



# Records of Vermont Birds

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## SUMMER 1990

1 June - 31 July

Jeremy Coleman, Seasonal Editor

The 1990 nesting season was moderately successful, with confirmed breeding reports for most of our regular breeding species. Field biologists are working hard to improve the chances for successful reproduction by Vermont's Endangered Species. With cooperation from an increasingly concerned public, Common Loon, Peregrine Falcon and Common Tern all remained steady, but for the second consecutive year only one of three nesting Osprey pairs was successful in fledging chicks. The Spruce Grouse is keeping a tenuous hold on its limited habitat in the N.E. Kingdom. Among the less common nesters, Gadwall continued breeding off Grand Isle and there were three separate reports for the Red-headed Woodpecker, one confirmed nesting and two possible. Also of interest were two new (possible nesting) locations for Grasshopper Sparrows.

Adding spice to the summer records was a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD seen briefly in Morrisville and a singing KENTUCKY WARBLER taped in West Brattleboro. All totaled, there were 187 species, plus two feral species, reported to the summer Records of Vermont Birds.

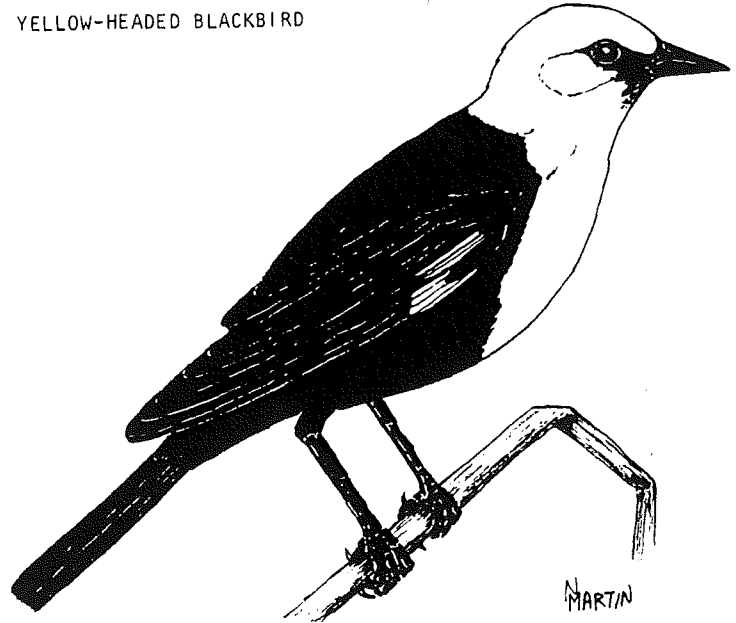
This marked the second year of the Vermont Forest Bird Monitoring Program. Twelve permanently protected study sites of mature forest habitat were censused twice during June. However, it is too early to draw any conclusions about population changes. Several years more data collection will be necessary to elucidate population trends of various species and groups in the forest habitats being sampled. These data should provide an excellent complement to the long-term Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data.

The BBS, conducted by volunteers for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service since 1966, has accumulated large amounts of data that is being used by researchers to analyze population trends. In the following records, significant declines or increases noted for some long-distance migrants are based on annual rates of change for Vermont provided by the BBS office. Those figures were then used in a formula, also provided by the BBS office, to calculate a cumulative trend. As a small state, Vermont has only 23 routes, and many species occur in specialized habitats within the state. As a result, several species are found on only a few routes. Figures for species that are recorded on less than ten BBS routes should be regarded with caution, as sample sizes larger than ten are generally considered necessary to attribute significance to differences observed.

As most readers probably know, the interpretation of population trend data is complicated by the many factors known to cause fluctuations in breeding bird populations. Some of these factors are favorable or unfavorable weather during the nesting or wintering seasons, changes in food abundance (e.g. spruce budworm outbreaks), habitat loss or change on the breeding or wintering grounds, and changes in populations of competitors, nest parasites or predators.

The cold wet weather in late spring had some adverse effect on early nesting waterfowl and possibly on some insectivorous species such as swallows, but for June and July the weather appeared to have little

### YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD



influence on breeding activity. The rainfall for June was near normal but with some locally heavy amounts during thunderstorms, ten of which were recorded in Burlington for this month. Temperatures averaged 1°F above normal, with a low of 41°F on 6/6 and a high of 87°F on 6/17 and 59% of total possible sunshine. July rainfall was 1.69" above normal and severe thunderstorm activity on 7/23 caused flash flooding, mudslides and tree damage in Chittenden County, Bolton and other areas. Luckily most first broods have fledged by this date. Temperatures for July were fractionally above normal with a low of 46°F on 7/6 and a high of 91°F on 7/18 and 63% of total possible sunshine, recorded at Burlington International Airport.

### LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The status of Vermont's Endangered (hereafter [E]) Common Loon population remained constant, with 14 nesting pr. raising 15 surviving chicks state-wide. There was a new breeding pr. on Berlin Pond, an area with no nesting history. There were scattered reports of non-breeders and dispersing birds throughout the summer season. Loon Watch Day held 7/21 tallied 127 loons (79 ad., 33 imm., 15 juv.) on 38 of 88 lakes censused, eclipsing the previous record high in 1989 of 73 (47 ad., 9 imm., 17 juv.). Reports for Pied-billed Grebe, a Vermont Species of Special Concern (hereafter [SSC]), were down from a peak in 1989. Two family groups consisting of 8 individuals were reported 7/29 from Barton River Marsh, Coventry (hereafter BRM) (WGE,NLM), while at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton (hereafter MNWR) the estimated peak population (hereafter epp) was 30 individuals, with 2 confirmed breeding pr. producing an estimated 10 offspring (JBG). The explosive nesting colony of Double-crested Cormorants at Young I., Lake Champlain (hereafter LC) has increased from last year's 369 to 395 active nests (CCR), and the colony has spilled onto the east shore, where 76 nests were located in poplars formerly occupied by Black-crowned

Night-Herons. Away from LC, an individual was observed at Wells River 7/1-8 (ET) and there was 1 at Springweather 7/29 (WHW). The 7 scattered reports for American Bittern confirm its status as a widespread breeder in both large and small marshes. At MNWR the epp was 25, with an unconfirmed breeding population of 5 pr. (JBG). The individual which appeared on a beaver pond on the Marlboro Breeding Bird Survey (hereafter BBS) was later reported as a breeder there (JPN). The reclusive Least Bittern [SSC], was reported only once by birders, 1 in West Rutland Marsh (hereafter WRM) on 6/6 (WJN), while at MNWR the epp was 5 individuals (JBG). Although numbers on LC appeared lower this year (CCR), the population of Great Blue Herons at MNWR was up after a decline in 1989. An epp of 1,063 birds there, and a breeding population of 462 birds produced an estimated 601 offspring. Elsewhere there is evidence for the continued presence of scattered, small colonies throughout the state, including a nesting pr. at South Pond, Marlboro (JPN), a nest with 4 yg. at Gale Meadows, Winhall (hereafter GM) (RWS; HG fide WJN), at least 6 nests at a colony in Weathersfield (EE), 9 nests at a beaver pond in Chester (SF), 2 nests in Underhill (MHR), and 4 nests at Springweather (WHW). Late July saw a few dispersing Great Egrets move into the state. First was a bird at Quechee 7/21 (EH), with numbers increasing to 4 there 7/26 (KRT), while a single bird was seen at Springweather 7/29 (WHW). An ad. Little Blue Heron\* was reported 7/20 south of Ascutney on the Connecticut River (hereafter CR) but unfortunately no documentation was received. There were 10 active Cattle Egret nests on Young I., LC, (CCR), up from 7 in 1989. There were scattered reports of Green-backed Heron from all over, high counts were 3 at the Intervale, Burlington, 7/11 (JRA), 3 in Dorset 6/12 (EFG), and 4 at Grand Isle 7/2 (DJH). At MNWR the epp was 20, with a confirmed breeding population of 8 (JBG). The number of active nests for Black-crowned Night-Heron on Young I. was down dramatically, to approximately 10 nests from 35 in 1989 (CCR). Competition from the cormorant colony is implicated as a cause. The epp at MNWR was 35 (JBG). Other reports were of 3 DCWMA 6/9 (MBN), 3 Grand Isle 6/22 (DJH), 2 Winooski R. Colchester 7/1 (JJA) and 1 imm. Pantan 7/31 (JAP).

