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FALL MIGRATION 1989

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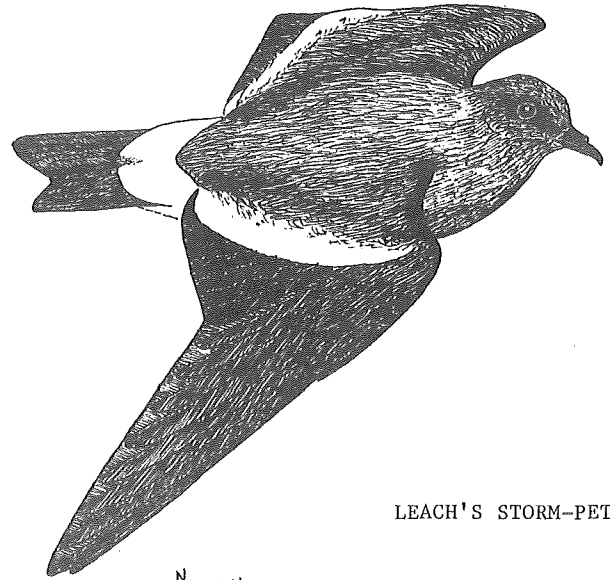
Walter G. Ellison, Seasonal Editor

Autumn 1989 was another bewilderingly diverse fall. Observers amassed reports of a total of 243 bird species, the second highest total ever reported to the autumn *Records of Vermont Birds* (RVB hereafter). The season was wetter than normal, including the wettest August since 1971, whereas temperatures were near normal until a bone-chilling late November. The wet season made wader watching a catch-as-catch-can affair as large gatherings seldom developed and those sandpipers and plovers that were found occurred during migratory fallouts in wet weather. On the other hand the rice stands in Champlain Valley marshes were flooded throughout the autumn which literally provided a food windfall and cover for large numbers of dabbling ducks and Ring-necked Ducks. A detailed look at some of the effects of more specific weather events follows.

Much of the rainfall during August fell in a few torrential thunderstorms. One particularly heavy storm occurred on 8/5, 5 to 6 inches fell in central Vermont during this storm. This heavy weather downed an interesting selection of waterbirds in eastern Vermont including the season's only non-L. Champlain Bonaparte's Gull, and a variety of waders in Brattleboro. A brief spell of high pressure on 9/12 after a cloudy 9/10-11 allowed Broad-winged Hawks to escape Vermont in good numbers. Another break in the weather on 9/15 led to an impressive flight of nearly 770 broad-wings over Brattleboro. Reasonable numbers of many species were seen during rainy weather on 9/16 and 17. Some waders and a few landbird migrants were evident after the passage of the remnants of Hurricane Hugo after 9/23 (e.g. Stilt Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, and 45 Lesser Golden-Plovers at Dead Creek). The frosty clear-out of a cold front on 9/27 pushed a number of early arctic and sub-arctic birds into Vermont such as Snow Goose, all 3 scoters, and Rough-legged Hawk.

Early October was gray and damp with the exception of 10/5, the arrival of another wet spell from 10/6-9 caused an impressive migratory fallout including Brant over Waterbury, GREAT CORMORANT and large numbers of scaup in Newport, a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (first autumn record), and 840 pipits in the Champlain Valley, and 30 Red-breasted Nuthatches in Chester. The peak Canada Goose flight of the fall also unfolded from 10/8-10. A modest flight occurred after a weak frontal system on 10/12-13, but the real show happened after heavy rains on 10/19 and 20 with good numbers of sparrows (e.g. 40 white-crowns in Charlotte on 10/22), scoters, cormorants (62 over Brattleboro), and kinglets (100 ruby-crowns in W. Brattleboro on 10/22). Rarities which occurred during the fallout included an early Iceland Gull, RED PHALAROPE, BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE, Brant, and RED-ELLIED WOODPECKER. Much of the remainder of October was Indian Summer with clear days and mild temperatures.

November was both wetter and colder than normal. A low produced wet, mild weather from Halloween to 11/1. A birding day on 11/2 in the Dead Creek area may have benefitted from a push of migrants after this low departed. Among the finds of the day was Vermont's



LEACH'S STORM-PETREL

MARTIN
after photograph by R.B.Lavallee

first member of the black-throated loon complex (either ARCTIC or, perhaps more likely, PACIFIC LOON). Good numbers of migrants (e.g. Common Goldeneye, Oldsquaw, and Snow Bunting) occurred after and during frontal passages on 11/4 and 12. It was mild from 11/14-16 with a record high of 73° F at Burlington on the sixteenth. Temperatures plummeted after 11/18 and it snowed, heavily in some places, on 11/21. The season closed out snowy and frigid with a few temperatures creeping below 0° F.

Seasonal patterns included a distressingly poor warbler flight in September and a good sparrow flight in October. The lack of pronounced migratory fallouts in September contributed to the poor numbers of warblers, but poor conditions have happened in the past without numbers plumbng the depths seen for some species this season. Something does appear to be causing declines of some long-distance migrant songbirds. Whether this is occurring in the temperate zone or the tropics, or both, is not certain. The quality of the sparrow migration was aided by the fallouts in October. Winter finches were good with large numbers of White-winged Crossbills from August onward (perhaps some of these nested), an excellent siskin flight, and fair numbers of Pine Grosbeaks and redpolls. The latter made an early appearance. Bohemian Waxwings also arrived early in unprecedented numbers for autumn. Winter raptors and the raptorial songbird the Northern Shrike were unspectacular. Diving birds (loons and grebes) were exceptionally well reported. There was also a good smattering of post-breeding herons including 12 Great Egrets and a few out-of-place night-herons. Rarities in addition to those cited above included an extraordinary LEACH'S STORM-PETREL on L. Champlain, SABINE'S GULL for the third fall in a row, WESTERN KINGBIRD in Barnard, a second Great Cormorant, a record 5 Connecticut Warblers, a Yellow-breasted Chat, and a record late report of Orchard Oriole.

The lateness of this report shows that my priorities are often elsewhere these days. Because I cannot concentrate on the records when they need to be completed and have taken on many other projects I have decided to step down as autumn seasonal editor. My tenure as an editor of RVB has lasted 17 years and I have usually enjoyed the responsibility. I leave the autumn season to my successor with mixed feelings. Please continue to improve the quality of your reports and the documentation thereof. You owe this to those people who will use these reports under the assumption that they are accurate.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

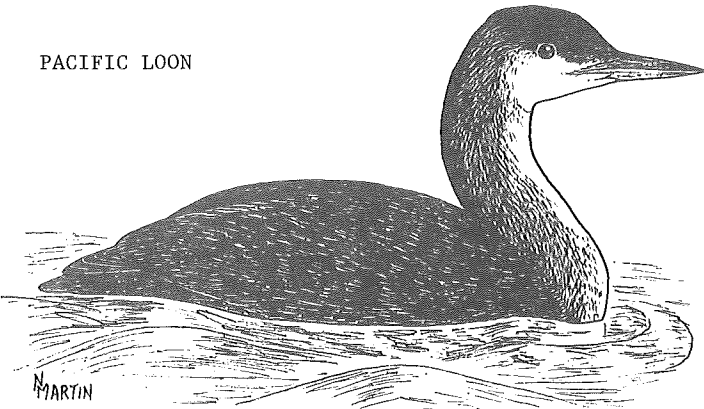
A big vote of thanks is due to Walter Ellison for the hours spent in analyzing and summarizing the fall reports these past seventeen years.

We will miss Walter's remarkable knowledge of Vermont birds and of the migrants that stop here briefly in the autumn. Wherever he may land, I am sure we wish him good luck and good birding. J.N.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

All previous autumn totals of Red-throated Loons were of less than ten birds, in 1989 this precedent was shattered by a phenomenal total of 28 birds reported. The first reported were 3 seen on 10/11 on a survey of L. Champlain from Crown Pt. to St. Albans (CCR,RBL), high counts included 5 on L. Champlain from Grand Isle to Panton on 10/28 (RBL,JJC), 4 in Addison on 11/7 (SBL,BLR,DLC), and 4 in Addison on 11/19 (WGE,NLM,LRB); a bird grounded by weather in Williston on 11/30 and later released on the Connecticut R. (NER,VRC) was the last reported; the only red-throat reported away from L. Champlain was observed at the Retreat Meadows, Brattleboro (hereafter RM) on 11/1 (*fide* DUW,JJC). One of the most interesting reports of autumn 1989 was the observation of an ARCTIC or PACIFIC LOON at Chimney Pt. in Addison from 11/2 to 11/12 (FO,WS,JW,GEHa,BLR,WAM),

PACIFIC LOON



descriptions of the bird eliminate Common and Red-throated Loon quite well but possible distinctions between the recently split species of black-throated loons were either not addressed or equivocated in descriptions, this was due to the distances the bird was seen at, which has left the specific identity of this loon unclear. A record total of nearly 780 Common Loons was recorded, the high count from L. Champlain was 220 on 9/30, 123 of these were in Grand Isle, and a further 97 were in Swanton (RBL,CCF), the high count of migrants away from L. Champlain was 5 on 9/21 at Seymour L., Morgan (WAM), most loons had left L. Champlain by 11/20. The total of 36 Pied-billed Grebes reported was average for the last five autumns, the high count was 5 on 9/13 at Herrick's Cove (hereafter HC) (WJN), and the last was in Addison on 11/12 (GEHa,BLR,WAM). The 790 Horned Grebes represented the second highest total in the last five autumns, the first reported was seen at South Pd., Marlboro on 9/29 (JPN), the only others found away from

