

# Records of Vermont Birds

a supplement to Vermont Natural History



Common  
Flicker  
studies  
Record  
of  
Vermont  
Birds  
with  
bander  
Bruce  
Hamblett.

### CONTRIBUTORS

May Adams  
Neale Biddle  
Hope Blucher  
Alexandra Brown  
Archer Brown  
Faith Carter  
Elizabeth Clapp  
Mary Clapp  
Don Clark  
Thomas Dibble

Sally Drew  
Eleanor Ellis  
George Ellison  
Walter Ellison  
Richard Farrar  
Tom Foster  
Grant Frazer  
Marcia Garner  
Beau Gatch  
Bunny Gatch

D. Hatch  
Bob Jervis  
Gladys Kidder  
Walter Kidder  
David Laughlin  
Sherry Mahady  
Joe Massey  
Loy McLaughlin  
Larry Metcalf  
Marian Metcalf

Don Miller  
Louise Mullen  
Julie Nicholson  
William Norse  
Frank Oatman  
Peggy Patten  
E. Pease  
Bruce Peterson  
Mary Russell  
George Schott

K. Shepard  
Anne Spencer  
Eleanor Swaim  
Marian Vince  
Walter Westcott  
John Wiggin  
Tom Will  
Jon Wood  
Cathy Yandell  
Frank Sherlock

# Records of Vermont Birds

"Records of Vermont Birds" is a new section of **Vermont Natural History**. It will cover the records of bird life submitted to the Vermont Institute of Natural Science — research, movement of birds throughout the state, sighting and nesting records, and the like. "Records of Vermont Birds" — this is the first issue — came about for two reasons. It is primarily the result of the many Vermont birdwatchers who have watched and kept records throughout the state and over the years. But the recent State Conference on Vermont Birds at Plymouth, in June, focused the need for an overall collection center for observations taken all over the state. In this way, the conference provided a chance for birders to meet, and even to recognize how large their numbers had grown. People recognized that their efforts weren't isolated and that their sightings were in accord with the data collected by others. Frequent at the conference were comments like, "Why didn't someone tell me that my nesting pair of mockingbirds would be a state record?" or, "Do you mean you've found Golden-crowned Kinglets nesting regularly in the southern half of Vermont?" and, "I've been keeping records for twenty years and waiting for the day when somebody would be interested in them!" Jim Stewart, Assistant State Ornithologist, probably summed up more than his own feelings when he said that it was a "special occasion" — the "first statewide gathering of the clan."

The conference gave next door neighbors a chance to discover a shared interest in birds, and was a time when bird-banding groups compared notes from around the state. Some of the scheduled presentations were: the history and present status of Peregrin Falcons in the state; the results and plans of the state-wide bird-banding network; the state's Fish and Game Department work with waterfowl populations; and Dr. Peter Paul Kellogg's demonstrations of the techniques of making and using sound recordings in the field.

All at the conference felt that a publication should be initiated to continue the experience. For some time the Institute has been collecting reports of bird observations, and those collected covering this year's spring migration are the basis for our first published compilation.

## WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Our idea is that reports sent in on standard forms by contributors (from feeder-watchers to the most avid "listers") will be the backbone of this section. Contributors, then, are the "authors" of the articles. The reporting forms can be obtained from the Institute Office in Woodstock, Vermont by mail. The BIRD SIGHTINGS form, 3 x 5 inches, is used for notes on early and late migrants, unusual or uncommon birds.

Where more information is being gathered, as in continual records of nesting birds, feeding station observation over the winter, behavioral accounts, etc., the larger SPECIES ACCOUNT form is used — one to a species. Finally, the FIELD TRIP REPORT form is submitted for records of birds seen on special excursions. On occasion, special Field Days are sponsored by the Institute to encourage simultaneous observations in various parts of the state.

Adding greatly to the picture of bird distribution and movement in Vermont is the data compiled by Institute-coordinated banding stations, the nation's largest inland bird-banding program. This data is especially helpful in determining peaks of species abundance during migration.

In addition to the compilation of seasonal records, feature articles will focus on special studies of interest. A number of people have already submitted material for these special articles. Anyone else have some things you're working on?

#### A FRAMEWORK

In the area from Springfield to Montpelier and west to Rutland, the status of each species on a week-by-week basis has been worked out (*Birds of East-Central Vermont* by Richard B. Farrar, Jr.) and published by the Institute. We recommend you acquire a copy of this book. The unique graphs should serve as a starting point against which to measure your own records no matter where you are in Vermont. In fact, the records of past years which some of you have could be sent in and used as a revision of these graphs for your area.

One big danger we can foresee from the experience with the graphs of *Birds of East-Central Vermont* is that observers will only report sightings which look unusual. We can't emphasize too strongly that all records are important. Even if you see common birds and live in the middle of the area covered by these graphs, and your sighting is at a "normal" time of year, it may be important for corroboration — so send it in.

The "authors" of the *Spring Movement of Birds* look forward to having others join them for the next issue and thus become regular contributors. Reports are due on the forms available from the Institute as follows: Spring Migration by June 15th, Nesting Season by August 15th, Fall Migration by November 15th, and Winter Season by April 15th. Note well that reports on spring migration may involve sightings as early as February, for nesting as early as March, and for autumn movements as early as July.

The discussion here of spring migration of birds into and through Vermont is organized at first by families and then by species. At least minimal mention is made of every species known to occur in the State on anything but an accidental basis. The compilation can be only as strong as the records submitted by contributors; it's obvious, for instance, that we need much wider coverage from areas on the edge of Lake Champlain. Initials in parentheses refer to contributors.

As records accumulate each year we'll try to get a much better feeling for differences between geographical divisions of the State. As of this year we will be testing the following hypothesis:

It appears that the early spring migrants such as some of the sparrows, blackbirds and thrushes may move up either the Connecticut River Valley or the Hudson River and Lake Champlain Valley as snow cover begins to decrease. This, of course, makes their arrival in parts of Vermont more variable through the years. Due to a generally milder climate, arrival of a given species in the Champlain Valley of northwestern Vermont may be earlier by about two weeks than in the upper reaches of the Connecticut River Valley. In the eastern half of the State, movement of these birds up the tributaries of the Connecticut may result in a delay between the first sightings near the Connecticut River and general arrival in areas near the Green Mountains. Waterfowl may follow similar trends which depend on the availability of open water.

Further, our hypothesis suggests that the later migrants of May and June generally disregard the distinctions of upland versus river valleys, arriving in the State and advancing northward on a broad front. A rough estimate at this point would allow about one week for these species to reach the border of Canada after their first appearance in Vermont

It'll be interesting to test this hypothesis through examination of each year's records, comparing one species against another even within families. The compilation itself will include mention of questions that look interesting for further study. Hopefully, individual observers will begin to look for answers within their records and to make further observations with these questions in mind.



# Spring Migration 1973

**LOONS** — The first report of the common loon was from mid-state at Norwich where three passed overhead, heading north, on April 29 (WE, GE). By May 15 (FO) and May 16 (LM, AB) two records of single birds were made in the vicinity of Plainfield in northern Vermont. Another bird was seen near Norwich (WE, GE) on May 19, the last record of the spring. There were no reports of red-throated loons.

**GREBES** — Generally rare red-necked grebes turned up in a group of four on the Connecticut River at Wilder on May 5 (WE, GE) with another individual on Lake Morey about twenty miles north on the same day (WE, GE). A single horned grebe was present on the Connecticut River at Wilder April 10, a slightly earlier date than usual there (WE, GE). A sighting of one pied-billed grebe at the same time and place was even earlier for that species (WE, GE). Another was seen April 28 at Dewey's Marsh in Quechee (WE, GE), but that was the extent of the spring records.

**CORMORANTS** — The double-crested cormorant was not recorded this year.

**HERONS, EGRETS, BITTERNS** — Several great blue herons were reported during their normal migration period, two at White River Junction on April 6 (WE, GE), one at Fairlee sailing north at high altitude on April 22 (WE, GE), one in Winhall on April 23 (WN) and one in Woodstock on April 29 (JW). Green herons were reported from April 24 to May 20 in appropriate habitat throughout Vermont (WE, GE, RF, MV, WN, BJ, CY). There was a record of two cattle egrets and three common egrets (rare in Vermont), in Vernon near the Massachusetts border on May 1 (LM, WNi). Two other species which occasionally reach Vermont, the little blue heron and snowy egret, went unrecorded. So did the black-crowned night heron, surprisingly, since it is a summer resident on Lake Champlain islands. A sighting of a least bittern near Addison on May 27 (WN) was an excellent record since the species is fairly secretive. Only two American bitterns were reported, one on Lake

Bomboseen near Hubbardton, May 12 (WE, GE), the other near Winhall, April 25 (WN).

