



RECORDS OF VERMONT BIRDS

VERMONT INSTITUTE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

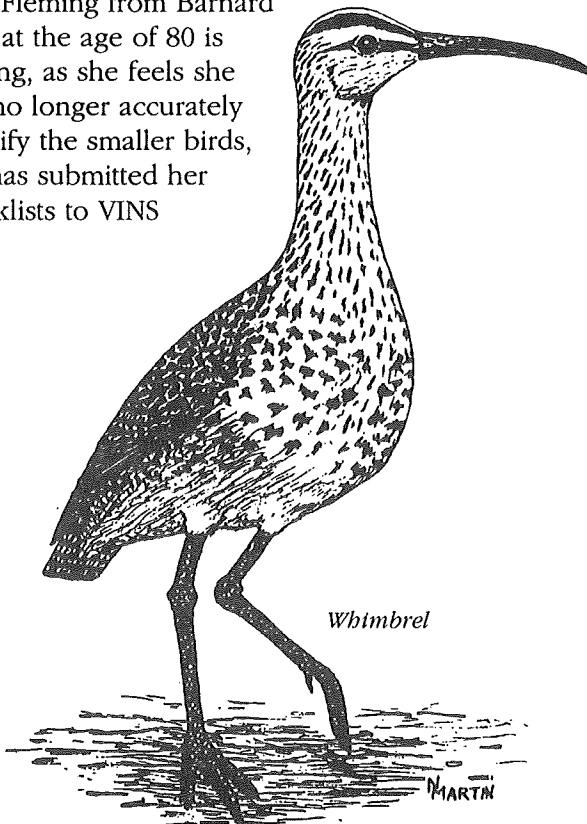
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FALL 1996

1 August – 30 November

George E. "Terry" Hall, Seasonal Editor

The fall of 1996 will stand out as remarkable for a number of reasons. First, it appeared to this editor that the number of observers had dropped from previous years and I felt coverage would not be adequate. I also noticed there had been no reports at all from the Northeast Kingdom, which would have left several species off the list. In addition there had been no drawdowns of impoundments at Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area to provide shorebird/wader habitat with a potential resultant drop in those species' reports. To my delight, the bottom line was an amazing 242 species that resulted from the efforts of a core of dedicated volunteers who searched hard, as well as those reliable observers who keep track of their "yards" year after year and, of course, Bill Barnard's crew of hawk watchers who put in long hours monitoring raptor migration. A big vote of thanks is in order for all of you who contributed to this effort, with a special note of appreciation to Jean Fleming from Barnard who at the age of 80 is retiring, as she feels she can no longer accurately identify the smaller birds, but has submitted her checklists to VINS



faithfully for many years. Thank you, Jean.

The 242 species included a couple of exotics and one genus, but also some very exciting rarities. In relation to the total Vermont List, a very high percentage of some families was seen, as in 33 of 38 waterfowl and 16 of 19 raptors, with 21 shorebirds and an incredible 14 species of gulls and terns. Add to those a great array of wood warblers and an excellent "finch" year, and this fall turned out to be spectacular.

August weather in general was cloudier and cooler than normal, but with little precipitation – 2.59 inches below normal for the Burlington area. No major systems were noted moving through the state and wind was very light, with no speeds of 20 mph or more recorded by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Birding was slow this month, but observers made a few significant finds. Most notable was the HENSLOW'S SPARROW discovered by Bill Norse in his "yard" in South Londonderry, and the first sighting in Vermont for this species in 20 years. A life bird for the observer, a WHIMBREL was found on Bell Island in Lake Memphremagog, then verified by Tom Hickcox. Rarely seen away from a banding net, a YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was observed by Larry Metcalf near I-89 in Berlin. Lastly, a frustrating view for Sue Wetmore of a possible CONNECTICUT WARBLER in Rochester was too early to be believed by the review committee.

As fall progressed, cold fronts pushed through in September with cooler, wetter and windier conditions. The monthly averages were very near normal, however, and no system was severe enough to produce storm-related fallouts of migrants. Numbers of individuals were down somewhat from previous years for flycatchers, warblers and sparrows, although nearly all the normal species were found. However, this was the month to be watching the "inland sea" – that area of Lake Champlain north of the Sandbar causeway all the way to St. Albans Bay. David Hoag spent many hours looking through Bonaparte's Gulls, and found a few Little Gulls, BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE, two SABINE'S GULLS and a possible FRANKLIN'S GULL. The latter was seen more than once, but could not be confirmed and was not accepted by the Records committee.

Continued

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RECORDS OF VERMONT BIRDS

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Regional summaries of bird sightings are due to VINS promptly at the end of each season. Sighting cards are available from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, RR2 Box 532, Woodstock, VT 05091, or by calling (802) 457-2779.

Many birders were treated to good looks of an imm. LITTLE BLUE HERON that stayed in East Creek in the town of Orwell for several days, and Pete Smith lucked onto a SEDGE WREN somewhat off Hawkins Rd. near the Little Otter Creek in Ferrisburgh. In what may be an annual event, two more reports of brownish hummingbirds were received, both left at the genus level as probable *SELASPHORUS* sp., and both undocumented by photos; one was on South Hero and the other at a South Royalton feeder.

Reports of rarities continued into October, a month characterized by the passage of a good cold front in the first week, below average temperatures (by only 0.5°F), the first traces of snow, but several cool, clear and windy days. This was the month for waterfowl, of course, and all eyes were on Dead Creek to witness the goose migration. Not all the action was there, however, as the first good bird was a juv. TUNDRA SWAN that spent a couple of days on Shelburne Bay. The two exotic species included in the total were RUDDY SHELDUCK, a bird seen in Brandon and clearly an escape, albeit a striking one, and a BARNACLE GOOSE that appeared at Dead Creek with other goose species. Usually regarded as exotic as opposed to a wild vagrant, this species was seen in Vermont in the recent past and most probably was the bird known to have escaped from a Grand Isle farm. Less equivocal was the reappearance of a few ROSS' GEESE among the Snows at Dead Creek, giving birders a chance to scan through the flocks for these delightful western strays. And for this editor, the bird of the month may have been the GREAT GRAY OWL that showed in Bob

Mattuck's yard in Plainfield very early, then typically left before any other birders could see it.

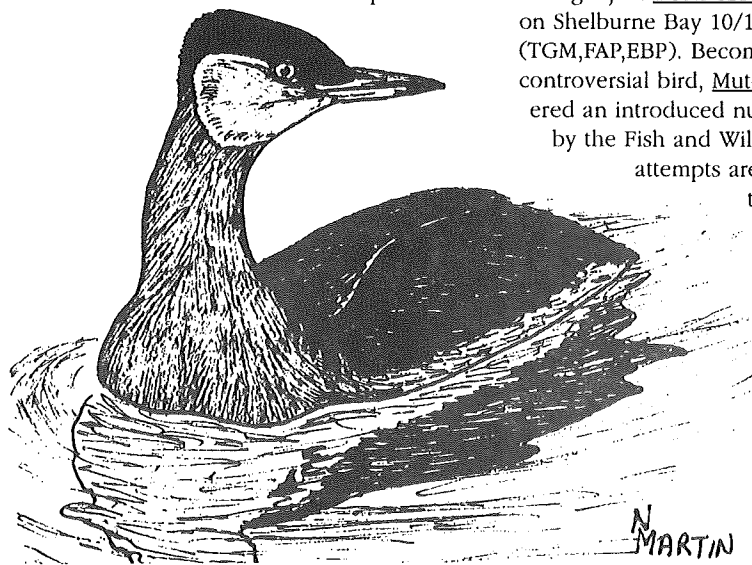
November settled in even colder, with temperatures dipping into the teens often at night and snow falling on no less than 19 days in the Burlington area. Winds were steady, but light throughout the month, with a very steady barometer testimony that no major fronts passed through. Some very exciting birds showed this month, including at least two GYRFALCONS near the Dead Creek area, and a dramatic Pomarine Jaeger that Jim Osborn was able to show Jean Arrowsmith off the Tri-Town Water Plant in Addison. The sight of a NORTHERN GANNET coming in with flocks of Snow Geese over the Addison fields must have been bizarre beyond belief, with the same bird showing at Shelburne Bay the next day a bit more normal. A cooperative adult FORSTER'S TERN spent a week at the Winooski River delta in Colchester, and to round out the dazzling array of larids this fall, Jim Osborn reported an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Burlington breakwater.

LOONS, GREBES, HERONS

Red-throated Loon was reported 3 times, 1 off Nichol's Pt., Grand I. 11/8 (DJH) and later found dead, a second near the Champlain Br. and another in Shelburne, both 11/9 (TGM). As a migrant, Common Loon was found on Lk. Champlain as early as August, with 16 on the so. end 8/5 (MF) and a high of 204 in the Shelburne/Burlington area 11/11 (RBL). Post- or non-breeders were found in early Aug. on Somerset Res. (NAB;ED,ND), Chittenden Res. (DM,BM) and Lk. Memphremagog (STH). Pied-billed Grebe is known to nest in only a few extensive marshes in the state, but many scattered reports of this species were evidence that more widespread nesting may have occurred, as in 1 in Arlington 8/3 (EFG), 1 near Manchester 8/31 (BWP), 1-2 on Leffert's Pd., Chittenden, from 9/10 into Oct. (DM,BM) and juvs. present off

Nichols Pt. mid- to late-Oct. (DJH). By Oct. Horned Grebe numbers began to build on Lk. Champlain; the first 5 were noted off Nichols Pt. 9/30 (DJH) and the high of 50 was counted between Crown Pt. and Burlington 10/27 (RDB,EMA). Aug. records of Red-necked Grebe are very unusual, so the presence of 1 to 3 birds off No. Hero 8/18 (MSL), Nichols Pt. 8/22 (DJH) and Rouse's Pt. 8/24 (TGM;FAP,EBP), with a possible on Lk. Memphremagog 8/27 (STH) were all noteworthy. Additionally, 12 on Lk. Champlain between Crown Pt. and Burlington 10/27 (RDB,EMA) were average, 25 off Nichols Pt. in late Oct. (DJH) were the high, and 1 bird on Tinmouth Pd. 11/10 (CJF) was remarkable. An extraordinary sighting of NORTHERN GANNET, an imm. bird flying in with flocks of snow geese and nearly landing in fields at Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter DCWMA) 11/23 (JEO,m.obs.) was followed by an equally bizarre report of most probably the same bird at Shelburne Bay 11/24 (TGM,FAP,EBP). More mundane, Double-crested Cormorant numbers continue to expand with increased nesting. An estimated 2000 birds were noted in upper Lk. Champlain and the Islands through Sept. (RBL), and individuals remained on Lk. Champlain through the end of the period (JRA;RDB,EMA). American Bittern was reported 9 times, the earliest being 1 in Newport 8/1 (STH), a high of 2 at Nichols Pt. 8/4 (DJH) and a late bird in the Springweather Nature Area (hereafter SNA), Springfield 10/6 (WJN). At least 2 Least Bittern in Tinmouth Ch. 9/28 and 10/3 (CJF) were the first there for the observer, and the only report received.

