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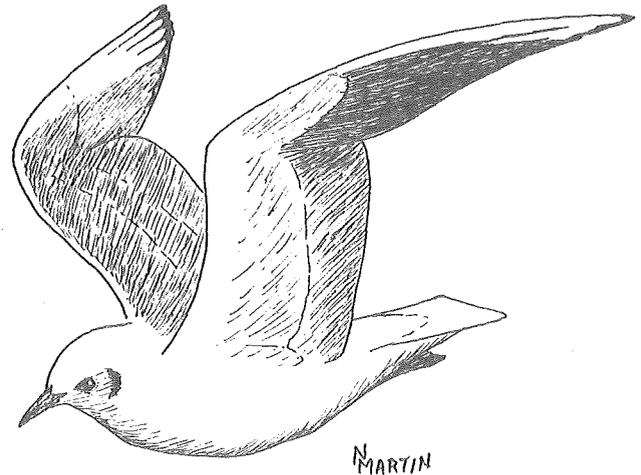
**FALL MIGRATION 1988**

1 August to 30 November

Jeremy Coleman, Seasonal Editor

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COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL



Bird records submitted to the Fall 1988 Records of Vermont Birds (hereafter RVB) painted a complex picture, not easy to categorize. The total of 239 species reported (about average for the Fall RVB), which excludes birds of domestic origin, included a goodly portion of rarities, a host of species that were reported in record high numbers, and a group reported in unprecedented lows. It is far from clear, however, whether the low number of reports correlates to population declines for all the species in question.

The first half of August continued the run of hot summer weather with temperatures 6 to 10 degrees above normal, dominated by a blocking Bermuda high over the southeast. Cooler air prevailed for the rest of the month, and precipitation was about average throughout. The waters of Lake Champlain were low, and an unusually early movement of shorebirds began there 8/6, associated with a frontal system moving along the northern edge of the high pressure system. A series of fronts moved through from the 15th until the 23rd, but the remainder of the month was characterized by humid weather and generally poor conditions for migrants. Waders were the order of the month; good birds in the Champlain Valley included Western Sandpiper, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, Red Knot, and record numbers of Baird's Sandpiper. At L. Seymour was a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE.

In contrast to August, September was, on average, cool and somewhat dry. Unsettled weather characterized the first half of the month, while high pressure dominated the last half. The first substantial Broad-wing flights were recorded following the passage of such a frontal system on the 10th, and a big movement of warblers and other associated passerines occurred under similar conditions on the 18th. Whimbrel, Long-billed Dowitcher and Connecticut Warbler were detected in September.

October was notable for its cold temperatures; precipitation was below average. Perhaps associated with the passage of a number of late October frontal systems, interesting birds turned up in diverse locations beginning the 20th. Most notable were Vermont's first COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL and third SABINE'S GULL. Other rarities reported in October included COMMON EIDERS on Lake Champlain and a well-noted LE CONTE'S SPARROW that, had more than one observer been present, would have been yet another first state record.

November rounded out the period with predominantly unsettled weather, many days of light precipitation and temperatures just above average. On the 20th, late season thunderstorms coincided with the sighting of Black-legged Kittiwake at 2 separate locations in the Connecticut River Valley. Other November highlights included HUDSONIAN GODWITS, GREAT CORMORANT, TUNDRA SWANS, DICKCISSEL, and WESTERN Tanager.

Some species were reported in record highs, while other groups were reported in record low numbers for the decade. Baird's Sandpiper was encountered early and often, perhaps an apparent result of fallout conditions coinciding with low water on Lake Champlain, an area well-covered by Vermont's birders. Red-breasted Merganser was reported by a number of observers in numbers that exceeded previous highs by at least one order of magnitude. Apparently frequent periods of unsettled weather grounded Snow Goose flocks in the largest numbers ever. A total of three Barrow's Goldeneye, a new-comer to the Vermont Daily Field Card, were reported. Moving on to passerines, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, and White-crowned Sparrow all came in with record highs. Reports from birders and from Vermont's 2 reporting banding stations were basically in agreement. Data from other sources concur that the populations of these and other short-range migrants are now at high levels, perhaps as a result of recent mild winters in their southeast wintering habitat; and it is encouraging to see corroborated, useful data coming out of the RVB.

Unfortunately many species -- in particular some of the vireos and the Dendroica genus of the wood warblers -- were reported in record

low numbers for the decade. Although it may have been a slightly off year for reporting among regular contributors to RVB, other factors may be at work here as well. Weather during migration plays a part in how many birds observers encounter. Best weather from the warbler-seeker's perspective often consists of periods of bad weather which create something of a migratory bottleneck followed by a clearing cold front and NE breezes. Sometimes spectacular migrant "waves" occur under such conditions. Fall 1988 had a few of these occurrences, but by and large late August and the first two weeks of September were characterized by unsettled weather interspersed with light rains. Under these conditions migrants trickle through in a more dispersed pattern, and are harder to detect in large numbers because the population is diffused. Alternatively, there may in fact be a reduction in the population of these species. Such a reduction could be localized -- the result perhaps of poor food availability or contrary weather during the nesting and fledging period -- or such a reduction could be widespread, the result of a host of stresses such as forest fragmentation, wintering habitat destruction, climatic warming, acid rain and the like. Species populations beyond the local level are extremely difficult to measure; estimates are dependent on localized samples that may not in fact extrapolate accurately to the species as a whole. It has even been suggested (see Richard Hutto's article in the Fall 1988 American Birds) that the primary method of population sampling for nesting species, a survey of singing males on the breeding territory, may be invalid as a measure of population densities because numbers of singing males are more or less a constant while the true population flux occurs in the population of non-breeding "floaters" whose numbers are for practical purposes not ascertainable. If this hypothesis is correct it may be that the estimates of populations inferred from birder's and bander's observations of migrants -- the kind of data compiled in the Records of Vermont Birds -- may be a key indicator for detecting population declines that would otherwise only be measurable after the population had declined to dangerously low levels.

LOONS, GREBES AND HERONS

Four Red-throated Loons were reported to the Fall Records of Vermont Birds (hereafter RVB), 1 on 10/20 in Addison (NLM,CCR,RBL), 1 on 10/27 in Bridport (RBL); 1 on the Connecticut River (hereafter CR) above the Vernon Dam ("Lake Cersosimo") on 11/29 (AGK); and 1 11/29 in Manchester (WSM). The latter bird was "grounded" but healthy, and was subsequently released at L. St. Catherine by VINS staff. Four hundred eighty-six Common Loons were reported by birders. Though this is down from last year's all-time high of 720 it was the third highest total for the Fall Records, possibly a result of the special attention this species has received of late. High counts were 73 at Grand Isle and 54 at N. Hero 11/12 (RBL), while away from Lake Champlain (hereafter LC) there were 13 on L. Memphremagog 9/17 (JaM). Reports from

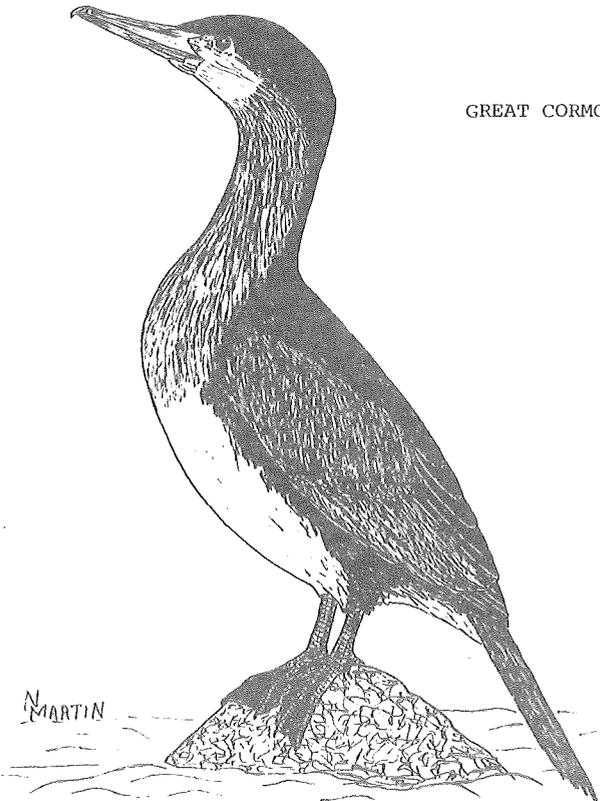
Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR) and the Vt. Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) aerial waterfowl survey are cited for selected species of Grebes through Rails. These are not included in the species totals. Thirty-seven Pied-billed Grebes were reported by birders, with high counts of 5 11/4 on the CR above the Vernon Dam (JJC), and 5 on 9/25 at Herrick's Cove (hereafter HC), Rockingham (AMD). Two pairs with 2 young each were seen at South Bay, L. Memphremagog (DLC). The peak population at MNWR in October was 25 (JBG). The last report for the season was 11/15 at HC (WJN). There were 662 Horned Grebes reported, somewhat more than half of the record high for 1986 but more than last season's 500. Bill Meador scored the hat trick with the season's first and last sightings, and the season's high count -- 26 on 10/16 at Champlain Islands, 130 11/12 at the Tri-Town Water District, and 30 11/27 Champlain Valley. One-hundred four were reported from central LC on 10/20 (NLM,CCR,RBL), and good counts of 52 and 45 were on LC 10/29 and 11/12 (WGE,RBL,NLM). Fifty Red-necked Grebes were a seasonal record for the Fall RVB. First were a very early 2 at Grand Isle 9/25 (DJH), last 2 on 11/19 at Potash Bay, Addison (SSW). High counts were 15 at the Tri-Town Water District 10/20 (SSW) and 9 at Addison 10/7 (RBL). Reports of Double-crested Cormorant were way down with 244 individuals reported. This probably means that the reporting rate for this growing population is falling as observers see more and more birds. "Becoming more common on Lake Champlain" (ELW) and pretty much everywhere else as well. The high count was 276 at St. Albans Bay 10/6 (RBL). Outside LC migrants were reported from August through October, first on the CR, Vernon, 8/5 (JJC), and continuing even on smaller bodies of water throughout the state, including 8 on Grout Pond, Somerset 8/22 (RWS). Vermont's 7th GREAT CORMORANT appeared in both NH and VT waters of the CR at Vernon on 11/16, last seen 11/18 (AGK,JJC). A population expansion for this species is underway in the Gulf of Maine and southward. There were other inland New England sightings this fall -- look for a further increase in coming seasons. There were only 10 reports by birders for American Bittern, all of single birds, the late date being 10/11 at Tinmouth Channel (CJF). MNWR reported peak counts of 20 individuals in October (JBG). Great Blue Heron was under-reported by birders with 197 individuals tallied; MNWR reported a peak population of 100 birds in October (JBG). Great Egret was reported 8 times: 1 8/1, L. St. Catherine Country Club (HWF); 1 8/4, Retreat Meadows (hereafter RM) (AMD); 1 8/10, HC (AGK); 1 8/11, Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA) (MCD,JID); 1 8/15, HC (AMD); 1 8/25-8/27, New Haven (ECC,TGC,SSW); last, 1 9/16, Orwell (ELW). For only the second time since 1981 there were no Snowy Egrets reported to these fall records (they continue as a breeder on Young Is.) Cattle Egrets were reported only three times: 9 8/8 Grand Isle (DJH), the high count; 1 8/26 at New Haven Junction; and 1 in Charlotte 9/18 (WAM), the last of the season. Forty-three Green-backed Herons were reported by birders,

with high counts of 5 in Burlington 8/27 (WGE,NLM), and 4 8/27 at the Winooski River Delta, Colchester (hereafter WRD) (WAM) and 9/7 at Shelburne Pt. (WAM). At MNWR peak counts occurred in August with 30 individuals tallied (JBG). Last was a single bird at Grand Isle 9/11 (DJH). Black-crowned Night Heron was reported only 5 times by birders: 2 8/15 in the Burlington Intervale (JDM); 1 at WRD 8/18 (JDM); 4 in Burlington 8/27 (WGE,NLM); 14 8/31 from DCWMA (MCD,JID); and last 3 birds at DCWMA 9/21 (ELW). MNWR surveys reported high counts in September of 40 birds (JBG). Glossy Ibis was not reported.

