



Records of Vermont Birds

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

FALL MIGRATION 1994

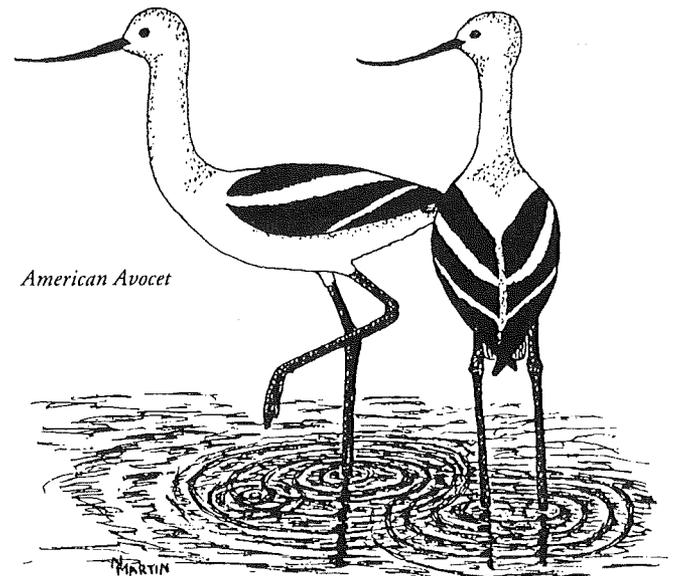
1 August to 30 November

George E. (Terry) Hall and Judith Peterson, Seasonal Editors

The Fall season of 1994 was generally cool and somewhat drier than normal region-wide, with the migration in Vermont highlighted by a spectacular shorebird buildup at the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA) in Addison and Panton. This report combines the efforts of two editors who compiled separate sections from the input of the many observers who faithfully send in their observations to *Records of Vermont Birds* (hereafter *RVB*). We thank all contributors, including hawkwatchers, for your input has resulted in data on an impressive 240 species including possibly the most impressive array of rarities ever.

After a much warmer early summer, August proved a bit cooler and with somewhat drier conditions than normal despite several very severe systems that affected southern regions. Vermont saw very little of the severe wind and heavy rains from hurricane Beryl for instance, and in fact missed most of the worst weather. These benign conditions may have helped enhance the effect of the third major "drawdown" of impoundments at DCWMA, in this case the southern end of the Brilyea access area. Designed to control vegetation and habitat for waterfowl and other birds, these measures result in mudflats which draw in shorebird species which normally would keep flying over the region, and predator species which hang around for the many easy meals. Among the many specialties found in August were 2 well-documented AMERICAN AVOCET, a third state record, Baird's Sandpiper, several possible WESTERN SANDPIPER, a 2nd state record CURLEW SANDPIPER, BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER, Red-necked Phalarope and numerous Bald Eagle, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. Also exciting was the 2nd record for RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD, seen at a feeder, and a LARK SPARROW in South Londonderry.

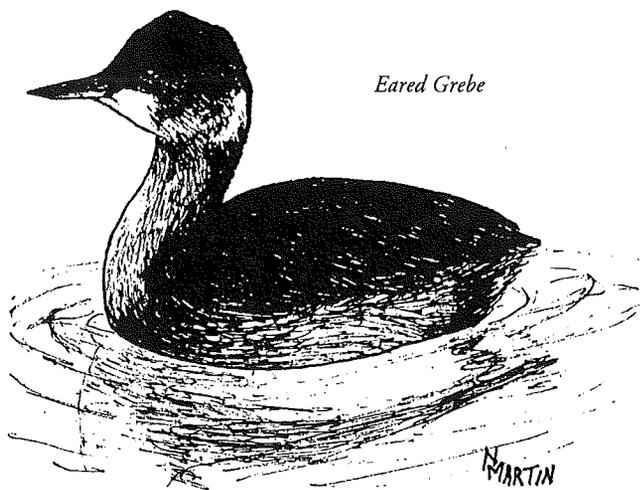
September remained a bit cooler than normal, but rainfall picked up a bit, causing ground water levels and streamflow to be above average in most of Vermont. Several coastal storms or nor'easters had little effect on Vermont, as in August, so conditions at DCWMA remained stable, and migration in general was normal throughout the state, with some considerable additional excitement. This month's rarities included the cooperative EARED GREBE that delighted many birders in Orwell, the first of 2 GOLDEN EAGLE over a hawkwatch site, a FORSTER'S TERN in Swanton, THREE-TOED WOODPECKER in Thetford, a NORTHERN WHEATEAR photographed in Lincoln, CONNECTICUT WARBLER banded at VINS



and a WORM-EATING WARBLER spotted in Stowe!

Characterized as "tranquil", October was also very dry with normal temperatures. There were no storms, but the first cold snap of the season came early and signalled the end of the effective growing season. Migration continued, with waterfowl moving normally, shorebirds departing and passerine numbers tapering off as well. Highlights were fewer, but still exciting, as ROSS' GOOSE appeared at DCWMA, another GOLDEN EAGLE was spotted, and a possible LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL eluded efforts to confirm. The star of this month was the first confirmed SAY'S PHOEBE (one of two that appeared) that ended up spending the winter in Brandon.

November was typical in that the cold deepened by the end of the month, but there was no snow to speak of until the very end, and that did not stay long. Generally mild, but breezy, this last month of the fall season saw little additional bird activity. The only notable species were a Red-throated Loon, well-documented movements of Little Gull, a most unusual 2nd SAY'S PHOEBE in Dorset and YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER at a Woodstock feeder.



Eared Grebe

LOONS, GREBES AND HERONS

Only two reports of Red-throated Loon were received, perhaps involving the same bird on Lake Champlain (hereafter LC) in Addison, 1 there 11/9 and again 11/13 (JAP). Common Loon numbers were healthy with birds reported throughout the period, mostly on LC. Early were 1 ad. and 2 imm. in Marshfield 8/7 (TSA), 1 calling on Spectacle Pond, Brighton 8/11 (TGM) and 22 on Maquam Bay 8/19 (RBL). Highs on LC were 93 near Grand Isle 9/24 (RBL) and 77 near Savage I. 11/20 (TGM). Four ad. and 1 imm. in Peacham 9/15 (JNF) were noteworthy. At least 35 Pied-billed Grebe were reported, including highs of 8 in South Bay, Newport 9/24 (PFW,SAW), 3 off Winooski River Delta Park (hereafter WRDP) Colchester 9/25 (SWM) and up to 4 at East Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter ECWMA) Orwell on 9/26 (JAP). The earliest of over 200 Horned Grebe reported were 2 in Potash Bay, Addison 10/12 (MBN), with highs on LC of 43 in Addison 10/26 (JAP), 35+ off Charlotte 11/20 (SWM) and 22 in North Hero (DJH). Away from LC, 2 birds on Danby Pond 10/23 (CJF) are of interest. At least 35 individuals of the less common Red-necked Grebe were noted, all on LC, the earliest 2 off Grand Isle 10/12, a high there of 16 on 11/5 (DJH) and the late report of 1 in Addison 11/28 (JAP). A very well-described juv. EARED GREBE pleased many birders at ECWMA for a week or more in late Sept. (EJ et al.). Double-crested Cormorant continued to inundate LC as over 1000 were noted off Grand Isle and South Hero 8/30 (RBL,FAP), and persisted off North Hero as late as 11/20 (TGM). Away from LC 3 in Essex Junction 8/11, 1 at Allen Brothers' Marsh (hereafter ABM), Westminster 8/27 & 29 (WJN;REG) and 2 on L. Fairlee 9/20 (KRH) were of note. Nine observers reported 10 American Bittern including a high of 2 at DCWMA, Addison 8/14 (TSA) and the late report of 1 on Grand Isle 9/11 (DJH). Least Bittern continued to be elusive, with 2 reports: 1 West Rutland Marsh (hereafter WRM) 8/2 (JMN) and another in Springfield 8/27 (WJN). Great Blue Heron was widely reported, with notable highs of 49 in the Addison area 8/16 (REG) and 30 at the Brilyea access of DCWMA 8/18 (SWM). Associated with the drawdown of the Brilyea area of DCWMA, numbers of Great Egret were seen with at least 3 there on 8/2 (TGM) and probably more in total through Sept. One at Bristol Pond 10/3 (MCD,JID) and another at South Slang, Ferrisburgh 10/4 (FAP) were the latest seen. Oddly, only 1 Snowy Egret was reported to RVB, a bird in Whitney Marsh, Addison on the very late date of 10/15 (CJF). Possibly as a result of increased nesting of Double-crested Cormorant on Young I., Cattle Egret numbers sharply declined in the Grand Isle

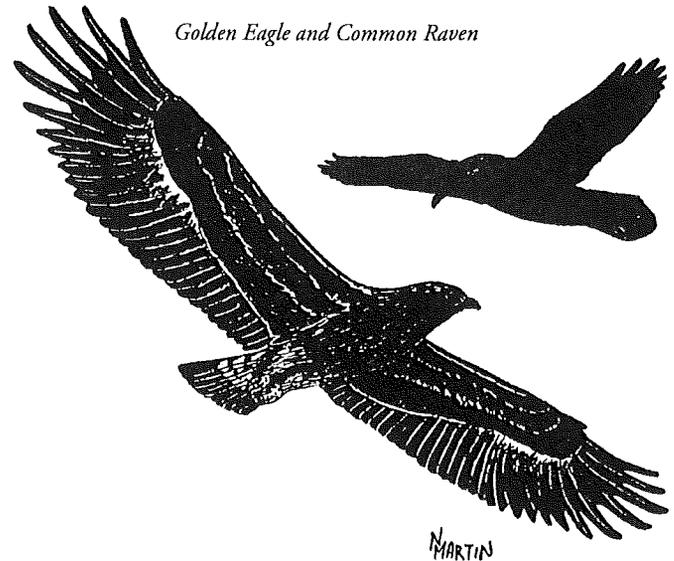
area as only 1 was seen there between 8/1 and 8/14 (DJH), but inexplicably a flock of 33 to over 50 spent much of the late summer and fall feeding in farm pastures with dairy cattle along Lake Rd. in Charlotte (GEH;TGM;SWM), and 1 late bird was seen near the Alburg bridge 11/6 (SWM;FAP). A total 16 Green Heron were observed in various locations, with 2 imm. in DCWMA 8/23 and a high of 3 at Shelburne Bay 8/24 (SWM;TGM), with the latest sighting of 1 in Ferrisburgh 10/25 (MCD,JID). Reports of Black-crowned Night-Heron were confined exclusively to Addison and the DCWMA, and those only in Aug. and Sept. A good high of 15 was seen at the Brilyea access 8/18 (SWM), with 5 remaining there on 9/3 (TGM).