Widespread in



Red-necked Grebe

good numbers, Great Blue Heron was reported by 24 observers and mainly from areas other than DCWMA, with representative highs of 6-8 birds in ea. of Colchester (RDB,EMA), Grand I. (DJH) and So. Londonderry (WJN), all in mid-Aug. Great Egret was seen from scattered locations in 1's and 2's as follows: 1 in Bellows Falls 8/11 (WJN), 1+ in Essex from 8/17 to 9/25 (RBL), 2 in SNA 9/1 (WJN), 1 in Dorset 9/26 and 10/8 (EFG;JP,SW), and 1-2 in So. Burlington in Oct. (RDB,EMA;RBL;TGM). Often missed, Snowy Egret was reported twice, 1 bird at Nichols Pt. 8/3 and 8/6 (DJH) and another above Weybridge Dam 8/21 (FAP,EBP). One imm. LITTLE BLUE HERON showed up in East Creek Wildlife Management Area (hereafter ECWMA), Orwell 9/1, and stayed at least two weeks, viewed by many observers (TGM,SSW;GEH;MBN;FAP,EBP;et al.). As a breeder Cattle Egret has relocated from Young and Bixby Is. to the Four Brothers in Lk. Champlain, and therefore is seen more regularly feeding in Chittenden and Addison counties in late summer. Reports were sparse, with 2 along Prunier Rd., Weybridge 8/10 (FAP,EBP), and 16 viewed near Shelburne Bay 9/8 (TGM). A more widespread but nowhere common breeder, Green Heron was reported 11 times with the first report of 2 in Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter MNWR), Swanton 8/14 (NP), another 2 at St. Albans Bay 8/24 (TGM) and the late report 1 bird on Nichols Pt. 10/8 (DJH). No reports of either night heron species were received by Records of Vermont Birds (hereafter RVB).

WATERFOWL

A single juv. TUNDRA SWAN was seen on Shelburne Bay 10/12 and 10/13 (TGM,FAP,EBP). Becoming a very controversial bird, Mute Swan is considered an introduced nuisance in Vermont by the Fish and Wildlife Dept. and

attempts are now being made to eradicate the species on the nest sites. Efforts to capture, kill or relocate birds is met with outrage by some and support by others, this editor included. They have

nested on Arrowhead Lk. for a couple years, and the offspring are seen on Lk. Champlain in fall, as 4 in St. Albans Bay 9/20-29 (TGM;FAP,EBP) and 7 near the Sandbar Causeway 11/17 (TGM) indicated; a pair that nested on So. Hero were escapees, and were recaptured in Sept. (DJH). Another bird of questionable origin, BARNACLE GOOSE was noted again in the state, 1 bird at DCWMA 10/20 and 22 (TGM,DJH); a bird known to have escaped from a game farm on Grand I. was seen in Spring, so that any sightings in this area are suspect at best. Snow Goose continued to dazzle the public at DCWMA, with spectacular buildups in numbers to well over 20,000 by mid- to late-Oct (m.obs.). The first arrivals noted there were 3 on 9/18 (TGM), and birds continued well into Nov. toward the end of the period. A few intrepid observers have been reading neck collars for 2-3 years in an effort to help track individuals and monitor the average length of stay at DCWMA. Now annual in small numbers, up to 3 individual ROSS' GOOSE were carefully studied and photographed among snows at DCWMA between 10/11 and 10/23 (TGM;DJH). A good Brant flight of at least 200 birds was noted heading so. off Nichols Pt. 10/1 (DJH), with 41 in the Sandbar area 11/3, 16 near Shelburne Bay 11/9 and 60 in Addison the same day (TGM), and finally 70 off Grand I. 11/13 (DJH) rounding out the total. Nearly every observer reported numbers of Canada Goose as usual, with no particular deviation from norms; one noteworthy report from DCWMA on 10/13 (TGM,DJH) carefully documented the presence of the tiny western race of Canada Goose, *minima* or Cackling Goose. To add interest, another tiny goose thought to be the Richardson's or *butchinsii* race was noted in a flock of larger Canadas in So. Burlington 10/30 (TGM). Treated as an exotic escape, a nonetheless striking RUDDY SHELDUCK was seen in Brandon 10/24 (SSW). Equally striking, and native, Wood Duck was found throughout the state, with notable high counts of 50 at St. Albans Bay 9/20 (RBL,TGM), 29 on Leffert's Pd., Chittenden 9/24 (DM,BM), and 35 in Tinmouth Ch. 9/28 (CJF). The first Green-winged Teal report was of 1 in MNWR 8/15 (NP), the high was 75 in Whitney Ck. marsh, Pantown 10/9 (CJF), and the late report was of 1 f. at Charlotte Town Beach 11/30 (TGM). A total 157 American Black Duck sightings included a pr. off Nichols Pt. 8/5 (DJH),

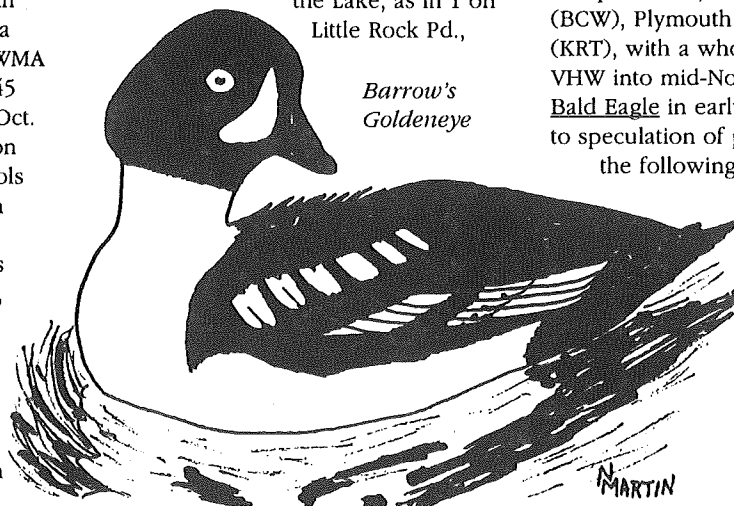
high counts of 17 in Pawlett 10/29 (GRB) and 31 in Manchester Ctr. 11/16 (BWP), with several reports through the end of the period in Nov. Although concentrations of Mallard build up at the Burlington waterfront each fall, the largest numbers reported this season were flocks totaling more than 5000 in the Rouse's Pt./Alburg/Swanton area 11/1 to 11/16 (FAP,EBP;TGM). Very low numbers for Northern Pintail included 1 each at SNA and Herrick's Cove (hereafter HC) 9/15 (WJN), 1 in Tinnmouth Ch. 10/8 (CJF), 2 at DCWMA 10/15 and 10/22 (TGM;SSW), another at SNA 10/27 (WJN) and the last a f. in Shelburne Bay 11/1 (TGM). Also very low, the total 16 for Blue-winged Teal perhaps did not include the normal buildup at DCWMA. The early report was of 1 at SNA 8/25 and then 8 in HC 9/1 (WJN), with 4 on Shelburne Bay 9/1 (TGM) and 3 at DCWMA 9/8 (JRA) the remaining sightings. Northern Shoveler is normally scarce, so that 17 individuals was good and included 4 in HC 9/22 (WJN), 4 in the Sandbar Wildlife Management Area (hereafter SWMA), Milton 10/26 (JEO,WB), then 1 f. at DCWMA 10/27 and 8 at SWMA 11/3 (TGM). Comparable numbers of Gadwall came in, with the early report a family group at Nichols Pt. 8/5 and 1 offshore at Young I. 8/22 (DJH) and the high and late sighting of 4 at SWMA 11/3 (TGM). As with the above three or four species, 12 American Wigeon was average for fall and included 1 at Nichols Pt. 8/27 and 9/8 (DJH), 4 on Shelburne Bay 11/1 (TGM) and 3 still there 11/24 (FAP,EBP). The only Canvasback report was of 2 birds at the Rouse's Pt. Br. 11/16 (TGM). Widely separated on Lk. Champlain, 3 and then 1 Redhead were found respectively so. of the Champlain Br. 10/26 and at the Rouse's Pt. Br. 11/16 (TGM). The early report for Ring-necked Duck came in with 2 in Bridport 9/4 (MBN), then a nice buildup to 200+ birds in the SWMA 11/3 (TGM); the final sighting was 45 on Danby Pd. 11/10 (CJF). By mid-Oct. Greater Scaup can form large rafts on Lk. Champlain, so that 220 off Nichols Pt. 10/8 was normal but only 8 seen on Lk. Champlain 11/17 (SSW) seemed low. Possibly overlooked as a species in large flocks of Greaters, Lesser Scaup was represented by only 1 juv. in MNWR on 8/11 (TGM). The first Oldsquaw sightings were of 2 birds at the Champlain Br. on 11/2, where 11 were seen a week later (TGM); then