L. Champlain were 2 on 10/16 in Vernon (JJC), the high count was 200+ on 11/2 on L. Champlain between Addison and Ferrisburg (Button Bay) (FO,WS,JW). Red-necked Grebes were reported in record numbers with 69 noted; the earliest were 4 in Swanton on 9/16 (RBL,DKL), however most were reported from mid-October on, including the high counts of 9 in Swanton on 10/14 (RBL,JJC), and 11 at Button Bay SP on 11/26 (SSW), the only Red-necked Grebe seen away from L. Champlain was at Caspian L., Greensboro on 10/27 (FO,JW). Truly extra-ordinary was the LEACH'S STORM-PETREL seen, pursued and photographed on L. Champlain off Ladd Pt., Grand Isle on 9/21 (RBL), equally surprising was the lack of extreme weather to explain this bird's occurrence so far from the sea. Inland reports of GREAT CORMORANTS are increasing in New England, these are mostly immatures and they seem to occur only west to the Appalachian ridges in the region, there is only one record from L. Champlain as yet. Two immature Great Cormorants were reported this autumn, 1 at L. Memphremagog in Newport on 10/8 (BLR,DLC), and another on the Connecticut R. at Hartland on 10/28 and 29 (WGE,NLM,DHC). The total of 900 Double-crested Cormorants reported reflects the continuing increase in this species' population in the northeast, high counts included 420 on 9/21 in Grand Isle (RBL,DKL), 125 on 10/14 at Button Bay SP, Ferrisburg (NLM,JMN,EFG et al.), and 62 in Brattleboro on 10/21 (JJC), late reports included birds on 11/6 in Vernon (JJC), and 11/26 on Shelburne Bay (WAM). As cormorants increase there continue to be new locality records, eventually every small pond in Vermont could have a sighting. Precious few American Bitterns were reported; up to 20 were estimated at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton (hereafter MNWR) (JBG), and just five others were found by birders including the late report of 9/15 at RM (JJC). Least Bittern reports were few and included 1 at RM on 8/5 (JJC), and 1 along the Head of L. Champlain, West Haven on 8/6 (WGE,NLM et al.). About 190 Great Blue Herons were reported by birders and up to 100 were estimated at MNWR (JBG), max. included 9 at RM on 8/4 (JJC), and 18 at Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA) on 8/27 (JID,MCD), "blue cranes" are now regularly observed into late November over much of Vermont with the exception of the Northeast Kingdom. There were six reports for this period in 1989 including two to the end of the season. Most of the 12 reports of Great Egret were of single birds but the species was widespread in western and southeastern Vermont, reports came from Sunderland (CRP), RM (JJC), DCWMA (m.ob.), MNWR (PAT,TAR,JBG), Londonderry (JoJ), Tinmouth (PMB), Vernon, where 4 were seen on 8/5 (JJC), and West Haven where 1 was seen on 9/21 the last report of the autumn (ELW). Snowy Egret reports included 2 at Young I., Grand Isle on 8/1, with a single bird there to 8/5 (DJH), 1 in the Burlington area from 8/24 to 9/5 (WAM, BLR,CSP), and 1 made a rare appearance in the Connecticut R. valley at RM on 9/1 (JJC). A piebald imm. LITTLE BLUE HERON was found at Springweather NA, Weathersfield on 9/13 (WJN). The only report of Cattle Egret was from Grand Isle close to the species' lone Vermont colony, the max. count there was 53 from 8/8 to 12, and the last were 7 on 9/8 (DJH). Thirty-eight Green-backed Herons were reported, up to 4 were observed in a day and the last was noted in Woodstock on 9/15 (JMN). Up to 25 Black-crowned Night-Herons were estimated at MNWR (JBG), and 19 others were detected. There was an early August influx of this night-heron into localities where it is a rarity including reports from West Haven (WGE,NLM,MCL), Brattleboro (JJC), Proctor (RWP), and Maidstone Lake (JJA).

WATERFOWL

Reports from MNWR and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (VFWD) aerial waterfowl surveys are cited prior to reports from birders in the following waterfowl accounts. High water on L. Champlain this

autumn flooded wild rice stands that are often high-and-dry in autumn allowing waterfowl with a taste for this grain to swim about in the larder so-to-speak, therefore many waterfowl species were reported in very high numbers at MNWR and on the VFWD surveys. For the second straight autumn Snow Geese were reported in excellent numbers; the number observed at MNWR was considered "unusually high" and included counts of 1500 on 10/28, and 1000 on 11/10 (JBG). Only 66 Snow Geese were found on the 10/9 aerial survey but 4650 were noted on the late survey on 11/22 (WJC). Birders reported a total of about 16,500 snows, the earliest report of the season came from MNWR on 9/30 (JBG), other early flocks were reported from 10/7-9, good flights were reported 10/13-16, 10/28, and 11/2-4, the max. report was from DCWMA where 10,000+ were seen from 10/24-11/11 (m. ob.). An observer with a goose's eye-view of L. Champlain (i.e. aerial) reported that flocks "appeared like soapsuds on the lake for a 12-15 mile stretch" on 11/2 (IW). Other good counts included 600 in St. Albans on 10/28 (JJC, RBL), and 600 on 11/19 over Norwich (GFE). Reports of blue-morph Snow Geese included 1 at Bridport on 11/19 (WGE,NLM,LRB), and 3 on 11/26 at DCWMA (SSW). There were five reports of Brant including "a flock" over Waterbury on 10/7 (BLR), and lone grounded birds at S. Hero on 10/21 (JJA), Windsor on 11/3 (LMP), and from 11/7-21 at RM (JJC). Canada Geese were reported in higher than usual numbers at MNWR with a max. of 1600 10/9 (JBG); 11,400 were found on the VFWD survey of 10/9, including 6100 at DCWMA, and 1900 were surveyed on 11/22 (WJC). Small numbers of feral geese were widely reported in August and early September including a pair with juveniles at Bethel on 9/4 (MCP); the earliest flight of the autumn migration was seen 9/24, the peak flight occurred from 10/8-10 with most seen on the former date including 1400 at Dorset (EFG), and 1000 over Tinmouth (CJF); the total number reported by birders was about 16,300. The largest numbers of Wood Ducks were noted from late September to mid-October including the MNWR high of 860 on 9/26 (JBG), and 1100 on the 10/9 aerial survey which included sub-counts of 530 at MNWR and 300 at Sandbar WMA (hereafter SBWMA) (WJC,VFWD); other observers reported 210 including an adult with juveniles on 8/9 at Lincoln (JRA), most observers reported their last Wood Duck in mid-October but an estimated 250 were still at MNWR on 11/1 (JBG). Green-winged Teal found the high water in the rice much to their liking with a high count at MNWR of 1240 on 10/28 (JBG); 1270 green-wings were counted from the air on 10/9 including sub-counts of 200 at SBWMA, 740 at MNWR, and 95 at Whitney Creek, Addison (WJC,VFWD). Birders reported a further 216 with a high count of 100 at DCWMA on 9/6 (MBN), and a late report of a drake at Wilder Dam on 11/25 (WGE,NLM). The high count of American Black Duck at MNWR was 2000 on 11/1 (JBG); waterfowl surveys located 3400 on 10/9 and 2300 on 11/22 (WJC,VFWD). Ratios of blacks to Mallard varied with location but increased in favor of black ducks as the season progressed, the ratio on the 10/9 survey was 1.1:1 in favor of Mallard and the ratio shifted to 1.9:1 in favor of black duck by 11/22. Field observers reported an additional 430 black ducks. The Mallard high count at MNWR was an intimidating 7000 on 10/28 (JBG); there were 3950 Mallards on the 10/9 aerial survey including 1150 at SBWMA, 2000 at MNWR, and 240 at DCWMA, the count fell to 1200 by 11/22 (WJC,VFWD). Birders reported 1530 other Mallards including high counts of 270 at DCWMA on 9/16 (NLM), and 292 on the Burlington waterfront on 11/26 (TGM). The Northern Pintail is seldom as numerous in autumn as it generally is in spring, and fall 1989 was no exception, pintail were reported at MNWR from August onward with a high count of 125 on 10/28 (JBG); 9 were reported on waterfowl surveys (WJC,VFWD); 21 others were reported from 8/21 to 11/19 with 5 reports from the Champlain valley and 2 from the southern Connecticut R. valley. The max.

estimate of Blue-winged Teal from MNWR was 250 on 9/15, 50 were still present on 10/9 (JBG), these were not seen by aerial surveyors on 10/9 who found their 8 blue-wings on Whitney Creek, Addison (WJC,VFWD). Only 58 were reported by birders including a modest max. of 9 at HC on 10/7 (AMD), and no report later than 10/8. The Northern Shoveler remains the scarcest regularly occurring dabbling in Vermont, the estimated max. from MNWR was 20 on 10/28 where the species was present from late Aug. to early Nov. (JBG). These were the only shovellers reported. Gadwall were present at MNWR from Aug. to early Nov. and were briefly abundant on 10/28 when 470 were estimated (JBG); 65 were counted from the air on 10/9 including 30 at MNWR and 35 at St. Albans Bay (WJC, VFWD). Others reported included 4 at Young I., Grand Isle (where nesting took place) 8/2-27 (DJH), 2 in Grand Isle on 9/21 (RBL,DKL), 1 at Vernon on 10/6 (JJC), 1 on "northern L. Champlain" on 10/11 (RBL,CCR), and 1 at RM on 11/9 (JJC). American Wigeon were abundant at MNWR during mid-Oct. with a high count of 620 on 10/9, the best count since 1985 (JBG); the aerial estimate of 610 at MNWR on 10/9 was in close agreement, others counted on 10/9 were 300 in Highgate and Quebec (the survey covers all of L. Champlain), 10 in St. Albans Bay and 2 at Whitney Creek (WJC,VFWD). Reports by birders included 10 in Grand Isle 8/5-11 (DJH), 4 in Grand Isle 8/30-9/2 (DJH), 1 at Springweather NA, Weathersfield on 9/13 (WJN), 5 at Lincoln on 9/15 (JRA), 2 at SBWMA on 10/8 (WAM), and 1 at L. Bomoseen and 2 at DCWMA on 10/9 (NLM,JBM,JPM). There were few discrete reports of Canvasback, 1 was seen at MNWR on 10/7, an early date (JBG); and 1475 were counted from the air on L. Champlain on 11/22 (WJC,VFWD). Redhead were only reported at MNWR with a peak estimate of 10 on 10/28 (JBG). The numbers of Ring-necked Ducks at MNWR were the best in the last five years with a max. estimate of 17,100 on 10/9 (JBG); VFWD survey results for MNWR were similar, other high counts were also at the north end of L. Champlain with 450 in Highgate and Quebec and 403 in Alburg and Kelley Bays (WJC,VFWD); 164 others were reported including a high count of 106 at Bresee Pd., Hubbardton on 11/19 (WGE,NLM,LRB). Greater Scaup peaked at 25 at MNWR on 11/4 (JBG), others reported included 2 on 10/8 at Shelburne Bay (CSP), 15 at Button Bay SP on 10/14 (NLM et al.), and 20 at Vernon on 10/16 (JJC). The max. count of Lesser Scaup at MNWR was 15 on 11/4 (JBG); 125 of the additional 145 reported were seen on South Bay in Newport on 10/8 (PFW,SAW). Aerial survey results do not differentiate scaup; 183 were counted on 10/9, numbers increased to 2480 on the 11/22 survey (WJC,VFWD). Understandably cautious observers reported over 480 unidentified scaup including 200 with a few individuals of both species identified on South Bay on 11/10 (MS,CW). Kenn Kaufman's new Field guide to advanced birding includes a chapter on scaup identification with useful tips and warnings. The first of 47 Oldsquaw was found on Tinmouth Pd. on 10/16 (CJF), another was seen on Deweys Pd. at Quechee 10/18-27 (ECJ), all others were seen on L. Champlain including the max. of 14 on 11/7 in Addison (SBL,BLR,DLC). About 380 Black Scoters were reported, the earliest were 5 on 9/30 in Swanton (RBL,CCF), there was a fallout of this and other scoters from 10/17-22, high counts during this period included 75 on 10/17 on Tinmouth Pd. (CJF), 75 (likely the same flock) on 10/19 on Danby Pd. (CJF), and 30 on Burnell Pd. in Brandon on 10/19 (SSW), 1 bird was grounded in Tinmouth and brought to VINS on 10/20 (PMB,VINS). The max. from L. Champlain was 40 in W. Addison on 11/19 (WGE,NLM,LRB). The Surf Scoter was reported in smaller numbers than the other scoters with 110 noted; the earliest were 15 in Burlington on 9/30 (JDM); other noteworthy counts included 11 on Tinmouth Pd. on 10/17 (CJF) (the same count was reproduced on Danby Pd. 3.5 air miles to the south two days later (CJF) suggesting that these birds and the 75 Black Scoters mentioned above were identical with those seen on