**IBISES** — The glossy ibis was unrecorded this spring.

**SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS** — Whistling swans went unrecorded, as did brant and blue geese. On April 1 there were flocks of snow geese over Plymouth Lake (OS, WJ) and Winhall (WN), with a large flock of 400-plus reported over Springfield April 4 (DC, JC). Canada geese were regularly seen in southern and central Vermont from March 12 to April 16, with the largest flock reported only 82 birds near Addison on April 14 (WE, GE). A late group of 30 migrants was noted on the White River, June 12 (GE).

Common goldeneye, ring-necked ducks and common mergansers began to build up in the southern Connecticut River at Bellow's Falls by March 17 where 41, 62 and 6 were seen respectively by Don Clark. There were two ring-necked ducks at Wilder the next day (WE, GE). Movement of these early ducks was not well documented, however. An April 14th field trip by the Ellisons showed 23 common goldeneyes on Lake Bomoseen with ring-necked ducks and common mergansers at several locations in central Vermont and Lake Champlain. A single report of 30 common mergansers at Wilder on April 21 (WE, GE) is the last record of that species. Additionally, a lone bufflehead was sighted at Wilder on March 17 and three at Lake Fairlee on April 20.

Other ducks arriving by late March included two hooded mergansers and four wood ducks at North Hartland (WE, GE). The former species was recorded again by the Ellisons at Wilder on April 8 (three) and on Lake Champlain April 14 (one). Wood ducks continued to move throughout the State during April (RF, JW, BJ).

It's interesting to consider the rest of the waterfowl a little out of their A.O.U. Checklist order.

Only one male red-breasted merganser was seen on April 25 at Wilder (WE, GE) and there were no records of gadwalls, northern shovelers, redheads, canvasbacks, greater scaup, Barrow's goldeneye, old squaw, ruddy ducks or any of the scoter species. The Clarks noted a pair of pintails and two American wigeon pairs near Springfield on April 7, but that was the only record of those species. Lesser scaup were reported only from Wilder on April 25 and Lake Champlain April 14 (WE, GE). The only records of green-winged teal were eight near Springfield April 4 (DC, JC) and a pair at Dewey's Marsh near Quechee on April 21 (WE, GE).

The only ducks reported regularly were mallards and black ducks moving throughout April, and blue-winged teal moving during the last half of that month, but these were considered so regular that dates were omitted from most reports and we can establish no pattern.

In short, for the ducks we need a good deal more consistent observation! Next year it would be great to have a special effort made from mid-March through April and early May to regularly check Vermont's water habitats and carefully note numbers and dates for all occurrences. Hopefully we can establish some sense of progressive northward movement for each species and a comparison between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain valleys.

**VULTURES** — One turkey vulture was noted heading NW over the North Springfield reservoir April 17 (EE) and another was reported from near Addison on May 27 (WN) with two near Manchester on June 9 (WE, GE). This species seems to be expanding its range northward and it will be interesting to pull together summer records for a look at possible breeding distribution.

**HAWKS, EAGLES** — A Winhall record of the goshawk on March 14 (WN) stood alone. Sharp-shinned hawks, however, were seen from April 14 to May 13 by many observers scattered throughout Vermont. The other accipiter, the

## PEREGRINE FALCON (CF)

Cooper's hawk, was reported from Guilford (one) by March 18 (LM) and Hartford (one) by March 28 (WE). Single reports from Guilford occurred again on March 25 and April 8 (LM) with a second and final report from central Vermont at North Hartland on April 21 (WE, GE). Williston, near Lake Champlain, had an early red-tailed hawk sighting on March 7 (CY). Late March and April brought regular flights of that species and red-shouldered hawks to Vermont via the Connecticut valley. Maximum daily count of both was six of each species near Hartland on April 21, (WE, GE). Broad-winged hawks, as expected, arrived in maximum numbers a little later, with a peak at Hartford of 22 on May 6 (WE, GE) and an "outstanding movement" along the Green Mountain ridge near Middlebury on May 19 (BP). Singles were seen as early as April 18 in Winhall (WN) and Putney (GF), April 19 in Calais (FO, JW) and April 21 at North Hartland (WE, GE). There were no records of rough-legged hawks and only one for the marsh hawk, in Addison on April 14 (WE, GE). Eleanor Ellis had sightings of single adult bald eagles near Weathersfield on March 18 and again on June 9. A sighting in northern Vermont (Moore Reservoir) was reported from June 4 (SA and others).

OSPREY — Ospreys were seen in good numbers the whole of their normal period of movement, from April 8 to May 26, throughout the State. Individuals were sighted in Brattleboro by April 8 (LM), Hartford by April 21 (WE, GE) and in northern Vermont at Calais on April 25 (FO, JW). Later reports were also concentrated near the Connecticut River valley.

FALCONS — Don Clark's account of his peregrine falcon sighting reads like an exciting novel, for those who are aware of the decline of this species. We have the full report on file, and will only summarize it here by noting that he got as close as thirty feet to a well-described male bird when it was perched, and was able to watch it then and in flight for a period of 15-30 minutes. The

report was from near Rockingham, March 28. The Ellisons tallied three merlins, one in North Hartland, the other over Sawyer Mountain in Fairlee on the weekend of April 21-22. The earliest American kestrel record was from Hartford on March 16 (WE), with another from Hartford on March 16 (WE), with another from Plainfield on March 19 (MM). They were regularly observed moving over the State through April, with maximum counts on any one day of six.

GROUSE — Resident ruffed grouse were observed throughout Vermont, but there were no reports of spruce grouse.

RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS — Marshes opened early this year, leading to a record early rail for the Quechee area, a sora at Dewey's Marsh on April 28 (WE, GE). Another was observed near Addison May 12 (WE, GE), but there were no further reports of this species, the Virginia rail, yellow rail, or American coot. Common gallinules were at the Dead Creek Waterfowl Refuge in Addison by June 14 (DC, JC), but had appeared earlier at Manchester by May 12 (WE) and in Milton and the Sandbar Refuge on June 1 (FO, BJ).

PLOVERS — March 14 brought the first killdeer records from Winhall (WN) and Saxton's River (DC). By March 19 they had reached the Hartford area along the Connecticut River (WE). In the Lake Champlain area, the first record was on March 15 at Williston (CY). They were "everywhere" and common throughout their April movement. Black-bellied plovers were seen by William Norse on May 27 at Addison (75) and May 28 at Winhall (30), with one recorded by Walter Ellison at Hartford earlier, May 20. There were no reports of either the semi-palmated plover, the ruddy turnstone or the golden plover.

SANDPIPERS — The earliest woodcock record near Lake Champlain was reported from Williston, March 16 (CY), but southern Vermont's first

record was on March 14 at Winhall (WN). By March 25 one was recorded in Hartford (WE), but we have no reports of early migrants from northeastern Vermont. They were moving generally in the State throughout April. Common snipe were first seen in Westminster on April 12 where there were seven feeding together (DC). By April 17 they had reached White River Junction where one was observed (WE). The only other reports were of birds in courtship displays after May 12, presumably having ceased migration. The rarely seen upland sandpiper (formerly upland plover) was reported from Addison (two) on May 9 (EV, RL) and May 12 (JP, RM, MN), from Vernon in a newly plowed field on May 13 (LM, DW), from Cornwall on May 23 (BP, GM), and from Winhall on June 6 when one flew overhead (WN). Spotted sandpipers were in Vershire (one) by April 25 (SD) and in Norwich (one) on April 29 (WE, GE), moving regularly throughout the State in May. There were two solitary sandpiper records in Fairlee on May 5 (WE, GE, LD), one in Hartford May 10-11 (WE), another in Hartford May 19 and finally a late bird in a wet cornfield at Vernon on May 26 (LM). Greater yellowlegs reached the State by May 1 at Vernon (LM), where one stayed until May 13. By May 19 one had been recorded from Norwich (WE, GE). There is one amazing record of the red knot from near Addison, a bird seen with a dowitcher flock on May 27 by three observers (WN), and a single report of five pectoral sandpipers in an unplowed cornfield in Vernon on May 13 (LM). In the Connecticut River valley 10 least sandpipers were seen at Hartford May 9-29 (WE, GE) and 52 at Norwich May 19. The only record from the Champlain valley is of 10 seen at Addison on May 27 (WN). The final shorebird record was an excellent count of 150 short-billed dowitchers at Addison, again on May 27 (WN). Unrecorded were the lesser yellowlegs, purple sandpiper, white-rumped sandpiper, Baird's sandpiper, dunlin, long-billed dowitcher, semipalmated sandpiper, western sandpiper, Hudsonian godwit, and sanderling. Some of these latter are rarely seen and some more

commonly in fall. It's clear, however, that we need more regular observations of all shorebirds, particularly near Lake Champlain.