WATERFOWL

There were 2 reports for Tundra Swan this fall: a flock of 4 adults, 3 immature on L. Carmi 11/25-27 (PJM); and 4 photographed at DCWMA 11/19-21 (WJC). Snow Goose was pretty much off the charts this fall, with 41 reports of over 23,850 individuals! The previous high occurred in 1985 with 19,700 plus individuals reported. Birds were predominantly reported from the Champlain Valley, with a max. of 5,000 at DCWMA 11/22 (MBN). As in 1985 there were few reports of "Blue" morph individuals, suggesting that these birds were predominantly of the normally occurring "Greater" race. Birds appeared early -- 1 at DCWMA on 9/7 (WJC) -- began appearing in flocks of 1000 or more in mid-October, and continued right through the fall period. There were 7 reports for Brant this season, beginning in late October. On 10/23 there were 20 reported from both Blodgett's Beach in Burlington and WRD (JDM). On 10/30 120 were seen overhead in Westminster (WGE,NLM) and 23 were reported from L. Morey (DHC). Single stragglers were

reported from Sandbar, Charlotte and Shelburne Bay during November, the latter bird lingering until 11/24 (m.ob.). About 30,000 Canada Geese were reported to RVB this season, with high counts of 7,550 appearing 10/13 at Fuller Mtn. (MCD,JID) and 5,000 at DCWMA 11/16 (MBN). An apparent Richardson's race individual was reported from HC 10/17 (WJN). Four-hundred sixteen Wood Duck were reported by birders, with high counts of 60 at L. Bomoseen 10/10 (NLM) and 53 at Mud Creek on 9/25 (WAM). The last reports were 10/29 with 3 at Tinmouth (CJF) and a f. at Thurman W. Dix Reservoir (hereafter TWDR) in Orange (ATA). The population at MNWR peaked at 800 in August (average 600), while the VFWD aerial survey located 100 at Mud Creek 10/3 (WJC). Birders reported 179 Green-winged Teal, with a high count of 37 at Mud Creek 10/16 (WAM). Numbers at MNWR peaked at 800 and averaged 600 in October (JBG); the VFWD aerial inventory counted max. of 500 each around Sandbar and Mud Creek 10/3 (WJC). There were about 1,210 Black Ducks reported. The high count by birders was 200 at Sandbar on 9/25 (JDM). The average population at MNWR averaged 1,200 and peaked at 2,000 (JBG), while the VFWD survey located 1,667 at MNWR from the air on 10/3 (WJC). Mallards were abundant, birders noted about 1,520 individuals. High counts were 185 between Burlington and Shelburne 11/24 (WAM) and 180 at L. Bomoseen 11/10 (MBN). The controversial 41 inch drawdown at Bomoseen, part of the Eurasian Milfoil counterattack, attracted large numbers of dabblers that were present right into ice-up in late November (RWP et al.). The peak population at MNWR was 3,500 in October, the average population then was 3,000 (JBG), and the VFWD aerial survey located a max. of 2,662 birds there 10/3 (WJC). Northern Pintail was reported 15 times by birders, accounting for 45 individuals. The high count was 13 at Charlotte/Addison 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM). The MNWR population averaged 20 during September and peaked at 30 (JBG), while the 10/3 aerial survey by the VFWD found 20 each at MNWR, Alburg and Kelly Bay, and Mud Creek (WJC). Birders reported 143 Blue-winged Teal. The high count, not surprisingly, was 36 at DCWMA 8/19 (MCD,JID). Outside the Champlain Valley breeding range the max. was 19 9/11 at HC (AMD). MNWR reported peaks of 600 and an average of 200 during August, and the VFWD inventory found 200 from the air at MNWR 10/3 (WJC). The only two reports for Northern Shoveler were two females at WRD on 8/18 (JDM) and 8/19 (WGE,NLM). Fifty-six Gadwall were reported to the Fall RVB. Reports indicate at least two successful nesting attempts at Grand Isle, where 8 young were observed flying on 9/9, and 3 chicks were reported on the late date of 9/18 (DJH). When added to the June and August nesting records for Gadwall from Grand Isle, we arrive at a minimum of three, probably four nesting records for the 1988 breeding season. The average October population at MNWR was 10, and peaked at 25 (JBG). American Wigeon arrived late, and numbers were modest -- 13 reports of 35 individuals. First was a pair 9/16 at Springweather (WJN), with high counts of 8 on 10/27 on the CR, Vernon (JJC) and 7 10/16 at Sandbar (WAM). Last was a pair at WRD 11/18 (JDM). The VFWD survey noted 202

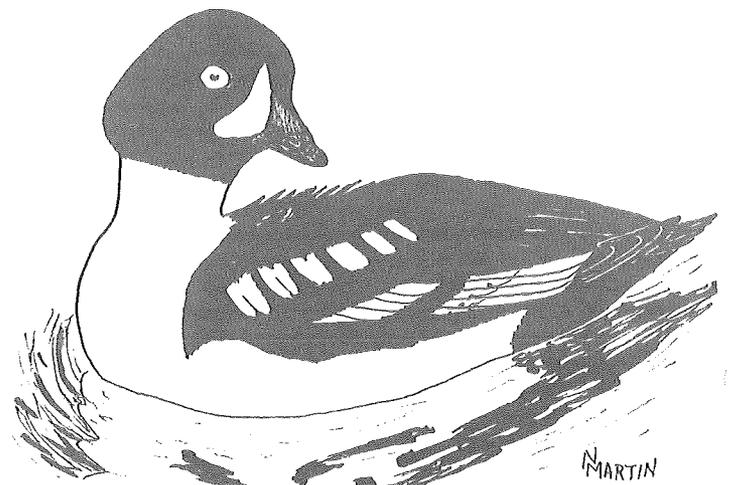


GREAT CORMORANT

at MNWR (WJC). The oddity for fall waterfowl was a Ruddy Shelduck photographed 11/21 at DCWMA (WJC). This Eurasian species is commonly domesticated and has no pattern of vagrancy in New England, and must be considered an escape. Birders reported only 7 Canvasbacks. There were 3 at S. Hero 11/12 (RBL), while outside the Champlain Valley there was 1 11/15 at HC (AMD), 1 11/25 at HC (WJN), and 2 11/27 at the CR, Vernon 11/27 (JJC). No Redheads were reported; most Vt. records for this species occur in April. Birders totaled 142 Ring-necked Ducks in 12 reports. The species arrived very late on 9/30 with 3 birds at HC (WJN). The high count was 45 on LC at Shoreham on 10/19. (ELW), although peaks of 11,000 were reached at MNWR in October (average, 8,000) (JBG), and the VFWD aerial survey located 10,085 there 10/3 (WJC). Besides the bird on 9/30 only two additional sightings occurred outside the Champlain Valley -- 11 at L. Fairlee 11/20 (WGE,NLM) and 5 at Springfield 11/15 (WJN). Birders reported 896 Greater Scaup, the bulk a flock of 450 in the Champlain Islands 10/16 (WAM) and 300 at S. Hero 11/12 (RBL). Greaters turned up at MNWR in October, peaks were 35 (JBG). Lesser Scaup was reported by birders only 7 times, with max. of 3 at Bridport 10/7 (RBL) and Charlotte 11/3 (RBL). The first arrival was a little early, a single bird 9/22 at HC (WJN). Birds arrived in small numbers (peak of 10) at MNWR in October (JBG). No Scaup species were noted in Vt. waters on the 10/3 aerial survey by the VFWD. Twenty COMMON EIDER\* were reported from Missisquoi Bay 10/22 (WJC). Any eider species on Vt. waters is extremely rare; King Eider is more common than Common Eider for inland Eastern sightings. There were 12 reports of 46 Oldsquaw; 12 at Panton, the high count for the period, were about 2 weeks early 10/7 (RBL). Birders counted 156 Black Scoters in 9 reports. First was a single bird at HC 9/30 (WJN); high counts were 81 on LC 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM), 45 10/13 at Colchester (JDM), and 35 10/20 at the Tri-Town Water District (SSW). Surf Scoter reports also peaked in mid-October. High counts were 25 on LC 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR) and 21 10/8 at Blodgett's (WAM), and the first report was for a pair at Swanton 10/6 (RBL). Seventy-two individuals were tallied in 10 reports. Birders tallied 108 White-winged Scoters in 17 reports. Again the peak movement appeared in mid-October. Earliest was a single bird 10/1 at Blodgett's (WAM), and the max. were 21 in the Champlain Islands 10/16 (WAM), and 20 on LC 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR). Common Goldeneyes were well reported by birders with 1,375 individuals counted in 28 reports. The high count was 500 at Sandbar 11/20 (FO, CSP). The high counts at MNWR occurred in August when the peak reached 150 birds (JBG). No less than three Barrow's Goldeneye were reported. A male along the Burlington Waterfront was well reported from 10/29 into December (DLC,SBL,JDM,BLR, m. obs.). Some observers described this bird as a first-year male coming into its first adult plumage (which was achieved in late November); it was actually a second-year male, as first adult

plumage in the genus Bucephala is not achieved until the second fall. Additionally a f. Barrow's Goldeneye was reported from L. Dunmore 11/12 (RWP), and an adult m. from the CR below the Vernon Dam on 11/14 (JJC), the latter bird returning for the third consecutive year. In the past five years Barrow's reports have become regular enough that the species has been added to the '89 edition of the Vermont Daily Field Card. Birders counted 357 Bufflehead in 23 reports. The species arrived 10/21 with a pair at Blodgett's, Burlington (JDM). Max. were 73 on LC 10/29 (WGE,NLM,RBL), and counts of 54 and 52 on 10/30 at L. Fairlee and LC, respectively (DHC,WAM). Also reported from 10/30 were 30 at L. Morey, 11 on the CR at Hartland, and 4 from the CR, Norwich (DHC) -- a widespread fallout for the species. Small numbers of the species (peaks of 25) arrived at MNWR in October (JBG). Hooded Mergansers were widely counted. A breeding pair with 12 chicks was reported 8/28 from Norton L., Warren (HHD). The high count was 32 from Love's Marsh, L. Bomoseen, 11/12 (RWP). In all, 289 individuals were reported by birders. The population at MNWR peaked at 100 in October (JBG). Common Merganser numbers were variable. In the south flocks seemed "smaller than usual" on the CR (TEJ), a single flock of 275 on Shelburne Pond 11/20 was "the largest flock ever observed in Vt." by veteran birders (FO,CSP), while 446 were reported 11/3 from Charlotte (RBL). The 10 reports of Red-breasted Merganser were a max. for the fall RVB; however the numbers of individuals reported were absolutely unprecedented, with "an explosion" of 500 observed 10/31 at Charlotte (MBN), with 150 11/5 at the same location (WAM). In all 682 individuals were reported, while the previous high seasonal total for Fall had been 54 in 1985. Given the similarities between Common and Red-breasted Mergansers in female and eclipse plumages, caution should be used before assigning large numbers of distant birds to a single species, especially in Fall. Birders reported only one sighting of the elusive Ruddy Duck, 2 from Blodgett's 11/3 (JDM).