WATERFOWL

A pr. of Mute Swans (not wild birds) appeared on the Colchester BBS (JNS). Canada Goose breeding was reported from Tinmouth (CJF), Woodstock (SBL) and 2 locations in Middlebury (MBN), the latter apparently a new nesting area for the species, close to the large breeding population at DCWMA. Wood Duck breeding was directly noted by birders from only 2 locations, Tinmouth (PMB), and Lincoln (JRA). The high count was 29 from BRM on 7/18 (WGE,NLM). At MNWR, a breeding population of 87 produced an estimated 611 offspring (JBG), and BBS routes reported 3 birds from 2 routes. There were 15 Green-winged Teal at MNWR this season, with no confirmed breeding. Nesting near Farrell Access at DCWMA was suspected by 1 observer, where there were 8 birds on 7/14 and 3 drakes in a group of 10 on 7/31 (JAP). Another 30 were spotted at DCWMA 7/25 (MBN). Family groups of American Black Duck included a brood of 8 in S. Londonderry 6/11 (WJN), 7 at Lemington 6/17 (WGE,NLM), and a f. with 2 chicks at Grand Isle 7/21 (DJH). A pr. attempted nesting unsuccessfully at Woodstock (JMN). The high count was 28 birds in Quechee 7/10 (WGE,NLM) and there were 3 birds counted on 2 BBS routes. Numerous reports from birders for Mallard included a hen with 7 yg. in Woodstock 6/2 (JMN), a f. with 8 yg. and a f. with 10 yg. 6/22 at Bloomfield (CJF), a hen with 6 yg. in Barnard 7/8 (JNF), and 4 yg. in Dorset 7/30 (EFG). At MNWR the epp was 855 (JBG). High counts were 25 in Lincoln 6/19 (JRA) and 37 at DCWMA 7/27 (JID). On BBS routes, 6 birds were counted on 6 separate surveys. Three reports for Blue-winged Teal were from DCWMA,

where 6 were spotted 7/25 (MBN), 14 on 7/27 (JID) and 20 7/31 (JAP). The other report was a drake at Bixby I., LC, 6/21 (CCR). At MNWR the epp was 40, with a confirmed breeding population of 11 producing an estimated 24 offspring (JBG). Gadwall continues as a breeder around Young I., LC, where 7 m. and 1 f. were noted 6/4 (RBL), a drake was seen 6/21 (CCR), and 2 pr. with 9 downy yg. were reported 7/6 (DJH). All 7 reports for Common Goldeneye came from LC, where downy yg. from 6 family groups appeared between 6/13 and 7/2 (DJH). The epp at MNWR was 310, while 37 breeding pr. produced 264 offspring (JBG). A lingering f. Bufflehead was noted on the Ottaquechee R., Taftsville, 6/10 (KRT). Two ad. Hooded Mergansers with 8 yg. were encountered at Bristol Notch 6/10 (JRA), while an individual was seen 6/30 in S. Londonderry (WJN). The epp at MNWR was 55, with 14 breeding pr. producing 42 chicks (JBG). Reports of Common Merganser chicks came from Colchester 7/2 (WDB), Nichol's Bay, LC (DJH), and S. Londonderry (WJN). Two birds were noted from 2 BBS routes. Breeding seems fairly widespread but localized in appropriate habitat throughout the state. Two LC reports for Red-breasted Merganser were received, 4 imm. or f. off Bixby I., where breeding has been reported in recent years (CCR), and an individual f. that summered at Grand Isle (DJH). Ruddy Duck is normally a very rare November occurrence in Vermont; 2 sightings this season are the first for the Summer RVB. A drake was reported from Pantan 6/9 (WHB,MBN et al.), and Little Otter Creek, Ferrisburg, 6/18 (LHB).

VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

Turkey Vulture was widely reported throughout the period. Nesting is undoubtedly fairly widespread in the state, but once again no nesting records were submitted, due in part to the inaccessibility of their preferred nesting sites. One expects the Peregrine monitoring program to turn up Turkey Vulture nests one of these years. High counts were 11 in Royalton 6/24 (CJF) and 12 at Deer Leap, Bristol, on 7/28 (JAP). BBS observers located 5 individuals on 2 routes. As in 1989 there were 3 nesting attempts by Osprey [E]: 1 at MNWR, 1 at Sandbar and 1 in Ferrisburg. Only the Sandbar nesting was successful, hatching 3 chicks, of which 2 birds were fledged and 1 was injured and treated at the Vermont Raptor Center. Elsewhere a bird summered throughout June and July at GM (HG,MW,fide WJN), and a bird was reported on the E. St. Johnsbury BBS route in the northern CR Valley (CSH). Most of only a handful of other sightings occurred in late July, representing early migration/post-breeding dispersal of the species. There were 7 reports for Bald Eagle [E] for the period: a sub-ad. that summered at DCWMA (WJC,SSW), 1 ad. in Cambridge 6/8 (KPG), 1 ad. seen over LC 7/7 (MPY), 1 imm. at Rockingham 7/7 (KNB), an ad. at Maidstone L. 7/11 (CSH), and an ad. at Peacham Pond, Groton, 7/21 (MAB). An imm. Eagle sp., probably a Bald Eagle, was reported from GM 6/12 (fide WJN). There were no nesting reports of Northern Harrier [SSC], although numbers of individuals were reported during the nesting period. Reports came from Brandon (SSW), Addison (JAP), Brighton, Charleston, Brunswick and Coventry (WGE,NLM), DCWMA (JID), and Rockingham (WJN). Two individuals were noted on the Hinesburg BBS (CP). Sharp-shinned Hawk is infrequently reported in the summer, perhaps because the species is far less conspicuous on its woodland breeding territory than in fall migration or winter, when it often makes dramatic appearances at feeders. This season reports came from Averill, Sutton, Bradford and Lewis (WGE) and Middlebury (JAP). A bird at Otter Creek 7/14 was observed being chased by kingbirds (JRA), and a roadkill was picked up in Windsor 6/30 (BMH). An ad. m. was banded 7/16 at the Bragdon Nature Preserve (hereafter BNP) at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (hereafter VINS), Woodstock (CCR), and there was 1 BBS report, from the Fletcher route (LPR). Five

reports for Cooper's Hawk [SSC] included a f. with captured prey being mobbed by 2 Blue Jays and a Pileated Woodpecker at Shaw Mtn., Benson 7/4 (WGE,NLM)! Elsewhere were birds in Middlebury 6/5 (JAP), Dorset 6/12 (EFG), and Lincoln 7/16 (JRA). Finding an attended nest of the Northern Goshawk can be a hair-raising experience (the parents often dive-bomb trespassers who wander too close), and this season 2 nests were reported. One was found at Chittenden 6/7, where at least 1 bird was successfully fledged (CG), the other at Reading 6/28, where at least 2 birds were fledged (FMH,GEH). There were also reports of individuals from Moose Bog 6/20 (DS,JRS) and Brandon 7/20 (JAP), and 1 was noted from the Post Mills BBS (WGE). Red-shouldered Hawk hangs on as a widespread but local breeder in Vermont. This season there were reports of 1 at Jay Peak 6/1 (JDM), a pr. in W. Bolton (MC), and individuals at Ira 6/1 (WGE,RS,JS), Winhall 6/12-13 (WJN), and Waterford 7/22 (NLM). One was reported on the Middlesex BBS (TEJ). The widely-distributed Broad-winged Hawk was reported from Chester (CEAd), Lincoln (JRA), Putney (JID), Rutland - carrying a snake - (CJF), Goshen (SSW), Woodstock (JMN), and Winhall (WJN), while other observers noted a minimum of 7 from Essex and Caledonia Counties over the season (WGE,NLM), and 1 was tallied on the Greensboro BBS (LE). Several observers noted that numbers for Red-tailed Hawk seemed down (JRA,SSW), but the species does not show appreciable decline in our area. There were no nesting reports. Birds were seen in Chester (CEAd), W. Bolton (MC), S. Pomfret (JNF), Dorset (EFG), Brandon (SSW), Addison, Weybridge and Middlebury (JAP), and a high count of 5 at DCWMA 7/27 (JID). Two were registered on 2 BBS routes. A Golden Eagle photographed on the ground in Greensboro 7/19, was reported but no further details have been received (JFA fide FO). Reports for American Kestrel were widespread, although some observers noted its absence from usual areas. On BBS routes, 11 birds were tallied on 8 surveys. For the second season running a pr. nested under the eaves of a house in Brandon (SSW). High counts were 6 in Brandon 6/21 (SSW) and 5 in Addison (JAP). Once again there were 7 known territorial prs. of Peregrine Falcons [E] in the state. Pairs nested at Mt. Pisgah (Westmore), Pond Mt. (Wells), Bird Mt. (Ira), Smugglers' Notch (Cambridge), Deer Leap (Bristol), and Bone Mt. (Bolton). The latter 3 prs. fledged a total of 6 yg. A Territorial pr. was in residence at Mt. Horrid (Goshen). Across LC in New York State a pr. fledged at least 1 chick on the cliffs of Split Rock Mt. (fide JID). Only 1 report away from these sites was made, an individual at DCWMA 7/20 (SSW).