Tinmouth Pd.), and about 20 were noted in Burlington and Shelburne on 10/22 (JDM,CSP). Over 330 White-winged Scoters were reported, the earliest were 4 in Swanton on 9/30 (RBL,CCF), high counts were 29 on L. Champlain in St. Albans on 10/14 (RBL,JJC), 27 in Vernon on 10/16 (JJC), and 100+ from Chimney Pt. to Button Bay, L. Champlain on 11/2 (FO,JW). These large ducks were also reported from Caspian L., and L. Memphremagog. Up to 100 Common Goldeneye were estimated at MNWR during Aug. (JBG) this early autumn high is typical for MNWR where goldeneye nest. Large numbers were not evident on L. Champlain until late in the season, the VFWD aerial survey recorded over 4400 on 11/22 (WJC,VFWD). Over 800 others were reported including high counts of 250 at SBWMA (JDM), and 200 in W. Addison (SBL,BLR,DLC) on 11/7. One, perhaps two, Barrow's Goldeneye were observed in the Burlington area this autumn. A male, presumably the bird which wintered in 1988-89, was seen on the Burlington waterfront from 10/22 onward (CSP,WAM et al.), and another, or the same bird wandering south, was seen on Shelburne Bay 11/19-26 (WAM). Over 100 Bufflehead were reported; the first was a hen-plumaged bird on Spectacle Pd. on 10/14 (FAP); numbers seemed modest with a max. of only 12 at McNeil Cove, Charlotte on 11/12 (TGM). Two males were seen displaying to a f. on 11/4 at Crescent L., Sharon (CCR,LLR). The max. estimate of 125 Hooded Mergansers occurred at MNWR in early Nov. (JBG); nearly 200 others were reported including high counts of 30 on Crescent L., Sharon on 11/4 (CCR,LLR), and 28 at East Creek, Orwell on 11/11 (RWP). Common Mergansers are uncommon at MNWR, the high count for the autumn there was 25 on 11/15 (JBG); aerial counts of unspecified mergansers rose from 170 on 10/9 to 3710 on 11/22 (WJC,VFWD); birders reported 2400 more mergansers including two ad. with 10 juv. at Somerset Res. on 9/4 (WHW), max. were 600 on 10/28 at Pantan (JJC,RBL), and about 500 of a flock of mergansers estimated at 1500 in Meach Cove, Shelburne on 11/7 were thought to be commons (JDM). Over much of the last 15 years the Red-breasted Merganser has been a uniformly uncommon autumn migrant in Vermont, however the species has been a fairly common and even locally abundant migrant on L. Champlain in the autumns of 1988 and '89, perhaps as many as 1350 were reported in autumn 1989, the first was a summering hen off Bixby I., Grand Isle observed on 8/1 (DJH), most high counts were of less than 100 birds but 1000 of 1500 mergansers at Meach Cove, Shelburne on 11/7 were considered red-breasts (JDM), and 120 were seen in Pantan on 11/11 (RWP). Five Ruddy Ducks were reported including a drake at the Stone Dam, DCWMA on 10/9 (NLM,JPM,JBM), a hen on Tinmouth Pd. on 10/23 (CJF), a hen or imm. on L. Morey, Fairlee on 10/26 (CCR), and 2 seen on Potash Bay, Addison on 11/2 (FO,JW).

VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

Numbers of Turkey Vultures were not as overwhelming as in the last trio of autumns (1986-1988); 66 were reported on hawk watches (0.16/obs. hr.), and an additional 143 were reported by independent observers, a single bird was noted in Peacham in the Northeast Kingdom on 10/8 (DJH). The high count in the Champlain Valley was 21 on 8/21 in Ferrisburg (WGE,NLM,DHC), all other maxima were from the southern Connecticut R. valley including 14 near the Rockingham landfill on 9/7 (WJN), 12 in Dummerston on 9/18 (AMD), and 17 at Putney Mt. on 10/11 (HML). Late reports included 2 at Grafton (DC) and 1 in Colchester (JDM) on 10/24, and 5 in Bristol on 10/25 (JRA). Osprey were reported in good numbers with 106 on hawk watches (0.26/obs. hr.), and 61 noted by other observers, high counts were 11 on 9/12 at Putney Mt. (JJC), 12 at Mt. Philo on 9/15 (JID, MCD et al.), and 11 at Fuller Mt., Ferrisburg on 10/14 (JID,MCD) the latter is a surprisingly high count for mid-Oct. The last was at RM on 11/12 (JJC). Three of the 19 Bald Eagles reported were seen on hawk watches, reports ranged from 8/5 to 11/25, age determinations

for 11 of the birds were 6 imm. and 5 ad. The number of Northern Harriers reported was about at par with most recent autumns, 53 were reported on hawk watches (0.13/obs. hr.), and over 80 others were reported; high counts included 7 each at Mt. Philo on 9/13 (FAP), and Fuller Mt. on 10/14 (JID,MCD). The total of 385 Sharp-shinned Hawks reported on hawk watches was 200 fewer than in 1988 but the 0.94/obs. hr. was better than figures reported in the mid-80s, 62 other sharp-shins were reported including one with eyes bigger than its stomach chasing a Pileated Woodpecker on 10/22 (CJF). The Cooper's Hawk appears to be slowly increasing, 37 were seen on hawk watches and an additional 24 were reported by other observers, numbers were consistent on hawk watches with high counts of 4 from four watches 9/14-16. Fourteen of the 19 Northern Goshawks observed on hawk watches were seen on just two watches, 8 were seen from Lincoln Hill on 9/9 (PAT) an early date, and 6 were seen over Fuller Mt. on 10/19 (JID,MCD), 7 other goshawks were reported. Few Red-shouldered Hawks were reported including 16 on hawk watches (0.04/obs. hr.) and 4 by other observers, the max. report was 5 on 10/14 at Lincoln Hill (PAT) and the last was seen in Winhall on 11/5 (WJN). In contrast to the preceding raptor the Broad-winged Hawk was reported in excellent numbers with 3205 on hawk watches and 260 others; high counts included 657 over Putney Mt. (HML), and 359 over Grafton (DC) on 9/12, 100+ on 9/13 in Braintree seen independently of any hawk watch (DH), and 768 over W. Brattleboro on 9/16 (ABM), the latest were 1 each in Island Pond (PFW,SAW) and Grand Isle (DJH) on 9/29. Red-tailed Hawks were reported in about average numbers with 505 on hawk watches and 205 others noted, very good counts included 29 seen at DCWMA on 8/19 (MJM,WRB,JM), and the majority of the hawk watch total was seen from Fuller Mt., Ferrisburg on 10/19 when the Dyes counted 323. An almost completely white leucistic red-tail continued to reside in Bradford (JF). Although a good total of 49 Rough-legged Hawks was reported none were seen from hawk watches, 1 seen at DCWMA on 9/30 (JDM) was the first of the season, however most were not seen until after the third week of Oct., the max. count was 12 with 2 in Bridport, 9 in Addison and 1 in Pantan on 11/19 (WGE, NLM,LRB); rough-legs outside of the Champlain Valley were seen during late Nov. in S. Royalton (EK), Springfield (DHC), Hartland (DHC), and N. Troy (SBL,HBS). The two Golden Eagles reported were seen in early Nov. with an imm. at DCWMA, Pantan on the 2nd (FO,JW), and an imm. over Quechee on the 4th (ECJ). Very good numbers of American Kestrels were reported including 252 on hawk watches (0.61/obs. hr.), and 131 by non-hawkwatchers; high counts were 32 at DCWMA on 8/19 (MJM,WRB,JM), 74 over Mt. Philo on 9/13 (FAP), and 47 there on 9/15 (JID,MCD et al.). A kestrel was observed chasing bats over Brattleboro on 9/9 (JJC) - elusive prey! Fourteen Merlin were reported with 4 on hawk watches and 10 others seen on dates ranging from 8/27 to 10/19, the latter was a bird brought to VINS for rehabilitation. Peregrine Falcon reports increased to a record 15 on hawk watches with an additional 11-13 reports. It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate reports into migrants, breeding residents, and imm. bred in neighboring states. With the recent discovery of at least a few falcons wintering at their aeries the winnowing task has become even more problematic. Examples of this include a hawk watch report of 3 at Brandon Gap on 9/9 (RWP) - a pair nested unsuccessfully at this cliff - and 5 reported during August, were these dispersing young, local residents, or early migrants? Hawk watch birds were reported from 9/3 to 10/14 which fits the general pattern of migration over the last decade, besides the birds at Brandon Gap another high count of 3 was reported from Mt. Philo on 9/13 (FAP). The last report was at DCWMA on 11/5 (JBG).

GAMEBIRDS THROUGH RAILS

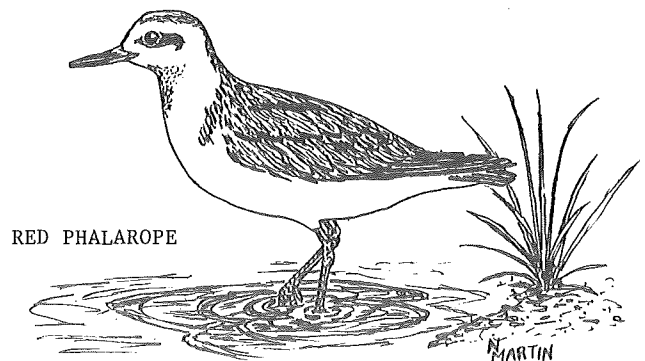
The only report of Gray Partridge was an estimated

population of 20 at MNWR (JBG). Good numbers of Ruffed Grouse continued from 1987 and '88 with about 90 reported by birders and an estimated population of 50 at MNWR (JBG); high counts included 8 at Reading on 8/16 (FMH,GEH), 9 at Woodstock on 9/11 (JMN), and 8 in Chester on 9/13 (CEAD). Reports of over 100 Wild Turkeys were scattered over much of western and southeastern Vermont, turkeys were noted in Swanton, Georgia, Addison, Brandon (6 hens with 13 poults on 8/19 [SSW]), W. Brattleboro (high count of 22 on 11/3 [JJC]), Chester, Reading, Barnard, and Norwich. Virginia Rails were reported from MNWR, Grand Isle, West Rutland, and the Tinmouth Channel, the last seen was at the latter site from 10/16-17 (CJF). Sora were only reported from MNWR. Seventeen Common Moorhens were reported by birders including 4 in marshland along L. Champlain, West Haven on 8/6 (WGE,NLM et al.), 2 independent juv. and an ad. with two chicks at East Creek, Orwell on 8/26 (RWP), 3 in South Hero on 9/18 (JDM), and a very late bird at the mouth of the LaPlatte R., Shelburne on 10/28 (RBL,JJC). The moorhen population at MNWR was estimated at 50 in late summer (JBG). There were three reports of American Coot with 1 in Shelburne Bay on 8/2 (TGM), another there from 10/1-5 (ECC), and 3 in Vernon on 10/16 (JJC).

