfowl, at least 3 more Ross' Geese were found at Dead Creek by the end of the period. Raptors were also on display with Golden Eagle and Gyr Falcon both at Dead Creek. The first three of a record five Northern Hawk Owls showed this month, the others appearing later and 3 staying most of the winter. Snowy Owls flooded into the state, appearing in many locations in addition to traditional ChV areas. Finally, a Shelburne feeder produced a Red-bellied Woodpecker.

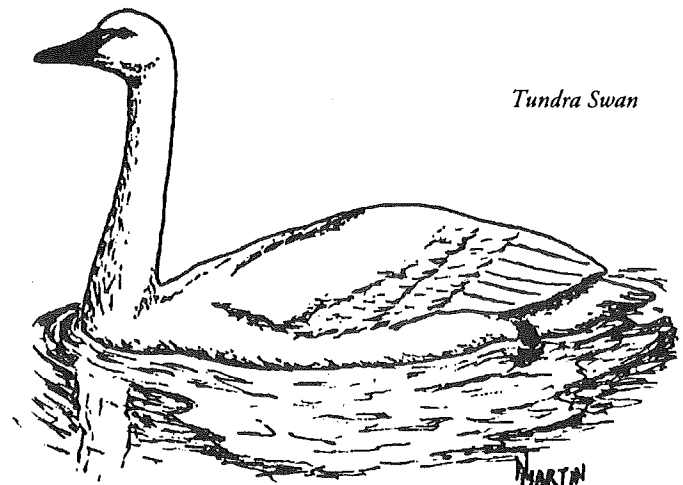
Although it did not surpass last year's total figures, this fall's Vermont Hawk Watch data was still excellent. Bill Barnard concludes that although there are problems with statistics from year to year, the data still indicate the general trends, declines or increases in populations, and therefore, can be used as a good barometer over the years. Sightings of Golden Eagles rewarded the efforts of two hawkwatchers this fall.

What follows is a breakdown of each species to record the data submitted by the many observers reporting to RVB whose contributions are greatly appreciated by your editors.

## LOONS, GREBES AND HERONS

All 9 Red-throated Loons reported this season were from LC, with an early sighting on 9/3 from Grand Isle (RBL) and a max. of 4 from the Tri-town Water Plant in Addison 11/23 (WGE,NLM). Common Loon numbers were healthy, with 366 reported statewide, 25 from inland ponds and the remainder from LC. A high count of 179 was reported from LC north of Sandbar State Park on 10/17 including 70 from North Hero and 57 near Georgia (RBL) and 35 were noted on the lake on both 11/4 (RBL) and 11/23 (NLM,WGE et al). Twelve Pied-billed Grebes reported to RVB represent a very low number, but because they are usually hidden in backwater marshy areas, many may have been overlooked. The 3 seen on Lake Fairlee 9/3 (TSA) represent the high count, and 1 off McCuen's Slang 11/11 (JAP) was the latest this fall. In contrast, 510 of the more conspicuous Horned Grebes were widespread on LC from mid-October through November, including a high count of 165 on 11/23 (NLM,WGE), and 5 birds seen on Lakes Morey (3) and Bomoseen (2) between 11/2 and 11/16 (NLM,WGE;DHC;RWP). Similar in distribution to the preceding species, Red-necked Grebe is also more abundant on LC, so that the 5 noted on "inland" ponds and lakes are of note. One on L. Fairlee 10/27 (NLM,WGE) was early, followed by one each on L. Morey 11/2 (DHC), in Waterbury 11/3 (TSA), Brookfield 11/11 (found dead - SS) and L. Bomoseen 11/16 (RWP). The remaining 32 birds on LC included a high of 10 at Tri-town Water Treatment Plant in Pantown 11/19 (SSW). The only Great Cormorant record was an imm. on L. Morey in Fairlee 10/13 (NLM,WGE). In recent years this species has appeared in the Connecticut River (hereafter CR) Valley nearly annually. No documentation has been received to support the report of a possible 3 imm. Greats on Young Island, LC among 4,000 to 5,000 Double-crested Cormorants 8/11. Double-crested Cormorant numbers continue to expand alarmingly, as more and more nest sites are occupied on LC islands. Most reports to RVB were from the ChV except for the 20 plus in Newport in August (STH) and 1 in

Marlboro 9/22 (JPN). Observers conservatively estimated 6000 birds staying on northern LC 8/11 with 5000 on Young I. alone (RBL,DLC,GEHa), and there was a late report of 3 from Addison 11/23 (NLM,WGE). The 7 American Bittern reports ranged statewide from Pomfret 8/18 (GF) to Ferrisburgh 8/26 (JID,MCD), Rutland 8/28 (CJF), Shoreham 9/2 (SSW), Newport 9/16,21 (STH), Quechee 9/26 (WGE) and Bridport as late as 10/2 (FAP), all single birds. Reports of a healthy 264 Great Blue Heron from all corners of the state include, as usual, a high count of 64 from DCWMA 8/4 (WGE,NLM) and late observations of 3 from Clarendon 11/29 (CJF), 1 the same date in Vergennes (SSW) and 2 in Orwell 11/30 (RWP). The 3 Great Egret sightings were 1 bird in Addison 8/3 (PBr) and 8/4 (WGE,NLM), 1 present for several days in mid-August in S. Londonderry (JHo fide WJN) and 1 in Orwell 10/6 (BAB). The Cattle Egret population peaked at 50 plus birds on Grand Isle between 8/1 and 9/11, and dwindled to 4 or 5 as late as 9/19 (DJH). One egret in Bridport on 9/20 (SSW) was probably in passage from Young I. Green-backed Heron was reported widely by fifteen observers, a total of 35 individuals including 6 from Proctor 8/20 (RWP) and the only October bird, one from Tinmouth 10/16 (CJF). At least 4 and possibly as many as 8 Black-crowned Night-Herons were observed at DCWMA, with 4 there 8/24 (RWP) and 1 at Whitney Creek, Addison as late as 9/28 (NLM,WGE et al). Two Glossy Ibis were seen at DCWMA from the end of July into early August (JAP;WGE,NLM;GEHa,DLC) and were the only ones reported to RVB this fall.



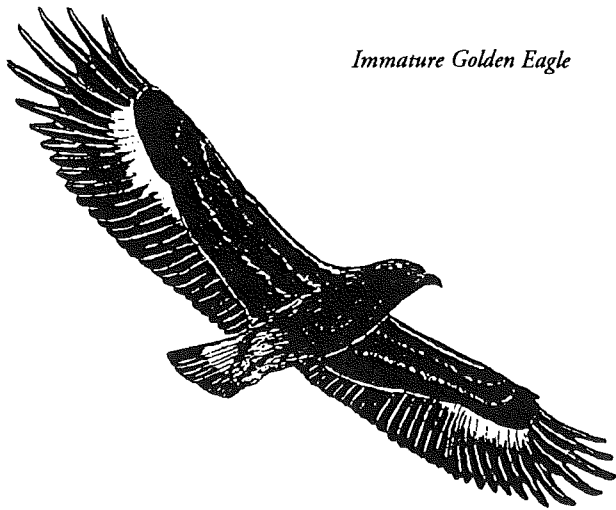
*Tundra Swan*

## WATERFOWL

A family group of 6 (2 ad., 4 imm.) Tundra Swans were seen for two weeks the first half of October off the Winooski River Delta Park (hereafter WRDP) in Colchester (GMW,EBW;CM;RM,TH). Snow Goose numbers peaked during the second and third weeks of October at DCWMA with estimates of 3000 to 5000 on 10/12,13 (CJF;MBN) and 6000 there 10/20 (WGE,NLM et al). The earliest sightings were of 50 there 9/29 (BRJ) and 23 in Mendon 9/30 (NLM,WGE,JPM,JBM), with 500-1000 persisting at DCWMA through the end of the period (MBN;JAP;SSW). Total counts are impossible to determine because of duplicate reports of the same birds at DCWMA and no way of accurately measuring the turnover of individual flocks there, but with nearly 1400 seen or heard away from Dead Creek, it would be safe to estimate that upwards of 10,000 snows passed through Vermont this fall. In a predictable repeat of last fall,