GROUND THROUGH RAILS

Birders submitted no reports for Gray Partridge, but at MNWR, the epp was 15 birds (JBG). In the Yellow Bogs area Spruce Grouse [E] populations were surveyed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. A max. of 12 individuals were reported. Elsewhere a f. was observed at Maidstone 7/29 (BW). Numbers of Ruffed Grouse reports were high, with family groups reported from Chester 6/17 (CEAd), Lewis and Averill 7/6 and 7/19 (WGE,NLM), Winhall 6/15 (WJN), and S. Duxbury 6/28 and 7/2 (FAP). Observers noted that breeding might be late due to a cool, wet May (WGE,NLM). A dustbath area in Goshen was noted (SSW). One bird was encountered on BBS routes. Wild Turkey was also widely noted but reported breeding evidence came only from the 4 family groups observed, at West Haven 6/13 and Ira 6/19 (WGE et al.), Chester 6/21 (CEAd) and Winhall 7/2 (WJN). Two birds were encountered on 2 BBS routes. A Northern Bobwhite at Hartford 7/9 was undoubtedly not of wild origin (the species is non-migratory). The widespread but localized Virginia Rail was reported from 7 locations. One was reported from Runnemed Pd. Windsor 6/4 (LMP), 1 from a Shaw Mt. sedge marsh, Benson 6/8 (WGE,NLM), 1 from WRM 6/10 (SSW), 10 from the WRM 6/25 (WGE,NLM), 1 from Otter Creek Florence 6/29 (VPH),

a juv. from Dorset 7/14 (EFG), and 7 from the BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM). At MNWR, the epp was 30 (JBG) producing 15 yg.. Four Sora were reported by birders. One, at Runnemed Pd., Windsor, 6/4 (LMP) may be part of a previously unrecognized breeding population. Elsewhere were 1 at the WRM 6/10 (SSW) and 1 at S. Londonderry 7/8 (WJN). At MNWR the epp was 65, producing an estimated 35 offspring. There was 1 Common Moorhen in West Haven 6/1 (WGE et al.), and 7 ad. with 2-3 yg. at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM).

SHOREBIRDS

As usual Killdeer was widely reported throughout the state. Large post-breeding congregations included 30 at Springweather 7/29 (WHW) and 30 in Addison 7/31 (JAP). The epp at MNWR was 30 (JBG). BBS routes encountered 60 individuals on 13 routes. Low water at DCWMA in July produced some impressive numbers of Greater Yellowlegs; there were 20 7/14 and 7/17 (MBN,JAP) 6 on 7/25 (MBN), 1 7/27 (JID), and an astonishing 100 on 7/31 (JAP). July numbers at DCWMA for Lesser Yellowlegs were also good, with 6 seen 7/14 (JAP), 2 7/27 (JID), and 20 7/31 (JAP). Migrant Solitary Sandpipers first appeared on the early date of 7/6 in Lewis (WGE,NLM), while at DCWMA 10 were observed on 7/16 (JAP), followed by 2 there 7/17 and 7/25 (MBN). One was seen at Rockingham 7/27 (WJN), and 6 at DCWMA 7/31 (JAP). Spotted Sandpiper was well represented; 4 eggs hatched from a nest in Tinmouth 6/16 (PMB) and the high count was 11 at Otter Creek 7/14 (JRA). At MNWR the epp was 35 with an estimated 15 yg. produced. There were 4 individuals noted on 4 BBS routes. This year 50 Upland Sandpipers [E] were observed during the more intensive surveys conducted in 3 Addison County towns from 2-10 June. Another 38 were reported in later surveys through 15 July, for a total of 88 birds. There are now thought to be 60-70 breeding pairs statewide (CCR). Other reports from birders included 4-5 in territorial display near the airport in Coventry 6/19 (DS,JRS), and 1 in St. Albans 7/24 (CS). The low water at DCWMA produced 15 Semipalmated Sandpipers on 7/16 (JAP), followed by 50 there on 7/27 (JID) and 60 on 7/31 (JAP). Least Sandpiper appeared at DCWMA in good numbers as well, 20 on 7/16 (JAP), 6 on 7/25 (MBN), and 40 on 7/31 (JAP). Pectoral Sandpiper first appeared 7/25 with 2 at DCWMA (MBN), followed by 5 there on 7/31 (JAP). Stilt Sandpiper, a real rarity for July in Vermont, appeared at DCWMA as well, but a count of 12 on 7/14 would be an all-time high record, 3 7/17 (MBN), and 4 7/31 (JAP). A Short-billed Dowitcher was reported from DCWMA 7/27 (JID), and Dowitcher sp. (probably Short-billed) was reported twice, a pr. from DCWMA 7/14 and 4 7/31 (JAP). There were 4 reports for the widespread American Woodcock, with the high count 4 in Middlebury 7/15 (JAP) and at MNWR the epp was 50, with an estimated 30 breeders (JBG). One was noted on the Stratton BBS (FMH). There were 13 reports for Common Snipe, including a bird on a utility wire in Warren (FAP). At MNWR the epp was 150, with a breeding population estimated at 80 (JBG). BBS surveyors noted 38 on 10 different routes.

GULLS AND TERNS

Scattered summer reports for Bonaparte's Gull continue on LC. While early June reports are likely north-moving stragglers, mid-June birds, some of which are molting adults, must represent non-breeders or failed breeders from further north or west beginning to stage before moving clear of the lake prior to freeze-up. This season found 12 at Savage I. 6/2, 1 at Popasquash I. 6/3, and 4 at Hen I. 6/12 (RBL), plus 125 at Alburg 7/21 (RBL) and a bird at Young I. 7/29 (DJH). The expansion of the Ring-billed Gull population on LC apparently continues. The large (approximately 13,000 nests) colony on Young I. was not counted this year, but the numbers at Popasquash I. increased from 189 to 220, and there were 19 nests on Rock I. (CCR). A die-off of about 3,500 birds (mostly

juv.) occurred in July on LC. Initial fears of a widespread disease were not confirmed by necropsies, which showed only a variety of expected ailments. (High Peaks [NY] Audubon Society Newsletter, J.M.C. Peterson) By July birds had dispersed to all parts of the state (m. obs.). BBS reporters found 387 individuals on 5 separate routes. About 10 Herring Gulls were reported on Young I. 6/25 (WDB), while another individual on LC was noted 6/13 (SSW). A Great Black-backed Gull nest on Rock I. failed (CCR); there was only 1 other report, 6 ad. plus imm. on Young I. 7/29 (DJH). On its breeding islands in LC, the Common Tern [E] had a most successful year. Numbers of nesting pr. increased by 5 pr. to about 55-60, and 29 chicks successfully fledged (from last year's previous high of 19) represents the highest productivity in at least a decade (CCR). The major threats to this colony continue to be night-time predation by Great Horned Owls (with consequent nightly desertions by nesting adults) plus chick predation by the tiny thief ant. There were no other reports for the species. At MNWR there was an epp for Black Tern of 150, with a breeding population of 35 pr. producing 50 chicks (JBG). Elsewhere there were reports of 4 from Addison 6/25 (JAP), 2 from Milton 6/28 (WDB), 3 at DCWMA 7/18 (JID), and 2 ad. with a juv. at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM), the last tern family group for the season there. A preliminary breeding season survey of Black Tern nesting colonies in the state was conducted by Nathaniel Shambaugh this year and the study will be continued in 1991. Eight colonies were found in three areas: Missisquoi NWR, South Bay State WMA, and Dead Creek WMA. Shambaugh found a total of 59 pr., located 20 nests and 49 eggs for an average of 2.7 eggs per nest containing eggs.

DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS Rock Doves remain abundant around bridges and taller buildings. Constrained to report them, BBS participants noted 101 on 16 survey routes. Mourning Doves remain common, especially in farm country, throughout the state. Two-hundred and thirty-six were tallied on the 20 BBS routes. While several observers (WGE,NLM,MBN,WJN) considered Black-billed Cuckoo to be "not especially common," "less obvious than usual," or downright "scarce," there were 19 separate reports for the species from all over the state, a good number for the summer RVE. However analysis of BBS data reveals that the species may have declined significantly since 1966, with a 45% overall decline in birds detected on BBS routes in that period, (see introduction for explanation of these figures). On this year's Vermont BBS routes, 13 birds were detected on 7 surveys. Birders reported the less common Yellow-billed Cuckoo 4 times. There was a pr. in W. Haven on a VINS Bird Conference Field Trip (hereafter VBC) 6/10, another there 6/13 (WGE,NLM), 1 in Brandon 6/24 (SSW), and a pr. in Lincoln 7/10 (JRA). Additionally, 1 individual was noted on the West Rutland BBS route (NLM). The sample size for this species on BBS routes is too small to be statistically significant, but the trend for the species is down as well. A cuckoo species was noted in Middlebury 7/23 (JRA). There was a Great Horned Owl reported from Addison 6/4 (JAP) and a pr. from Dorset 6/19-20 (EFG). The owl nest in a cormorant nest in the colony on Young I. (first noted 4/22) was photographed 5/24 with 1 chick 2/3 grown (RBL). One was recorded on the Northfield Falls BBS route (WHB). One Barred Owl was noted on the Stratton BBS (FMH). Confirmed breeding reports were: 2 groups of fl. Galick Preserve, West Haven 6/13 (WGE,NLM), 3 fl. Willoughby Cabin, Westmore 6/29 (CSH et al.), and 2 fl. Victory 7/22 (WGE,NLM). The Common Nighthawk population in Vermont may be crashing, and birders are urged to report all nighthawk sightings. The species has been nominated as a Vermont Species of Special Concern. The loss of agricultural land in Vermont has undoubtedly played a part in this decline, and it may be that

roof-top nesting in urban areas may be largely unsuccessful due to exposure to sun and predators. This year there were reports of an individual in Brandon 6/1-2 (SSW), a bird displaying and calling in White River Jct. 6/24 (WGE,NLM), 2 in Springfield 6/26 (WME), 2 in Woodstock 7/4 (KRT), and 1 in Windsor (MFC). There was but 1 nesting report of an ad. with 2 chicks on a rooftop in Montpelier (DP). Individual Whip-poor-wills [SSC] were reported from WRM 6/2 (CJF), Brandon 6/10-11 (SSW), Island Pond 6/11 (WGE), Thetford 6/12 (CEAd), and L. Dunmore (WBK).



SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

There were numerous reports for Chimney Swift, with high counts of 20 in Brandon 6/1 (SSW), 16 in Woodstock 6/3 (JMN), and 10 in Middlebury the same date (JAP). Seventy-four were tallied on 11 BBS routes, including 19 on the West Rutland survey (NLM). An observer in Woodstock remarked that Ruby-throated Hummingbird numbers were down (JMN), however reports to the summer RVE seemed higher than average. One nest with yg. was reported from Barnard on the late date of 7/27 (MLW). BBS routes totalled 12 on 9 routes. Belted Kingfisher was also conspicuous. A family group with 2 recently fledged yg. was reported from Grand Isle 7/1 (DJH), while 13 birds were tallied on 9 BBS routes. Scattered reports for Red-headed Woodpecker [SSC] came in from 4 locations. Four individuals were observed in Bridport 6/1 (JAP,MP), with 1 pr. seen displaying and copulating there (MP). There was another report from Bridport 6/8 (JAP); a bird was seen at a feeder in Northfield Falls 7/7 (CAG), 2 ad. with 1 imm. were reported from Ferrisburg 7/21-27 (JID,MCD), and a nest in a dead elm in W. Arlington fledged at least 1 yg. by 9/7 (CSC). In all, reports for the species do seem to be increasing. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker continues "common in n. hardwoods, some in spruce-fir woodlands" (WGE,NLM). Nesting was reported from many locations. A nest with yg. was observed 30' up in a yellow birch in Goshen 6/28 (CCR), three family groups were noted in Lincoln 7/3 (JRA), 2 ad. with 2 juv. were reported 7/17 from Dorset (EFG), 2 ad. with 2 juv. were spotted 7/25 in Barnard (JNF), there was a nesting pr. in Marlboro (JPN), and a pr. fledged yg. in Woodstock (JMN). There were 45 counted on 13 BBS routes. Successful Downy Woodpecker nesting was recorded in Brandon 6/29, where 2 ad. brought 2 yg. birds to a suet feeder (SSW), and Woodstock, where 2 pr. brought yg. to suet (JMN). On BBS routes, 41 were counted on 14 surveys. Hairy Woodpecker was described as "common" (WDB), "fairly common" (WGE,NLM) and "numbers OK" (JRA). Nesting success was noted in Woodstock, where a pr. brought yg. to a suet feeder 6/26 (JMN). Twenty-eight were observed on 11 BBS routes. Black-backed Woodpecker [SSC] has been nominated as Endangered, its breeding range now limited to areas of the Northeast Highlands. Estimates put the current breeding population at more than 10, but less than 28 pr.; probably around 20 pr. (GPL). In the Victory Bog area 4 pr. were noted 6/12 (WHB), while in the Yellow Bogs area 3 birds were noted 6/17 (WHB) and 2 individuals were noted at clear cuts along Lewis Pond Rd., Lewis, 7/6 (WGE,NLM), on 7/12 one of those birds was observed feeding a juv. m. (AB et al.). An additional bird was sighted 3 miles east of Brighton on Rte. 105 on 7/18 (WHB). Northern Flicker was well reported, including an active nest in a spruce snag, Maidstone 6/11 (WGE), and 42 individuals counted on 15 separate BBS routes. Over 18 reports for Pileated Woodpecker were supplied by birders, the species is widespread throughout the state wherever forest culling practices have not overly reduced the numbers of mature trees. At MNWR there was an estimated breeding

population of 2 pr. (JBG). Seventeen were counted on 11 BBS routes.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported a record number of 19 times, including 3 in Brunswick 7/14 and 3 at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM). Analysis of BBS data, however, is discouraging. The cumulative decline, based on a total of 9 routes, from 1966-89 is 53%, with a significant portion of the decline occurring since 1980. On this year's BBS routes, 4 birds were counted on 2 routes. While some observers found Eastern Wood-Pewee common in hardwood forests (WGE,NLM,JRA), others found them locally scarce (CCR,WJN). In any case a fairly typical 16 reports were made, with high counts of 6 along the Otter Creek 6/14 (JRA) and 5 7/3 in Reading (FMH,GEH). Fifty-seven were tallied on 16 BBS routes. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was reported 8 times, with a high count of 5 (singing males) at Roy Mt. WMA, Barnet, 6/7 (CCR), 5 at Lewis 6/12 and 5 at Averill 7/19 (WGE,NLM). Two birds were reported from 2 BBS routes. The locally common Alder Flycatcher was reported over 14 times, including an individual in Waterford carrying food for yg. on 7/22 (WGE,NLM). A total of 67 were counted on 13 BBS routes. This species is one of the few long distance migrants that appears to be on the increase in Vermont, based on BBS data, with a five-fold increase over the time period 1966-89. Willow Flycatcher, although absent from some usual locations (MBN), was widespread, with a high count of 4 including one pr. with fl. in Quechee 7/26 (WGE). Seventeen were tallied on 8 BBS routes. Eight "Traill's" Flycatchers were netted at BNP (VINS). Observers continue to note an apparent decline in Least Flycatcher numbers (FAP). Nonetheless birders reported the species over 20 times, with a high count of 11 in Lincoln 6/10 (JRA), a nest in late stages of construction in West Haven 6/13 (WGE), and a bird in Tinmouth feeding yg. on 6/20 (PMB). At BNP a fairly high total of 30 birds were netted (VINS). BBS contributors tallied 177 individuals on 18 survey routes. The population is probably stable, but is localized and mobile in response to forest clearing succession. Eastern Phoebes were reported often. Because they are conspicuous and nest at human habitations, nesting reports are common. Two ad. with 4-5 yg. were noted from Barnard 7/11, where 2 broods were raised (JNF); 3 broods were noted from a nest in Marlboro (JPN); 2 broods were noted from S. Londonderry (WJN); a nest with 5 yg. was seen in Tinmouth 6/3 (PMB); and 2 nests were found in Braintree (RAM). Eight birds were banded at BNP (VINS). On BBS routes, 190 individuals were noted on the 20 routes. Great Crested Flycatcher was reported 20 times by birders. A pr. in Woodstock fledged 3 yg. 6/22 (JMN). One individual was banded 6/28 at BNP (VINS). One experienced observer felt numbers were noticeably reduced (CCR). On BBS routes there were 41 reports from 14 surveys. Eastern Kingbird was well represented with 111 encountered on 19 BBS routes, 2 banded at BNP (VINS), and over 30 reported elsewhere, including high counts of 15 on 7/27 in Ferrisburg (JID,MCD), 12 at BRM on 7/29 (WGE,NLM) and 12 in Addison (JAP). A pr. was reported gathering nesting material in Chester 6/20 (CEAd), a pr. was seen feeding yg. in a nest 8 ft. up in a black spruce at Moose Bog 7/11 (CCR), a nest was found 6 ft. high in a red maple at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM), and a nest was located about 2 1/2 ft. high in a tamarack at Nulhegan Pd., Brighton 6/18 (WGE,NLM). A Horned Lark was singing in Addison 6/4 (CCR), a pr. was in New Haven 6/6, and 4 were noted in Addison 7/31 (JAP), while 1 was counted on the Hinesburg BBS route (CSP). All 5 Purple Martin reports were from breeding colonies in the Champlain Valley, the high counts were 25 near McCuen Slang and 15 at LC 6/20 (SSW), while numbers at Grand Isle seemed average overall (DJH). Many observers feel that this species is declining, but it is not clear if this is a function of an actual decline or a shifting of local

colonies. Detailed monitoring of this species is needed. Tree Swallows were ubiquitous, with 226 seen on the 20 BBS routes, 24 (21 nestlings from boxes) were banded at BNP (VINS), and others noted from all parts of the state. Nests were noted from Woodstock (JMN), Strafford (HR), Barnard (JNF), and Brownsville (BMH). A nest was still active at BNP at the late date of 7/31 (WGE,NLM). By late July flock formation was conspicuous, with 100+ noted at DCWMA 7/27 (JID,MCD). Northern Rough-winged Swallows were recorded 8 times. Notable was a pr. nesting in a dryer vent pipe on the side of a house in Felchville (FMH,GEH)! Eleven fledglings were noted at Grand Isle 7/3 (DJH). The high count was 6 in Weybridge 6/20 (JAP). BBS data shows an increase in the population of this species in Vermont, a 6% annual increase and a 250% increase for the period 1966-89. Over the period 1980-89 the population seems stable. BBS data shows a significant increase also in numbers of Cliff Swallows from 1966-89, but the trend from 1980-89 is downward. The localized, colonial breeding style of this species affects the interpretation of these results. This year 20 were counted on 9 BBS routes. Eight reports were made elsewhere for the species, including a colony of 4 nests in Winhall (WJN), 27 nests in Tinmouth, where some fledged on 6/21, and a colony at Island Pd. (PMB). In Chester, 2 pr. nested at a colony which has declined from 14 pr. in 1988; spotty, localized nesting is typical of this species in Vermont. An experienced observer felt nesting may have been adversely affected by the cool, wet May (WGE). Six reports of Bank Swallow by birders included 30+ at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM), 30 at Salisbury 6/26 (JAP), and 25 in Brandon 6/15 (SSW). Elsewhere 119 were noted from 9 BBS routes. BBS data show a statistically significant decline for the species in our state from 1980-89. Birders reported Barn Swallow frequently, with a high count of 50 at DCWMA 7/27 (JID,MCD). A total of 298 were reported from the 20 BBS routes. BBS data indicate a decline for this species as well for the period 1966-89, but no significant change since 1980.