WATERFOWL

The Mute Swan continued to encroach on Vermont with 1 seen in Herrick's Cove, Rockingham (hereafter HC) from 9/4 to 11/5 (WJN;FAP;PFW,SAW), a pr. in the Poultney/Fair Haven area 10/23 (HD) and a group of 4 ad. and 2 imm. on Maquam Bay 11/20 through 12/4 (TGM,RBL). The Snow Goose put on another spectacular display at DCWMA beginning in Sept. with early reports of up to 35 birds 9/3 and 9/4 (m.ob.), then 350 on 9/24 (SWM) followed by a steady buildup in Oct. with 2500 on 10/5 (MBN) and 8000 on 10/19 and 10/20 (JAP). Maxima were reached in Nov. with estimates of 13,000 on 11/4 (TGM) and 15,000 on 11/6 (MBN), followed by declines to 800 11/12 (TSA) and 250 11/21 (JAP). Elsewhere, reports included 200 in Reading 11/11 (FMH,EJH), 250 flyovers in Tinmouth 11/12 (CJF), an impressive 8000 in Alburg 11/16 (FAP) down to 1500 there 11/20 (TGM,RBL) and the latest a bird in a Weybridge snow squall 11/30 (MBN). A well-described ROSS' GOOSE was among Snows at the DCWMA viewing area 10/19 (JAP), possibly the same bird seen off Gage Rd. there 10/22 (GEH,SWM). Numerous reports of Canada Goose came from scattered locations, although observers felt numbers were down, possibly reflecting declines in breeding success in Canada leading to closed hunting of this species in the Northeast. A high count of 2700 was made by the Vt. Fish and Wildlife Champlain Valley Waterfowl Survey (hereafter CVWS) in the DCWMA 10/6, whereas 2 days earlier geese were noted moving throughout the state: 355 at L. Memphremagog (STH), 170 over Middlebury (JRA), 1580 in 26 flocks over Tinmouth (CJF), 500 in Reading (FMH,EJH), about 2600 in West Bolton (MC) and "skein after skein all day" in Woodstock (JMN). About 425 birds remained in Shelburne Bay until the end of the season (TGM). Wood Duck was well-reported, with a high of 849 in the Champlain Valley (hereafter CV) 10/6, 300 alone at Sandbar Wildlife Management Area (hereafter SWMA) on the (CVWS). Other notable sightings were 29 on L. Memphremagog 10/4 (STH) and 40 at Berlin Pond 10/22 (TSA). Green-winged Teal was average this fall as a high of 250 was seen at DCWMA 9/29 (SWM), the census recorded 731 in the CV 10/6 (CVWS) and 100 were at Whitney Creek, Addison 10/15 (CJF). Widely reported though in small numbers, American Black Duck observations included 27 in Orange 8/12 (TSA), 40 in a flooded field in Coventry 8/26 (PFW,SAW), 60 at DCWMA 8/29 (JAP), 18 on the Mettowee R. 11/2 (GRB), 25 on Little Otter Creek 11/26 (CJF) and 210 on Maquam Bay 11/27 (TGM). The CVWS aerial census recorded 2737 birds 10/6 including 800 near SWMA and 1000 in the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR). Good numbers of Mallard were reported, with non-aerial tallies of 200 in Burlington 8/14 (SWM), 54 at Berlin Pond 11/11 (TSA), 75 at Otter Creek, Rutland 11/26 (CJF) and 210 on Maquam Bay 11/27 (TGM), but the CVWS counted about

4336 birds 10/6 with 1800 in MNWR alone. A total of 57 Northern Pintail included the high of 20 at the Brilyea access of DCWMA 9/15 (SWM), 12 (4 f. 8 m.) at ECWMA, Orwell 10/23 (RWP) and a late report of 1 on Maquam Bay 11/27 (TGM). Accurate totals for Blue-winged Teal were difficult to get due to many duplicate reports from DCWMA, but at least 60 were there 9/15 and 9/16 (SWM;TGM) for the high, and reports elsewhere included 2 in Coventry 8/12 (REG), 4 in Springweather Management Area 8/27 (WJN), 16 in Little Otter Creek, Ferrisburgh 10/6 (CVWS) and 3 in HC 9/10 (WJN). Northern Shoveler was scarce, with 2-3 at the Brilyea area of DCWMA between 9/16 and 9/24 (m. ob.), a pr. at SWMA 10/14 (FAP) and the late bird at DCWMA 11/3 (SSW). Of the total 268 Gadwall reported, most were by aerial census on 10/6 with 150 in St. Albans Bay/Stevens Brook and 100 at MNWR (CVWS), but other notable sightings included 10 in the same brood on Grand Isle 8/6 (DJH), 2 in Milton 9/5 (NLM,WGE), 3 at DCWMA 10/1 (TSA) and 1 at HC 10/22 (WJN). Only a few reports of American Wigeon were received by RVB, but notable was the count of 516 in the CV 10/6, 500 of which were at MNWR (CVWS), and the 3 present in Shelburne Bay from 10/4 through the end of the period (m. ob.). Ring-necked Duck gathers in MNWR in high numbers in fall, as reflected by the 10,000 there 10/6 (CVWS), with only another 1000 or so anywhere else in the CV. An individual high of 350 was seen at SWMA on 10/14 (FAP). Reports of Greater Scaup were few, and included a high of 15 at the Champlain Bridge, Addison 10/19 (SWM), but the 25 scaup sp. on Maquam Bay 10/6 (CVWS) and 60-65 on South Bay, Newport 11/20 (PFW,SAW) probably refer to this species. A handful of the less common Lesser Scaup was reported by 4 observers and included 6 at Bridport 11/9 (JAP). Ten reports of Oldsquaw totalled an excellent 27 birds, and started with an early 1 on Shelburne Bay 10/30 (EB), then 8 in Bridport 11/2 (MBN), 1 on Lake Parker, West Glover 11/3 (REG), another on Caspian Lake, Greensboro 11/10 (JW) and a high of 12 off Grand Isle 11/12 (RBL,GEH). Excellent counts of Black Scoter were made on "interior" ponds this season, including 175 on Tinmouth Pond, 64 on Danby Pond (CJF) and 42 on Shelburne Pond (FAP), all on 10/14! Scattered reports of Surf Scoter totalled 40-60 birds, most notable of which were 6 at Shelburne Town Beach 10/4 (CJF) and 25 at the Champlain Bridge in Addison 10/9 (SWM). Usually more common on LC, only 170 White-winged Scoter were noted but included 15 off Charlotte Town Beach 10/23 (SWM), 112 at Bridport 11/2 (MBN) and 20 in North Hero 11/20 (RBL,TGM). Of the total 873 Common Goldeneye reported, the earliest were 2 on Grand Isle 8/8 (DJH) with highs of 550 in Alburg (RBL,TGM) and 60+ off Burlington/Charlotte 11/20 (SWM). Up to 2 m. Barrow's Goldeneye returned to the Burlington waterfront by 11/9 in the company of commons, probably the same individuals which for several years had remained in the harbor through the winter (m. ob.). Bufflehead reports were down with a total count of 110, a high being the 70 at Maquam Bay 11/20 (RBL,TGM) with ~15 off Grand Isle 11/1 (DJH) and 15 on Shelburne Bay 11/20 (SWM). A local breeder, Hooded Merganser was tallied in good numbers throughout the period; maxima were 24 in St. Albans Bay 10/14 (FAP), 29 in Swanton 11/6 (TGM;SWM), 40 in North Hero 11/19 (SWM) and 30-40 on L. Memphremagog 11/20 that were "a bit difficult to count as a speedboat scattered all the waterbirds on purpose" (PFW,SAW). Healthy numbers of Common Merganser were also reported, with broods in Aug. comprised of 14 (2 f. w/6 y. each) on the Winooski R., Montpelier 8/6 (TSA) and 19 (1 f. w/18 y.!) at WRDP 9/5 (SWM). High counts included 95 at Grand Isle 11/13 (DJH), 100 at the Champlain Bridge 11/20 (MBN) and 150 off Bridport 11/28 (JAP). There were 10 reports of Red-breasted Merganser, all from LC.

including 7 off Charlotte Town Beach 10/23 (SWM), 25 at Bridport 11/3 (JAP), 4 on Grand Isle 11/5-6 (DJH) and 7 at the Champlain Bridge 11/25 (JMN). No reports of Ruddy Duck were submitted this fall.



VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

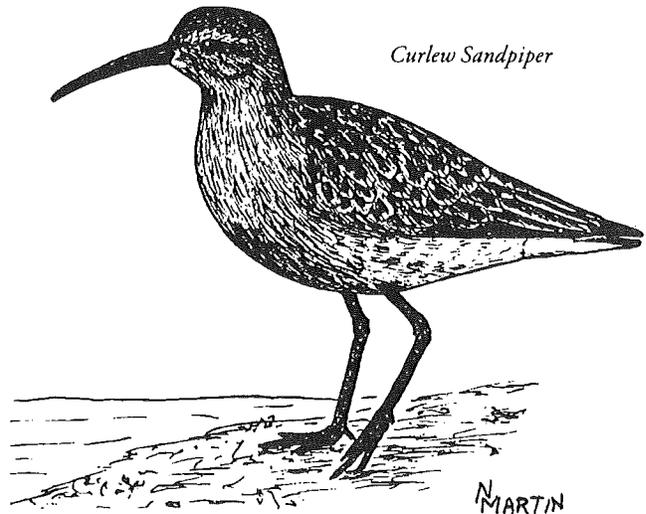
Turkey Vulture numbers remained healthy, with a total 246 noted statewide, including 174 from various Vermont hawkwatch sites (hereafter VHW) and a single high of 26 in Bristol 9/19 (JRA); the latest was 1 in Colchester 11/6 (SWM). Down from last year, Osprey is still widespread as the 43 observed included a high of 5 near Lewis Creek 8/16 (MCD,JID), a late one in North Hero 11/16 (FAP) plus an additional 47 from VHW sites for a total 90 in all. Bald Eagle reports came in three categories: the 8 recorded between 9/5 and 10/4 from hawkwatch sites (VHW), the ones seen by multiple observers in the DCWMA area during the shorebird vigils between 8/7 and 9/25 which boil down to at least 3 imm. and 2 ad., and the several scattered reports from other areas in the state. Some of these include 1 imm. near the Connecticut River (hereafter CR) at White River Junction 8/7 (SDF), 1 at Lake Arrowhead, Milton 8/18 (MZ), 1 ad. plus 1 imm. near Vernon Dam 8/20 (KPM), singles in Derby 9/1 and 9/3 (STH), Norwich 9/2 (BD), Montpelier 9/7 (MK), Waterbury 9/12 (SGN), Craftsbury 9/19 (JR), a banded ad. in Evansville 10/20 (LR) and the latest a bird in Hartland 11/27 (RMR). Sightings of Northern Harrier totalled 139 birds which was on a par with last year, starting with 2 in Addison 8/5 (JAP), building to a high of 6+ in that area 9/24 (SWM) and continuing through the period. Seen statewide in good numbers, Sharp-shinned Hawk was reported from Moose Bog, with 3 on 8/1 (FAP), 3 more in South Burlington 9/8 (SWM), a high of 10 cruising by Mt. Philo 9/12 (EMA,RDB) and a late one in Middlebury 11/28 (JAP); these sightings totalled 48 and were augmented by 184 others seen by VHW between 8/19 and 10/23. Cooper's Hawk figures dropped from last year, with 11 single reports including DCWMA 8/9 (WGE,NLM), Weybridge 8/22 (MBN), Grand Isle 10/12 (DJH), Dorset 11/5 (EFG) and Brandon 11/26 (SSW), and 13 more reported by VHW. Also down, the 15 Northern Goshawk reported included birds at DCWMA 9/6 (JAP) and 9/15 (SWM), Reading 9/27 (FMH,EJH), Clarendon 10/3 (CJF), Bristol 10/10 (FAP), Tinmouth 11/6 (CJF) and S. Duxbury late in Nov. (FAP), plus an additional 8 from VHW. Very scarce could describe

reports of Red-shouldered Hawk, as only 7 came in with 1 at West Bolton 8/18 and 10/7 (MC), 1 at Derby on 9/1, 13 and 20 (STH); 1 in Winhall 8/6, and Tinmouth 11/6 (CJF) with an additional 7 seen from VHW sites between 9/3 and 11/3. Nothing like last year, the 812 Broad-winged Hawk total included only 672 seen by the VHW teams between 9/5 and 10/6, but the 1 day total of 108 from Mt. Philo, Charlotte 9/12 (EMA,RDB) was impressive, and the latest sightings were singles in Brandon (SSW) and Reading (FMH,EJH) on 10/17 and Charlotte 10/23 (JRA). Down to half of last year's numbers from VHW, only 383 Red-tailed Hawk were tallied and added to 74 more observed by others, which included a high of 15 in the Bridport area 10/12 (JAP) and others that lingered beyond the end of the period. The early Rough-legged Hawk report came in from Charlotte, 1 bird on 10/1 (TSA). Numbers built up to a high of 5 in the Champlain Valley at Bridport 11/23 (JAP) and when added to 27 seen by VHW totalled 42 in all. VHW observers tallied only 2 GOLDEN EAGLE this fall: 1 over Fuller Mtn. 9/18 and the second over Vergennes 10/21. American Kestrel sightings were scattered statewide, with good numbers from Pawlet (GRB), Irasburg (REG), Brownsville (BMH), Manchester Center (BWP) and Sheffield/Coventry (PFW,SAW); highs in the CV at Addison of 6 on 8/5 (SWM) and 8 on 8/20 (JAP), and 118 reported by VHW brought the total to nearly 200 in all. Merlin showed up at DCWMA to harass the shorebirds and was seen by many between 9/3 and 10/1. No one reported seeing more than 1 bird at a time, so it is unclear whether more than 1 was present, but others were seen in Lyndonville 9/23 (PFW,SAW), Derby 9/24 (STH), Dorset 10/7 (EFG) and Tinmouth Channel 10/8, 9 and 29 (same bird?) (CJF); 4-6 others were seen by hawkwatchers between 9/10 and 10/2 at various sites (VHW). Peregrine Falcon also took advantage of the shorebird bonanza at DCWMA, where many observers reported what were at least 5 individuals there between 8/4 and 10/6. On 9/1, 1 ad. and 3 imm. were noted at the Brilyea access (SWM), and others saw 2 ad. more than once, accounting for the minimum of 5. In addition, the familiar banded f. was seen at the UVM water tower sporadically throughout the period (m.ob.), single birds were noted from North Hero 8/30 (RBL,FAP), Mallett's Bay 9/24 (EMA,RDB) and Brattleboro 10/3 (PM), and the VHW reported 3 birds in passage between 9/1 and 10/25.

GROUSE THROUGH RAILS

Ring-necked Pheasant was again reported in "good" numbers, with evidence of nesting in Ferrisburgh by a f. with 4 y. (MCD,JID), a m. in Woodstock 8/16 (JMN), 2 in Bridport 9/16 and 1 in Panton 10/4 (JAP), and finally in Tinmouth a f. 10/13 and a m. 10/15 (CJF). The only Spruce Grouse report once again comes from the Yellow Bogs area in the Wenlock WMA near Island Pond, where 1 was found 8/1 (FAP). Resident Ruffed Grouse reports were stable at 57 and included up to 5 in Pawlet for the period (GRB), 5 in Winhall 9/7 (WJN), 4 in Reading 10/23 (FMH,EJH), 1 on the Long Trail near Lincoln Gap 8/19 (WME) and 1 in Barnard 9/16 (JNF). Wild Turkey is rebounding after suffering winter losses, as the 107 reported included flocks of 23 in Lincoln 8/3 (JRA), 3-18 for the period in Pawlet (GRB), 30 in the Brownsville area 9/6 and 4 ad. w/6 y. in Vershire 9/18 and 27 (KRH). A single Northern Bobwhite report comes from Lake Fairlee on 8/8 (KRH), but whether or not the bird was "wild" is always in question here. Easily overlooked, the 8 Virginia Rail reported were typical and included 1 in Newport 8/2 (REG), 1 in Grand Isle 8/27 and 3 there 9/25 (DJH), 1 at DCWMA 9/6 (SWM) and singles in Tinmouth Channel 10/17 and 18 (CJF). A

couple of Sora found in ABM on 9/10 (WJN) was the only report this fall. A juv. Common Moorhen was present in Shelburne Bay for at least a month, seen by numerous observers between 9/12 and 10/14, but the 3 in Mud Creek WMA, Alburg 8/26 (REG) were a high, and singles in Charlotte 9/4 and WRDP 9/5 (WGE,NLM) brought the total to 6 seen this season. American Coot made a good showing in New England this fall, and in Vermont 2 were seen on Berlin Pond 10/22, with 3 there 10/29 and then 9 there on 11/6 (TSA;FAP). Pending the receipt of photos, the Vermont Bird Records Committee is postponing acceptance of a sighting of 2 SANDHILL CRANE along Tabor Rd. in West Swanton 11/7 & 8 (NB,GG,AZ), although it appears likely that this record is entirely accurate.