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE



\*Consideration by Vermont Bird Records Committee pending

## VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

One hundred twenty-nine Turkey Vultures were seen on hawk watches this fall while birders reported 197. The high count was 38 over Pond Mtn., Wells, 8/8 (CNV), while 36 were in Shoreham 10/3 (ELW). Twenty-four were reported roosting in a tree in Bridport 8/28 (ELW), and 24 were reported over Rattlesnake Cliff Hawk Watch in Salisbury (hereafter Hawk Watch = H.W.) 8/27 (RWP). Many observers noted the apparent continued expansion of this species. A juvenile, still with white down on the upper neck, was observed at South Mtn., Bristol, 8/18 (EAD). Last report was 10/20 at Putney Mtn. H.W. (AGK). Eighty-five Osprey were reported from hawk watches, 41 by birders elsewhere. High counts were 9 from the Putney Mtn. H.W. 9/14 (AGK), and a somewhat late 10 birds at Fuller Mtn. H.W., Ferrisburg, 10/13 (JID,MCD). Last was 1 on 11/14 at HC (EP). There were 33 reports for Bald Eagle; 6 were from hawk watches, and all of these were from the lower CR valley -- Putney Mtn. H.W. 9/6, 9/10 (2 birds), and 9/11 (AGK,ASW); Gile Mtn H.W., Norwich, 9/10; and Lincoln Hill H.W., Hinesburg, 9/16. Of the aged birds, 10 were adult, 10 were imm. (1st or 2nd year), 1 was aged as a 3rd year type, and 1 a 4th year type bird. Hawk watches reported 62 Northern Harriers, while birders reported an additional 63. The high count was 9 at Lincoln Hill H.W. 10/16 (MPB), and migration seemed pretty evenly distributed from early September until that date. Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported in good numbers, 594 from hawk watches and 39 from birders. Although strong movement occurred 9/10-9/16, numbers seemed to peak 10/12-10/16 with 50 over Lincoln Hill H.W. 10/16 (MPB) and 23 10/16 from Putney Mtn. H.W. (AGK). Cooper's Hawk numbers were down from last year (but up over the long term) with 42 reported from hawk watches and birders elsewhere reporting 15. The high count was 5 at Putney Mtn. H.W. 9/14 (AGK). Thirteen Northern Goshawks were seen on hawk watches, 6 elsewhere; 19 reports implies correctly that the high count was 1! Movement apparently peaked in the latter 2 weeks of September. Red-shouldered Hawk numbers were low with 21 reported from hawk watches, 7 elsewhere. The high count was of 3 imm. from Mt. Holly H.W. 9/10 (WJN). Last was a bird 11/26 in Tinmouth (CJF). No major movement of Broad-winged Hawks was reported. A low 988 were reported from hawk watches, 32 elsewhere. The primary peak occurred 9/11-12, when 253 passed over Putney Mtn. H.W. (AGK) 9/11, and 118 over Snake Mtn. H.W., Addison, 9/12 (NLM et al.). Last was a single bird 10/3 from Putney Mtn. H.W. (AGK). Hawk watchers counted 387 Red-tailed Hawks, 164 were reported by birders elsewhere. A big movement was apparent 10/16 at Lincoln Hill H.W., 112 birds reported (MPB), while 50 were seen 10/30 in one hour at Hartland (DHC). A "very dark" individual was reported from Tinmouth 10/14 (CJF). Although Red-tails are pretty variable it's well to be alert to the possibility of western races. An albino Red-tail was seen 8/9 in Shoreham (ELW), while the albino that has amazed Putney Mtn. hawk watchers for the past four years was reported as resident at the base of Putney Mtn. along the Grassy Brook (pers.

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comm.). Fourteen Rough-legged Hawks were tallied in 9 reports. The first were 2 from the Fuller Mtn. H.W., Ferrisburg, 10/13 (JID,MCD); the max. was a count of 4 at DCWMA 11/5 (BLR). All reports were from the Champlain Valley. Five Golden Eagles were reported. First was a sub-adult 10/9 at Dorset (EFG), while 2 adults appeared at Lincoln Hill H.W., Hinesburg, 10/15 (PAT), and another 10/16 (MPB). Last was a bird at Dorset 11/11 (EFG). Several observers noted the apparent reduction in numbers of breeding American Kestrels: good numbers for migration, then, may be encouraging. Two hundred twenty-nine individuals were counted from hawk watches, with an astonishing 40 going by Putney Mtn. H.W. 9/11 (AGK). 120 birds were reported elsewhere, with a high at DCWMA of 19 on 9/24 (WAM). Nineteen Merlins were reported from hawk watches, 13 from Putney Mtn., where the high was 7 on 9/12 (HL). It remains to be seen if these numbers were atypical, or due to greatly increased coverage. All other reports were for single birds. First was 9/1 at Paine Mtn. H.W., Northfield, (WHB), last 11/5 at Tinmouth (CJF). Hawk watches turned up 9 Peregrine Falcons, while 11 were reported elsewhere. There were 2 high counts of 2 each; a m. and f. seen in a tree in Middlebury 9/25 (SSW), one of them feeding on a Rock Dove; and a pair (m./f.) at Pond Mtn., Wells, 8/20 (RWP). Last was a single 11/25 at Charlotte (SC).

## GALLINACEOUS BIRDS AND RAILS

One hundred twenty-eight Ruffed Grouse were reported to the Fall RVB. High counts were 20 9/9 and 13 9/25 in Chester (CEAD), who reports, "Abundant, most since '82 -- but, as a native Vt. bird hunter, I'll be damned if I tell where!" A female Ring-necked Pheasant was observed in Barre 11/4 (ATA), the only one reported. Only 68 Wild Turkeys were counted, with high counts of 23 in Dorset 11/16 (EFG) and 22 in Rockingham 9/24 (AMD). A hen with 2 half-grown poults was observed 9/9 at West Rutland Marsh (hereafter WRM) (WJN). Northern Bobwhite and Virginia Rail were unreported by birders. MNWR reported peak populations of the latter at 50 birds in August. Sora was tallied only once by birders, a single bird 8/11 at DCWMA (JID,MCD), while MNWR reported a peak population of 100 during August (JGB). There were 13 reports by birders for Common Moorhen, with max. of 7 at WRD 8/27 (WAM), and 5 at the RM 8/1 (JJC). The latter birds, unaged as the observer was caught in a rare moment without binoculars, raise the possibility of nesting in Windham Co. which would be a first, although migrants at that date would certainly be possible. Another southern report comes from Rockingham, 3 on 9/22 (WJN). Last were 2 at Sandbar 10/16 (WAM). The peak at MNWR was 25 in October (JGB). There were only 3 reports by birders for American Coot: 5 10/27 on the CR above the Vernon Dam (JJC), 1 11/11 RM (AMD), and 3 11/27 CR above the Vernon Dam (JJC). The estimated peak population at MNWR in October was 50 (JBG).

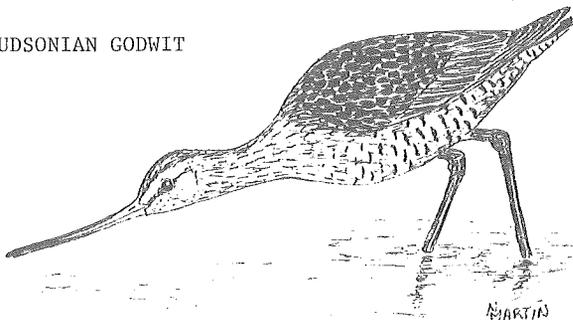
## WADERS

Black-bellied Plovers rebounded somewhat with

19 reports after poor showings in '86 and '87. First were single birds on 8/6 at WRD (JDM) and Blodgett's Beach (WAM). The high count was only 2, however: at St. Albans Bay 10/6 (RBL), at L. Bomoseen 10/19-20 (RWP), and at Grand Isle 10/31 and 11/4-5 (DJH). Last was a bird at Grand Isle 11/7 (DJH). Lesser Golden-Plover was reported 4 times: a single bird 9/18 and 10/25 in Vernon (JJC), the high count of 3 at HC on 9/22 (WJN), and last a "probable" at Grand Isle 11/4 (DJH), late but not unreasonably so. Typically, most of 72 Semipalmated Plovers were in the Champlain Valley. First was a bird at St. Albans Bay 8/2 (BLR). High count was 10 at DCWMA 8/19 (JID,MCD), and last was a bird at Grand Isle 10/29 (DJH), about 2 weeks late. About 480 Killdeer were reported, somewhat lower than usual. The max. was 45 in Washington 10/10 (ATA) and the last reported was in Shelburne on 11/3 (JDM). There were 39 reports of 116 Greater Yellowlegs, with a high count of 12 at L. Bomoseen, date not reported (RWP). Last date was 11/12, 1 at Grand Isle "shot for a gamebird by a young hunter" (DJH), 1 in Shelburne (JDM), and 5 at L. Bomoseen (RWP). Lesser Yellowlegs tend to occur in VT in larger flocks than their larger namesakes, as illustrated by the 18 reports of 101 birds. High counts were 23 8/31 at St. Albans Bay (CCR,MSL), 16 8/19 at DCWMA (JID,MCD), and 15 at Panton 8/18 (WGE,NLM). Last were 2 at L. Bomoseen 11/6 (SSW) and 3 at the same location 11/11 (CJF). Solitary Sandpipers were severely under-recorded with only 8 birds counted. The high count was 2: at the RM 8/22 (AGK), 2 juveniles in Washington 8/27 (ATA), and 2 at DCWMA 8/28 (WAM), the final report and at least a month before the last birds cleared the state. Sixty Spotted Sandpipers were reported with a high count of 12 at DCWMA 8/19 (JID,MCD) and the last 10/18 at L. Carmi (PJM). Only 1 Upland Sandpiper was recorded, a migrant 9/11 at Winhall (WJN). A Whimbrel (another new addition to the Vermont Daily Field Card) was picked up in Charlotte 9/12 (PWh) and brought to VINS, where it was rehabilitated and successfully released in Connecticut (closer to usual Whimbrel migration routes) on 10/2. HUDSONIAN GODWIT was reported 4 times: two in Shelburne 11/1 (JDM), two 11/10 at DCWMA 11/10 (WS), a