JAYS THROUGH WRENS

The Gray Jay [T] was reported 13 times, all from Victory Bog and the Nulhegan drainage, including Moose Bog and the Yellow Bogs areas of the Northeast Highlands (WHB,WGE,NLM). Breeding was confirmed by the sighting of 2 or 3 juv. birds with 2 ad., as well as a different juv., on 7/18 at Moose Bog (WHB). "Common" was the operative adjective applied to Vermont's Blue Jay population. The only nesting report was a pr. fledging 3 yg. in Woodstock 7/13 (JMN). One was netted at BNP (VINS), while 270 were reported from the 20 BBS routes. The American Crow was also encountered on all 20 BBS routes (516 total). There was 1 nesting report, with 2 begging yg. in Woodstock 7/28 (JMN). The high counts were a modest 30 at HC 7/27 (WJN), and 20 in New Haven (JAP). Common Raven was reported by birders a healthy 20 times, with possible nesting near Otter Creek (JAP), and 2 ad. with 3 "noisy" yg. at Woodstock 8/25 (JMN). Seventeen turned up on 10 BBS routes. Nesting by the ubiquitous Black-capped Chickadee was noted in a wren box in Dorset (EFG) and in a nest box in Brownsville 6/10 (BMH), while 4 nests were found in Braintree (RAM). Three-hundred forty-six birds were noted on the 20 BBS routes. Boreal Chickadee was reported only 4 times: 1 6/11 at Maidstone, 2 6/12 in Lewis, and 2 7/19 in Averill, while 1 in a white spruce plantation near Stiles Pd., Waterford on 7/22, may have been a wandering bird (WGE,NLM). Nine Tufted Titmouses were reported, including a pr. that nested successfully in early June in a bluebird house in Westminster West (AMS), a family group with 4 fledglings at a feeder in Hartland 7/2 (WGE,NLM), and a pr. (with downy yg. at a feeder in Woodstock) that may have raised 2 broods (JMN). BBS participants tallied 7 individuals on 4 routes. Reports for the Red-breasted Nuthatch were

about half of last year, and at least 1 observer noted "numbers way down from '89" (JRA). These numbers probably reflect the relative abundance of the spruce and hemlock crop in '89, as opposed to a very poor crop this season. Forty were counted by BBS participants on 13 surveys. There was no nesting activity reported. White-breasted Nuthatch reports were far more numerous, and included 2 family groups 7/8 and 1 7/28 in Lincoln (JRA), a family group at a Hartland feeder 6/24-7/5 (WGE,NLM), a nest 7/22 in the hollow of a silver maple in Dorset (EFG), and 2 ad. with at least 3 fl. in Norwich 6/24 (CCR). On BBS routes 45 were tallied on 14 surveys. One of the 13 reports by birders of the inconspicuous Brown Creeper was of ad. birds feeding yg. at a nest in a dead pine in Tinmouth 6/7 (PMB). BBS participants located 6 individuals on 5 routes. A pr. of Carolina Wrens in Brandon were present 7/24 - 8/24 and may have nested (SSW), while 4 yg. were fledged in a first brood and at least 2 in a second brood in Bennington (BCD, RD, ERK, RSK). The continuing series of mild winters with relatively little snow has been kind to the species here in Vermont at the fringe of its range. A total of 51 House Wrens were reported on 13 BBS routes. Elsewhere were reports of pr. nesting in Dorset and Chester (EFG, CEAD), however they were missing from the S. Londonderry region (WJN). Winter Wren was widely reported from 15 BBS routes (96 individuals) and from birders as well. The high count was 10, including a family group, in Rochester 6/9 (SSW), while 9 were noted in Ferdinand 7/13 (WGE,NLM). Sedge Wren [T] was not reported this season, after being located on territory at WRM for 2 consecutive years. Marsh Wren was reported often by birders, with high counts of 18 at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM), and 15 at DCWMA 7/27 (JID, MCD). Six were reported from 2 BBS routes.

KINGLETS THROUGH THRUSHES Golden-crowned Kinglet appears well established in spruce-hemlock habitat, especially at higher elevations, although relatively few reports (and no nesting confirmations) by birders were made to the summer RVB. A total of 25 were noted by observers on 8 BBS routes. The more restricted Ruby-crowned Kinglet was noted from Flagg Pk., Wheelock, where there were 6 on 6/16 (WGE,NLM), and Roy Mt. WMA, Barnet 6/7 (CCR). The species seems "fairly common in Essex Co. (WGE,NLM). In addition, 2 individuals were located on the Landgrove and E. St. Johnsbury BBS routes. There were 5 reports for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 4 from their breeding range in the lower Champlain and CR Valleys, plus an apparent migrant on 7/31 in Winhall (WJN). A nest with yg. was spotted 12' high in a cottonwood in West Haven 6/10 (VBC), and a nest with yg. was found 30' high in an elm in West Haven 6/13 (WGE,NLM). There were many reports for Eastern Bluebird, including 13 nesting reports, plus 17 birds noted from 8 BBS routes. Breeding numbers for the species are on a steadily rising curve thanks in part to restoration efforts of Bluebirds Across Vermont whose 1990 data revealed that 27% of the 677 nest boxes monitored by observers were used by bluebirds (32% were used by Tree Swallows and 5% by House Wrens) with an estimated 724 fledglings, based on a nesting success of 3.98 fl. per box. The percentage of boxes that fledged at least one chick was 88% this year! (JD). This year comments like "more numerous" were frequent, and 13 nests were reported from the Northeast Highlands to the southern Green Mts., including Lewis, Chester, Lincoln, Brownsville, Huntington, Marlboro and Dorset. Veery was widely reported, with 309 counted on the 20 BBS routes. BBS data for this species is alarming. While the decline from 1966-89 is not statistically significant, the decline from 1980-89 was, with a 35% cumulative decline in that time period. Birders were not diligent in locating nests this season: none were noted. Seven birds were netted at BNP (CCR). Birders apparently made little effort to locate the Gray-cheeked Thrush as well;

-36- only 1 was reported, from Burke Mt. 7/6 (WGE,NLM). The species can still be found at many high altitude locations but with damage observed in mountain-top forests, closer monitoring is warranted. Eleven Swainson's Thrushes were counted on 2 BBS routes. Elsewhere there were 9 reports, none of them breeding reports, plus 1 early migrant banded 7/27 at BNP (VINS). The high count was 6 in Lewis 6/12 (WGE,NLM). Comments ranged from "fairly common in Essex and Caledonia Co." (WGE,NLM) to "surprisingly scarce" in the Duxbury area (FAP). BBS data for Vermont for 1966-89 has shown a significant 44% decline, although the change since 1980 has not been statistically significant. Seventy-two Hermit Thrushes were noted on 16 BBS routes, but none were banded at BNP for the season. Birders found them "fairly common everywhere" (WGE,NLM), with high counts of 11 at Lincoln Gap 7/5 (JRA) and 8 7/14 at Brunswick (WGE,NLM). There were 22 reports for Wood Thrush, but no breeding records. One observer found numbers in Woodstock to be down from previous years (JMN). Reports of 6 or more came from Springfield and Dorset (WME, EFG), and 239 were noted from 19 BBS routes. Five were banded at BNP (VINS). In the midwest, this species is suffering severely from cowbird nest parasitism, enhanced by increasing forest fragmentation. This is also of concern in Vermont, and this concern is confirmed by BBS data. As with the Veery, the 1966-89 trend is not significant, but for the time period 1980-89 the annual decline has been 6%, with a 41% cumulative decline in that 9 year stretch. The ubiquitous American Robin was widely reported, including 110 from the 20 BBS routes. Of interest was a leucistic individual with white outer tail feathers seen in W. Windsor (GJ). Sixteen were netted at BNP this season (VINS).

