

Records of Vermont Birds

SUMMER 1976

1 JUNE - 31 JULY WAYNE SCOTT, EDITOR

Many birders, exhausted from the frenetic pace often characteristic of spring migration, lapse into aestivation during June and July. In the past, the summer records have reflected this reduced level of ornithological activity. Because birding at these times is often done without specific focus or purpose (or not at all), species accounts have sometimes been cryptic and the data difficult to analyze. For instance, people often ignore common birds in their reports. Analysis of trends in status or distribution must be made primarily on the basis of circumstantial evidence and on the intuitions of the summer editor. The advent of the Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas Project has provided impetus for lethargic birders, myself included. It has become a cause celebre, a rallying point on which torpid birders can focus their attentions, and thus generate the adrenalin necessary for surveying a block.

This was the summer of the Atlas Pilot Project; and if the response and subsequent results of this venture are in any way indicative of Atlas itself, then we can expect the accumulation of highly informative and interesting data. The response was outstanding; I received 91 block reports and a total of 107 people submitted reports of one kind or another. Compare with 1975 when only 52 birders submitted a seasonal report. Kudos go to William J. Norse who garnered 101 species in one of his blocks.

There were some outstanding birding feats which reflect the increased coverage and focus in 1976. Based on the information in Bob Spear's Birds of Vermont and previously published Records of Vermont Birds, the following birds were established as confirmed nesters for the first time: Willow Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-winged Warbler and the hybrid--Brewster's Warbler and House Finch. The occurrence of the GREATER SHEARWATER in Burlington was T-H-E ornithological event of the season.

Conspicuous by their absence in any reports were Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, and to a lesser extent: Ring-necked Ducks, Carolina Wren, Red and White-winged Crossbills. Also note the disappointing lack of shorebirds (Charadriidae and Scolopacidae). After banner years for shorebird migration in 1974 and 1975, 1976 was a flop; this can be attributed to the high water levels on Lake Champlain and along rivers throughout the state, particularly Dead Creek.

Lest this editor leave the impression that all is well with the summer records, a caveat is in order. One of the difficulties of analyzing the various summer reports, was assimilating and interpreting the data from the Atlas cards. One can infer that the occurrence of a species in a certain percentage of the surveyed blocks, is an indication of its relative abundance statewide. This is only partly true. Sixty-two of the pilot blocks were located in the middle to southern half of the state, 13 in the northwest, and of the remaining, only 16 were located in north-central or northeastern Vermont. The selection of a random

10-square-mile block from each of the 7½-minute U.S. Geological Survey Maps of the state for the five-year Atlas Project (1977-1981) will, of course, help to eliminate the problem of "weighted" data. In addition, this editor would urge that birders take a few minutes to jot down notes on nesting, egg, or fledge dates where possible; on relative abundance in your area (specific numbers where possible); and, on any other pertinent information with regard to status, distribution, nesting, etc. While this will make life more difficult for an editor, it should help to make the analysis of the data, and the subsequent report to you, more substantive and informative.

LOONS THROUGH BITTERNS

Four records of Common Loon, none of which shed any light on the 1976 nesting status of this species in Vermont, were submitted. Single individuals were sighted June 30 on Woodward Reservoir (SBL) and July 10 in Button Bay (WJN). For the second consecutive year Lake Ninevah produced a record, this one of a loon calling July 18 (SBL). A pair was sighted on July 31 on Marshfield Pond (MFM). This species has a limited occurrence in Vermont. I suspect that pressure from increased use of our larger lakes and ponds has severely restricted breeding of this species and efforts to locate and protect existing nesting sites should be made.

Other than a "possible" breeding of Pied-billed Grebe from Plainfield (MFM) and a sighting from the Bird Conference in the Northeast Kingdom, June 13, all reports came from the Missisquoi Refuge area where George O'Shea confirmed nesting in one out of three blocks where they were seen. With the absence of reports from the summer of 1975 and the dearth of reports from 1976, one wonders about the current status and/or the coverage by birders of available habitats.

Certainly, the bird of the season has to be the GREATER SHEARWATER, picked up in exhausted condition in Appletree Bay, Burlington, by Maureen McMahon (fide Eastman) and kept alive for three to four days before it died. This represents the first live sighting in the State and only the second record ever, the first being a specimen from Rutland following the 1938 hurricane. Amazingly last year's bird was first sighted June 14 flying north on the Hudson River, south of Albany. Word was passed along to observers in the Champlain Valley, including Oliver and Barbara Eastman, who were, by coincidence, in the Huntington Nature Center two days later when Ms. McMahon reported she had rescued the bird during a thunderstorm. It is presumed that this bird became displaced and disoriented during a period of stormy weather which struck the mid-Atlantic coast just prior to this time.

Great Blue Herons were listed as possible breeders in fourteen scattered locations statewide but only at Missisquoi was there confirmation of breeding within an Atlas block (GO'S). A rookery of 6-10 nesting pairs was discovered at Groton State Forest, June 20 (SA). The nests were located

on top of a 2000 foot hill, fifty feet up in dead beech trees. Other reports from scattered locales suggest that this species was commonly and widely distributed in 1976 (v.obs).

Similarly, the Green Heron was widely observed. Of 25 blocks within which this species was reported there was confirmation of nesting in Ludlow only (EE). Reports also came from Winhall, Chester, West Rutland, Dead Creek (all WJN) and Woodstock (SBL).

