

Records of Vermont Birds

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

FALL MIGRATION 1993

1 August to 30 November

George E. (Terry) Hall, Seasonal Editor

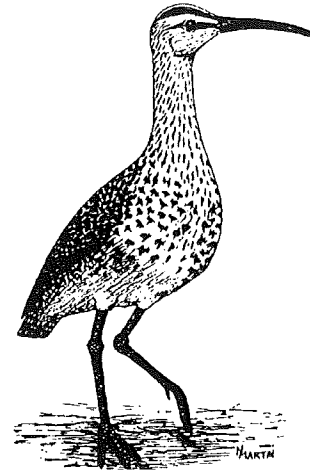
Fall of 1993 was average in several ways; weather, number of species reported as well as any exciting records all fit the category. However, as always there are highlights and this fall is no exception, with a record hawk watch year and a second state record to name a couple. The total species count treated in this document is 241, with several forms and genera mentioned in addition, as reported by a large and enthusiastic group of observers.

I would like to thank each and every person who carefully documents the many sightings that go into these reports, for without you there would be no data. Also, many more of you contribute to the very comprehensive hawk watch effort and usually are not acknowledged by name; hats off to you all.

August weather was characterized by warm and calm days, with few strong systems to produce much needed moisture until the very end of the month. Winds recorded in Burlington never exceeded 20 knots all month, and overall rainfall was well below normal statewide. This benign weather may have helped some typically southern species to move a bit farther north than usual, as in the Burlington area where observers found a record high number of egrets which often disperse northward after breeding. Other August specials included the YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON found at Dead Creek and a young LAUGHING GULL near the Champlain Bridge, a well documented sighting confirmed as a second state record, and finally a WHIMBREL found by the same observer in about the same spot as the gull!

In contrast, September turned to more fall-like weather as the warm and dry conditions turned wet and cool. This unsettled condition even produced a tornado in the Westmore/East Charleston area of the Northeast Kingdom on the 3rd! By the third week, a cold front pushed temperatures to record lows with a reading of 18 degrees in Searsburg where Nancy Martin was setting up a new hawk watching site - brrr! As if that weren't enough, nearly two inches of snow fell on Mt. Washington in NH in the last week of the month. Bird activity was centered on hawk migration, this season being the 20 year anniversary for Vermont Hawk Watch, and as Bill Barnard put it in his report, "What more fitting way to celebrate... than by setting a record for the largest fall migration total." The record was 11,202 hawks seen which translates to 20.61 birds per observer hour, an incredible effort all around. Earlier in the month, birders spotted the first of several HUDSONIAN GODWIT to be found, and then produced NORTHERN WHEATEAR to the delight of many observers.

Whimbrel



Described as "cool and tranquil" by weather observers, October didn't see many strong systems until the very end of the month, as a big storm headed up the coast to clobber New England in early November. However, a front that produced some strong westerly winds around the 13th also grounded a NORTHERN GANNET near the summit of the Killington ski area, and later cold weather may have hastened the arrival of the vanguard of Bohemian Waxwings that invaded the state in near-record numbers by the 3rd week of this month. An exceptionally late WHITE-EYED VIREO was found far north of its usual range as a further highlight for late October.

The November storm mentioned above dropped up to 6 inches of snow in Vermont for an early season reminder of what was to come later with a vengeance. However, monthly averages were only slightly below normal for both temperature and precipitation, and Vermont did not see any strong storms, with the first below zero readings coming around Thanksgiving. Some notable sightings for this month might include the Golden Eagle from S. Londonderry or the Great Cormorant in Fairlee, but the big happenings involved both the largest and smallest of our birds. We may be seeing the beginnings of Mute Swan invading our wetlands, which could have an impact on management plans for the future, but the real crowd pleasers were the many hundreds of redpolls that swarmed down in November and stayed all winter. The few HOARY REDPOLL mixed in with Commons provided birders with some real tests of their field identification skills.

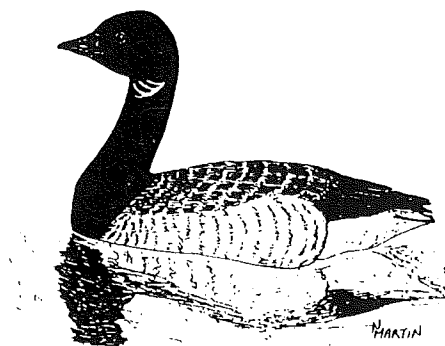
LOONS, GREBS AND HERONS

Three reports of Red-throated Loon were received, perhaps involving the same birds on Lake Champlain (hereafter LC) near the Champlain Bridge; 1 on 11/13 (GEH, SWM, JEO), 3 the next day (TGM, FAP), then 2 birds 11/17 and 1 on 11/22 (JAP). Fewer than 100 Common Loon were

reported, the earliest 2 imm. with 2 ad. on May Pond 8/1 (PFW,SAW) and a single bird on LC in Addison 8/2 (JAP), then building in numbers on LC with a high count of 16 off Charlotte Town Beach 11/16 (TGM,FAP) and extending through the period with 2 on LC 11/26 (SSW). At least 32 Pied-billed Grebe were reported from scattered locations including an ad. with 5 imm. in Coventry 8/1 (REG), another 6 on Lk. Memphremagog 9/25 (PFW,SAW) and a late bird in Addison 11/22 (JAP). The earliest of 147 Horned Grebe sighted were 4 at Eagle Pt., Newport 10/2 (STH), with highs on LC of 35 on 11/18 at Potash Bay (JMN) and 39 on 11/22 in Meach Cove, Shelburne (TGM); 15 were still off Charlotte as late as 11/26 (SWM). Red-necked Grebe reports were low with 1-2 in Addison 10/4 to 10/25 (JAP,FAP), another 2-3 birds on Shelburne Bay between 10/6 and 11/13 (SWM;JEO) plus the late records of 2 birds off Charlotte Town Beach 11/29 (SWM), and another the next day in Meach Cove (SSW). This year's NORTHERN GANNET was a bizarre tale of a juv. bird found alive at the Killington Ski area 10/13 (MF), rehabbed at the Vermont Raptor Center, then released at the ocean on Plum Island, MA. Becoming annual, an imm. Great Cormorant was reported from Lk. Morey in Fairlee 11/2 (DHC). Observers tallied just 850 Double-crested Cormorant from around the state, starting with 1 on 8/3 in Richmond (TSA), other inland sightings from Taftsville Dam 8/5 (PK), Clark's Pond 9/14 (PFW,SAW) and Silver Lk. 9/17 (MM), with the only large buildup on LC reported as ~500 from Gull I. 8/29 (JMN). A group of 10-21 was present on Lk. Memphremagog 8/17 to 10/3 (STH), and the latest record was of 1 bird in Shelburne Bay 11/20 (SWM). Six observers reported 8 American Bittern including 2 at South Slang, Ferrisburgh 8/9 (JID,MCD), at least 2 on Grand Isle 8/22 and a single there 10/3 (DJH), other singles 9/12 at Winooski R. Delta Park (hereafter WRDP) (SWM), Tinmouth Channel 10/17 (CJF) and the last in Middlebury 10/19 (JAP). Of the more than 200 Great Blue Heron reported by nearly every observer statewide, a few of the high counts include 32 from the Addison/Panton area 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF), 13 at Richville Reservoir, Shoreham 8/21 (RWP) and 22 in the Champlain Valley (hereafter CV) 8/30 (REG). Some that lingered into late November were 1 in Montpelier 11/20 (TSA), 1 in W. Pawlet 11/24 (GRB) and 1 in Dorset 11/27 (EFG). An invasion of Great Egret eclipsed all previous highs, with at least 60 birds reported statewide. Concentrated in the CV, 6 birds were seen on Shelburne Bay 8/12 (TGM,SRA) and at the Brilyea access of Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA)(JMCP), with 5 at WRDP 10/9 (FAP). Some of the reports away from the LC area include birds in Woodstock (PK), Windsor (JS), Arlington (CSC;BCD), Hardwick Lk. (CG), Richmond area (JMN;EH) and Weathersfield (WME). Far fewer, but still impressive numbers of Snowy Egret showed up, but were restricted to Blodgett's Beach, Burlington and Shelburne Bay. All records were between 8/9 and 9/10 and may have involved the same 4 birds going back and forth between sites (TSA;JJA;m.ob.). On 8/12 9 egrets were seen on Shelburne Bay (6 Greats and 3 Snowys) (SRA,TGM)! Cattle Egret reports came from Grand Isle with 7 between 8/1 and 8/14 (DJH), 1 from the Four Corners Farm in South Newbury 10/24 (NO,SO) and an imm. seen off Rt. 17 near DCWMA on 10/26-27 (JAP,MBN,SWM). The Green Heron was well reported (total of 26) from many locations statewide, never more than 1 or 2 birds: 8/1 from Dorset (EFG) & Coventry (REG), 8/4 from Bristol (JRA) and Taftsville Dam (JMN), 8/5 Colchester (EMA,RBD), 8/9 Woodstock (CRP) and 8/18 Lyndonville (PFW,SAW). Later reports included 1 at Eagle Pt., Newport 9/2 (STH), 2 in Woodstock 9/14 & 20 (JMN;CRP) and 1 from Pawlet 10/2 (GRB). Sixteen Black-crowned Night-Heron were spotted with highs of 3 from the Grand Isle ferry 8/

9 (EMA,RDB), 3 from Slang Rd., Panton 9/24 (JRA) and the late date from Shelburne Bay, 1 bird 10/20 (SWM,TGM). A well-described juvenal plumaged YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON found at Stone Bridge, DCWMA 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) provided a highlight to the fall, as this species is very rare anywhere in northern New England.