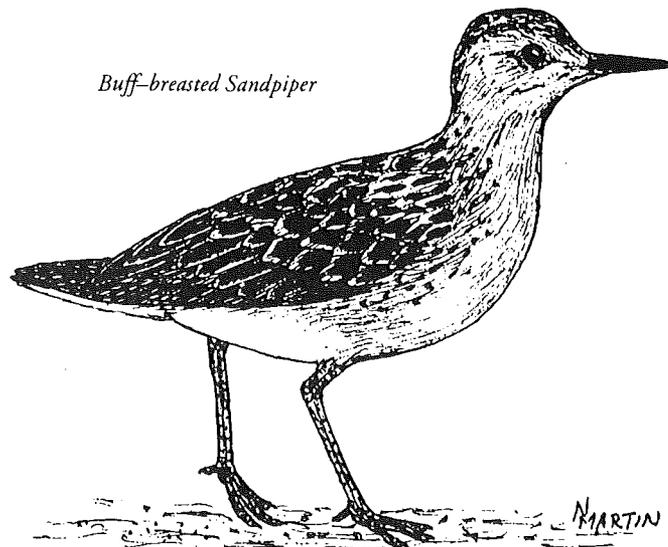
Curlew Sandpiper

SHOREBIRDS

All reports of Black-bellied Plover came from DCWMA, with the first 7 seen there 8/8 (JAP). At least seven more observer reports were received with the latest and high count of 14 on 10/23 (SSW). American Golden Plover arrived late as usual, the first sighting of 1 at DCWMA on 9/6 (SWM), building to around 17-18 seen by several people there between 9/22 and 10/25 (SWM;TGM;JAP;FAP), but with an outstanding estimate of 50-60 birds in the area 9/24 (DJH) and a late flock of 11 in Brandon 11/1 (GEH). All observers at DCWMA reported good numbers of Semipalmated Plover with 5 there as early as 8/2 (TGM) and maxima of 31 on 8/15 (TGM) and 40+ on 8/18 & 24 (SWM); elsewhere, 4 birds were at SWMA 9/7 (RBL) and 2 seen in Manchester Center 10/13 (BWP) is the late report. Although concentrated at DCWMA where counts of well over 100 Killdeer were reported, this species was seen all over the state by many observers and lingered into the 3rd week of Nov., as 2 birds were seen at Shelburne Bay 11/18 & 19 (SWM;TGM). The crowd-pleasers of this season were 2 AMERICAN AVOCET, found at the Brilyea access of DCWMA around 8/5 and subsequently seen by dozens of eager birders for at least the next two weeks. Presumably a pair from bill curvature, these huge shorebirds represented a 3rd state record and only the 2nd record for Vermont in over 100 years. Greater Yellowlegs were present at DCWMA from 8/2 through 10/25, peaking in numbers as high as 50-60 on 8/18 (SWM;TGM) with 2 remaining by 10/25 (JAP); elsewhere up to 4 were seen in the same time period at Grand Isle (DJH) and singles were in

Sheffield (PFW,SAW) and Herrick's Cove 9/24-25 (WJN). Nearly twice as many Lesser Yellowlegs were noted, again at DCWMA, by many observers between 8/2 and 10/25, but reached maxima earlier as 100 were seen there 8/5 (SWM) and flocks of 25-52 were frequent (m.ob.). Up to 3 Solitary Sandpiper were seen at DCWMA between 8/7 (JMN) and 9/26 (JAP), with 1 or 2 noted more frequently (EMA, RDB; SWM; TGM;FAP), but the early sighting was of 1 in Orleans 8/2 (REG) and the high count was 4 on Grand Isle 8/12 (DJH). As expected, many observers found Spotted Sandpiper at DCWMA, with 3 to 4 seen most days except for a high of 8 on 8/10 (RWP), and a late bird found in Derby 10/4 (STH). Oddly, only 1 report of Upland Sandpiper was received, a bird seen in Addison 8/18 by an out-of-state observer (HW); most eyes must have been trained on DCWMA. Another single report was received, of a Whimbrel from the Lyndonville area 8/26, no other details (fide PFW,SAW). Hudsonian Godwit went unreported this season despite comprehensive coverage of very suitable habitat. Another single sighting was of 1 Ruddy Turnstone, on Savage Island 9/17 (RBL,FAP). Not unexpectedly, Red Knot also went unreported, and Sanderling was seen in very low numbers with 1 at DCWMA 8/10 (MBN,JAP), another in Burlington 8/21 (SWM) and the last on Savage Island 9/30 (RBL). Good numbers of Semipalmated Sandpiper gathered at DCWMA from early Aug. until the last sighting of 2 on 10/25 (JAP); highs of at least 200 in late Sept. were noted (SWM;TGM), and away from this area 4 birds were seen at Maquam, 8 on St. Albans Bay 8/19 and 2 at Sandbar 9/7 (RBL). Reports of Western Sandpiper remain equivocal, as 1 reported from DCWMA on 8/14 (GEH,TGM) was not accepted by the Vt. Bird Records Committee, but another there 9/6 (SWM) was accepted as hypothetical; the ID of this species is so difficult that nearly perfect photos are required for a positive determination. The most numerous shorebird at DCWMA this season was clearly Least Sandpiper, as estimates of 250+ were reported 8/18 (SWM;TGM) and groups of 40-95 were noted by others on several days (m.ob.), but the birds seemed to leave early as the last 1 was reported 10/18 (JAP). The occurrence of White-rumped Sandpiper was noted at DCWMA by four observers with 1 on 8/2 (TGM), building to 3 on 8/16 (TSA), highs of 15-18 on 8/18 (SWM;TGM) and 2 as late as 10/26 (JAP). The drawdown of DCWMA offered birders a chance to study Baird's Sandpiper well, as many observers reported 1-3 of these peeps over the weeks through Aug. and as late as 9/24 (m. ob.); 1 bird was reported from Grand Isle 9/10 (DJH). All reports of Pectoral Sandpiper came from DCWMA this season, the first 2 on 8/2 (TGM), building to highs of 30-36 by mid-Sept. (SWM;TGM;JAP;FAP) and dwindling to 1 as late as 10/28 (JAP). Purple Sandpiper moves through the state very late, usually staying "offshore" on rocky islands and is best seen from small boats as the two records this season indicate: 2 off North Hero 11/19 (RBL) and 2 the next day on Savage Island (RBL,TGM). Another late arriver, Dunlin showed at DCWMA with 5-8 noted 9/14, 15 & 22 (SWM;JAP;FAP), 1 was found at Colchester Pt. 10/14 (FAP) and 1 stayed at DCWMA until 10/23 (SSW). A well documented CURLEW SANDPIPER in basic plumage provided only the 2nd record for Vt. at DCWMA on 8/28 (SWM,FAP), but unfortunately did not stay long enough for others to study. Another DCWMA exclusive, Stilt Sandpiper was present in good numbers and allowed birders great looks to study and learn this uncommonly seen Vt. migrant; seen in 1's and 2's nearly each week from mid-Aug. through 10/20 (m.ob.). Another very exciting, but fleeting visitor at DCWMA was 1 BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER seen on 8/30 only (JAP; GEH, TGM, MRP). Short-billed Dowitcher was found at DCWMA from 8/11 off and on until 10/19 in numbers ranging from 1-10 (m.ob.), but the

Buff-breasted Sandpiper



high for the state was 20+ in Herrick's Cove 9/25 (WJN). Any late dowitcher report could refer to Long-billed, which went unreported officially; hard to identify except by voice, this species might have appeared in Oct. when most Short-billed had left the state. Scattered reports of Common Snipe in 1's and 2's were received from Rutland 8/5 (CJF), Dorset 8/6 (EFG), the Sheffield area 8/19 & 26 (PFW,SAW), Grand Isle 9/18 & 25 (DJH) and Bridport 10/3 (JAP) - and yes, even DCWMA on 8/19 & 23 (SWM). The only living American Woodcock were found in Tinmouth, 1-2 on four dates from 9/24 to 10/22 (CJF), but a couple of dead ones were found in Brandon this fall (SSW). An unsubstantiated report of Wilson's Phalarope was received from DCWMA, but Red-necked Phalarope was definitely seen there, with 2 on 8/17 & 18 (SWM;TGM;JAP) and 1 more on 9/1 (TGM); elsewhere, 2 were found near Maquam 8/19 (RBL) and the late bird was 1 near Savage I. 9/2 (MSL).

GULLS AND TERNS

The best way to summarize Little Gull sightings is to quote Dick Lavallee's note based on his frequent boat trips on upper LC: "1st in mid-July - then we averaged sighting 5+ on most boat trips thru Aug-Sept-Oct; over 40 sightings total - notable increase in juv. birds. Last birds sighted were 11/20 - 2 (S. Alburg; N. Hero) w/Ted Murin. Pat Pratt on other trips of 5+ birds" (RBL). Bonaparte's Gull typically appears on upper LC in July, with the first report to RYB of 15 off Grand Isle 8/8 (DJH), then building to large loose flocks remaining in the Islands, as in the 3200 counted from North Hero to SWMA 8/30 (RBL,FAP), and by Nov. feeding in the lower bays through the end of the season; over 800 noted in Shelburne Bay 11/12 (TGM), with 5 still there 11/25 (JAP). Hard to quantify accurately, Ring-billed Gull, after breeding, wanders nearly statewide into farm fields and wet areas where it feeds until freezeup, then lingers along LC into late winter. More associated with large bodies of water, Herring Gull is found in smaller numbers than the above species and tends to move out, as evidenced by 30 moving over S. Londonderry 10/9 and 7 over the Winhall Hawk Lookout 10/23 (WJN), but remains in the Burlington area into winter: 25 on the waterfront 11/25 (JAP). An intriguing report of LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL was received from Lake Dunmore, Salisbury 10/6 (JAP), but inconsistencies in plumage characteristics and

the fact that the bird left the area before more confirmation could be made left the sighting in question. Apparently stable in numbers, Great Black-backed Gull is found near any large lake or river, but congregates near landfills and the Burlington waterfront in late fall and into winter, where it seems to outnumber Herring Gull; highs this fall were 30 in St. Albans Bay 11/19 (SWM) and 15 in Burlington 11/25 (JAP). A good count was made of Common Tern, as 120 were noted at the main staging area in MNWR, Swanton on 8/30 (RBL,FAP), but the only other report was of 1 at SWMA 8/29 (MCD,JID). One of very few state records, a well-documented imm. FORSTER'S TERN was found at the mouth of the Missisquoi R. on 9/2 by a VINS tern biologist (MSL). The only reports of Black Tern were of 6 in the MNWR 8/30 and 1 more near Savage I. the same day (RBL,FAP).