Cattle Egrets were reported from two Atlas blocks in the Burlington area (CSP), and a flock of 9 was seen in Addison eating meadow voles disturbed by a mower (AP). These, undoubtedly, were summer vagrants, possibly part of the nesting population at Four Brothers Islands in Lake Champlain. So far, all summer reports of this species have been limited to the Champlain Valley.

The Black-crowned Night Herons, rare outside of the Champlain Valley, were reported as possible nesters in three blocks in the Burlington area (DWh,DBe,CSP). On July 10 more than 10 were reported at Dead Creek, including an immature bird barely able to fly, suggesting that this species nested there (WJN).

The advent of the tape recorder has provided a means of more easily finding the elusive Least Bittern. All records from Atlas blocks of this species came from Missisquoi where it was listed as possible in two blocks and probable in one (GO'S). Records also continue to increase from West Rutland marsh where one was seen July 10 (WJN) and eight were reported in mid-July (LHP). One was also seen July 10 at Dead Creek (WJN). Summer records outside of the Champlain Valley are virtually nonexistent.

American Bittern was widely reported from the southern half of the State and throughout the Champlain Valley. This species was confirmed in four of 17 blocks. One was seen flying (and heard calling) over South Albany in the Northeast Kingdom (RAR). I strongly suspect that more thorough coverage of the northern part of the state would indicate that this species is more common in that area than records indicate.

GEESE AND DUCKS

Most exciting was confirmation of a nesting Canada Goose in Orwell along the Lemon Fair River (AP). This is an area considerably south of Dead Creek where pinioned geese, and more recently, wild geese, have bred. On June 11, 40-50 geese (with many goslings) were counted at Dead Creek (FO et al). Late flights of geese were reported June 13 from such widely scattered locales as to rule out one flock. Thirty-two were seen on the Passumpsic River (FO,RAR), 30 in Winhall, 45+ in Andover (WJN), and 50 in Plainfield (MFM).

A pair of late migrant Brant rested on Lake Dunmore June 14 for a few minutes before continuing north again (WS).

Mallards were confirmed as nesting in 13 blocks, listed as probable in one and possible in 13 others.

Equally numerous were Black Ducks which nested in 23 of the Atlas blocks and were present in nine others. Among the reports for this species was one of 1-2 fledglings with a female, east of Island Pond, June 13 (FO,RAR).

Vermont lies just to the south of the Pintails' breeding range. In Birds of Vermont breeding is listed as irregular. It is interesting, therefore, that fledglings were observed in one block at Missisquoi, and two additional blocks produced "possible" breeding records (GO'S).

Blue-winged Teal were widely reported in the Champlain Valley. Confirmation of nesting was obtained at Missisquoi where this species was confirmed in three blocks and at Weathersfield (EE). Sightings were made also at Colchester, St. George, and Dead Creek (DWh,CSP,WJN,FO et al).

Well east of its normal breeding range, Northern Shoveler was seen in a block at Missisquoi (GO'S). There are scattered records of its breeding outside of the usual nesting range, in-

cluding New York and Vermont; so this sighting, though unusual, is not totally unexpected.

Wood Duck was confirmed in seven of sixteen blocks in which it was found. Once again the greatest frequency of occurrence came from Missisquoi where confirmation was obtained in three blocks. In addition, nesting was confirmed in Woodstock, Gale Meadows, Saxton's River, and Brattleboro. Also, a female and 7 young were seen at Barre Reservoir, July 25 (MFM).

Except for Missisquoi, where three blocks produced confirmation of breeding of Common Goldeneye, there was only 1 other report, from Reading, where a male was seen on a pond July 5 and 7 and listed as a possible breeder (SBL).

Missisquoi also provided the majority of records of Hooded Merganser. George O'Shea confirmed nesting in two of five blocks in which this species occurred. The only other record came from Gale Meadows where it was also confirmed as a nester (WJN).

In contrast to the previous two species, the only sightings of Common Merganser came from the central and northeastern parts of the state. Confirmation of nesting was obtained in Lyndonville (DHM), Londonderry (GA), and Ludlow (EE). In addition, Frank Oatman observed a female with three young on the Lamoille River in Wolcott June 10, and on June 13 a pair was seen examining nest sites at Gale Meadows (WJN).

VULTURES AND HAWKS

There was a sharp decline from 1975 in the number of Turkey Vultures reported from the Champlain Valley, but a dramatic increase in sightings from the Connecticut River Valley. This species was listed as a possible nester in Springfield (JLW), Sudbury (AP), Saxton's River (DC), and Wilmington (WN). Single vultures from the central Champlain Valley were reported June 5 from West Rutland (WJN), July 8 from Bristol Cliffs (PMB), and July 10 from Dead Creek (WJN). On June 30, three were sighted in Hartland (TC) and a season high of 12 was seen July 1 (HB,TC).

Recorded as a possible nester in only three locations, Goshawk was observed in the Killington area (SBL) and near Delectable Mountain (GFE,WGE). In addition, a single individual was spotted June 5 in Groton State Forest (RAR).

Sightings of Sharp-shinned Hawks increased from 1975. Blocks from the following locales: Delectable Mountain (GFE,WGE), Saxton's River (DC), Ludlow (MVB), and Cuttingsville (GSC) contained possible nesting sharpies. Single birds were also sighted at Groton State Forest June 5 (RAR,SA) and at Island Pond June 13 (CVB).

