

# New England



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The weather of autumn 2003 was largely average (although October was much wetter than normal at Boston), so weather that affected bird movements in New England appeared to be event-based rather than based upon broad climatic patterns. August and September lacked any truly pronounced peak flight of most birds, as was true on most of the East Coast. The strong frontal activity of October did produce several flights: strong northwesterly and offshore winds 6–7 October were associ-

ated with good passerine flights at Bluff Point, Connecticut; there was a good flight of Brant on 16 October; and a narrow band of mixed rain, sleet, and snow on 22 October caused a waterbird fallout from northern New Hampshire across Vermont. The big events of November were four periods of strong southwesterly winds on 1, 8, 13, and 25 November that deposited an array of southwestern U.S. vagrants and reverse-migrant songbirds into the Region, mostly on or near the coast. Featured in the latter three of these flights were Cave Swallows, including first records for New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The array of lost westerners from the flight of 1 November (and later) was also impressive: Hammond's Flycatcher, Tropical/Couch's Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, and Black-headed Grosbeak. More general comments on bird abundance and movement were often negative: continued low numbers of Neotropical migrant songbirds, a somewhat poor season for seawatch-

ing, and generally mediocre movements of irruptive boreal species. Exceptions were a decent shrike irruption, an incipient redpoll flight, good numbers of short-distance, facultative migrants such as Hermit Thrush and sparrows, and the spectacle of increasing goose populations—although geese do negatively affect other species and ecosystems.

We note with sadness the passing in early January 2004 of David Emerson. A charter member of the Rhode Island Ornithological Club, he was a central figure in Rhode Island birding for decades. Our association with him was a result of his role as long-time compiler of Rhode Island records, which he concisely organized with an expert's eye for New England Regional reports, as well as for the *Field Notes of Rhode Island*. He will be very much missed.

**Abbreviations:** A.P. (Andrew's Pt., Rockport, Essex, MA); Appledore (Appledore I., Kittery, York, ME); Charlotte (L. Champlain shore, Charlotte, Chittenden, VT); D.C.W.M.A. (Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison and Panton, Addison, VT); Gay Head (on Martha's Vineyard, Dukes, MA); Monhegan (Monhegan I., Lincoln, ME); Plum I. (Plum I., Newbury/Rowley, Essex, MA); S. Beach (South Beach I., Chatham, Barnstable, MA).

## LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Three Pacific Loons were observed in e. Massachusetts, the earliest 11 Oct at Race Pt., Provincetown, Barnstable (BN, PF), with later sightings at A.P. 4 Nov (RH) and 22 Nov at Wellfleet, Barnstable (Gd'E). A record count of 654 Common Loons at A.P. 4 Nov was almost twice the previous maximum for this well-known seawatch (RH). High counts of *Podiceps* grebes included 206 Horneds at Fairhaven, Bristol, MA 27 Nov (ML et al.), 15 Red-neckeds inland on n. L. Champlain 2 Nov (PJ, AS), and 25 Red-neckeds at Winthrop, Suffolk, MA 30 Nov (RS et al.). East Gloucester, Essex, MA hosted its Eared Grebe for a 9th straight year, with arrival on 28 Sep (J. Nelson, m. ob.). The best tubenose of the season was the Yellow-nosed Albatross that flew past Nahant, Essex, MA 29 Aug (†LP). Other seabirds were reported at best in modest numbers, with no sign of the near-shore abundance so evident over the last two autumns. The only apparent windfall from Tropical Storm *Isabel's* passage was a storm-petrel, perhaps 2, seen on L. Champlain at Grand Isle and Charlotte on 20 Sep (†DJH, †TM, †S. Antell, †L. Hills). At the n. site the storm-petrel was too far away to reveal much in the way of field marks, whereas at Charlotte the bird allowed a more extended viewing. The bird's behavior, structure, and some plumage features indicate the bird was likely Vermont's first Wilson's Storm-Petrel, although the possibility of Band-rumped was not ruled out.

Between one and 3 juv. Northern Gannets cruised n. L. Champlain 6–24 Nov (TM, DJH et al.). Two to 4 American White Pelicans were in coastal Connecticut, first seen at Milford Pt., *New Haven* on 1 Nov (S. Spector et al.), with 2 per site seen 3 Nov in Guilford, next in *New Haven* (GH et al.), and then two hours later in *Westbrook, Middlesex* (A. Nichols). An imm. Great Cormorant at *Cherry Pond, Jefferson, Coos, NH* 13–24 Oct (S. & M. Turner et al.) was the most out of context of 2 seen inland. Separate sightings of an ad. female **Magnificent Frigatebird** from *Monhegan* 26 Sep (B. Schutsky) and *Gloucester and Marblehead, Essex, MA* the next day (†D. Noble et al., †A. Stone) probably involved the same bird. No frigatebirds were noted in association with *Isabel* the previous week, but some connection is conceivable.