(WAM,DLC). The high count was 3 8/16 at Burlington (WGE,NLM), and last was a pair at WRD 9/17 (WAM). At least 243 Semipalmated Sandpipers were noted, virtually all from the Champlain Valley. The high count of 91 at St. Albans Bay 8/31 was comprised of about 75% juveniles (CCR,MSL); last was a pair 10/15 in St. Albans Bay (WAM). Only one report outside the Champlain Valley was received, 8 8/10 at HC (AGK). Western Sandpiper was reported twice. A report of a juvenile seen at Blodgett's Beach 8/16 was accepted by the Vermont Records Committee (hereafter VRC) (CSP). Separating basic-plumaged Westerns from Semipalmateds requires experience, luck, and the basing of identification on a combination of characters including calls, physical structure and plumage characters. For instance bill length in Semipalmateds is substantially longer in western birds and females, so a conspicuously long-billed individual in a flock of Semipalmateds does not of itself indicate a Western. There is an excellent article on identifying small Calidrine sandpipers ("peeps") by Veit and Jonsson reprinted recently in the Sep./Oct. 1984 issue of American Birds. Birders reported 132 Least Sandpipers, including a high of 60 8/19 at DCWMA (JID,MCD). Last were four at WRD 9/9 (WAM). There were a record 12 reports for White-rumped Sandpiper. First was a bird 8/6 in Green River Res. (JGG). The high count was 4 at the WRD 10/23 (JDM), and last was one at DCWMA 11/10 (WS). It was also a record year for Baird's Sandpiper with 10 reports, all from the Champlain Valley. First was one at Blodgett's Beach 8/7 (ECC,DLC,WAM). The high count of 3 came in from WRD 8/18 (JDM) and 8/19 (WGE,NLM). Last were 2 at the WRD 8/27 (WGE,NLM), 1 there 8/28 (CSP), and 1 at Colchester Point 8/27 (WAM). Over 352 Pectoral Sandpipers were reported, the most since '84. High counts were 35 at MNWR 10/6 (JDM) and a remarkable 71 at L. Bomoseen 11/5 (RWP). Last were 3 on 11/11 at Shelburne (WAM) and one at Grand Isle 11/13 (DJH). Reports for 20 Purple Sandpipers, newly added to the Vermont Daily Field Card, included a high count of 9 on Grand Isle 11/6 (DJH - beautifully photographed), and singles (last date) at Grand Isle and Rock I., St. Albans, 11/19 (RBL). All but one of the 76 Dunlin reported were in the greater Champlain Valley. First were 3 at Grand Isle 9/28 (DJH), max. were 19 at WRD 11/3 (JDM) and 15 at Charlotte 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM), and last was 1 at Shelburne 11/12 (JDM). There was 1 report from the south, a bird 10/25 in Vernon (JJC). There were 6 reports of 8 Short-billed Dowitchers. First was 1 at the RM 8/10 (AGK). High counts were 2 8/10 at St. Albans Bay (DLC) and 2 at DCWMA 8/31 (JID,MCD). Very late was a bird identified by calls and plumage at L. Bomoseen 10/27 (WJN). There were 3 reports for Dowitcher sp., 1 10/10 at L. Bomoseen (NLM), 1 there 10/20 (RWP), and 1 10/23 at Blodgett's Beach (WAM). Juvenile Long-billed Dowitchers, at least, are readily separable by plumage from Short-bills due to the absence of conspicuous interior markings on the tertials and scapulars, so a juvenile photographed 9/24 from Grand Isle (DJH) was conclusively a rare Long-bill. Another individual was reported 8/10 from St. Albans

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

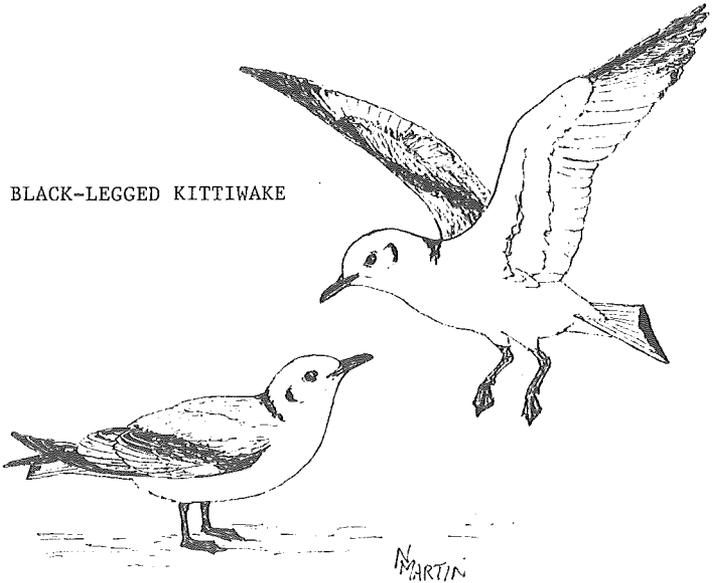


single in juvenile plumage 11/10 (WAM), and a bird 10/30 - 11/8 (2 on 11/7) at Shelburne Bay (SRA). There were 3 reports for Ruddy Turnstone: 1 8/16 in Burlington (WGE,NLM), 1 8/25 at Blodgett's Beach (CSP), and another sighting at Blodgett's 8/28 (WAM). A rare Red Knot turned up at WRD on 8/28 (CSP). Only 13 Sanderling were reported. The first, two at Blodgett's 8/6, were a week early

Bay by a knowledgeable birder but without documentation; most Long-billed individuals are seen in the east much later, partly because the majority are juveniles. Forty-three American Woodcock were reported, the high counts being 7 in Tinmouth 9/25 and 10/1 (CJF), and the last 1 10/19 in S. Wallingford (CJF). "After seeing a ... substantial improvement in 1987 ... I was somewhat dismayed at the lesser numbers this year of both flight and native birds. Perhaps the drought made them move to wetter pastures." (CJF) Forty-five Common Snipe were reported, with a high count of 7 at Swanton 10/26 (FAP) and the latest a bird 11/23 in Tinmouth that eventually overwintered (PMB). Wilson's Phalarope was seen on two occasions at Blodgett's Beach. Three were reported 8/6, and 2 8/7 (DLC,SBL,WAM,BLR), while 1 was seen there 8/24-25 (DLC,WAM,CSP), with its peculiar on-shore feeding motions well-described. Red-necked Phalarope was reported 6 times. 2 were at the WRD (WGE,NLM) and 1 at Blodgett's Beach (WAM) on 8/16; 1 at Panton 8/18 (WGE,NLM); 1 at Blodgett's 8/24 and 8/25 (WAM,CSP); and 1 in Burlington 8/27 (WGE,NLM).

GULLS AND TERNS

Little Gull was reported again to the Fall RVB, thanks to Dick Lavalley's persistent forays onto Lake Champlain, excursions which have consistently turned up the season's most intriguing species (see below). This year Little Gull was located 12 times on Lake Champlain. First was one in North Hero 10/6 (RBL), followed by birds in Panton and Ferrisburg 10/7 (RBL), one in Addison 10/9 (RBL), 2 in Panton 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR), 1 in Charlotte 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM), 1 in Burlington 11/9 (FO), 2 on Shelburne Bay 11/11 (WAM,DLC), 3 in Shelburne 11/12 (DLC,BLR), and 1 in Shelburne 11/13 (DLC). Given the numbers of Bonaparte's staging on LC in October one could almost claim that the state's first COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL was overdue, but no longer as a photographed adult in basic plumage was found there in Addison and Panton 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM). Over 6,450 of the handsome Bonaparte's Gull were reported, mostly on LC where the high counts were 1,080 10/20 on a "pelagic" expedition (NLM,RBL,CCR) and 750 11/1 and 11/3 at the Shelburne fishing access (JDM). From the south the only reports were 3 at Roundy's Cove, Rockingham, 11/15 (WJN). Counts of Ring-billed Gull on Lake Champlain peaked at 2500+ on 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR) and members of this population were reported daily from lakes and landfills in the Champlain environs. The high count from the south (migrants) was 76 at the Brattleboro Dump 11/15 (JJC). Herring Gulls were constant on Lake Champlain with a high count of 640 on 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR). Migrant max. were 100+ 11/25 at Roundy's Cove (WJN) and 120 11/27 at the Brattleboro Dump (JJC). An early first winter Iceland Gull turned up 11/4-5 on the CR in W. Lebanon, NH (DHC,LB). Great Black-backed Gulls were present throughout the period on LC with a high of 48 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR) and 15 at Blodgett's Beach 11/24 (ATA). High count from the south was 6 at the RM 11/15 (JJC). Vermont's second report of SABINE'S GULL came just about a



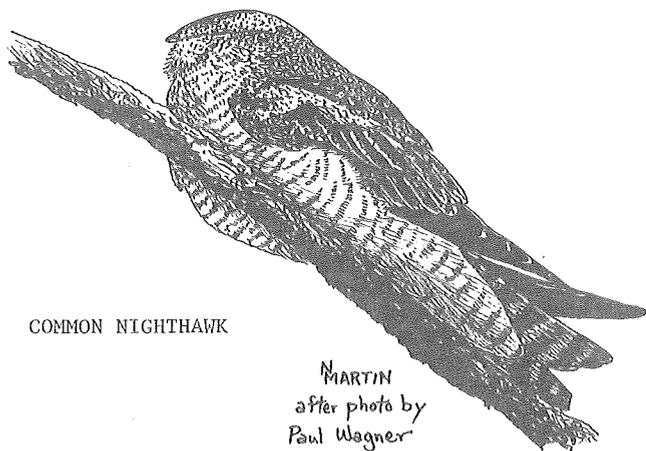
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

year after its first. A juvenile was photographed on Lake Champlain in Addison 10/29 (WGE,RBL,NLM). The rare Black-legged Kittiwake was spotted twice 11/20 in the CR valley, one on L. Fairlee (WGE,NLM) and 2 at HC (LB). All were in first basic plumage. There were only 6 reports for Common Tern, all on LC. Two adults with dyed underparts were observed 8/23 at WRD (ATA). When such birds are seen be sure to report the appropriate data including location and dye color to VINS at the earliest opportunity, as VINS research is underway on this locally declining species. The high count was 62 8/31 at St. Albans Bay (MSL,CCR), and last were 3 at Ferrisburg 10/20 (RBL,NLM,CCR). Black Tern was reported only 6 times, last (and high count) 6 at the WRD 8/19 (WGE,NLM).

DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Birders reserve little comment for Rock Doves; the species appears stable in appropriate habitat. Could they ever revert back to cliff sites in the absence bridges and tall buildings? Approximately 700 Mourning Doves were noted by birders this fall; obviously most elicit no reports. Three contributors noted the apparent continuing increase in numbers for the species (EWC/MCC,EMH,ELW). Numbers for Black-billed Cuckoo were moderate, with 12 reported, all but 1 in August. Last was an imm. 9/17 in Bridport (FAP). However 5 reports for the rare/secretive Yellow-billed Cuckoo ties the high count for the 80's, with 1 in Winhall 8/21 (AS fide WJN), 1 in Brandon 8/21 and 9/21 (SSW), 1 in S. Royalton 8/22 (TH), and 1 probable (rufous wing flash) in Quechee 9/17 (NLM et al.). Eastern Screech-Owl was reported only twice, 1 in W. Brattleboro 9/12 (JJC - see comment following), 1 gray-morph returning to a winter-roost nestbox in Milton from 10/23 on (TAR). This species is the most common raptor in neighboring Mass., yet is very rare in Southern Vt. and is present in substantial numbers only in the Champlain Valley. Birders noted Great Horned Owl 8 times, all from the Champlain Valley. There were 6 reports for the widespread Barred Owl. Seven

Short-eared Owls were observed leaving a daytime roost 11/20 on Slang Rd. in Panton (TAR). It has been 4 years since nesting has been reorted from that location. Two Northern Saw-whet Owls were noted, 1 banded at Bragdon Nature Preserve (hereafter BNP), VINS 10/21 (CCR), while 1 was at the Yellow Bogs 10/26 (CEA). Especially in the CR valley birders should be alert to the impressive migration of Common Nighthawks which can be seen at dusk in late August/early September, especially in urban areas. This year the flight was, for the most part, missed, the exception being a flock of 80 in Springfield 8/25 (SBL). An unusual photo of a single Nighthawk perched, lengthwise, on a tree branch in Sheffield was submitted (PFW,SAW).