**PHALAROPES** — There were no reports of the northern phalarope.

**GULLS, TERNS** — **Glaucous gulls** and **Iceland gulls**, rare winter visitants, were unrecorded this spring, as was the **great black-backed gull**. A single **herring gull** near White River Junction on March 20 was early for that area (WE, GE). Others were seen during their normal inland movement from the coast on April 18 (one over Wilder), April 22 (two over Fairlee), May 5 (one at Lake Morey near Fairlee), May 12 (one at Chimney Point on Lake Champlain) and June 4 (two at White River Junction). All of these were reported by the Ellisons. **Ring-billed gulls** arrived in the Connecticut River valley as early as March 18, when six were counted by the Ellisons in east-central Vermont. Five more were recorded in that area on March 25 (WE, GE) and scattered individuals noted until the last record of three in Norwich on May 19 (WE, GE). In the Champlain valley, the only report was also by the Ellisons — 108 on April 14 at Chimney Point. There were no reports of **Bonaparte's gulls**, **Caspian terns** or **common terns**, but **black terns** were noted several times. The first was reported from near Addison with five others on May 12 (WE, GE). This was followed by reports of one between Arlington and Manchester on May 19 (TW), one near Hartford on May 29 (a rare find by the Ellisons), one in a flock of swallows over Brookfield Pond in "late May" (BJ), and several on Lake Memphramagog by early June (MG).

**MURRES** — Reports of both the **common murre** and the **thick-billed murre** are rare and limited to autumn — there were no spring records this year.

**DOVES** — **Rock doves** were regularly seen as permanent residents. The earliest report of the **mourning dove** was a record of ten birds at Guilford on

March 4 (LM). Thereafter came many scattered reports from throughout the State, but the lack of careful notation of dates leaves us no record of their progressive appearance northward.

**CUCKOOS** — There was only one report of the **yellow-billed cuckoo**, heard in Londonderry, May 14 - June 19 (TW). One **black-billed cuckoo** was heard in Londonderry May 6 - June 11 (TW), one in Hartford on May 19 (WE, GE), another at Bennington on May 26 (TF) and a fourth in Winhall June 6 (WN).

**BARN OWL** — Two **barn owls** (a pair?) were sighted and well described by John and Amanda Hamilton from East Poultney on May 30. These birds are rare in Vermont, but usually permanent residents where they exist.

**OWLS** — Little is known of the status of this group in general except that most seem to be residents year-round in certain areas. The **snowy owl**, **hawk owl**, **great gray owl**, **short-eared owl** and **boreal owl** are mainly rare winter visitants and none were recorded this spring. William Norse sent in records from Winhall of **great horned owls** heard on March 6 and April 13, **barred owls** heard from March 1 to April 22, and a **saw-whet owl** heard on March 5. The only other record was of the last species on March 31 at Hartford (WE, GE) and there were none of the **screech owl** or **long-eared owl**. Obviously, most of us are not listening or searching for owls.

**WHIP-POOR-WILLS, NIGHTHAWKS** — The **whip-poor-will** must move silently into the State in late May, but there never seem to be any reports until the first two weeks in June when the birds begin calling. Presumably these birds are establishing territories and have ceased moving. In another article we'll describe a survey made by the Clapp sisters in Randolph that involves reports of presumably breeding birds. If their efforts could be duplicated in several areas we might have a better picture of the distribution of this species in Vermont. Reports of **nighthawks** were also lacking from most

areas. They were over White River Junction by May 30 (WE, GE) and Bennington the next day (TF), but those are the only records we have received.

**SWIFT** — **Chimney swifts** were noted first over White River Junction on May 3 (GE), with more in the Woodstock area May 5 (DL). By May 10 they were over Randolph (EC, MC) and over Plainfield by May 11 (FO, BJ). Thereafter reports came from many areas. We have no clear picture of their arrival in the Champlain valley, however.

**HUMMINGBIRDS** — The earliest record of the **ruby-throated hummingbird** was from Winhall on May 8 (WN). Other records were of three in Bennington May 21 (MV) and one in Shrewsbury May 26 (WE, GE). Where are the rest of the records of this fairly common species?

**KINGFISHERS** — Since **belted kingfishers** occasionally winter over in Vermont, it's a little difficult to establish which reports are of spring arrivals. It looks as though single birds seen both in Plainfield and in Marshfield on March 4 (MM) may be the earliest of the migrants although they were not seen farther back along the line until March 19 when one appeared in Woodstock (JW). There were two in Wilder March 29 (WE, GE) and they continued to arrive throughout the State in April.

**WOODPECKERS** — **Common flickers** first appeared this spring in Williston where one was seen on March 17 (CY). In the Connecticut River valley one was seen in Winhall on March 29 (WN) and they had reached Hartford by April 5 when one was heard (WE). Numbers reached a peak in the last week of April and the first two weeks of May in all areas of the State. **Pileated woodpeckers**, as permanent residents, became more active during March and April, but were reported regularly only by Norse in Winhall and Farrar in Woodstock. Bruce Peterson reported "...three reliable records of **red-headed**

**woodpeckers**, which must be separate birds from the location (they are usually permanent residents and localized) and the fact that the first one was dead." The most complete notes accompanied a report by Robert and Marion Mundstock in Peterson's area detailing a male feeding on elms and maples near Bristol. Reports from the Champlain valley are regular but few. Can it be found east of the Green Mountains? **Yellow-bellied sapsuckers** appeared somewhat later than usual, it seems, with one in Fairlee on April 20 (WE, GE) and two in Woodbury by April 25 (FO, JW). Surprisingly, there was only one other report, of three birds in Fairlee on May 5 (WE, GE, LD). Again, it's difficult to detail movement unless observers report even the common birds with dates. Both **hairy woodpeckers** and **downy woodpeckers** were present as permanent residents and reported regularly. Observers should be aware that both species are migratory, and careful note of increases in abundance will give us a better picture of migratory timing. The **black-backed three-toed woodpecker** was unrecorded as a winter visitant.

**FLYCATCHERS** — **Eastern kingbirds** were reported from Hartford May 9 (WE), Bennington May 11 (MV), Woodstock May 12 (RF), Shrewsbury May 13 (AS) and reached Cabot May 18 (FO). In the Champlain valley they were first recorded May 19 (CY). By the last week in May they had reached a peak throughout the State. The first **great-crested flycatcher** in eastern Vermont was reported from Hartford on May 14 (WE), in the west at Hinesburg on May 19 (CY). By the end of May they were everywhere, although not regularly seen by all observers. The first **eastern phoebes** appeared in Hartford March 29 (WE, GE) and South Londonderry March 31 (WN), and were reported throughout the State during their April movement. Again, there were not enough actual counts of this common bird to establish peaks of migration, although it did seem that there were more seen after the storms of early April. Only two reports of the **yellow-bellied flycatcher** were received, a

rather early record at Winhall on May 19 (WN) and one from Hartford on June 5 (WE). No records from the nesting areas of northern Vermont! The **alder flycatcher** was recorded only from North Calais on May 27 (FO, JW), presumably identified by its song, and the **willow flycatcher** in Addison on the same date (WN). At least the former species is found regularly as a nesting bird although in very few localities, and must move through the State in early May. Since it is not singing then, it is probably passed up as a least flycatcher. Except for banding records, the two species will probably never be noted in actual migration. The willow flycatcher is especially rare in our area during any season. The first **least flycatchers** were recorded from Manchester on May 12 (WE, GE), Shrewsbury May 13 (AS) and Plainfield May 15 (AB, LM). By the end of May the movement had peaked and they were recorded everywhere. **Eastern wood pewees** were in Williston by May 13, but in the Connecticut River valley didn't arrive until May 27 (WE, GE) at Mount Ascutney. They were reported regularly during the peak of movement in early June by only a few observers in Hartford (WE, GE) and Woodstock (RF). Is this another species that goes unnoticed until it starts its breeding songs? The elusive **olive-sided flycatcher** was recorded only once, in Dorset on May 26 (WE, GE). This whole family needs more careful study to determine its status in Vermont.

**HORNED LARK** — **Horned larks** were seen "after storms" throughout the winter (CY) in the Champlain Valley, but were not recorded until their spring movement in eastern areas of the State. There were four in Springfield on April 28 (WE, GE, DF, TF) and ten in Woodstock on May 10 (RF).