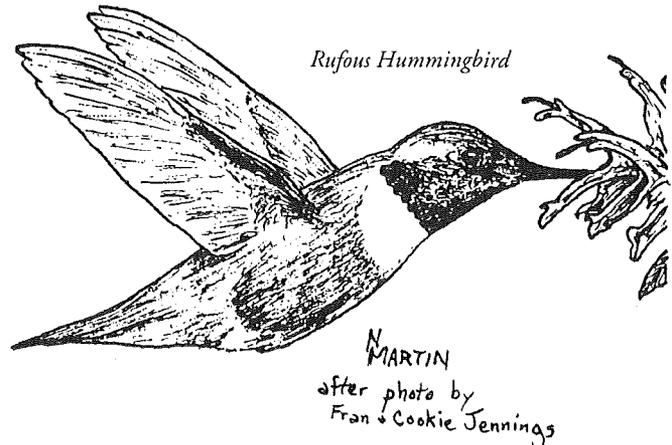
DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Rock Dove continues to hold its own throughout the state, with a high of ~90 in the Bristol/New Haven area for the period (JRA). Nearly ubiquitous and apparently increasing, Mourning Dove was widely reported by 27 observers with flock sizes ranging from 12 for the period in Pawlet (GRB), to 23 in Westminster West 9/11 (AMD), 30 in Grand Isle (DJH), 75 in Rutland 11/26 (CJF) and 78 in North Hero in Nov. (SWM,TGM). With 1-4 individuals seen and/or heard at DCWMA from Aug. into Oct. by m. ob., Black-billed Cuckoo was also reported from several other areas: 1 Bridport 8/1 (JAP), 1 Lincoln 8/3 (JRA), 1 Woodstock 8/4 (JMN), 1 Reading 8/6 (FMH,EJH), 1 Vershire 8/15 (KRH) and 1 S. Londonderry 8/24 (WJN). Far less frequent this season, Yellow-billed Cuckoo was reported as heard only twice, from DCWMA 8/19 & 27 (SWM). Far more common than the few records indicate, Eastern Screech-Owl was heard calling on 4 dates: 2 at the Brilyea access of DCWMA 9/1 (TGM,SWM), 1 on Ft. Cassin Pt. 9/3 (WGE,NLM) and 1 in WRDP 9/25 & 10/1 (SWM). Great Horned Owl was reported as follows: 1 in Sunderland 8/5 (GRB), 1 in Grand Isle 8/6 & 11/9 (DJH), 1 from DCWMA 8/23 (SWM), 2 in Dorset 9/15, 3 there 9/20 and another 11/8 (EFG), 1 at Manchester Ctr. 9/18 & 10/12 (BWP) and finally 1 each Tinmouth Channel 10/17, Kingsland Bay 11/19 and Clarendon 11/25 (CJF). As if to complement the above, sightings of Barred Owl were usually from different habitats, as in a pr. for the period in Pawlet (GRB), 1 in Reading (FMH,EJH), a pr. in Woodstock (JMN), 1 West Glover 8/24 (REG), 1 West Bolton 8/26 & 11/3 (MC), 1 Sheffield 9/3 (PFW,SAW), 1 Springfield 9/29 (WME), another Leicester 10/17 (SSW), 1 heard in Vershire 10/28 (KRH) and finally 3+ in the Tinmouth area during hunting season (CJF). One report of Northern Saw-whet Owl, a bird in West Glover 8/28 (REG) was received by RVB. Common Nighthawk was seen in early August in 1's or 2's in Springfield (WME) and Montpelier (TSA), but 25+ were noted over Sharon 8/25 (SDF) and a few lingered at DCWMA 9/2-6 (SWM;TGM) or over the river in Winooski 9/7 (EMA,RDB).

SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

By the first week of the period, Chimney Swift began to flock up and groups of 8-16 were reported: 8 in Montpelier 8/5 (TSA), 8 in Brandon 8/6, 16 as a high in Island Pond 8/9 (TGM), then moved out so that 1 bird over Mt. Philo 9/19 (EMA,RDB) was the late report. Does everybody feed hummingbirds? Twenty-four observers reported Ruby-throated

Hummingbird from across the state from 8/1 through 9/22, with high counts of 6-9 from Ferrisburgh (MCD,JID), Vershire (KRH), Reading (FMH,EJH) and Sheffield (PFW,SAW), with the late bird from Vershire 9/22 (KRH). Over the last 2-3 years an increasing number of RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD sightings have been documented in the northeast, and so it is not surprising that one more appeared in Vermont, this one a well-described m. at a feeder in Glover 8/19 (WHA,MPA). The total of 54 Belted Kingfisher sighted is down somewhat from previous years, but this may be attributed to fewer observers reporting, as the species does not

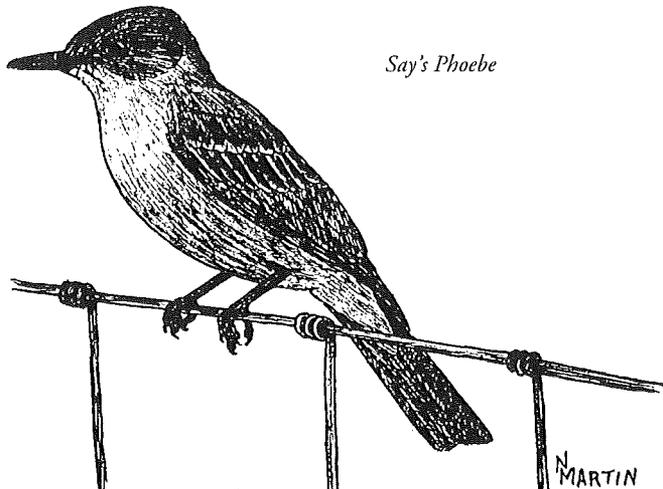


appear in any danger; highs of 5-6 in the CV in Aug/Sep (MCD,JID;SWM) and a late bird in Dorset 11/4 (EFG) are noteworthy. The small colony of Red-headed Woodpecker returned to breed for another year along Market Rd. in Bridport, as up to 3 adult birds were reported throughout the period (JAP;SWM;SSW;WGE,NLM). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported mostly from upland areas and northeastern Vermont. They were considered "regular" in the Newport area (STH), but in Goshen they were down from last year with 1 bird reported 8/16 (SSW). The high count was 3 at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM) and the latest report was 1 at W. Bolton 10/5 (MC). Downy Woodpecker was present in singles or small groups statewide throughout the period, becoming more obvious with the start of the feeder season. Five were tallied 10/1 in Colchester and Burlington (SWM). Hairy Woodpecker was less frequently seen but still widespread. Three birds in "bill waving" display were observed in Lincoln 9/3 (JRA). There was 1 report of THREE-TOED WOODPECKER in Thetford 9/5 (TSA). The only Black-backed Woodpecker was seen in an unusual location, Spencer's Cabin hawkwatch site, Winhall 9/15 (WJN). Northern Flicker was widespread and common thru the period with high counts of 13 at Ferrisburgh 8/23 (MCD,JID), 20 at Vershire 9/2 (KRH) and 9 at Tinmouth 9/25 (CJF). Almost all contributors reported Pileated Woodpecker in ones and twos. Our largest woodpecker seems to be widespread and fairly common.

FLYCATCHERS

There were only a few sightings of Olive-sided Flycatcher. One was at Brighton State Park 8/13 (TGM), 2 at Reading 8/19 and 1 there 8/20 (FMH,EJH), 1 at Winhall 8/28 and 1 at S. Londonderry 9/1 (WJN). The late summer singing of the Eastern Wood-Pewee brought it to the attention of many observers statewide. Especially well documented were the 2 individuals heard in August and early September by the many

birders gathered to watch the shorebirds at DCWMA. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was only recorded a few times during the period, with 1 at Bridport 8/26 (JAP), 1 at Grand Isle 9/9 (DJH), 1 at S. Duxbury 9/1 and a lingerer there 9/20 (FAP). There were 4 reports of Alder Flycatcher, presumably singing, all in early August. Two observers claimed Willow Flycatcher, 3 sightings of 1 bird at S. Londonderry 8/3,9 & 11 (WJN), and reports of 1 bird each at Colchester and DCWMA, both 8/23 (SWM). Five brave reporters recorded Least Flycatcher, 1 (singing?) as late as 9/5, while 5 scrupulously entered Empidonax sp. including 1 at Danby 10/11 (CJF), very late for any flycatchers except the phoebes. The unquestioned stars of the flycatcher show were 2 SAY'S PHOEBES, a first and second state record respectively, although a previous sighting had been accepted as hypothetical. The first bird was discovered on the grounds of the former Brandon Training School, Brandon 10/30 (SSW), was found again in a nearby field 11/2 (GEH) and was then seen by many observers. The bird was in the company of a small flock of Eastern Bluebird and appeared on and off thru the period. The second Say's was discovered on Lane Rd., Dorset, accompanied by 2 bluebirds, and was seen only once 11/7 (EFG). Although it would have been physically possible for Say's #1 to have flown the 30 miles from Brandon to Dorset and back again in the few days between Brandon sightings, it seems highly unlikely that it would have returned to exactly the same Brandon location. Most assuredly Say's #2 was a different individual. The Eastern Phoebe was widespread and common thru mid-October, and 2 late individuals were found in the same Brandon field as the Say's Phoebe 11/2 (JMN,FAP). The Great Crested Flycatcher was reported by many contributors with the high count of 3 at Ferrisburgh 8/10 (MCD,JID), and the late record 1 at Huntington 9/14 (SSW). The Eastern Kingbird, one of the common species in the state's agricultural grasslands, was recorded by most observers birding in the proper habitat. The high count of 20 was in Addison 8/13 (JAP), and the latest record was of 2 in Manchester Ctr. 9/4 (BWP). Except for a report of 3 at DCWMA 8/7 (JMN), Horned Lark sightings ran from late September thru the end of the period, building up higher numbers in November. Individuals of the western race are permanent residents of the Champlain Valley agricultural grasslands and nest there. Birds of the northern race are winter visitors, mixing with and far outnumbering the westerns thru the winter. Some high counts were 50 at DCWMA 11/6 (MBN), 30 there 11/19 (SSW) and 25 at Ferrisburgh 11/29 (MCD,JID).