The **Reddish Egret** holding over from Jul at *Compton, Newport, RI* until 13 Aug (G. Dennis et al.) provided a notable exception to the overall lack of s. herons reported (Great Egrets did stray inland in modest numbers, however). Bittern reports were mixed, the American Bittern total of 63 being marginally higher than any we have tallied from our sources in a decade. Only 3 Least Bitterns were located, one of these on the remarkably late date of 26 Oct at *Warwick, Kent, RI* (D. Wilson). Also unusual in light of the lack of s. herons were several **Wood Stork** sightings, including 4 at a farm pond in *Barre, Worcester, MA* 24–25 Aug (ph. C. Buelow et al.), one described adequately at *Dover, Strafford, NH* 2 Sep (†J. Lanier), and one seen flying over the *Barre Falls hawkwatch, Worcester, MA* 7 Sep (T. Carrolan et al.). **Black Vultures** did not stray far n. this year, but they are now relatively numerous to the w. and s. in our Region: 10 for the season at the *Blueberry Hill hawkwatch in Granville, Hampden, MA* (JW et al.), 4 for the season on inner *Cape Cod* (v. o.), and a maximum of 12 at *Sheffield, Berkshire, MA* 20 Sep (ML et al.). Impressive **Turkey Vulture** counts at the n. periphery of its range included 60+ at *Newport, Orleans, VT* 3 Sep (B. & J. Prue) and 120 at *Rochester, Strafford, NH* (SM).

## WATERFOWL

**Tundra Swans**, scarce in the Region, included 4 at *Brattleboro, Windham, VT* 12 Nov (†CP, †H. Galbraith) and 2 at *Coventry, Kent, RI* 25 Nov (MT). Previously very rare, both **Greater White-fronted** and **Ross's Geese** continue patterns of annual occurrences. Eleven **Greater White-fronteds** were divided among *Maine* (one), *Massachusetts* (4), and *Connecticut* (6). **Ross's Geese** occurred at *D.C.W.M.A.*

from 11 Oct into Nov, with a maximum of 4 on 2 Nov (PJ, AS). An ad. at *Milford, CT* 22–27 Sep (N. Hamilton) was early and a state first, if accepted. A major flight of **Brant** occurred both on the coast and inland 16 Oct, with record counts of 2631 at *Charlotte (RBL, TM)* and 1580 at *Seabrook, Rockingham, NH* (SM). Several more **Brant** were seen



This adult male **Common Ringed Plover** was discovered on the *South Lubec Flats in far "Down East" Maine* 26 (here 27) August 2003. A first record for *Maine* and third for *New England*, it remained through 5 September.

Photograph by *Louis R. Bevier*.

inland, including many during the 22 Oct waterbird fallout. *Massachusetts's* 11th **Black Brant** was found at *Plymouth, Plymouth* 25 Oct (WP). A wary **Barnacle Goose** was reported far to the n. at *Collins L., Caribou, Aroostook, ME* 11–13 Oct (ph. BS).

Excellent counts of dabblers this autumn were 198 **Gadwalls** at *Barrington, Bristol, RI* 30 Nov (RF), 90 **Northern Shovelers** on *S. Monomoy, Barnstable, MA* 27 Nov (BN), and 250 **Northern Pintails** also on *S. Monomoy* 2 Nov (BN et al.). Thirteen **Eurasian Wigeons** were reported from *New Hampshire* (one), *Rhode Island* (2), *Maine* (one), and *Massachusetts* (9) 10 Oct+. A **Cinnamon Teal** found 25 Nov in *Coventry, RI* was reason to give thanks (MT). **Redhead** remains scarce in the Region, but one on the *Connecticut R.* at *Hinsdale, Cheshire, NH* 23 Nov (E. Master-son) was especially rare. An impressive total of 1540 **Ring-necked Ducks** was counted at *Southborough, Worcester, MA* 9 Nov (ML et al.). The **Sterling, Worcester, MA Tufted Duck** did not return this year, but females were found in *Rhode Island* at the *E. Providence Res.* 8 Nov (ML et al.) and at *Wakefield,*