Two locations were listed as possible nesting sites of the rare Cooper's Hawk, Bennington (MBV) and Brattleboro (JPN).

Red-tailed Hawks were widely dispersed and common. It was confirmed in seven blocks and occurred in 29 others. Interestingly, a melanistic (all black with red tail) Red-tail was sighted near Island Pond July 11 (WJN).

Just as widely distributed, but in apparently fewer numbers, was the Red-shouldered Hawk, which was established as a confirmed nester in Gale Meadows (WJN), Springfield (JLW), Saxton's River (DC), Brattleboro (ASW) and Plainfield (EA).

Broad-winged Hawks were in good numbers and widely distributed; they were listed as possible nesters in fourteen blocks, as probable in ten and confirmed in nine. William Norse reported 2-3 pairs in Winhall.

Four sightings (8 in 1975) were made of Bald Eagles. An immature bird was observed near the Crown Point Bridge June 9 (AP). On June 12 a single adult was sighted in Berlin (MFM) and another was seen during the June 13 field trip to Lake Memphremagog (CVB). In Randolph Center, one was spotted July 5 (EWC).

Marsh Hawk, listed as "common" in summer in Birds of Vermont, was found as a possible nester in Sudbury (AP) and at one location at Missisquoi (GO'S). It was confirmed as a nester in Arlington

(CSC). The 3 records this season are an improvement over 1975 when none was found; but the status of this raptor in Vermont remains seriously reduced.

Osprey reports came from Burlington where it was sighted in one of the Atlas blocks (BG,GG). One was sighted in Addison during the first week of June (AP) and 1 was reported in Island Pond June 13 (GFE,WGE). The recent breeding success of this species may lead to an increase of sightings in summer.

American Kestrel was confirmed as a nester in no fewer than 25 of the 62 blocks in which it was found.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse was common and widespread, with a total of 57 blocks reporting this species. Of these blocks, 35 confirmed nesting.

Bobwhite, unreported to Records of Vermont Birds before spring 1976, was sighted on three separate occasions: June 5 in Ferrisburg (IOR), June 10 in Pomfret where a male and female were seen together (ARC), and in June in Gifford Forest, Sherburne (EHa).

Two reports of Ring-necked Pheasant came from Bennington (MBV) and Missisquoi (GO'S). Both reports listed this species as a possible nester. This introduced species has, so far, fared poorly in Vermont.

Another introduced species, Gray Partridge, has apparently held its own in Grand Isle County, where it has immigrated from its range in northern New York State. At Missisquoi, confirmation was obtained in one of two blocks in which it was seen (GO'S). Surprisingly, this species was listed as a possible nester in a Bennington block (MBV) well south of its normal range. To my knowledge, this species was previously unknown in Vermont outside of Grand Isle County. Between 1915-1920 this species was introduced and apparently bred, but it vanished shortly thereafter.

The Turkey continues to do well in the southwestern part of the state. Confirmation of nesting was received from Sudbury (AP), Castleton (HBD), and Arlington, where 21 young were seen (CSC). This species has obviously expanded to the Connecticut River Valley area as evidenced by the confirmed nesting reported from Brattleboro (ASW) and Saxton's River (DC). Sightings were also made in Rutland (DLB) and in the Merck Forest, West Rupert (KN,AN).

Virginia Rails were reported primarily from the Champlain Valley, but confirmation of nesting was also obtained in Plainfield (MFM,MVE), Peru (WJN), and at Curtis Pond (MFM). These birds, apparently, are quite common at West Rutland Marsh and Missisquoi.

Sora Rails were reported from such widely separated locales as Burlington (CSP), Londonderry (WJN), Victory Bog (1 heard calling) June 13 (CVB) and West Rutland Marsh where young were observed in July (SBL).

The only Common Gallinule seen outside of the Champlain Valley was spotted June 5 near Hartford (GFE,WGE). This species was indeed common at Missisquoi as four blocks yielded evidence or confirmation of nesting (GO'S). Four were seen at Dead Creek June 11 (FO et al) and an adult with three young were observed at West Rutland Marsh July 10 (WJN).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Killdeer was commonly reported and widely distributed in 91 Atlas blocks.

Not surprisingly, confirmation of nesting of Upland Sandpiper was obtained in Orwell (AP) where it was reported that at least 2 and perhaps as many as 5 pair were nesting. These findings, plus the sighting of 1 along Route 22A in Shoreham June 5 (WJN), suggest that this species is more widely distributed in the Champlain Valley. The previous available records center primarily in the area between Dead Creek and Colchester.

Only 3 Greater Yellowlegs were seen at Dead

-3- Creek (WJN) and these were undoubtedly early fall migrants. As stated earlier, the lack of July shorebird records reflects the high water levels, due to the plentiful rainfall throughout the state.

Spotted Sandpiper was widely reported and nesting was confirmed in scattered locations in the state.

Woodcock was listed as a confirmed nester in eleven of 41 blocks from which it was reported.

Not as common, but as widely distributed, was Common Snipe, which appeared in eighteen Atlas blocks, five of which were from the Missisquoi NWR where it was a confirmed nester in three blocks. This represents an incredible increase in numbers of reports over 1975 when only 2 snipes were reported.

Incredibly, I received no reports of Ring-billed Gulls for summer 1976.