Ross' Goose was picked out of the flocks of Snows at DCWMA in small numbers. The first, in ad. plumage 10/17, was followed a month later by 3 adults 11/21 (JAP). One still there 11/30 was seen by many and photographed (RWP et al.). The only Brant reports are of 1 imm. in Brattleboro 10/23,24 (WDN), and an ad. on Shelburne Bay 11/2 (GEHa). Birders reported nearly 10,000 Canada Geese outside of the ChV, and another 6000 to 8000 were counted at DCWMA and nearby areas. Highest counts included 5500 on 10/8 from the ChV state waterfowl survey (WJC), 3800 from North Ferrisburgh 10/12 (JID,MCD), 2716 from Dorset the same date (EFG) as well as "13 flocks" from Tinmouth (CJF), and 3000 the next day, 10/13 at DCWMA (TSA). Early migrants appeared in Randolph, a "large flock" on 9/11 (EWC,MCC), 22 in West Bolton 9/21 (MC) and 39 the same day at Mt. Hunger, Waterbury (EK). Of note was an individual "Richardson's" form of Canada Goose seen at Quechee in mid-November (NLM,WGE) one of a small pale central Canadian arctic population east of its normal range. Surveys accounted for the highest counts of Wood Duck including 1062 by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (hereafter VFWD) on 10/8 (WJC) and 1825 at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR) from August through October (CS,RAZ). Birders added another 400 sightings statewide with several into November in West Bolton (MC), Dorset (EFG), Quechee (WGE) and the latest in Wallingford 11/8 (PMB). Of the 1900 Green-winged Teal tallied, nearly half were counted in the ChV 10/8 (WJC), 817 were at MNWR August through October (CS,RAZ), and of the remainder, 80 in Whitney Creek Marsh 10/12 (CJF) and one as late as 11/26 at DCWMA (WGE) are of note. Numbers of American Black Duck peaked in October as 2970 were tallied in the ChV on 10/8 (WJC) and estimates of 4411 at MNWR were reported to RVB that month (CS,RAZ). An additional 830 birds for the period included a high of 300 at Vernon 11/24 (DHC,WGE,NLM). In contrast, nearly 13,600 Mallards reported were nearly all accounted for either in the state survey on 10/8 with 7500 in the ChV (WJC) or at MNWR with 4720 estimated in October (CS,RAZ). At least 342 ducks were present well into November in several locations statewide (SSW;JAP;MBN;DJH;EFG;WGE,NLM;TSA). Northern Pintail was scarce with only 121 reported this fall, most from the ChV including a single high count of 13 from DCWMA 10/14 (WGE,NLM). A few were seen into November, the latest report being 4 on Grand Isle from 11/9 to 21 (DJH). Blue-winged Teal counts at MNWR were 152 in August, 160 in September and 25 for October (CS,RAZ). Birders at DCWMA reported a total of 190 more through September (JRA;WGE,NLM;jMN;JAP;SSW;RWP). Less than 100 were seen elsewhere including 12 in Manchester 8/29 to 9/9 (BWP), 10 at Herrick's Cove (hereafter HC) 9/12 (WJN), and the latest report of 4 on Berlin Pond 10/26 (TSA). The only Northern Shovelers reported were from Sandbar Wildlife Management Area (hereafter SWMA) with 8 there 10/9 (WGE,NLM) and 4 remaining 10/19 (FAP). Gadwall reports of 88 individuals were normal, all from the Champlain basin with the exception of one bird from Springweather Nature Area in Weathersfield 9/12 (WJN), and include a high of 24 from SWMA 10/19 (FAP), and "several" as late as 11/16 in North Hero (TH,RM). To round out the dabblers, American Wigeon counts peaked in October at MNWR, where 410 were estimated (CS,RAZ), and 130 more were counted in the ChV 10/8 (WJC,VFWD). The remaining few reported include 15+ on Grand Isle 8/3 to 9/29 (DJH) and 2 late birds in South Hero 11/16 (TH,RM). Ring-necked Duck didn't appear in the state until early October when they stayed in numbers. Over 9300 birds were estimated at MNWR, but only handfuls were reported elsewhere by birders. High counts included 18 on

Berlin Pond 10/20 (TSA), 25 in Brandon 10/26 (JAP) and 32 on Stiles Pond, Sheffield 11/7 (PFW,SAW) with the latest report being 1 bird on LC off Addison 11/23 (WGE). The largest flock of Greater Scaup was in Alburg on LC with 1300 birds estimated 10/17 increasing to 2700 by 11/4 (RBL). The only other reports included 17 off Burlington 11/17, 50 Greater plus another 90 scaup sp. off the Tri-Town Treatment Plant in Panton 11/23 (WGE,NLM), and a few other scattered small flocks bringing the total count to 2900 birds in all. More common in salt water, only 45 Lesser Scaup were reported including 16 on Berlin Pond 10/20 (TSA), 15 in Newport 10/25 (FAP) and 3 on Dewey's Pond, Quechee 11/11 (WGE). Of the 16 Oldsquaw tallied, 12 were seen in October with 5 off North Hero 10/17 (RBL) and 7 in Panton 10/27 (SAP,RBL). The other 4 were scattered individuals on L. Morey 11/3, Dewey's Pond 11/11 (WGE,NLM), Berlin Pond 11/11 (TSA) and one that remained in Shelburne Bay the entire month of November (GEHa). Black Scoter was more numerous inland from LC, the largest flock of 150 found on L. Bomoseen 10/14 (WGE,NLM), 13 on Berlin Pond (TSA) and 65 on Tinmouth Pond 10/20 (CJF). A late sighting of 26 on LC at Addison 11/23 (WGE,NLM) brought the fall total to 318 birds. Normally less numerous, only 24 Surf Scoters were tallied including an early and high count of 9 in Quechee 9/26 (WGE), 3 in Newport 10/25 (FAP) and a dwindling flock on Dewey's Pond in November with one bird present as late as 11/22 (WGE,NLM). White-winged Scoter often outnumbers the other two scoter species, but this fall only 45 were reported to RVB in small scattered flocks. Notable highs were 8 birds on both LC at the Tri-town Water Plant 10/20 (WGE,NLM) and at Newport 10/25 (FAP), 7 on L. Bomoseen 11/7 (SSW) and the latest seen were 4 in Burlington 11/17 (WGE,NLM). In the post-breeding period Common Goldeneye numbers build up in October on the larger lakes and ponds so that by November the highest counts are made. This fall a total of 1390 birds included an October estimate at MNWR of 350 (CS,RAZ) and November counts of 18 on L. Bomoseen 11/9, 260 in the Burlington area 11/17 (WGE,NLM), 90 off McCuen Slang 11/21 (JAP), 48 in the CR at Vernon 11/24 and birds on LC through the end of the period (JAP;WGE,NLM). An early male Barrow's Goldeneye showed up at the Burlington waterfront on 11/17 (WGE,NLM) most likely the same bird that has been there for several winters. The two largest flocks of Buffleheads were away from LC; of 92 birds in all, 22 were in Quechee 11/4 (WGE) and 30 on L. Dunmore 11/8 (CMO), with smaller groups reported statewide through the end of the period, the last individual in Bridport 11/30 (JAP). Wildlife biologists estimated 62 Hooded Mergansers at MNWR in October (CS,RAZ), the high count in a total 381 birds this fall. Other good flocks were of 45 at McCuen's Slang 11/12 (JAP), 44 in Vernon along the CR 11/24 (DHC,WGE,NLM) and the latest for the period 43 on East Creek, Orwell 11/30 (RWP). Large flocks of Common Mergansers gathered on LC in late November, but earlier reports included in a total 1149 birds were of 45 at WRDP 8/3 (TSA), 19 in Woodstock 8/15 (JMN), 84 on Waterbury Reservoir 9/24 (EK) and 120 in Shelburne with 96 in Ferrisburgh 10/27 (RBL). Flocks of 200 or more were in the McCuen Slang area 11/21 and Bridport 11/30 (JAP). Although a total 74 Red-breasted Mergansers was reported, this editor feels there was duplication in a group of 11-40 that stayed on LC near the Tri-town Water Plant from 10/20 to 11/21 (WGE,NLM;JAP;RBL,SAP), and a few in Grand Isle from 8/16 to 10/27 (DJH). An ad. f. Ruddy Duck was present on Whitney Creek, Addison from 10/19 (FAP) and 10/20 (NLM,WGE) to 10/30 (JAP).



*Immature Golden Eagle*

## VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

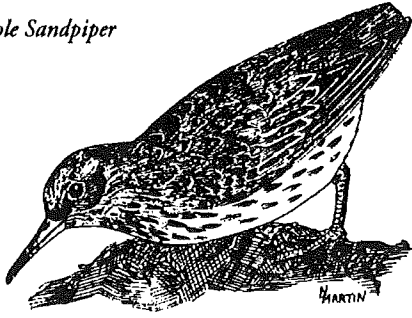
Turkey Vulture continues to be a common sight in late summer and fall, as 331 were reported, 184 from Vermont Hawk Watches (hereafter VHW) and another 147 from birders elsewhere. Seventeen in Brattleboro 8/30 (WJN), 10 at E. Slang 9/2 (JID,MCD), 12 in Addison 9/9 (JAP) and another 17 in Salisbury 10/2 (SSW) were all good counts prior to the main migration, as the last birds were seen over White River Junction (hereafter WRJ) 10/21 (DHC) and Brandon 10/24 (SSW). Osprey was well reported again with 164 from VHW and an additional 49 all in singles or pairs throughout the state. The high daily count was 10 on both 9/30 and 10/7 from VHW, with only one bird into November, over L. Bomoseen 11/9 (WGE,NLM). About the same number of Bald Eagles were seen, 9 from VHW all as singles trickling by from 9/8 to 11/9, with an additional 17 spotted elsewhere. The only "concentration" was at DCWMA where several observers reported at least two imm. together with an ad. or two during the period (WGE,NLM;JMN,EFG; JAP;SSW;RBL; et al), and the latest sighting was of 1 in Tunbridge 11/30 (MJC). Nearly 180 Northern Harriers reported to RVB include 79 from VHW with an additional 100 in scattered reports. Typically, DCWMA offered the highest concentrations, with 10 there 10/20 (WGE,NLM) and 4 on 10/23 (CJF) and 10/30 (JAP). From VHW data, Brownell Mt. recorded a high of 15 for the fall (PCR). The bulk of Sharp-shinned Hawk records came from VHW, and half of those were counted over Putney Mt. with a very high 441 for the period (JJC et al.). An additional 50 birds away from VHW sites probably included many non-migrants as most were single birds, but the total for fall was a very respectable 936. Cooper's Hawk counts remained steady, with 74 reported from VHW and 24 additional sightings which included a high of 5 from Rockingham 9/12 (WJN). Again, Putney Mt. recorded the most for the period, a high of 43 (JJC et al.). Only 26 Northern Goshawks were tallied, 20 from VHW including 7 from Putney Mt. (JJC et al.), and 6 single birds from scattered interior forested areas. Down a bit from last season, Red-shouldered Hawk was seen 43 times from VHW, 15 alone from Putney Mt. (JJC et al.), and 9 times elsewhere. The latest was one bird at Spencer's Cabin, Winhall on 11/4 (WJN). An impressive 737 Broad-winged Hawks were counted from Brownell Mt. this fall (PCR), part of the total 2081 from VHW. Thirty