*Washington* 22–30 Nov (m. ob.). Nine **King Eiders** were reported 10 Oct+. A female **King** at *Hammonasset Beach S.P., New Haven, CT* 23 Nov+ returned for its 3rd winter (G. & B. Nichol et al.). The 22 Oct waterbird fallout grounded 2 **Common Eiders** in the *White Mts.*, with an imm. male at *Bartlett, Carroll (R. Crowley)* and an ad. male at *Moore Res., Littleton, Grafton (S. & M. Turner)*. An imm. male **Harlequin Duck** at *Cherry Pond* 24 Oct (DG) was also a product of the 22 Oct fallout in *New Hampshire*. Impressive scoter numbers for their localities on 22 Oct included 11 **Surfs** and 95 **Blacks** in *Bennington, VT* (B. Powers, R. Stewart), 60 **Surfs** and 70 **White-wingeds** on *Loon L., Plymouth, Grafton, NH* (J. Williams), and 120 **Blacks** on *Cherry Pond (DG)*. The best coastal scoter flight took place 4 Nov, with a record 9055 **Blacks**, plus 8140 **Surfs** and 1310 **White-wingeds** at *A.P. (RH)*. Reports of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** commenced 25 Oct, with most reported during the last week of Nov, including a drake well s. at *Stratford, Fairfield, CT* 28 Nov (R. Harvey), for a seasonal total of 16.

## RAPTORS THROUGH CRANE

The **Accipiter** flight peaked in mid-Oct with 950 **Sharp-shinned**s and 371 **Cooper's** at *Lighthouse Pt., New Haven, CT* 11 Oct (B. Banks et al.) and good counts at *Lighthouse Pt.* and *Napatree Pt., Washington, RI* 13 Oct (GH, J. Zbyrowski et al.). Good counts of **Red-shouldered Hawk**, a late migrant, included 15 at *Barre Falls* 18 Oct (BK) and 14 at *Brigham Hill, Essex, Chittenden, VT* 19 Oct (R. Renaud); *Barre Falls'* season total of 124 was also impressive (BK et al.). The peak **Broad-winged Hawk** flight was diffuse and low, with high counts in *Vermont* on 17–18 Sep and maxima to the e. on 21 Sep. *Connecticut hawkwatchers* continue to encounter multiple **Swainson's Hawks**, with 6 seen there between 30 Sep and 18 Nov, including 2 at *Lighthouse Pt.* 18 Nov (L. James et al.). Another **Swainson's Hawk** was reported on the *Lincoln/Concord, MA town line* 22 Oct (S. Perkins). There was a good late-season **Red-tailed Hawk** movement, with especially good numbers counted 7–8 Nov, including 139 on the latter date at *Blueberry Hill (JW)* and 233 for both days at *Barre Falls (BK et al.)*. **Rough-legged Hawks** appeared in slightly above-average numbers, with over 40 reported beginning 30 Sep at *Putney Mt., Windham, VT* (B. Hughes et al.). The 37 **Golden Eagles** reported represent the best total for the Region since 1995; migrants were seen 10 Sep+. A black **Gyrfalcon** encountered at *Pochet l., Orleans, Barnstable*

15 Nov (JT, RS, BN et al.) brought the first whiff of the Arctic to Massachusetts. Excellent counts of Peregrine Falcon included 44 at Block I. 3–5 Oct (m. ob.) and 5 at Pack Monadnock, Peterborough, Hillsborough, NH 9 Oct (I. McCleod), the latter a notable tally for an inland site.

Rails were reported in distressingly low numbers, even for this group of largely silent and secretive autumn migrants. Two Soras at Stockbridge, Berkshire 16 Aug were the first



The majority of Sabine's Gulls seen inland are in juvenal plumage, so the appearance of this adult off of the Charlotte, Vermont shore of Lake Champlain 5 September 2003 was a surprise. Photograph from videotape by Richard B. Lavallee.

in summer for w. Massachusetts in a decade (ML et al.), and over half of the 11 Common Moorhens reported were in Vermont. More than 13 Sandhill Cranes were reported, the best total since 1994. Cranes included a family group of 3 from cen. Maine's recently established nesting population in early Aug at Belgrade, Kennebec (LRB et al.), a flock of 5 at Kennebunkport, York 17 Oct (J. Junker), and one back for its 6th year at Monroe, Grafton, NH, last seen 23 Nov (J. Williams, ph. C. Johnson, v. o.). Another crane was found in New Hampshire, with 3 more in Connecticut and one in Rhode Island.