**SWALLOWS** — As usual **tree swallows** arrived first, with two seen over Bennington on April 12 (MV). By April 14 a few were at Addison and Lake Bomoseen (WE, GE) and at Williston by April 18 (CY). On April 15, the Connecticut River Valley had its first reported birds, thirty-four at Hartford

(WE, GE). Numbers built at the last location to a maximum of 959 (count 'm!) on April 25 (WE). April 29 brought the first report from Calais — 127 birds (FO, JW). The first **barn swallows** were reported from Williston on April 17 (CY), and from Calais (one) on April 18 (FO, JW). — a nice record for that northern area. In central Vermont they were finally recorded on April 24, two in Hartford (WE) and one in Randolph (EC, MC). By the second week in May migration was in full swing everywhere. **Bank swallows** were the next to arrive, being recorded by April 24 in Hartford where two were seen by Walt Ellison, and by April 29 in Calais (FO, JW). Their movement peaked and ended by mid-May with maximum counts of 68 in Hartford on May 5 (WE, GE, LD), 90 near Lake Champlain on May 12 (WE, GE) and 40 in Calais on May 14 (FO, JW). The Ellisons reported the arrival of a single **rough-winged swallow** in the Hartford area, where they nest, by April 26. Counts had reached six by mid-May. The only other record in Vermont was from Winhall, where Norse saw one bird on May 20, presumably the last of the migrants. **Cliff swallows** were seen first in Calais, again an early swallow record for that northern area (FO, JW). That count of seven was the highest until mid-May, as single birds were sighted at Hartford May 2 (WE) and Winhall May 4 (WN). The Ellisons saw twenty near Lake Champlain on May 12 and nine at Hartford on May 13, for the only other records. The latest of the swallows to arrive, **purple martins**, reached their nesting houses near Addison by May 12 (WE, GE) and that was the only record.

**JAYS, CROW, RAVEN** — No winter records of the **gray jay** were submitted, so we have only a little notion as to when most of the birds pull back north for breeding. The **blue jay**, of course, is a permanent resident and unless someone keeps close records of the numbers of individuals seen, the migratory individuals go through unnoticed. Banding records this spring suggest that the movement lasted from mid-April to the end of May, but we



need corroboration by field observers. Since blue jays move in flocks at low altitude until mid-morning, patient observers could watch the skies for a few hours each day and make a real contribution. Common crows are also permanent residents, but less abundant during winter than blue jays, so the return of migrants is more easily noticed. Records began to increase in late February, with a maximum count of 92 birds in the Norwich area on March 25 (WE, GE). No-one is sure how much movement the common raven makes, but it seems that individuals are seen more often in spring at any rate. Two were reported from Winhall on March 22 (WN) and nesting pairs were observed from mid-April north of Springfield (DC) and near Sherburne (WJ). Beautiful records of nesting activity were submitted by Don Clark which will form part of a longer article at a later date. The nesting of ravens in Vermont is not well documented. A single individual at Fairlee on April 22 and May 5 (GE) may indicate another nesting pair there.

**CHICKADEES, TITMOUSE** — The lack of careful records on the numbers of black-capped chickadees prevents any clear indication of the passage of migrant individuals of this permanently resident species. Banding records suggest movement through April to mid-May. The much less common boreal chickadee were unreported as a winter visitant. Tufted titmice, expanding their range into Vermont as permanent residents in new localities, turned up at Bennington (two) on April 26 (MV) and much farther north in E. Barre (one) throughout the winter and spring seasons (RJ).

**NUTHATCHES** — Since both the red-breasted nuthatch and the white-breasted nuthatch are permanent residents, few observers made careful notes of changes in abundance. Banding records indicate migratory populations pass through in the last half of April and the first half of May, but again, more field observations are needed. Even the distribution of the red-breasted nuthatch in the State is unclear.

**CREEPER** — Brown creepers are permanent residents, but migratory populations begin to move through the area in March and the species becomes more abundant. Sightings of single birds in Plainfield (MM) and Hartland (WE, GE) on March 4 were probably of migrants. Another was noted in Winhall March 9 (WN) and reports were regular throughout the State in April and early May.

**WRENS** — House wrens first appeared in Randolph, where one was noted from May 4 to May 10 (EC, MC). The Ellisons recorded one in the Hartford area by May 9 and four by May 19. Strangely, there were no other records except Bob Jervis's comment that they were "common" during migration in Washington County. Early arrivals of winter wrens were in Winhall April 3 (WN), Fairlee April 22 (WE, GE), Calais April 24 (FO, JW) — all single birds. This represents some nice observations of northward progression, but there the record stops, with no indication of migratory build-up. A final record of 4 from Plainfield (MM) in May 14 come at the end of the Spring movement. Long-billed marsh wrens were in Dewey's Marsh (Quechee) by May 12 (RF) and near Dead Creek in Addison the same day (WE, GE). There were no records of the very rare Carolina wren and none of the short-billed wren, which is usually sighted.

**MIMICS** — Mockingbirds were seen singly in Manchester on May 12 (WE, GE) and Londonderry May 18 (TW), with two reported from Addison May 27 (WN). The first State breeding record will be reported in another article. Catbirds were seen in Randolph (one) on May 4 (EC, MC), for the first spring record, with two noted in Thetford May 6 (JM), one in Manchester May 12 (WE, GE) and two in Calais May 15 (FO). They were apparently considered too common for careful records after that! Notes were made of early brown thrashers by April 22, with one in Hartford (WE). Another was seen in Saxton's river on April 25 (KS). Again, except for a May 15 record of one at Poultney (AM), careful records ceased,

and we have no clear picture of their May movements.

**THRUSHES** — Two robins were in Winhall by March 12 (WN), and in the Champlain Valley near Williston on March 15 (CY). Single birds had reached Plainfield (MW) and Hartford (WE) by March 24, with one in Woodstock March 26 (JW). Thereafter numbers increased, with fifty recorded on an April 8 field trip in Plainfield (MM), 200 in Bennington on April 11 (MV), 71 in "western Vermont" (GE, WE) on April 14 and peaks everywhere by the first of May. Hermit thrushes were noted by few in Vermont, with one seen in Quechee on April 21 (FO, JW) and one in Fairlee the next day (WE, GE). But the only record after that was of two birds in the Hartford area on May 19 (WE, GE). What happened to our observers? Wood thrushes were seen single in Hartford by May 3 (WE, GE), Williston by May 5 (CY), Randolph by May 6 (EC, MC), and Plainfield by May 11 (FO, BJ). There were peaks in east-central Vermont by May 19 when 16 birds were reported by the Ellisons, but no helpful records were received from others. The Ellisons also reported a Swainson's thrush from Hartford on June 12 and six gray-cheeked thrushes from Mt. Equinox on June 9, but these are late records and it must have been that the movement of these uncommonly seen birds went generally unobserved.

The movement of veerys was noticed, with one to two birds reported from Winhall May 4 (WN), Hartford May 5 (WE), Williston May 10 (CY), and North Calais May 14 (FO, JW). By that time peak numbers (14) were recorded on field trips near Hartford (WE, GE). Single eastern bluebirds were reported from Winhall March 16 (WN), Calais March 28 (MM), Plainfield March 31 (MM), Barre April 2 (MM), Saxton's River April 10 (DC) and Hartford April 18 (HG BG). After this movement, others were seen as nesting commenced.

**GNATCATCHER AND KINGLETS** — Our usual single record of a blue-gray



Sp 13

gnatcatcher occurred this year in Winhall (WN), on May 12. Very early records of the golden-crowned kinglet in Winhall March 3 (WN) and Hartford March 5 (WE) may be of wintering visitants. A later record by the Ellisons of eighteen in "western Vermont" on April 14 more likely was of migrants, but that's the extent of our reports. Ruby-crowned kinglets were noted a little later than usual, with one in Pomfret April 19 (JN), three in Hartford April 21 (WE, GE), and singles in Calais on April 23 (FO, BJ) and Saxton's River April 25 (KS). Before the species left the area there were four reported from Norwich on April 29 (WE, GE), five from Hartford on May 2 (WE), and a last bird in Manchester on May 12 (WE, GE).

PIPIT — Two out of six water pipits first sighted on May 1 lingered until June 4 near Vernon (LM), but no others were reported in the State.

WAXWINGS — Single cedar waxwings were sighted on May 24 in Bennington (MV), May 26 in Shrewsbury (SL) and May 27 in Hartford (WE). By June 9, the spring movement had picked up, with twelve sighted in Manchester (WE, GE). Unfortunately, the records stopped coming in at that point. Did observers decide they were too common to report? As expected there were no Bohemian waxwings reported.

SHRIKES — Northern shrikes, here as winter visitants, remained in Hartford until March 10, where one was seen by George Ellison and in Plainfield until March 11, the last date for an individual watched by Marion Metcalf. Loggerhead shrikes, possible arrivals for the breeding season, went unrecorded.

STARLING — Permanently resident starlings were seen regularly, with numbers swelling by the end of March as nicely recorded only by the Ellisons in Hartford. We need other observers making daily counts of these birds in specific localities, so that the influx of migrant individuals can be satisfactorily documented.