WADERS

Black-bellied Plovers were scarce, reports included 1 at DCWMA on 9/18 (MBN), 1 at L. Dunmore 9/27-10/6 (WBK) a rare sighting away from L. Champlain, 1 at Blodgett's on the Burlington waterfront on 10/5 (JDM), 2 at the same location from 10/8-14 (CSP,JDM,WAM), 1 on Savage I. from 10/11-14 (RBL,CCR,JJC), and the last was in Burlington from 10/22-24 (JDM,WAM). Over 65 Lesser Golden-Plovers were reported, the first were 14 in Panton on 9/16 (NLM), most others were reported at DCWMA with a high count of 45 on 9/24 (FAP), the last were 5 in Newport on 10/6 (JDM). Only 14 Semipalmated Plovers were reported, the earliest migrants occurred in July (see Summer RVB) and 12 of those reported were observed in the Burlington area, the exception were 2 in Newport on 9/5 (JDM), the latest was seen in Burlington on 10/11 (JDM). Over 570 Killdeer were reported, high counts were 45 in Ferrisburg on 8/21 (WGE,NLM,DHC), and 96 on 10/18 at Randolph Center (FAP), the last was at Blodgett's in Burlington on 10/24 (JDM). Nearly 90% of the 107 Greater Yellowlegs were reported from the Champlain Valley, reports near L. Champlain began in August with 7 in Burlington on 8/2 (WAM), high counts were 10 on 8/19 at DCWMA (JAP), and 10 at DCWMA on 10/24 (FAP). Reports away from the lake ranged from 9/15 to 11/9 with a max. of 4 at Randolph Center on 10/18 (FAP), the last was about three weeks late on 11/26 at Shelburne Bay (WAM). Lesser Yellowlegs were scarcer than usual with just 21 reported, the first were 3 at RM on 8/4 (JJC), the max. count was 6 at DCWMA on 9/24 (CSP,DLC), and the last was at HC on 10/16 (AMD). Solitary Sandpipers were uncommon, 17 were noted with a high count of 6 on 8/17 in Middlesex (FAP), the last was a bird with a recently broken wing found in Woodstock on 9/27 (VINS) this bird was kept at the Vermont Raptor Center (hereafter VRC) through the winter and transferred to a zoo in Connecticut when it failed to regain its capacity for strong flight. Forty-six Spotted Sandpipers were reported with a max. of 13 at Shelburne Bay on 8/1 (ECC), and a late date of 10/22 at Ball I., St. Albans (RBL,BLR,DHD,DLC). Eight Upland Sandpipers were reported on two dates including 6 at DCWMA (MJM,JM) and 1 at the Caledonia County Airport in Lyndon (T. Winans, *vide* PFW) on 8/5, and 1 in Ferrisburg on 8/11 (JID,MCD). A late Whimbrel was reported from DCWMA on 9/26 (DLC). Ruddy Turnstone was thrice reported, 1 was at Blodgett's on 8/6 (BLR, DLC), 6 were seen at the Winooski R. Delta Park in Colchester (WRDP hereafter) on 8/13 (WAM), and 1 was seen in wet fields at DCWMA on 9/24 (FAP) the latter location and habitat rarely host this stout wader of debris-strewn shorelines. Eighteen Sanderlings were

reported, the first were two weeks early and in the Connecticut valley where they are very rare, 2 were reported without comment on 8/5 at RM with 1 staying to 8/6 (JJC). Other reports of this sandpiper of sandy shores were, as usual, from L. Champlain with 4 at WRDP on 8/21 (WGE,NLM,DHC), 1 at Blodgett's on 9/9 (JDM), a high count of 10 on 9/20 at the same site (JDM), and the last on 10/24 was also there (JDM). Semipalmated Sandpipers were noted in modest numbers with 76 reported, high counts were 18 on 8/6 at RM (JJC) a good count outside of the Champlain Valley, and 22 on 8/23 at St. Albans Bay (CCR,MSL,CSH), late reports included 1 at DCWMA on 10/14 (NLM,JMN,EFG et al.), and 1 in Burlington on 10/24 (JDM). Two Western Sandpipers were reported, sans documentation, from DCWMA on 9/11 (MBN,JAP,DLC). The 63 Least Sandpipers represented a below-average total for autumn, max. of 12 each were counted at DCWMA on 8/26 and 9/3 (MBN), and late reports included 1 on 9/17 at RM (JJC), and 4 at Blodgett's in Burlington on 9/20 (JDM). White-rumped Sandpiper reports included 1 at Blodgett's 9/20-22 (JDM,CSP), 2 at the same place from 9/25-26 were less gray than the previous bird (JDM), 1 at the Miller Farm in Vernon on 10/21 (JJC), a superb count of 17 made on Slang Rd., DCWMA, Panton on 10/29 (FO,CSP), and 4 seen along Route 17, DCWMA, Addison on 11/7 (DLC). Two Baird's Sandpipers reported at RM on 8/5 were very early for New England and the first for the Connecticut valley of Vermont (JJC). Some details of the sighting were provided, observers will help overcome editorial skepticism by providing a few diagnostic details with such unusual reports whether official Rare Species Documentation is required or not. however no specific documentation was submitted with this report. Another Baird's was reported from Burlington on 8/25 (WAM). The earliest of 62 Pectoral Sandpipers were reported at RM on 8/4 when 6 were noted (JJC), this count doubled the next day, however the highest count submitted was 15 on 9/24 at DCWMA (FAP), the last observed were 5 at DCWMA on 11/2 (FO,JW,WS). Only 11 Dunlin were reported including 1 at DCWMA, Panton on 9/16 (NLM), another at DCWMA on 9/24 (FAP), 1 at Blodgett's in Burlington on 10/11 (JDM), 2 in Grand Isle from 10/11-28 (RBL,JJC,CCR), 1 on the Miller Farm, Vernon on 10/21 (JJC), 3 at Blodgett's from 10/22-24 (JDM), and 2 at Shelburne Bay on 11/5 (WAM). Reports of the scarce Stilt Sandpiper included 1 at DCWMA on 9/11 (MBN), and 2 there from 9/23-24 (CSP,DLC). Short-billed Dowitcher was reported twice, 2 were at DCWMA on 8/27 (MBN), and a juv. at RM on 9/17 was two weeks late and rare for the Connecticut valley (JJC). Unidentified dowitchers included 1 at DCWMA on 9/3 (MBN), and 1 there on 10/14 (NLM,JMN,EFG et al.). Over 70 American Woodcock were reported, C. J. Frankiewicz characterized the season as "decent" and supplied the high count of 13 on 10/19 in Tinmouth and late date of 11/10 when he saw 1 in Clarendon and 2 in Danby. Three dozen Common Snipe were reported, high counts were 5 each on 8/26 at DCWMA (MBN), and Tinmouth Channel on 10/11 (CJF), and the last reported was seen in Tinmouth from 11/10-21 (PMB). A RED PHALAROPE found on Caspian L. on 10/21 was well described (FO,JW,EI).

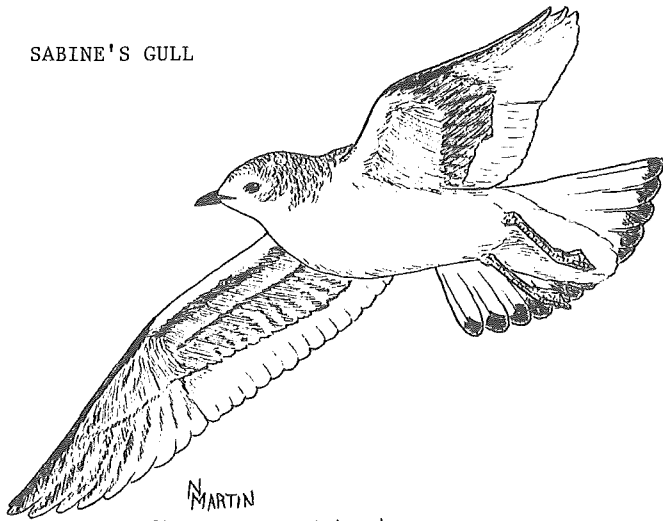


RED PHALAROPE

GULLS AND TERNS

A Little Gull reported on 8/6 at WRDP was at least a month early (BLR,DLC), all others occurred from late October to mid-November with an ad. on 10/28 at Gardner I., Ferrisburg (RBL,JJC), an imm. in Addison on 11/7 (BLR,SBL,DLC) (this age is seldom reported in Vt.), ads. were reported at the Charlotte town beach on 11/11 (CSP), on Shelburne Bay on 11/13 (GEHa), and at Town Farm Bay, Charlotte on 11/19 (RBL,GEHa,BLR). Very large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were reported throughout the season on L. Champlain; only 1 was seen outside of the Champlain Valley at HC on 8/5 (DC,MWB). The high count from L. Champlain was 3200 on 10/28 with local counts of 1200 in Shelburne and 1140 in Charlotte (RBL, JJC), 60% of 150 birds in St. Albans Bay on 8/23 were juvs. (CCR,MSL,CSH). High counts of Ring-billed Gulls included 2750 at DCWMA on 9/4 (JRA), and 1830+ on northern L. Champlain (via boat) on 10/11 (RBL,CCR), the high count at L. Memphremagog was 250+ on 10/1 (PFW,SAW), relatively few ring-bills were reported from the Connecticut valley; deep in the Green Mts. 35 were observed migrating over Winhall from 10/12-11/5 (WJN). Although Herring Gulls were widely reported the only notable count was 1500+ on the Burlington waterfront on 10/11 (RBL,CCR). An Iceland Gull arrived early on L. Champlain at Burton I., St. Albans on 10/22 (RBL,BLR, DHD,DLC). A lone white-winged (Glaucous or Iceland) or leucistic gull passed over Winhall on 11/5 (WJN). About 250 Great Black-backed Gulls were reported including high counts of 100+ in Burlington on 10/11 (RBL,CCR), 20 at White River Jct. on 10/12 (JMN), and 21 in Addison on 11/5 (MBN). An imm. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE was photographed on L. Champlain in Pantan on 10/22 (RBL,BLR,DHD, DLC), another was reported without supporting details from Addison on 11/7 (BLR,SBL,DLC). A juv. SABINE'S GULL was photographed off Ladd Pt., Grand Isle on 9/16 (RBL,DKL), this is the third consecutive year for an autumn report of this rare arctic gull on L. Champlain

SABINE'S GULL



MARTIN
after photo by Dick Lavallee

and by far the earliest record. Common Terns have become scarce at the former staging site at WRDP where counts of 6 were made on 8/6 (BLR,DLC) and 9/19 (JDM), the autumn 1989 staging area was Missisquoi Bay where 150+ were counted in mid-September (MSL). Eleven chicks were banded on nesting islands in St. Albans from 8/2-23 (MSL,CCR,VINS). The last reported were 2 on 9/30 in St. Albans (RBL,CCF). The usual handful of August Black Terns included 2 on L. Champlain in West Haven 8/1-6 (WGE,NLM et al.), 1 at DCWMA on 8/22 (JID,MCD), and 2 on Missisquoi Bay on 8/31 (MSL,CSH).

DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Rock Doves were reported by 11 observers with a

max. count of 130 at Chester (AMD). About 450 Mourning Doves were reported with high counts of 45 on 8/8 in Danby (CJF), and 39 on 11/23 in Sheffield (PFW,SAW). Black-billed Cuckoo reports included 1 in Dorset on 8/2 (EFG), 1 seen in Grand Isle from 8/10-11 (DJH), 1 in Winhall on 8/16 (WJN), 1 on 8/21 in Pantan (WGE,NLM, DHC), 2 in Winhall on 9/1 (WJN), 1 banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/3 (JJC), and the last of the season in Winhall on 9/21 (WJN). An Eastern Screech-Owl was heard in Brandon on 8/23 (SSW), and the estimated population at MNWR was 10 (JBG). All 11 reports of Great Horned Owls were from west of the Green Mts., pairs were reported in Dorset (EFG), and on the east shore of Grand Isle (EMH). A Snowy Owl was reported from MNWR during November with no arrival date cited (JBG). At least 16 Barred Owls were reported, these reports were more widely dispersed than those of Great Horned Owls and included a count of 3 in Danby on 10/27 (CJF). Reports of Short-eared Owl included an unreleasably injured bird which came to the VRC from Milton on 10/17 (NER), and 1 at DCWMA on 11/2 (FO,JW), the former bird was given a home in a Springfield, MA captive breeding program. The always inconspicuous Northern Saw-whet Owl was reported in Winhall on 10/22 (WJN), 1 was found stunned in Rutland on 10/26 and brought to VRC (VINS), 1 was found in Mt. Holly on 11/13 (fide CJF), and one fell victim to a barn cat in Ludlow on 11/28 (ADH). Observers did not detect the peak of Common Nighthawk migration this autumn as very few of these partly diurnal nightjars were reported, 2 were at Winooski on 8/3 (JDM), 1 was over Burlington 8/17-19 (JMD), 1 was seen in Brandon on 8/20 (SSW), 1 in Pantan on 8/21 (WGE, NLM,DHC) was probably a migrant as none are thought to nest there, 2 over Rutland on 9/8 were the first seen there in 1989 by C.J. Frankiewicz (the species nested in Rutland until at least 1988), and the last was a notably late migrant over Winhall on 9/18 (WJN).

SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Nearly 190 Chimney Swifts were reported, high counts included 65 over Brandon on 8/16 (SSW), and 35 over Bristol on 8/21 (JRA), as usual few were seen after August, including 1 seen over Mt. Philo on 9/9 (JDM), and a swift seen by WJN during a hawk watch in Winhall on 10/12, one of the latest ever reported to RVB. About 77 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported, 4 were captured and marked at Bragdon Nature Preserve, Woodstock (BNP hereafter) (VINS), up to 5 were reported in a day and late reports included 1 in Woodstock on 9/24 (CMW, JFW), 1 feeding on Impatiens in Manchester on 9/28 (fide NS), and the last in Winhall on 9/30 (WJN). Over 80 Belted Kingfishers were reported, the max. count of 8 was recorded along East Bay, West Haven on 8/6 (WGE,NLM et al.), at DCWMA on 8/11 (JID,MCD), and in Grand Isle on various dates in Aug. and Sept. (DJH). Although Red-headed Woodpeckers are reported in only small numbers there have almost always been a few reports to RVB in autumn, therefore it was disappointing to find that none were reported in autumn 1989. Replacing the missing Red-headed Woodpeckers so-to-speak were two reports of its congener the RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER, 1 was found in Chester on 10/22 (CEAd), and a f. was present in Grand Isle from 10/27 through the end of autumn (EMH,SH et al). Forty Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported with 5 banded at BNP (VINS), and 1 banded at W. Brattleboro (JJC), the max. count was 5 on 9/1 in Mendon (WGE,NLM, JPM,JBM), and the last date was 2 weeks earlier than usual with single birds in Reading (FMH,GEH), and Winhall (WJN) on 10/4. The numbers of Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers reported were normal with 101 Downies (2 banded) and 61 Hairies (1 banded). The only Black-backed Woodpecker reported was a single out-of-range male at White River Jct. on 9/11 (DHC). The less than average totals of Northern Flickers reported over the last two autumn RVB may be cause for concern, 164 were noted including a high count of 13 at HC on 9/23 (NLM),

a few remained through the end of autumn as usual. The total of 67 Pileated Woodpeckers was good, the best count reported was 4 on 8/25 in Grand Isle (DJH).

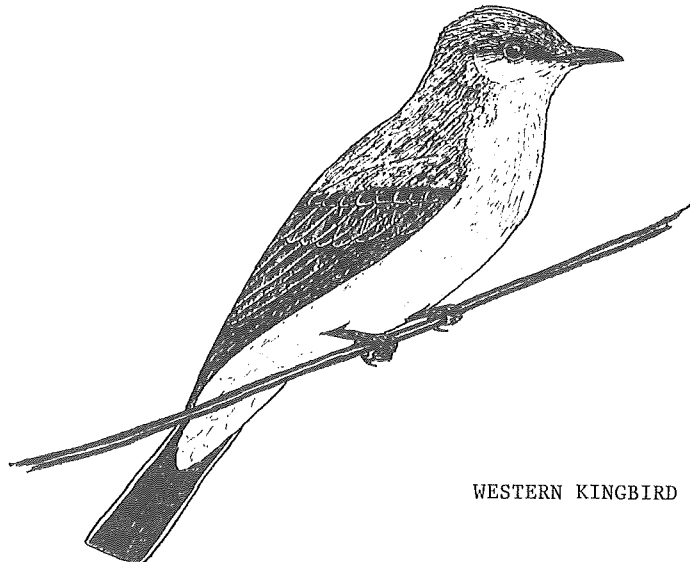
FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Six of the 9 Olive-sided Flycatchers reported were found during August, the last was in Winhall on 9/14 (WJN). Just over 70 Eastern Wood-Pewees were reported including 7 banded at BNP (VINS), the high count of 10 in Brandon on 9/8 was later than usual (JDM), and late reports were of birds at WRDP (JDM), and Shelburne (ECC) on 9/19. All of the 7 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers reported were located in August, 3 were banded, 2 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), and 1 at BNP (VINS). A good total of 56 "Traill's" flycatchers were reported, 10 of these were identified as Alder Flycatchers including a good count of 6 in Dorset on 8/3 (EFG). Willow Flycatchers totalled 14 with a max. of 8 on 8/5 at RM (JJC). The 32 unidentified "Traill's" flycatchers banded (these species cannot be consistently identified in the hand) included a record 29 at BNP (VINS), and 3 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), the last of these birds were 1 at BNP on 9/11 and 1 on 9/13 in W. Brattleboro. Numbers of Least Flycatchers were near their five year average after being reported in very low numbers in the fall of 1988, 56 were reported in August and September 1989 including 28 banded, 23 at BNP (VINS), and 5 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), the high count was 5 on 8/10 (CCR,VINS), and the last was in W. Brattleboro on 9/14 (JJC). A late Empidonax flycatcher in Lincoln on 9/28 (JRA) may have been a Least because this species tends to linger later than its congeners. About 180 Eastern Phoebes were reported, 38 of 46 banded at BNP and W. Brattleboro were captured at the former site (JJC,VINS), 9 in Dorset on 9/17 (EFG) was the high count, and the last reported was in Grand Isle on 10/20 (DJH). All of the 13 Great Crested Flycatchers reported were noted during August with the latest in Grand Isle on 8/27 (DJH). A WESTERN KINGBIRD was fortuitously seen and reported on 9/22 in

the latter date was surprising, groups of kingbirds have not been seen after the first week of September in previous falls. About 200 Horned Larks were reported; high counts were from November in the Champlain Valley including 70 near Long Pt., Ferrisburg on the 11th (CSP), and 85 in Orwell (60) and Shoreham (25) on 11/19 (WGE,NLM,LRB), larks were reported away from the Champlain Valley in Sheffield, Brattleboro, and Vernon. All of the 80 Purple Martins reported were seen during August in the Champlain Valley, a pair of presumably young, tardy arrivals (7/1) were still feeding nestlings on 8/19 (DJH). See articles by Eugene Morton in the latest Living Bird Quarterly and Condor for interesting accounts of Purple Martin nesting and migratory behavior. The max. count was 40 in Grand Isle on 8/26 (EMH), and the last were 2 in Shelburne on 8/28 (ECC). The total of 1450 Tree Swallows reported was average, the high count of 600 was reported at DCWMA on 8/24 (MBN), the numbers of swallows there had dwindled to 110 on 9/4 (JRA), and the latest were 2 over Putney Mt. on 9/13 (JJC). Northern Rough-winged Swallows included 1 on 8/8 at S. Londonderry (WJN), 3 at Quechee on 8/21 (JMN), and 1 at DCWMA on 9/27 the latter was nearly a record late sighting. A cautionary note regarding identification of late brown-backed swallows due to the similarity of imm. Tree Swallows to Bank and rough-winged swallows: these birds may often show a dusky throat or a breast-band, observers should always attempt to carefully note a combination of characteristics to make this identification and not rely on one field mark (see Wilds,1985 Birding 17:209-11). Very few rough-wings are present in New England after 7/31. None of the over 220 Bank Swallows reported were found after August, high counts occurred just before the species departed with 81 in Panton on 8/21 (WGE,NLM,DHC), and 100+ at East Creek, Orwell on 8/26 (RWP). Cliff Swallows also departed at the end of August, the highest count was 40 in Winhall 8/1-6 (WJN), and the last was reported from Chester on 8/30 (CEAd). A somewhat low total of 460 Barn Swallows was reported, 4 fledglings were fed in Shelburne as late as 8/22, the parents of these birds also proved responsive to the begging behavior of 2 juv. House Finches (ECC), and 3 young fledged from a nest in Chester on 8/23 (CEAd). Two were banded at BNP on 8/4 (CCR et al.), the high count was 104 on 8/21 at DCWMA (WGE,NLM,DHC), and the last were 4 at DCWMA on 9/27 (MBN).

JAYS THROUGH WRENS

Gray Jays were reported in Lewis where 3 were seen on 8/28 (CEA), and at Moose Bog (Wenlock WMA), Ferdinand on 10/14 when 5 were observed (FAP). About 630 Blue Jays were reported, 2 were banded at BNP (VINS), and 25 were banded in W. Brattleboro (JJC) the latter number is impressive because jays are wary and are large enough to often escape the fine mesh of songbird nets. Good numbers of migrants were reported on 9/16 when high counts of 70 at Snake Mt. (NLM,AP et al.), and 216 at Mt. Philo (JID,MCD) were achieved, a concentration of 38 at a Sheffield feeder on 11/30 (PFW,SAW) must have been colorful. Less colorful but a spectacle nonetheless is the October migration of American Crows. As usual this event peaked at mid-month with a number of reports from 10/16-19, 9300 total were counted passing over Fuller Mt., Ferrisburg during October (JID,MCD). After a run of years ending in 1987 when over 100 Common Ravens were reported each autumn, the falls of 1988 and 1989 failed to produce a combined total of 100; 42 were reported during autumn 1989 with a high of only 7 on 9/1 at West Rutland (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM). Over 650 Black-capped Chickadees were reported including high counts of 46 on 8/19 in S. Duxbury (FAP), 101 in Mendon on 9/1 (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM), and 50 in Reading on 9/16 (FMH,GEH), 72 were banded including 56 at BNP (JJC,VINS). Six of the 8 Boreal Chickadees reported were found in north-eastern Vt., half of these were seen at Moose Bog,



WESTERN KINGBIRD

N. MARTIN

Barnard by Connecticut birder Jay Hand en route to a wedding, Nancy Martin relocated the bird later on the same day and provided supplementary documentation of the report including a convincing sketch. The total of 137 Eastern Kingbirds represented the second straight autumn with less-than-average numbers reported (versus 1985-87), the high count was 26 on 8/21 at DCWMA (WGE,NLM,DHC), and late reports included 1 in Middlebury on 9/18 (JRA), and 4 at HC on 9/22 (AMD) the number of birds on