## SHOREBIRDS

American Golden-Plovers were noted in low to average numbers, with 150 reported. High counts were of flocks seen in transit rather than birds on *terra firma*. One found at Hampton B., Rockingham, NH 25–26 Nov was among the latest ever seen in New England (D. & L. Stokes, ph. SM). One of the best finds of the season was the ad. male Common Ringed Plover discovered on the Lubic Flats, Washington, ME 26 Aug and present until 5 Sep (ph. LRB et al.), the first for the Pine Tree State and just the 3rd for New England. American Oystercatchers continued to burgeon in s. New England, with record highs of 200 at Sandwich, Barnstable, MA 23 Aug (G. Gove) and 315 at S. Beach 31 Aug (BN). At least 3 American Avocets included one at Old Lyme, New London, CT 7–20 Sep (J. Norton et al.), a bird seen at Plymouth and Duxbury beaches, Ply-

mouth, MA 24–27 Sep (C. Walker), and one very late and inland at Sunderland, Franklin, MA 7–9 Nov (D. Minear et al.). Upland Sandpiper numbers continued to drift downward, with a mere 19 reported. Whimbrel high counts often occur just before the autumn season in New England, but this year, they were a week late, with 125 at Jonesport, Washington, ME 1 Aug (N. Famous) and 86 at Wellfleet, MA 2 Aug (ML et al.)

Three Whimbrels were seen inland, including one at Great Meadows N.W.R., Middlesex, MA 30–31 Aug (B. Howell et al.) and 2 at D.C.W.M.A. 7 Sep (L. Master et al.). A pale-rumped Eurasian Whimbrel was found at Griswold Pt., Old Lyme 21 Sep (DP et al.). Hudsonian Godwit numbers were low, whereas 34 Marbled Godwits were above average, including 7 at S. Beach 19 Aug (BN), 2 at Hampton Harbor, NH 6–22 Aug (ph. SM et al.), 2 in Connecticut, and 4 in Rhode Island.

Red-necked Stints have now occurred at S. Beach in four of the last five autumns; given that this season's bird, photographed 14–19 Aug (ph. BN et al.), was again an ad., one wonders if a returning vagrant is involved in some of these occurrences. New Hampshire's first Little Stint (and the Region's 6th as well as the first since 1990) was an ad. found near Odiome Pt., Rye, Rockingham 7 Aug (ph. †MH, ph. SM, m. ob.) that proved very confiding and findable until 11 Aug, much to the delight of Regional birders. Migrant White-rumped Sandpipers were seen in excellent numbers on Cape Cod, with a peak count of 600 16 Sep at S. Beach (BN); singles at Westport, Bristol, MA (E. Nielson) and W. Addison, Addison, VT 27 Nov (*vide* VBA) were exceptionally late. Baird's Sandpiper numbers continued

very high for a 2nd consecutive fall, with 74 noted (maximum 13 at Plum I. 5 Sep; RH). Five Purple Sandpipers were reported on L. Champlain 24 Oct–1 Nov, and 400 at Rockport, Essex, MA 27 Nov (RH) was a very

good count within the last 10 years. An ad. Curlew Sandpiper graced S. Beach 18–31 Aug (C. Marantz et al.). Stilt Sandpipers were in better-than-average numbers, including a record 40+ at Scarborough Marsh, Cumberland, ME 10 Aug (LB); one was far inland at L. Josephine, Easton, Aroostook, ME in late Sep (BS), while another inland bird at Gill, Franklin, MA was very late 1 Nov (M. Taylor). Thirty-two Buff-breasted Sandpipers was an average total for the last decade. Ruffs were found at Edgartown, Dukes, MA 8 Aug (AK et al.) and Milford Pt. 6 Sep (J. Bair). Wilson's Phalaropes were well reported again, with 14 divided among Vermont (one), New Hampshire (one), Massachusetts (5), Rhode Island (3), and Connecticut (3, of which 2 at Hammonasset 3 Oct were notably late; B. Kleiner). As usual, a few Red-necked Phalaropes were seen in Vermont's Champlain Valley, and 3 appeared within Long Island Sound. Western Massachusetts cornered the market on inland Red Phalaropes, with a cooperative juv. in Westfield, Hampden 12–15 Sep (T. Swochak, ph. C. Buelow, m. ob.) and Berkshire's 2nd at Onota L., Pittsfield 9 Nov (R. Packard).

## SKUAS THROUGH ALCIDS

There were at least nine skua reports including 5 or more identified as Great Skuas in the Gulf of Maine in the Mt. Desert I. region 27 Aug–4 Oct (WT, LB et al.). Coastal jaeger reports were about average, although Pomarines were less evident in Nov than has been the case of late. The only Long-tailed Jaeger of the season was located 34 km e. of Mt. Desert Rock, ME 15 Aug (WT). On L. Champlain, 6 jaegers were seen 31 Aug–20



Proving that stunning photographs do not always reveal the identity of their subjects, this *Selasphorus* (Rufous/Allen's) hummingbird that spent the month of November 2003 in Little Compton, Rhode Island remains unidentified to species. Photograph by Geoff Dennis.

Sep, including 3 Parasitics through 11 Sep (RBL, TM et al.) and an ad. Pomarine 20 Sep (†TM, J. Osborn, AS).