VIREOS — Solitary vireos moved in first, as expected, with individuals recorded at Winhall April 22 (WN), Hartford April 24 (WE) and North Calais April 25 (FO, JW). Two each were sighted in Fairlee and Hartford by the Ellisons on May 5 and 6, and finally ten in a very small area near Plainfield on May 15 (LM, AB), apparently after a good night for migration. Red-eyed vireos and warbling vireos arrived together and were seen regularly. Records for the former include one at Bennington May 11 (MV), one at Manchester May 12 (WE), one at Hartford May 17 (WE), eighteen in the area from Manchester to Shrewsbury on May 26 (WE, GE) and thirty-one in the area Mt. Ascutney to Hartford on May 27 (WE, GE). In Williston they were reported by May 13 (CY). Numbers of the warbling vireo were lower as usual, with individuals at Hubbardton and Chimney Point on May 12 in the Champlain Valley (WE, GE) and at Brattleboro and Vernon on May 13 and 19 (LM). They reached Hartford by May 16 where two were seen (WE) and in North Calais they were finally recorded on May 27 (FO, JW). No Philadelphia vireos were seen and there were only two records of the yellow-throated vireo, one at Dorset of May 26 (WE, GE), the other at Sandbar State Park on June 1 (FO, BJ).

WOOD WARBLERS — Warbler reports from the Champlain Valley were lacking entirely, so the following documents only their movement at Saxton's River (KS, GF) and Vershire (SD) by April 25, with individuals seen at Hartford May 2 (WE), North Calais May 4 (FO, JW) and Woodstock May 5 (RF). By mid-May they were being reported from all over the State in fairly good numbers during a day's field trip. There were no worm-eating warblers nor blue-winged warblers seen, but golden-winged warblers were seen in small numbers at the usual locality in Saxton's River by May 16 (DC). Tennessee warblers were reported as single birds only from the Manchester area by May 12 (WE, GE), Winhall May 13 and 30 (WN) and Hartford May 20 (WE, GE). Single

Nashville warblers arrived in Hartford on May 2 and 10 (WE) and in Plainfield on May 11 (FO, BJ). The highest numbers seen during their normal May movement were only six in the Manchester area (WE, GE) on May 12 and seven in Shrewsbury on May 26 (SL, WE, GE). Parula warblers were seen even less frequently, with singles noted in Fairlee May 5 (WE, GE, LD) and Hartford on May 16 and 29 (WE). There were three seen in Plainfield by May 11 (FO, BJ). The only other report was of a bird in Plymouth on June 16 that may have been breeding (WE).

Single yellow warblers were being seen as early as May 4 in East Bethel (EC, MC), May 5 in Woodstock (RF), and May 8 in Hartford (WE). At that point numbers picked up considerably, with six reported from Hartford on May 10 (WE), twenty-one from Manchester on May 12 (WE, GE), fifteen from the Hartford area May 19 (WE, GE) and fifteen from Dorset and Shrewsbury on May 26 (WE, GE). There were no reports from northern Vermont, except from Bob Jervis who calls them "uncommon" during spring migration. This is an easily identified warbler in spring and it seems as though we could work out a pretty good picture of its movements and abundance with concentration by observers on this species.

The Ellisons stood alone in their coverage of magnolia warbler movements, except for the early Vermont record of one bird in Pomfret on May 11 (CP) and another of five birds in Plainfield May 15 (LM, AB). Their records show one bird in Hartford May 19, two on May 22. Maximum was only four birds at Shrewsbury on May 26, with one at Mt. Ascutney on May 27 and three at Mt. Equinox on June 9. Again, Bob Jervis calls them "common" in Washington County, but we have no specific records. For Cape May warblers, William Norse had a monopoly with two sightings of individual birds on May 13 and 30. I suspect these birds could be turned up more frequently by others if some careful watching was done. Bruce

Petersen, although he submitted no actual records on the bird, writes from Middlebury, "I personally made five different observations of Cape May warblers this Spring. For a bird that some say is rare the things seem to be showing up more and more around here."

For **black-throated blue warblers**, the Ellisons again kept the only careful records of movements. Chris Peterson had the early record in Pomfret, May 4 and they had one in Hartford May 6, four in Manchester May 12, three in Shrewsbury May 26 and five on Mt. Equinox on June 9 (a late date for migration — probably breeding birds). In northern Vermont, there were only two early records, from Woodbury on May 15 (FO), and another of five birds on the same date in Plainfield (LM, AB), but Bob Jervis calls them "common" there. We need some better documentation of warblers up north.

The earliest **yellow-rumped warblers** (formerly myrtle warblers) were reported as single birds from North Hartland April 21 (WE, GE), Fairlee April 22 (WE, GE), Calais April 24 (FO, JW) and Hartford April 28 (WE). Thereafter numbers began to increase, with sightings everywhere by the second week in May, but only in breeding locations at the end of the month. The Ellisons documented a build-up of **black-throated green warblers**, with one in Manchester on April 28, one in Hartford May 2, five in Hartford May 6, five in Manchester May 12, thirteen between Hartford and Mt. Ascutney May 27 and ten in Hartford May 29. In northern Vermont, the first was recorded in Calais May 10 (FO) and five in Plainfield May 15 (LM, AB). **Blackburnian warblers** were also covered fairly well by the Ellisons, who noted four in Hartford May 6, four in Bennington May 11 (MV), six in Manchester May 12, eight in Hartford May 24 and peaks of sixteen and ten in the Hartford area on May 27 and 29. First reports in northern Vermont were from North Calais on May 18 (FO) and Plainfield on May 15 (LM, AB) when "ten to fifteen" appeared after an

apparently good night for migration. The peak count in Vermont was from Bennington May 23, where twenty were seen (MV). Interestingly, Calais in northern Vermont had the first **chestnut-sided warbler** on May 10 (FO), with three reported the same day from Hartford (WE, GE). Within a week they were everywhere in good numbers, the last of the migrants as recorded at banding stations in the first week of June. Individual **bay-breasted warblers** turned up at Vernon May 13 (LM), Hartford May 19 (WE, GE), Shrewsbury May 26 (WE, GE), Hartford May 27 (WE), Winhall May 31 (WN) and a final bird at Hartford June 1 (WE). **Blackpoll warblers** moved into the State of Hartford on May 29 and 30, with two seen each day (WE). As one of the latest warbler migrants they continued moving through the first two weeks of June, during which time maximum numbers for a day's field trip were thirty as reported from Mt. Equinox on June 9 (WE, GE). A count of twenty-seven at Killington Peak on the State Conference field trip were probably the last of the migrants beginning to settle in for breeding. Two **pine warblers** were seen as early as April 19 in Hartland (ES), with another in Quechee on April 28 (WE, GE), and three in Wilder and Norwich on May 5 (WE, GE, LD). They have usually moved through east-central Vermont by mid-May, and the note that one of the latter birds was, "carrying nesting material," may indicate the first of the breeding. A definite breeding record for that area has not been established, however.

A male **prairie warbler** was reported from the same spot as last year in Saxton's River on June 16 (DC). A much earlier record was established at Bondville on May 24 (WN). The former bird, being so late, may be at least "trying to breed." **Palm warblers**, passing through the State, were noted only twice, two at Hartland on April 19 (ES) and one at Winhall April 22 (WN). **Ovenbirds** arrived as early as May 2, when one was seen at Hartford (WE). Two had reached Calais by May 10 (FO) and thereafter the build-up was obvious in all areas of the State. The

highest numbers were reported near the last of the movement, from Hartford and Mt. Ascutney where nineteen were recorded on May 27 (WE, GE). **Northern waterthrushes** were seen (two) at Manchester on May 12 (WE, GE), one at Marshfield May 18 (FO, BJ), five at Dorset May 26 (WE, GE) and three at Dorset June 9 (WE, GE). The even less common Louisiana waterthrush was seen at Dorset May 26 (WE, GE) and another at Plymouth on June 16 on a State Conference field trip.

**Mourning warblers** were seen only twice, once by Bruce and Judith Peterson near Middlebury on May 23, and again by William Norse at Winhall, June 3. Two **common yellowthroats** on May 23, at Hartford (WE, GE, LD) were the first recorded in Vermont. By May 12, when eleven were seen at Manchester, they were regular in southern Vermont, and by May 14 two were seen in Calais (FO, JW). After that, and throughout May, they were everywhere in good numbers. Single **Wilson's warblers** were recorded first in Calais on May 9 (JW), then in Winhall May 11 (WN), Norwich May 20 (WE) and Shrewsbury, for the last record, on May 26 (WE). **Canada warblers** reached the State by May 12, when the Ellisons recorded five at Manchester. They also found three at Hartford May 19, two at Dorset May 26, two at Hartford May 27 and three at Dorset and Mt. Equinox June 9. This species is usually expected on every field trip to the proper habitat in the last week of May. Where were all our observers? The Ellisons again documented the arrival of **American redstarts**, with a first sighting of seven at Manchester on May 12, seven at Hartford on May 13, thirty-five in the Hartford area on May 19, twenty from Manchester to Shrewsbury May 26 and twenty three from Hartford to Mt. Ascutney May 27. Other records included two at North Calais by May 25 (FO).