one more sightings included a high of 16 from Grand Isle 8/20 (DJH) and a late bird from Mt. Philo 10/26 (JAP), bringing the fall total to 2117, as well as a rewarding 2.59 hawks per observer hour (hereafter p.o.h.) at VHW. Just slightly higher numbers of Red-tailed Hawks were tallied from VHW, 2113 in total and 2.63 birds p.o.h. with a peak in the third week of October including a season daily high of 324 over WRJ 10/20 (DHC). Of note was a Red-tail of a very dark morph rarely seen in the east, in Orwell 10/14 (WGE,NLM). Nearly 140 more birds were seen, most in the ChV including 51 at DCWMA 10/20 (WGE,NLM). An early Rough-legged Hawk over Brownell Mt. 10/9 (PCR) was the first of 14 from VHW before November, and another 66 birds were counted as they gathered in the ChV or moved south through the state away from hawk watches. A daily high of 18 at DCWMA on 11/30 (RWP) was noteworthy. Most exciting were 3 Golden Eagle sightings this fall; 2 at VHW and 1 at DCWMA. The first was an imm. at S. Londonderry 10/23 (WJN), then an ad. over Brownell Mt., Williston 10/29 (PCR). The third was an imm. found at DCWMA 11/25 (WRB) and seen there through 11/30 (WGE;GEHa,DLC;SSW;RWP;m.ob.). Very good numbers of American Kestrel included 493 from VHW, with a high ct. of 49 from Brownell Mt. alone 10/7 (PCR). Seventy-two more were seen by other observers through the period, one bird each at Addison (MBN) and Shoreham (RWP) as late as 11/30. Up from previous years, Merlin was recorded 23 times from VHW, and 12 more were tallied for a very respectable 35 in all. Putney Mt. had 14 for the period, including a one day high of 4 on 10/7 (WB). Eleven Peregrine Falcons, all single birds, trickled by VHW from 9/11 through 10/19, but most significantly, 23 more were widespread statewide and included 2 to 3 at DCWMA from 8/12 through at least 10/20 (JAP;MBN; WGE,NLM;GEHa;SSW;EFG,JMN), and single birds at Newport 8/26 (STH), Marshfield 9/2 (JJA), S. Royalton 9/9 (BM), Franklin 9/17 (PJM,CNM), South Hero 9/27 (DJH) and Dorset 10/12 (EFG). Perhaps 2 early Gyrfalcons showed up this fall, a gray bird at DCWMA from 11/4 through 11/25 (WJC;WGE,NLM;WRB), and another in Weybridge 11/18 (JAP), possibly the same bird.

## GAMEBIRDS THROUGH RAILS

Two Gray Partridge in Alburg 10/20 (FAP) was the only report of this species. The same count of Ring-necked Pheasant came in from two separate locales, one from Tinmouth 11/10 and another the next day in Danby (CJF) both likely released by a local game farm. The only sighting of Spruce Grouse was from the Yellow Bogs area as an out-of-state birder saw one fly across "Three-toed Road" 11/9 (fide GEHa). An average 56 Ruffed Grouse total includes highs of 12 in Reading 8/20 (FMH,GEH) and 2-5 present in Sheffield 10/14 through 11/12 (PFW,SAW). Several large Wild Turkey flocks totalling 173 birds included 6 ad. with 13 juv. in W. Arlington 9/2 (NS), 30 in Westminster 9/17 and 18 at Athens 9/23 (AMD), 25 from Tinmouth 10/16 and 11/9 (CJF), 15 from E. Barnard 10/30 (LD) and finally 14 in New Haven 11/6 (JRA). Searchers found 11 Virginia Rails with a high of 6 in the West Rutland Marsh (hereafter WRM) 8/3 (WGE,NLM), a bird killed by a cat in Hartland 10/1 (JT) and 2 lingering rails on Grand Isle 10/25 (DJH). The only Sora report was of 2 juv. in Brown's Marsh, Grand Isle 9/6 and 9 (DJH). Common Moorhen sightings were mostly in August with 3 in West Rutland 8/3 (WGE,NLM), 10 at S. Slang, Ferrisburgh 8/22 and 8/27 (JRA;JID,MCD), except for one late bird along the Barton River Rd. 10/4 (PFW,SAW), a total of 14. Two reports of American Coots included 15 on L. Bomoseen 10/14 (WGE,NLM) and 2 at McCuen Slang, Addison 11/14 (JAP).

Purple Sandpiper



## WADERS

A good showing of Black-bellied Plover produced 25 in all, with highs of 7 at DCWMA 8/9 (JAP), 6 from St. Albans Bay 10/17 (RBL), one from the Ompompanoosuc R. at Norwich 8/19 (NLM, WGE) and a late bird at DCWMA 11/14 (JAP). In contrast, only 2 Lesser Golden-Plovers were seen, 1 at Stone Bridge, DCWMA 9/13 (JAP) and the second on Grand Isle 10/18 (RBL). An excellent count of 183 Semipalmated Plovers was concentrated in the ChV with the exception of 24 fallout birds on the Ompompanoosuc R. in Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM), a very good number for that area. Highs in the ChV included 19 at Highgate Springs 8/11 (RBL, GEHa, DLC), 30 at DCWMA 8/19 and 8/28 (JAP) and the last reported were 2 from Winooski River Delta Park (hereafter WRDP) 9/1 (TSA). The 502 Killdeer reported was average with scattered flocks virtually statewide including highs of 52 in Addison 8/4 (WGE, NLM), 32 at Highgate Springs 5/6 (CCR), nearly 60 on Grand Isle in August (DJH) and 80 in New Haven 9/16 (JAP). One hundred thirteen Greater Yellowlegs, normal for the period, included 6 from the Ompompanoosuc R. at Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM) with the rest from the ChV. High counts were 10 at DCWMA 8/9 and 25 there 8/19 (JAP). Several late reports into October were 6 from Shelburne Bay 10/13 (TSA) and 10/27 (RBL, SAP), with up to 6 on Grand Isle into early November (DJH). Lesser Yellowlegs was more numerous as nearly 400 birds were reported, again primarily from the ChV except for 30 in Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM). Largest flocks were at DCWMA with 72 on 8/4 (WGE, NLM), 47 on 8/7 (JID, MCD) and 100 there 8/12 (JAP). One or two lingered in Tinmouth from 10/16 through 11/1 (CJF) for the late report. An excellent total of 46 Solitary Sandpipers was composed of sightings of 1-3 individuals from scattered locations except for up to 8 birds at DCWMA in early August (WGE, NLM; JAP) and late singles from Grand Isle (DJH) and Middlebury (JAP) on 10/2. Spotted Sandpiper was reported by 11 parties, a total of 51 birds with the only numbers found at DCWMA in August - 15 there 8/4 (WGE, NLM), 11 on 8/7 (JID, MCD) and 8 still present 8/16 (JRA). The only October report was of one bird in Barnard 10/8 and 12 (JNF). A migrating flock of 35 Upland Sandpipers was found in Addison 8/9, but only 5 remained there 8/12 (JAP). One more individual was reported in S. Londonderry 9/13 (WJN). At least 8 Hudsonian Godwits is remarkable and includes 1 at DCWMA 8/28 (JAP), 2 there 10/18 (WGE, NLM) and 5 more on 10/23 divided between Burlington (2) (GEB) and Charlotte (3) (PRW). Of the 18 Ruddy Turnstones reported, 1 from the Ompompanoosuc R. at Norwich 8/9 was the first in that part of the state for the observers (WGE, NLM). The remainder from the ChV included a high of 8 at DCWMA the same date (JAP) and 2 from Milton as late as 9/5 (RBL). Sanderling numbers were sparse, as only 11 reports included 6 from Highgate Springs on 8/14 (CCR). By far the most numerous shorebird