White-winged gull reports used to be almost routine in late Oct in the 1970s and

1980s, but these days we seldom receive reports before mid-Nov, as was the case this year. Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers creep ever higher, with over 110 reported this autumn. Selected high counts included 25 at S. Beach 27 Sep (BN) and 22 on Nantucket 13 Nov (E. Ray); an ad. was far inland and far from any commodious landfill at L. Umbagog, Errol, Coos, NH 30 Sep (R. Quinn et al.). The late-autumn Regional Ring-billed Gull high peaked at 20,000, counted at Charlotte 14 Nov (TM, P. Riley). About 40 Little Gulls included 12 on L. Champlain, 5 in New Hampshire, 8 in Maine with a maximum of 6 at Pine Pt., Scarborough 12 Oct (LB, M. Resch), and 14 in e. Massachusetts. Black-headed Gulls numbered 16, including singles 16 Oct and 1 Nov at Grand Isle, VT (†DJH), one at Hampton, NH 16 Nov (SM, J. Lawrence), up to 4 in Maine, at least 7 in e. Massachusetts, and 2 in Rhode Island. Sabine's Gull reports included sightings of possibly the same juv. at Grand Isle and Charlotte 4 Sep (†DJH, †TM, RBL, H. Kaestner), a rare inland ad. 5 Sep at Charlotte (TM, ph. RBL), and one seen 20 km e. of Chatham, Barnstable, MA 7 Sep (S. Perkins et al.). As with other inshore pelagic species, coastal numbers of Black-legged Kittiwake were unexceptional, but the 22 Oct inland waterbird fallout produced an exceptional two-day flight on L. Champlain, with at least 12 on 22–23 Oct (10 on the former date) including a single ad. (TM, RBL, AS, DJH).

Two Sandwich Terns included a banded bird photographed at S. Beach 18 Aug (ph. P. Brown); that bird stayed until 29 Aug (D. Silverstein et al.). The partial band number readable in the photograph indicated to John Weske that this bird had been banded as a chick on North Carolina's Outer Banks in Jun 2002 by Micou Browne. A juv. Sandwich Tern was found at Napatree, RI 24 Sep (CR), possibly in connection with *Isabel*. The most northerly of 8 Royal Terns was at Westport, Bristol, MA 21 Sep (E. Nielsen et al.). The 40 Caspian Terns reported was an average tally. Reports from the species' New England breeding beachhead at L. Champlain continued through 17 Sep, while coastal migrants were reported until 14 Oct. Late Common Terns were found on L. Champlain at Charlotte 28 Oct (TM, RBL) and 27 Nov at Chatham (BN). A Sooty Tern was at Duxbury Beach 8 Aug (†D. Clapp).

Alcid numbers remained mediocre through Nov. Over the past 50 years, the proportions of murre species reported in this region have been reversed: reports of Common Murres have increased, whereas those of Thick-billeds have dwindled. As an example of this trend, witness 15 Com-

mon Murres versus 13 Thick-billed Murres counted at A.P. 21 Nov (RH). Completely unexpected was the serendipitous discovery of Vermont's 2nd Atlantic Puffin, swimming in Burlington harbor, *Chittenden* 27 Nov (†R. Scott).

### DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A White-winged Dove observed at Kittery, York 27 Nov (LB, ph. LRB) was preceded by at least 10 other Maine records. A number of cuckoos stayed late in the North Country, including a Black-billed in Portland 2 Nov (R. Eakin) and Yellow-billed on Mt. Desert I., *Hancock*, ME 20 Oct (C. Robbins et al.) and at Gay Head 8–9 Nov (A. Fischer). The season's Snowy Owl flight was nearly nonexistent, with only 3 at traditional locations, beginning 20 Nov. Only 3 or 4 of the secretive Long-eared Owl revealed themselves to birders, while a respectable 27 Short-eared Owls were found mostly in coastal locations, with the exception of birds in *Grand Isle*, VT and Northampton, *Hampshire*, MA. Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded in average numbers (252) in Freeport, *Cumberland*, ME (J. Walker). A new banding station established in Uxbridge, *Worcester*, MA handled 185 (S. Wheelock). The peak

Rhode Island hosted tardy Chimney Swifts at Block I. 6 Nov (SMit, CR et al.) and in Providence 9 Nov (D. Finizia). The now-regular appearance of Rufous Hummingbirds (and of unidentified *Selasphorus*) is increasingly documented by carefully photographed or banded birds. This season brought 4 Rufous to Massachusetts and an ad. male to Connecticut, as well as 2 *Selasphorus* to the Bay State and one to Rhode Island. Red-headed Woodpeckers were scarce in New England this autumn, with only eight reports.

### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS

A late Least Flycatcher carefully studied at Marblehead, Essex, MA 18 Nov prolonged its already considerable tardiness by staying until 22 Dec (RH). Remote Tuckernuck I. off Nantucket, MA furnished the state's 2nd Hammond's Flycatcher 1 Nov (†RV), on a cold front that brought many other westerners to the East. The season's Say's Phoebe was photographed in W. Tisbury, *Dukes*, MA on 10 Sep (W. Manter, v. o.), as was the first of the state's 3 Ash-throated Flycatchers, in Stoneham, *Middlesex* 7–16 Nov (D. & I. Jewell, v. o.). Others were found in Melrose, Essex 11 Nov (MR et al.) and at Gay Head 18 Nov (VL). During the same month, 2 tardy Great Crested



An adult Fork-tailed Flycatcher, one of two in New England this autumn, graced a weedy field in Richmond, Rhode Island 7–10 September 2003—the Ocean State's fourth record. Photograph by Rachel Farrell.

Common Nighthawk migration in cen. Massachusetts seemed a bit later than usual this year, with two counts totaling 1518 on 26–27 Aug in *Worcester* and another peak of 730 on 4 Sep to the w. in Northampton; three other counts of 213–300 migrants came 4–5 Sep. A late straggler was seen in Pittsfield, *Berkshire* 9 Oct (TC).

Flycatchers were reported in Rhode Island, at Block I. 6 Nov (SMit, CR et al.) and at Tiverton, *Newport* 8 Nov (RF); Great Cresteds are very rare anywhere n. of Florida at this time of year, whereas Ash-throateds are annual in some numbers in the mid-Atlantic. A Tropical/Couch's Kingbird found at Claremont, *Sullivan*, NH 2 Nov was studied at length, but

the bird never vocalized, except perhaps briefly when it was snatched and carried off by a Sharp-shinned Hawk as observers watched (†W. McCumber, †S. McCumber, †R. Welsh, †A. Beals). The bird is, nonetheless, the Granite State's first record of either species. Again this year, only 5 Western Kingbirds were located in New England, 3 in Massachusetts and singles in Maine and Connecticut. A young male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher photographed in Chatham 13 Oct (†D. Manchester) stayed for two days, then apparently wandered n. over the next month before settling in at the Marconi Beach parking area, Wellfleet from 12 Nov until the first heavy snow in early Dec (ph. B. Elrick, m. ob.). Rounding out a stellar flycatcher season were 2 Fork-tailed Flycatchers: the first appeared briefly in Stonington, New London, CT 12 Aug (G. Williams), and Rhode Island's 4th lingered at Richmond, Washington 7–10 Sep (D. Finizia et al.).

A Regional total of 60+ Northern Shrikes, beginning 25 Oct, was the best showing since 2000. New Hampshire's 3rd Bell's Vireo lingered around the Exeter, Rockingham wastewater treatment plant 1–9 Nov (ph. SM, ph. JT, ph. D. Abbott, ph. MH, m. ob.), allowing brief looks for numerous visitors. A Warbling Vireo at Nahant, MA on the late date of 16 Nov (G. Tepke) could well have been of a western taxon. A Fish Crow far inland in Pittsfield, Berkshire, MA was notable, as was a count of 172 in Boston.

This season, Cave Swallows made three appearances along the New England coast. The first wave broke in Connecticut 8–9 Nov, with 23 at locations from Westport, Fairfield to Hammonasset Beach S.P. (v. o.); a single bird reported from Charlestown, Washington 8 Nov (†J. Murphy), represented Rhode Island's 3rd record. In the second group 15 Nov, a lone individual was at Lighthouse Pt. (DS), and 2 reached Orleans, MA, providing the long-anticipated first Bay State record (JT et al.). The last push 25–27 Nov brought 3 more to Connecticut, another to Orleans, and 4 to Rye, NH (ph. SM, ph. P. Brown, m. ob.). The latter birds established the first state record; plumage details observed on perched birds over two days suggested the southwestern race *pelodoma*, as expected. By most

accounts, Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a moderate flight this season, although a count of 300 at Roque I., Jonesport, ME 17 Oct (N. Famous) was remarkable. A Rock Wren seen but not photographed at Point Judith lighthouse in Narragansett, RI 24 Nov (Shane & Katy Patterson, *vide* R. Farrell) would constitute a first record for the Ocean State and is under review by the state's committee. After the tough winter of 2002–2003, numbers of Carolina Wrens were down, especially in Maine and New Hampshire. An unspecified number of Sedge Wrens was present on Monhegan I., from late Sep to 3 Oct, and one was in Lexington, Middlesex, MA 13 Sep (MR et al.).