**WEAVER FINCH** — **House sparrows** were regular and widespread as permanent residents.

**BLACKBIRDS** — Six bobolinks were seen at Dead Creek near Addison by May 12 (WE, GE) and the species had moved north as far as Williston by May 19 (CY) in the Champlain Valley. In the eastern half of the State they were first recorded in the Hartford area (nine) on May 19 (WE, GE) and northward in Plainfield by May 26, when nine were seen (FO, JW). Three seen in Dorset on May 26 (WE, GE) were the last reported in spring movement before individuals settled into their sparsely distributed breeding habitat. Eastern Meadowlarks were seen as early as March 31 in Hartford (WE, GE), but the two seen there were the only record until April 10, when one was seen in Wilder (WE, GE). On April 14 there were four in "western Vermont" (WE, GE), one in Quechee on April 21 (FO, JW), and ten seen on a field trip from Hartford to Springfield near the peak of spring movement, April 28 (WE, GE). Six in Woodstock May 5 (DL) and sixteen in "western Vermont" (WE, GE) were the last of the Spring records. Winhall had two red-winged blackbirds as early as March 3 (WN) and the species moved north rapidly: four in Hartford March 4 (WE) and one in Plainfield March 10 (MM). In the Hartford area numbers continued to build as recorded by the Ellisons: sixty-nine on March 10, 91 on March 18, and 114 on March 25. Continued movement in April produced 263 on a field trip in the Champlain Valley April 14 (WE, GE) where the first birds were recorded March 5 (CY). By April 28, a field trip across the State from Manchester to Hartford produced a dwindling total of 121 (WE, GE).

Northern orioles were picked up first in Randolph, where one was seen May 7 (EC, MC) and by May 10 they were at Williston (CY) and Hartford (WE). The next day one was recorded in Plainfield (FO, BJ). One in Woodstock May 12 (RF), two in Shrewsbury (AJ) and Poultney (AH) May 13, one in Pomfret May 14 (SC) and fifteen in the Hartford area May 19 where the only other records during the Spring movement, which usually lasts through the first week in June. No orchard orioles were

recorded. Rusty blackbirds were seen irregularly: one in Winhall March 11 (WN), five at Hartford March 18 (WE, GE), one in Woodstock March 28 (SM), twenty-five in Calais April 23 (FO, JW) and a final passing bird in Manchester on April 28 (WE, GE). The first common grackles were seen (two) in Winhall March 3, followed by four in Grafton March 8 (DC), one in Hartford March 10 (WE, GE), and moving north to Plainfield with three on March 10 becoming ten the next day (MM). By March 18 numbers in Hartford on a field trip increased to 43, with 95 seen in the area March 25. Plainfield produced 50 for Marion Metcalf by April 11, and the Ellisons recorded 273 at the Spring peak in "western Vermont." Brown-headed cowbirds turned up first at Plainfield March 11 (MM), with numbers at Hartford building from 40 to 197 on two field trips, March 18 and 31 (WE, GE). In Winhall, the first bird was seen March 25. The mid-April peak produced 344 on a field trip in "western Vermont" (WE, GE).

We need more continual reports, particularly from the Champlain Valley, in order to work out patterns of movements of the common blackbirds in Vermont.

**TANAGER** — Scarlet tanager reports were slim, with one in Hartford May 9 (WE, GE), one in Manchester May 12 (WE, GE), "a pair" in Williston May 19 (CY), six each day in the Hartford area on May 19 and June 1 (WE, GE), and one in Reading May 24 (CP).

**GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS, BUNTINGS** — Cardinals, presumably resident, were reported from several localities during the Spring: singles in Saxton's River (KS, GF), Manchester (WE, GE), Hartland (WE, GE), Norwich (WE, GE), Hartford (WE, GE), Woodstock (RF), South Woodstock (RF) and Plainfield (MM), and four in Wilder (WE, GE).

Other "winter finches" will be considered as a group, out of the normal A.O.U. Checklist order. Evening grosbeaks, as winter visitants, were

present throughout the State, usually near feeding stations, in flocks reaching fifty or more birds. Normally, numbers increase during early April as migrants come through from wintering areas farther south. This year the lack of consistent records from specific localities over that period makes that movement unclear in most of the State. High counts at Plainfield occurred April 2 (MM) and at Hartford April 8 (WE, GE), but in Bennington on May 2 (MV). The last record as the birds left the State was from Hartford, where one bird was recorded on May 26 (WE, GE). Late dates from other localities are missing. Numbers of pine grosbeaks were relatively slim all winter with no indication of the usual influx of birds from south of Vermont in late March. The species was last seen in Winhall April 3 (WN), Bennington (five) April 5 (MV), and in Fairlee as a flock of twenty-five on May 5 (WE, GE, LD). The rare hoary redpoll went unrecorded over the winter and common redpolls were unusually scarce. The only records of the latter were of six at Williston "in February" (CY) one in Woodstock April 10 (SM) and one at Bennington April 11 (MV), about the time they're usually last seen in the State.

Pine siskins were seen regularly here and there over the winter, with a major flight developing in late February as birds moved northward through the State. There were high counts of 100-200 on many days in March and April at Winhall (WN), and they were "numerous" during the period at Grafton (DC). The Ellisons in Hartford recorded scattered nesting records in the State in past years, observations of birds carrying nesting material and dead birds with brood patches suggested the commencement of nesting in late March over most of Vermont (LM, RF, SM). No nests were discovered, but juveniles were seen in many localities by late April (RF). This represents nesting in unprecedented numbers here — an incredible record for Vermont. Numbers decreased considerably, especially in southern Vermont, in early May, with in-

dividuals last sighted in Peru on June 1 (WN) and Hartford (four) June 3 (WE). There were apparently very few red crossbills around until winter visitants to areas farther south began to accumulate here on their return through the State. William Norse reported an unspecified number from Winhall on March 2, just before Tom Will in Londonderry began to see them regularly in flocks of ten to twelve. Tom had a total of 120 on March 6, with 150 on March 16, twenty-seven on March 24, thirty-two March 28 and last sighted them on March 31. Don Clark averaged ten to thirty each day through the last half of March in nearby Grafton. In Hartford, on the other hand, although the Ellisons saw two on March 10, and eleven on April 8, flocks were not regular until May! They had numbers up to twenty from May 6 to June 9. White-winged crossbills were much less regular, with only one report of a female in Londonderry March 6 (TW).

Now a look at other members of this family. First records this year for rose-breasted grosbeaks came from Shrewsbury on May 4, when a lonely bird was well watched by a crowd of observers (NB, AS, SS, GS, PP)! Three were seen in Hartford by May 7 (WE, GE) and singles in Woodstock (RF) and Plainfield (FO, JW) by May 12. The only other reports were from Shrewsbury May 13 (AS), from Hartford and Norwich (ten) on May 19 (WE, GE) and Poultney May 22 (AH). The reports drop off just when we should have been recording a peak of migrants!? Indigo buntings appeared at Guilford (two) May 13 (LM), Bennington May 23 (MV) and Hartford May 24 (WE). At the peak of their movement in late May and early June there were three seen in Bennington on June 4 (MV) and four at Mt. Equinox June 9 (WE, GE). Purple finches occasionally overwinter and there were records of single birds appearing on March 10 in Winhall (WN), March 17 in Plainfield (MM) and March 28 in Hartford (WE, GE) that may fall into that category. Eight in Hartford on April 11 probably represent the real start of migration, with three in Woodstock April 12 (SM),

twenty reported from Marshfield April 28 (MM) and sixteen from Hartford May 9 (WE). The house finch, expanding its range as a cage bird escapes centered in lower New England, was recorded (one) in Bennington on April 11 (MV) and Pownal (two females — no date, no observer's name).

American goldfinches, around fairly regularly as permanent residents in winter, seem to have more flock movement in March and April, so reports begin to increase then. Tentative banding information suggests that the first influx of northward moving birds from south of Vermont comes about the first of May. The Ellisons in Hartford submitted the only continual records from one locality. They noted an increase to peaks of 110 birds on May 2 and 65 on May 6 from five to ten daily. In Woodstock, peak number for a day's trip was 35 on May 5. We need consistent records on this species over late winter and spring from all observers.