MIMIDS THROUGH VIREOS Gray Catbird was reported 136 times on 18 BBS routes, while 31 were netted at BNP (VINS). Elsewhere reports for the species were widespread, with nesting specifically noted from Woodstock (JMN), and 1 observer felt it was a "good breeding season" for the species (JPN). Birders reported Northern Mockingbird 15 times, with a high of 3 at Panton 7/27 (JID, MCD). The species was also reported 10 times from 5 BBS routes. There were 14 reports for Brown Thrasher, including a nest with 3 yg. at Tinmouth 7/4 (PMB) and a nesting pr. in Weybridge (MBN). Otherwise 1 was banded 6/7 at BNP (VINS), and 9 turned up on 7 BBS routes. Two observers noted they were "fairly common in localized successional habitats in West Haven, Woodstock, Norwich and Weston" (WGE,NLM). The abundance of Cedar Waxwings seems to have moderated this season after booming in 1989. Three-hundred fifty were counted on 19 BBS routes, down from the 417 noted on the 19 routes run last year. Twenty-five banded at BNP compares to 50 last season (VINS). Elsewhere birders noted nesting from Ferdinand 7/13 (WGE,NLM), Grand Isle 8/23 (DJH), and Weybridge (MBN). A flock of 45+ 6/4 in Woodstock was apparently still migrating (WGE,NLM). European Starling was represented by 920 individuals noted on the 20 BBS routes; 3 were banded at BNP (VINS). Otherwise birders noted them primarily in agricultural areas. Two observers noted they were "never found on remote logging roads" (WGE,NLM). The 9 reports by birders of Solitary Vireo included no nesting evidence. High counts were 4 in Middlebury 6/29 (JAP) and 3 in Lincoln Gap 7/3 (JRA). They were "common in Essex and Caledonia Cty." (WGE,NLM). Fifty-five individuals were counted on 13 BBS routes. While BBS data for Vermont reveals that the species has shown a significant increase in the time period 1966-89, it had declined at an annual rate of 12% since 1980. Yellow-throated Vireo was reported 21 times on 6 BBS routes. Elsewhere there were 13 reports from birders, including a high count of 6 in West Haven 6/10 (VBC). One experienced observer found them "scarce" (WJN).

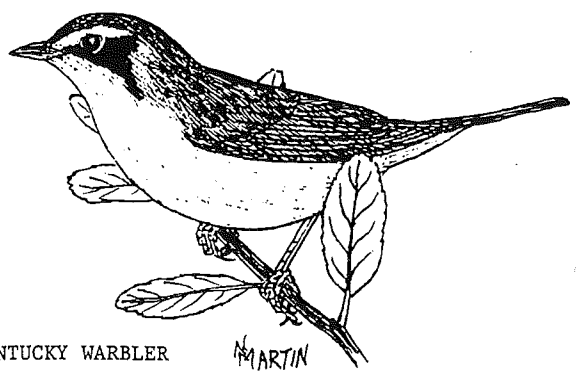


Warbling Vireos were observed 67 times on 15 BBS routes, banded 9 times at BNP (VINS), and reported 14 times by birders. There were no nesting reports. The loquacious Red-eyed Vireo was noted 689 times by BBS surveyors. BBS data indicate this species increased over the time period 1966-89, but may be declining since 1980. Seven individuals were banded at BNP (VINS), and the species was widely reported by birders, including an ad. carrying food in Braintree 7/22 (RAM) and 4 fl. at Monkton Pd. 7/20 (JRA). The high counts were 17 in Bristol Notch 7/12 (JRA), and 24 singing m. at the Cape, Goshen, 6/28 (CCR).

WOOD WARBLERS Vermont birders were apparently not inclined to note the locally distributed Blue-winged Warbler this season, the only reports being an individual in Brandon 6/2 (SSW), and 1 seen in West Haven 6/10 (VBC). Golden-winged Warbler, on the other hand, was well noted. An individual was noted 6/8 at Shaw Mt., Benson (WGE,NLM), 1 at Ira 6/10 (SSW), 2 in West Haven 6/13 plus 2 there with 2 fl. 6/26 (WGE,NLM), 2 at Ira 6/19 (WGE,DS,RS,JS), and 3 at Shaw Mt., Benson, 6/22 (WGE,NLM). One was found on the West Rutland BBS (NLM). Additionally, a "Brewster's" type hybrid was seen 6/10 in Ira (SSW). It sometimes seems as though the spring and fall migrations of the Tennessee Warbler might overlap, and this year south-moving individuals followed late northbound migrants by a scant five weeks. Two were noted in Dorset 6/5 (EFG), and an ad. m., in early molt, was banded at BNP 7/16 (VINS). Additionally there were singing m. in Ferdinand 7/13 and in Brunswick 7/14 (WGE,NLM), and a singing m. in Norwich 7/17 (CCR). Numbers of Nashville Warblers, a species of brushy, successional habitats, seem to be declining in southern portions of Vermont (JJC, pers. obs.), but are still "fairly common in Essex Co.," (WGE,NLM). Two were banded at BNP (VINS), and 12 BBS routes yielded 37 individuals. Other reports included 3 singing m. at Roy Mt. WMA Barnet, 6/7 and a nesting pr. at BNP (CCR), 1 6/2 in Reading (FMH,GEH), and 1 in Woodstock 6/5 (SSW). BBS data for Vermont show a significant decline in the species over the period 1980-89, a 14% annual reduction over the period, or 75% accumulated, but no significant trend between 1966-89. Northern Parula, always localized in Vermont, was much more common at Roy Mt. WMA Barnet, than in 1989; 8 singing m. were present 6/7 (CCR). Elsewhere the species was "fairly common in Essex Cty.," where 4 were noted in Brunswick 7/14 (WGE,NLM). An individual was recorded at Putney School 6/15 (FMH,GEH), and 12 were noted on 6 BBS routes. Sixteen Yellow Warblers were netted at BNP (VINS), while 241 individuals turned up on the 20 BBS routes, indicating how widespread and adaptable this species is. There were 2 nesting pr. at BNP: one nest with 4 eggs, located 2.5 ft. high in Spiraea 6/15 fledged 3 yg. 7/2 (CCR). High counts by birders included 8 in Milton 7/3 (WDB), and 6 at Bristol Pd. 6/1 (JRA). A common resident of disturbed habitat in Vermont, the Chestnut-sided Warbler was reported often, including 271 individuals from 19 BBS routes. There were 2 nesting pr. at BNP, where 8 were banded (VINS). Ads. were feeding nestlings 7/13 in Ferdinand (WGE,NLM), and counts of 6 or more were recorded from Lincoln 6/12 (JRA) and Reading 7/8 (FMH,GEH). In addition to 61 individuals tallied on 9 BBS routes and 1 banded at BNP, reports for Magnolia Warbler were scattered, with reports of more than a single bird coming from Mt. Ascutney (WME), Winhall (WJN), and the Cape, Goshen (CCR), and E. Branch Rd., Lewis & Averill with 14 on 7/19 (WGE,NLM). Breeding was confirmed with a nest with 3 yg. Moose Bog, Ferdinand 6/18 (WGE,NLM). BBS data shows a significant 81% declining trend for this species since 1980, but a non-significant decline of only 21% from 1966-89. Thus it is not clear whether the species is returning to normal after a population boom in the 1970's, or is in real decline here. A single Cape May