Black Terns were sighted at Missisquoi where they were confirmed as nesters in two blocks. Two were observed in Williston June 10 (FO) and 6 were seen at Dead Creek June 11 (FO et al). Several were seen at South Bay Marshes June 13 (CVB) and at Dead Creek July 10, 10 to 12 were seen feeding young. Additionally 2 others were sighted at Button Bay (WJN).

DOVES AND CUCKOOS

Mourning Doves were present in good numbers as reports of nesting confirmation were received from seventeen of 59 blocks.

Workers in Shaftsbury obtained possible nesting status for Yellow-billed Cuckoo (RSK), a species of uncertain nesting status in the state. From Springfield and Brattleboro, this species was also recorded as a possible nester. In addition, a single sighting was made June 1 in Bennington (MBV).

Of fifteen blocks in which Black-billed Cuckoo was recorded, only two listed it as confirmed. In Springfield fledglings were seen (JWL), and in Arlington an active nest was discovered (CSC). In addition, sightings were made of single birds at Williston June 10, Craftsbury June 14 and 25 (all FO), and at Dead Creek July 10 (WJN). The sharp increase in reports over 1975 suggests that this species is more elusive than scarce.

OWLS

The uncommon Screech Owl was confirmed as a nester at three locations. In all instances, fledglings were observed. Two records came from the Burlington area (CSP,FCH) and 1 was obtained in Bennington (MBV). In addition, Frank Oatman called an individual bird at the Screech Owl "hot spot", Rock Point in Burlington June 10.

Confirmed nesting of Great Horned Owl was reported from Missisquoi (GO'S) and Burlington (FCH, BG,GG). Additionally, this species was observed in nineteen other survey blocks, indicating that it enjoys a widespread distribution.

Slightly less common in 1976 was the Barred Owl, reported in 24 blocks and confirmed in Killington Peak Quad (SBL). William Norse cited breeding in Winhall is reduced over past years.

Alan Pistorius was able to confirm nesting in Orwell of the Long-eared Owl, which was this season's only report. This species was unreported in 1975; it is highly nocturnal and elusive, preferring thick evergreen copses. I suspect this bird may not be as unusual as records from the last two years would indicate.

The Saw Whet Owl was reported in three blocks including a confirmation of nesting in Underhill (BG,GG) where fledglings were discovered. Higley Hill, Wilmington, was the site of a possible nesting (WN), and in Plainfield, Gary Smith and Kathleen Wiles reported this species as a probable nester.

WHIP-POOR-WILL THROUGH KINGFISHER

The elusive, but vocal, Whip-poor-will was confirmed as a nester in a Colchester block (BG, GG). A scattering of reports came from the central part of the state: Sudbury, Proctor, Springfield,

St. George, and Saxton's River.

Common Nighthawk was confirmed as a nester in Saxton's River (DC), Springfield (JPe,MPe), and Brattleboro (LPM). Sightings were made in three additional blocks and in Fair Haven (FSA), Rutland (WJN), and Woodstock where Sally Laughlin reported a pair sighted throughout the season. Since this is one of the easiest species to observe, one wonders whether people are simply overlooking them, or are these birds indeed as uncommon as records from 1975 and 1976 would indicate.

Chimney Swift was ubiquitous; a total of 45 blocks reported the species with nesting confirmation obtained in eighteen.

Apparently, even more widespread was Ruby-throated Hummingbird which was reported in 58 blocks, but confirmed only in six.

Listed as confirmed in nineteen of 65 blocks in which it was found, the Belted Kingfisher appears to be doing well.

WOODPECKERS

No less common than the above was the Common Flicker, which was reported as a confirmed nester in 31 of 71 blocks.

A record of Pileated Woodpecker on June 10 in Craftsbury represents the northernmost sighting of this species outside of the Champlain Valley this year (RAR). Confirmation of nesting was accomplished in six of 37 blocks.

Unusual, even in the Champlain Valley, from which most of the nesting and sighting records in the last ten years have been made, a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers was reported without comment from Alden Hill, East Burke (FM). Alan Pistorius reported that this species was a possible nester in Orwell, and on June 5 William Norse observed nesting in Addison.

As expected, the majority of nesting confirmation of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker came from interior and eastern Vermont. It was found in fifty-seven blocks.

Both the Hairy and Downy Woodpecker were very widely distributed. Reports from 72 and 71 blocks, respectively, support the "common" status assigned these two species.

Three to four Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers seen June 13 near Island Pond were probably nesting (FO,WS et al); and at the edge of Peacham Bog July 9 Susan Antenen suspects there was a family group.

FLYCATCHERS

The ubiquitous Eastern Kingbird was found nesting in 44 blocks and was suspected of breeding in thirty others.

George O'Shea confirmed Great Crested Flycatcher in three of the blocks at Missisquoi and there were additional confirmations from Springfield, Arlington, Woodstock, and Brattleboro (v. obs.). In Winhall, William Norse reported they were scarcer than usual.

Eastern Phoebe, no less common than the previous two species, was confirmed in 62 of 84 blocks in which it was found.

A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, seen June 2 in Winhall, was a late spring migrant. All other seasonal birds were reported from the Northeast Kingdom. Four, seen June 5 at Groton State Forest, were probably breeding (RAR,SA). Eight to 10 were observed near Island Pond June 13 (FO,WS et al). In Craftsbury, 1 was sighted June 8 and 2 were heard calling in good habitat July 4 (RAR). A hatching year bird banded at VINS July 27 and one in Winhall July 30 probably represent the first fall migrants of this species.