COMMON NIGHTHAWK

MARTIN  
after photo by  
Paul Wagner

#### SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Vt. birders reported 364 Chimney Swifts this fall, with a high of 190 flying into the chimney of the Woodstock Post Office at dusk 8/20 (WGE,NLM) and a final date of 9/10 when 4 were observed on the Mt. Holly H.W. (WJN). About 95 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds is par for the season; the high count was 6 at Ferrisburg 8/18 (JID,MCD); and the last was a pair at the same location 9/23 (JID,MCD), 6 were netted at BNP (VINS). Many individuals had departed by the first week in September, and a number of observers commented on the apparent early departure of the species. Seventy-two Belted Kingfishers were reported for the season with a max. of 5 at Otter Creek 8/20 (JRA). A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers was seen 8/21 at DCWMA (SSW), and an imm. accompanied by two ad. was reported from Addison 8/23 (SSW). Forty-seven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported, the high 7 in Reading 8/17 (FMH,GEH) and last a bird in New Haven 10/12 (ELW); 6 were banded at BNP (VINS). Eighty-five Downy Woodpeckers and 62 Hairy Woodpeckers were reported for the season, typical of numbers and ratio for the fall, 6 Downies and 2 Hairies were banded at BNP (VINS). Black-backed Woodpecker was recorded 6 times: 1 9/24 in Wheelock (CEA); 1 10/23 in Island Pond (BKB,DLC); 1 11/4 at Victory Basin (AB,JH); 1 f. 11/8 at Yellow Bogs (EMQ); 1 11/9 in Franklin (PJM); and 1 11/11 in Yellow Bogs (EMQ). Reports of Northern Flicker indicated they were at the height of their movement 9/3-14. One-hundred

-48- eighty were reported, low for the Fall RVB, but 15 banded at BNP was a high number. High count was 23 post-breeding dispersers 8/7 at Lyford Pond(JAM), and last was a bird 11/27 at Shelburne Bay (WAM). Most interesting was a red-shafted/yellow-shafted intergrade banded at BNP 9/21 (VINS). Pileate Woodpecker numbers should remain healthy at least until the next oil crisis (culling of standing deadwood for firewood is hard on the species).

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

In general, flycatcher numbers were low, as attested by reports to these Fall RVB and commented on by at least one observer (WJN). Nine Olive-sided Flycatchers were reported with a high count of 3 in Reading (FMH,GEH) and last one in W. Brattleboro 9/7 (JJC). For the second year in a row the species was banded at BNP, one each on 8/9 and 9/7 (VINS). Only 56 Eastern Wood-Pewees were recorded, with a high count of 16 on Otter Creek 8/20 (JRA), and the last 1 banded in Vernon 9/25 (JJC). Thirteen Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were recorded. The high count was 4 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), last one at the same location 9/13 (FAP). Three were banded at BNP (VINS). Forty-one "Traill's"-type Empidonax flycatchers were reported, with 6 identified by voice (one hopes) as Alder Flycatchers and 9 as Willow Flycatchers. Twenty-four ("very good") were banded at BNP, the last on 9/22 (VINS). Only 26 Least Flycatchers were recorded with 14 banded at BNP; the high count there was 4 on 9/1 (VINS). Last were 2 banded in Vernon 9/6 (JJC,TEJ,AGK) and 1 banded at BNP 9/9 (VINS). Over 130 Eastern Phoebes were recorded, 33 banded at BNP (VINS). The high count was 15 in Windsor 8/18 (FMH,GEH), and last 2 in Dorset 10/17 (EFG). Just 6 Great Crested Flycatchers were reported -- were all birders on vacation in August or was it truly a bad year? Last seen were 2 in Shoreham 9/6 (ELW). Even Eastern Kingbird appeared under-reported, with 126 tallied. The high count was 20 at DCWMA 8/21 (JID,MCD) and last were 2 in Addison 9/11 (JRA) and 1 seen at the late date of 10/29 at DCWMA (SSW). We have 2 races of Horned Lark in Vt., the pale, breeding "Prairie" Horned Lark (Eremophila alpestris alpestris) and the more yellow, wintering "Northern" Lark, (E. a. praticola). They are clearly distinguishable when viewed well in the field and if birders recorded the race when making reports we could track the arrival and departure dates for each. Over 135 Larks were reported, with high counts of 50+ in a Westminster cornfield 11/11 (AMD) and S. Hero 11/12 (RBL). The "Northern" race had arrived at least by 10/16 when 2 were seen on Grand Isle (DJH). Forty-six Purple Martins were reported from the Champlain Valley, the last 8/28 in Addison (ELW). Tree Swallows were under-reported, 1630+ for the season with a high count of 1000+ in Shoreham 8/31 (ELW) and the last reported at DCWMA 9/21 (ELW). There were 6 reports for a total of 19 Rough-winged Swallows in August with the last 8/22 in S. Londonderry (WJN). Bank Swallow was recorded 8 times, the high count 30 at HC 9/7 (WJN) and last 4 at DCWMA 9/17 (FAP). Fifty-two Cliff Swallows were counted, the high count for this handsome

Hirundinan was 20 at Winhall 8/6 (WJN) and last was a bird in Shoreham 9/7 (ELW). A comparatively scanty 500+ Barn Swallows were counted, the highs were "hundreds" at Grand Isle 8/31 (EMH) and 100 in Shoreham 8/28 (ELW), last were birds at Quechee (NLM,CCR et al.) and DCWMA (FAP) 9/17.

#### JAYS THROUGH WRENS

There were 18 reports of Gray Jay in the Northeast Highlands. Twenty were reported from the Yellow Bogs/Lewis area, including 4 on 10/23, (DLC,BKB,MB), and 4 on 11/25 picking at a deer carcass on Lewis Pond Road (EMQ). Two reports came from Wenlock, 1 on 11/7 and 1 on 11/12 (EMQ); 2 reports of 2 each came from Gore Mtn. in Avery's Gore 10/7 and 11/1 (AB via CEA), and 2 reports came from Victory Basin, 2 on 10/28 (CEA,JH) and 1 10/19 (AB via CEA). A scanty 480 Blue Jays probably indicates under-reporting, as observers commented on apparently "normal" numbers and a "very good" total of 17 were banded at BNP (VINS). The high count was 64 at Reading 10/16 (FMH,GEH). Over 6000 American Crows were recorded, with migration peaking in mid-October, and highs of 3000 and 2000 at Fuller Mtn. H.W. 10/19-20 (JID,MCD). Only 56 Common Ravens were reported, the high count a flock of 23 11/9 in Reading (FMH,GEH), and lowland sightings from Shelburne and Brandon. A modest 427 Black-capped Chickadees were recorded, but banders and birders alike remarked on high apparent numbers. The high count was 62 on 8/20 in S. Duxbury (FAP) and a "good" total of 80 were banded at BNP (VINS). Reports of Boreal Chickadee from the Northeast Highlands included 1 at Sheffield 8/5, 3 there 9/5, and 4 on 9/15 (PFW,SAW), 1 9/10 at Brighton State Park (ECC), 2 at Moose Bog 10/1 (NLM,EFG et al.), and 3 at Ferdinand 11/6 (BKB,MB,DLC,WAM). Over 42 Tufted Titmouses were reported from Barnard, Bennington, Brandon, Chester, Colchester, Ferrisburg, Proctor, Shoreham, S. Burlington, Weathersfield, and Westminster. Seventy-six Red-breasted Nuthatches were recorded with high counts of 6 in Reading 10/15 (FMH,GEH) and 5+ in Washington 9/3 (ATA). About 80 White-breasted Nuthatches were reported; high counts were 11 in Windsor 8/6 (FMH,GEH) and 7 in Dorset 11/13 (EFG). Brown Creeper numbers appear healthy with 48 reported and max. of 4 at Maidstone 8/3 (SSW), Mt. Philo 8/22 (JID,MCD), 3+ at Grand Isle 10/15 (DJH), and 3 at Lincoln 8/9 (JRA). Four were banded at BNP (VINS). Carolina Wrens continue to hold their own in Vt. with 1 in E. Dorset 8/31 and 11/12 (RWS), 1 in Weathersfield 9/16 (WJN), 1 in Addison at the Champlain Bridge 11/6 (BLR), and one from 11/12 on in Bloomfield (DK). About 34 House Wrens was low but the species is thriving in lowland areas. Family groups of 5-6 represented the high counts in Grand Isle and Brattleboro (DJH,JJC); last was 1 retrapped at BNP 9/29; a total of 6 was banded at BNP (VINS). The diminutive Winter Wren appears to be in very good shape, 56 reported is the second highest for the decade. Max. were 8 at Maidstone 8/3 (SSW), 10 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), and 6 in Reading 10/15 (FMH,GEH). Four were banded at BNP (VINS). Sixty-six Marsh Wrens more than doubles the previous high for the decade; 26

-49- were detected on a canoe trip through DCWMA on 8/31 (JID,MCD); last were 2 in Colchester 9/24 (WAM). One was banded at BNP for the 3rd consecutive year. In support of the proposal that the species is expanding, colonization has taken place just this year at the RM and along other cat-tail marshes along the lower CR, but this may be related to recent substantial (18"+) raising of the river level caused by new flashboards at the Vernon Dam (JJC, pers. obs.).

#### KINGLETS,GNATCATCHER AND THRUSHES

The diminutive Golden-crowned Kinglet remains in reasonably good shape with 145 individuals recorded by birders. Migrants were on the move in early September, high counts were 20 at Bayside Park 9/25 (JDM) and 15+ in Washington 10/8 (ATA); 6 were banded at BNP (VINS). A healthy 186 Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported; some observers commented on the relative abundance of the species. Migrants were moving by mid-September and peaked in October with max. of 13 in Reading 10/25 (FMH,GEH), 9 10/4 in Woodstock (JMN), and 8 in Hinesburg 9/18 (CCR,PW) and Washington 10/1 (ATA). Forty-nine were banded at BNP (VINS) with high counts of 7 on 9/30 and 8 on 10/4. Last report was 1 at White River Jct. 11/3 (CCR). Reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher included 3 at the WRD 8/18 and 8/19 (WGE,NLM,JDM), 1 at Shoreham 8/23 (ELW), 4 at the WRD 8/28 (CSP), and last 2 there 9/7 (JDM). Eastern Bluebird numbers continue to increase with a record 238 birds reported; interest in return of the this songster results both in more nestboxes and better reporting. Family groups were reported from W. Glover (RVC) and Washington (ATA), high counts were flocks of 32 in W. Windsor 9/18 (FMH,GEH), 26 in Chester 10/12 (CEAd), and 23 in Dorset 10/15 (EFG). Fifteen individuals were observed to pack a nestbox overnight in S. Pomfret in mid-Oct. (GB), a behavior observed as well for overwintering birds at the northern edge of the wintering grounds. Migrant flocks peaked in mid-October; the last report was for a bird in Dorset 11/15 (EFG). Thirty-eight Veeries was about average. The high was 4 in Bristol 8/17 (JRA) and 3 banded 8/19 and 8/25 at BNP (VINS), where a "good" total of 18 were handled. Last reports were a bird in Ferrisburg 10/7 (JID,MCD) and one in Dorset 10/9 (EFG). The skulking Gray-cheeked Thrush is often overlooked in migration; this fall totaled 7 reports for the species, highest since '81. Reports came from Winhall with 1 on 8/10, 2 on 10/7, 2 on 10/15, 1 on 10/20 (WJN); Woodstock, with 1 banded at BNP 9/28 (VINS) and 1 observed 9/29 (JMN); and Vernon, with 1 banded 9/18, (AGK). Swainson's Thrush numbers remain constant with 49 reported, the max. were 5 in Woodstock 10/8 (JMN), 4 banded on 9/19 and 9/20 at BNP (VINS) where an additional 21 were handled, and last was 1 in Ferrisburg 10/7 (MCD,JID) and 1 banded in Vernon 10/13 (JJC). Hermit Thrush numbers appear to be peaking for the decade; birders reported 55 and 93 were banded at BNP (VINS), more than double the previous fall total, and 21 were banded at Vernon and W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). Max. were 8 banded at BNP 9/22 (VINS), 6 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), and 6 in Tinmouth 10/9 (CJF). Forty-eight Wood