-37- Warbler was encountered on the Hardwick BBS 7/2 (TEJ), within the general limits of its Vermont breeding range. Fourteen BBS routes totalled 48 Black-throated Blue Warblers, and birders found them common as well. This species did not decline significantly on BBS routes over the period 1966-89, but did show statistically significant decline (9% annually, a cumulative 56%) over the period 1980-89. Counts over 10 included 24 singing m. at Jay Peak 6/1 (JDM), 15 singing m. at the Cape, Goshen, 6/28 (CCR), 12 at Concord Woods 6/26 (CCR), 13 in Rochester 6/12 (SSW), and 11 at Mt. Ascutney 6/1 (WME), with a m. carrying food for fledglings in Lewis 7/12 (WGE) being the only nesting evidence reported. Yellow-rumped Warbler may be increasing in numbers in coniferous forests of lower elevations including the lower CR Valley (JJC, pers. obs.). One-hundred twenty-one birds were tallied on 14 BBS routes. Reports of 5 or more came from Rochester 6/19 (SSW) and from Lewis 7/6 (WGE,NLM), and ad. with yg. were reported from Woodstock 6/17 (JMN). Black-throated Green Warbler was found 57 times on 16 BBS routes. Other reports included an ad. carrying food 7/7 in Braintree (RAM). There were 10 singing m. at Jay Peak 6/1 (JDM), 6 singing m. at the Cape, Goshen, 6/28 and 5 in Concord Woods 6/26 (CCR), while 5 were located in Rochester 6/12 (SSW). BBS data shows a statistically significant decline in the species in Vermont over the period 1966-89 (5% annually, 66% total), although numbers since 1980 appear stable. Still fairly common in short-neededled conifers (WGE,NLM), the Blackburnian Warbler was located 48 times on 13 BBS routes. There were 6 in Reading 7/8 (FMH,GEH), 4 in Ripton 6/8 (JAP), and 4 singing m. at Concord Woods 6/12 (CCR). A m. with fl. was observed in Lewis 7/12 (WGE,NLM). BBS data show a significant decline in Vermont since 1980, 10% annually and 61% accumulated for the time period, but as with Magnolia, a non-significant decline since 1966. Pine Warbler is found regularly in white pine stands in the lower CR Valley (JJC, pers. obs.), and appears to be uncommon, if localized, elsewhere. Three birds were noted on 2 BBS routes, and birders found a m. in Brunswick 7/14 (WGE,NLM) and 3-4 pr. in Middlebury 6/29 (JAP). The range of Prairie Warbler has expanded dramatically into Vermont over the past two decades. The species can be found regularly on brushy hillsides, often with small, scattered conifers, locally throughout the lower CR Valley (JJC, pers. obs.), and this year they turned up for the first time on the E. St. Johnsbury BBS. A bird in West Haven 6/8 was the observer's first for Rutland Cty. (WGE,NLM). A pr. at BNP (for the 3rd confirmed nesting in 4 years) had 3 chicks 7/13 fledging by 7/19 (CCR). The only report of Bay-breasted Warbler was of a singing m. in Warrens Gore 6/17 (WGE,NLML). Multiple reports for Blackpoll Warbler were 4 in Lincoln Gap 6/9 (JRA), 2 at Lewis 6/12 and 2 in Averill 6/17 (WGE,NLM), 3 in Rochester 6/19 (SSW), and 3 in Mt. Tabor (WME). A breeding population on Burke Mt. was noted (WGE,NLM). Only 1 BBS route, Landgrove, recorded the species (WGE). A singing m. Cerulean Warbler [SSC] was heard in West Haven 6/10 (VBC). There were no other reports for the species, although Vermont has a breeding colony in Milton, and scattered birds, some unconfirmed, have been noted in Windham Cty. and environs over the past 3 yrs. (JJC, pers. obs.). The Black-and-white Warbler was recorded 112 times on 18 BBS routes and netted 5 times at BNP (VINS). Two breeding pr. were noted in Woodstock (JMN). Fairly common throughout deciduous woodlands in Vermont, the American Redstart was noted 222 times on the 20 BBS routes and banded 14 times at BNP (VINS). Birders and banders noticed the species seeming to migrate in small family groups this year (a phenomenon observed with Red-eyed Vireos as well), perhaps attributable to delayed nesting due to the wet, cold spring (JJC,CCR). In any case there was a mini-fallout of the species in Dorset 7/30, where 20 were noted (EFG); 20 also were noted at Jay Peak 6/1 (JDM). One

nest with 3 eggs was located 6/15 at BNP, and 3 yg. hatched 6/25 and fledged by 7/5 (CCR). BBS data for the state show a statistically significant decline for the period 1980-89, 8% annually and 54% total. Numerous and vocal in mixed and deciduous woods, 369 Ovenbirds were encountered on the 20 BBS routes, while 10 were banded at BNP (VINS). BBS data shows a relatively stable population in Vt. from 1966-89, but a serious decline of 38% over the period 1980-89. Time will tell whether the recent reduction in numbers is a return to normal numbers or a trend of real concern. Elsewhere 28 singing m. were heard at the Cape, Goshen, 6/28, and 21 were heard at Concord Woods 6/12 (CCR). There was an unsuccessful nest located in Braintree 6/13 (RAM). Counts by birders of 8 or more included 8 at Lincoln 6/10 (JRA), 8 at Rochester 6/19 (SSW), and 13 at Mt. Ascutney 6/1 (WME). The high count for Northern Waterthrush was 9 singing m. at Roy Mt. WMA 6/7 and 6/19 (CCR), while 4 were found on 3 BBS routes. BBS data for Vermont shows a statistically significant increase in the species over the period 1966-89. Ad. Louisiana Waterthrushes with fl. were noted in West Haven 6/19 (WGE,NLM) and Ira 6/19 (WGE,DS,JS,RS), while 8 were located on 4 BBS routes, including 4 on the Marlboro BBS (JJC). The highest count by birders was 4 in West Haven on 6/10 (VBC). No nests were reported, and the northernmost individual was in Goshen 6/28 (CCR). Mourning Warbler seemed more conspicuous than usual, according to several observers (SSW,JAP) and a high total of over 23 reports. In a larger context, BBS data shows an increase for the period 1966-89, but a decline from 1980-89. Two 6/10 at WRM were late migrants (SSW), while 5 m. were singing on territory at the Cape, Goshen, 6/14 (CCR). Four breeding pr. were reported in forest openings in Middlebury (JAP), and an ad. m. was seen with an imm. bird in S. Duxbury 7/13 (FAP). Ten were reported from 6 BBS routes. Vermont's 6th KENTUCKY WARBLER appeared briefly on 6/14 in W. Brattleboro (JJC). Although never seen, this singing m. was tape-recorded over a 20 min. period, but not heard from



KENTUCKY WARBLER

again. Interestingly, the 5th state record came from the same location in May-June 1988: site fidelity or circumstance? The conspicuous Common Yellowthroat was noted 507 times from the 20 BBS routes, while 14 were banded at BNP (VINS), where a nest with 4 chicks was located 6/29, fledging by 7/8 (CCR). Elsewhere a pr. was observed with food for yg. at Moose Bog on 7/11 (CCR), as was a bird in Braintree 7/1-2 (RAM). Canada Warbler was reported 17 times from 8 BBS routes, but no nesting was reported. This species appears to be in significant decline in Vermont, according to BBS data. Over the period 1966-89 the annual rate of decline has been 3% (45% cumulative), but since 1980 the annual rate of decline has been 17%. Counts of 5 or more were: 5 in Lewis/Averill 7/19 (WGE,NLM), 6 in Reading on 6/2 (FMH,GEH), and 8 in Rochester 6/12 (SSW).

TANAGERS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW Scarlet Tanagers were reported more than 24 times by birders, with high counts of 4 7/21 in Reading (FMH,GEH) and 4-5 plus a nest with

both tanager and cowbird chicks at Shaw Mt. in Benson 6/22 (WGE,NLM). A total of 55 were recorded on 13 BBS routes. Although the species has increased over the period 1966-89 (3% annually), it has decreased 4% annually and 29% calculated total for the period 1980-89. While common at lower elevations, a singing m. Northern Cardinal was a first for a veteran observer in Marlboro (JPN). The high count was 11 in Brandon 7/22 (SSW), while 52 individuals were noted on 10 BBS routes. No breeding observations were submitted. Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported over 2 dozen times, including 10 in Lincoln Gap 7/3 (JRA) and 4-5 imm. at a feeder in Chester (CEAd). From BBS routes, 64 were noted on 18 different surveys, while 4 were banded at BNP (VINS). The population trend for Vermont indicated by the BBS survey is extraordinary. From 1966-89, the species has shown a 9% annual increase, yet from 1980-89 the annual change has been a 9% annual decrease. Population crash or return to normal? Eight Indigo Buntings were netted at BNP (VINS), while 103 were noted on 17 BBS routes. BBS data indicates a decline for the species over the past 23 years. Over this period, the annual decline has been 3%, 53% overall. Elsewhere birders reported the species 26 times, including an individual that came in to a feeder in S. Strafford from 6/10-24 (HR) and a f. carrying food to yg. in Braintree 7/22 (RAM).. There were 2 breeding pr. at BNP, where 2 chicks hatched 7/14, and fledged by 7/24 (CCR). Rufous-sided Towhee was reported only 8 times on 6 BBS routes, while 4 were banded at BNP, where there were 2 nesting pr.. Two chicks hatched from 1 nest on 6/26 but were lost to predation by 7/2 (CCR). Elsewhere birders reported the species 12 times, with counts of 3 or more being: 3 in Lincoln 7/16 (JRA), 3 in Ira 6/19 (WGE,DS,JS,RS), and 2 pr. in Marlboro 6/10 (JPN). Birders described Chipping Sparrow as "populations up" (JRA) and "common" (WGE). Three were banded at BNP (VINS), while 280 were recorded from the 20 BBS routes. Six Field Sparrows were netted at BNP, where there were 4 nesting pr. and 2 unmated territorial m.. All nesting pr. were double-brooded, with 1 brood lost to predation (CCR). A nest with 4 yg. was located in Ira 6/19 (WGE,DS,JS,RS), while 36 were found on 12 BBS routes. Vesper Sparrow, proposed as a Species of Special Concern in Vermont, was reported 6 times. A nest with 4 eggs was located in Chester 6/17 but was destroyed a few days later (CEAd), there were 2 at Boylan Airport, Brighton, 6/11 (WGE,NLM), 3 singing m. in Addison 6/4 (CCR), 3 in Addison 6/4 and 2 there 7/31 (JAP), and 5 in Panton (JAP). One was noted on the Hardwick BBS (TEJ). There were 82 Savannah Sparrows located on 14 BBS routes, while other reports included a high count of 40 in Addison 6/4 (JAP). Birders felt the numbers for the species were "OK" (JAP), and "common in suitable habitat" (WGE,NLM), although the species is surprisingly uncommon in the lower CR Valley (JJC, pers. obs.). Although Grasshopper Sparrows were present in May at DCWMA, none were located there since (JRA). An individual may have been present in Dorset 6/11 (EFG), and single birds were noted in Weybridge 6/6 (JAP) and 6/9 (MBN), New Haven 6/21, and again in New Haven 7/10 (JAP), as well as the Colchester BBS, where 3 were reported (JNS). Fifty-nine Song Sparrows were banded at BNP, including a high of 11 7/30 (VINS). Seven-hundred and two were noted on the 20 BBS routes, and breeding was noted in S. Pomfret (JNF), Woodstock (JMN), and Braintree (RAM). Lincoln's Sparrow, quite common in suitable habitat at higher elevations, was noted only from Averill where there was an ad. feeding yg. 6/17, Brighton 6/18, Lewis 1 juv. and a singing m. 7/6 and Ferdinand 7/13 (WGE,NLM). Four were counted on 2 BBS routes. Swamp Sparrows were widespread, with 2 banded at BNP (VINS), 48 reported on 9 BBS routes, and a high count of 20+ at BRM 7/29 (WGE,NLM). White-throated Sparrows were tallied 273 times on 19 BBS routes, while 11 were netted at BNP (VINS). Otherwise