Ferdinand on 10/1 (SSW), outlanders included 1 on Breadloaf Mt., Ripton on 8/10 (TEJ), and 1 in Winhall on 11/8 (WJN). The number of Tufted Titmice reported each autumn has risen steadily over the last 5 years, 50 were noted during autumn 1989 with counts ranging up to 7 in Colchester 9/14-15 (JDM), and 8 on 11/25 in White River Jct. (CLD), all reports were from low elevation locales in southern Vt. and the Champlain Valley. Numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were much higher than normal with 175 reported, 1 was banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/29 (JJC), numbers were particularly high in the Green Mts. and their adjacent foothills. High counts included 19 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), 25 on 9/1 in Mendon (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM), and 30 in Chester on 10/8 (CEAD), this flight was also noted in southern New England, the Maritimes, Pennsylvania, northern New Jersey, and Ontario (*American Birds* 44 [1]). The 106 White-breasted Nuthatches reported represented an average total, 3 were banded at BNP (VINS), and among the best counts were 10 at Snake Mt., Addison on 9/16 (NLM,AP et al.), and counts of 8 on 11/11 and 11/14 in Dorset (EFG). Numbers of Brown Creepers were average with 45 reported, 1 each were banded at BNP and W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS), and a high of 5 was noted in Chester on 10/22 (CEAD). Reports of Carolina Wrens were all of lone birds and included sightings at Bartonville on 8/11 (TEJ), in Manchester from early October to 11/19 (SDA), and at Brandon from 10/29-11/5 (SSW). The lowest autumn seasonal total of House Wrens of the decade was reported in 1989 with only 20 noted, 3 were banded at BNP and 1 in W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS), 6 yg. fledged in Woodstock on 8/1 (JMN). The max. count was 5 in Dorset on 9/4 and 8 (EFG), the last bird reported was two weeks late on 10/30 in Dorset a date more typical of the next species than House Wren. Numbers of Winter Wrens continue to increase with the 66 reported representing a new high for the 80s. The 2-egg clutch reported in a late nest at W. Dummerston on 8/11 probably represented an incomplete clutch or unhatched eggs (JJC); 4 were banded, 3 at BNP and 1 in W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS); high counts included a probable family group of 8 in Reading on 8/6 (FMH,GEH), and 7 in Chester on 10/15 (CEAD). Reports ended in late October but this inconspicuous bird is regularly seen on Christmas Bird Counts. Marsh Wren reports returned to normal after an impressive showing in autumn 1988, 40 were reported including high counts of 10 on 8/1 along East Bay and L. Champlain in West Haven (WGE,NLM,MCL), 6 at RM on 8/5 (JJC), and 6 at West Rutland Marsh (hereafter WRM) on 9/1 (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM), latest were single birds at East Creek, Orwell (RWP), and WRDP (JDM) on 10/14.

KINGLETS THROUGH THRUSHES

Numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets were above average with over 200 reported; 10 were banded with 8 captured in W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS); high counts were a mix of post-breeding and migrant counts including 16 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), 23 in Mendon on 8/27 (WGE, NLM), 20 in Winhall (WJN) and 30 in Colchester (JDM) on 10/14, and 15 in Chester (CEAD) and 25 (5 banded) in W. Brattleboro (JJC) on 10/22. Ruby-crowned Kinglets made their best autumn showing of the 80s with 280 reported, 92 were the most banded in years with 50 caught in W. Brattleboro and 42 at BNP (JJC,VINS). Early migrants were noted in late August and early September; high counts included 20 in Danby on 10/7 (CJF), 25 in Colchester on 10/9 (JDM), and 20 in Chester (CEAD) and 100 (40 banded) in W. Brattleboro on 10/22 (JJC), the last reported was in Pantan on 11/4 (MBN). Reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers included a good count of 10 in West Haven on 8/1 (WGE,NLM,MCL), only 1 was found in the same places in West Haven five days later; single birds were also found at Fort Cassin, Ferrisburg on 8/19 (JID, MCD), and Brandon on 8/24 (SSW). An autumn RVB record total of nearly 270 Eastern Bluebirds was reported, this apparently reflects an ongoing population increase in

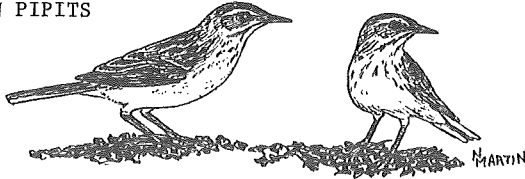
the eastern United States (see Sauer and Droege, 1990 *Wilson Bulletin* 102:239-52), high counts were 28 in Dorset on 9/21 (EFG), and 25-30 in Chester on 10/10 (CEAD), a nest with 4 eggs was found at Westminster West on 8/13 (AMD), and 1 bluebird was banded and another recaptured at BNP (VINS). The last bluebird reported was on 11/14 but see the Winter RVB for later reports. The 50 Veeries reported was a greater than average total based on totals reported over the last five falls, 33 of these were banded with 24 netted at BNP (VINS) and 9 ringed in W. Brattleboro (JJC), 7 banded on 9/5 at BNP was the max. count (CCR et al.), and the last was a week and a half late on 9/28 in Dorset. Reports of Gray-cheeked Thrushes included a "Bicknell's" in nesting habitat on Breadloaf Mt. on 8/10 (TEJ). Very little is known about the departure and migration of this scarce and local bird in Vt., it is considered a separate species by some (Sibley and Monroe, 1990 *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world.*), three other gray-cheeks were banded at BNP on 9/20, 9/28 and 10/2 (VINS). The number of Swainson's Thrushes reported to the Autumn RVB has remained stable over the last four years (1986-89) with 50 reported in each season, 20 of the 30 banded were netted at BNP (JJC,VINS). High counts were 9 banded at BNP on 9/18 (CCR et al.), and 5 not far from BNP on 10/2, the last were 1 banded at BNP on 10/4 and 2 also in Woodstock on 10/22. Over 145 Hermit Thrushes were reported including 77 that were banded at BNP (58) and W. Brattleboro (19) (JJC,VINS) half of these were caught during October, high counts included 9 banded at BNP on 10/9 (CCR et al.), and 8 in Tinmouth on 10/22 (CJF), (these counts occurred on dates when other boreal migrants which winter in the southeast U.S., the kinglets, were also observed in good numbers). The last was reported in Addison on 11/2 (FO,JW). Analysis of banding and field data for Hermit Thrush and other *Catharus* thrushes reveals either the under-reporting of Hermit Thrush in October or the over-reporting of other spotted thrushes in that month, only 3% of spotted thrushes other than Hermit were banded in October whereas the corresponding percentage of field sightings was 29%, considering the unobtrusive nature of spotted thrushes in autumn I tend to trust banding data more than observer totals, I believe this may arise from rejection of Hermit Thrush identity through the negative criterion of unseen or poorly seen tail coloration which leads to a default identification of another spotted thrush. Hermit Thrushes are notably late migrants which winter in the United States whereas the other spotted thrushes winter in the neotropics and are seldom present after early October. The 57 Wood Thrushes reported was by far the best autumn total of the 80s, 14 were banded at BNP (VINS), and 18 were ringed in W. Brattleboro (JJC), 4 banded at the latter location was the high count (JJC), and the last was at Marlboro on 10/7 (JPN). Over 4100 American Robins were reported, the peak of migration was from 10/12-20 with max. of 1000+ in Grand Isle on 10/15 (DJH) and over Fuller Mt. on 10/19 (JID,MCD), 288 of 291 banded were netted at BNP (JJC,VINS). A white robin was seen in Hancock from 10/11-12 (HRC) either a completely leucistic bird or a true albino.

MIMICS THROUGH VIREOS

The total of 370 Gray Catbirds was well above average, the 210 banded were almost evenly divided between W. Brattleboro (106) and BNP (104) (JJC,VINS). High counts were 10 on 8/11 in Addison (JID,MCD), and 11 banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/8 (JJC), late reports included 10/26 in Grand Isle (DJH), and 11/2 when a previously banded bird was recaptured at BNP (CCR et al.). The 25 Northern Mockingbirds were reported north to Grand Isle and White River Jct. Nine Brown Thrashers represents a distressingly low number but fewer were reported in the autumn of 1987, this bird of abandoned pastures appears to have declined over the last 20

years. Four were banded on 3 dates at BNP (VINS), and 2 were banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/4 and 9/10 (JJC), the last was found at HC on 9/23 (NLM). The first American Pipits were notably early with 4 on Mt. Mansfield on 9/4 (DJH), 70% of the 1200 pipits reported were seen on one field trip, with a phenomenal 840 on 10/8 in Addison (BLR,DLC), an indication of a major migration fallout, the last reported were 100+ in Addison on 11/7

AMERICAN PIPITS



(BLR,DLC,SBL). Bohemian Waxwings arrived early in very good numbers for autumn, 17 appeared in Grand Isle on 10/23 (DJH), 4 were sighted in Hardwick on 10/27 (GPL), 14 were seen near the Shelburne Bay fishing access on 10/28 (JJC,RBL), 31 were found in S. Duxbury on 10/31 (FAP), and 12 were located in Grand Isle on 11/26 (CSP). About 1200 Cedar Waxwings were reported, 163 of 165 banded were netted at BNP (JJC,VINS). High counts were from September including 110 in Dorset on 9/8 (EFG), 100 in Reading on 9/9 (FMH,GEH), and 180 at HC on 9/23 (NLM), there were no reports of large flocks in November. Reports of Northern Shrike included an ad. retrapped at BNP on 11/2 three years after its initial capture (CCR et al.), others were in Pittsfield on 11/25 (RCW), and Brownsville (SJS) and Swanton (RBL,GEHa,BLR) on 11/26. The continued abundance of European Starling was illustrated by high counts of 2000 in Addison on 9/16 (JRA), and 1500 in Chester on 9/28 (AMD). Numbers of Solitary Vireos were somewhat low with 47 reported, 21 were banded with 13 captured at BNP (JJC,VINS), no more than three were reported in a day and the last were 2 banded in W. Brattleboro on 10/22 (JJC). Yellow-throated Vireos were reported in their usual low autumnal numbers with 12 listed from early August to 9/13 when the last was detected in W. Brattleboro (JJC). An average total of 35 Warbling Vireos was reported with 4 banded at BNP (VINS), high counts of 5 each on 8/1 in West Haven (WGE,NLM,MCL), and 9/3 at WRDP (WAM), and the last at HC on 9/23 (NLM). Six Philadelphia Vireos were reported from 8/7 to 9/12 when the latest was banded at BNP (VINS). About 140 Red-eyed Vireos were reported, 36 of these were banded including 29 netted at BNP (JJC,VINS), the max. count was 13 on 8/19 in S. Duxbury (FAP), and the last was in Colchester on 10/2 (JDM).