Say's Phoebe

SWALLOWS

Purple Martin was seen only in August and only at the martin houses south of the Champlain Bridge in Addison. Four birds were there 8/1 (JAP) and 1 remained 8/11-12 (JAP;SSW). The far-from-endangered Tree Swallow congregated in large flocks in August and September before migrating out. An estimated 700 were at Ferrisburgh 9/7 (MCD,JID), and more than 200 at Coventry 8/2 (REG). Large numbers of swallows, mostly trees, made the scene at Briley Access, DCWMA and were noted by some observers who didn't take the time to count them. Those who tried estimated 500 on 8/16 (SWM), 200 on 8/26 (TSA), and 150 on 8/24 (SSW). There were just 3 reports of Rough-winged Swallow with 6 at DCWMA 8/8 (JAP), 100 there 8/16 and a late straggler still there 9/20 (SWM). Only 5 observers reported Bank Swallow, several sightings for some of them. The high counts were up to 50 at DCWMA 8/16 (REG;SWM), 10 at Elmore 8/2 (SSW) and 10 at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 9/4 (WJN). There were only 2 reports of Cliff Swallow, singles at Winhall 8/6 (WJN) and Newport 8/18 (STH). The common Barn Swallow was noted by many observers, with 1 pair fledging 4 young from a garage in Weybridge 8/16 (MBN). The flock at Briley Access, DCWMA was estimated at 300 on 8/16 and had dwindled to 60 by 9/6 (SWM). The last report was of 5 at Herrick's Cove 9/10 (WJN).

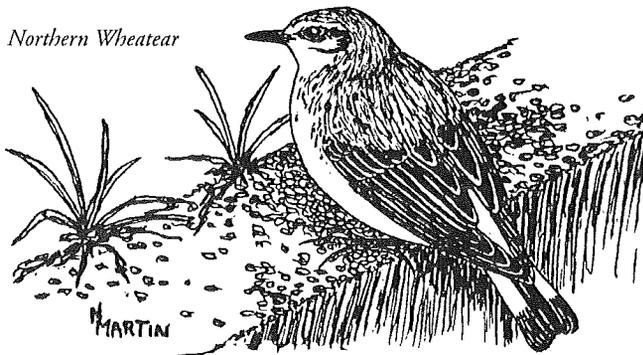
JAY THRU CREEPER

There were 3 reports of Gray Jay, all from the Wenlock WMA/Moose Bog area, Ferdinand. Two birds were present 8/1 (FAP), 2 on 8/12 (TGM) and 2 flocks of 3 on 9/10 (SWM). The common and noisy Blue Jay was seen statewide sometimes in flocks of 20 or 30. One observer noticed 21 jays mobbing a Barred Owl in Woodstock 9/7 (JMN). The equally common American Crow tended to gather in large flocks late in the period. Several contributors noted flocks of 100-250 with the high count of 300 at Grand Isle 11/6 (DJH). Many observers statewide reported Common Raven in small numbers. This species drew special attention because of its presence at most hawk watch locations. The Black-capped Chickadee, reported statewide thruout the period, started gathering at feeders in October and November. Fifteen were at Sheffield 10/24 (PFW,SAW), 20 were seen at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 10/22 (WJN), and 12 each were at Woodstock 11/27 (JMN) and at Brandon 11/30 (SSW). Four observers recorded Boreal Chickadee with 2 at Wenlock WMA 8/1 (FAP), 2 at Moose Bog 8/12 (TGM), 2 at W. Glover 10/10 (REG,OAG), and 1 at Sheffield 8/10 and 10/14 (PFW,SAW). The Tufted Titmouse is becoming increasingly more common, particularly in the warmer areas of the state and is most often seen at feeders. Some representative counts were 3 at Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP), 4 at Springfield 11/26 (WME) and 4 at Wallingford 9/16 (SJD). The Red-breasted Nuthatch was present statewide in small numbers with a high count of 15+ at Moose Bog 9/10 (SWM), 6 at Reading (FMH,EJH), and 3 at Charlotte 9/12 (EMA,RDB). The White-breasted Nuthatch was widespread in small numbers with 6 at Woodstock 8/6 (JMN) and 4 each at DCWMA 9/20 and Charlotte 11/27 (SWM). The Brown Creeper, fairly common in Vermont woodland but inconspicuous, was reported by 11 observers, all single birds except for 2 at Reading 10/26 (FMH,EJH).

WRENS THRU GNATCATCHER

Only 3 Carolina Wren were reported this season, 1 at Middlebury 9/2 (JAP), 1 in Brandon 10/24 (SSW) and 1 in Norwich 11/20 (GFE). Very possibly the harsh winter of 93-94 hit this species hard, and it may take several years to recover what ground it had gained in the state. The House Wren, still singing into the fall, attracted the attention of some contributors. Three birds were at Manchester Ctr. 8/25 (BWP), and a late record was of 1 in Vershire 10/16 (KRH). Ten observers recorded Winter Wren, and all were singles except for 2 at Reading 9/19 (FMH,EJH) and 3 at Danby 10/2 (CJF). The only November sighting was a bird on Mt. Tom, Woodstock 11/17 (KRT). Sedge Wren was not found again this season. Marsh Wren was fairly commonly seen at areas of proper habitat thru September. One individual at Tinmouth Channel was seen there 10/9 and heard chattering 10/17 (CJF) for a late record. Small numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglet were noted by a few observers, with the only sizeable flock 10-15 at Moose Bog 9/10 (SWM). The Ruby-crowned Kinglet was reported by many observers as it came thru in migration in late September and October. Some high counts were 8 in Duxbury 9/20 (FAP) and 6 in Ferrisburgh 10/7 (MCD,JID). The last record was of 1 bird at Manchester Ctr. 10/28 (BWP). Only 4 reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher included 1 at Ferrisburgh 8/1 (MCD,JID), 1 at West Rutland Marsh 8/2 (JMN), 1 at DCWMA 8/30 (JAP), and a late but sure record of 1 at Middlebury 9/24 (JAP).

Northern Wheatear



THRUSHES THRU STARLING

A NORTHERN WHEATEAR was found and photographed on French Settlement Rd., S. Lincoln 9/17 (MSH,RCH). Almost all contributors reported Eastern Bluebird, sometimes in substantial numbers as this half-hardy species lingered on and in many cases prepared to overwinter. A flock of about 100 at Bridgewater 10/5 (CC) was amazing, but a flock of 20 in Hyde Park 10/2 (BCD) was more in line with other reports. The Veery was recorded by 7 observers in ones and twos with the last report of 2 birds at Danby 9/29 (SSW). Gray-cheeked Thrush was not reported this fall. Swainson's Thrush was observed by only 6 reporters with the high count of 4 at Woodstock 9/21 (JMN) and the last record of 1 at Winhall 10/12 (WJN). Hermit Thrush was widely reported with high counts of 6 at Reading 10/18 (FMH,EJH) and 5 at Woodstock 9/21 (JMN), and the last record of 1 at Woodstock 11/4 (JMN). Fewer observers reported Wood Thrush with 2-4 in Vershire 8/1 (KRT), 3 in Ferrisburgh 8/2 (MCD,JID), and a very early final record of 1 at Reading 9/17 (FMH,EJH). American Robin, one of our most common birds, was

badly under-reported as some contributors failed to keep counts on them. As robins started flocking, some of the larger tallies were 200 at Cornwall 10/10 (JAP), 120 at Panton 10/23 (MBN), and 50 each at Brandon 11/2 (FAP) and Grand Isle 10/12 (DJH). Gray Catbird, a common and active backyard nester, was reported by most contributors. High counts were 15 at DCWMA 8/23 (SWM) and 10 at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 9/10 (WJN), and a very early last record was of 1 at Bolton 10/3 (MC). After the bitter winter of 93-94 Northern Mockingbird numbers were very low with 6 sightings of single birds spaced thruout the period. Six observers reported Brown Thrasher with the high count of 2 in Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP). The 2 final sightings on 9/24 were of 1 at Addison (SWM) and 1 at Bridport (FAP). There were many reports of American Pipit, almost all from DCWMA where pipits mingled with shorebirds on the newly-exposed mud flats from mid-September thru October with a peak of 75-100 on 9/24 (SWM), and another 65 on 10/25 (JAP). In other locations a small flock of 8 was seen on the ridgeline of Mt. Mansfield 9/14 (CCR,KPM,CHD), 25 were in Norwich 10/25 (CCR) and the late record was of 2 at Alburg 11/19 (SWM). Bohemian Waxwing was not reported, but Cedar Waxwing was widespread and common statewide, especially in September and October. A flock of 80-100 was at East Hubbardton 9/17 (RWP), 100 were seen at Herrick's Cove, Rockingham 9/25 (WJN) and perhaps the same 100 were there 10/29 (FAP). Only 3 Northern Shrike were found for the period. An adult was banded at VINS 10/17 (EWC,CHD), 1 was located at S. Londonderry 11/5 (WJN), and a well-documented immature was seen by many during November in the same field as the Say's Phoebe, Brandon. The European Starling was ever present statewide, gathering into large flocks as the fall progressed. Observers were restrained in reporting with high counts only 1000 at DCWMA 8/31 (SWM) and 2000 at Shoreham 10/12 (JAP).