Willow Flycatcher was listed as a probable breeder in two Brattleboro blocks (WN), one Hardwick block and in Orwell (AP). The Ellisons and Don Clark confirmed nesting in White River Junction and Saxton's River, respectively. In addition, one was seen at Danby July 5, and a seasonal high count was obtained July 10 at Dead Creek where 5 to 6 were seen or heard (WJN).

The more widely distributed Alder Flycatcher

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was confirmed as a nester in Saxton's River (DC). Fifteen other blocks produced records of this species, including a pair in Craftsbury June 9-10 (RAR). They were reported to be nesting in several locations around Winhall (WJN), and a singing individual was observed at Island Pond June 13 (CVB). An undated record was sent of 2 birds banded at Marshfield Pond (MFM).

A total of 54 blocks contained Least Flycatcher; 22 of these confirmed nesting. A pair was observed feeding young June 30 in Craftsbury (RAR).

Both Julia Nicholson and William Norse described Eastern Wood Pewee as being down in numbers in Woodstock (JMN) and Winhall (WJN). Ten of 54 blocks contained confirmed nesting pairs.

The boreal forest near Island Pond produced 5 Olive-sided Flycatchers June 13 (CVB). Confirmed nesting was obtained in Saxton's River, Woodstock, and Brattleboro; and evidence of breeding came from thirteen localities, none in the Champlain Valley. Gale Meadows contained 1 or 2 nesting pairs (WJN).

LARK AND SWALLOWS

A single summer record of Horned Lark in 1975 and 1 record each in 1976 from Sudbury, where this species probably nested, and from Rutland Airport June 30, suggest that this bird is either much less common than records indicate, or more likely, this inconspicuous ground dweller is overlooked in its habitat.

Tree Swallows were numerous and nesting was confirmed in 57 of 76 blocks in which it was found.

The colonial Bank Swallow was confirmed in fourteen localities. William Norse suspects breeding occurred in Chester, Dorset, West Rutland and at Dead Creek.

The rarest of the resident swallows, the Rough-winged Swallow, was confirmed as a nester in Bellows Falls (DC), Brattleboro (LPM) and Springfield (JPe). In addition, observers noted this species in Londonderry (WJN), Woodstock (SBL) and Delectable Mountain quad (GFE,WGE). A single bird over Buxton's Pond east of Island Pond June 13 was most unusual so far north (FO,WS,et al). Single birds June 4 in West Rutland, in Chester July 7 (WJN), and the presence of 2-3 all season near Woodstock round out the reports (JMN).

More than 75 Barn Swallows on wires in Rutland County July 12 (BCW) highlighted an apparently successful breeding season during which 63 of 77 blocks produced confirmed nesting.

Cliff Swallows, reported with less frequency than Tree or Barn Swallows, proved to have widespread distribution statewide, except in the Champlain Valley where nesting was apparently limited to the southern townships, Sudbury (AP), Proctor (RWP). From Wallingford Betty Weeks reported 8-10 active nests.

Purple Martins, unreported in 1975, were seen in five localities. Blocks in Missisquoi (GO'S), Burlington (BG,GG), and Colchester (BSE) produced confirmed nesting status. In Plainfield it was listed as a possible nester. The only non-Atlas sighting was July 10 at Dead Creek (WJN).

JAYS THROUGH CREEPER

A Gray Jay family group, including two adults feeding fledglings, was one of the highlights of the Bird Conference field trip to Island Pond. This establishes the second known record of nesting in this state (FO,WS et al).

Observers found Blue Jay to be widespread and common. It was confirmed in forty of 75 Atlas blocks.

The distribution of the Common Raven continued to expand in 1976 with the discovery of a nesting site on cliffs above Lake Champlain near Alburg (GO'S). Additional nesting confirmations came from Plymouth (SBL) and South Londonderry (WJN). Sightings were obtained in Plainfield (MFM), Saxton's River (DC), on Delectable Mountain (GFE,WGE), on Mt. Pisgah June 12 (FO,RAR,CSP), near Island Pond

June 13 (FO, WS et al) and in Craftsbury all season (FO, RAR).

Common Crow appeared in 65 Atlas blocks, of which 24 produced confirmation of nesting. Rose Ann Rowlett observed adults feeding fledglings July 7 in South Albany.

The population of Black-capped Chickadees was reportedly "above average" in Woodstock (JMN) and "normal" at the VINS Banding Station where 11 birds were captured. Statewide, this species proved to be one of the most widely distributed with sightings obtained in 78 blocks.

Only in Craftsbury was Boreal Chickadee confirmed as a nester (RAR). The species was also observed in Plainfield and Island Pond June 13 (FO, WS et al), where Oatman reports numbers were down this year. Obviously a late migrant, an individual was sighted just after a thunderstorm on Pine Street in Burlington June 4 (WS).

The first-ever nesting record of TUFTED TIT-MOUSE in Vermont, was obtained in Peru by Leroy Williams (fide WJN) for this season's only report. This species has been expanding its range from the south over the last ten years. It was only a matter of time before nesting was established here.

White-breasted Nuthatch, reported nesting in sixteen of 64 blocks, was probably normal in occurrence.