reports came from Shelburne Bay where up to 4 birds persisted until at least 11/24 (RDB,EMA;FAP,EBP;SSW). Black Scoter was scattered in small numbers, the first 3 seen on Danby Pd. 10/11 (CJF), 3 more in So. Hero 10/25 (DJH) and the last 1 at Charlotte Town Beach 11/30 (TGM). More numerous was Surf Scoter, as the nearly 30 reported included 2 near Savage I. 9/30, another off I. la Motte 10/5 (RBL), 3 each on Danby and Tinnmouth Pds. 10/11 (CJF) and the late/high counts of 7 each at Grand I. 10/25 (RBL) and on lower Lk. Champlain 10/27 (RDB,EMA). As expected, White-winged Scoter took top scoter honors, with 1 seen on Danby Pd. 10/11 (CJF), high counts of 50 each spotted on lower Lk. Champlain 10/27 (RDB,EMA) and off So. Hero 11/17 (TGM) and the latest 2 birds in Shelburne Bay 11/20 (SSW). Common Goldeneye normally builds in numbers on Lk. Champlain through Nov., so the presence of a juv. at Nichols Pt. through Aug. and Sept. (DJH) was noteworthy, as were sightings away from Lk. Champlain, such as the 2 on Lk. Pinneo, Quechee 10/22 (JMN), and 1 on Lk. Bomoseen 11/30 (CJF). It is fun to see how many Barrow's Goldeneye will appear off Blodgett's Beach, Burlington, each year. This fall, the first arrivals were noted in the Champlain Is., with a drake off the So. Hero railroad causeway 10/20 (DL) and 2 more off Nichols Pt. 10/23 (DJH), but by 11/10 at least 4 drakes and 1 hen were in the Burlington harbor (TGM). Small flocks of 6-10 Bufflehead were noted on Lk. Champlain as early as 10/29 (SSW), and also in Quechee 11/2 (KRT) and Leffert's Pd. 11/6 (DM,BM), but the high count was 21-28 seen in McNeil Cove most of Nov. (TGM). Hooded Merganser was first noted on Lk. Champlain as a single off Nichols Pt. 8/3 (DJH), but many reports came from areas away from the Lake, as in 1 on Little Rock Pd.,

Danby 8/14 (SSW), 2 in the SNA 9/1 (WJN), 12 below Bellows Falls on the Connecticut R. 10/5 (MJL), 1-2 in W. Bolton 10/25 to 11/1 (MC) and 19 on Lk. Bomoseen 11/27 (RWP). The abundant Common Merganser can be found into winter in huge flocks on Lk. Champlain, as the 300 off the e. shore of Grand I. in late Oct. (DJH) illustrated But observers reported numbers away from the Lake in fall, as follows: 2 in So. Londonderry 8/8 (WJN), 5 at Townsend Dam 8/10 (NAB), 15 on Lk. Memphremagog 9/1 (STH), 15 on Silver L., Leicester 9/30 (SSW) and 2-4 on the Connecticut R. near Bellows Falls 10/31 to 11/21 (MJL). Numbers for Red-breasted Merganser fluctuate from year to year; this fall the early sightings were of 1 off Grand I. 9/15 and 3 on Lk. Champlain off Orwell 10/15 (RDB,EMA), with highs of 15 on Lk. Champlain 11/7 (SSW) and ~20 in Shelburne Bay 11/9 (TGM), and up to 9 persisting off Nichols Pt. to the end of the period (DJH). Very sporadic in occurrence, Ruddy Duck was represented by only 1 individual, a drake on Shelburne Bay seen between 10/15 and 11/27 (DJH,TGM;FR).

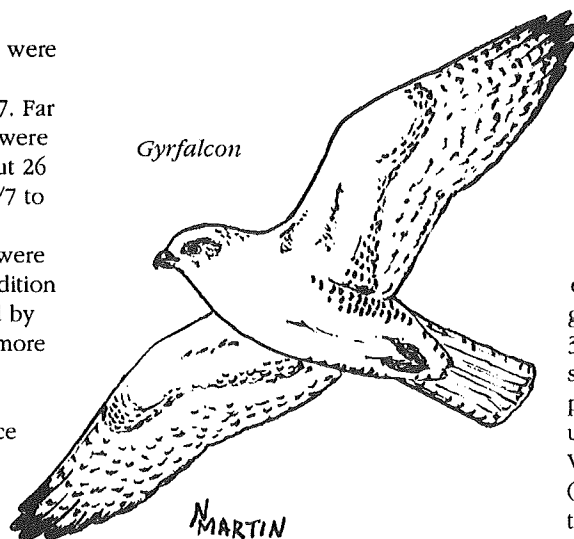
VULTURES, HAWKS AND FALCONS

Down somewhat from previous years, Turkey Vulture was observed in migration from various Vermont Hawk Watch (hereafter VHW) sites, with 101 reported between 8/17 and 10/24. Elsewhere, the early sighting was of 1 in Dorset 8/4 (EFG) and the largest flock size was 50 in Salisbury 8/17 (SSW). Osprey was very widely reported, with evidence of birds on territory statewide. Singles were seen in Aug. from Somerset Res. and Dummerston (NAB), Montpelier (MBN), SNA (WJN), Manchester Ctr. (BWP), Mt. Independence, Orwell (SSW), Bloomfield (BCW), Plymouth (WS) and Hartland (KRT), with a whopping 171 seen by VHW into mid-Nov. The presence of Bald Eagle in early fall in Vermont leads to speculation of potential breeding, as the following Aug. reports illustrated: 1 ad. at DCWMA 8/1 (FAP,EBP), 1 ad. at Somerset Res. 8/5 (ED,ND), 1 in the Newport area 8/7 (STH), 1 along the Connecticut R. in Hartland 8/19 (KRT), and an imm. on Young I. 8/27



Barrow's
Goldeneye

(DJH;MF). An additional 12 eagles were seen from VHW sites, presumably migrating, between 9/12 and 10/17. Far fewer reports of Northern Harrier were received from DCWMA this fall, but 26 birds were tallied by VHW from 9/7 to 11/11; breeding was confirmed at Nichols Pt. where 1f. with 3 juvs. were watched in mid-Aug. (DJH). In addition to 344 Sharp-shinned Hawk tallied by VHW between 9/1 and 10/29, 20 more were reported statewide by 12 observers and 2 were netted by Vermont Institute of Natural Science (hereafter VINS) staff at the Bragdon Nature Preserve (hereafter BNP), Woodstock, in Sept. Cooper's Hawk figures dropped from last year as only 47 were seen by VHW between 9/11 and 11/11, with the remaining 14 reports including 2 in Dorset 8/25 (EFG). Interestingly, twice as many Northern Goshawk reports were received of resident birds, a total 8 compared to only 4 from VHW, the same ratio as in some previous years. The presence of 2 birds in both Tinmouth Ch. 10/3 and Tinmouth 11/28 (CJF) were noteworthy. Apparently becoming quite scarce, Red-shouldered Hawk was reported as follows: 1 in Addison 8/17 (TGM), 1 in W. Bolton 9/6 (MC), 1 in the Newport area 9/9 (STH), 1 ea. in Castleton 9/21 and Danby 10/11 (CJF) and another near Brownell Mt. 10/23 (TGM), with only 10 total from VHW sites between 9/7 and 10/19. Within a narrow three-week window, migrating Broad-winged Hawk figures are compressed to a very few busy days at VHW sites. This fall 2519 birds were tallied between 9/1 and 9/22, with only a handful of others noted by 6 observers in Aug. The ubiquitous Red-tailed Hawk was widely reported by 15 observers, with 536 migrants counted by VHW until the last official count day, 11/12. Many more birds move into the state as winter residents, with additional territorial birds remaining if conditions are favorable. The earliest and only official VHW report for Rough-legged Hawk was of 2 birds from Mt. Philo 9/19. At least 1 lt. morph bird was noted at DCWMA by 10/18 (TGM;JEO,WB), and the only sighting from outside the Champlain Valley (hereafter CV) was of 1 in E. Charleston 10/25 (JB). An average, but always exciting, fall for Golden Eagle resulted in 2 sightings from VHW sites: 1 on Appalachian Gap in Buel's Gore 10/11 and another from Paine Mt. 10/16; another bird was seen briefly at DCWMA



10/18 (DJH;TGM). An intriguing and very early sighting over Simms Pt., Grand I. 9/18 (DJH), may have been this species. American Kestrel was found in good numbers, with a high of 5 in Manchester Ctr. 8/21 (BWP) and 4 in the Brandon-to-Middlebury area 8/25 (SSW), plus an additional 79 seen from VHW sites 9/1 through 10/19. The presence of Merlin in Aug. was suspicious as the species has been found breeding in the nearby Adirondacks as well as New Hampshire, so perhaps birds are residing in Vermont as well. One in Westminster 8/23 (MJL) and another, or perhaps 2, were seen in Newport 8/25 and 9/12 (STH). Birds presumed in passage totaled 5 from VHW sites, with 8 more from observers statewide, including 1 in Bridgewater as late as 11/3 (JWL). The Peregrine Falcon is becoming urbanized in many areas, so that 1 roosting on Grace Congregational Church in Rutland 9/13 (RWP) was not unusual. At least 11 falcons were noted off known breeding sites and 6 more were seen in passage from VHW between 9/22 and 10/29. Two distinctly different GYRFALCON showed up in the DCWMA area in Nov., the first a dark imm. on 11/16 (SWM), and the second, a lighter gray phase, on 11/29 (SDF). They apparently remained in the area, and many birders spent long hours trying to see either of these birds into the winter.