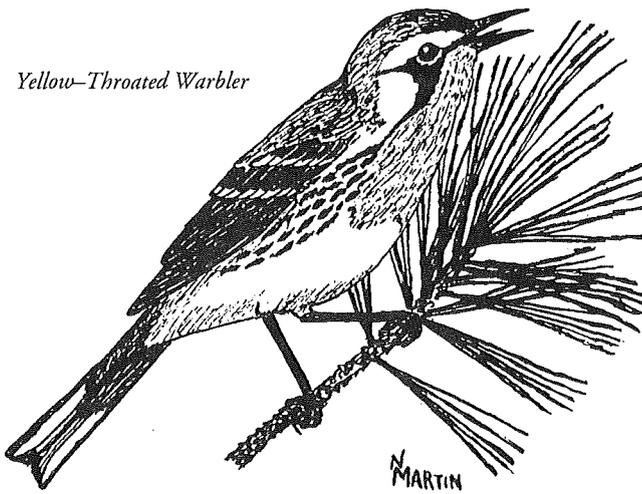
VIREOS

There were many reports of Solitary Vireo, one of our more common forest nesters. High counts were 4 each at Moose Bog 9/10 and DCWMA 9/24 (SWM). Late records were 1 at Reading 10/31 (FMH,EJH) and 1 banded at VINS 10/31 (CCR,EWC,SDF). Only 2 observers reported Yellow-throated Vireo. One sighting was at Mt. Philo, Charlotte 9/12 (TGM), and EFG recorded the species 4 times in Dorset during the period. Warbling Vireo was well reported, mostly in August and in small numbers, but a concentration of up to 10 at Delta Park, Colchester 9/5 (SWM;WGE,NLM) was remarkable. Philadelphia Vireo was recorded 3 times, 1 at Duxbury 8/31 (FAP), 1 at Delta Park, Colchester 9/5 (SWM) and 1 imm. banded at VINS 9/19 (CCR,EWC). Red-eyed Vireo was reported commonly statewide. A migrant flock of 20 was noted at Red Rocks Park, Burlington 9/5 (SWM), and the latest record was 1 at Lincoln 10/8 (JRA).

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler was not reported this period, but there were 3 records of Golden-winged Warbler, 1 at S. Londonderry 8/17 (WJN), 1 at Brandon 8/27 (SSW) and 1 at Lincoln 8/30 (JRA). One observer noted "poor numbers" of Tennessee Warbler, yet 5 reporters noted Tennessees in migration. A single bird was at S. Duxbury 8/31 and another there 9/27 (FAP), 3 were at Woodstock 8/31 (JMN), 1 at Middlebury 9/24 (JAP), 1 at Dorset 9/28 (EFG) and 1 at Winhall 9/29 (WJN). The only Orange-

Yellow-Throated Warbler



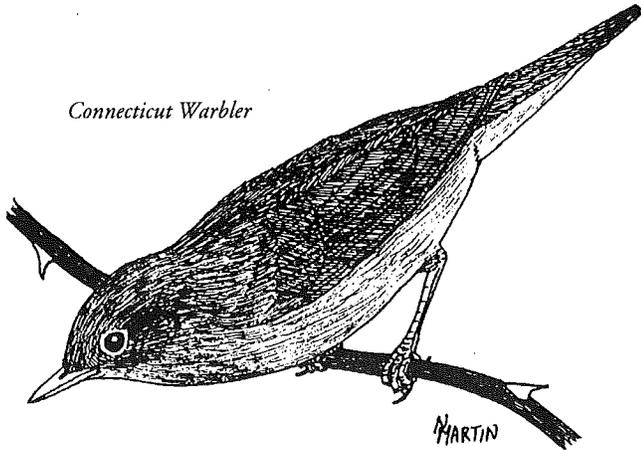
crowned Warbler of the season was at S. Londonderry 10/22 (WJN). There were considerable reports of Nashville Warbler, another fairly common nester. Some high counts were 6 at Moose and Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM), 4 at Middlebury 9/24 (JAP), 4 at S. Duxbury 8/31 (FAP) and 3 at Ferrisburgh 9/7 (MCD,JID). The last report was of 1 on 10/9 at S. Duxbury where FAP observed fairly good numbers for the migration period. There were 8 sightings of Parula Warbler, all but 1 in September. Three birds were seen at Moose Bog 9/10 and another 3 at Delta Park, Colchester 9/25 (SWM). Yellow Warbler was reported by a number of observers who noted poor numbers of this species. Most birds were seen in August with a scattering of reports until 9/5 when 5-6 were at Delta Park (SWM). There were many reports statewide of Chestnut-sided Warbler, another common nester. High counts of 7-8 were at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM) with 5 at Reading 8/30 (FMH,EJH) and 3 at Woodstock 9/17 (JMN). The last record was of 1 at Middlebury 9/24 (JAP). Good numbers of Magnolia Warbler were recorded with a resounding high count of 25-30 at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM), followed by 8 at S. Duxbury 9/9 (FAP) and 5 at Winhall 8/12 (WJN). Last seen was 1 at Winhall 9/29 (WJN). The few Cape May Warbler reports included 1 at S. Londonderry 9/1 (WJN), 1 at DCWMA 9/20 (SWM) and 1 at S. Duxbury 9/14 with 2 there 9/27 (FAP). There were many reports of the forest nesting Black-throated Blue Warbler. High counts were 9 at Lincoln Gap 9/24 (JRA), 5 at Goshen 8/25 (SSW), and 5 at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM). The latest record was of 1 at S. Duxbury 9/29 (FAP). Sizeable flocks of Yellow-rumped Warbler were seen in migration, most during October. Thirty-five were reported at Addison 10/6 (FAP), 22 were at Bridport 10/6 (JAP), and 20 at Rockingham 9/26 (WJN). The late record was of 1 at Addison 11/10 (JAP). Many observers also reported Black-throated Green Warbler with high counts of 15-20 at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM), 11 in Woodstock 9/17 (JMN), 8 at S. Duxbury 9/5 (FAP) and 8 at Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP). The late record was of 1 at Dorset 10/5 (EFG). Eight reports of Blackburnian Warbler included high counts of only 3 at S. Duxbury 9/9 (FAP) and 3 at Woodstock 9/17 (JMN) which was also the latest record. One reporter noted that numbers appeared to be low. A YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER appeared at a feeder in Woodstock for Thanksgiving and was duly documented, 11/23 (PH,DH,NM,RM). There were only a few records of Pine Warbler with 5 at Manchester Ctr. 9/20 (BWP) and a late record of 1 at Bridport 10/7 (JAP). There were 10 sightings of Palm Warbler with not more than 2 birds per sighting. The late report was of 1 "yellow" palm at Addison 10/26 (JAP). Five observers

reported Bay-breasted Warbler with the high count of 3 at Woodstock 8/6 and the late record of 1 also at Woodstock 9/17 (JMN). Blackpoll Warbler was considered in low numbers, but 3 were at Ferdinand 9/12 and 6-8 were at Delta Park, Colchester 9/25 (SWM). One was at Middlebury 9/27 (JAP) for the late date. There were many reports of Black-and-White Warbler, mostly of single birds. An unusual flock of 10 was at Red Rocks Park, South Burlington 9/8 and 1 was there 10/1 (SWM) for the late date. There were also many reports of American Redstart with high counts of 3-4 at Colchester 8/23, 4-5 at South Burlington 8/27 (SWM) and 4 at Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP). One was seen at South Burlington 10/1 (SWM) for the late date. There were 8 sightings of Ovenbird, all of 1 or 2 birds. One was seen in Shelburne 10/10 (FAP) for the late date. Only 3 records of Northern Waterthrush included 1 at South Hero 8/6 (SWM), 3 at Brandon 8/7 (SSW) and 1 at Dorset 8/13 (EFG). The only record of Louisiana Waterthrush was of a bird found dead beside the road in Brunswick (TGM). An immature CONNECTICUT WARBLER was banded and documented at VINS 9/12 (CCR,EWC,KPM). Only 2 reports of Mourning Warbler included 1 at Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP) and 3 at Lincoln Gap 8/16 (JRA). There were many reports of Common Yellowthroat with high counts of 7 at Dorset 8/12 (EFG), 7-8 at DCWMA 8/23 and 6 at Colchester 9/25 (SWM). The late record was of 1 at Tinmouth 10/20 (CJF). Seven observers recorded Wilson's Warbler, all single sightings except for 2 at Delta Park, Colchester 9/5 (WGE,NLM), and with a late record of 1 at Dorset 10/2 (EFG). The very unusual sighting of a WORM-EATING WARBLER was of 1 at Stowe 9/5 (RCD,VCD), only the fifth ever submitted to these Records. Canada Warbler was moderately reported with 3 seen at Manchester Ctr. 9/5 (BWP) and 2 at Ferrisburgh 9/7 (MCD,JID) for a very early last date. Observers noted that numbers were low.