Single rufous-sided towhees appeared in Guilford April 21 (LM), Calais April 25 (FO), Hartford April 28 (WE) and Norwich April 29 (WE, GE). Numbers picked up after that, with nine in Hartford May 6 (WE), and seventeen in that area May 19 (WE, GE). Additional reports came only from Poultney on May 3 (JH) and Woodstock May 12 (SM). These birds are more common than that. What happened to our observers? Savannah sparrows were first noted in Hartford (two) April 17 (WE), with five in Marshfield by April 19 (FO, JW). Through the rest of the Spring movement, ending a little after mid-May, they were reported from both sides of the State in numbers up to six per day, but not from the central highlands. Vesper sparrows were seen in much the same pattern, with even fewer numbers. The Ellisons recorded two in Hartford April 21, one in Springfield April 28, and one in Fairlee May 19. Nesting habits is rare and probably few of these birds stop over, except perhaps in the Champlain Valley. We have one record of two seem

near Burlington June 1, probably birds settled in for breeding, so it's obvious we need more observers over that way. There were no records of grasshopper sparrows, Henslow's sparrows or sharp-tailed sparrows. A single slate-colored junco was reported from Hartford March 2 (WE, GE), twenty from Guilford March 4 (LM), one from Winhall March 9 and twelve by March 12 (WN), and one from Plainfield March 19 (MM). Numbers built in Hartford to fifteen April 8, thirty-two April 11, and twenty April 13 (WE). In Plainfield peaks were reached of eleven April 10, and twenty April 14 (MM).

Winter visitant tree sparrows were present in fair numbers throughout the State during late winter, with their ranks increased by northward returning migrants after mid-March. High counts were twenty-five at Peru on March 16 (TD) and Plainfield on March 19 (MM). In decreasing numbers they were seen most everywhere through the first of April, with last dates of April 20 at Winhall (WN), April 22 at Hartford (WE, GE) and April 25 at Vershire (SD). Chipping sparrows arrived in the State as early as April 20, when two were recorded at Shrewsbury (NB), with four seen at Quechee April 21 (FO, JW), two at Bethel April 22 (MR) and one at Hartford the same day (WE, GE). By the end of the month they were being seen everywhere, with up to twenty on a day's trip. Single field sparrows were recorded from Guilford March 29 and April 3 (LM), Woodstock April 10 (FT), Manchester April 14 (WE, GE), Hartford April 17 (WE, GE), Bethel April 21 (SR, MR) and Poultney April 29 (AH). In numbers never higher than three on a day's trip, they were reported regularly in migration through mid-May.

White-crowned sparrows were reported from the Champlain Valley by April 26 (CY), but only single individuals were seen elsewhere, at North Calais on May 4 (FO), Hartford on May 16 (WE, GE), AND Quechee May 23 (RF). There were occasional reports of overwintering white-throated sparrows, but



Spring '73

even as migrants began to return from areas farther south after early April, numbers on a day's trip did not exceed four until near the first of May. There were reports of migrants from Randolph April 10 (EC, MC), Manchester April 14 (WE, GE), Hartland April 19 (ES), Hartford April 21 (WE), Bethel April 22 (MR), Calais April 22 (FO), Saxton's River April 25 (KS), Rockingham April 25 (LM), Guilford April 25 (LM) and Poultney April 29 (AH). Only an April 28 trip by the Ellisons between Hartford and Manchester and a May 19 trip in Hartford and Norwich turned up between fifteen and thirty birds. Fox sparrows were seen infrequently as they passed

through the State, one in Norwich April 8 (GE), five in Manchester April 14 (WE, GE), one in Hartford April 14 (WE), one at Mt. Horrid April 20 (FO), another at Hartford May 1 (WE) and one at Williston May 20 (CY).

There were no Lincoln's sparrows sighted. One swamp sparrow was seen at Fairlee April 20 (WE), THREE AT Pomfret April 21 (FO), four at Quechee April 21 (WE, GE) and nine at Hartford and Manchester April 28 (WE, GE). At the peak of their movement into the State they were still being seen in small numbers: two in Woodstock May 23 and eighteen in a search at Dorset May 26 (WE, GE). A few song sparrows were

being reported from Guilford March 10 (LM), Hartford March 10 (WE, GE), Peru March 12 (TD), Plainfield March 25 (MM), and Woodstock March 25 (JW). In the Champlain Valley migrants were first reported March 19 (CY) at Williston. Maximum numbers were recorded at Hartford just at the beginning of April when 74 were seen on one field trip by the Ellisons, but numbers elsewhere picked up through the whole month. Lapland longspurs were recorded by Cathy Yandell at Williston after storms in January, but none were reported in the State after that. Similarly the last snow buntings were reported by Cathy the same month.

## Special Reports

We have received few reports of either breeding or migrant Whip-poor-wills from our regular observers. After mentioning to Elizabeth Clapp our interest in her report of a calling bird in Randolph, and our lack of records in recent years especially from east-central Vermont, we got the following report. Any comments from other parts of the State?

\* \* \*

After learning that our mention of a Whip-poor-will was unusual, our interest was aroused. We sent a letter to the Editor of the *White River Valley Herald* asking for any information about hearing these birds.

We were surprised and pleased at the response, by letter and by telephone. Of all the reports only two reported hearing Whip-poor-wills over the past two or three years. For everyone else the call was a rarity.

Most of the calls were heard in the first two weeks in June. One report was for the last week in May.

The first call we had was from Mrs. Klinton Wigren who reported that they had heard a Whip-poor-will near their camp in Bethel-Gilead on the evening of June 3. The next evening they heard one near the Green Mountain Stock Farm in Randolph.

From Mrs. Florence McLaughlin of Randolph we had a report of hearing the Whip-poor-will call sometime in the last of May about 5 a.m. He called for about fifteen minutes. She telephoned me again on June 20 to say that she had heard a Whip-poor-will the evening before at 9:30. She has heard them each spring for the

past few years at about the same date. She thinks this may be a breeding pair but isn't sure.

There were three reports for June 5. These came from Mrs. Wayne Oakes and Rev. Albert Kime of Randolph and from Miss Louise Putman of Bethel.

Mrs. Jennie Rhodes of West Brattleboro wrote that she had heard a Whip-poor-will in their pasture about 3 a.m. early in June. She couldn't give the exact date.

There were three reports from South Strafford. Mrs. Gladys Silloway wrote that they had heard a Whip-poor-will during the first week of June. This bird was only heard on one evening although a few years ago they were fairly common in this area. From Mrs. Ralph Brown came the report that a Whip-poor-will arrives there about June 1 and has for the past few years, staying about a month. Mrs. I.F. Zimmerman also wrote from South Strafford that she had heard a Whip-poor-will late on the night of June 6, he called for three or four hours, a very sustained call. She had not heard one previously.

The evening of June 8 my sister, Mary, and I heard a Whip-poor-will very close to the house for about half an hour. Comparing notes with neighbors the next day we learned that others had heard it, too.

All other reports were for June 10 through June 17. Mrs. Lester Day, of Braintree, reported hearing a Whip-poor-will near their camp in East Alburg sometime during the week of June 10. This bird was heard about 3:30 a.m. for half an hour. Another report for

June 10 was from Mrs. Eleanor Fortune of Randolph Center, on the North Randolph road. This call was heard at 9:30 p.m. From Christian Hill, Bethel, Mrs. Esther Clark reported hearing a Whip-poor-will on the evening of June 11 and again the evening of June 17.

Mrs. Erwin Willey of Pomfret on the road from East Barnard reported hearing a Whip-poor-will on the evening of June 11. She said that it was a warm night so the doors were open and the bird was very close to the house, apparently moving around in the shrubbery. His call was so loud that their dog was awakened. She added that it has been many years since she had heard a Whip-poor-will.

The last report came from Mrs. Edward Barnaby of Tunbridge, a mile from the village. This call was heard on June 11, the first she had heard in that area although she remembered them from her childhood in another part of the village.

All reports spoke of either woodsy or swampy areas or thick shrubbery where the birds were heard.

I hope that this information will be helpful to the Institute.

Elizabeth W. Clapp

## Cattle Egrets — The First Breeding

Early in the Spring of 1973, the Four Brother Islands were visited by Edgar Strobridge, District Warden Supervisor. During his visit he observed three Cattle Egrets. At the time of our visit (May 23, 1973) to the islands, ten Cattle Egrets were counted. Several suspected Egret nests were observed from the ground, but an exact count could not be made due to the close association with nests of Black-crowned night Herons. Most of the suspected nests were in cedar trees which had been killed by droppings from the Herons.

One cedar tree was climbed. An egg was collected and compared to a Heron egg. Upon comparison, the suspected Egret egg appeared smaller and a much paler blue than the Heron egg. The Heron's egg dimensions were 53.2 mm x 35.2 mm, and the Egret egg was 44.4 mm x 34.0 mm.

The Egret nest appeared very flimsily made of only enough thin twigs to support the eggs. Light could easily pass through the bottom of the nest.

According to available records, this is the first nesting for Lake Champlain. (The Four Brother Islands are technically in New York state — so we still have no records. —Ed.)