Brant



WATERFOWL

An alarming trend in southern New England has been the steady increase in the population of introduced Mute Swan; it appears that Vermonters may have evidence of successful breeding in two areas of the state this fall. Three juv. were in Arlington from 10/27 to 11/20 (EFG,BCD), and a pair raised 2 young on Arrowhead Lk. in Milton (MZ) which later were seen along the Sandbar Refuge causeway 11/21 (SWM,TGM,FAP). Yet another juv. was on the Connecticut R. (hereafter CR) above Bellows Falls 11/15 to 11/25 (TEJ;REG), but seen by one observer as a possible Tundra Swan (AMD); as no RSD was submitted, and as the identification (hereafter I/D) of imm. swans is difficult, care must be taken with all swan reports in the future. The Snow Goose buildup at DCWMA began about 9/30 with 150 seen (RDE,SMK), increased in Oct. with estimates from 1000 to 5000 from many observers (TSA;JRA;CJF;MBN) and peaking between 10/10 & 10/15 with an estimate of 10,000 on 10/10 and up to 20,000 on 10/15 (SWM,TGM). The number fell off in Nov. from 2-3000 (CDA;SBL,LJE,DCD;m.ob.) (except for 5000 (FAP) 11/21), down to a final 15 on 11/30 (JAP). Other notable reports outside the CV came from Randolph 9/15 with 20+ (EWC,MCC), up to 2000 in flight over a Searsburg hawk watch site between 10/10 and 10/25 (NLM), 7 birds in Glover 10/11 (REG), 125 in Tinmouth 10/14 (CJF) and 200 on 10/19 from Reading (FMH,EJH). Finally, a second staging area is known from the LC area between Point Au Roche and Cumberland Head, New York and the northern end of Grand Isle, so that 7000 seen from Isle la Motte 11/21 (FAP) confirms that area as a valuable later staging site. For the second year in a row, no reports of Ross' Goose were received, but due to the difficulty in picking out the 1 or 2 birds that are mixed with thousands of Snows, this is not unexpected. Apparently only 3 Brant were seen in Vermont this fall: 1 on Lk. Bomoseen 10/24 (RWP), 1 in Shelburne Bay 11/4 (BD) and 1 under the Champlain Bridge in Addison 11/13-19 (SWM,TGM,GEH;m.ob.). DCWMA is no longer the focus for migrating Canada Goose, with the many thousands that pass through Vermont being seen from many scattered locations, although 3-5000 at DCWMA on 10/10 (SWM,TGM) does represent the high. Other notable counts include 2000 in Button Bay 9/30 (RDE,SMK), 1650+ in flight over the Searsburg hawk watch site between 9/24 and 10/25 (NLM) and 1000 at East Cr., Orwell 10/17 (JMN); on the last day of the period there were still 5 at DCWMA (JAP) and 4 in Dorset (EFG). Wood Duck

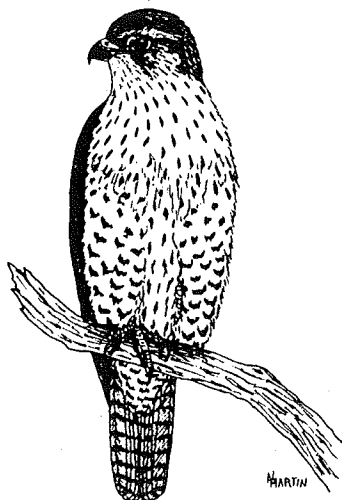
was well reported, a total of 341 with high counts of 53 at Richville Reservoir, Shoreham 8/21 (RWP), 21 on Berlin Pond 9/12 (TSA), 18 in Tinmouth Channel 9/26 (CJF) and 40 in the Ferrisburgh area 10/1 (JAP); a late sighting of a fem. in Addison 11/21 (FAP) is notable. Average counts of Green-winged Teal were received, a total of 165 birds with highs of 30 in Addison 9/15 (JAP) and 33 on Whitney Cr. 10/10 (SWM), but none seen into Nov. as the last report came from East Creek Wildlife Management Area in Orwell (hereafter ECWMA) 10/26 with 6 birds (JAP). American Black Duck was widely reported with a total of 338 birds including 90-100 from Hardwick between 8/19 and 8/30 (REG), nearly 10 from the Black R. and Barton R. areas during the period (PFW,SAW), 22 from Orange 9/5 (TSA), 20 on the Mettowee R. 11/24 (GRB), 5 in Bellows Falls 11/25 (AMD), 12 in Dorset 11/27 (EFG) and a buildup to 30-50 birds in Burlington by late Nov. (SWM,TGM). Observers reported a total of 2375 Mallard, but it should be noted here that waterfowl figures this fall do not include surveys normally done by biologists from aircraft, and therefore don't have figures from Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR) or other inaccessible wetlands that normally harbor hundreds of waterfowl. Highs of this species include 300 from Grand Isle 10/16 (DJH), 150 in the Sandbar Wildlife Management Area (hereafter SWMA) on 10/17 (TSA) and the normal buildup at Blodgett's Beach, Burlington by 11/25 of ~1000 birds (TGM). Normally scarce at any season, Northern Pintail was reported from 5 areas, with reports of 4-7 in ECWMA between 10/11 and 10/26 (MBN;JMN,EFG;JAP) the high counts; 3 in Ferrisburgh 10/1 (JAP), 3 more in Shelburne Bay 10/10 and 2 at Whitney Cr. 10/13 (SWM,TGM), and up to 2 fem. at Blodgett's Beach on 11/21 (SWM,TGM;FAP;JEO) the last reports. A low total of 160 Blue-winged Teal includes highs of 19 on 8/21 from Richville Reservoir, Shoreham (RWP), 20 in Addison 9/15 (JAP) and 50 at Chimney Pt. 9/30 (RDE,SMK), with notable reports of 2 birds from Coventry 8/1 (REG), 3 in Craftsbury 10/13 and the late record of 6 at SWMA 10/24 (TSA). Four observations of Northern Shoveler total 12 birds and include 5 from Chimney Pt. 9/30 (RDE,SMK), 1 in Rockingham 10/8 (WJN), 4 in Shelburne Bay 10/17-18 (SWM,TGM) and finally a late report of 2 at ECWMA 11/18 (JMN,EFG). Of 25 Gadwall spotted by 8 observers, 6 from SWMA 10/17 is the high (TSA), but 2 in Williamstown 9/10 (TSA), 1 on L. Memphremagog 10/12 (RDE,SMK) and 3 on L. Bomoseen as late as 11/16 (RWP) are all notable. Very few reports of American Wigeon were received: 17 on Grand Isle 8/8 (DJH), 20 from Addison 9/15 (JAP), 2 each from Shelburne Bay 10/5 (SWM,TGM) and SWMA 10/24 (TSA), with singles on Grand Isle 10/18 (DJH) and the last a late bird in Addison 11/6 (JAP) bringing the total to 43. Fair numbers of Ring-necked Duck were observed, the total of 1500 seen between 10/5 and 11/16 including a high of 800 at MNWR 10/30 (JMN), with other good flocks of 300 in Newport 10/12 (RDE,SMK), 98 at High Pond, Brandon 10/16 (WME,JAP), and the last report of 50 in Bridport 11/19 (JAP). No large numbers of Greater Scaup were reported, with 20 each at MNWR 10/24 (TSA) and West Swanton 11/21 (FAP) as highs and 11 on Roach Pond, Castleton 11/16 (RWP) the only other flock of any size, a total of 60 in all. A handful of Lesser Scaup, normally quite rare in contrast to Greaters, included 1 on Grand Isle 10/10 (DJH), a fem. at Newport 11/1, and 3 in W. Swanton 11/21 (FAP,EBP), plus a questionable report of 11 on Roach Pond 11/11 (JEO) that possibly were the same Greaters seen above by RWP. Usually more numerous than the 7 scattered reports, Oldsquaw appeared on LC first with 2 on Converse Bay 10/13 (FAP,RBL), then 2 at Long Pt., Ferrisburgh 11/17 (JID,MCD), 1 each at Bridport 11/19 and Addison 11/26 (JAP), and off the Sandbar causeway 11/26 (TGM).