**This young male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—which took up residence at the Marconi Beach parking area of Cape Cod National Seashore in Wellfleet from 12 (here 23) November into early December 2003—became a much-visited visitor here. Photograph by Phil Brown.**

### GNATCATCHER THROUGH WARBLERS

Interestingly, the discovery of late, reverse-migrant Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in S. Portland, Cumberland, ME 9 & 16 Nov (DL) and at Ipswich, MA 11 Nov (RH et al.) coincided with the arrival of Cave Swallows to the south. After missing Northern Wheatear last autumn, birders found birds in three locations: 7 Sep at both Epsom, Merrimack, NH (†N. & S. Osborne) and Egg Rock, Hancock, ME (WT), and 16 Sep

in Tiverton, RI (ph. E. Oldmixon). Tardy thrushes included a Veery banded in Wells, York, ME 1 Nov (J. Ficker) and an apparently injured Swainson's Thrush in Lexington, MA 22 Nov (MR). Notable high counts of 50 Swainson's came from Bluff Pt., CT 6 & 7 Oct (DS, D. Provencher et al.) and of 64 Hermit Thrushes at Providence, RI 3 Nov (RF). The peak count of 9000 migrating American Robins at Lighthouse Pt., CT came 8 Nov. Rather late for such a count were 45 Gray Catbirds at Block I. 6 Nov (SMit, CR et al.). Five autumn reports totaling 12 individual Bohemian Waxwings gave little indication of the winter flight to come.

Recent peaks in warbler migration seem to be occurring later in the season. Representative of this trend were counts at Bluff Pt., CT of 1500 individuals of 21 species 30 Sep; 2000 of 17 species 6 Oct; and 8000 of 13 species 7 Oct. Single Golden-winged Warblers were found in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, while 3 others were seen in Massachusetts. Reports of at least 32 Tennessee Warblers represented a slight comeback for the species over recent autumns, and nearly twice that many Orange-crowned Warblers were reported: 2 in Vermont, a very high 11+ from Maine, 37 in Massachusetts, and 9 in Connecticut. Warblers reported in low numbers included Magnolia (running against recent trends), Cape May, and Bay-breasted, all of which were banded in near-record low numbers on Apple-dore (DH). Stray w. warblers were represented by a Townsend's-type *Dendroica* at Napatree, RI 30 Sep (CR), currently under review, and one or 2 MacGillivray's in Massachusetts in Nov. The more expected s. strays reached farther n. than usual: Maine garnered 3 Yellow-throated War-

blers and single Prothonotary and Worm-eating Warblers, while Massachusetts and Rhode Island each had singles of each, along with single Cerulean and Kentucky Warblers in the Bay State and 6 Hoodeds in the s. coastal states. The Cave Swallow-bearing weather systems may have also been responsible for 2 of the Yellow-throateds, on 16 Nov in Portland, ME (DL) and 30 Nov–5 Dec in Nahant, MA (L. Pivacek, v. o.), as well as a Prairie Warbler in Johnston, Provi-

dence, RI 27 Nov (J. Murphy); these were only two of the 12 warbler species found in New England during the last week of Nov. Single-site high counts of Blackpoll Warbler came over a well-defined period, with 151 in Burrillville, *Providence*, RI 14 Sep (ML), and 82 in Windham, *Rockingham*, NH (MH) and 1200 at Gay Head (M. Pelikan) on 21 Sep. Unexpected on the immediate coast was a Louisiana Waterthrush at Gloucester, MA 31 Aug (RH). Rounding out warbler reports were a Regional record 45 Connecticut Warblers and 63 Yellow-breasted Chats, most in Massachusetts but with a scattering of each from Maine, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Topping the chat counts were 5 in Orleans, MA 23 Nov (RH et al.).

### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

New England hosted a full selection of tanagers this season. A maximum count of 15 Scarlet Tanagers in Worcester, MA 28 Sep (ML et al.) was supplemented by a Summer Tanager that spent 15–16 Sep at Edgartown, MA (R. Stone) and a Western Tanager found in Plymouth, NH 30 Nov (†MH, †B. Griffith).