Thrushes reported is high for the decade. The high count was 5 in Windsor 8/6 (FMH,GEH); 5 were banded at BNP (VINS) and last were birds in Winhall 9/21, Colchester 9/22 (JDM), and a late bird banded in W. Brattleboro 10/13 (JJC). About 1,350 American Robins were reported. High counts were 150 in Shoreham 10/20 (SSW), 115 in W. Windsor 9/18 (FMH,GEH), and 50-100 in a flock in Grand Isle 10/20 (EMH). A very high total of 230 were banded at BNP (VINS), with peak days of 33 on 10/3 and 18 on 10/24.

MIMICS THROUGH VIREOS

Gray Catbird was reported in record numbers. Birders reported 110 individuals, while 115 (the most ever) were banded at BNP (VINS) and 44 were banded in Vernon and W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). High counts were 15 seen at HC 9/16 (WJN), 11 banded at BNP on 8/16 (VINS), 8 in Washington 9/3 (ATA), and 8 at Lewis Creek 9/6 (JID,MCD). Late reports were birds in Shoreham (ELW) and Tinmouth (CJF) 10/16, and one banded at BNP 10/19 (VINS). Northern Mockingbird was reported from Bridport, Colchester, Dorset, Pittsford, Grand Isle, Rockingham, Shelburne, Shoreham, S. Burlington, Rutland, Vergennes, and Westminster. An ad. was feeding young in Pittsford 8/8 (RWP), and the high count was 6 in Vergennes 9/29 (BPG, via JID,MCD). Fourteen Brown Thrashers were counted by birders, 4 were banded, 2 at BNP (VINS). The high count was 3 in Grand Isle 8/6 (DJH), and last was a bird in Shoreham 9/22 (ELW) and one banded in W. Brattleboro 9/24 (JJC). Six Water Pipits in Vernon 9/2 (JJC) were the earliest ever reported to the Fall RVB by 6 days. The remaining 182 birds reported followed by almost 5 weeks and more, 10 in Ferrisberg 10/7 (JID,MCD), 12 at Shelburne Beach 10/9 (DLC,WAM). The high count was 60+ at L. Bomoseen 10/10 (NLM), and last were 30 in Shelburne 10/23 (JDM) and 1 in Burlington 11/13 (DLC). Total numbers and high counts for Cedar Waxwing were lower than average. High counts were 85 in W. Windsor 9/18 (FMH,GEH), 50 at HC 9/7 (WJN), and 50 in Shoreham 9/8 (ELW). Fifty-three were banded at BNP, well below the average of 232 for the previous 2 years. Four Northern Shrikes were reported, first was an ad. at Ferdinand 10/23 (BKB,MB,DLC), followed by 1 in Springfield 11/15 (WJN), an ad. in Cambridge 11/19 (FO), and 1 in Winooski 11/20 (FO). A rare LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE appeared almost 3 years to the day after the last fall record for the species. The bird was located at L. Seymour in Morgan Ctr. 8/13 (DLC). Birders didn't try too hard for European Starling; the high counts were a meager 800 9/21-22 on Grand Isle (EMH) and 400 in Shoreham 9/29 (ELW). A sub-par 50 Solitary Vireos were reported, the only count above 3 was 6 in Reading 8/12 (FMH,GEH), and the last reports were a bird banded 11/6 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), 1 banded 10/28 at BNP (VINS), and 1 10/23 at WRD (JDM). A total of 10 were banded at BNP (VINS). A paltry 2 reports were received for the striking Yellow-throated Vireo, 1 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP) and 1 by L. Dunmore 9/10 (RWP), its coarse song carrying up to the hawk watch above the lake. Warbling Vireo seemed under-reported as well, 24 birds counted by birders plus 7 banded, 6 at BNP

(VINS). The high count was 5 in Shoreham 8/8 (ELW), and last was an individual banded 10/1 in W. Brattleboro (JJC). Young fall Warbling Vireos can have a lot of yellow in the underparts and look for all the world like Philadelphia Vireos; the bird on 10/1 would have been identified by plumage as a Philadelphia, but for anatomical reasons (no 10th primary) was identified as a Warbling. Three Philadelphia Vireos were reported, 1 8/16 in Winhall (WJN) and 1 9/12 in S. Strafford (HR). A bird reported in W. Brattleboro 11/3, 5 weeks late, had no supporting details. Red-eyed Vireo numbers, unlike the rest of the Vireonidae, were at average numbers, 132 reported with a very high 45 banded at BNP (VINS). High counts were 13 in W. Windsor 8/20 (FMH,GEH), 10 at Mt. Philo 8/22 (JID,MCD), 7 in Lincoln 8/9 (JRA), and 7 banded at BNP 8/16. Last was a bird 10/3 in Shoreham (ELW) and 2 banded 9/23 at BNP (VINS).

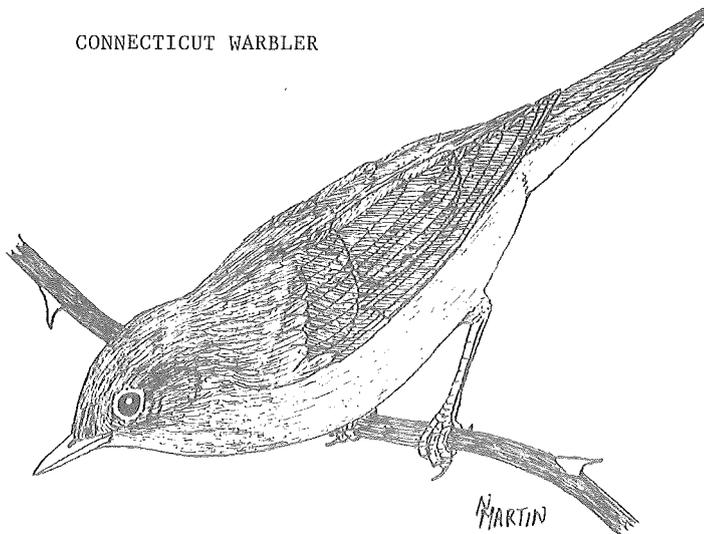
WOOD WARBLERS

A m. Blue-winged Warbler was banded in W. Brattleboro on 8/26, the season's only report. Forty-two Tennessee Warblers is the low count for the decade to the Fall RVB, a scant 4 were banded at BNP (VINS), and 6 were banded in Vernon and W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). "Seemed less common...early last date" (FAP). Migrants were moving in July (the species apparently disperses immediately after fledging), the high counts were 5 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP) and Colchester 9/22 (JDM), last were 1 in Grand Isle, a power line kill, 10/1 (DJH), 1 banded at BNP 10/3 (VINS), and 1 in Shoreham 10/9 (ELW). The reclusive Orange-crowned Warbler was a good find at the WRD 10/2 (CSP). Another was banded 10/10 at BNP (VINS). There were 39 Nashville Warblers tallied, a meager 8 of them banded at BNP (VINS). "Not very impressive numbers" (FAP) about sums it up, this is another low count. The high counts were 5 in Lincoln 8/2 (JRA) and 4 in S. Duxbury 9/8 (FAP); last were single birds in Winhall 9/19 (WJN), Colchester 9/21 and 9/22 (JDM), and 2 banded at BNP 10/5 (VINS). Never numerous in Vt., Northern Parula was recorded 7 times. The first migrant was in S. Duxbury 9/2 (FAP), the high count was 4 in Colchester on 9/21 (JDM), and last was a bird in S. Duxbury 9/25 (FAP); 1 was banded at BNP (VINS). Thirty-eight Yellow Warblers was the lowest since 1982; here under-reporting is perhaps more apparent than in some of the other Parulinae. Two were banded at BNP (VINS), the high count was 10 in Shoreham 8/8 (FMH,GEH), and last was 1 at WRD 9/15 (JDM) and 1 at HC 9/16 (WJN). Forty-three Chestnut-sided Warblers also represents the second-lowest total for the decade; 5 were banded at BNP (VINS) where as many as 25 have been banded in the fall season. The high count was 9 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), and last was a bird in Colchester 9/21 (JDM), and 1 banded at BNP 9/28 (VINS). Fifty-three Magnolia Warblers is the low count for the decade, but the 23 banded at BNP (VINS) was about average for the decade. The high count was 10 banded at BNP (VINS) 9/20, last was a bird in Pomfret 9/24 (CRP), 1 banded 9/28 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), and 1 banded at BNP 10/7 (VINS). There were 5 reports for Cape May Warbler, 1 in Winhall