GROUSE THROUGH RAILS

There appears to be a small, persistent population of Ring-necked Pheasant surviving in the Addison Cty. area of the CV, as the following sightings bore out: 1 in Weybridge 9/22 (MBN), 1 m. along Rt. 17 in W. Addison 10/27 (TGM;SSW), 1 at DCWMA 11/6 (EFG) and the last, 1 f. in

Charlotte 11/17 (TGM). It was a good year for Ruffed Grouse, with the following numbers coming in from observers: 9 in Vershire 8/10 (KRH), 6 in Goshen 8/27 (SSW), 5 in Manchester Ctr. 9/1 (BWP), 8 in Reading 9/27 (FMH,EJH) and up to 10 in Pawlett throughout the period (GRB). Apparently Wild Turkey fared as well as the grouse, as flock sizes ranged from 10 to 35 mainly in the central portion of the state; notable sightings throughout the period included 20 in Pawlett 8/9 (GRB), up to 20 in Reading (FMH,EJH), ~25 in Vershire (KRH), up to 30 on Grand I. (DJH) and 35 in Dorset 9/12 (SSW). The two Sora sightings were of 1 at the Briley Access, DCWMA 8/1 (FAP,EBP), and another in MNWR 8/15 (NP). Restricted to the CV, Common Moorhen sightings were good this fall; the earliest were 7-9 at Mud Ck., Alburg 8/4 and 8/19 (FAP,EBP), then 10 in the St. Albans Bay area 8/24 (TGM;FAP,EBP), 5-6 at ECWMA 9/1 (SSW;TGM) and finally a late report of 2 in Shelburne Bay 10/14 (SSW). A known breeder in this area, 10 American Coot were found on Missisquoi Bay on 10/1 (TGM), and a single showed up in Burlington harbor 11/30 (SSW;TGM) where it apparently spent the winter.

SHOREBIRDS

The first of nearly 15 Black-bellied Plover reports were of 1 ea. at Winooski River Delta Park (hereafter WRDP), Colchester, and along Shelburne Bay 9/12 (FAP,EBP), and the high/late count was 5-7 birds at Nichols Pt. 10/27 (DJH). A single American Golden Plover was discovered at WRDP on 9/21 (FAP,EBP) for the only record this fall. Semipalmated Plover was found in 3 locations: 3 along Dunsmore Rd., St. Albans 8/4 (FAP,EBP), 2 at Shelburne Bay 8/6 and the last 3 in Essex Jct. 9/21 (TGM). Flock sizes for Killdeer ranged from 30 to 60 birds through Aug. and Sept. in So. Londonderry (WJN), Pawlett (GRB), Charlotte (JEO,WB) and the Alburg area (TGM;FAP,EBP), and at least 6 remained in W. Swanton to 11/1 (FAP,EBP). An early Greater Yellowlegs showed at Nichols Pt. 8/2 (DJH), the high was a flock of 30 at DCWMA 10/6 (JRA) and the latest was 1 bird in SWMA 11/1 (FAP,EBP). Far fewer Lesser Yellowlegs were noted; the total 21 birds included the high and early record of 10 birds on Prunier Rd., Weybridge 8/10 (FAP,EBP), and the last 2 along Rt. 2, No. Hero 10/21 (TGM). An early migrant,

Solitary Sandpiper moved through mainly in Aug. when a high of 3 was tallied at DCWMA 8/17 (SSW), but 1 in Woodstock 9/3 (JMN) and 2 in Weybridge 10/12 (FAP,EBP) were a bit late. More widespread than the few records would indicate, Spotted Sandpiper was noted in the CV, where a high of 13 at DCWMA 8/21 (BWP) was the only good count, and 1+ in So. Londonderry 8/4 and 14 (WJN) was the only sighting away from the CV. Upland Sandpiper remains near the breeding sites in family groups through Aug. before moving out, and this fall 4 observers reported groups of 5, 7 and 9 in the DCWMA between 8/1 and 8/17 (TGM,FAP,EBP,SSW). A life bird for the observer, and rarely seen in Vermont, a WHIMBREL was carefully described from Bell I., Lk. Memphramagog 8/13 (STH,BPA). Ruddy Turnstone was recorded twice, 2 on Young I. off Nichols Pt. 8/29 (DJH) and another from a boat on the "inland sea" e. of Grand I. 9/15 (RBL,RDB,EMA). The 10 or 11 Sanderling reports included 4+ above the Weybridge Dam 8/21 and 8/23 (TGM,FAP,EBP) and then 6 off Nichols Pt. 10/16 (DJH). Very low, ~20 Semipalmated Sandpiper sightings involved 9 birds in St. Albans 8/4 (FAP,EBP), 3-5 more at the Weybridge Dam between 8/10 and 8/23 (TGM,FAP,EBP) and finally 5 in DCWMA 8/17 (SSW). The first of nearly 35 Least Sandpiper were 2 on Nichols Pt. 8/1 and 8/2 (DJH), a good flock of 20 at the Weybridge Dam 8/21 (FAP,EBP) with at least 1 record coming from SNA out of the CV on 8/11 (WJN). Often found on short grass, Pectoral Sandpiper was first noted in Essex Jct. 9/21 and then ~12 were on the DCWMA goose fields 10/9 (TGM); the last record was 2 in Charlotte 10/25 (FAP,EBP,JEO,WB). One of the latest migrants, and usually found only "offshore" on islands in Lk. Champlain, Purple Sandpiper was noted 3 times: 3 on Gull I. off No. Hero 10/25 (RBL), then 6 on Rock Dunder off Shelburne Pt. and 1 on the Burlington breakwater, both 11/11 (RBL,TGM). Another late shorebird, the first 3 Dunlin were found on Popasquash I. 9/30 (RBL), 3 more on Gull I. 10/25 (RBL), a single off lower Lk. Champlain 10/27 (RDB,EMA) and the last 7 along the Sandbar causeway 11/1 (FAP,EBP). A single Stilt Sandpiper was found in an odd spot, Savage I. off So. Hero 9/20 (RBL,TGM), for the only record. As further

evidence of lack of appropriate habitat in the CV, the only sighting for any dowitcher sp. was of 5 Short-billed Dowitcher from the SNA 9/1 (WJN). Careful searching can often turn up good numbers of Common Snipe; the earliest was 1 bird in Woodstock 8/1 (CRP), but the highs were of 10 at Mud Ck. 8/4 and 15 on Black Ck., St. Albans 8/19 (FAP,EBP), with the latest 1 on Nichols Pt. 11/2 (DJH). Secretive but findable when "hunted," American Woodcock was spotted by 7 observers in wooded areas between 8/20 and 11/18 in the following towns: Pawlett (GRB), Wardsboro (NAB), Tinmouth and So. Wallingford (CJF), Vershire (KRH), Woodstock (CRP), Rochester and Brandon (SSW) and Huntington (RBL).

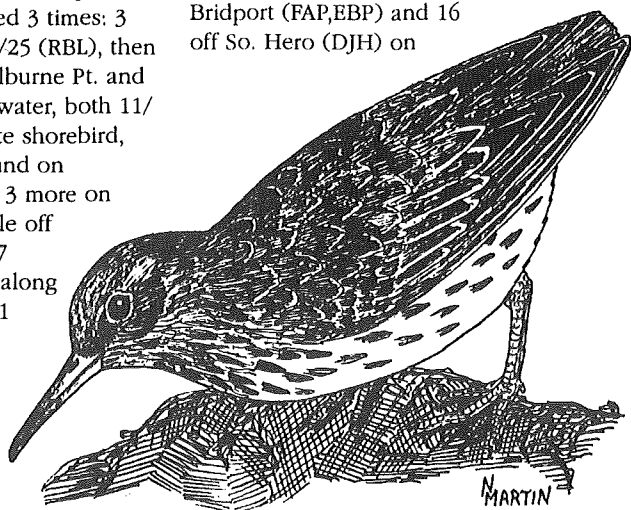
GULLS AND TERNS

At least 1 and possibly 2 POMARINE JAEGER sightings were noted this fall: 1 along the w. shore of Grand I. 11/9 (DJH) remains unconfirmed, but another on Lk. Champlain from the Tri-Town Water Plant in Addison 11/23 (JEO,JRA) was accepted by RVB. Very frustrating for the observer, a possible FRANKLIN'S GULL sighting could not be corroborated, nor accepted by the RVB committee; seen 3 times at some distance, the possible imm. was off Kibbe Pt., So. Hero on 9/8, 9/13 and 10/7 (DJH). Little Gull was found regularly in small numbers within large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls throughout the "inland sea" no. of Sandbar causeway to St. Albans Bay. Between 9/7 and 11/15 an estimated 30+ birds were encountered, mainly from boat trips (RBL,DKL,TGM;RDB,EMA,FAP,EBP,DJH). The increase in early Aug. sightings of Bonaparte's Gull remains a mystery. Eleven seen off Willow Pt., Bridport (FAP,EBP) and 16 off So. Hero (DJH) on

8/1 are very early for migrants, if they were. The more normal buildup among the Champlain Is. in mid- to late-Sept. had 2000 in St. Albans Bay (RBL,TGM), 4500 off No. Hero (RBL) and 6000+ off So. Hero (DJH); birds lingered further so. in Lk. Champlain to the end of the period (SSW,FAP,EBP,TGM). Ring-billed Gull was widely reported in flocks as high as 1000 birds throughout the fall period. Far fewer Herring Gull numbers came in, but included an average buildup of 200+ in the Burlington harbor area by 11/23 (TGM). A first yr. Iceland Gull showed up on the Burlington breakwater 11/26 (TGM) and remained at least through Nov. An excellent find, an ad. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL in winter plumage was found on the Burlington breakwater 11/29 (JEO) but was undocumented. Numbers for Great Black-backed Gull appeared stable as 105 were noted in Burlington 11/26 (TGM), with others scattered around Lk. Champlain (m.obs.), on the Connecticut R. (WJN;MJL) and on Lks. Dunmore (SSW) and Memphremagog (STH). Seen well from a boat, 1 imm. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE was spotted near Savage I. in Lk. Champlain 9/15 (RBL,RDB,EMA), and probably the same bird was seen in the area a few days later (DJH). Quite the fall for gulls, the finale came with well documented reports of 2 imm. SABINE'S GULL seen off Kibbe Pt., So. Hero, in the "inland sea" 9/8 through 9/13 (DJH,TGM,FAP,EBP). A very encouraging count of Common Tern totaled 400-450 birds on the E. Alburg railroad bridge 8/24 (TGM,FAP,EBP), with 250 remaining in the same area 9/21 and dwindling to 70 by 9/29 (FAP,EBP). A bird showing with increasing frequency in Vermont, a very late ad. FORSTER'S TERN was present at WRDP from 11/1 to 11/7 (DJH,TGM,FAP,EBP). Seen in 1's and 2's, Black Tern hung around the Champlain Is. from 8/3 to 9/12 (DJH,TGM,FAP,EBP), and 1 bird was noted at SNA 8/11 (WJN).