WOOD WARBLERS

Reports of 1 to 2 Blue-winged Warblers, generally from Windham County, have been annual in autumn since 1985, therefore the leap to 11 reported in autumn 1989 was stunning if not unexpected. Five were banded in W. Brattleboro, with 1 present there to 8/25 (JJC), others included 1 in Winhall on 8/9 (WJN), 1 in S. Duxbury on 8/14 (FAP) was new for the location and well out-of-range, and 3 at Halladay Pd., Marlboro on 9/10 (JPN) was a high count and the first September report for Vt.. Over the last decade or more the Tennessee Warbler has been one of the most common migrant warblers during autumn in Vt. but reports have declined precipitously over the falls of 1988 and '89, only 23 were reported in autumn 1989; 13 were banded with 11 ringed at BNP (JJC,VINS), no high count worth the name was reported and the last was banded at BNP on 9/26 (VINS). The rare Orange-crowned Warbler has been reported annually in very small numbers during fall since 1983, this autumn's gray-green ghost was seen with a flock of kinglets in Winhall on 10/14 (WJN). As with Tennessee Warbler the numbers of Nashville Warblers reported over the last two autumns has been very low with just 41 listed by obser-

vers in autumn 1989, 12 were banded including 10 at BNP (JJC,VINS), high counts did not exceed 4 and the last was at Winhall on 10/12 (WJN). Numbers of Northern Parulas were also very low with only a half dozen reported including 2 in Hartland on 8/30 (WGE,NLM), and single birds at WRDP on 9/2 (JDM), S. Duxbury on 9/4 (FAP), Winhall on 9/6 (WJN), and the last in Colchester on 9/24 (JDM). The 75 Yellow Warblers reported was above average for autumn; 5 were banded at BNP (VINS), high counts were from August including 13 on 8/1 in West Haven (WGE,NLM,MCL), 12 along the LaPlatte R. in Shelburne on 8/9 (ECC), and 12 at WRDP on 8/21 (WGE,NLM,DHC), late reports included 1 in Marlboro on 9/4 (JPN), and 2 in Shelburne on 9/6 (ECC). The total of 68 Chestnut-sided Warblers was average, 22 of 25 banded were captured at BNP (VINS,JJC). The high count was 8 on 8/19 in S. Duxbury (FAP), and the last was banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/24 (JJC). Magnolia Warbler numbers were low but not significantly below average with 79 reported, 15 were banded at BNP (VINS) and 11 ringed in W. Brattleboro (JJC), max. were 8 in Mendon on 8/27 (WGE,NLM) including a m. feeding 2 fledglings, and 6 netted at BNP on 9/14 (CCR et al.); the last was banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/30 (JJC). Cape May Warblers were scarce with only the following reports submitted: 2 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), 1 in Hartland on 8/30 (WGE,NLM), 1 at Mt. Philo (JDM) and 2 in Winhall (WJN) on 9/9, the last were 2 in Winhall on 10/15 (WJN) a record by 7 days. The total of 56 Black-throated Blue Warblers reported was only slightly below average, 11 were banded in W. Brattleboro (7) and at BNP (4) (JJC,VINS); the max. count was 14 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), and the last were 1 in S. Duxbury (FAP) and 2 in Lincoln (JRA) on 9/24. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was reported in very low numbers, several observers reported their high counts of this species in August despite a normal migration peak in late September and October, about 300 were noted including 53 banded at BNP (VINS) and 6 netted in W. Brattleboro (JJC). The highest counts were from the normal part of the season with 35 at HC on 9/23 (NLM), and 30 in Ferrisburg on 10/19 (JID,MCD), late individuals were found in Vernon on 11/28 (JJC), and at a feeder in Bloomfield from 11/25-Dec. (DK) the latter bird was attempting to overwinter in the town with the record low temperature for Vt.. Numbers of Black-throated Green Warblers were below average but were an improvement on the previous fall's (1988) poor showing, 96 were reported including 26 banded, 23 of these were caught at BNP (VINS,JJC); high counts ranged from 8/21-9/25 with a max. of 8 on 9/8 in Marlboro (JPN), and the last was at Colchester on 10/2 (JDM). In what surely sounds like a litany, numbers of Blackburnian Warblers were well below the average autumn total for the 80s with only 26 reported, only the very poor total of 1988 was lower. Three of the 4 banded were ringed at BNP (VINS,JJC); the high count was 12 in S. Duxbury on 8/21 (FAP), and the last were 2 in Marlboro on 9/16 (JPN). Pine Warblers were, as always, scarce and included 1 in Winhall on 8/8 (WJN), 1 in W. Brattleboro on 9/13 (JJC), 2 in Colchester on 9/24 (JDM), and 1 in Colchester on 10/4 (JDM) perhaps 1 of the 2 seen 10 days prior. The only Prairie Warbler was seen in Winhall on 8/8 (WJN). Twenty-two Palm Warblers were reported, the first was seen at RM on 9/15 (JJC), 6 were banded, 4 at BNP and 2 in W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS) 5 of these were "yellow" Palm Warblers of Maritime Canada. The last was found in Tinmouth on 11/12 (PMB) the first reported from November in over a decade. Numbers of Bay-breasted Warblers have dropped like a stone through a wet paper bag over the last three autumns, only 11 were reported in fall 1989 including 1 in Hartland on 8/30 (WGE,NLM), 1 in Mendon on 9/1 (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM), 3 in S. Duxbury on 9/4 (FAP), 1 in Winhall on 9/9 (WJN), 2 were in W. Brattleboro on 9/13 (JJC), 1 was banded at BNP on 9/21 (CCR et al.), and the last was reported in Ferrisburg on 10/7 (JID,MCD) the first October report of the species in a decade. The Blackpoll Warbler is the usual

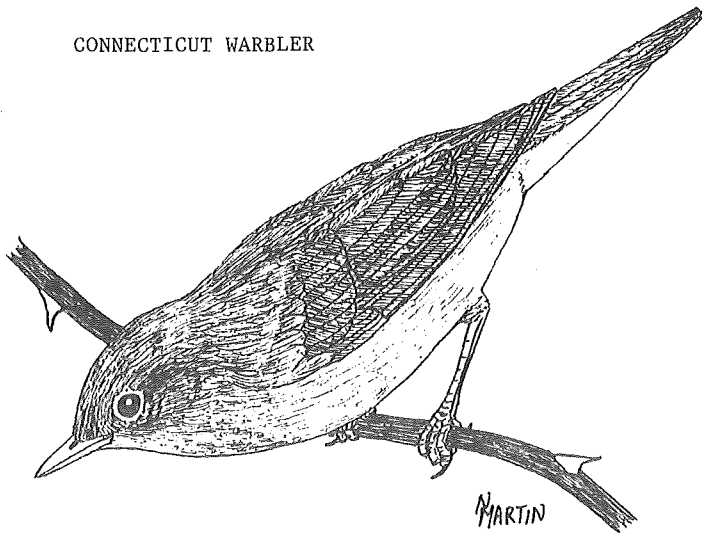
member of this pair of species seen in October. Numbers of the latter species were no better than those of the bay-breast with an abysmal 9 reported, five of these were banded, 4 at BNP (VINS,JJC), the first migrant was netted at BNP on 9/12 (CCR et al.), 7 of the remaining 8 were seen in Sept-ember but the last was at Winhall on 10/12 (WJN). Nearly 70 Black-and-white Warblers were reported representing above-average numbers, 14 of 20 were banded at BNP (VINS,JJC); the high count was 13 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), and the latest were 2 at HC on 9/23 (NLM). Eighty American Redstarts was an average total, 28 were banded at BNP (19) and W. Brattleboro (9) (VINS,JJC), the max. count was 5 on 8/21 at WRDP (WGE, NLM,DHC), and the last was at WRDP on 9/19 (JDM). The 66 Ovenbirds reported was a well above average total, 42 were banded with 23 ringed at BNP and 19 captured in W. Brattleboro (VINS,JJC); a high count of 7 was achieved in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), and the last was banded at BNP on 9/28 (CCR et al.). A mere 5 Northern Waterthrushes were noted, although this species is always uncommonly reported (average of 11.8/fall 1979-89) this was an especially low total, underlining this bird's inconspicuous behavior during migration. Four (80%) of those reported were banded in W. Brattleboro (JJC), the last of these was netted on 9/10. Louisiana Waterthrushes included 1 in Hartland on 8/2 (WGE,NLM), and 1 banded at BNP on 8/22 (VINS) the second latest report over the last ten years. Prior to autumn 1989 there were never more than 2 reports of Connecticut Warbler in a season, this autumn 5 were detected including 3 netted by banders, the first was ringed in

autumn showing of the decade with just 14 reported from 8/14 in S. Duxbury (FAP) to 9/25 in W. Brattleboro (JJC), 1 each were banded at BNP and W. Brattleboro (JJC,VINS). By contrast, numbers of Canada Warblers were about average with 47 reported, as usual most were seen early in the season with high counts of 5 in S. Duxbury on 8/19 (FAP), 4 in Woodstock on 8/21 (JMN), and 4 in Mendon on 9/1 (WGE,NLM,JPM,JBM); 9 were banded at BNP (VINS) and 7 in W. Brattleboro where the last was netted on 9/12 (JJC). Always a good find, a Yellow-breasted Chat was seen in Marlboro from 9/13-15 (JPN).

TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

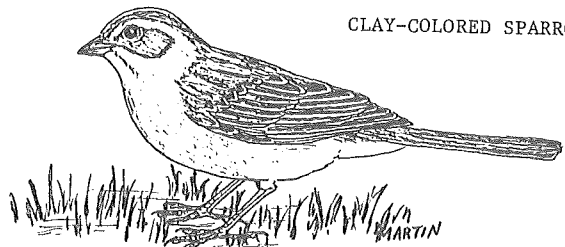
Scarlet Tanagers were reported in above average numbers with 67 cited by observers, 26 of the 27 banded were netted at BNP (VINS,JJC), no count exceeded 4 and late reports included 1 in Dorset on 10/1 (EFG), and a banded bird recaptured at BNP on 10/2 (CCR et al.). The 113 Northern Cardinals reported was an average total, numbers of cardinals reported in autumn over the last decade have varied little. Eleven were banded at BNP (VINS), and the high count was 15 in the DCWMA area on 11/2 (FO,JW). Many dispersing cardinals, presumably young birds, put in brief appearances at feeders where they have been seldom or never seen and departed after short stays in most cases. Over 75 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported, 14 were banded at BNP (VINS), no true high counts were noted and late reports were 1 on 9/24 in S. Duxbury (FAP), and 2 in W. Brattleboro on 9/25 (JJC). As usual rather few Indigo Buntings were reported with a total of 34 noted, in part the low totals reported in autumn are due to the end of male song in mid-August, other factors include the molting of males into drab brown winter plumage and a tendency to shift to non-breeding habitat; especially unharvested cornfields during fall migration. Eleven were banded at BNP (8) and W. Brattleboro (3) (VINS,JJC), the last banded was at BNP on 9/27 (VINS), however a moderately decomposed carcass was picked up at Sykes Ave., White River Jct. on 11/24 (WGE,NLM) although the bird may have been dead up to two weeks it certainly must have been alive and present there in early November. Twenty-three Rufous-sided Towhees were reported, 13 were banded with 7 caught at BNP (VINS,JJC), the highest count was 4 on Putney Mt. on 9/13 (JJC), and late birds were 2 recaptured by banders at BNP on 10/6 (VINS), and 2 in Ferrisburg on 10/7 (JID,MCD). The first of 235 American Tree Sparrows was seen at WRM on 10/9 (NLM,JBM), 28 were banded at BNP (VINS), and the high count was 40 in Orwell on 11/19, part of a total of 99 seen over a wider area during the day (WGE,NLM,LRB). Nearly 250 Chipping Sparrows were reported, 14 were banded at BNP (VINS), high counts included 30 on 8/25 in Dorset (EFG), and 25 on 10/3 at WRDP (JDM), late reports were from Lincoln on 10/19 (JRA), and BNP on 10/20 (CCR et al.), however see the Winter RVB. An imm. CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was well described near WRDP in Colchester on 10/8 (BLR,DLC) this is the fourth report of this essentially mid-western sparrow for Vermont and the first in autumn.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER



W. Brattleboro on 9/4 (JJC), 1 was seen at the same location on 9/8 (JJC, RBo), 1 was seen on Putney Mt. on 9/10 (JJC), 1 was caught at BNP on 9/12 (CCR et al.), and the last was banded in W. Brattleboro on 9/16 (JJC). While descriptions of all of these birds were sufficient, several lacked important details, relying for the most part on a complete eye-ring as the only necessary characteristic to separate these birds from Mourning Warbler, other features which should be emphasized when identifying this species include buffy (not yellow) throat, a complete, brown breast band, dull underparts (not bright yellow), and brownish flanks (see Pyle and Henderson 1990, *Birding* 22:222-29). Speaking of Mourning Warblers - 17 were reported, 70% of which were banded, 6 each at BNP and W. Brattleboro (VINS,JJC), the last was banded at BNP on 9/21 (CCR et al.). About 240 Common Yellowthroats were reported which is an average number for autumn, 97 were banded including 76 at BNP (VINS,JJC); the best count reported was 15 at Deweys Pd., Quechee on 8/15 (WGE,NLM), and the last were at RM (JJC) and Winhall (WJN) on 10/21. As with so many other warblers the Wilson's Warbler had by far its worst

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW



The total of 30 Field Sparrows was low but not unusually so, 7 were banded in W. Brattleboro (JJC), and 6 were ringed at BNP (VINS), the max. count was 8 in W. Brattleboro on 8/16 (JJC). As usual this was a late breeding season report rather than a migration count which is not surprising when one discovers that very few

Field Sparrows range north of Vt., the last reported was in Randolph on 11/11 (EWC,MCC). Only 1 Vesper Sparrow was reported, this bird was seen in Winhall on 10/5 (WJN). This represents the worst showing in the Autumn RVB for this increasingly uncommon sparrow, however considering the fairly consistent numbers reported until this season (16.7/fall including 17 in 1988) it seems likely that this low report couples the species' scarcity (already a known factor) with observers overlooking a few individuals. Just over 80 Savannah Sparrows were reported which is a modestly below average number. One was banded at BNP (VINS), the high count was 30 on 9/10 at DCWMA (JRA), and the last reports were of 2 in Charlotte (WAM) and 4 in Vernon (JJC) on 10/21. Grasshopper Sparrow reports included 1 in Grand Isle on 8/27 (DJH), and 1 at S. Londonderry on 9/12 (WJN). Fox Sparrows had one of their occasional poor autumn migrations in Vt. with only 14 reported from 10/4 in Chester (CEAd) to 11/10 in Clarendon (CJF), 1 was banded at BNP (VINS), and the high count was 4 on 10/19 in Ferrisburg (JID, MCD). Three young Song Sparrows fledged from a nest in Woodstock on 8/4 (JMN), over 710 others were reported throughout the season including 170 banded at BNP (146) and W. Brattleboro (24) (VINS,JJC), high counts were from mid-October and included 61 at WRM on 10/9 (NLM, JPM,JBM), 75 in Colchester (50) and Shelburne (25) on 10/14 (JDM), and 42 at RM on 10/21 (JJC). About 85% of the 42 Lincoln's Sparrows reported were banded including 29 at BNP and 7 in W. Brattleboro (VINS,JJC), the earliest migrant reported was banded at BNP on 9/6 (CCR et al.), no more than three were reported in a day and the last was banded at BNP on 10/24 (CCR et al.). Swamp Sparrows were noted in above average numbers with 149 reported including 31 banded at BNP (VINS) and 5 ringed in W. Brattleboro (JJC); high counts were 16 on 8/1 in marshes along East Bay and the Head of L. Champlain in West Haven (WGE,NLM,MCL), and 14 along the Tinmouth Channel on 10/12 (CJF); the last reported was netted at BNP on 10/31 (VINS). Over 740 White-throated Sparrows were reported, 333 of these were banded including 259 at BNP (VINS,JJC); high counts were not overwhelming and included 22 banded at BNP on 9/19 (CCR et al.), 40-50 in Chester on 10/8 (CEAd), and 21 banded in W. Brattleboro on 10/22 (JJC) (banding totals probably reflect much larger numbers of birds present because the number banded represents a sub-sample of all birds in an area). About 205 White-crowned Sparrows were reported beginning on 9/28 when single birds were banded at BNP (VINS) and W. Brattleboro (JJC), 21 others were banded at BNP (VINS); high counts were 20 in Charlotte on 10/15 (WAM), 14 at RM on 10/21 (JJC), 40 in Charlotte on 10/22 (WAM), the last reported was at BNP on 11/1 (CCR), however see the Winter RVB. Dark-eyed Juncos were reported in impressive numbers with 1200 listed in observer's reports, 81 were banded at BNP (VINS), and 11 were netted in W. Brattleboro (JJC), high counts were 150+ in Woodstock (JMN) and 200 in Reading (FMH,GEH) on 10/19, and 150+ in Chester on 10/22 (CEAd). Lapland Longspur was reported twice this autumn after an absence of two falls, 4 were at DCWMA on 10/14 (NLM,JMN,EFG et al.), and 1 was seen in Swanton on 11/25 (CSP). Just over 500 Snow Buntings were reported, the first was detected in Alburg on 10/14 (RBL), high counts included 75-100 at the Caledonia County Airport, Sutton on 11/10 (PFW,SAW), and 200+ in Grand Isle on 11/21 (DJH).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

Bobolinks were reported in average numbers with 224 noted, high counts were from the second week of August including 48 at DCWMA on 8/11 (JID,MCD), and 32 in Chester on 8/13 (CEAd); the last was at RM on 9/15 (JJC). Red-winged Blackbirds were seen throughout the season, high counts occurred in October with 1800 in Vernon on 10/16 (JJC), and 4500 at DCWMA on 10/25 (SSW), numbers tailed-off thereafter with few red-wings still present by the end of November. Exactly the same number

of Eastern Meadowlarks were reported this fall as in autumn 1988 (61), the max. count was 19 in New Haven on 10/3 (JRA), and the last reported was seen at W. Pawlet on 11/23 (HML). Forty-eight Rusty Blackbirds were reported including two counts of 15 at WRM on 10/9 (NLM, JPM,JBM), and Grand Isle on 10/11 (CCR,RBL), none were reported after late October but see the Winter RVB. Considering the abundance of the Common Grackle in other seasons the autumn 1989 total of about 3000 seems small, one third of these were reported in Ferrisburg on 9/7 (JID,MCD), no large flocks were reported after mid-October, but as usual a few remained through the end of November. Reporting of Brown-headed Cowbirds was spotty which is normal during autumn, high counts included 180 in Addison on 9/16 (NLM), and 200 at White River Jct. on 11/13 (CCR). Two Orchard Orioles reported at DAR SP in W. Addison on 8/11 (JID,MCD) were the first ever reported to the Autumn RVB, this diminutive oriole departs its nesting areas in the northeast in mid-July, perhaps these were birds which made a late re-nesting attempt. Northern Orioles were reported in average numbers with 49 cited by observers, 13 of 14 banded were captured at BNP (VINS,JJC); the highest numbers reported were 5 in Lincoln on 8/15 (JRA), and 6 banded at BNP on 8/21 (CCR et al.). Virtually all orioles were gone by mid-September but a laggard was reported from a Manchester feeding station on 11/12 (Mrs. Sprague *vide* NS), why Northern Orioles seem more prone to this behavior than other long-distance migrants is a mystery. Although 28 seems a small total, this represented the most Pine Grosbeaks reported during autumn since 1985, when a much more impressive 300 were noted. The first was seen in Winhall on 10/30 (WJN), high counts included 8 in Wolcott on 11/3 (FO,JW,SM), and 9 on Mt. Philo on 11/25 (TGM). Purple Finch numbers were low with 123 reported, several observers reported only 1 for the season and high counts were modest including 9 in Sheffield on 9/13 (PFW,SAW), 8 of the 31 banded at BNP on 10/10 (VINS), and 25 in Ferrisburg on 10/24 (JID, MCD), few were seen late in the season. House Finch numbers seem to have stabilized since the mid-80s, the number reported increased rapidly from about 26 in 1979 to a peak of 735 in 1986, the average since 1986 has been about 558. High counts included 37 in Shelburne on 9/6 (ECC), 50 in Weybridge on 11/21 (MBN), and 75+ at a Grand Isle feeder through much of the season (EMH), 31 were banded in September at BNP (VINS). As usual Red Crossbills were scarce with 1 in Plymouth (SBL) and 2 f. seen with White-winged Crossbills in Reading (FMH, GEH) on 8/13, and 1 in Winhall on 10/11 (WJN). Over 400 White-winged Crossbills were reported exceeding the previous record autumn total of 250 in 1987, most of these were seen in the Northeast Kingdom and Green Mountains, but 20 in Ferrisburg on 10/31 (JID,MCD) were the first seen there by the observers in 10 years. Breeding evidence again proved elusive, the most tantalizing report was of a pair with two essentially independent juvs. in Sutton on 10/6 (FO,JW,EI) unfortunately it is plausible for such youngsters to travel a considerable distance from where they fledged. High counts were 50 in Marlboro on 9/1 (JPN), 50-60 in Sheffield on 8/10 (PFW,SAW), and 35 in Reading on 11/8 (FMH,GEH). Common Redpolls arrived early and were reasonably numerous especially after being missed entirely in autumn 1988, 60 were seen in Ferdinand on 10/9 (BLR,DLC), 25 followed in Charlotte on 10/15 (WAM,DLC), 2 were in Winhall on 10/23 (WJN), and a "flock" was seen in Winhall on 11/11 (WJN). Pine Siskins were abundant during autumn 1989 presaging an invasion for the following winter and spring, 2 dependent juvs. were with their parents at a Sheffield feeding station in August and the first week of September (PFW,SAW). High counts during the autumn flight included 100 at BNP on 10/20 (CCR,CSH,EFG), 150 in Brandon on 11/13 (SSW), and 70 on Mt. Elmore on 11/19 (TGM); 41 were banded at BNP for the season (VINS). About 440 American Goldfinches were reported including

18 banded at BNP (VINS); high counts included 44 at RM on 10/21 (JJC), 35 in Middlebury on 10/25 (JRA), and 42 were seen in Grand Isle on 11/29 (EMH). The pattern of occurrence of the 615 Evening Grosbeaks reported was familiar, with some flocks present in the north and the Green Mountains during August but widespread occurrence not until October, high counts reflect the pattern including 60 in Bristol on 8/16 (JRA), 200 over Fuller Mt., Ferrisburg on 10/19 (JID,MCD), and 60 in Waterford on 11/24 (PFW,SAW). There was nothing noteworthy to report about House Sparrow this autumn beyond its continued abundance in urban areas and around farms.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

BNP Bragdon Nature Preserve, VINS, Woodstock
 DCWMA Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area, Addison and Panton
 HC Herrick's Cove, Rockingham
 MNWR Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton
 RM Retreat Meadows, Brattleboro
 SBWMA Sandbar Wildlife Management Area, Milton
 WRM West Rutland Marsh
 WRDP Winooski River Delta Park, Colchester

ad.	adult(s)	NA	Nature Area
f.	female(s)	Pd.	Pond
imm.	immature(s)	Pt.	Point
I.	Island	Res.	Reservoir
juv.	juvenile(s)	R.	River
L.	Lake	Rd.	Road
max.	maximum/maxima	SP	State Park
Mt.	Mountain/Mount	yg.	young

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