Red-breasted Nuthatch appeared somewhat less frequently (confirmed in twelve of 34 blocks); and in Woodstock, Julia Nicholson noted an absence of this species where they have normally occurred in the past.

Observers were able to obtain only five confirmed nesting records out of 31 blocks in which the somewhat less conspicuous Brown Creeper was found. Young were out of the nest in Craftsbury by June 30 (FO, RAR).

WRENS

Julia Nicholson in Woodstock and William Norse in Winhall reported a population decrease of House Wrens. Sixty-three blocks produced records of this species; 35 were listed as confirmed.

By contrast, the Winter Wren was reported to be numerous and common (SBL, WJN). Confirmed nesting records came from blocks in central and south central Vermont (ten in all). There were additional reports from 29 widely scattered locations.

Sightings of Long-billed Marsh Wren were strictly limited to the Champlain Valley and West Rutland Marsh with one exception: Don Clark was able to confirm it as a nester in Saxton's River. More than 10 birds were heard singing at Dead Creek June 11 (FO), for a seasonal high count.

The Short-billed Marsh Wren, which prefers short-grass marsh and hayfields, was observed nest-building in cattails at Dead Creek June 11 (FO). This rare and elusive species in Vermont was also observed at West Rutland Marsh June 5 (WN) and it was listed as a possible nester in a Saxton's River Atlas block (DC).

No Carolina Wren reports?!

MIMICS

The Mockingbird was limited primarily to the Lake Champlain and Connecticut River Valleys. Nesting confirmation was obtained at two locations near Brattleboro (LPM) and at Orwell (AP). Nesting was also observed in Pittsford in June (BMZ). Observers in Rutland and Manchester obtained sighting records June 4 and July 8 respectively. Harlan Haskins reported a single bird June 6 in St. Johnsbury, where it is decidedly rare, if not unreported.

Gray Catbird appeared in 89 Atlas blocks, 46 of which produced nesting confirmation.

Frank Oatman notes that Brown Thrasher was present in normal numbers in Craftsbury. I suspect that this was true of other locales, as 51 blocks reported this species.

THRUSHES

Robin took the honors as the most widely distributed species with 83 blocks reporting this

species. Seventy-one produced confirmation of nesting.

Twenty-six hatch-year Wood Thrushes were banded at VINS, and nesting was confirmed in 28 of 73 blocks, indicating a successful year for this species.

Hermit Thrush was not quite as commonly reported as the Wood Thrush and confirmation proved to be more difficult, as only eighteen of 58 blocks produced nesting.

The only confirmation of Swainson's Thrush was obtained at Killington (SBL). William Norse's evaluation of its status in Winhall as scarce and declining every year is underscored by the few records received. Only twelve additional blocks produced sightings.

The Gray-cheeked Thrush, limited to higher elevations, was present on Killington and Shrewsbury Mountains all season (SBL). Additional sightings came from Missisquoi (GO'S), Winhall June 25-26 where a pair was seen (WJN), and a late migrant was banded at VINS June 8.

Sixty-six blocks produced records of Veery, of which 23 were nesting confirmations.

The Eastern Bluebird, apparently, is holding its own as thirty blocks produced nesting confirmation, and there were an additional fourteen blocks from which sightings were obtained. Observers in Burlington and Missisquoi did not report any sightings.

GNATCATCHER AND KINGLETS

Confirmed nestings in Vermont of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher were obtained at Vernon and Lake Bomoseen as reported by Oatman in the spring Records of Vermont Birds. Additional sightings were made in Ludlow (MVB) and in Herrick's Cove where Don Clark discovered a singing male.

The Golden-crowned Kinglet is listed as an uncertain nester in Bob Spear's Birds of Vermont, so it is auspicious that, with increased coverage, 7 confirmed nestings were obtained: Delectable Mountain Quad (WGE, GFE), Woodstock (EH), Craftsbury (RAR), Mt. Snow (WN), Plainfield (LNM), and Winhall where 3-4 pairs were found (WJN). Rose Ann Rowlett reports that from June 28 to July 6 as many as 28-30 fledglings were present in four-six family groups in Craftsbury.

Possible and probable nesting records for Ruby-crowned Kinglet from locations considered well south of its nesting range cast doubt on the validity of the current limits of its summer range. Reports came from Londonderry (Gale Meadows), Brattleboro, Woodstock, West Rupert, White River Junction and Ludlow (v. obs.). No confirmations were obtained.

The Cedar Waxwing was widespread and commonly reported with 34 of 62 blocks listing nesting confirmation.

One report of the scarce Loggerhead Shrike was received from Orwell, where Alan Pistorius thought nesting was possible.

VIREOS AND WARBLERS

Records in 1976 indicate that while the distribution of Yellow-throated Vireo was widespread, it was of limited abundance. Confirmation was obtained in Arlington (CSC), Woodstock (SBL, JDL), and near Camel's Hump (NLP). In addition, an adult was seen carrying food in Wallingford (BCW, NWW).

Solitary Vireo was described as a common nester at higher elevations (WJN). The data tends to bear that out as locations from southern and central Vermont produced sightings and fifteen nesting confirmations.

Red-eyed Vireos were commonly reported; but, surprisingly, no hatch-year birds were banded at VINS South Woodstock station.