Flocks of Black Scoter away from LC outnumbered any on the Lake, with 35 on Lk. Parker, Glover 10/10 (REG), 45 on Tinmouth Pond 10/10 and 24 still there 10/23 (CJF), then 18 on Woodford Pond 10/23 (WGE,NLM). Nov. reports included 4 from Lk. Salem 11/13 (FAP,EBP) and a few from LC (SWM,TGM;JEO) bringing the total to 133 in all. In contrast, 8 Surf Scoter were found, 7 between Blodgett's Beach and Shelburne Bay 10/9 to 11/25 (SWM,TGM), and 1 on the CR at Roundy's Cove, Rockingham 11/15 (TEJ). The total of 127 White-winged Scoter was comprised of 7 on Tinmouth Pd. 10/10 (CJF), a high of 80 on the CR at the Ompompanoosic R. 11/2 (DHC) and up to 30 in the Shelburne area of LC between 10/14 and 11/16 (SWM,TGM;JEO). The earliest Common Goldeneye reports were from Grand Isle with 2 there 8/3 (DJH) and 3 on 8/9 (EMA,RDB), then flock size grew on LC to over 400 between Shelburne and Ferrisburgh 11/13 (SWM), and 250 in Meach Cove alone 11/19 (FAP); a total of 1215 birds reported is conservative for this season. A good total of 6 Barrow's Goldeneye does not even include any from Burlington where 1-2 drakes have returned for several years now by the end of November; what happened, observers? An observer from out-of-state found 3 (2 m., 1 f.) on Lk. Bomoseen as early as 11/11 (JEO) for an outstanding record, and the rest were as follows: 1 in Meach Cove 11/15 (SWM,TGM,FAP) and 2 at Long Pt., Ferrisburgh 11/17 (JID,MCD). With the exception of 30 Bufflehead reported from LC at Shelburne 11/13-21 (SWM,TGM), most of the total of 163 were birds in central Vt., notably 32 from the Danby/Tinmouth area 10/31 (CJF), 38 the same day in Manchester Center (BWP) and 18 on Dix Reservoir, Barre 11/2 (TSA); at least 4 remained on LC in Meach Cove through 11/30 (SSW). Hooded Merganser numbers were healthy, with flocks reported from inland lakes including 50 on L. Memphremagog 10/12 (RDE,SMK), 20 on ECWMA ponds 10/18 (JAP), 28 there 10/29 (RWP), and finally the 77 seen 11/11 on Roach Pd., Castleton (JEO) and 64 in that area 11/16 (RWP) all added up to a total 486 for the season. Again, reports of Common Merganser came from many areas statewide and eclipsed totals from LC itself, the only exception being 300 off Shelburne Beach 10/24 (SWM) and ~200 in St. Albans Bay 11/26 (TGM) as highs. Of the total 1315 birds reported, flocks were noted from Montpelier, Dix Reservoir, Barre and Middlesex (TSA), Danby Pd. (CJF), Bartonville and Herrick's Cove (TEJ), Glover (REG), Taftsville (JMN), Manchester Ctr. (BWP), 67 on Wolcott Pd. (FAP), Brandon and Lk. Dunmore (SSW), the Barton R. (PFW,SAW) and Chittenden Dam (RWP). Red-breasted Merganser is usually quite rare, so flocks of 14 on Dix Reservoir, Barre 11/2 (TSA), 30 on LC in Addison 11/22 (JAP) and 25 off the Charlotte Beach area 11/26-27 (SWM,TGM) are all good records, and when added to the single bird in Shelburne Bay 10/5 through 11/19 (TGM;FAP) total 70 in all. Two reports of Ruddy Duck are normal at this season: 2 on Berlin Pd. 10/2 (TSA) and 1 female in Potash Bay, Addison 11/3 to 11/10 (JAP,FAP;MBN).

VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

The figures for Turkey Vulture are very interesting this fall, as at least 321 were reported statewide by many observers, including 23-28 around the Bristol landfill area in August (JRA;RWP) prior to migration, but these did not include Vermont Hawk Watch (hereafter VHW) figures; only 84 were noted from these sites statewide. Are the local birds not moving out along the ridges, but instead gathering in the CV (where many observations came from) and leaving later? At any rate, as this species is enjoying a steady increase in Vermont, can the Black Vulture be far behind?

Gyr Falcon



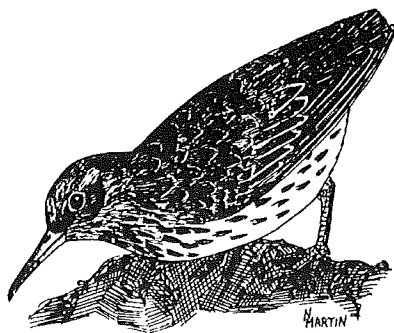
Osprey numbers were up, with 63 from statewide observers and an additional 152 from VHW; highs include 3 at South Slang 8/6 (JRA) and Bridport 9/11 (FAP), 4 in Charlotte 9/29 (JAP) and the rest as 1 or 2 birds including a late individual at Roundy's Cove, Rockingham 11/15 (TEJ). Three out of the 4 ad. Bald Eagle reports were prior to migration, and may represent birds summering in Vermont; also, an imm. at Long Pt. 8/23 (JID,MCD) had been reported to this editor several times through the year as "breeding". At any rate, 14 eagles were seen in addition to the 21 from VHW sites from the following locations: 1 ad. in Bolton 8/20 (DM), 1 ad. in Rutland near the airport 8/29 (GB), 1 ad. and 1 imm. at Somerset Reservoir 9/1 (RR) and a 4th ad. in Georgia at Lk. Arrowhead 9/4 (MZ). Imm. eagles showed up along the LC basin in Oct. and Nov. with at least 3 at DCWMA 11/10 (m.ob.) and the late birds included 1 at Danby 11/4 (LP) and 1 in Hartland 11/24 (MAM). Observers reported 135 Northern Harrier with some notable highs in the CV: 9 at DCWMA 8/30 (REG), 8 from New Haven 9/10 (JRA), 25 in the Bridport/Addison area 11/3 (JAP,FAP) and 6 in one field in Panton 11/20 (SWM,TGM). One report from DCWMA 11/26 (SSW) was the latest, and when added to VHW figures of 65 tallied, the total reaches 190 birds in all. In scattered 1's and 2's, Sharp-shinned Hawk was reported statewide by 21 observers, with a high of 5 in Wallingford 9/19 (BWP), and totalled 53; VHW totals were impressive, with 698 reported to VINS including 108 from Searsburg alone between 9/20 and 10/28 (NLM). Up from last year, Cooper's Hawk total was 79 including 22 reported by individuals and another 57 from the various VHW sites. Also up, the 31 Northern Goshawk reports were mostly singles except for 2 in Tinmouth Channel 11/5 (CJF), and two dates in Searsburg where 3 ea. were seen (NLM). The 11 Red-shouldered Hawk encountered seems low, although 3 together in S. Londonderry 10/23 (WJN) is hopeful, but the additional 13 from VHW sites brings the total to only 24 this season. Sept. 16 will be a date to remember in VHW annals, and the Broad-winged Hawk was the species that starred in a record-setting day in a record-setting year. On this day alone, 2229 hawks (2021 Broad-wings) seen over Brownell Mt., and no fewer than 3688 (3512 Broad-wings) counted from Mt. Philo were all part of a major flight that saw more than 22,000 Broad-wings tallied from southern CT in the same window of time! Nearly 50 of this species were counted this season away from VHW sites and included 3 in W. Glover 8/1 (REG), to be added to the total 8696 birds from VHW. Hawk watchers tallied 778 Red-tailed Hawk, and other observers re-

ported an additional 175 with concentrations in the CV from late Oct. through the period, notably 12 at Chimney Pt. 10/20 (JRA), 11 in Bridport on 10/29 (JAP) and 12 more in the Addison/Panton area 11/26 (SWM). First dates for Rough-legged Hawk were 1 in Pawlet 10/7 (GRB) and another in Middlesex 10/8 (TSA), but oddly it was not found in the CV until 11/3 with 5 from Bridport/Addison (JAP;FAP) and built to a high of 6 at DCWMA 11/18 (JMN,EFG), then 10 in the same area on 11/20 (SWM,TGM); not noted from VHW sites, a good total of 39 was about normal, but did not include an unconfirmed report of "at least 30" in a kettle over Riverton 11/7 (ALP) which would be an incredible record. Only 1 sighting of Golden Eagle came from a VHW site in S. Londonderry, where an ad. was seen 11/2 (WJN). Of the total 482 American Kestrel reported, 333 were from VHW but of the remaining, fully 55 were found outside the CV where the species nests commonly, and include up to 18 reported from areas in Coventry, Glover, Greensboro and the Barton R. within the period dates (PFW,SAW). The elusive Merlin slipped through the state between 9/11 and 11/20, with all sightings of single birds and concentrated in mid-Oct; the total of 26 included 16 from VHW which is normal. Peregrine Falcon totals may include duplicate reports of the bird residing on the UVM campus water tower through the period (JJA;EMA,RDB;SWM), and are low at 15 plus the 9 recorded by hawk watchers. Perhaps the lack of good shorebird habitat (drawdowns) in the CV kept these falcons on the move in this area. A gray phase Gyr Falcon showed up in the vicinity of DCWMA by 11/16 (TGM;JAP), and was the vanguard for what seem to be a few that show up each winter now in the CV, very likely involving the same individuals.

GROUSE THROUGH RAILS

It is never certain whether reports of Ring-necked Pheasant refer to established birds or recent releases (escapes?), but 2 of 3 seen this season are likely to have survived Vt. winters, and are hence "countable": 1 cock seen in the median strip of I-91 near the MA border 10/9 (GEH) probably came from a healthy population in that area; the 1 in Middlesex 10/24 (TSA) might be doubtful as to origin, but the 1 in Ferrisburgh 11/29 (TGM) echoes a report from the same area last year. Always nice to hear about, 1 Spruce Grouse was reported from the Yellow Bogs in Lewis 8/28 (FAP,EBP) after an absence of a year. Apparently stable Ruffed Grouse counts show a total of 45 throughout the state, with highs of 8 in Reading 8/14 (FMH,EJH) and 6 in Ripton 9/21 (SSW). Wild Turkey continues to expand in suitable habitat, with the impressive total of 321 containing flocks of 23 (4 ad., 9 y.) in Pawlet 8/4 to 8/25 (GRB), 12 in Ferrisburgh 9/30 (JID,MCD), 20 in Woodstock 10/12 (CRP), 30-41 in Chester from 10/21 to 11/28 (CEA), 23 on Grand Isle 11/14 (DJH) and 25 in Pomfret 11/15 (SDF). A few Virginia Rail reports include 1 from Addison 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF), 2 from Dorset 8/11 (EFG), 2 at South Slang, Ferrisburgh 9/21 (JID,MCD), and a late report of 2 at Dorset 11/4 (EFG). Sora went unreported this season. Reports of 3 juv. Common Moorhen on 9/4 from MNWR (RWP) and 1 other from the South Slang 9/21 (JID,MCD) were the only ones received. A high of 6 American Coot from the SWMA on 10/17 (TSA) was exceptional, with only two other reports of 1 at MNWR 9/4 (RWP) and 2 from Berlin Pond 10/22 (TSA) received this season. An intriguing (unique?) sighting of a large and long-necked bird seen from above from a light plane over the Greensboro area 8/8 (TSA) was thought to be a Sandhill Crane by the observer, and would be the only record of this species this fall if the chance of its being a panicked Great Blue Heron had been completely ruled out!