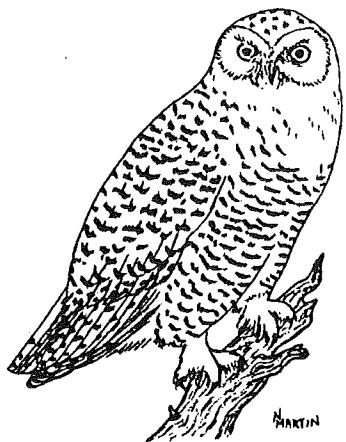
to pass through the state, over 1050 Semipalmated Sandpipers were counted and were all in the ChV except for 150 in Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM) part of the fallout phenomenon mentioned earlier in connection with Hurricane Bob. Highs in the ChV, DCWMA specifically, were also on the same date, with at least 300 there 8/19 and 1 persisting until 9/14, the only September sighting (JAP). A good flight of Least Sandpiper totalling 425 birds peaked in mid-August with nearly 50 on northern LC shores 8/11 (RBL, GEHa, DLC), 50 in Norwich (WGE, NLM) and 150 at DCWMA on 8/19 and as many as 20 still there into early September (JAP). Twenty one White-rumped Sandpipers included an early ad. at DCWMA 8/4 (WGE, NLM), the high count of 13 from the Missisquoi R. delta 8/22 (CCR) and a late bird on Grand Isle 10/17 (RBL). Normally very scarce, 3 Baird's Sandpipers were special; one each in S. Londonderry (WJN) and Highgate Springs (CCR) on 8/14, and the last one at DCWMA 8/19 (JAP). Pectoral Sandpiper was found in above average numbers with 278 reported, 59 from Highgate Springs as early as 8/11 (RBL, GEHa, DLC), 15 from Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM) and 13 late birds in Charlotte 10/22 (PRW). The first fall Purple Sandpiper report since 1988 was of 4 early birds on North Hero 10/17 (RBL). Another late shorebird, Dunlin was first observed on South Hero 9/20 (DJH), peaked at DCWMA with 12 on 10/20 (WGE, NLM) and with 1-4 at Grand Isle until 10/27 (DJH) totalled 34 in all. A single Stilt Sandpiper at Highgate Springs 8/6 (CCR) was the only report received by RVB. Eleven confirmed reports of Short-billed Dowitcher included 9 at St. Albans Bay 8/6 (CCR) and were supplemented by 10 more dowitcher sp., probably short-bills. A late bird in St. Albans 10/17 (RBL) could have been either species. A total of 37 Common Snipe was reported; the high was 18 at Highgate Springs 8/14 (CCR) with 2-8 present in Tinmouth Channel 10/15-25 (CJF) and a late bird there 11/11 and 12 (PMB). American Woodcock reports, of pairs or singles, totalled 15 with more from the ChV, and mostly October birds as late as 2 in Danby 10/24 (CJF). All three phalarope species were reported with Wilson's outnumbered by Red-necked 9 to 11. Wilson's Phalarope was found only at DCWMA and Highgate Springs in early to mid-August (WGE, NLM; AMG; JAP; CCR; RBL, GEHa, DLC), whereas 2 Red-necked Phalaropes were seen with the remarkable group of shorebirds at Norwich 8/19 (WGE, NLM) in addition to 9 in the ChV. Three well-documented Red Phalaropes included 1 photographed at St. Albans Bay 9/24 (DLC), another also photographed in South Hero 9/29 (DJH) and the third, a well-described juv. on L. Bomoseen 11/9 (WGE, NLM).

## GULLS AND TERNS

Little Gull continues to show up earlier and earlier, as it associates with the next species, and so one bird at North Hero 8/3 (RBL) was not unexpected. A total of 10 birds was reported, all scattered individuals except for 2 in Shelburne Bay 10/27 (RBL, SAP). At least one imm. stayed in Button Bay through the end of the period and may have been the same bird reported later on the Ferrisburgh Christmas Count (WGE). Bonaparte's Gull numbers appeared down somewhat, a total of 6111 with the largest flock about 1700 at Grand Isle 8/29 (RBL, DKL), although 850 were found there as early as 8/1 (RBL) and as many as 125 stayed through the end of the period (DJH). Of note were a few birds on L. Pinneo, Quechee, 3 on 10/31 and 1 on 11/22 (WGE). The total of 2858 Ring-billed Gulls seems low considering how many appear in farm fields in the ChV, but the largest flocks reported were of 730 at DCWMA on 8/31 (WGE, NLM), 360 from Bristol 10/15 (JRA) and at least 250 in Newport for the period (STH). More Herring Gulls were reported from the CR than the rest of the state,

with 210 in WRJ on 11/10, and 150 in Vernon two weeks later (DHC,WGE,NLM), then 20 in the Newport area for the period (STH) plus a mere handful elsewhere for a total of 408 birds. A single Iceland Gull appeared at the Brattleboro landfill 11/24 (WGE,NLM,DHC) for the only report this fall. Great Black-backed Gull numbers continued to increase both along LC and the CR, with reports of 252 birds. The largest counts were 50 in Hartford (DHC), 40 in WRJ (WGE,NLM) and 45 in Vernon (DHC,WGE,NLM) all in November, most of the rest on LC as the species built up to larger winter numbers. This fall's BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE was a very early imm. seen at the Retreat Meadows, Brattleboro 8/8 and later found dead (DM). Examination of the specimen (now at VINS) revealed extreme emaciation. Two Caspian Terns spent time near MNWR in mid-August, as 2 were seen at Highgate Springs 8/1 (RBL,DLC,GEHa). One at North Hero two days later (MSL) was thought to be one of that pr. Of the 56 Common Terns reported, 40 at Highgate Springs on 8/6 was the high (CCR) and late reports of interest include 5 in Brattleboro 9/24 (WJN) and 1 on LC in Addison 9/28 (WGE,NLM et al). A higher than average 43 Black Terns were seen, all on the upper LC shore near MNWR with the high count 16 at Highgate Springs 8/6 (CCR); none were seen after 8/15.

*Snowy Owl*



## DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

There was nothing noteworthy about the 90 Rock Doves reported. Mourning Dove continues to prosper, as 17 observers reported 472 birds statewide with highs of 37 for the period in Sheffield (PFW,SAW), 42 in WRJ 9/22 and 65 in Shoreham 10/14 (WGE,NLM). The three Black-billed Cuckoos were 1 at Bragdon Nature Preserve (hereafter BNP), Woodstock 8/6 (NLM,WGE), an ad. feeding yg. in Braintree 8/19 (RAM) and the last in Woodstock 9/8 (JMN). A single Yellow-billed Cuckoo was late on Grand Isle 10/9 (WGE,NLM). An enticing report of a possible Barn Owl comes from Danby where an individual was heard and seen at a distance through August (HEK). Two or three Eastern Screech-Owl reports include 1 on Grand Isle for the period (RBL) and birds at Brandon 10/27 and 11/10 (same bird?) (SSW). Not prominent at this season, 11 Great Horned Owl sightings are average with a pr. in Dorset, present from 9/1 through 10/4, as a high (EFG). An unprecedented invasion of Snowy Owls began on 10/31 with 1 in Williston (TGC) and continued through November with a total of at least 30 birds reported by 27 observers. An accurate total is difficult to obtain because many birds in the ChV were seen repeatedly by many. Reports came in from places such as W. Swanton (DJH), Fairfax (ECC,VRC), Whiting (JAP,SSW), Thetford (RCH), Shrewsbury Ctr. (MPY,DS), Brookfield (DMc), Morgan (BrM),

Dummerston (AT) and Sharon (JR) with the highest totals of 4 each in Burlington (JAP) and DCWMA or nearby (JID,MCD;WGE,NLM; MBN;JAP;SSW;SR,MP;WRB;MOM). Of special note is the fact that at least 7 birds, all young-of-the-year, were found emaciated or injured and were brought to VINS for rehabilitation, but none survived. Also "invading" were 3 Northern Hawk Owls; the first in Charlotte 11/12 (DCD,LJE) did not stay around, but 1 in Westford 11/23 (DH) and another in Craftsbury 11/26 (FO,JW) stayed all winter and were observed by many. The 15 Barred Owl reports were widespread throughout "interior" Vermont with pairs reported from Hartland 8/28 to 11/1 (WGE,NLM), Reading 9/9 (FMH,GEH) and Waterbury Ctr. 9/24 (EK). Short-eared Owl was reported twice, 1 bird from W. Swanton mid-September (DJH) and 4 in Charlotte 11/17 (WGE,NLM). The only Northern Saw-whet Owl was one in Marlboro on 11/4 (JPN). Apparently declining as a breeder in the state, Common Nighthawk was reported 61 times, mainly as they passed through the CR valley in August with a high of 30 from WRJ 8/23 (WGE,NLM).

## SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The nearly 45 Chimney Swifts reported are way below average, with a high of only 8 in Woodstock on 8/8 (CRP), but a very late bird on the Putney Mt. hawk watch on 10/20 (JJC) was notable. Ruby-throated Hummingbird was very widespread; a total 75 birds reported by 22 observers included a high of 12 at a feeder in Woodstock 8/22 (ALH), 11 in the S. Londonderry/Winhall area from 8/1 to 8/18 (WJN) and said to be "common" around Westminster West in August (AMD). Some late birds lingered into October with one each on 10/10 at the Winhall hawk lookout (hereafter HL) (WJN) and in Reading (JF), and another on Grand Isle 10/18 (RBL). Outstanding was a hummingbird photographed in Starksboro, a male that stayed between 8/1 and 8/9 (FJ,CJ) and was certainly in the genus Selasphorus, most probably a RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD. This will be a new state record when specific identification is confirmed by experts. Down in numbers somewhat, the 56 Belted Kingfishers were nearly all pairs or singles except for 4-5 along Lewis Creek between 8/16 and 26 (JID,MCD), 3 in Dorset to 8/13 (EFG), Montpelier 9/10 (TSA) and Marlboro until 10/9 (JPN) and birds in November were 1 in Brandon 11/2 (SSW), 2 on Grand Isle 11/23 (DJH) and 1 in Brattleboro 11/24 (WGE,NLM). The only Red-headed Woodpecker reported was an imm. at the Winhall HL 9/22 (WJN). A male Red-bellied Woodpecker was in Shelburne at a feeder in November (ML). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers trickled through the central part of the state as 18 birds were reported in singles or pairs from Dorset on 8/1 (EFG) to Marlboro as late as 10/14 (JPN). Both residents, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers were reported in the same numbers - 38 to 40 total, and most for the whole period with little movement detected. High count for Downy was 6 in Addison 11/23 (WGE,NLM) and for Hairy was 5 in Winhall through 10/21 (WJN). VINS handled 3 Downys and 5 Hairys at the banding station (CCR et al.). Two Black-backed Woodpeckers were seen in the Northeast Kingdom, one in Victory Bog 8/12 (NM) and another at Moose Bog 11/9 (GEHa). Still apparently down in numbers, Northern Flicker was counted 80 times, mainly in passage with a high of 8 in Westminster West 9/26 (AMD) and late birds in Middlebury 11/23 (JAP) and Addison the same day (WGE,NLM). Most of the 23 observers reported 1 or 2 Pileated Woodpeckers late in the period for a total 53 birds statewide. High counts were up to 5 in the Winhall area in September (WJN) and 12 noted by 2 observers from various locations during the period (WGE,NLM).

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

All 14 Olive-sided Flycatchers, an early migrant, were August birds, including 7 sightings in S. Londonderry between 8/8 and 8/29, the latest date (WJN). Eastern Wood-Pewee was widespread, a total of 34 with a high of 6 along Lewis Creek 8/16 (JID,MCD), 2 were banded at VINS 8/29 and 9/17 (CCR et al.), and a very late bird was at the Winhall HL 10/10 (WJN). Seven migrant Yellow-bellied Flycatchers included 1 on Grand Isle 8/16 (DJH), 1 in Middlebury 8/18 (JAP), another in S. Londonderry 8/23 (WJN) and 4 banded at VINS between 8/23 and 9/11 (CCR et al.). The only Alder Flycatcher report was of 1 or 2 present in Dorset 8/1 through 10 (EFG). Equally few Willow Flycatchers were seen, 1 in Reading 8/10 (FMH) and another at HC 8/17 (WJN). Thirty-six "Traill's" type flycatchers were banded at VINS. Least Flycatcher was also numerous, 5 of the 6 total observed were at S. Duxbury 8/22 (FAP), and 23 more were banded at VINS between 8/7 and 9/4. Cautious observers reported 2 Empidonax sp. as well. The total of 133 Eastern Phoebes included 53 banded at VINS, but also highs of up to 6 or 7 at Berlin Pond (TSA), Woodstock (JMN), Dorset (EFG) and Manchester (BWP), and a very late bird in Woodstock from 11/28 to 12/1 (CRP). Thirteen Great Crested Flycatchers included 1 heard calling in Randolph 8/15 (EWC,MCC), the high of 5 along Lewis Creek 8/16 (JID,MCD), 3 banded at VINS between 8/9 and 27 and a late report of 1 at BNP, Woodstock on 9/17 (WGE,NLM,MSL). A vagrant Western Kingbird reported at South Hero 9/15 (RO fide MRP), is still awaiting further documentation as one of very few state records of this species. Eastern Kingbird numbers were concentrated in the ChV, as a total 124 sightings included 15 from Addison 8/4 (WGE,NLM), 21 from Ferrisburgh (JRA) and 30 plus from DCWMA 8/22 (EFG,JMN), with late reports from S. Londonderry 9/13 and Winhall 9/17 (WJN). Horned Lark flocks peaked in November with a total 379 birds reported, including a high of 130 at DCWMA 11/23 (WGE,NLM), 58 in Vernon 11/24 (DHC,WGE,NLM) and 20 in Addison 11/25 (JAP). Alarming, no reports of Purple Martin were received by RVB this fall. Over 4000 Tree Swallows is a good total, but probably includes some duplication at DCWMA where they staged in large numbers the third week in August. A high of at least 200 there on 8/21 (MBN), as well as 500 at Cedar Lake, Monkton on 8/22 (JID,MCD) and another 500 at DCWMA 8/30 (JAP) were noteworthy, as were 2 late birds in New Haven 10/22 (JAP). Between 30 and 50 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were counted at DCWMA on 8/19,30 and 9/4 (JAP), the only report received. A very good showing for Bank Swallow, with 2145 birds reported, all from DCWMA between 8/5, with the high of 1500 (FAP), and a very late bird on 9/27 (WGE,SJS). Cliff Swallow was most numerous at DCWMA as well, although 1 in Winhall 8/13 and 3 at HC 8/17 (WJN) were of interest. Of the 29 total birds reported, 10 at DCWMA 8/30 was high, and a single bird was with the mixed flock there 9/27 for another late record (WGE,SJS). Relatively few Barn Swallows were noted (just missed?), a total of only 289 which included a high of 100 at DCWMA the beginning of Sept. (FAP), scattered sparse groups nearly statewide, and some late sightings at DCWMA 9/28,29 and 10/13 (WGE,NLM et al.;JRA;FAP).

## JAYS THROUGH WRENS

Gray Jay was noted twice this fall; 2 from Yellow Bogs, Ferdinand 11/9 (GEHa) and 4 from Brunswick the same date (SSp). Most of the 295 Blue Jays were resident birds, but the 50 at Mt. Holly 10/19 (WJN) were in

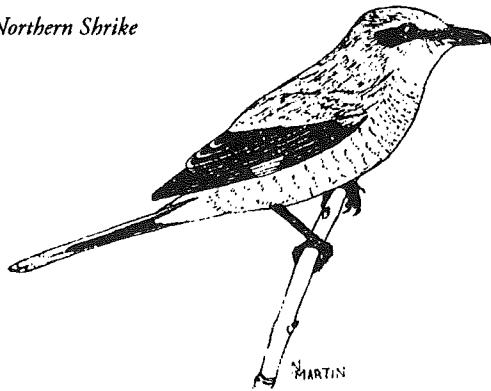
passage and 24 birds handled at VINS were of note, as were the 55 seen at DCWMA 9/27 for a high count (WGE,NLM). Several thousand American Crows were in passage through the ChV between 10/17 and 10/28 (RWP;JID,MCD;PCR) and accounted for most of the reports received. Common Raven continues to be well-reported in small groups statewide, with a notable high of 22 in Brattleboro 10/7 (WDN), part of a total 93 birds. Most of the 331 Black-capped Chickadees reported were in groups of up to 20 within an area for the entire period, but with notable highs of 38 in Hartland 9/21 (WGE), 25 in Reading 10/2 (FMH,GEH), and 58 banded at VINS. Boreal Chickadee sightings were restricted to the Northeast Kingdom, with 2 in Sheffield 8/9 and 11/18-22 (PFW,SAW) and 2 more in Yellow Bogs, Ferdinand 11/9 (GEHa). Tufted Titmouse appears restricted to central and southern Vermont, as 21 of 22 birds were found there, but a single bird on Grand Isle 11/9 (RBL) was not unexpected. The total of 40 Red-breasted Nuthatches was low, but sightings were widespread with highs of 7 in Reading 8/3 (FMH,GEH) and 8 in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP). Similarly, White-breasted Nuthatch was widely reported in small groups during the entire period, with a high of 6 at DCWMA on 11/2 (WGE,NLM), and a total of 52 birds in all. The secretive Brown Creeper was tallied 34 times including the 8 banded at VINS between 8/2 and 11/14. Thanks to its loud and distinctive call uttered all year, the Carolina Wren is being reported more frequently in central and southern Vermont, with a total of 16 birds this season which included a high of 3 in Dorset 11/25 (MA via NS), and pairs in Norwich (WGE,GFE,NLM), Brandon (SSW) and Arlington (DR,LR). The same total as last season, 16 House Wrens is low, but not clear evidence of a decline as the species becomes difficult to find in late summer. However, a high count of a "family" group on Grand Isle 8/8 (DJH) and only 1 banded at VINS 8/28 was not encouraging. Most of the 35 Winter Wrens reported were single birds, exceptions being 5 each in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP) and Winhall 8/20 to 10/1 (WJN), and 4 in Rochester 9/18 (SSW). Marsh Wren was represented by 14 at WRM 8/3 (NLM,WGE), at least 5 on Grand Isle "still feeding young" 8/10 (DJH) and 2 more in New Haven 9/18 (JAP) for a total of 21 birds.