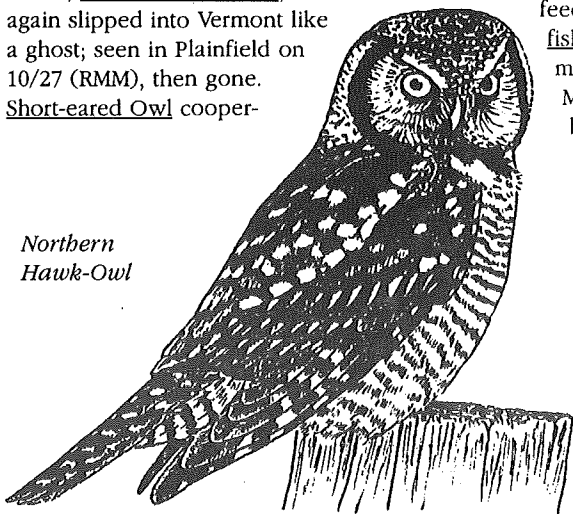
DOVES THROUGH NIGHTJARS

Rock Dove remained steady statewide in urban and farmland areas. Twenty-four observers reported Mourning Dove, with highs at the end of the period of 30 in Cornwall (JRA), 37 in Reading (FMH,ELH), 40 on Grand I. (DJH) and 118 in Richmond (TGM). The first of 6 Black-billed Cuckoo reports was 1 in



Purple Sandpiper

Newport 8/1 (STH), then 1 ea. on Grand I. 8/9 and 8/30 (DJH), 1 in DCWMA 9/1 (TGM) and finally a bird netted in BNP, Woodstock in Aug. (VINS). Not unusual, only 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoo reports were received: 1 heard on Market St., Bridport 9/1 (TGM), and another in Winhall Hollow 9/14 (WJN). From their stronghold on Grand I. came the only report of Eastern Screech-Owl, 1 bird on Nichols Pt. Aug. to Sept. (DJH). Singles of Great Horned Owl were seen or heard as follows: Dorset on 9/22 and 10/12 (EFG), in Tinmouth 10/3 (CJF), on Grand I. 10/19 (DJH), Clarendon 11/10 (CJF), Brandon 11/14 (SSW), Peru 11/15 (GRB) and finally in Dummerston 11/21 (MJL). Snowy Owl reports probably involved 3 or 4 birds, as follows: 1-2 in Burlington/Winooski 11/13 and 11/25 (TGM;RBL;BP), another in Ferrisburgh 11/16-17 (SSW;MBN) and the last at the Berlin airport 11/24 (BP). The bird that put Vermont on the birding map this fall was Northern Hawk-Owl, where no less than 4 confirmed sightings were documented. The first 3 were found by the end of the period, as follows: 1 along West St., Cornwall, 11/21 (AP;m.obs.) stayed all winter; 1 in Brandon 11/28 (SSW) didn't stay; 1 along Rt. 100 near the Green Mt. Club, Waterbury 11/30 (?) (TSA;m.obs.) (Ed. note: the date on the report said "early Nov", but I believe it should have been early Dec. which would have meant out of this report's period) - this bird stayed all winter. The fourth bird settled in at a horse farm in Bridport in Dec. and also stayed all winter. The common resident Barred Owl was reported this fall from Pawlett (GRB), West Bolton (MC), Tinmouth (CJF), Dorset (EFG), Reading (FMH,EJH), Wallingford and Leicester (SSW). The elusive and much sought after northern visitor, GREAT GRAY OWL, once again slipped into Vermont like a ghost; seen in Plainfield on 10/27 (RMM), then gone. Short-eared Owl cooper-



Northern
Hawk-Owl

ated for birders in 2 spots this fall; 2 were seen from West St., Cornwall, along the Lemon Fair R. 11/24 (MM) and at least 3 were consistent at the corners of Slang Rd. and West St., DCWMA from 11/29 on (FAP,EBP;m.obs.). Two observers were treated to a Saw-whet Owl perched on their lawn chairs in St. Albans Town 8/2 and 8/3 (DM,BM), the only report received. Most of the 7 Common Nighthawk sightings were between 8/17 and 9/4, so the 1 in Panton 9/29 (MBN) stands out as late; the rest were from Brandon and Orwell (SSW), Georgia (RDB,EMA), Bloomfield (BCW) and Winhall (WJN).

SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The bulk of the Chimney Swift population had departed by late Aug., with highs of 12 in W. Bolton 8/4 (MC) and 20 in Danby 8/23 (SSW), so the 1 in Tinmouth 9/28 (CJF) represents a late bird. Most Ruby-throated Hummingbird reports refer to feeder birds, so observers usually report the last date they are seen, and this date averages the last 2 wks. in Sept. The average "flock" size ranges from 3-7 birds, and this fall the following sites were representative: Georgia (RDB,EMA), Lincoln (JRA), Wardsboro (NAB), Barnard (JNF), Vershire (KRH), Reading (FMH,EJH), Woodstock (CRP), Manchester Ctr. (BWP) and Brandon (SSW); 1 tardy bird was seen at flowers on Nichols Pt. 10/18 (DJH), then headed so.. Another elusive visitor, the SELASPHORUS sp. hummingbird, was suspected again this fall, but never substantiated. Most probably referring to Rufous if they were this genus, 2 birds were noted; 1 in So. Hero 9/12 (fide

DJH) and another at a So. Royalton feeder 9/24 (CEJ). Belted Kingfisher was well reported with many prs. noted, a high of 5 in Manchester Ctr. 8/21 (BWP) and birds lingering to the end of the period (DJH;SSW;CRP;TGM). Still in residence at their Bridport site on Market Rd., Red-headed Woodpecker remains a very scarce and local bird in Vermont. One or two birds at this spot between 8/1 and 9/2 (FAP,EBP;TGM;SSW) were the only reports of this species. Only 17 Yellow-

bellied Sapsucker reports, never more than 2 at a time, seemed low but were well scattered statewide and augmented by 3 birds netted at BNP Aug. to Oct. (VINS). Our two common residents, Downy Woodpecker and Hairy Woodpecker, were reported in nearly identical numbers, about 32 each, and usually as 2-4 birds associated with feeders. The Northern Flicker is frequently seen in some numbers as they move out in Sept. and Oct., so highs of 7 ea. in So. Alburg 9/22 (TGM) and Danby 10/4 (CJF) were typical, but 1 bird in Charlotte on 11/16 (SSW) was quite late. Often conspicuous and noisy, Pileated Woodpecker was very well reported statewide by 20 observers, mainly as single birds except for 1-3 in Lincoln (JRA) and up to 4 in Georgia (RDB,EMA) for the period.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS

The only observations of Olive-sided Flycatcher came from so. Vermont, where 2 and then 1 were found in So. Londonderry 8/13 and 8/29 and another in HC 9/22 (WJN), with 1 bird caught in nets at BNP in Aug. (VINS). Eastern Wood-Pewee can be conspicuous into fall as they often sing late into the season; high counts of 6 were seen on Mt. Independence, Orwell 8/13 (SSW), in MNWR 8/14 (NP) and DCWMA 8/30 (JRA); 4 birds were netted at BNP in Sept. (VINS) and the last sighting was of an imm. along a So. Hero railroad bed 10/5 (TGM). Only 2 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher were seen, 1 ea. in Duxbury on 8/27 and 9/9 (FAP,EBP), although 3 more were captured at BNP Aug. to Sept. (VINS). Observers claimed 11 different Alder Flycatcher, it is hoped based on call note and/or habitat, with highs of 2-5 in Dorset 8/1-3 (EFG) and 3 in Lincoln 8/5 (JRA), with 1 very late bird in Dorset 10/30 (EFG). As in the above species, the same ID criteria should apply to Willow Flycatcher; 2+ birds in So. Londonderry between 8/2 and 8/6, and another in Reading 8/27 (FMH,EJH) were the only ones reported. Later in the season, or with migrants, the ID is best left at Empidonax sp. or "Trail's," as in the 22 birds netted in the BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS) and 2 birds in Winhall 9/6 and 9/21 (WJN). Less equivocal, Least Flycatcher was identified by 6 observers between 8/1 and 9/22, with an additional very late bird in Dorset 10/24 (EFG) and 12 more captured by VINS staff. Eastern