Purple Sandpiper



SHOREBIRDS

The early Black-bellied Plover sighting was from WRDP 8/26 (GEH), the 1st of a total 21 observed; highs of 5 ea. from Grand Isle in Oct. (DJH) and DCWMA 11/8 (SWM), which is also the late date, are notable. Only 6 American Golden-Plover were noted, all in Oct., with 3 in Grand Isle 10/9 and 2 there 10/26 (DJH), and the other a bird in Orwell 10/22 (JAP). Semipalmated Plover did better, a total of 31 starting with 1 at Blodgett's Beach, Burlington 8/5 and building to a high of 15 there until 8/27 (SWM), with 6 on St. Albans Bay 8/30 (EMA,RDB) and the latest one in SWMA 11/6 (SWM) rounding out the picture. As expected from a species that breeds commonly in the state, Killdeer was widely reported, with the total of 332 in part due to highs of 33 at the Waits River, Bradford 9/8 (NO,SO), 30 on Shelburne Bay 9/29 (SWM), some Aug. counts of 25 in Brandon 8/25 (SSW), 21 in Springfield 8/19 (WME) and 20+ in Grand Isle on 8/22 (DJH). As the LC water level dropped in late summer, shorebird habitat improved, as the many records from St. Albans Bay, Blodgett's Beach and Shelburne Bay indicate; but the real bonanza proved to be an accidental drawdown at East Creek in Orwell, discovered by JAP and monitored frequently thereafter. Greater Yellowlegs was one of many species to build up at ECWMA, with a total of about 90 statewide, and at least 40 of those reported from ECWMA between 10/11 and 10/29 (JAP;m.obs.), with a notable late report of 1 in Bartonville 11/18 (TEJ). Exactly half as many Lesser Yellowlegs were reported, with 30 of them in the same time frame as the above species at ECWMA (JAP;SWM,GEH), and 3 in Vergennes 11/10 (SBL,LJE,DCD) the late record. As is typical of Solitary Sandpiper, many sightings of 1's or 2's came in from both ends of the state, including Moose Bog (SWM), Albany (REG), Grand Isle (DJH), Middlebury (JAP), Woodstock (JMN;CCR) and S. Londonderry (WJN), but oddly none from ECWMA. A total of 45 Spotted Sandpiper included a high of 20 on Grand Isle 8/20 (DJH), with 9 on St. Albans Bay 8/13 (SWM) and the latest report of 1 at Herrick's Cove 10/17 (REG). The only reports of Upland Sandpiper came from DCWMA with a group of 4-7 seen along the Slang Rd., Panton between 8/9 & 8/26 (GEH;SWM;JAP), possibly the same family group in a post-breeding flock. An excellent find was 1 WHIM-BREL south of the Champlain Bridge in Addison/Bridport on 8/4 (HW,JAP,WS). Nearly as special as the above species, HUDSONIAN GODWIT was seen in four locations this fall: 1 at Nichols Pt., Grand Isle 9/1 and 9/5 (DJH), 1 at ECWMA 10/11 to 10/21 (JAP;m.obs.), 3 on Blodgett's Beach 10/17 (GEH,DLC) and 1 from DCWMA 10/19 (JDM). Ruddy Turnstone turned up in four locations as well: 1 under the Champlain Bridge 8/2 (GEH), 1 at Blodgett's Beach, Burlington 8/28 (SWM,TGM), 2 on the bar off WRDP 9/12 (SWM,TGM) and 2-3 on Grand Isle 10/9-26 (DJH) as both the high and late records. The only Red Knot report came once again from Grand Isle, with 4 juv. on 9/28 (DJH), giving ample testimony to the value of consistent coverage of one good area by an observer who keeps good notes and therefore chronicles each season accurately and comprehensively. Sanderling appeared at

Blodgett's Beach, Burlington, 4 on 8/12 (GEH) and 7 there 8/27 (SWM), and on Grand Isle with 2 on 9/10, 5 on 10/10 and 3 on 10/16 (DJH), for a total of 21. Of the total 50 Semipalmated Sandpiper reported, the high of 25 on St. Albans Bay 8/13 (SWM) and up to 5 or more at ECWMA into late Oct. (JAP;m.obs.) are notable. A bird thought to be Western Sandpiper at Burlington 8/12 (GEH) must remain hypothetical due to the difficulty of identifying this species and its uncertain status in the state. Less equivocal, Least Sandpiper was well-reported with several from Grand Isle in mid-Aug (DJH), a high of 30 on St. Albans Bay 8/13 (SWM) and at least 12 lingering on the mudflats of ECWMA until 10/29 (RWP), for a total of 61. Normally one of our latest migrants, White-rumped Sandpiper was found early at Shelburne Bay, with 2 there 8/21 (GEH), 1 on Popasquash Is. 10/8 (RBL,FAP), several into late Oct. in ECWMA (JAP;m.obs.), but the latest were 2 at SWMA 11/6 (SWM,TGM). A small handful of reports of Baird's Sandpiper included 1 on the spit of Blodgett's Beach 8/18 and 8/24 (SWM;JAP), 1 in Shelburne Bay 8/19 (GEH) and another there 9/19 (GEH,SWM). Observers reported Pectoral Sandpiper from 3 well-monitored locations: up to 50+ at ECWMA between 10/11 and 10/24 (JAP,FAP;m.obs.) were the highs, 10-15 along the Shelburne Bay beach between 9/19 and 10/15 (GEH,SWM) and 8-12 on Grand Isle mid-Oct. (DJH); the latest sighting was of 1 still at Shelburne Bay 11/6 (SWM). Two sightings of Purple Sandpiper from Grand Isle are normal, with 1-3 there 10/10 and 10/15 (DJH). Another late migrant, Dunlin reports were all for Oct. and restricted to the LC area with two notable exceptions: 1 in Herrick's Cove 10/26 (TEJ) was the only CR Valley sighting, and the 1 from SWMA on 11/6 (SWM,TGM) was the only Nov. record; however, highs over 100 on Grand Isle 10/16 (DJH) and of 50-60 in ECWMA 10/16 (JMN;SWM,TGM) helped boost the total reported to at least 215 this fall. One of our rarer migrants, only 1 Stilt Sandpiper was described from Blodgett's Beach, Burlington 9/10 (FAP). Two Short-billed Dowitcher were also seen at Blodgett's Beach 8/27-28 (SWM,TGM), providing the only report this fall. Common Snipe proved to be very "common" in Newport on 8/22, where an astounding 300 were counted (PFW,SAW), and added to many more reports scattered throughout the state for a total of nearly 330, including a late sighting of 1 in Shelburne Bay on 11/6 (SWM). As expected, all American Woodcock sightings came as 1's or 2's from more pastoral settings, with honors for the highs going to CJF in the Tinmouth/Danby area with 3 10/16, and other reports from Chester (CEA), Berlin (TSA), W. Bolton (MC), Dorset (EFG), Woodstock (CRP), Winhall (WJN), Reading (FMH,EJH) and the latest one in Baltimore 11/21 (TEJ). A very cooperative Red Phalarope pleased observers as it patrolled the shoreline of Shelburne Bay 9/19 (GEH,SWM;m.obs.), and another was found at the Town Beach in Shelburne 10/22 (TGM); no other phalarope species were reported to "Records of Vermont Birds" (hereafter RVB) this season.

GULLS AND TERNS

A second state record juv. LAUGHING GULL was discovered at the Champlain Bridge 8/4 (WS) and spent several days in the area, often roosting with Ring-billed Gulls in the parking lot of the Crown Pt. Historic site on the NY side. The low total of 5 Little Gull reports only reflects a lack of boat trips onto LC; Little Gulls regularly mingle with Bonaparte's flocks, but 2 from Addison 8/4 (JAP) were early, 1 on Missisquoi Bay 10/8 (RBL,FAP) and 2 (1 ad., 1 imm.) in Shelburne Bay from 10/18 to 11/19 (SWM,GEH,TGM) were all that were received by RVB. It is difficult to get a total of Bonaparte's Gull from the reports

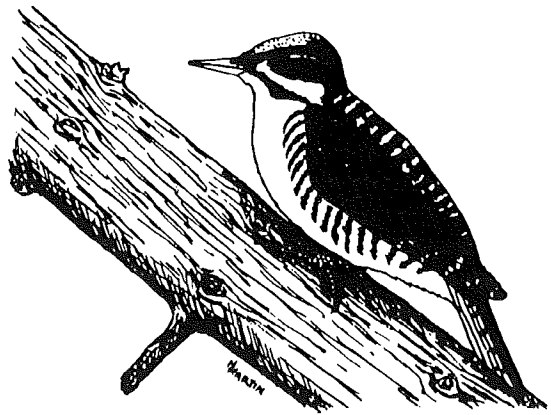
submitted, but at least 2300 were counted from all areas on LC, with the apparent high buildup of 1000 birds noted in Shelburne Bay mid to late Oct. (SWM,TGM); also noteworthy were the 40 or so on Lk. Memphremagog from 9/2 to 10/12 (STH;RDE,SMK). Bonaparte's are known to be nomadic by nature, and it would be very interesting to discover just how long this species stays in a given location, and whether or not the flock sizes remain discreet. One indication of this would be the presence of Little Gull within the flocks. If an individual could be tracked over time, some interesting data could evolve. The post-breeding buildup of Ring-billed Gull in agricultural settings is impressive, and so flocks in the 1000's are becoming the norm, but as with the above species, arriving at a good total is next to impossible, and probably irrelevant. Reports of 1250 in Newport 9/28 (STH), 1000 at Crown Pt. 9/30 (RDE,SMK) and 2000+ on Grand Isle 11/13 (TGM) are typical. More interesting are the reports of Herring Gull from locales away from LC, as in the 100+ moving by the Searsburg hawk watch 9/29 to 10/24 (NLM), 2 each in Winhall and S. Londonderry 10/24 (WJN), 35 on Danby Pd. 11/7 (CJF) and 2 on Lk. Bomoseen 11/16 (RWP), all of which are part of the total 400 reported this season. The only "white-winged" or "Arctic" gull reported was 1 Glaucous Gull at Blodgett's Beach 11/21 (SWM). As with Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull can be uncommon away from large bodies of water or rivers, and so 2 on the Black R. near Newport 10/7 (PFW,SAW) and 1 in Searsburg, Bennington Cty., 10/23 (NLM) are unusual; the 30 noted in Burlington 11/21 is low (SWM), but attests to the species' nesting success on several offshore islands in LC. Common Tern maintains its stable toehold as a breeder on small islands in LC, and observers noted 7 on Grand Isle 8/3 (DJH), a staging flock of 15 (incl. 2 juv.) at WRDP 8/8 with 6 still there 8/25 (EMA,RDB), up to 12 on the small islands off North Hero and Grand Isle 8/29 (JMN,MSL,EAH) and the high a group of 34 in MNWR 9/4 (RWP), for a total of 80 terns. Usually gone by early Aug., Black Tern was sighted twice: 2 or 3 from S. Slang, Ferrisburgh 8/6 (JRA), and 1 from WRDP 8/8 (SWM).

DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Rock Dove flocks were reported statewide by many observers. Of the total 405 Mourning Dove sightings from no less than 23 locations, the biggest flock size was 150 on 11/16 in Whiting (JAP). A single observer had the only sightings of any cuckoo this fall: 1 Black-billed Cuckoo on the grounds of Smith Haven, S. Londonderry 8/28, and 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Winhall 8/15 (WJN). A generally poor showing of owls, as reported to RVB, starts with Eastern Screech-Owl where 2 on 8/26 and 1 the next day in Brandon (SSW), plus 1 bird on Grand Isle 9/5 (DJH), were all that came in. Singles or pairs of Great-horned Owl were noted from Shelburne on 8/22 (GEH), Dorset 8/22, 10/27 (EFG), Pittsford 8/24 (SSW), Georgia 8/28 through 11/13 (EMA,RDB), Grand Isle 10/30 and Swanton 11/16 (DJH), Weybridge 11/22 (JAP) and lastly Pawlet 11/26 (GRB). The earliest Snowy Owl was spotted on a Shelburne rooftop 11/7 (TGC), with another in Enosburg Falls 11/15 (BD) and an imm. on the Burlington breakwater 11/26 (SWM) the only fall sightings. A fair total of 16 Barred Owl was reported, all from heavily wooded sites around the state, and with 3 in Reading 9/25 (FMH,EJH) the high count. There were no reports of either Long-eared or Short-eared Owls, but Northern Saw-whet Owl was located 4 times; 1 in West Glover 8/28 (REG), 1 in Dorset 9/25 (EFG), 1 adult in a South Burlington yard 10/28 (TGM,SWM) and the last in Proctor 10/31 (RWP). Common Nighthawk seemed to be moving by mid-Aug. as 7+ were seen near W.

Lebanon 8/14 (BRJ,EEJ), 25 in Springfield 8/26 (SSW), 20 more over Springfield 9/1 (WME) and 5 from Strafford 9/2 (SDF) as an indication that the main corridor for this species is the CR Valley. Only ten additional nighthawks were reported from the other seven observers.

Black-backed Woodpecker



SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Of the total 160+ Chimney Swift reported, a flock of 60 in Waterbury 8/2 (TSA) was high, but 18 over Manchester Ctr. 8/4 (BWP), 25 in Middlebury 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) and 15 from Saxton's River 8/15 (REG) are all notable. Many observers had good numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbird, mostly at feeders late Aug. into Sept. Some highs include 7 in Sheffield 8/4 (PFW,SAW), 5-7 in Georgia 8/6-15 (EMA,RDB), 10 in Reading 8/20 (FMH,EJH) and up to 6 on 9/9 in Vershire (KRH). The latest dates include 1 in Weybridge 9/23 (MBN) and singles in S. Londonderry 9/30 and 10/4 (WJN). An excellent total of 95 Belted Kingfisher probably attests to their conspicuous nature, but is still notable as were highs of 4 along Lewis Cr. 8/6 (JID,MCD), 5 in Newport late Aug. (STH), 5 in Ferrisburgh 10/1 (JAP) and the birds hanging on to the end of the period in Woodstock (CRP) and Montpelier (TSA). The small colony of Red-headed Woodpecker returned to Market Rd. in Bridport where a careful watch by JAP showed 3 nesting pairs that produced a total of 4 young; these birds were left undisturbed, but were still enjoyed by many birders from the road between 8/8 and 9/17 (JAP;m.obs.). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports were average, with 36 total from many scattered "inland" sites including 4 in Woodstock 8/3 (JMN), 4 (2 ad., 2 imm.) at Lincoln Gap 9/5 (JRA) and birds staying into early Oct. around Newport (STH). Nearly equal numbers of both Downy Woodpecker and Hairy Woodpecker did not include any exceptional high counts, and were primarily of resident birds near the observers' feeders. Far enough south to be of interest, 1 Black-backed Woodpecker was well-described from Winhall 9/12 (WJN), and 2 fem. were found in proper habitat at Yellow Bogs in Lewis 8/28 (FAP,EBP). Healthy numbers of Northern Flicker included moving flocks of 7-12 in Woodstock 8/27 (JMN), Reading 9/19 (FMH,EJH), Pawlet 9/22 (GRB) and 30 in the Searsburg area 9/28 (NLM), for a total 131 birds. Another very conspicuous and widely reported species is Pileated Woodpecker, with the total 62 possibly including some duplication by the 30+ observers, but still very impressive. Typically, no one reported more than 3 at one time.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

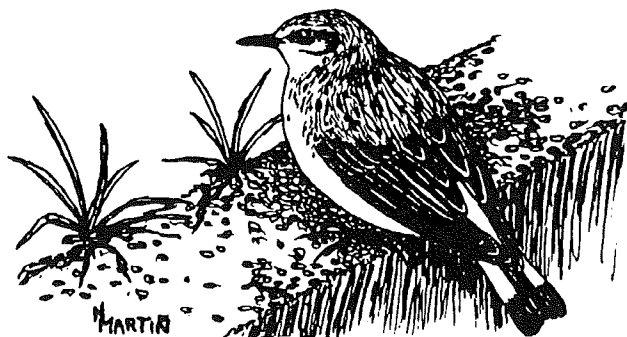
Olive-sided Flycatcher was noted only 4 times, perhaps involving only 3 individuals: 1 in Barton 8/1 (REG), 1 in Reading 8/17 and again 8/24 (same bird?) (FMH,EJH) and the last on the grounds of Smith Haven, S. Londonderry 9/5 (WJN). Of the 28 Eastern Wood-Pewee reports, most were of 1's or 2's except for 5 in Reading on 8/10 (FMH,EJH) and all were Aug./Sept. birds except 2 that stayed in Newport until 10/3 (STH). With the exception of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and any Empidonax sp. netted and thus in-hand to identify, most of this genus can be identified well only if birds call, field marks are carefully studied and/or they are in a certain specific habitat. Regardless, observers reported every member of the genus on the VT list except Acadian, and all but 1 sighting in Aug., as follows: 3 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Grand Isle (DJH) & S. Duxbury (FAP); 11 Alder Flycatcher including 9 total within Aug. in Dorset (EFG) and 2 in Sheffield/Barton (PFW,SAW); 4 Willow Flycatcher in all, 2 from Addison (1 prudently called "Traill's") (WGE,NLM,JF;JAP), 1 each from Reading (FMH,EJH) & Bridport (MBN); 5 Least Flycatcher observed, in Weybridge (WGE,NLM,JF), W. Glover (REG), Island Pond (SWM), and Reading 9/2 (FMH,EJH), plus an additional 11 banded at VINS this season (CCR). Kudos to a Woodstock observer (JMN) who called the 5 she saw Empidonax sp.! Less dicey are the 92 Eastern Phoebe reported, a good total that does not include any banded at VINS, but some highs of 12 in Cornwall 8/15 (MBN) and 6 in Bridport 9/27, where the latest report came from as well, 1 on 11/3 (JAP). Great Crested Flycatcher made a good showing, with 18 total from scattered locations and up to 2 lingering in Newport through 10/3 (STH). Another widely reported species, Eastern Kingbird numbers were up and centered in the CV, where highs of 28 in Addison/Panton and 11 more in Bridport or Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) added to 27 seen in Whiting/Bridport 8/21 (RWP) made up a total 154 this fall. The biggest Horned Lark flock was 200 in Addison 12/24 (SWM), where they are to be expected in large numbers, so that ~100 mixed with Snow Buntings in White River Jct. 11/2 (DHC) and 10 counted in Waterbury the same day (TSA) are of interest. As they are through breeding in Aug., Purple Martin begin to stage for migration and 10 found at Shelburne Bay 8/14 (SWM) is typical there, contributing to a total 23 seen in Aug. in the CV. Tree Swallow is often the last to leave, but large groups also gather in Aug. at DCWMA, where this year 240 on 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) would seem low by comparison, the 6 in Ferrisburgh 10/4 (JID,MCD) not very late, and the total 956 overall for the season exceptionally low. In contrast, Northern Rough-winged Swallow is seldom, if ever, seen in large flocks together, so that the 150+ reported from Grand Isle until 9/13 (DJH) must represent a cumulative total over time to be believed, and at that is unprecedented; confusion with the imm. Tree Swallow can be a tricky I/D problem at this season. A moderate total of 164 Bank Swallow includes highs of 80, 14 and 35 in Addison, Weybridge and Bridport 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF), 20+ seen on Grand Isle to 8/15 (DJH) and 1 in Panton 9/11 (SWM) for a late date. Perhaps as scarce and local as Martin, Cliff Swallow is seldom seen in good numbers. This season, 24 were reported by 4 parties from 5 locations, with highs of 10 in S. Londonderry 8/1 (WJN) and 8 in Addison 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) notable. Reported from many scattered locations, Barn Swallow numbers were OK as a total 870 indicates, and included flocks away from DCWMA like 250+ on Grand Isle 8/15 (DJH) and 100 in Mallett's Bay, Colchester 8/19 (EMA,RDB).