birders provided 32 reports, including high counts of 10 in Ripton 6/28 (JAP), 12 in Dorset on 7/10 and 7/29 (EFG), and 21 in Brunswick on 7/14 (WGE,NLM). Confirmed breeding included ad. feeding yg. in Woodstock 7/8 (JMN), a nest in Braintree that failed by 6/16 (RAM), and ad. with fl. on 6/18 and 6/29 in Brunswick (WGE,NLM). A three-week-tardy White-crowned Sparrow encountered in a clearing in the Concord Woods 6/12 was not observed to be singing and was not present on a return visit 6/26 (CCR). The 27 reports for Dark-eyed Junco included a nest at Mt. Philo 6/8 (JID,MCD), a nest with 4 eggs on Burke Mt. 7/6 (WGE,NLM), 3 ad. with yg. 6/18 in Winhall (WJN), and a nest in W. Dummerston that may have suffered chipmunk predation and failed by 7/9 (CE-K). BBS observers located 85 birds on 14 routes, while none were banded at BNP for the season. On 18 BBS routes 242 Bobolinks were noted, while 23 other reports were made, including 101 singing males on the Upland Sandpiper survey in SW Addison 6/4 (fide CCR). Several birders noted the apparent benefit for nesting success which resulted from late hay cutting due to wet conditions in June (JID,MCD,WGE,NLM). There were 25 reports for Red-winged Blackbird, plus 9 banded at BNP (VINS) and 963 located on the 20 BBS routes. There were 2 nesting pr. at BNP, with 1 nest of 3 chicks fledging by 6/14 (CCR). There were also 2 ad. and 3 fl. at S. Pomfret 7/28 (JNF), fledged yg. by 6/2 at WRM (CJF), and 1 pr. nesting in Woodstock (JMN). Birds were flocking at Dorset by 7/14, where the high count was 75 on 7/31 (EFG). A rare YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was found in Morrisville on 6/15 (CPL), the second for the summer records and only about the fourth for Vermont. Eastern Meadowlark was reported 11 times, with no direct nesting or breeding evidence, and 47 were noted on 15 BBS routes. Reports on Rusty Blackbird [SSC] benefitted from extensive field work, conducted this summer for the VFWD, by 2 observers (WGE,NLM); all reports stem from this effort as follows: 10 birds including many fl. at Lewis 6/12, 2 with fl. in Wheelock 6/16, 2 with fl. at Warrens Gore 6/17, 14 including fl. in Averill where a nest with 4 eggs was located at 6 ft. in a fir tree 6/17, 2 in Sutton 6/29, 1 at Ferdinand Bog 7/11, 7/13, and 1 with 2 begging juv. in Waterford 7/22. The Rusty Blackbird was made a Species of Special Concern in Vermont in 1988. It has disappeared as a breeder from many locations, and concern has been expressed that acid rain (harming aquatic insects on which they feed) may be reducing their breeding range, although pH had no significant effect on habitat use in WGE's study. The Brown-headed Cowbird was observed 163 times on 19 BBS routes, about the same as last year, and was reported by birders 18 times, including a high count of 10 in Middlebury 7/12 (JAP). Some f. birds were noted even in fairly extensive forest in the Champlain Valley (WGE,NLM), a bad indicator for the status of species that serve as hosts to the eggs of this nest parasite. Common Grackle was tallied 468 times on the 20 BBS routes, a significant increase over last year's 393 birds on 20 routes, and 3 were netted at BNP (VINS). Elsewhere 24 reports were made, including a nest with 4 yg. 5' in a white cedar on Lewis Pd. 6/12 (WGE,NLM), nests in Grand Isle from which yg. fledged 5/31 and 6/1 (DJH), and a high count of 50 from Middlebury 7/28 (JAP). Orchard Oriole continues as a rare breeder in Vermont, this year a m. was seen carrying food for yg. on 7/4 at the DAR mansion in Addison (JAP). BBS observers counted the widespread Northern Oriole a healthy 88 times on 19 routes, but numbers were down during the breeding season at BNP though three were banded there (VINS). Twenty-six were reported by birders, including a nest with yg. 33' high in an aspen in West Rutland 6/19 (WGE,DS,JS,RS), independent yg. in Grand Isle 7/8 (DJH), and 2 nesting pr., fledging 6/16 and 6/24, in Woodstock (JMN). There were 22 reports for Purple Finch including a juv. begging for food at a feeder in Wallingford (SJD), while 51 were totalled on

11 BBS routes, including 14 in Landgrove, and 1 was netted at BNP (VINS). House Finches counted on BBS routes rose to a new high of 146 on 12 routes (99 on 10 routes last year), and 5 were netted at BNP (VINS). Twenty-four other reports included a pr. with fl. 6/30 and 7/13 in Wallingford (SJD), an ad. with yg. at a feeder in Woodstock 7/3 (JMN), and 2 yg. fledged 7/8 in Brattleboro from a flower pot hanging on a Day Care entry-porch (JJC), while the high count was 50 in the "wilds" of HC 7/27 (WJN). A few Pine Siskins lingered through June, including 1 in West Haven 6/10 (VBC), birds on 6/3 and 6/14 in S. Strafford (HR), and individuals 6/26 and 6/30 in Brandon (SSW), while 22 were encountered on 4 BBS routes, including 11 in Landgrove. There was confirmed nesting for the species in April and May in Woodstock in the vicinity of the BNP (VINS). Nesting in invasion years is probably regular, but not widely noted, in part because birders are not thinking about breeding records so early in the season. Among 27 reports for American Goldfinch was a pr. nest-building in Woodstock 7/20 (JMN). Nine were banded at BNP (VINS), while 269 were counted on the 20 BBS routes, up somewhat from last year. Birders felt numbers were high this year. Eighteen Evening Grosbeak reports included ad. feeding 2 fl. at a feeder in Hartland 7/12-7/16 (WGE,NLM), the high count was 17 in Victory Basin 7/22 (WGE,NLM). House Sparrows elicit little notice from birders. Among this year's 13 reports were 3 juv. being fed 7/7, a pr. feeding a fl. on 7/4 in which the f. chased the m. away from his paternal chores, and 2 ad. feeding 3 yg. on 6/9, all observed at a Wallingford feeder (SJD). A leucistic individual with a white tail fledged in Grand Isle 7/13 (DJH). On BBS routes 283 were counted on 15 routes.

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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 (802) 457-2779.

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AUTUMN - 1 August - 30 November  
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Abbreviations Used in the Text

BRM Barton River Marsh, Coventry  
BNP Bragdon Nature Preserve, Woodstock  
CR Connecticut River  
LC Lake Champlain  
GM Gale Meadows, Winhall  
MNWR Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, Swanton  
WRM West Rutland Marsh, West Rutland  
WMA Wildlife Management Area

[E] Endangered in Vermont  
[T] Threatened in Vermont  
[SSC] Species of Special Concern in Vermont

BBS Breeding Bird Survey  
Cty. County  
epp estimated peak population  
f. female (s)  
fl. fledgling (s)  
imm. immature (s)  
I. Island  
juv. juvenile (s)  
m. male (s)  
max. maximum  
m.obs. multiple observers  
Mt. Mountain/Mount  
Pd. Pond  
pr. pair (s)  
pers. obs. personal observation  
RVB Records of Vermont Birds  
R. River  
YG. young

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey Routes, Observers and Dates. Routes are 25 miles long, with 3 minute stops every 1/2 mile.

Colchester (JNS) 6/25	Marlboro (JJC) 6/6
East Haven (TEJ) 7/3	Middlesex (TEJ) 6/20
E. St. Johnsbury (CSH) 6/28	Newbury (FAP) 6/22
Fletcher (LPR) 6/24	Northfield (WHB) 6/23
Gaysville (NLM) 6/25	Post Mills (WGE) 6/14
Grand Isle (LPR) 7/6	Shaftsbury (CCR) 6/24
Greensboro (LJE) 6/12	South Reading (TEJ) 6/6
Hardwick (TEJ) 7/2	Stowe (EJM) 7/4
Hinesburg (CSP) 6/24	Stratton (FMH) 6/13
Landgrove (WGE) 6/15	West Rutland (NLM) 6/19

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