Phoebe reports were widespread and included highs of 4 in Lincoln 9/15 (JRA), 5 in Dorset 9/22 (EFG), 4 in Wardsboro through 9/25 (NAB) and up to 6 in Vershire through 10/15 (KRH), with 27, 24 and 5 birds netted at BNP in Aug., Sept. and Oct. (VINS). The very few Great Crested Flycatcher reports included 1 in Burlington 8/2 (RDB,EMA), 1 in Manchester Ctr. on 8/21 and 8/31 (BWP), 1 on Ward Hill, So. Duxbury 8/26 (FAP,EBP), and the latest 1 captured at BNP in Sept. (VINS). Although the high count for Eastern Kingbird of 30+ birds came as expected from DCWMA 8/21 (BWP), several observers had good counts elsewhere, as in 4 in Vershire 8/1 (KRH), 5 in Dorset 8/8 (EFG) and 4 in Brandon 8/9 to 8/25 (SSW), with the late report of 1 at HC 10/6 (WJN). By Nov. Horned Lark had formed flocks as noted: 12 at DCWMA 11/3 (JRA), 5 in So. Londonderry 11/5 (WJN), 17 and 19 in Whiting 11/27 (RWP), 30 at DCWMA 11/27 (SSW) and 75 on Grand I. 11/29 (DJH). A staging area for Purple Martin produced an impressive 235 in Grand I. on 8/22, with 8 remaining until 9/3 (DJH), but these were the only reports received. Tree Swallow also staged in good numbers in the CV, with high counts of 500 in Cornwall 8/29 (MBN), 1000 in Weybridge 9/7 (FAP,EBP) and 300+ at DCWMA 9/30 (TGM), and the late report of 20 still in Weybridge 10/12 (FAP,EBP). Fewer numbers of Northern Rough-winged Swallow came in, but included 50+ in the DCWMA-to-Orwell vicinity 8/21 (BWP) and 45 on Grand I. 9/14 dwindling to 9 there by 9/18 (DJH). Only 2 observers reported Bank Swallow this fall: 1 in So. Londonderry 8/2 and 11 over HC 8/11 (WJN), then 1, 3 and 3 on Grand I. respectively on 8/3, 8/11 and 9/4 (DJH). Cliff Swallow fared a bit better, as the total of 22 included 1+ on Nichols Pt. 8/3 (DJH), a high of 10 in Putney 8/17 (WJN), 2-3 in Manchester in mid-Aug. (BWP) and a late bird over Allen Bros. Marsh (hereafter ABM), Westminster 9/1 (WJN). Barn Swallow was the most widespread of this group reported, although flock sizes ranged smaller than Tree Swallow, from 15-50 birds in Aug. in the following places: Manchester Ctr. (BWP), Winhall and HC (WJN), Weybridge (MBN) and the Newport area (STH). The sighting of a large, white-bellied race of Barn Swallow, possibly *rustica* from Eurasia, in Dorset 8/4 (EFG) was quite noteworthy.

JAYS THROUGH WRENS

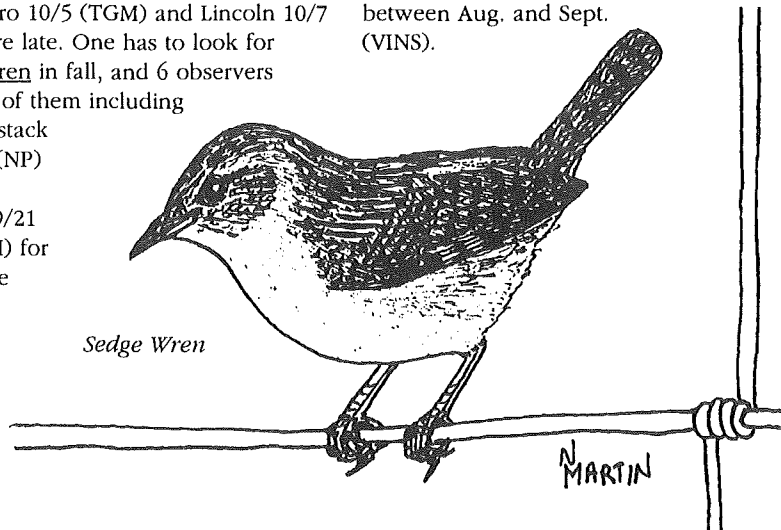
Apparently stable, Blue Jay was reported in normal numbers statewide throughout the period, despite published reports that in some areas they had suffered a crash. This fall, American Crow gathered in impressive flocks, but was not reported from hawk watch sites in any mass movement. High counts included 250+ on No. Hero 9/8 (DJH), 300 in Georgia 10/20 (RDB,EMA) and ~775 in Dorset 11/10 (EFG). Common Raven was well reported by 15 observers this fall, mainly as 1-4 birds with notable exceptions of 47 on Mt. Philo 10/5 (migrants?) (JRA) and 21 birds in Vershire 10/22 (KRH). Possibly underreported, Black-capped Chickadee numbers remain somewhat conservative as most observers don't see every bird at their feeders; the 35 reported from Dorset for the period (EFG) is probably more in the ballpark than the average "6-10" totals. In contrast, Tufted Titmouse remained a scarce bird except in protected or southerly locations. Thirteen observers reported a total 27 birds, all from feeders with a high of 2 ad. with 3 y. in Proctor 8/13 (RWP). Red-breasted Nuthatch may also have been missed, as most reporters depend on their feeder birds and have no way to assess the vast majority still in the woods; still, the total 36 noted included a high of 7 in Reading 10/23 (FMH,EJH). More widespread, White-breasted Nuthatch numbers were good for the period, with a high of up to 10 in Dorset (EFG). Brown Creeper reports came in at only 14, including 4 on Nichols Pt. 11/9 (DJH) and 3 captured at BNP in Sept./Oct. (VINS). Becoming inconspicuous in Aug., and often gone by Oct., House Wren numbers were low, with only 13 reported; up to 4 in Dorset through 9/15 (EFG) was high, and birds in So. Hero 10/5 (TGM) and Lincoln 10/7 (JRA) were late. One has to look for Winter Wren in fall, and 6 observers found 13 of them including 4 on Haystack Mt. 8/16 (NP) and 3 in Reading 9/21 (FMH,EJH) for highs. The first in 4 years, a SEDGE WREN was discovered off

Hawkins Rd. in Ferrisburgh near Little Otter Ck. 9/15 (PS), a mere half mi. so. of where a wren was seen and heard in late June to early July and then left. Six to 7 Marsh Wren were located, all in cattail habitat from Aug. to Oct., by 4 observers, and all singles except for 3-4 at Nichols Pt. in Aug. (DJH); the late bird was in Tinmouth Ch. 10/8 to 10/13 (CJF).

KINGLETS THROUGH THRUSHES

Despite the few observers, Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers were impressive with highs of 6 on Mt. Mansfield 8/15 (NP), 10 in So. Duxbury 9/19 (FAP,EBP) and 10 in Ripton 10/1 (SSW). Ruby-crowned Kinglet moved late as usual, but in very small numbers; the highest count was 5 in So. Duxbury 9/19 (FAP,EBP) and only 15 were netted at the BNP in Oct. (VINS). Eighteen observers reported Eastern Bluebird in normal numbers, with high counts of 9 in Lincoln 9/15 (JRA), 24 in Dorset 9/29 (EFG), 7 in Brandon 9/30 (SSW) and 8 in Addison 10/23 (TGM); the late record was of 2 birds in Brandon 11/22 (SSW). Veery records started with 1 at HC 8/11 (WJN) but never increased to more than 2 at a time as in Ripton 8/21 (SSW) and Dorset 8/22 (EFG), although 17 birds were netted at BNP in Aug./Sept. (VINS). One Bicknell's Thrush was identified at the Putney hawk lookout on 8/17 (WJN) for the only report, and only 2 Swainson's Thrush were seen, 1 in Winhall 8/13 (WJN) and the other in So. Duxbury 9/19 (FAP,EBP); 21 Swainson's were captured in nets at BNP in Sept./Oct. (VINS). Far more Hermit Thrush reports were received, including highs of 6-7 in Dorset 10/13 (EFG) and an impressive 62 netted in Woodstock between Aug. and Sept. (VINS).

Sedge Wren



Reported in singles only, 8 Wood Thrush seemed low but perhaps average for this species, as an additional 14 were captured at the BNP banding station, including a late 1 in Oct. (VINS). American Robin gathers in large flocks, often wintering in the 1000's in the CV when conditions permit, so it is not surprising for observers to report groups of 50-100 or more in fall. This fall was average as a flock of ~80 in Charlotte 11/30 (TGM) indicated, and birds netted in Woodstock totaled 19 in Aug., 19 in Sept., 78 in Oct. and 4 in Nov. (VINS).

MIMIDS THROUGH VIREOS

Statewide reports of Gray Catbird were normal, and included highs of 11 in Dorset 8/1-2 (EFG) and 20 at HC 8/11 (WJN), with capture totals at the BNP station of 19 in Aug., 41 in Sept. and 4 in Oct. (VINS). Remaining very local and scarce, Northern Mockingbird was found only 3 times: 1 in Shoreham 10/29 (SSW), 1 in Shelburne 11/1 (FAP,EBP) and the last on Nichols Pt. 11/2 (DJH). Only 1 or 2 Brown Thrasher records were submitted, by 1 observer: 1 in So. Londonderry 8/1 and another of the same bird there 8/16 (WJN); 1 bird netted at BNP in Sept. was late (VINS), as in all likelihood most of this species has departed the state by early Aug. An early flock of American Pipit, 10 birds in ABM 9/15 (WJN), was followed by 8 in Weybridge 9/28, the high of 20 in Addison 10/25 (FAP,EBP) and finally "many" seen in a plowed field in Charlotte the next day (JEO,WB). Bohemian Waxwing did not appear before the end of the period, but Cedar Waxwing made a widespread, impressive showing throughout the period, with high counts of 90+ in Manchester Ctr. 8/31 (BWP), 100 at HC 9/11 (WJN) and ~75 in Dorset 9/14 (EFG). Nothing like the previous fall, but at least 7 single Northern Shrike reports came in as early as 11/10 as follows: Bristol Pd. (JRA), Grand I. (DJH), Addison and Button Bay (TGM), E. Montpelier (RBL), No. Pomfret (DA) and Cornwall (DR). Flock sizes for European Starling ranged from 100's to well over 2000 in several places statewide. Solitary "Blue-headed" Vireo sightings totaled 15, with the first 1 in Dorset 8/4 (EFG), a high of 3 on Mt. Philo 9/28 (TGM) and the latest 1 also on Mt. Philo 10/5 (JRA). A bird that falls silent very early, Yellow-throated Vireo was seen only twice, 1 in Woodstock 8/1 and another there 9/16 (CRP). In contrast, Warbling Vireo sings well into

autumn; however, only 10 birds were found in 1's and 2's, and included a singing bird at the New Haven hawk watch site 9/14 (RWP) plus 5 captured at BNP in Aug./Sept. (VINS) that were *not* singing. Philadelphia Vireo is more numerous than the few records indicated: 1 on Ward Hill, So. Duxbury 9/4 (FAP,EBP), 1 seen in Dorset 9/19 was the 2nd sighting in 11 years (EFG) and 3 more netted at BNP in Sept. (VINS) were the only reports. Down in numbers from previous years, Red-eyed Vireo was nonetheless widely reported, but highs of more than a handful were rare. The 6 in Dorset 9/5 (EFG) was highest, an imm. in Weybridge 10/11 (MBN) was latest and 29 birds netted by VINS staff in Aug./Sept. rounded out the total.