JAYS THROUGH WRENS

Three Gray Jay sightings include 2 at Moose Bog trail 8/15 (SWM) and 1 in the Yellow Bogs area of Lewis 8/28 (FAP,EBP). Blue Jay seemed to be everywhere and in good numbers, with the only noteworthy report of an albino bird on Poker Hill, Underhill on 8/10 (JG). American Crow appeared to move out in large numbers a bit earlier than last year, as flocks of 1000 on 10/15 and 920 on 10/19 were noted in Ferrisburgh (JID,MCD), with 250 in Middlebury also 10/15 (JAP). Groups of 6-8 Common Raven were frequently reported, but the 18 around Wheeler Mtn. 8/18 (PFW,SAW) is definitely the high for this very fascinating species that seems to be increasing in Vt. and throughout New England as well. Nearly all Black-capped Chickadee reports were of small flocks associated with feeders and present through the period, with the exception of 15 to 18 present in a Searsburg hawk watch area (NLM) and 15+ from the Moose Bog area of Ferdinand (SWM). Boreal Chickadee is rarely as well documented as this fall: the 11 sightings, as expected from Northeast Kingdom sites, include 2 from the Sheffield area between 9/3 and 11/22 (PFW,SAW) and 4 from a Hyde Park feeder 11/24 (NMM). Tufted Titmouse seems to be thriving, especially in somewhat protected environments near feeders, as the total of 68 indicates. Notable sightings include 1 seen in Searsburg at 2800' of elevation 9/30 and 10/10 (NLM,WGE) and another at a feeder in Sheffield both 11/6 and 11/8 (PFW,SAW), the first seen in that area. A precursor of what was to become a record invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatch throughout New England last winter, the fall count total of 94 included many reports of 3 and 4, with the 11 in Cavendish on 11/11 (TEJ) high. Conversely, the White-breasted Nuthatch total of 75 reflects a normal, stable resident population reported almost exclusively from feeders. The inconspicuous little Brown Creeper surfaced 16 times, all singles except for the pair found in Bartonsville through the period (TEJ). Carolina Wren is holding its own, with 6 reported from the following 5 locales: 1 on Quaker Village Rd., Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF), 1 in Guildhall 8/26 (BCW), 2 in a Brandon backyard 8/26 to 10/29 (SSW), 1 in Bartonsville 9/8 and 1 in Shelburne through the period (GEH). Way down from previous years, House Wren was reported on only 7 dates, but 3 of those from Dorset may involve duplicate sightings of the 3 individuals seen 8/16 (EFG), and the others were singles in Weybridge 8/2 (MBN), Middlebury 8/9 (JAP), Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP) and Grand Isle 9/18 (DJH), the late date. An interesting anecdote from Lincoln details the feeding of 2 y. Winter Wren by 3 ad. on 8/26 (JRA), and with 10 noted at upper elevations in Searsburg between 9/20 and 10/25 (NLM,WGE) plus about 14 more from various observers, a good total of 30 was accumulated. Often heard from proper habitat quite late, Marsh Wren was reported infrequently, with ~20 from South Slang, Ferrisburgh 8/6 (JRA) and 10 there 8/9 (JID,MCD) the only highs, and 2 in Addison 10/20 (CJF) the last.

KINGLETS THROUGH THRUSHES

A species that often fluctuates widely from year to year, Golden-crowned Kinglet was reported in good numbers this fall, the total 107 generally comprised of small groups except for the high of 15 seen in both Moose Bog 8/15 (SWM) and Woodstock 10/21 (JMN). Although Ruby-crowned Kinglet numbers were the same as above, this species is more likely to move out completely, hence the totals aren't comparable; high counts include 20+ in the High Pond area 8/16 (WME) and 24 noted in Searsburg over a month's time with 10 on 9/25 alone (NLM,WGE). Blue-gray Gnat-

Northern Wheatear

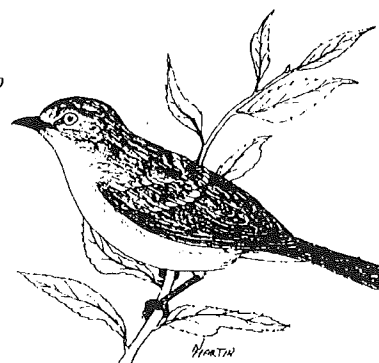
catcher is reported each fall now, but appears restricted to the CV or rarely in eastern Vt. near the CR. Only two reports were received, the first of 2 birds along Lewis Cr. 8/6 (JID,MCD) and the second of 1 or 2 in WRDP 8/8, 9/10 and 9/12 (SWM;FAP). For the second fall in a row, NORTHERN WHEATEAR was reported. This year, good fortune allowed birders to spot a bird along Market Rd.,Bridport when the observers had to stop for a bucket loader at work, and this obliging wheatear stayed in the area from at least 9/10 to 9/14 (BPG,MM,PG,JH) allowing many happy observers a good look. Eastern Bluebird numbers appear stable and promising, as over 200 were reported across the state, and flock sizes were as high as 11 in S. Londonderry mid-Sept. (WJN), 25 in Bondville/Winhall Sept. (NS) and 34 in Dorset 9/29 (EFG); several reports went into Nov. with the latest 4-8 in a Pawlet yard to 11/29 (GRB). The 15 Veery sightings were all Aug. except 1 in Woodstock 9/5 & 9/19 (JMN) and another in Brandon 9/12 (SSW), but were augmented by only a "few" banded at VINS this fall, which is below average (CCR). A single Gray-cheeked Thrush was reported from the grounds of Smith Haven, S. Londonderry both 9/30 & 10/1 (WJN); if not differentiated to race, this species will present future I/D problems when "Bicknell's" Thrush is split off from Gray-cheeked and observers try to sort out some subtle field marks. Above average numbers of Swainson's Thrush were banded at the Bragdon Nature Preserve (hereafter BNP), VINS, a total of 38 this fall (CCR), but only about 5 were seen outside of Woodstock including late birds in Georgia 10/13 (EMA,RDB) and Dorset 10/15 (EFG). Hermit Thrush totals were down from previous years to 44 observed and another 34 banded at BNP (CCR), with the only flock of any size the 5 in Tinmouth 10/2 (CJF). A species that leaves early, Wood Thrush was reported 11 times between 8/1 in W. Glover (REG) and 10/9 from Tinmouth (CJF), as well as a "normal" 5 banded at BNP (CCR). Normally very abundant, American Robin flocks were noted from all quarters through the period, but the only sizeable groups were 150 in Dorset 8/23 (EFG) and 200 in S. Londonderry 10/20 (WJN), and the 62 banded at VINS was down from a mean of 195 (CCR).

MIMICS THROUGH VIREOS

Gray Catbird is often abundant in coastal locations during migration, and was reported statewide in groups of 1 to 5 until 10/15; the total 73 included 8 in Dorset in Aug. (EFG), 5 at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 10/8 (WJN), 2 in New Haven 10/14 (TSA) and 1 in Reading the next day (FMH,EJH). The elusive Northern Mockingbird was not reported often, a total 15 reflecting the tenuous status of this southern species on the northern fringes of its range. Concern over the status of Brown Thrasher

continues, as only 13 were seen which is average for the last few years, but not healthy, and included a high of 3 in Bridport 9/11 (FAP,EBP) and 2 on a Randolph lawn as late as 10/22 (EWC,MCC). American Pipit was first noted 9/14, when an intriguing sighting of 6 on the summit of Camel's Hump (SDF) might lead one to speculate as to how long they had been there, and the total 323 included a flock of 100+ on Grand Isle 10/17 (DJH) with the last report of 2 in Addison 11/4 (JAP). The earliest of what was to become a major invasion of Bohemian Waxwing throughout New England was 1 in Searsburg 10/19 (NLM), 5 in Brandon 10/20 (SSW) then building to flocks of 100+ in Ferrisburgh (SWM,JEO) and Grand Isle (DJH) by mid-Nov., and through the period when over 720 total were reported. Nearly as impressive, numbers of Cedar Waxwing reached a total 513, with reports from Moose Bog (SWM), Manchester Ctr. (BWP) and Searsburg (NLM), and included a high of 150 in Brandon 11/11 (SSW). Northern Shrike was very scarce this season, the 4 reports comprised of 1 in S. Londonderry 10/18 (WJN), 1 on North Hero 10/24 (DJH), 1 in Orwell 10/26 (JAP) and 1 from Berkshire 11/4 (BD). Many reports of European Starling flocks numbering 1-5000 birds were received, especially later in the period when the species masses in farming areas and then contributes to insect control. A well-described WHITE-EYED VIREO showed up in Bartonsville 10/26 (TEJ) to provide the only report this fall. A total of 17 is average for Solitary Vireo, and includes a high of 5 in the Searsburg area 9/25 (NLM,WGE) with a late date 1 in Dorset 10/25 (EFG). Only 2 Yellow-throated Vireo were found, 1 in Woodstock 8/22 (JMN) and the other in Manchester Ctr. 9/12 (BWP). If they didn't vocalize so late into the fall, Warbling Vireo might be overlooked more often; this period observers reported 25 birds in all, with 10 in WRDP 8/8 and 3 there 9/12 (SWM) the high count and late date. The usual total of 6-7 Philadelphia Vireo (five years running) had 1 in Danby 8/19 (SSW) and the rest in Sept. with 2 at Shelburne Bay 9/6 (GEH) the high. Half of the total 70 Red-eyed Vireo were banded at BNP, which is back to 1986-1989 levels (CCR), and the remainder were all 1-3 at a time from several areas with the last reports both 10/3: 2 in Newport (STH) and 1 in Dorset (EFG).