## KINGLETS THROUGH THRUSHES

Nineteen observers reported nearly 140 Golden-crowned Kinglets, many in groups of 5 to a dozen, and including a high of 13 in Winhall 8/23 through 10/24 (WJN) and the same number banded at VINS. Moving through Vermont in fall, Ruby-crowned Kinglet was recorded 79 times with a high of 10 in Middlebury 9/30 (JAP), up to 5 in Tinmouth 11/6 (PMB) and Marlboro through 11/14 (JPN), and 15 banded at VINS. A single report of 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at S. Slang on 8/8 (JID,MCD) was the only one received by RVB. Most encouraging was a record total 419 Eastern Bluebird sightings, reflecting successful nesting and many lingering individuals. Large groups included 34 in Dorset 9/30 and up to 39 there 10/20 (EFG), 30 in Cornwall 10/22 (JAP) and 30 in Danby 11/25 (via NS), as well as several small groups seen well into late November and reported to RVB by nearly 30 different observers. Twenty of the very low total of 36 Veerys reported were banded at VINS and the rest were mainly single sightings except for 3 in Dorset 8/23-9/1 (EFG). Very difficult to find in migration, only 3 Gray-cheeked Thrushes were reported, 1 in S. Duxbury 9/19 (FAP), 1 banded at VINS 9/23 (and recaptured 2 times; CCR et al.), and the last in Marlboro 10/17 (JPN). Thirty-four Swainson's Thrushes included 24 banded at VINS and a late bird in S. Londonderry 10/11 (WJN). Good numbers of Hermit Thrush

included the 138 banded at VINS, 5 at Tinmouth 9/28 (CJF) and a relatively late bird in Reading 11/8 (FMH,GEH), for a total 208 birds. Of 41 individual Wood Thrushes this fall, 20 were banded at VINS and the remaining 21 seen by other observers included a high of 4 in Marlboro 8/1 (JPN), but no sightings after September 30. Well over 1200 American Robins were encountered; at VINS 147 bandings was not the high, as large groups lingered late in the state through the end of the period. A flock of 200 in Weybridge 10/18 (MBN) was of note, and November birds were seen in Bristol (JRA), Brandon (SSW), Randolph (EWC,MCC), Wallingford (SJD), Benson (WGE,NLM), Reading (FMH,GEH), Woodstock (JMN;SBL), Sheffield (PFW,SAW), and Pomfret 11/30 (KRT).

*Northern Shrike*



## MIMICS THROUGH VIREOS

More than half of the 205 Gray Catbirds seen were banded at VINS, 115 in all, and of those observed elsewhere 12 in Dorset 9/26 (EFG) and 10 in Manchester 1 1/2 (BWP) were highs, with the late record a bird in Lincoln 10/12 (JRA). Sporadic and local, Northern Mockingbird numbers seemed healthy with 34 reports and a high of 6 from DCWMA 10/20 (WGE,NLM). Up from last season, 17 Brown Thrashers was still very low. Four were banded at VINS, the high was 3 at Grand Isle 9/1 (DJH) and one late bird at Tinmouth 9/28 (CJF) was noteworthy. The first small flock of American Pipits appeared at DCWMA on 9/13 (JAP), and peaked there at 120 birds on 10/20 (WGE,NLM). Other good records included 24 pipits in WRJ 10/6 (WGE,NLM), 6 in S. Londonderry 11/3 (WJN), and a late record at DCWMA 11/14 (JAP). Twelve early Bohemian Waxwings appeared in Middlebury on 11/22 (JAP), with one other reported from Fairlee 11/29 (WGE,NLM). The total of 1345 Cedar Waxwings was high, with flocks of 100 in Montpelier 9/12 (TSA), 500 in Cornwall 11/2 (JAP), another 100 in Middlebury 11/21 (JID,MCD), but only 56 banded at VINS in the period. In a repeat of last year, 16 Northern Shrikes were seen before December; these were scattered statewide but were not as early as last year, the first reported 10/26 in Woodstock (MSL;ABS). The total 4662 European Starlings was characterized by large flocks in Montpelier (2000+) 9/12 (TSA), 500-600 daily in WRJ 10/1-7 (JMN), and 300 both in Middlebury 8/9 and Addison 9/29 (JRA). Solitary Vireo numbers were average; 46 in all with a high of 5 at Bristol Notch 9/13 (JRA) and 19 banded at VINS. Around 10 Yellow-throated Vireos were reported, all singles except for "several" in Lincoln 9/9 (JRA). A low total of 11 Warbling Vireos were also singles, with 5 banded at VINS, and a late bird seen there 9/15 (JMN). Six Philadelphia Vireos was a typical total, with 1 banded at VINS 9/9 and the latest sighting at Bristol

Notch 9/28 (JRA). Observers found 57 Red-eyed Vireos with highs of 10 in S. Duxbury 8/27 (FAP), up to 6 in Marlboro 9/1-7 (JPN) and Hartland 9/21 (WGE), and an additional 74 were banded at VINS for a grand total of 131 for the period, all seen before October.

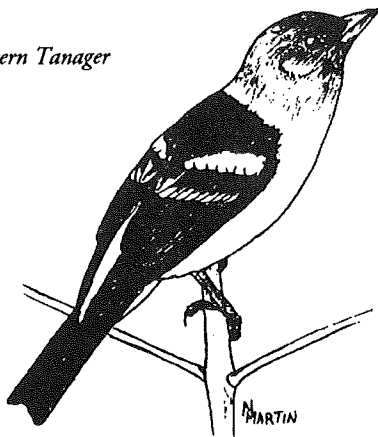
## WOOD WARBLERS

Although no Blue-winged Warblers were reported, there were 2 Golden-winged Warblers and one of the hybrids of these two species, the "Brewster's" type as well. Both Golden-wings were from Woodstock, on 8/18 and 8/29 (JMN;WGE) and the Brewster's was found in S. Londonderry 9/15 (WJN). Tennessee Warbler went unrecorded in the ChV, as 20 of the total 52 were banded at VINS and the high of at least 8 was seen in the same area 9/5 (WGE), with the last report of one bird in S. Londonderry 9/20 (WJN). One Orange-crowned Warbler was banded at VINS 9/27. This species seems to be of annual occurrence there. Nashville Warbler totals remain low, with 53 in all including 21 banded at VINS and at least 3 seen in S. Duxbury on four dates from 8/17 to 9/19 (FAP); and 3 more as late as 9/21 in Hartland (WGE). Nine single Northern Parula were observed between 8/18 in Woodstock (JMN) and 9/21 in Hartland (WGE). Fourteen Yellow Warblers was very low, with a high of 6 in Dorset 8/1 (EFG) and only 3 banded at VINS. Chestnut-sided Warbler was average with 41 observed, and 17 more banded at VINS, including highs of 8 and 10 from S. Duxbury 8/17 and 8/24 (FAP). A below average 62 Magnolia Warblers included 22 banded at VINS, and of the 40 others observed, 13 were in Winhall between 8/23 and 9/11 (WJN) and one lingerer was in Woodstock 10/18 (JMN). Although none were banded, 16 Cape May Warblers is average with 3 in Marlboro 9/5 (JPN) the high and a late bird in Hartland 9/21 (WGE). Black-throated Blue Warbler was more common as 72 were found in all; 13 banded at VINS and 59 observed elsewhere included highs of 12 in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP), 10 in Lincoln Gap 8/23, and a late two in Bristol Notch 9/28 (JRA), with the last sighting in Danby 9/29 (CJF). Compared to previous years, the total 271 Yellow-rumped Warblers observed is alarmingly low and the 55 additional banded birds at VINS doesn't help that much, considering the highs of 65 plus in Waterbury Ctr. and 50 plus in Morrisville on 9/14 (EK). Black-throated Green Warbler was recorded 127 times in all including the 22 banded at VINS and a high of 20 in Hartland on 9/21 (WGE). One in Lincoln on 10/9 was late (JRA). Twenty-three Blackburnian Warblers were seen in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP), representing one-third of the seasonal total of 61, another 6 were banded at VINS, and the last was seen in Hartland 9/21 (WGE). A possible Pine Warbler was reported from Underhill 11/28 (KV) for a record late sighting of this species that has been known to winter on occasion in New England. The other 8 reports from 8/5 through 9/30 came from 6 other observers. The single Prairie Warbler sighting came from the BNP 8/28 (WGE). An average passage of Palm Warblers brought 27 reported birds, all after 9/2, with 2 in Middlebury (JAP), a high of 3 in Marlboro 10/12 (JPN) and only 3 banded at VINS including a late record on 10/25. The 20 Bay-breasted Warblers was again very low compared with several years ago but on a par with the last few years, and included a healthy high of 7 in Hartland 9/21 (WGE) and 5 banded at VINS. Blackpoll Warbler held its own with a total 66; 45 observed and 21 banded at VINS. Highs were 7 each at Hartland 9/21 (WGE) and Mendon 9/30 (JPM,JBM,NLM,WGE) and the latest seen was one in Ferrisburgh 10/6 (JID,MCD). An excellent record in fall, a single Cerulean Warbler was found in Winhall on 9/1 (WJN). Black-and-white