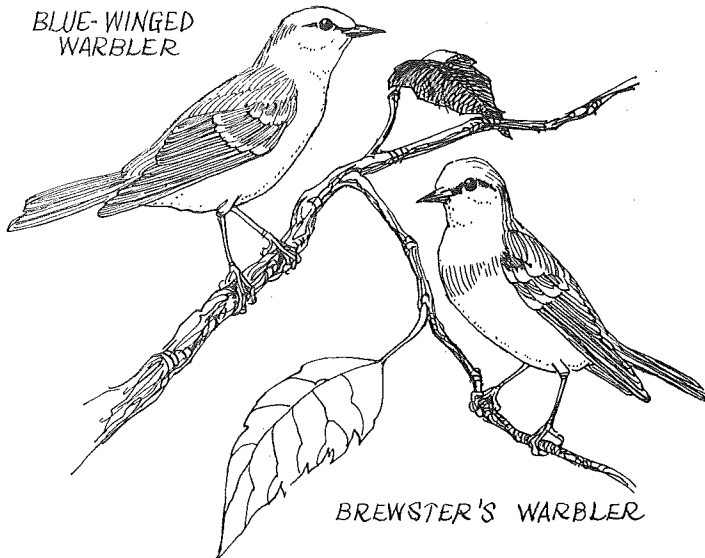
Three probable nesting reports of Philadelphia Vireo were obtained in the Delectable Mountain quadrangle (GFE, WGE). A late transient was seen June 5 in Winhall (WJN). The paucity of records indicates that this species is deserving of its uncommon status in Birds of Vermont.

Warbling Vireo was confirmed in seven of 34 blocks in which it was found.

Black and White Warblers were reported virtually statewide and twelve of 47 blocks reported confirmed nestings.

Alan Pistorius hit the jackpot in his Sudbury block when he was able to confirm nesting of the rare Golden-winged, BLUE-WINGED and BREWSTER'S WARBLERS. He found a male Goldenwing feeding newly fledged young July 9 and 10. Then in the Taconic foothills east of Sudbury Village he observed a male Brewster's (hybrid of Golden-wing and Blue-wing) and a female Blue-wing feeding young. In addition, Roy Pilcher in Proctor listed Golden-wing as a probable nester. These are remarkable records for our area.

BLUE-WINGED
WARBLER



BREWSTER'S WARBLER

No nesting confirmation of Tennessee Warblers has yet been obtained. In Whitingham a possible nesting Tennessee Warbler was reported (LBo). This species has never been confirmed nesting this far south. Another encouraging record in 1976 was a hatch-year bird, looking very recently fledged, which was banded July 29 at VJNS.

Nesting records of Nashville Warbler were obtained in Sudbury (AP) and Craftsbury (FO,RAR) where they were described as numerous. Other reports were scattered around the state. The Northern Parula was seen infrequently with 1 confirmation from Plymouth (SBL) and 2 from Plainfield (MFM,MVE,VC,LNM), West Rupert (KN et al), Delectable Mountain (GFE,WGE), Winhall (WJN), and Whitingham (LBo). Yellow Warbler, reported in 54 blocks, was numerous. Magnolia Warbler was well-distributed around the state, but in modest numbers. Thirteen blocks confirmed nesting and seventeen others were reported as supporting this species. A Cape May Warbler nest with three eggs was discovered in Sandgate (Bennington County) (HT). This is well south of the normal southern limit of its range, which in the 1957 A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds is recorded as Killington. Otherwise, all records centered around Island Pond and Craftsbury, where it was also confirmed (FO,RAR,WS et al). Thirty-eight blocks were reported as having Black-throated Blue Warblers and 51 contained Yellow-rumped Warblers. Both were well-distributed overall and in Winhall, the latter species was common (WJN). Not quite as common, but widespread nevertheless, was the Black-throated Green Warbler, reported in 41 blocks. Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided Warblers appeared in about one third to one half of the Atlas blocks. The latter species was confirmed in thirty.

Bay-breasted Warbler was listed in three blocks: possible in Hardwick (FO,RAR) and Plainfield (BBC), probable in Plainfield (LNM). A late transient was in Winhall June 2 (WJN) and in Craftsbury a singing male behaved territorially

-6- on June 27 but was not seen after that date (FO, RAR).

Blackpoll Warbler reports came, not unexpectedly, from the spruce and balsam-covered high peaks. Mt. Snow, Killington, and Shrewsbury Mountain contained populations, as did the Merck Forest (WN, SBL, KN et al). William Norse saw a late spring migrant June 4 in Winhall.

An uncommon summer resident, the Pine Warbler, was recorded in three locations: Burlington (ORE, BSE), White River Junction (GFE,WGE--two blocks), and Woodstock (MCH) where it was confirmed as a nester.

Prairie Warbler, which was virtually unknown in Vermont in previous summers, was confirmed as a nester in Springfield--8 pairs (EE,SBL,JPe,MPe) and listed as a probable breeder in three locations near Saxton's River (DC).

Observers noted Ovenbird in 67 blocks.

Northern Waterthrush was reported as abundant at Marshfield Pond where Marion Metcalf banded 17. William Norse reported it bred in Winhall, Peru and Chester. Elsewhere it was reported in twelve blocks and confirmed in six.

Louisiana Waterthrushes were observed in Wells River June 13; these are the first records for the Northeast Kingdom (FO,RAR). Elsewhere, this species was reported in twelve blocks with nesting confirmation obtained near Delectable Mountain (GFE,WGE).