White-eyed Vireo



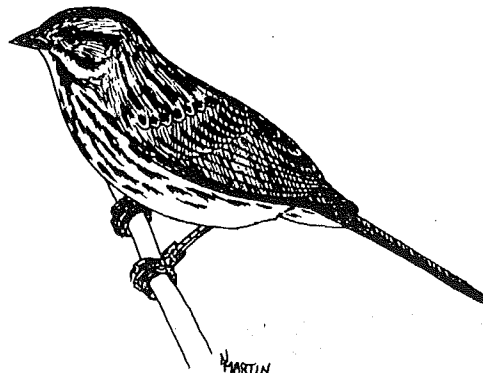
WOOD WARBLERS

Of interest were the 2 Blue-winged Warbler reports this fall, 1 on the Turnpike Rd., Norwich 8/18 (CCR) and another at Smith Haven, S. Londonderry 9/20 (WJN). Observers reported an average 21 Tennessee Warbler with 1 in Searsburg 10/11 (NLM) the latest, but the additional 8 netted at BNP were down from the mean banded there from 1986 to 1992 (CCR). Rare even in the fall, Orange-crowned Warbler was reported twice, each one described well; 1 in S. Duxbury 9/8 (FAP) and the other in Searsburg 9/30 (NLM). The total for Nashville Warbler of 36 was average and did not include any banded at BNP, but 5 in S.

Duxbury 9/8 (FAP) and 4 in Searsburg 9/25 (NLM,WGE) were highs and 1 in Bridport 10/14 (JAP) was the late report. Good numbers of Northern Parula were reported, a total of 11 which included 4 in Winhall between 9/11 and 9/24 (WJN) but none from the VINS banding station. Repeating last year, 10 Yellow Warbler were found in Colchester 8/8 (SWM), and were nearly half the total 23 reported, with 1 in Lincoln 9/9 (JRA) and another in Dorset 9/18 (EFG) the only Sept. birds. The 3+ Chestnut-sided Warbler seen in the Moose Bog/Island Pond area 8/15 (SWM) were the farthest north reports, with 4 in Dorset in Aug. (EFG) and 4 more in Duxbury 9/8 (FAP) as highs, and late. A good total of 82 Magnolia Warbler, with 34 banded at BNP higher than the 1986 to 1992 mean (CCR), also included a high of 15 from Reading 9/11 (FMH,EJH) and 2 quite late in Woodstock 10/12 (CRP). Cape May Warbler passed through nearly unnoticed as only 2 sightings were submitted: 1 on Quaker Village Rd., Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) and another in S. Londonderry 9/21 (WJN). An average 26 Black-throated Blue Warbler reports included a high count of 5 in the Little Rock Pd. area 9/2 (SSW) and 1 a bit late in Ferrisburgh 10/6 (JID,MCD). Very low numbers of Yellow-rumped Warbler were reported statewide in comparison with previous years as the 27 handled at BNP were way down for the second year (CCR), and a total 190 observed elsewhere was about half of past years, with high counts of 15 in Reading 8/15 (FMH,EJH) and 20 in Ferrisburgh 10/6 (JID,MCD). A meager Black-throated Green Warbler count, 53 in all, had highs of 10 in S. Duxbury 9/6 (FAP) and 6 from Danby 9/26 (CJF), but included no figures from banding sites. A total of 19 for Blackburnian Warbler was about a third of normal numbers for fall, and included just 6 for a high, in S. Duxbury 9/6 to 9/8 (FAP), but again no reports from banders. One Pine Warbler in Manchester Ctr. 9/7 (BWP), another in Lincoln 9/16 (JRA) and the third from Ripton 9/22 (MBN) are the only reports received. An alarmingly low total of 10 for Palm Warbler once again included zero figures from banders, and a meager 5 in Winhall/S. Londonderry over a month's time (WJN). If there was duplication in the 10 Bay-breasted Warbler sightings from Ward Hill, S. Duxbury 9/6 and 9/8 (FAP), then perhaps only 10 were seen in all, and included one late bird in Ferrisburgh 9/25 (JID,MCD). Another species that appears to be way down in numbers, Blackpoll Warbler was seen only 13 times with the high of 3 as usual from Ward Hill in S. Duxbury 8/29 (FAP). Black-and-white Warbler numbers were about average; the total 26 comprised of 1's to 3's seen between 8/1 in Montpelier (TSA) and W. Glover (REG), and as late as 10/3 in Plainfield (RDE,SMK). Somewhat low, 49 American Redstart observations were augmented by 6 banded at BNP (CCR), and included 6 at WRDP 8/8 (SWM) for the high with 1 in Woodstock 9/16 (JMN) the latest report. As it becomes inconspicuous by late summer, Ovenbird seems under-reported with only 4 sightings, but the "normal number" of 19 banded at BNP (CCR) attests to its abundance in our forests. The above species, with Northern Waterthrush which went unreported this season, and Louisiana Waterthrush are all apt to depart VT early, and so the 1 Louisiana found the first week of Aug. in Bartonsville (TEJ) is of interest. With no banding totals reported for Mourning Warbler, the 3 sightings, 1 S. Duxbury 8/16 (FAP), 1 Reading 8/27 (FMH,EJH) and 1 Lincoln 9/9 (JRA) may be a record low for fall. Much more conspicuous, Common Yellowthroat was sighted 47 times by numerous people, but with only 4 the high in Island Pond 8/15 (SWM) and the 62 banded at BNP (CCR) representing a continued decline. Wilson's Warbler was seen by 6 observers, the total 16 including an excellent high of 6 at Reading 9/3 (FMH,EJH) and 1 Oct. bird on the 9th in Woodstock (JMN). An average 15-19 Canada Warbler reports included possible duplication of 4 seen in

Reading both 8/7 and 8/10 (FMH,EJH) as highs and the latest 1 at WRDP 9/10 (FAP).

Song Sparrow

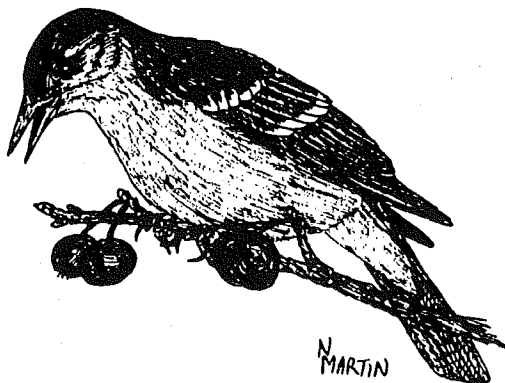


TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

This fall Scarlet Tanager was observed 22 times, mostly in pairs, but with a high of 6 in Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) and 1 late sighting in Woodstock 9/23 (JMN) where a way below average 12 additional birds were banded at BNP (CCR). Most of the 95 Northern Cardinal reports were of pairs, and presumably feeder birds for the whole period; interesting exceptions would be the single fem. in a Searsburg cemetery at 2500' elevation 10/25 (NLM) and the 5 in the wilds of Button Bay State Park 11/26 (SSW). Good numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeak were reported, the total of 68 included highs of 6 each in Dorset 8/1 (EFG) and Brandon 8/26 (SSW), with the late report 1 in Ripton 9/22 (MBN). Of 11 Indigo Bunting reports, fully half were the 5 in Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) and a fem. at a feeder in Wallingford 9/17 (SJD) was late. Rufous-sided Towhee numbers are still very low, as the 12 reported do not include any from banders and are all 1's or 2's, but included one notable late sighting from a clearcut at 2800' in Searsburg 10/14 (NLM). A record high 111 American Tree Sparrow were handled at BNP this fall (CCR), and the earliest of 255 more observed were 3 on Grand Isle 10/10 (DJH), with the high a flock of 58 in Bridport 10/28 (JAP). Good Chipping Sparrow flocks were noted in Dorset 9/2-3 (EFG) and Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 10/8 (WJN) with up to 30 birds counted, but leading to a meager fall total of 147 with the 1 in Brownsville 11/4 (BMH) not exceptionally late. All Field Sparrow records were in Oct. except 2 in Manchester Ctr. 8/22 (BWP), and the total of 21 included highs of only 3 in both Barnard 10/11 (JNF) and Dorset 10/15 (EFG). Vesper Sparrow is local in summer, and unpredictable in fall, so that 10-12 in a Strafford hayfield 9/16 (SDF) is very exciting and clearly the high of the 26 found, although a bird seen at SWMA on 11/6 (SWM) is remarkably late. A total of 118 is average for Savannah Sparrow, but included a good count of 50 in Addison 9/22 and the late report of 2 in Bridport 10/19 (JAP). In a repeat of several past falls, the only report of Grasshopper Sparrow comes from Winhall Hollow, where 1 ad. was recorded 10/11 (WJN). Scattered sightings of Fox Sparrow came in from across the state, the earliest being 1 in Winhall 9/21 (WJN) with 3 in Randolph 10/23-25 (EWC,MCC) the high, all leading to a total of 24 for the period. The 180 Song Sparrow sightings were a mere fraction of previous totals, and even 64 banded at BNP were so low as to be a record (CCR); however, many observers reported them in groups, up to 20 in Ferrisburgh (JID,MCD), 25 in Newport (STH) and 27 in Bridport (JAP), even into late Nov. in Brandon (SSW).

