

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF THE
BIRDS OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY
MASSACHUSETTS

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Pittsfield Mass
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INTRODUCTION

Berkshire county is comprised of the westernmost 33 towns and cities of Massachusetts. Its elevations range from the summit on Mt. Greylock in Adams, the highest point in the state at 3491 feet to 590 feet where the Hoosic River flows from the county in Williamstown. In between, a host of habitat allows for a great diversity of bird life.

The county is enveloped between the rolling peaks of the Taconic Mountains to the west and the Berkshire Plateau on the eastern margin enfolding the valleys of the Housatonic, Hoosic and Farmington Rivers. These three valleys serve as a minor migration route for returning birds in the spring and those departing before winters onset.

Here in the Berkshires, for nearly 200 years, the migration and breeding of birds have been documented. The first acknowledgment of avian presence was from Chester Dewey in his *A History of the County of Berkshire, Massachusetts* in 1829 and extended through the 19th Century as regional accounts and reminiscences. It was not until 1900 that a formalized listing by Ralph Hoffmann and Walter Faxon was printed (updated in 1922). Sprinkled through the professional literature and popular literature was more specific accounts of Berkshire birds. From the 1930s on, the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, largely under the guidance of Bartlett Hendricks, sorted through this and the growing reports of species that people would see and record and then inform the museum. These results were compiled by Hendricks and published under the sponsorship of the Massachusetts Audubon Society in 1950 entitled *Berkshire Birds*. In 1978, Doug McNair wrote an excellent manuscript, unpublished, that expanded and added to the records of Berkshire avifauna. In 1998, Hendricks decided to rewrite and update the records of his 1950 work which he published under the title of *Birds of Berkshire County*. Since then, no published compendiums have been attempted. The following tries to amend this and seeks the readers indulgence for any gross errors and omissions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Perhaps, one of the most difficult aspects of writing is who, behind the scenes made a work possible. Certainly, a myriad of good people and institutions will be left out, often for no less of a crime than my failing memory. For those omitted, please accept my apologies and know in my heart I appreciate and love you all.

This paper could not have been written without the constant mentoring and companionship in birding over the last 50 years of wonderful people as Alvah Sanborn, Bartlett Hendricks, S. Waldo Bailey, Thom Smith, Rick Oltch, Tom Collins, Norma Purdy, Edna Dunbar, Noreen Mole, the membership of the Hoffmann Bird Club, the staff of the Berkshire Sanctuaries and the wardens and naturalists of Bartholomews Cobble in Sheffield.

The Hoffmann Bird Club operates a Hot Line in which rarities are promptly reported and posted.

Many of the following records come from this invaluable service. Thanks to Audrey Werner for directing this endeavor.

I would like to give a special thanks to Chris Blagdon, Rene Laubach, Tom Collins and Ed Neumuth who sacrificed their time to review my initial manuscript and delete and add from my already copious notes. THANK YOU.

A SPECIAL NOTE

This compilation is fully expected to be a living outline for future additions and corrections. With the advent of computer technology, we should not have to wait decade long intervals to bringing up to date material to the birder. I expect a completely different book in the years to come. This is up to the reader and both the relentless and seasonal birder to report their sightings. GOOD BIRDING!!!

DPSTJ

AN ANNOTATED LIST OF THE BIRDS OF BERKSHIRE COUNTY MASSACHUSETTS

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

(Anser albifrons)

Status: Very rare

There are only seven records of this species. The first one was seen on Cheshire Reservoir March 17, 1991 (J. Shampang) remaining until the 21st. St. James recorded a bird at Onota on March 21, 1997. In 2000, a spring bird was noted on Cheshire (March 1, Collins) and another bird March 24, 2000 on Smilleys Mill Pond (Barrett). On March 4, 2002, St. James recorded two birds on Richmond Pond. There are two fall records: October 10, 2003 on Smilleys Mill Pond (King) which was noted through the 28th and October 31. 2011 on Richmond Pond (Hurley).

SNOW GOOSE

(Chen carelessness)

Status: Uncommon

The earliest record was for 4 birds noted on December 2, 1932 in Lenox (Pell). Griscom and Snyder (1955) reported a marked increase statewide from 1942. The earliest spring date is March 5, 2001 on Onota (Mole). The maximum spring count is 1600 by Ferren (location, date?). Spring dates: March 5-May 17 2003 in Sheffield (Johnson). Summer dates include a crippled bird in Hinsdale June 8, 1966 to July 21, 1966 (Ford). The earliest fall date is October 5, 2002 over BCC when 4558 were noted (fall maximum). Dates extend into winter. The dark morph, Blue Goose, has, until 1978, been recorded only 4 times.