WOOD WARBLERS

A hybrid between Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler, Brewster's Warbler, was seen in Dorset 8/3 (EFG) and yet another of the same type was captured at BNP in Aug. (VINS). The total of 6 Tennessee Warbler reports involved individuals in So. Londonderry 8/26 (WJN), Bridgewater early Sept. (JWL) and Tinmouth 9/28 (CJF), with 2 in So. Duxbury 9/10 and 1 more there 9/22 (FAP,EBP). A single imm. Orange-crowned Warbler was a good find near a So. Hero marsh 10/5 (TGM). Nashville Warbler was first seen in Winhall 8/13 (WJN), had a high count of 10 in Lincoln 9/1 (JRA) and a very late record in Reading 10/25 (FMH,EJH); an additional 10 were netted at BNP (VINS). Northern Parula was scarce, with a first 1 in So. Duxbury 8/24 (FAP,EBP), then 2 ea. on Mt. Philo (TGM) and in Alburg (FAP,EBP) 9/29 as the late date and only 1 captured by VINS staff in Sept. Not all the Yellow Warbler crowd had departed early, as 3 were in Dorset 8/2 (EFG), 4 at MNWR 8/15 (NP), a high of 6 in Manchester 8/21 (BWP) and 1 stayed in Dorset as late as 9/9 (EFG). Of the total 26 Chestnut-sided Warbler sightings, 10 in So. Duxbury 8/23 (FAP,EBP) was high, and 1 in Reading 10/22 (FMH,EJH) was the late record; 4 birds were banded at BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS). A fair showing for Magnolia Warbler included highs of 5 ea. in Woodford St. Pk., Woodford 8/17 (NP), and So. Duxbury 8/23 (FAP,EBP), with the late record 1 bird on Mt. Philo 9/28 (TGM); 11 more were netted at BNP before Oct. (VINS). Cape May Warbler was noted as follows: 2 in Molly Stark St. Pk, Wilmington 8/16 and 2 more in

Woodford 8/17 (NP), then 1 in So. Duxbury 8/26 (FAP,EBP) and the last sighting 1 f. in BNP 9/11 (CCR). Good numbers of Black-throated Blue Warbler were seen, including the first 5 in Rochester 8/12 and a high of 8 in Goshen 9/16 (SSW), leading to a total 34 seen plus 10 more captured in BNP into Oct. (VINS). Easily the most numerous in this group, Yellow-rumped Warbler was widespread, with highest numbers in Oct. such as 25 at HC on 10/2 (WJN) and ~50 in So. Hero 10/5 (TGM), and birds into Nov. in Shrewsbury (SSW) and Middlebury (JRA); only 17 birds were captured at BNP in Sept./Oct. (VINS). Black-throated Green Warbler was reported 60 times by 11 observers, the first being 2 in Rochester 8/12 (SSW), a high of 12 in So. Duxbury 9/9 (FAP,EBP), 1 bird in Reading as late as 10/6 (FMH,EJH) with 12 added at BNP in Aug./Sept. (VINS). The 22 Blackburnian Warbler sightings included 1 in Reading 8/5 (FMH,EJH) as early, 8 in Woodford St. Pk. 8/17 (NP) as high and 1 on Mt. Philo 9/15 (TGM) as late, with only an additional 2 netted in BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS). Pine Warbler was found on Mt. Elmore 9/2 (RDB,EMA), then 2 on Mt. Philo and 1 in So. Alburg 9/22 (TGM) for the only records this fall. Usually missed, Prairie Warbler was found only once, a m. in Vershire 9/9 (KRH). Often quite late, Palm Warbler was first found in So. Londonderry, a "Western" type on 9/30 (WJN), then 3 in So. Hero 10/5 and another in Shelburne 10/10 (TGM;FAP,EBP), a "Yellow" type in So. Londonderry 10/21 (WJN) and finally the last record in Charlotte 10/25 (JEO,WB). Bay-breasted Warbler was noted only 3 times: 1 in Molly Stark St. Pk. 8/16 (NP), another in So. Duxbury 9/5 (FAP,EBP) and the last on Mt. Philo 9/15 (TGM). Often confused with the above very similar species, Blackpoll Warbler was identified 7 times, 1 early in Rochester 8/12 (SSW) and the high and late record of 3 in Tinmouth Ch. 10/2 (CJF), with 1 additional bird captured by VINS staff in Sept.; none of the observers took the easy way out by calling any of them simply "Bay-polls." Black-and-white Warbler had left the area by late-Sept., with most reports in Aug., including highs of 4 in Woodford St. Pk. 8/17 (NP), "several" in Lincoln 8/24 (JRA), and 8 more banded at BNP in Aug./Sept. (VINS), leading to a total 28 records. American Redstart was conspicuous as the total 25 sightings reflected; 2 in Dorset 8/1 were early and 5 there 8/3

(EFG) were high, with 1 in Woodstock 9/26 (CRP) the late record and an additional 4 netted at BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS) added to the total. Aug. sightings of Ovenbird probably reflected birds still near territories, hence figures were higher, as in 3-4 in Vershire 8/1 (KRH) and prs. in Lincoln (JRA), Reading (FMH,EJH) and Rochester (SSW) in addition to a singing bird in Woodstock 8/31 (JMN); the 13 netted at BNP in Sept. by VINS staff reflected birds in passage. Northern Waterthrush was seen only once, a bird at the Brandon Training School 8/12 (SSW), but 3 and then 1 were banded in Woodstock in Aug. and Sept. (VINS). Rarely seen, or especially heard into Aug., the Louisiana Waterthrush was in fact seen in Rochester 8/20 (SSW) and then 1 was heard singing along Turnpike Rd., Norwich, as late as 8/26 (CCR); 1 bird was captured in BNP nets in Aug. (VINS). Although not accepted by the RVB review committee partly because of the very early date, a possible sighting of CONNECTICUT WARBLER took place in Rochester 8/12 (SSW). The first of only 6+ reports for Mourning Warbler was in Rupert 8/15 (SSW), with 4-5 sightings in So. Duxbury by mid-Sept. (FAP,EBP) for the high, and only 1 more caught at BNP by VINS staff in Aug. Common Yellowthroat numbers were healthy, the total 58 observed being matched by 58 more netted at BNP Aug. to Oct. (VINS); high counts came from 5 in Manchester Ctr. 8/21 (BWP), 6 in Lincoln 9/1 (JRA) and 7 in Dorset 9/14 (EFG), with late honors going to 2 birds in Brandon 10/18 (SSW). The 5 Wilson's Warbler reports included 2 in So. Duxbury 8/23 and 1 in Bridport 9/1 (FAP,EBP), then 1 in Reading 9/14 (FMH,EJH) and the last a banded bird at BNP in Aug. (VINS). An average total of 24 for Canada Warbler consisted of 1 early in Dorset on 8/3 (EFG), highs of 5 in Woodford St. Pk. 8/17 (NP) and 5 in So. Duxbury 8/23 (FAP,EBP), the late bird in Brandon 9/27 (SSW) and an additional 10 caught at BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS). A very rare autumn sighting of YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT took place near I-89 at the So. Barre exit, Berlin, on 8/13 (LNM).

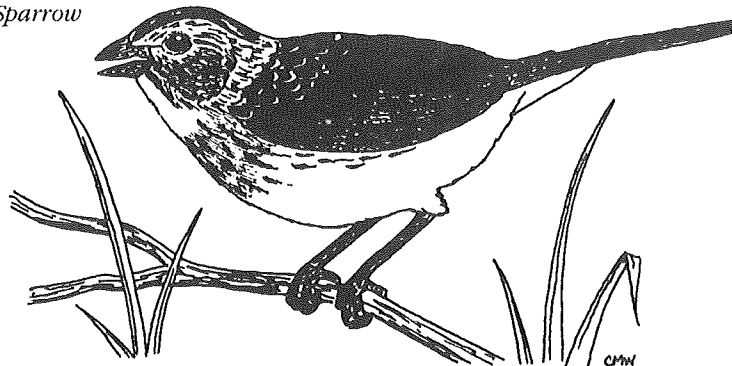
TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS

A lackluster showing for Scarlet Tanager, with a total 16 sightings and only 3 more netted at VINS, included no more than 1-2 at a time, and 1 late sighting at HC 10/2 (FAP,EBP). Northern Cardinal was

underreported, although widespread with a high of 6 in Dorset 8/6 (EFG) and a number of prs. noted from feeders for a total 25 sightings, plus only 2 netted by VINS staff. Somewhat better totals for Rose-breasted Grosbeak included highs of 6 in Vershire up to 8/10 (KRH) and 4 in Ripton 8/28 (MBN), with a late record of 1 in Dorset 9/19 (EFG) and 4 captured at BNP Aug./Sept. (VINS). Another late singer, Indigo Bunting often remains on territory as the many Aug. sightings may have indicated; the total 23 had 1 late bird in Brandon 10/13 (SSW) and was supplemented by 9 more banded at BNP through Sept. (VINS). Eastern Towhee often goes undetected; this fall 1 was found in Pawlett 9/24 (GRB), 2 more in Tinmouth 10/3 (CJF) and only 1 captured at BNP in Oct. (VINS). However, a probable report of the western "Spotted" form of Towhee came from W. Arlington 8/1 (CSC) but went undocumented; the importance being that the AOU has now officially split this form into full species status and this would have been a notable record. The first 3 of 79 American Tree Sparrow showed on Market Rd., Bridport 10/26 (JEO,WB), but built up in Nov. into modest flocks such as 21 in Dorset 11/1 (EFG) and 10 on Grand I. 11/27 (DJH); of interest were the 13 netted at BNP in Oct., not Nov. (only 2). Chipping Sparrow was noted by more than 20 observers in very good numbers, including highs of 15 in ea. in Dorset 8/5 (EFG), So. Londonderry 9/24 (WJN) and HC 10/2 (FAP,EBP), then 50 in So. Londonderry 9/24 (WJN) and 20 in Weybridge 10/10 (MBN); the late record was a bird at a Chittenden feeder through 11/23 (DM,BM). The few Field Sparrow reports totaled 17, with a high of 10 in So. Londonderry 8/20 (WJN) and 2 in Brandon as late as 10/13 (SSW); only 1 was netted at VINS. The 4+ Vesper Sparrow along Townhouse Rd., Addison 8/17 (TGM), may still have been on territory, and the additional 6 reports were also from the CV (FAP,EBP,SSW) but included a very late bird on Grand I.