American Tree Sparrows arrived in good numbers, evidenced by 120 in Sandwich, *Carroll*, NH 3 Nov (TV). Reports totaling 40 Clay-colored Sparrows came from every state: the nesting pair at Grand Isle, VT, still present on 2 Aug, two reports from New Hampshire, 3 each from Maine and Rhode Island, 5 from Connecticut, and the balance from Massachusetts, including a count of 4 from Truro, *Barnstable* 2 Nov (JT). Connecticut birders found nearly half of the 41 Vesper Sparrows, a single report came from Rhode Island, and the rest were from New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Maine's Appledore I. and Monhegan I. accounted for most of the state's 9+ Lark Sparrows, including 3 on Monhegan 7 Oct (BS), while Massachusetts contributed an additional 6. Two female Lark Buntings, one on Appledore I. 7 Sep (DH et al.) and the other at Scarborough Marsh 18–20 Sep (ph. LB, m. ob.), were the first Maine records of the species in any season since 1983. Reports of a Henslow's Sparrow at Bolton Flats, *Worcester*, MA 5 Oct (†ML et al.) and Rhode Island's 2nd Le Conte's Sparrow at Napatree Pt. 26 Nov (†CR) are under review by local bird records committees. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows appeared inland at Bolton Flats and Northampton in early Oct. Seasonal high counts of more common sparrows included 29 Lincoln's Sparrows at Bolton Flats on 5 Oct (ML et al.), 200 Song Sparrows at Sandwich, NH 3 Nov (TV), 239 White-throated Sparrows at Westborough W.M.A., *Worcester*, MA 12 Oct (ML et al.), and 250 Dark-eyed Juncos at Gay Head 31 Oct (VL). An imm. Harris's Sparrow enter-

tained visitors to Great Meadows N.W.R. 7–9 Oct (S. Wheelock, v. o.), while Gambell's-type White-crowned Sparrows were reported from Newbury, *Essex*, MA 26 Oct (RH) and W. Brattleboro, VT 28 Oct (LM). Snow Buntings performed impressively, with high counts of 200 in coastal Connecticut, 500 in coastal New Hampshire, and 700 in Northampton, MA—all dwarfed by 1200 in Presque Isle, *Aroostook*, ME in late Nov (BS).

Two Nov Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at feeders in Newton, *Rockingham*, NH (ph. P. McFarland) and N. Truro, MA (ph. C. Skowron) lingered into Dec. Black-headed Grosbeak was reported from Monhegan in early Oct, while a young male visiting a feeder in Derry, *Rockingham* 31 Oct–4 Nov (S. Gould, ph. †SM, ph. B. Goodwin, v. o.) was the first in New Hampshire since 1978. Twelve Blue Grosbeaks appeared during the season in expected coastal localities from Maine to Connecticut. A count of 32 Indigo Buntings in Durham, *Strafford*, NH 27 Sep (SM et al.) was notable, as were tardy individuals in Portland 11 Nov (DL) and at Gay Head 22 Nov (AK et al.). Massachusetts's contribution of more than half of the 99 Dickcissels reported for the season was aided greatly by a count of 32 at Gay Head 14 Oct (VL et al.); every other state also contributed, including Vermont, where one was photographed in W. Brattleboro 20–31 Oct (LM).

The late Aug peak of Bobolink migration was captured by counts of 187 in Concord, NH 25 Aug (R. Suomala) and 148 in Northampton, MA 31 Aug (T. Gagnon). A very late Bobolink was at W. Haven, *New Haven*, CT 16 Nov (P. Desjardins). A Western Meadowlark at Gay Head 26 Nov (VL) called attention to itself by singing and calling. Four of the season's 6 Yellow-headed Blackbirds appeared in Aug, as early as 2 Aug, from Maine to Rhode Island. A Connecticut record count of 17 Boat-tailed Grackles was achieved at the traditional Sikorsky Airport, Stratford location on 15 Sep (F. Mantlik). An Orchard Oriole lingering on Monhegan to late Sep was unusual, as was a Baltimore visiting a feeder in S. New-

fane, *Windham*, VT 11 Nov (†CP).

Northern finches performed erratically, with only a handful of reports of Pine Grosbeak and both crossbills. Purple



This furtive Bell's Vireo lingered around the Exeter, New Hampshire wastewater treatment plant 1–9 November 2003, a third for the state. Note the prominent wing bar on the greater coverts and weak broken spectacles. Photograph from videotape by Jeremiah Trimble.

Finches and Pine Siskins moved in modest numbers, the best being a count of 300 Purple Finches from the Lighthouse Pt. hawkwatch 19 Oct (S. Mayo et al.), and coastal maxima of 80 Pine Siskins in Massachusetts and 50 in Rhode Island. An observer in Sandwich, NH was surprised by 2 Common Redpolls a month early on 9 Oct (TV). Good numbers arrived in the rest of the Region in mid-Nov, with maxima of 150 at Owls Head, *Knox*, ME 18 Nov (S. Kauffman et al.) and 60 at Plum I. 22 Nov (T. Wetmore). Other observers at Plum I. the same day carefully studied a single Hoary Redpoll with a flock of 15 Commons (†RH, JT, RL). Finally, Evening Grosbeaks appeared in modest numbers across the Region, although the largest flock was only 30.

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