F. Loy McLaughlin  
Fish and Game Department

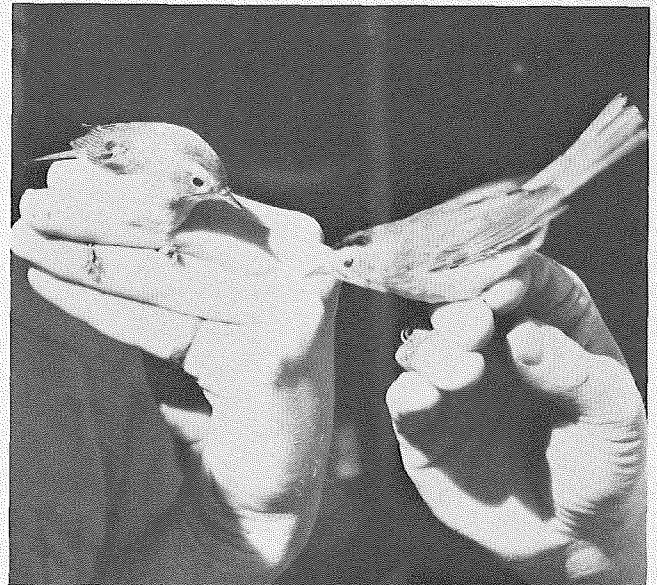
## Mockingbird Nests

In Pownal, Vermont on July 19, 1973, I found a Mockingbird nest with four young, all fully feathered. The nest was located about four and a half feet above ground in a small cedar tree on the side of a hill in a pasture dotted with these small cedars.

A week previously the male had been singing all night long, and my general impression was that he was a breeding bird. I never saw the pair together however, until I finally found the nest. Unlike my observations of nesting Mockingbirds in Florida, this nest is located well away from, and out of sight of, any house or barn. The birds act somewhat shyer than they do in the south.

The next two days were rainy, and on Sunday afternoon, the 22nd, the young had left the nest. The adult birds still scolded at our appearance (my wife was along to help with the pictures), and were carrying food in their bills, so I assumed were still feeding some of their young.

Walter Westcott



"24 grams!?" How  
do you get off the  
ground!"

# A.O.U. Shoots down U.S. birds

The publication (in *The Auk* for April 1973) of the thirty-second supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union **Check-list of North American Birds** is an important event for the birding fraternity because it calls for changes in classification and nomenclature that will be adopted in future field guides and other popular books on birds, in *Vermont Natural History* and similar publications, as well as in the scientific literature. Those of us who keep "life lists" will find that these, too, require revision.

Many of the changes are reflected in the scientific names only; these are ignored in this short article. The decisions that involve "lumping" or "splitting" of bird species recognized in the last edition of the Check-list (1957) call for changes in the common or English names, and some of these names are changed for other reasons, as noted below.

## A. CHANGES INVOLVING RECLASSIFICATION

I. The following are "lumped" because they are now considered to be color phases ("morphs" is the technical term) of one species. The old names are given in the left hand column. The currently recognized common name for the species is on the right.

Great White Heron  
Great Blue Heron

**Great Blue Heron**

(Note: "Great White Heron" (in quotes) may be used for the white birds.)

Snow Goose  
Blue Goose

**Snow Goose**

Common Bushtit  
Blacked-eared Bushtit

**Bushtit**

II. The following, formerly recognized as separate species, are now "lumped" into one. As a rule, they are now classified as subspecies, or as subspecies groups. Again, the obsolete names are on the left, the currently recognized one on the right.

Common Teal  
Green-winged Teal

**Green-winged Teal**

Red-tailed Hawk  
Harlan's Hawk

**Red-tailed Hawk**

Yellow-shafted Flicker  
Red-shafted Flicker  
Gilded Flicker

**Common Flicker**

Robin  
San Lucas Robin  
(of Baja California)

**American Robin**

Bananaquit  
Bahama Bananaquit

**Bananaquit**

Olive-backed Warbler  
Socorro Warbler  
(of Socorro Island, Mexico)

**Tropical Parula**

Myrtle Warbler  
Audubon's Warbler

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**

Baltimore Oriole  
Bullock's Oriole

**Northern Oriole**

Ipswich Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow

**Savannah Sparrow**

Seaside Sparrow  
Dusky Seaside Sparrow  
Cape Sable Sparrow

**Seaside Sparrow**

Slate-colored Junco  
White-winged Junco  
Oregon Junco  
Guadalupe Junco (of Guadalupe Island, Baja California)

**Dark-eyed Junco**

Mexican Junco  
Baird's Junco  
(of Baja California)

**Yellow-eyed Junco**

III. The following, formerly regarded as one species, are now "split" into two.  
Herring Gull

**Herring Gull**

(Note: Thayer's Gull, formerly regarded as a subspecies of the Herring Gull, breeds in the Arctic, and is sometimes seen in the U.S. in winter.)

**Trail's Flycatcher**

(Note: The northern birds, that sing "way-be-o," are Alder Flycatchers; the more southern and western birds, that sing "fitz-bew," are Willow Flycatchers.)

**Boat-tailed Grackle**

**Alder Flycatcher  
Willow Flycatcher**

**Boat-tailed Grackle  
Great-tailed Grackle**

(Note: The large grackles of the southeastern U.S. are Boat-tailed Grackles; those of the southwestern states and Middle and South America are Great-tailed Grackles.)

**B. CHANGES NOT INVOLVING  
RECLASSIFICATION**

1. "To provide a specific modifier when the same group name is employed for another Western Hemisphere species."

**Northern Fulmar** (for Fulmar), **Northern Shoveler** (for Shoveler), **Red Knot** (for Knot), **Gray Catbird** (presumably to distinguish it from the Black Catbird of Mexico, **Northern Parula** for Parula Warbler).

2. To conform with international usage.

**Merlin** (for Pigeon Hawk), **American Kestrel** (for Sparrow Hawk), **Storm Petrel** (as a group name for all petrels in the family **Hydrobatidae** to separate them from petrels in the family **Procellariidae**, e.g. **Leach's Storm Petrel** for Leach's Petrel).

3. "To avoid misleading taxonomic implications..."

**Wood Stork** (for Wood Ibis), **Upland Sandpiper** (for Upland Plover).

4. "To prevent confusion with another species bearing the same name."

**Montezuma Quail** (for Harlequin Quail).

5. "To conform with usage in the breeding region of a species that is merely a migrant or wanderer in our area."

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** (for Pale-footed Shearwater), **Short-tailed Shearwater** (for Slender-billed Shearwater), **White-tailed Eagle** (for Gray Sea Eagle).

6. To substitute a "more meaningful modifier" for the adjective "common" in some cases.

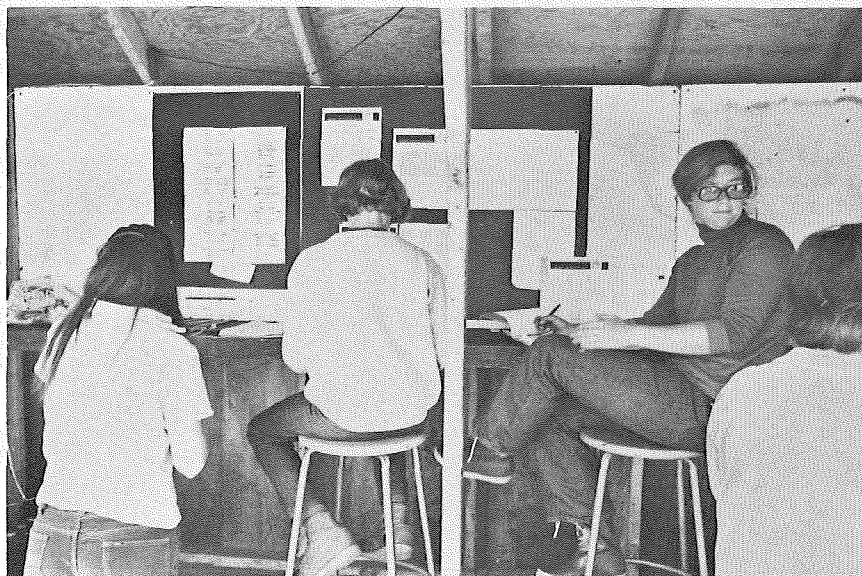
**Great Egret** (for Common Egret), **Black Scoter** (for Common Scoter).

7. Finally, "Widgeon" is henceforth to be spelled "Wigeon."

The A.O.U. Check-list has, in the past, covered the birds known to occur in the continental U.S., Canada, Greenland, Bermuda, and Baja California. In the next edition its coverage will be extended to include the birds of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies. This is a welcome change, for there has been much confusion in the nomenclature of the birds of some of the latter regions.

**Kimball C. Elkins**

Note: Reprints of the Thirty-second supplement to the A.O.U. Check-list can be purchased for \$1.25 each (so long as they last) from the Treasurer of the A.O.U.: Burt L. Monroe, Jr., Department of Biology, University of Louisville, Louisville, Ky. 40208.



Data taking at the Woodstock Banding Station