11/3 (DJH); the single bird captured at BNP in Oct. (VINS) was a good record. Savannah Sparrow records peaked at ~25 birds in So. Burlington 10/5 (TGM), but the late report came from Dorset on 10/23 (EFG) and VINS staff captured 10 more at BNP 8/11 through 10/13. A Grasshopper Sparrow still carrying food in Addison 8/17 (TGM,SSW) was one of only 3 observations this fall, the other 2 both in So. Londonderry 8/26 and 9/23 (WJN). An extraordinary find, 1 HENSLOW'S SPARROW on the Smith Haven grounds, So. Londonderry 8/18 (WJN), was carefully documented by the observer. Fox Sparrow was recorded only 4 times, but the first 5 in Goshen 10/23 (SSW) were the high count and included birds in song; the remainders were singles in Pawlett 10/31 (GRB), Grand I. 11/12 (DJH) and the BNP nets (VINS). Another underreported species, Song Sparrow should be nearly ubiquitous; the total 83 sightings this fall included a high of 18 in Dorset 8/3 (EFG) and a few Nov. records, but the 57 captured at BNP into Nov. gave testimony to just how many passed through. Careful observers found 7 Lincoln's Sparrow, 4 of them in So. Londonderry from 8/26 to 9/9 (WJN), 2 in So. Duxbury 9/10 and 9/19 (FAP,EBP) and the last in a Brownell Mt. swamp 10/23 (TGM), but no less than 18 were netted by VINS staff at BNP in Sept./Oct. In proper habitat Swamp Sparrow can be numerous in fall, as the 18 found in Tinmouth Ch. 10/3 (CJF) illustrated; only 16 more were recorded elsewhere by 6 spotters, including 1 on Grand I. as late as 11/2 (DJH); 13 additional birds were captured at BNP in Oct. (VINS). The first White-throated Sparrow was noted in Winhall 8/4 (WJN) and high counts were of ~30 on So. Hero 10/5 and ~50 in Shelburne 10/10 (TGM), but the impressive numbers came from the BNP banding nets: 9 in Aug., 50 in Sept., 151 in Oct. and 2 in Nov. (VINS). Relatively few White-crowned Sparrow sightings included 3 in Shelburne 10/10 (TGM), 2

Henslow's Sparrow



in Brandon 10/11 (SSW), 1 in the Appalachian Gap, Buel's Gore 10/11 (RWP), and 2 in Woodstock 10/18-20 (CRP); staff netted only 4 at BNP in Sept./Oct. (VINS). Dark-eyed Junco was noted by 22 observers in healthy numbers statewide; the first were in mid-Aug., probably still on territory (SSW;WJN), but highs of 15-20 were found in Lincoln 9/21 (JRA), W. Bolton 10/25 (MC), Bridgewater 11/25 (JWL), Reading 11/27 (FMH,EJH) and Manchester Ctr. 11/30 (BWP), with only 10 captured in nets at BNP in Oct. (VINS). A small handful of Lapland Longspur were found in DCWMA, 1-3 birds there by 11/27 and 11/29 (SSW;FAP,EBP). In contrast, Snow Bunting came down in good numbers as the first one was found at DCWMA 10/23 (TGM), then 75 on rocks offshore Burlington 10/27 (RDB,EMA) and building to the high of 140 on Grand I. 11/29 (DJH).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW

Nearly all the 80 records for Bobolink represented birds still in breeding locales, such as the 15 in Manchester Ctr. 8/21 (BWP) and 50 in Brownington 8/28 (STH), whereas birds in passage were noted in So. Londonderry 9/5 and 9/12 (WJN). Immense and impressive flocks of Red-winged Blackbird continued to stage in the CV in Oct.; estimates included ~65,000 in the Alburg area 10/19 (DJH), ~25,000 along Slang Rd., DCWMA 10/25 (FAP,EBP), and ~20,000 in the same area 10/27 (TGM). Eastern Meadowlark was down somewhat, as 10 in Manchester Ctr. 8/21 (BWP) and 20 in Weybridge 10/12 (SSW) were the only highs in addition to 11 in Bridport 10/26 (JEO,WB), which were also the late record. Excellent numbers of Rusty Blackbird were found, mainly in swampy areas; high counts included 40+ in Alburg 9/29 (TGM;FAP,EBP), 30 in Dorset 10/12 (EFG), "100's" in the Sandbar St. Pk. area 10/26 (JEO,WB) and 80 at Shelburne Bay 10/30 (TGM), with a late record of 1 in Tinmouth 11/10 (CJF). An average fall for Common Grackle saw flocks of 40 or 50 to more than 1000 throughout the period, as reported by 16 observers statewide. More impressive, and very discouraging were reports of flocks of Brown-headed Cowbird of at least 1000-3000 birds in the DCWMA 10/20 to 10/25 (TGM;FAP,EBP); at least these were the only large groups mentioned. Baltimore Oriole made a nice showing in Aug.,

with a total 16 birds reported in 1's and 2's by 9 spotters, plus 1 in Dorset 9/1 (EFG) for the late record; 12 more were captured at BNP in Aug. (VINS). This fall was a good "finch" season, and started with high counts for Purple Finch including 25 in Reading 8/12 (FMH,EJH), 30+ in Pomfret 11/16 (KRT), 12 in Bridport 11/28 (WME) and 15 in Brandon 11/28 (SSW), but with only 4 netted at BNP in Oct. (VINS). Apparently declining in some areas, House Finch was still reported widely in the period, with highs of 12 in Panton on 11/11 (MBN) and 8-11 in Manchester Ctr. through Nov. (BWP). Both crossbill spp. were seen in small numbers; 3 Red Crossbill were in So. Londonderry, 1 on 8/10 and 2 on 9/8 (WJN), and 2 White-winged Crossbill were at the same site 8/13 (WJN), with an additional 3 showing at the BNP on 11/10 (KPM). Pine Siskin numbers paralleled Purple Finch with similar flock sizes, although most reports were from Nov., and included highs of 30+ in Proctor 11/3 (RWP), 18 in Reading 11/10, 23 there 11/27 (FMH,EJH) and 20-25 in So. Londonderry by 11/30 (WJN). Far more numerous still, American Goldfinch sightings totaled well over 550 birds as reported by 24 observers within the period. Highest flock sizes included 40+ in Lincoln (JRA), 44 in Dorset (EFG), 50 in ea. of Georgia (RDB,EMA) and So. Londonderry (WJN), and 60 in W. Bolton (MC); oddly, only 11 were netted at BNP Aug. to Oct. (VINS). Evening Grosbeak was sporadic, with only 2 flocks of any size reported; 48 in Reading 8/1 (FMH,EJH) were early and high, and 20 in Bristol 11/20 (JRA) when added to the remaining 18 sightings completed the total. Pine Grosbeak and redpolls went unreported this season. And finally, 8 observers kept track of House Sparrow and reported flocks of up to 30 in several communities.

White-winged Crossbills



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Special thanks to all hawkwatchers.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN TEXT

Major sites:

ABM	Allen Bothers Marsh in Westminster
BNP	Bragdon Nature Preserve in Woodstock
CR	Connecticut River
CV	Champlain Valley
DCWMA	Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area in Addison
ECWMA	East Creek Wildlife Management Area in Orwell
HC	Herrick's Cove in Rockingham
MNWR	Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge in Swanton
RVB	Records of Vermont Birds
SB	Shelburne Bay in Shelburne
SNA	Springweather Nature Area in Springfield and Weathersfield
SWMA	Sandbar Wildlife Management Area in Milton
VHW	Vermont Hawk Watch
VINS	Vermont Institute of Natural Science
WRDP	Winooski River Delta Park

STANDARD

ABBREVIATIONS:

ad.	adult
imm.	immature
pr.	pair
Aug.	August
Jct.	Junction
Pt.	Point
Bk.	Brook
juv.	juvenile
R.	River
Br.	Bridge
Lk.	Lake
Rd.	Road
Ch.	Channel
m.	male
Res.	Reservoir
Ck.	Creek
m.obs.	many observers
Rt.	Route
Ctr.	Center
mi.	mile(s)
Sept.	September
Cty.	County
Mt.	Mount, Mountain
So., so.	South, south
E. or e.	East, east
No., no.	North, north
sp.(spp.)	species (plural)
ea.	each
Nov.	November
St.	Street
f.	female
Oct.	October
W., w.	West, west
I.	Island or Isle
Pd.	Pond
wk.	week
ID	identification
Pk.	Park
yr.	Year

NOTES ON THE DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SPECIES

The Vermont Bird Records Committee (VBRC) emphasizes the importance of detailed, descriptive documentation of all rarities, rare nesting species or out-of-season species. It is frustrating for both the observer and the committee to have a tantalizing sighting of a rare

species rejected for listing due to insufficient details.

The committee is anxious to involve all Vermont birders in 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.

In the field, writing down the salient points of identification, talking into a tape recorder, making a sketch or taking a photograph 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 while also checking the form for the details requested. The committee welcomes suggestions for improving the reporting and voting process.

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



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recognizes scientific research and environmental education are the most effective ways to appreciate and protect the natural world. VINS members receive free admission to the Vermont Raptor Center, subscriptions to our natural history publications, privileges at the Olin S. Pettingill natural history library and discounts on nature programs, workshops, courses, field trips and items from our gift shops.