Lincoln's Sparrow can be sporadic, but 10 sightings is very low, as are the 19 banded at BNP (CCR), and include 2 at Shelburne Bay 9/6 (GEH) as a high count! More numerous, but still low, Swamp Sparrow was recorded 66 times plus 12 more banded at VINS (CCR), with an excellent count of 22 in Tinmouth Channel 9/26 (CJF) and 3 at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 10/26 (TEJ) as the high and late reports. Some years very high numbers of White-throated Sparrow pass through, but this season the 308 sightings are low in comparison, as are the 169 banded at BNP (CCR), but still include flocks of 26 in Searsburg 9/30 (NLM), 30 in Tinmouth 10/2 (CJF) and 25 in Bridport 10/10 (SWM). In contrast, numbers for White-crowned Sparrow were above average, the total 191 sightings exclusive of any banding data but comprised of an early 12 at a Wallingford feeder 9/7 (SJD), with highs of 27-30 in Bridport on 10/17 (JMN,EFG) and 10/19 (JAP). Most numerous was the Dark-eyed Junco at a total 857, all sightings with no banding totals again, and flocks of 100+ in both Reading 10/20 (FMH,EJH) and Westminster West 10/21 (AMD). Of interest was a bird in S. Londonderry on 10/26 of the "Oregon" race (WJN). Of the 6 Lapland Longspur seen in the period, a pair in a Searsburg cemetery 10/23-25 were early (NLM,WGE), with 3 in a White River Junction cornfield 11/2 (DHC) and 1 more in Bridport 11/8 (JAP) all that were reported. The first of many Snow Bunting flocks arrived 10/18 in Charlotte (JID,MCD) with an average size of 150, but ranging up to 500 in Bridport 11/3 (FAP) and leading to a total of at least 1800 for the period.

Northern Oriole



BLACKBIRDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

Bobolink, which seemed to be everywhere in early summer, was almost missed this fall as only 23 were counted, all in the CV between 8/4 and 8/11 with a high of 11 in Weybridge (WGE,NLM,JF). Well known for massing in flocks numbering in the millions in the winter down South, Red-winged Blackbird also stages in impressive flocks in places like DCWMA in fall; however, nothing like the estimated 50-100,000 there 10/27 (SWM,TGM) had been reported before this season. With these numbers, one can hope for a Brewers or Yellow-headed, but the Red-wings cleared out fairly quickly except for 1 seen at DCWMA as late as 11/22 (MBN). The total 55 for Eastern Meadowlark is normal, and includes a high of 13 in Shoreham 10/11 (RWP), a late report of 1 in Brandon 11/9 (SSW) but a negative note from the Pawlet area that no meadowlarks were seen all season (GRB). Down from previous years, the 53 Rusty Blackbird sightings included flocks of 6 at McCuen's Slang 10/

6 and 10 there 10/27 (JAP) as highs, with a single in Dorset 11/4 (EFG) the late report. Common Grackle can also flock up in fall in good numbers, so that the 800 in Whiting 11/11 (JAP) could be expected, and contributed as the high to a total 2375 seen in the period, with feeder birds as late as 11/26 in Wallingford (SJD) and 11/30 in both Sheffield (PFW,SAW) and Westminster West (AMD). Can it be that the mere 311 Brown-headed Cowbird sighted represent a trend? This low number is encouraging, but also includes a report of 1 juv. begging food from a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Quechee 8/17 (SSW), and a pure flock of 200 in Addison 11/13 as a high (SWM). With the inclusion of only 3 birds banded at VINS this fall ("very low", CCR), the total for Northern Oriole is respectable at 43 and includes 10 seen in Weybridge 8/8 (WGE,NLM,JF) and 5-6 imm. feeding with warblers in Lincoln on 8/9 (JRA), with 1 in Wallingford 10/30 (SJD) the late sighting. The earliest of a total 172 Pine Grosbeak reported came on 11/3 with 3 calling in Norwich (CCR) and continued all period with 20 in a Woodstock crabapple tree 11/29 (LHR) and 10-25 all month in W. Topsham (NO,SO) the highs, with an exciting footnote that the 4 banded at BNP were the first for that station (CCR). In contrast, Purple Finch was "virtually absent from VINS banding" (CCR), so the 179 scattered observations were from forested areas or feeders, with 19 or 20 in both Sheffield 9/5 (PFW,SAW) and Newport until 10/3 (STH) the big flocks. Even bigger House Finch flocks were noted, totalling 361 birds and another 40 banded at BNP ("way down, but no loss" CCR), but with the prize going to the 60 in Bridport 11/17 (JAP). In general, crossbills did not make it south of the boreal zone except for 1 fem. Red Crossbill seen on Smith Haven grounds in S. Londonderry 9/21 (WJN) and 2 White-winged Crossbill reports: 1 from Cavendish mid-Aug. (TEJ) and the other in Brandon 11/2 (SSW). By the end of Oct. we knew: "they're here!", as the vanguard of a major Common Redpoll invasion appeared first in Newport 10/24 (REG), then in Searsburg (NLM), Bridport (JAP), Ripton (WBK), North Pomfret (KRT) and the Mountain School in Vershire (DAM) by 10/31. By mid-Nov. they were everywhere, massing in flocks of 500 (SWM) and even 800-1000 (JEO) in CV weed fields, and then dispersing in smaller groups to feeders throughout the state as winter snows deepened and natural food supplies diminished. Allowing for some duplication of the flocks reported in the Bridport/Addison/Panton area, between 3000 and 4000 birds may have been present in VT in the period and into winter season. With this many commons, it was to be expected that HOARY REDPOLL could be present in small numbers, as the 4 reports indicated. As these two species remain equivocal as to whether Hoary and Common are truly separable or just forms, and present very difficult I/D problems in the field, it was felt best to accept the 4 sightings as "hypothetical" despite excellent documentation: 2 in Addison 11/19 (JAP,FAP et al.), 1+ in Panton 11/20 (SWM) and 1 there 11/22 (TGM). In fact, a few more reports were received through the winter season, but no photos or specimens were presented as definitive evidence. Pine Siskin was sporadic but well reported, as the total of 185 included 80 seen in Searsburg 10/16 (NLM,WGE) as a high count, but the species was "virtually absent at the VINS banding station" this fall (CCR). Also reported in healthy numbers, American Goldfinch was widespread; the total of 522 was comprised of highs of 55 in Dorset 8/8 (EFG), 60 in Bridport 10/10 (SWM) and 27 in Springfield 11/14 (WME). Also widespread, a good total of 839 Evening Grosbeak was reported mainly in flocks of around 20-30 except for the 350+ birds seen in Searsburg 10/24 (NLM) as an outstanding high count. House Sparrow was reported in moderate numbers by the few observers who bothered, as the total 315 is average for RVB in fall.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT

BNP Bragdon Nature Preserve
 CV Champlain Valley
 CR Connecticut River
 DCWMA Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area
 ECWMA East Creek Wildlife Management Area
 LC Lake Champlain
 MNWR Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge
 SWMA Sandbar Wildlife Management Area
 VHW Vermont Hawk Watch
 VINS Vermont Institute of Natural Science
 WRDP Winooski River Delta Park

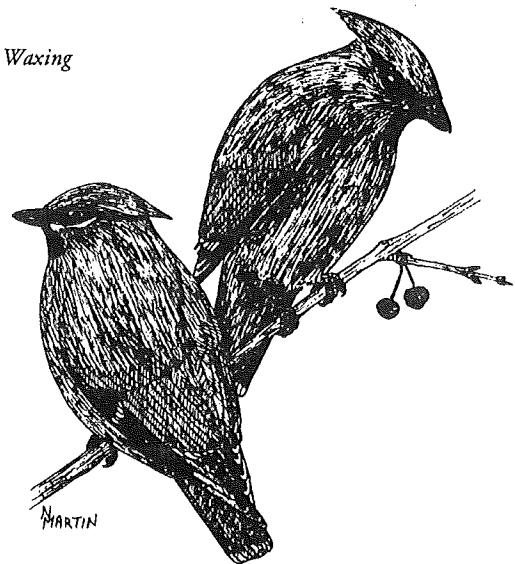
ad. adult
 Cr. Creek
 Ctr. Center
 imm. immature
 m. male
 fem. female
 m.ob. many observers
 Mt. Mountain
 Pt. Point
 Pd. Pond
 Rd. Road
 S. South

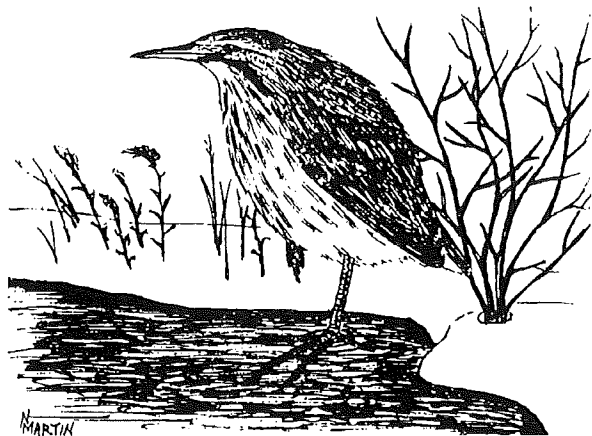
Corrections

Fall 1992 – The report of 25 Ruby-crowned Kinglets from Reading (FMH, EJH) should read 9/26, 27, not 10/26, 27.

Summer 1993 – All reports of Brown Thrasher from Dorset (EFG) were printed in error.

Bohemian Waxing



American Bittern

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