TANAGER THRU SNOW BUNTING

Six observers reported Scarlet Tanager in ones and twos with the last record of 1 at Dorset 9/25 (EFG). Northern Cardinal was reported statewide thru the period. Four were at South Burlington 9/11 (SWM) and 4 were at Middlebury thru 11/30 (JAP). Eight observers reported Rose-breasted Grosbeak with highs of 9 at Ferrisburgh 9/7 (MCD,JID) and 5 at West Bolton 8/15 (MC). The last record was of 1 at Dorset 9/25 (EFG). Indigo Bunting was recorded by only 4 reporters with the high count of 4 at New Haven 9/9 (JAP) and the last report of 1 at S. Londonderry 9/13 (WJN). Only 6 reports of Rufous-sided Towhee, all singles, included a last record at Winhall 10/8 (WJN). There were many reports of American Tree Sparrow with the early arrival date of 10/24 at Woodstock (JMN). Some high counts were 20 at Dorset 11/9 (EFG) and 16 at Montpelier 11/27 (TSA). Sizeable flocks of Chipping Sparrow were reported with 50 at S. Londonderry 8/31 (WJN) and 20 at Sheffield 9/28 (PFW,SAW), while 1 individual stayed until 11/7 at a Middlebury feeder (JAP). Five observers reported Field Sparrow, all sightings of single birds. The last record was of 1 at Bridport 11/9 (JAP). There were 3 sightings of Vesper Sparrow, 1 at Addison 8/5 (JAP), 1 at the Champlain Bridge, Addison 10/27 (SWM) and 1 at S. Londonderry 10/11 (WJN). An exciting LARK SPARROW was well described at S. Londonderry 8/31 (WJN), but was recorded as hypothetical for want of a second and confirming report. This is the 2nd state record accepted as hypothetical, the 1st coming from Rutland 5/17/85 (CJF). There were many reports of Savannah Sparrow, mainly from the Champlain Valley. Sightings of 25

Connecticut Warbler

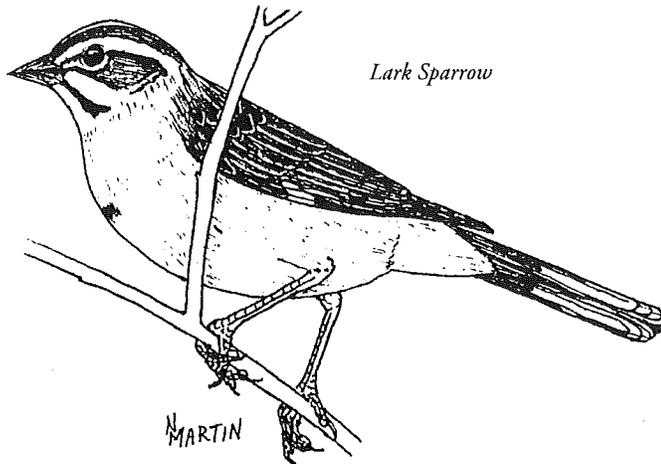


at Addison 10/10 (FAP), 15 at Bridport 9/27 (JAP) and 15 at DCWMA 9/20 (SWM) were representative, and the late record was of 1 at Benson 10/29 (SWM). Grasshopper Sparrow left the state without notice, while the only report of Fox Sparrow was of 2 birds at Dorset 10/21 (EFG). Reports of Song Sparrow came from around the state in average to good numbers, with 25 at Addison 10/10 (FAP), 20 at DCWMA 8/19 (SWM) and 20 at Allen Brothers Marsh 9/25 (WJN). Late records were of 2 at Shelburne Bay 11/25 (TGM) and 2 at Addison 11/29 (JAP). A few reports of Lincoln's Sparrow included 2 at S. Duxbury 9/25 (FAP) and 2 at Dorset 10/2 (EFG), the late record. Many observers reported Swamp Sparrow with the high count being 22 at Tinmouth Channel 10/12 (CJF) and the late record of 3 at Brandon 10/30 (FAP,TGM). White-throated Sparrow numbers were way down, according to some observers. The only big flock was of 25 at Tinmouth Channel 9/24 (CJF) and 11 were there 11/6. Ten were at Moose Bog/Yellow Bogs 9/10 (SWM) and a flock of 11 was at Lincoln 8/30 (JRA). White-crowned Sparrow was also observed to be in poor numbers. By far the largest flock seen was 25 at Addison 10/10 (FAP) while 3 at Dorset 10/31 (EFG) was the last report. Almost all observers reported Dark-eyed Junco throughout the period with peak numbers in late October. Some high counts were 30 at Reading 10/23 (FMH,EJH), 10 at Ripton 10/21 (SSW), 15 at Lincoln 10/24 (JRA) and 13 at E. Barre 11/20 (TSA). The only report of Lapland Longspur for the period was of 2 at Addison 11/10 (JAP). Eleven reporters found Snow Bunting, all in November except for the early record of 1 at Tinmouth Channel 10/30 (CJF). Numbers built up later with 200 at Bridport 11/11 (JAP) and 400 at Swanton 11/16 (FAP).

BLACKBIRDS THRU HOUSE SPARROW

Red-winged Blackbird gathered into huge flocks as expected in the fall and was reported commonly statewide. Some typical numbers were 1200 at DCWMA 8/23 (SWM), 1000+ there 9/26 (EMA,RDB), an "uncountable flock" at Ferrisburgh 10/15 (JRA), and 500 in Newport (PFW,SAW). Eastern Meadowlark was seen by 5 reporters with 10 at Brandon 9/18 (SSW), 6 at Bridport 10/10 (JAP), 4 at Ferrisburgh 9/24 (MCD,JID) and 8 at Weybridge 10/3 (JAP) for the last record. Two sizeable flocks of Rusty Blackbird were reported, 50 at Cornwall 10/10 (JAP) and 60 at Grand Isle 10/13 (DJH), with the last record of 4 at Swanton 11/6 (SWM). Common Grackle was under-reported for the period, but there were 1200 at Montpelier 10/5 (TSA), 500 at Reading 8/2 (FMH,EJH) and 60 at Georgia 11/25 (EMA,RDB). Brown-headed Cowbird was also under-reported, but 100 were at DCWMA 8/31 (SWM), 200 at Ferrisburgh 10/4 (JAP) and 300 at Newport 10/23 (PFW,SAW). Many observers reported Northern Oriole in August and September with 5 at Ferrisburgh 8/15 (MCD,JID), 4 at Coventry 8/12 (REG,OAG) and 4-5 at DCWMA 8/23 (SWM). The late record was of 1 at Derby 9/23 (STH). An unusual bird at DCWMA having field marks of Streak-backed Oriole was determined later to be a probable immature northern 8/23 (BK,CM). Pine Grosbeak was absent this season, nor was it a particularly good fall for Purple Finch. Numbers were generally low with a few larger flocks of 17 at Sheffield 8/25 (PFW,SAW), 15 at Reading 8/1 (FMH,EJH), and 20 at Winhall 10/23 (WJN). House Finch was generally reported as "common" or "omnipresent" and some observers did not keep a count. Some of the larger numbers were 30 at Weybridge 9/24 (MBN), 60 at Dorset 10/14 (EFG) and 71 at Middlebury 11/25 (JAP). Red Crossbill was seen only in Island Pond and Ferdinand with 2+ on 8/10 (TGM), 20+ on 9/10 (SWM) and 2 on 9/12 (FAP). White-winged Crossbill was found in the same area with 2+ on 8/10 (TGM) and 5+ on 9/10 (SWM). In addition, 2 were at Winhall 10/15 (WJN). There were no confirmed sightings of Common Redpoll this fall, but 10 observers recorded Pine Siskin in small numbers except for 100 at Charlotte 11/13 (FAP) and 21 at W. Glover 11/17 (REG,OAG). American Goldfinch was reported by almost all observers, with 150 at Bridport 9/16 (JAP), 22 at Dorset 8/10 (EFG) and 25 at SWMA 11/19 (SWM). Nine contributors recorded Evening Grosbeak in small flocks, with the high count of only 8 at Sheffield 11/14 (PFW,SAW) and 4 at Winhall 9/17 (WJN). House Sparrow was under-reported with a high count of 120 at Vergennes 9/24 (SWM). Some observers noted declining numbers.

Lark Sparrow



Abbreviations

L. Lake
 Mt. Mountain or Mount
 I. Island
 R. River
 Ft. Fort
 Pt. Point
 w/ with
 ad. adult
 imm. immature
 juv. juvenile
 f. female
 m. male
 y. young
 pr. pair
 sp. species
 m.ob. many observers

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Special thanks to all hawkwatchers.

Memorandum Regarding Rare Species Documentation

The Vermont Bird Records Committee (VBRC) emphasizes the importance of descriptive and detailed documentation for all rarities, rare nesting species and out-of-season species.

The committee is anxious to involve all Vermont birders in the process of producing as accurate a Vermont state list as possible. This list and all documentation must be credible to future ornithologists who will use the material for research. Suggestions for improving the reporting/voting process will be gratefully received by the committee.

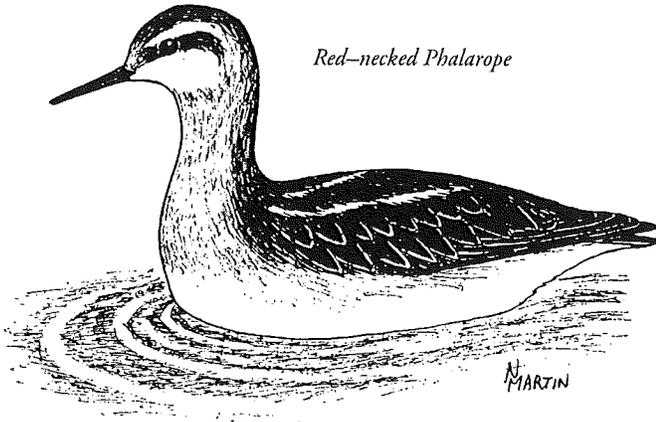
It is frustrating for both the observer and the committee to have a tantalizing sighting of a rare species not listed due to insufficient details.

Writing down the salient points of identification, talking into a tape recorder, making a quick sketch or taking a photograph at the time of observation are ways to help with accurate recounting later.

The Rare Species Documentation (RSD) form is both for filing the reports and is intended as a guide for the information needed. After completing the first page, reporters may prefer to write the description of the bird on a separate sheet of paper but checking the form for details requested.

Again the VRBC expresses its thanks to all observers who have contributed valuable information to the Vermont state list thus far.





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