Warbler counts were average, with the 12 banded at VINS augmented by 28 sightings with a high of 8 in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP) and the late bird in Hartland 9/21 (WGE). American Redstart was way down with only 37 total birds, including a disappointing 9 banded at VINS. The high counts of 4 each in Dorset 8/1 (EFG) and S. Lincoln 8/7 (JRA) were early enough to be family groups, the latest reported was 1 Woodstock 9/25 (JMN). Twenty-six Ovenbirds observed is average and included 9 in Lincoln on 8/2 (JRA) and late birds in Danby 9/31 (CJF) and Winhall 10/1 (WJN). This total was doubled as 28 more birds were handled at VINS. The 8 Northern Waterthrushes banded at VINS were nearly all the reported birds except for 1 additional sighting in Addison on 9/14 (JAP). A good catch, the single Louisiana Waterthrush banded at VINS 8/22 was late, as this species leaves the state early. A hatch-year f. Connecticut Warbler was banded at VINS (NLM et al.) on 9/10. Most records of these rare migrants come from banding stations in the fall. Also hard to find in fall, Mourning Warbler was encountered 12 times, with 5 banded at VINS, 3 seen in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP) and a late bird found at Dewey's Pond, Quechee 10/4 (WGE). Only 33 Common Yellowthroat were observed, but an additional 86 were handled at VINS. A high of 9 in Quechee 9/26 (WGE) was noteworthy, and the late birds were 1 each in Marlboro 10/19 (JPN) and Manchester 10/25 (BWP). Wilson's Warbler was found 12 times as singles or doubles as early as 8/23 in Winhall (WJN) and as late as 9/28 at DCWMA (WGE, NLM et al.). Six more birds were banded at VINS for another poor showing for this species. Also down, 32 Canada Warblers included the 13 banded at VINS, with 6 in S. Duxbury 8/17 (FAP) a high count, and 1 at Bristol Notch as late as 9/13 (JRA). Very rarely seen in Vermont, a single YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was banded at VINS on 9/10 (CCR et al.), then this hatch-year bird was photographed and released.

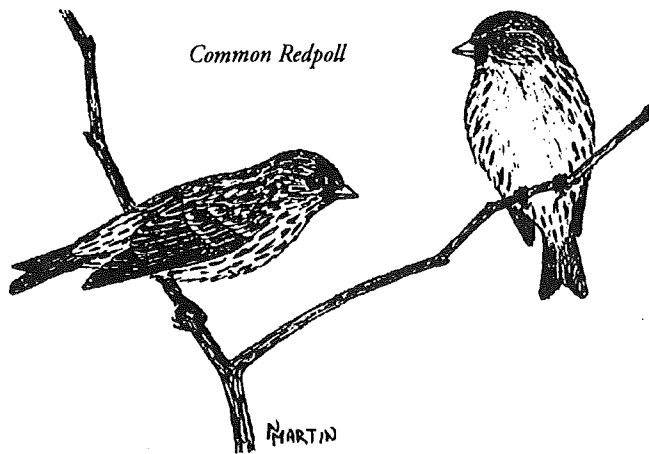
*Western Tanager*



## TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

Nine observers reported 21 Scarlet Tanagers, never more than 2 at a time, with a late bird in Woodstock 9/28 (JMN), and an excellent additional total of 50 banded there (VINS). After nearly 30 years, the second recent sighting of WESTERN TANAGER in Vermont came from Panton on 8/22, a male along West Rd. (BW, RDW, PB). Northern Cardinal reports came from as far north as Lyndonville, with a pr. there 9/29-11/22 (PFW, SAW), and 75 more were seen elsewhere plus 12 banded at VINS. A high of 15 in Ferrisburgh 11/18 (JID, MCD) indicates the abundance of this species in the ChV. Exactly half of the total 78 Rose-breasted

Grosbeaks reported were banded at VINS; this total matches last year's sightings and is average. Of those observed, 7 in Dorset 8/1-7 (EFG) and 6 in Reading 8/3 (FMH, GEH) were highs, but a bird in Lyndonville 11/14 and 19 was extraordinarily late (DHM). Indigo Bunting was reported 28 times, all singles except for the 5 or so in Braintree 8/20 (RAM); 16 were banded at VINS, and a late bird was at Wilder Dam 10/6 (WGE, NLM). Fourteen Rufous-sided Towhees is very low, with only 3 banded at VINS and a late f. in Marlboro 10/24 (WDN). The first American Tree Sparrows were found at DCWMA 10/13 (TSA; FAP), and flocks built up in that area to a high count of 78 on 11/23 (WGE, NLM). A total of 294 in all includes 20 banded at VINS. A species recorded in high numbers, well over 300 Chipping Sparrows were found with flocks of 30 to 50 in S. Londonderry 8/31 (WJN), Quechee 9/26, and Fairlee 10/6 (WGE, NLM), and many smaller groups elsewhere of up to 25 per group. Some late birds in November were 2 in Weybridge 11/4 (MBN), 1 in Brattleboro 11/4 (WDN) and the last in S. Londonderry 11/30 (WJN). Reports of 53 Field Sparrows came in from 9 observers and included 15 banded at VINS, a high of 5 in Manchester 10/13 (BWP), and a very late two from Marlboro 11/12 (JPN). Of a total 12 Vesper Sparrows, 2 in Danby 10/21 (CJF) were not only the latest, but the only ones reported out of the ChV, where 3 in Panton was the high reported in August (WGE, NLM; MBN). Also concentrated in the ChV, Savannah Sparrow reports totalled 140 birds with groups of 43 from DCWMA 8/31 (NLM, WGE) and 40 there 10/13 (FAP) the highs, but the 3 in WRJ 10/28 were the latest reported (WGE). Always a good find in fall, a single Grasshopper Sparrow was seen in S. Londonderry 9/8 (WJN). Only 10 Fox Sparrows were spotted this fall but 5 more were banded at VINS. The first was seen in Sheffield 10/13 (PFW, SAW) and the last in Ferrisburgh 11/7 (JID, MCD). Only a third of last year's total, 309 Song Sparrows is only average, but 94 additional birds were banded at VINS. High counts include 52 in WRJ 10/6 (WGE, NLM), 30 in Addison 10/13 (FAP) and 41 in Quechee 10/17 (WGE), and also of note were mostly white birds seen in both Tinmouth and Wallingford in early October (PMB). Secretive in nature, Lincoln's Sparrow was banded at VINS in good numbers, 43 in all, but only seen 23 times in other areas from 9/3 in Sheffield (PFW, SAW) to 10/11 in Quechee (WGE). Swamp Sparrow totals were average, 92 observed plus 31 banded at VINS. Twenty-three in Tinmouth Channel on 10/17 was a high (CJF) while one bird at HC 11/24 was late (WGE, DHC). Nearly equalling last year's totals, White-throated Sparrow was banded 296 times at VINS and 329 more were observed for a grand total 625 birds. The larger flocks included 19 in Wallingford 10/12 (SJD), 100 in Woodstock 10/16 (JMN) and at least 35 in Sheffield through 10/22 (PFW, SAW). The first White-crowned Sparrows arrived the last week of September in Quechee (WGE), Sheffield (PFW, SAW) and Manchester (BFP), reached highs of 15 in WRJ 10/6 (NLM, WGE) and 20 at S. Londonderry 10/15 (WJN), with a total 140 birds including the 13 banded at VINS. Dark-eyed Junco tends to move in large flocks, and the total 659 birds reported included at least 50 in Reading (FMH, GEH) and Woodstock (JMN) 10/16 and Ferrisburgh 10/18 (JID, MCD), then 63 through the period in Sheffield (PFW, SAW), while only 16 were banded at VINS this season. The earliest Lapland Longspurs were 2 or 3 at DCWMA 10/13 (TSA; FAP), with one more in WRJ 10/28 (WGE), a total of 12 birds seen before December. As with the previous species, Snow Bunting arrived from the north in October, but this year they were 2 weeks later as the first were spotted in Grand Isle (DJH), Shelburne and Burlington (RBL, SAP) on 10/27; only 3 days later the high count of 100 was at DCWMA (MBN); the season total was 320 birds.



## BLACKBIRDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

The Bobolink count of about 211 included the normal 100 plus in Ferrisburgh 8/12 (JID,MCD), "many" in S. Lincoln 8/17 (JRA) and 36 in S. Londonderry through 9/22 (WJN), with one late bird at DCWMA 9/28 (NLM). The staging of Red-winged Blackbirds can be spectacular if not alarming, so that the estimate of 20,000 at DCWMA on 10/18 (WGE,NLM) must have been quite a sight! This aggregation was by far the high in a total 25,000 plus birds reported. Eastern Meadowlark numbers were very modest by comparison, only 42 in all including 17 at DCWMA on 10/20 (WGE,NLM) for a high and a late individual in Craftsbury 11/27 (FO,JW). An excellent total 103 Rusty Blackbirds was bolstered by high counts of 60 in Cornwall 10/22 (JAP) and 26 in Dorset 10/28 (EFG) which was also the latest report. Common Grackle flocks were less spectacular, with 500 or so in each of Montpelier 10/12 (TSA), Ferrisburgh 10/18 (JID,MCD) and Addison 11/1 (JAP) adding to a total 2975 birds, some as late as 11/18 in Wallingford and Middlebury (SJD;JAP). Nearly twice as many Brown-headed Cowbirds, 5637, were counted with flocks of "thousands," in WRJ 8/1-10/30 (JMN), 1500 at DCWMA 10/20 (WGE,NLM) and 1000 in Ferrisburgh 11/3 (JID,MCD), the latest reports were 2 in Brandon 11/15 and 17 at DCWMA 11/17 (SSW). The usual handful of Northern Orioles included 16 banded at VINS and 23 more spotted elsewhere in ones and twos except for 3 each in Lincoln 8/17 (JRA) and Woodstock 8/15 (JMN). Very scarce again this season, one Pine Grosbeak was reported from Winhall 11/6 (WJN), and 2 from Moose Bog 11/14 (GEHa). Purple Finch numbers were very healthy, as 180 were seen statewide in flocks as high as 25 in Sheffield 8/11 (PFW,SAW), 24 at Moose bog 11/9 (GEHa) and 20 in Winhall 11/14 (WJN), and an additional 54 were handled at VINS where they stayed through the end of the period in record numbers (VINS staff). The spread of the House Finch was dramatically illustrated as 409 were banded at VINS, and 328 others were reported from all corners of the state. A high of 98 in the Addison/Panton area 11/23 was of note (WGE,NLM). The only Red Crossbills were 3 in S. Londonderry 8/2 and similarly there was one report of 20 White-winged Crossbills in Winhall 10/5 (both WJN). Common Redpoll did not appear in high numbers, as the 1 early bird at BNP on 10/30 (WGE) was the only one there, but 43 more were seen elsewhere including 35 on Grand Isle 11/18 (RBL) for a high. Pine Siskin numbers picked up from last year to a total 281 which included 25 banded at VINS and a max. of over 100 in the Moose Bog area 11/9 (GEHa). Good numbers of American Goldfinches were observed and banded for a total 683 individuals; 239 were banded at VINS and the largest daily count

was 56 at DCWMA 11/23 (NLM,WGE). Evening Grosbeak totals were average at 440 sightings plus 24 banded at VINS, and some sizeable flocks included 35 in Reading 10/19 (FMH,GEH) and Addison 11/23 (NLM,WGE) and 75 in Sheffield 11/26 (PFW,SAW). House Sparrow continues to hold its own against the invading House Finch as 328 birds were reported to RVB.

## Contributors

JFA	Jeffrey Allen	CJF	C.J. Frankiewicz
TSA	Ted Allen	JVF	Jeffrey Freeman
JAA	JoAnn Appleton	ELG	Ted Gaine
JRA	Jean Arrowsmith	EFG	Betty Gilbert
MA	Mrs. August	CSG	Carolyn Greer
PMB	Phillip Ballou	AG	Alan Gregory
WB	Waldo Beals	MG	Monica Gregory
WRB	Will Beecher	JRG	John Guidry
DB	Deborah Beier	GEHa	Terry Hall
RB	Roger Benjamin	TH	Tom Heatley
PB	Paul Blair	EEH	Edie Hentcy
MPB	Mark Biercevicz	JH	John Herix
GEB	Gilbert Bolsterle	PH	Pat Hesterberg
FB	Frank Boyle	STH	Tom Hickcox
PBr	Peg Brady	DH	Doug Hinshaw
BAB	Barbara Brosnan	DJH	David Hoag
FLC	Frank Callahan	JAH	Judy Holzschleiter
RVC	Robert Canosa	ALH	Aubigine Horner
DLC	Dwight Cargill	RCH	Richard Howard
MC	Mike Cassara	JHO	Jennifer Howe
ECC	Eveleen Cecchini	FMH	Fred Hunt
TGC	Terry Cecchini	GEH	Gloria Hunt
MJC	Mary Jo Childs	CJ	Corinne Jennings
EWC	Elizabeth Clapp	FJ	Francis Jennings
MCC	Mary Clapp	BRJ	Betty Rist Jillson
RC	Randy Clark	EEJ	Ernie Jillson
ETC	Edwin Congdon	JJ	Jacqueline Jimoi
WJC	Bill Crenshaw	PK	Peggy Kannenstine
DHC	Dan Crook	HAK	Hester Kay
CED	Catherine Dame	EK	Liz Kellogg
DD	Dan Darling	WBK	Warren King
CRD	Carolyn Dasher	SCK	Sandy Kuehn
AD	Alan Dater	MSL	Mark LaBarr
DCD	Deborah Davis	CL	Charlotte LaRue
AMD	Allison Deen	SBL	Sally Laughlin
LD	Linda Desmond	DKL	Dorothy Lavelle
SJD	Sarah Jane Dudley	RBL	Richard Lavelle
BCD	Bonita Dundas	ML	Margaret Libby
RGD	Richard Dundas	AL	Ann Lorrie
JID	John Dye	BM	Brian Mahon
MCD	Margaret Dye	BrM	Bradley Mann
WGE	Walter Ellison	JPM	Janet Martin
LJE	Lynn Erb	JM	Jim Martin
CCF	Chris Fichtel	JBM	John Martin
GF	Gerry Fields	NLM	Nancy Martin
JF	Joan Fike	DMc	David McLelland
JNF	Jean Fleming	DM	Dorrit Merton
JMF	Jackie Fowley	MOM	Mary Metcalf

SBM	Steven Metz	JR	Jack Robinson
CM	Cynthia Meyer	SJS	Jean Sangdahl
DHM	Donald Miller	DS	Debbie Schoch
NM	Neil Monteith	SS	Susan Shea
MAM	Mark Morrison	NS	Nancy Simson
VLM	Virginia Morrison	CS	Chris Smith
CNM	Charles Mullen	SSp	Susan Spackman
PJM	Phoebe Mullen	ABS	Allan Stimson
RAM	Ronald Mura	PS	Peter Stavrakis
MBN	Marge Nelson	JS	John Sullivan
JPN	John Nevins	DS	Daniel Swainback
WDN	Whitney Nichols	ES	Ester Swift
JMN	Julie Nicholson	KRT	Kevin Taft
WJN	Bill Norse	MT	Mathew Taylor
CMO	Cecilia Oakman	JT	Julie Tracy
FO	Frank Oatman	AT	Allison Trowbridge
RO	Rodney Olsen	VFWD	Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
EPq	Erny Palola	VINS	Vermont Institute of Natural Science
MRP	Michele Patenaude	VRC	Vermont Raptor Center (VINS)
SAP	Simon Perkins	KV	Kenneth Varney
JAP	Judy Peterson	PFW	Paul Wagner
MpE	Mary Metlau	SAW	Shirley Wagner
MP	Mary Phinney	SSW	Sue Wetmore
RWP	Roy Pilcher	PRW	Paul Wiczoreck
CRP	Carol Powell	BW	Betty Wotton
BWP	Barbara Powers	RDW	Robert Wotton
EBP	Eleanor Pratt	GW	Glen Wood
FAP	Frederick Pratt	RLW	Becky Wright
SR	Stuart Randall	MPY	Mark Youngstrom
DR	Daniel Reid	RAZ	Al Zelley
LR	Lillian Reid		
PCR	Peter Riley		
CCR	Chris Rimmer		

Special thanks to all hawkwatchers.

### Abbreviations Used in the Text

BNP	Bragdon Nature Preserve (VINS), Woodstock
ChV	Champlain Valley
CR	Connecticut River
DCWMA	Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Addison and Panton
HC	Herrick's Cove, Rockingham
LC	Lake Champlain
MNWR	Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton
SWMA	Sandbar Wildlife Management Area, Milton
WRM	West Rutland Marsh
WRJ	White River Junction
WRDP	Winooski River Delta Park, Colchester

ad.	adult(s)	L.	Lake
ctr.	center	pr.	pair(s)
f.	female(s)	R.	River
imm.	immature(s)	sp.	species
HL	hawk lookout	VHW	Vermont Hawk Watches
juv.	juvenile(s)	yg.	young

## Memorandum Regarding Rare Species Documentation

The Vermont Bird Records Committee (VBRC) emphasizes the importance of descriptive and detailed documentation for all rarities, rare nesting species and out-of-season species.

The committee is anxious to involve all Vermont birders in the process of producing as accurate a Vermont state list as possible. This list and all documentation must be credible to future ornithologists who will use the material for research. Suggestions for improving the reporting/voting process will be gratefully received by the committee.

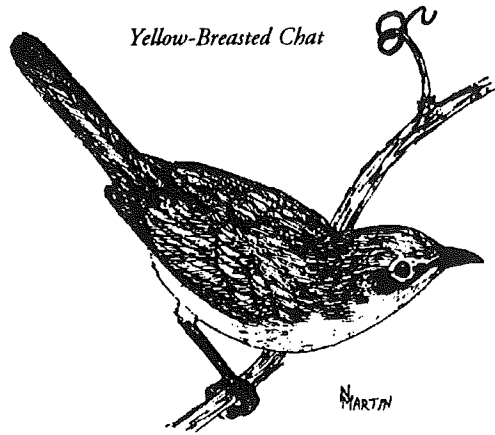
It is frustrating for both the observer and the committee to have a tantalizing sighting of a rare species not listed due to insufficient details.

Writing down the salient points of identification, talking into a tape recorder, making a quick sketch or taking a photograph at the time of observation are ways to help with accurate recounting later.

The Rare Species Documentation (RSD) form is both for filing the reports and is intended as a guide for the information needed. After completing the first page, reporters may prefer to write the description of the bird on a separate sheet of paper but checking the form for details requested.

Again the VRBC expresses its thanks to all observers who have contributed valuable information to the Vermont state list thus far.





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