8/19 (WJN), 1 in Washington 8/27 (ATA), 2 in W. Brattleboro 9/11 (JJC), 1 in Quechee 9/17 (NLM), and 1 in Winhall 9/19 (WJN). None were banded. Forty Black-throated Blue Warblers is another low count for the eighties; 3 were banded at BNP (VINS). The high count was 12 at S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), last were 1 in Fairfax Falls 9/21 (FAP), 1 banded in W. Brattleboro 9/22 (JJC), and 1 banded at BNP 9/26 (VINS). Over 423 Yellow-rumped Warblers compares to the 6-year average of 613 and is the second-lowest since 1980, although many observers found them more common than usual. Seventy-three were banded at BNP (VINS) compared to 200+ the previous 2 years. The high count was 50 in Dorset 10/9 (EFG); last was 1 in Quechee 11/20 (WGE,NLM) and Tinnmouth 11/27 (CJF). Seventy-seven Black-throated Green Warblers, the smallest total for the eighties, compares to a 6 year average of 132, while 1 bird netted at BNP (VINS) compares to the 6 year average of 10. High counts were 8 in S. Lincoln 8/12 (ATA) and 8/18 in Lincoln Gap (JRA). Last were 3 in Colchester 9/22 (JDM), 3 in S. Duxbury 9/25 (FAP), 1 banded at BNP 9/28 (VINS), and 3 in Washington 10/1 (ATA). Blackburnian Warbler also set a record low mark, 17 reported compared to the 6-year average of 59. None were banded at BNP, although as a treetop forager it is not commonly netted. The only count higher than 2 was 4 in Reading 8/6 (FMH,GEH). Last was 1 in Shoreham 9/18 (ELW), and 1 banded in W. Brattleboro 9/22 (JJC). Five Pine Warblers is not atypical for the Fall RVB; the species is not conspicuous in migration inland and, though widespread in Vt., is a localized breeder. Reports included 2 in Shoreham 8/11 (ELW), 1 in Winhall 9/14 (WJN), and birds in Colchester 9/16 and 9/22 (JDM). Numbers for Prairie Warbler are increasing annually in Vt. but fall reports are slim. This year 1 was banded at BNP 8/25 (VINS) and 1 was found at HC 8/26 (DHC,WGE). The "Yellow" and "Western" races of the Palm Warbler are readily separated in the field and represent distinct populations with differing migration patterns; it would be interesting if more birders specified the subspecies whenever possible. Overall numbers were high: 23 reported was the most since '83, and 9 banded at BNP was the highest ever. Western Palms moved through in late September with 5 in Vernon (1 banded) 9/20 (JJC,AGK), 1 in Weathersfield 9/22 (WJN), 1 car-killed in Woodstock 9/29 (NER), and 1 banded at BNP 9/29 (VINS). Yellow Palms moved through a little later: 1 banded at BNP 9/20 was followed by 5 banded there 9/30 and 1 on 10/10 (VINS). There was 1 in Winhall (WJN) and one banded in W. Brattleboro 10/5 (JJC), and 1 at WRM 10/10 (NLM). Birds of unspecified race were 1 in Reading 9/17 (FMH,GEH), 1 in Winhall 9/27 (WJN), 1 in Reading 9/29 (FMH,GEH), and 1 in Brandon 10/4 (SSW). Reports for Bay-breasted Warbler established another low for the decade: 25 compares to the 6 year average of 69. Migrants appeared pretty much on schedule with 1 in Shoreham 8/31 (ELW), 1 at Shelburne Beach 9/2 (JID,MCD), and 3+ in Washington 9/3 (ATA); the high count was 5 in Hinesburg 9/18 (CCR,PW); 1 was banded in Vernon 9/20 (JJC,AGK), and last was one 9/22 in Colchester (JDM). A paltry 13 Blackpoll

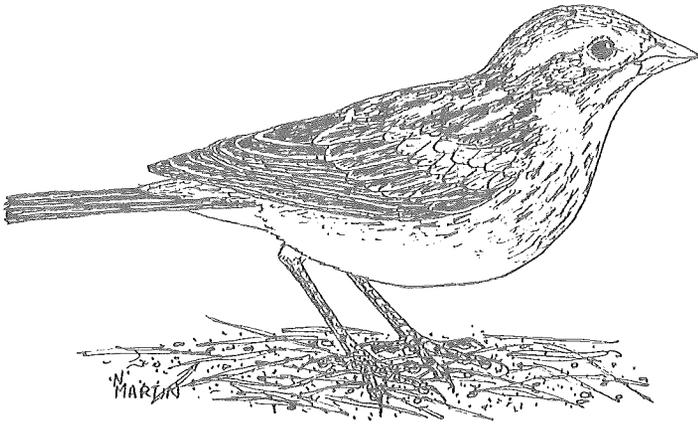
Warblers compares to the 5 year average of 34; 1 was banded at BNP (VINS), and 6 were banded at Vernon and W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). An unspecified number were with large, pre-migrant foraging flocks of warblers on 8/28 on Belvidere Mtn. (DLC), the first clear migrants were 1 banded at BNP 9/13 and 1 in Pomfret 9/17 (NLM,CCR et al.) and the high count was 5 banded in Vernon 9/18 (JJC,AGK). Last was 1 9/27 in Shoreham (ELW). "None at all" from a veteran warbler watcher in a location where one would expect to find them (FAP) is worrisome. Thirty-nine Black-and-white Warblers were reported, a low count for the eighties (compare to the five year average of 47). Three banded at BNP compares to 10 in each of the past 2 years, but 3 in '85. The high count was 3 banded at BNP 8/9 (VINS); last were 1 banded in W. Brattleboro 9/14 (JJC) and 1 in W. Windsor 9/18 (FMH,GEH). Thirty-two American Redstarts is another record low count; the 6 year average is 75. Three banded at BNP (VINS) compares to 17 the previous 2 fall seasons. The high count was 6 8/20 in S. Duxbury (FAP), last was 1 9/17 in S. Duxbury (FAP) and a very late individual banded at BNP 10/4. Of 44 Ovenbirds recorded, 20 were banded at BNP (VINS); the total is on par with the 6 year average of 42. Max. were 4 banded at BNP 8/22 and 9 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP). Last were 1 in Winhall 9/19 (WJN) and 1 banded at BNP 9/22 (VINS). Reports for 10 Northern Waterthrushes is not far off the 6 year average of 14; 2 were banded at BNP (VINS). This fairly common migrant is inconspicuous in fall, staying close to the ground along water, often separate from large foraging flocks. The high count was 2 in Brandon 8/12 (SSW), last were 1 seen at HC 9/16 (WJN) and 1 banded in Vernon 9/18 (JJC,AGK). There was only 1 report for Louisiana Waterthrush, 2 in Reading 8/13 (FMH,GEH). Many birds have left the state by the beginning of the reporting period. A

CONNECTICUT WARBLER



rare Connecticut Warbler was banded at BNP 9/8 (VINS). Seven of 12 Mourning Warblers reported were banded at BNP (VINS), a typical year: the 6 year average is for 15 reported, 6 banded at BNP. Migrants were moving in early August; max. were 2 ringed at BNP 8/3 and 2 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP), last were a retrap at BNP 9/21 and 1 banded in W.

DICKCISSEL

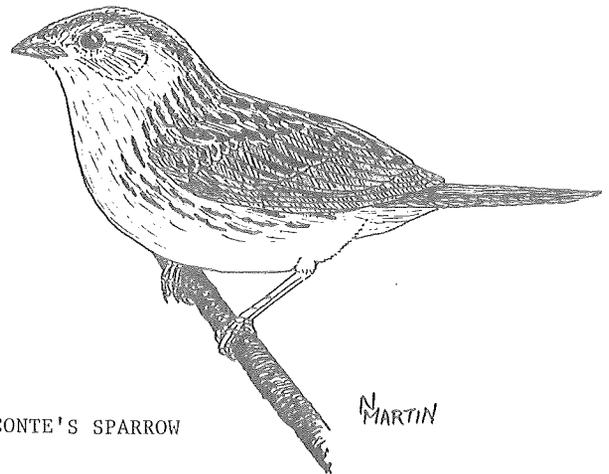


8/7,17 & 26 (EFG), last were birds netted in Vernon 9/18 (JJC,AGK) and BNP 9/22 (VINS). Indigo Bunting numbers were above average. Of 56 reports, 14 were netted at BNP (VINS) where the high count was 5 on 8/16, last were 1 banded in Vernon 9/25 (JJC) and 3 in Shoreham 10/6 (ELW). A female Dickcissel turned up in Shaftsbury 11/5-14 (RK); this rare fall reverse migrant has turned up previously in the falls of '81,'82,'83 and '87. Ten of the 18 Rufous-sided Towhees reported were banded at BNP (VINS) where the max. was 3 on 9/8, last was a retrap 10/10. The 10 banded at BNP was the highest ever, but 18 total reports is the low count for the Fall RVB. One hundred forty-five American Tree Sparrows is very few, but the 29 banded at BNP (VINS) was a high seasonal total. One at Lincoln 10/9 (JRA) was the first reported, and they were widespread by late October. The high count was 13 at DCWMA 11/6 (JRA). One hundred eighty-two Chipping Sparrows were counted, 9 were banded at BNP (VINS), the high count was 25 in Colchester 9/21 (JDM), and last were 4 in Sudbury 11/6 (SSW). Thirty-three Field Sparrows were reported, 9 were banded at BNP (VINS). The max. was 6 in Shoreham 10/6 (ELW), last were 2 in Shelburne 10/19 (ECC) and 2 in Shoreham 10/20 (ELW). Seventeen Vesper Sparrows is about par for recent years, the max. (and final date) was 6 in Tinmouth 10/13 (CJF), 1 was in S. Duxbury 10/11 (FAP). Thirteen of 41 Savannah Sparrows were banded in Vernon along the CR (JJC,AGK) where the high count was 6 banded 10/11; 2 were banded at BNP (VINS). Six were reported from Springfield 10/7 (WJN); last were 2 in Shoreham 10/19 (ELW) and 2 in Shelburne 10/23 (JDM). A superbly described LE CONTE'S SPARROW was discovered 10/10 at WRM (NLM). This is the first Vt. record ever for this secretive breeder from the Canadian mid-west; because it was a sight report from

Brattleboro 10/1 (JJC). Of 203 Common Yellowthroats, 108 were banded at BNP (VINS). The total is significantly off the 6 year average of 284, but 108 is average for BNP over that period. Two family groups were present in Washington 8/27 (ATA). The high count was 10 in S. Duxbury 8/20 (FAP); last were 1 in Vernon 10/11 (JJC), 1 banded at BNP 10/14, and 1 at WRD 10/16 (JDM). Nineteen of 40 Wilson's Warblers were banded at BNP (VINS). Total reports equal the 6 year average, while 19 ringed is the highest ever at BNP (VINS). Migrants were moving in the 3rd week of August, the high count was 5 in Shoreham 8/30 (ELW), last was 1 banded at BNP 9/23 and 2 at Colchester Pt. 9/25 (WAM). A cat-killed female was found in Grafton 8/30 (DC) that had been banded in W. Greece, NY, 270 miles due west of Grafton, just 3 days before! A total of 34 Canada Warblers was well off the 6 year average of 54 (in fact another low count since '80) but 11 banded at BNP (VINS) was above the 6 year average of 7. The max. was 5 in Reading 8/6 (FMH,GEH), last was a bird banded in W. Brattleboro 9/18 (JJC).

TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

Fifty reports for Scarlet Tanager is about average; an above-average 29 were ringed at BNP (VINS). Five banded there on 8/22, plus 6 in Reading 9/3 (FMH,GEH) were the high counts; last was a bird banded 10/13 in W. Brattleboro (JJC) and a young male retrapped at the late date of 11/9 at BNP (VINS). This bird was first netted 9/12 and was recaptured 9 times before moving on. He had an old injury or deformity in the skin of one wing but appeared to be able to fly normally and had gained nearly 5 grams before his last recapture. A reverse-migrant WESTERN TANAGER, Vermont's 4th record, was discovered in Cambridge 11/19 (JCG,RYG). Northern Cardinal is widespread in the lower elevations; 106 reports were received including an August family group in Randolph (EWC,MCC), max. were 12 in Ferrisburg 9/14 (JID,MCD) and 7 in Brandon (SSW); 6 were banded at BNP (VINS). Sixty-two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, though low, is not far off the 6 year average of 81. Some observers considered them scarce, but 18 banded at BNP (VINS) was the second highest total for 19 fall seasons. The high count was 6 in Dorset



LECONTE'S SPARROW

only one observer it has been accepted as a hypothetical record by the Vt. Records Committee. Twenty-three Fox Sparrows were noted, 2 banded at BNP (VINS). First were 2 in Barnard 9/28 (JNF), last was 1 in Winhall 1/16 (WJN); the high count was 11 in Tinmouth 10/29 (CJF). Of more than 444 Song Sparrows recorded, a high 107 were banded at BNP (VINS) and 48 were banded in Vernon and W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). High counts were 60 in Shoreham 10/5 (ELW) and 54+ at WRM 10/10 (NLM). Although some observers found them

scarce, the Lincoln's Sparrow flight seemed about average; of 50 reported a "good" 39 were banded at BNP (VINS) where the high count was 6 on 9/21 and the last was 1 on 10/21. Ninety-six Swamp Sparrows were noted, with the 35 ringed at BNP (VINS) a fall record. Max. for migrants were 14 at Tinmouth 10/8 (CJF), 5 in Lincoln 8/30 (ATA), and 5 banded in Vernon 10/9 (JJC); last was 1 netted at BNP 10/26. One hundred ninety-seven of the more than 737 White-throated Sparrows recorded were ringed at BNP (VINS); high counts were 150 in Shoreham 10/5 (ELW) and 53+ at WRM 10/10 (NLM). Over 217 White-crowned Sparrows were the most ever for the Fall RVB, while 42 netted at BNP (VINS) was 4 times the previous high. First were reports of 1 banded at BNP 9/16 (VINS) and individuals 9/27 in S. Duxbury (FAP) and Shoreham 9/27 (ELW), but by early October they were widespread. Max. were 16 in Weybridge 10/7 (MBN) and 12 banded at BNP 9/29 and 10/5 (VINS). Last was a bird in Washington 10/31 (ATA). Five hundred fifty-six Dark-eyed Juncos were observed, 18 were netted at BNP (VINS) and 50 in W. Brattleboro (JJC,AGK). Migrants were widespread by late September, max. were 50 at Moose Bog 10/1 (EFG,NLM et al.) and 50 in Reading 10/23 (FMH,GEH). About 807 Snow Buntings were noted, first arrivals were 2 in Shoreham 10/20 (ELW) and 22 at 10/23 (JDM), and the max. was 150 at Potash Bay, Addison 10/30 (MBN).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH OLD WORLD SPARROWS

Over 240 Bobolinks were reported, including the high counts of 100+ at DCWMA (JID,MCD) and 75 in Shoreham 8/23 (ELW), last were 7 in Shoreham 8/23 (ELW). High counts for Red-winged Blackbird included 7,000 along the CR in Vernon 10/27 (JJC) and 3,000 at DCWMA 10/20 (SSW). Four were banded at BNP (VINS). Sixty-one Eastern Meadowlarks were noted, 14 were in St. Albans 10/20 (FAP), 8 in Shoreham 8/1 (ELW), and 8 in W. Glover 8/16 (RVC), while last were 1 in Shelburne 10/23 (JDM) and 3 in Brandon 10/29 (SSW). Birders located more than 46 Rusty Blackbirds with a high count of 10 in Washington 10/10-12 (ATA) and the last report of 3 at L. Bomoseen 10/27 (WJN). A paltry 1,205 Common Grackles were reported, "high" counts were 300 at DCWMA, no date (SSW), and 250 in Washington 8/17 (ATA). Flocks of 1,200 in Vernon 10/27 (JJC) and 1,000 in Addison 9/14 (FAP) made up the bulk of about 2800 Brown-headed Cowbirds. Most reports of 49 Northern Orioles were from August when these birds are still vocal; 9 were in Dorset 8/6 (EFG) and W. Windsor 8/13 (FMH,GEH). A record high 19 were banded at BNP (VINS), with 14 captured 8/16. Last was 1 in Brandon 9/20 and an exceptionally late first year male at a feeder in W. Brattleboro 11/27 (JJC,TEJ). There was but 1 report of Pine Grosbeak in what turned out to be an off winter for them, a bird found in Winhall 11/18 (WJN). Purple Finch reports were down somewhat with just over 100 birds noted, high counts were at feeders, 12 in Walden 8/8 (JAM) and 10 in Chester in August (CEAd), 8 were banded at BNP (VINS). House Finches continue to expand. Over 595 were noted including 4 in Bristol Notch; begging juveniles were observed in Shelburne 8/23

(ECC). The high counts were 65 in Shelburne 8/23 and an impressive 120 in Grand Isle during November (RBL). 108 were netted at BNP (VINS). Noted in Randolph 11/10 was an orange-plumaged variant (EWC,MCC); this relatively common occurrence is thought to be a result of pigments taken (or not taken) in with the bird's diet. Red Crossbills were reported twice from Mt. Holly and the observer believes it likely they bred there (WJN). First was an ad. feeding a fledged juvenile 9/10 and next 2 on 9/17. The species is highly irruptive and has been known to travel relatively great distances almost immediately after the young have fledged, so this record is not conclusive for breeding. Compared to the overwhelming irruption of '87, Pine Siskins were virtually absent from Vt. in fall '88. Early sightings were 4 from E. Calais 8/31 (JCN) and 3 from Mt. Holly 9/12 (WJN); these may actually have been holdovers or even breeders from the previous year, not newly arrived. Scattered reports from late October on included 1 in W. Windsor 10/23 (FMH,GEH), "a few small groups overhead" in early Nov. in Brattleboro/Vernon (JJC), 1 11/14 in Reading (FMH,GEH) and 12 11/23 in Ferrisburg (JID,MCD). Two-hundred seventy-six American Goldfinches were predominantly recorded in August, a f. with nestlings was noted 8/18 in Addison (WGE,NLM) as well as an ad. tending a begging juvenile on 9/1 in Washington (ATA). The high count was 24 on Grand Isle 9/1 (EMH), while counts of 20 were reported from Ferrisburg, Cornwall and Shoreham; 4 were banded at BNP (VINS). Evening Grosbeak numbers were low. August reports included the high count of a mere 41 at Bristol Notch 8/17 (JRA), 35 at Moose Bog 8/4 (SSW), and 35 in Reading 8/15 (FMH,GEH). Other August reports of 3-4 birds in Dorset, Grand Isle and S. Arlington (EFG,DJH,NS) may well have been dispersed local or NE breeders. Numbers of the species declined through the reporting period (in all about 350 were recorded), leading up to a winter in which only small, scattered flocks were present in the state, the first such year since '82. "The House Sparrow is still widespread and common", as the Fall RVB has stated previously, but the increase in House Finches (not to mention Starlings), which can compete for House Sparrow roost sites, may reduce numbers locally. Birders who note House Sparrow numbers might keep an eye on this possibility. For the record, about 220 individuals were noted this season.

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|                     |                        | SC  | Scott Crocall      |
|                     |                        | DHC | Dan Crook          |
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|                     |                        | JID | John Dye           |
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| GB                  | Gretchen Baker         |     |                    |
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| AAB                 | Ada Brown              |     |                    |
| BTB                 | Beatrice Tracy Brown   |     |                    |
| NB                  | Norm Brown             |     |                    |
| DGB                 | Dave & Gail Bumgardner |     |                    |
| LB                  | Lloyd Buntin           |     |                    |
| BKB                 | Byron Butler           |     |                    |
| MB                  | Maggie Butler          |     |                    |

|     |                      |      |   |
|-----|----------------------|------|---|
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| BDF | Brian Farrell        | MBN  | Marge Nelson  |
| AF  | Anne Ferrell         | JMN  | Julie Nicholson   |
| JNF | Jean Fleming         | BN   | Bob Nordham   |
| PF  | Polly Foley          | JN   | Jeanette Nordham  |
| HWF | Henry Ford           | WJN  | Bill Norse  |
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| JBG | John Gallegos        | CPa  | Clarence Parker   |
| JG  | John Gates           | EP   | Earl Paxman   |
| EFG | Betty Gilbert        | MP   | Mildred Payne   |
| LG  | Louise Gow           | CP   | Carl Perry  |
| DWG | Daphne Green         | RWP  | Roy Pilcher   |
| AG  | Arlene Grover        | FAP  | Frederick Pratt   |
| BFG | Bea Guyett           | CSP  | Craig Provost   |
| JGG | June Guyette         | RP   | Roger Purinton  |
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| DJH | David Hoag           | TAR  | Tom Rivest  |
| RLH | Roy Hodge            | WR   | Wayne Rowell  |
| DH  | David Horan          | MAS  | Mark Schamel  |
| JH  | Jim Horton           | WS   | Wayne Scott   |
| TH  | Toni Hover           | NS   | Nancy Simson  |
| ECH | Fran Howe            | CS   | Cora Smith  |
| FMH | Fred Hunt            | ES   | Edward Smith  |
| GEH | Gloria Hunt          | MJS  | Mary Jo Smyth   |
| GJ  | Ginny Jenks          | CST  | Cindy Stacy   |
| MRJ | Marion Johnston      | RWS  | Ruth Stewart  |
| KJ  | Ken Johnston         | JS   | Jay Stiegel   |
| CDK | Chris Kibbe          | SS   | Sharon Stiegel  |
| DK  | Dave Killam          | PAT  | Pat Taber   |
| AGK | Andrew Knafel        | KT   | Kevin Taft  |
| ERK | Eugene Kosche        | HT   | Helen Tyre  |
| RSK | Ruth Kosche          | CHV  | Carl Veilleux   |
| MSL | Mark LaBarr          | VEWD | Vermont Fish and Wildlife<br>Department   |
| HL  | Henry Lappen         | VINS | Vermont Institute of Natural<br>Science Rehabilitation and<br>Bird Banding Data |
| JLa | Jean LaRiviere       | DWa  | Dale Walther  |
| SBL | Sally Laughlin       | PEW  | Paul Wagner   |
| RBL | Richard Lavallee     | SAW  | Shirley Wagner  |
| DL  | Douglas Lawrence     | ASW  | Al Watson   |
| GPL | George Lisi          | ELW  | Betty Weeks   |
| ECM | Eugenia MacKellar    | SSW  | Susan Westmore  |
| Jam | Rev. James MacKellar | PWh  | Polly Whitcomb  |
| WSM | Dr. Scott MacLachlan | PW   | Paul Wiczorek   |
| JAM | Judy MacDonald       | MLW  | Martha Williamson   |
| JDM | John Marsh           | WHW  | Bill Willis   |
| JM  | John Martin          | DW   | Diane Wilson  |
| NLM | Nancy Martin         | FW   | Fred Wilson   |
| WAM | Bill Meador          | CHW  | Carol Wood  |
| AGM | Anne Gates Miller    | RAZ  | Robert Zellely  |
| JMo | John Moyers          |      |   |
| PJM | Phebe Jane Mullen    |      |   |

Abbreviations Used in the Text

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| BNP   | Bragdon Nature Preserve, VINS, Woodstock     |
| CR    | Connecticut River                            |
| DCWMA | Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Addison |
| HC    | Herrick's Cove, Rockingham                   |
| LC    | Lake Champlain                               |
| MNWR  | Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge          |
| RM    | Retreat Meadows, Brattleboro                 |
| TWDR  | Thurman W. Dix Reservoir, Orange             |
| WRD   | Winooski River Delta, Colchester             |

|      |            |      |                 |
|------|------------|------|-----------------|
| ad.  | adult      | L.   | Lake            |
| ctr. | center     | m.   | male            |
| f.   | female     | max. | maximum, maxima |
| H.W. | Hawk Watch | Mt.  | Mountain        |
| imm. | immature   |      |                 |

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Contributors are reminded to send in rare and unusual bird sightings at once (or to call the Vermont Bird Alert) and to submit seasonal summaries promptly at the end of each season. This publication is only as complete as you make it. If you need sighting cards, write VINS, PO Box 86, Woodstock, VT 05091, or call us at 457-2779.

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