Reports of Mourning Warbler were scattered in eight locations from Saxton's River and Winhall in the south to Craftsbury in the north. Observers listed this scarce and local summer resident as a probable nester in seven blocks.

Common Yellowthroat, which occurred in 74 blocks, was the most abundant warbler.

Wilson's Warbler was listed in two blocks: one possible (EA) and one probable (LNM), both in Plainfield quad. Perhaps with more thorough coverage of the northern portion of the state, additional nesting locales will be found.

Atlas workers tallied nesting confirmation of Canada Warbler in nineteen of 41 blocks.

The eighteen banded American Redstarts at Marshfield Pond (MFM) underscores the abundance with which this species was found statewide.

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS

Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks occurred in approximately half of the Atlas blocks. According to William Norse the distribution of Bobolinks is much more widespread in the northern part of the state. Both species were scarce in Winhall.

Red-winged Blackbird was confirmed in 46 of 75 blocks in which it was found.

An Orchard Oriole was listed as a probable nester in Burlington (CSP) and was observed at Lake Bomoseen June 16 (EE). This species is rare in the spring and was virtually unknown (before 1975) in the summer.

Northern Oriole appeared in 67 blocks, of which forty were listed as confirmed nesting.

Aside from sightings of Rusty Blackbird near Island Pond June 13 (FO,WS et al) and July 11 (WJN), all reports came from central and south-central Vermont, where this species was uncommon and local. Delectable Mountain, Winhall, Mt. Snow, Woodstock and Killington produced reports (v. obs.).

Sixty-eight blocks contained Common Grackle and sixty produced evidence or confirmation of "nesting" Brown-headed Cowbird.

Scarlet Tanager was reported below average in numbers in Woodstock (JMN). Statewide it appeared to do rather well, appearing in 58 blocks.

FINCHES

Cardinal nested for the first time ever in Plainfield (MFM), giving evidence that it is still extending its range northward. Observers consider it fairly common in many locations, particularly in southern Vermont. Atlas workers reported Rose-breasted Grosbeak in 64 blocks, state-

wide. Indigo Bunting was confirmed nesting in three Arlington blocks, and in Woodstock, Ludlow, Springfield, and Saxton's River (v. obs). Thirty-nine additional blocks produced evidence of nesting. Of interest is a report of confirmed nesting Evening Grosbeaks in Saxton's River (DC) and Peru (fide WJN), both near the southern limit of its range. Purple Finch was abundant nearly everywhere in suitable habitat. Eighty-five were banded at Marshfield Pond; and in Winhall, William Norse described them as common nesters. Anyone who fed birds this past winter will appreciate the above. Marion Vince of Bennington confirmed the first state record of "nesting" HOUSE FINCH when a male and female (present all spring) brought three young to her feeder July 8. An additional sighting came from Manchester July 8 (WJN). American Goldfinch appeared in no fewer than seventy-eight blocks. The only seasonal observation of White-winged Crossbill was made in Plainfield where it was a possible nester (MFM). Rufous-sided Towhee was recorded in 49 blocks around the state. The Savannah Sparrow had a statewide distribution, but was far more common in the Champlain Valley where it is the most common sparrow. The elusive Grasshopper Sparrow, scarce and local in Vermont, was confirmed as a nester in White River Junction (GFE, WGE). A small colony was present all season in Orwell (AP) and one was spotted in South Londonderry June 19 (WJN).

The Vesper Sparrow, reputedly more common, was infrequently observed. Nesting confirmation was obtained in Burlington (BG,GG), Sudbury (AP), and White River Junction (GFE,WGE). Four to five singing males were sighted in Guildhall in the Northeast Kingdom July 11 (WJN) for a seasonal high count. Dark-eyed Junco has increased in numbers every year near Winhall (WJN); statewide 36 blocks produced records of this species. Chipping Sparrow, which appeared in seventy Atlas blocks, was described as very numerous (SBL). In Winhall the Field Sparrow is declining as a nester (WJN). Elsewhere observers confirmed nesting in nineteen of forty blocks. Auspicious among the 29 nesting confirmations of White-throated Sparrow was one from Sudbury in the Champlain Valley where this bird is uncommon in summer. The three reports of Lincoln's Sparrow from the Northeast Kingdom were no surprise. Don Miller obtained probable nesting status for this species in two blocks, while Oatman and Rowlett confirmed nesting in Craftsbury. One was seen near Island Pond June 13 (VINS). Swamp Sparrows were common in Missisquoi, but unconfirmed as nesters; they occurred in 36 blocks statewide. Nine were banded at Marshfield Pond (MFM). Song Sparrow was present almost everywhere.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the help of Holly McKenzie who proofread and typed the manuscript.

Contributors are reminded to send in rare and unusual bird sightings at once (or to call the Vermont Bird Alert) and to submit your seasonal cards promptly at the end of each season! This publication is only as complete as you make it. If you need sighting cards, write VINS.

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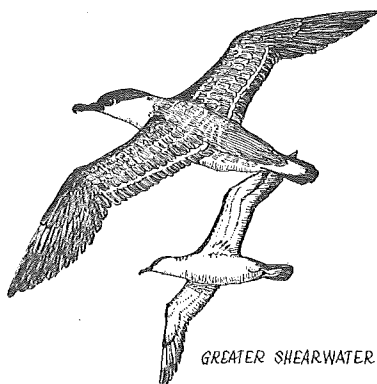
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