BRANT

(Branta benicula)

Status: Very rare

Brant are more readily observed in the fall than in the spring but in neither season can it be considered common. The largest fall flock was on October 27, 1940 when 200 were observed flying over the Mohawk Trail (Benchley). Spring dates: March 3, 2002 on Richmond Pond (Neumuth) to May 23, 2004 when Mole had 2 on Onota Lake. The spring maximum was 25 birds on Onota, May 18, 1952 (v.o.). Fall dates extend from October 12, 2003 on Wood Pond in Lenox (Laubach) to November 23. On October 21. 2010, Neumuth discovered a western subspecies, the Black bellied form, on Pontoosuc Lake.

CACKLING GOOSE

(Branta hutchinsii)

In 2004, the American Ornithological Union split Canada Geese with the smaller subspecies brought into a separate species, the Cackling Goose. Since then there have been only three sightings though it could be much more common due to birders being unfamiliar with this new species. The first mention was a single bird on Richmond Pond noted on November 1, 2008 (St. James). The following year, another single bird was seen on Smilleys Pond in Egremont (St. James, v.o.). On October 31, 2011 Hurley observed a single bird on Richmond Pond.

BARNACLE GOOSE

(Branta leucopsis)

Status: Accidental

There are at least two records of this species in the Berkshires. On February 19, 1992 a Barnacle Goose was noted with a flock Of Canada Geese in Lenox by St. James. The bird was later seen by many observers moving between Eastover Resort and New Lenox Rd. On February 20, 2010 a Barnacle Goose was seen by many observers on Smilley Mill Pond in Egremont.

CANADA GOOSE

(Branta canadensis)

Status: Abundant; very common breeder

Small flocks of geese, rarely numbering over 100, migrated over Berkshire County in the first half of the 20th Century. Around 1950, Canada were beginning to nest successfully in the eastern part of the state. State wildlife officials began a program of transplanting pairs to the western portions of the state to try to establish a nesting population there and by the 1960s geese were breeding with regularity. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Canada Geese were abundant as a migratory species but also a breeder. In the late 1990s they were definitely considered a nuisance and are currently recorded year round with high concentrations along the Housatonic River in the southern portion of the county in winter. The maximum number is 3000 seen over Onota Lake November 12, 1979. The total Sheffield wintering population undoubtedly dwarfs this number. 4500 geese were recorded on the South Berkshire CBC on January 1, 2000 (Laubach).

MUTE SWAN

(Cygnus olor)

Status: Rare

This swan was first recorded on April 12, 1967 on Cranberry Pond, West Stockbridge where it stayed until December (Vincent). Five were reported on Onota from November 10, 1978 through December 7, 1973 (Collins) Dates for spring are March 19-May 27 (Sheffield, St. James); fall: August 8-December 8. The first nesting occurred on Harmon Pond in New Marlboro in 2011 and in 2012 nesting was shown to be successful with one cygnet (Harwood)

TUNDRA SWAN

(Cygnus columbianus)

Status: Rare

The first record of a Tundra Swan (previously called the Whistling Swan) was between 1880-95 when Henry Francis reported shooting them on Pontoosuc Lake. The first modern record is of March 22, 1920 when Bailey saw 4 in Pittsfield. Most records are of single or few birds though 11 have been noted twice, the most recent in November of 1965 on Laurel Lake, Lee. Spring dates are from late March (22nd) to April (19th). Fall dates begin in early October (4th) to early winter (Ashley Falls January 27, 1965 to January 31, 1965 and Onota Lake December 10, 1972 to January 4, 1973. One Tundra Swan was noted on the South Berkshire CBC, January 1, 2005, Smilley Mill Pond, Egremont .

WOOD DUCK

(Aix sponsa)

Status: Very common breeder

The Wood Duck has dramatically increased in status in the last 50 years largely due to extensive breeding box programs by the state and other organizations. Spring migration is well underway through March and some migrants may appear in late February. They are more prevalent in the valley wetlands, less common and local on the plateau. Birds usually depart by early November though 150+ were seen in Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield on December 20, 1988. Birds will congregate in some of the larger ponds in late summer notably Onota Lake and Cheshire Reservoir where over a hundred may be seen. The spring maximum is 20 on Smilleys Pond, Egremont while the fall maximum is 220 recorded on the Central Valley lakes, October 3, 1959 (HBC). There are few winter records, some of these the result of wounding during the waterfowl hunting season.

GADWALL

(Anas strepera)

Status: Uncommon migrant; very rare breeder

This duck was first recorded by Eliot and Hendricks November 19, 1950 on Onota. Eliot had the next record in Pittsfield August 27, 1972. Since that time they have become a sporadic migrant. Spring migration occurs from early April to mid-May while fall records extend from early October to late November. There is one record of breeding: on June 23, 2000 Graefe had a female with two young in Lenox. Maximum: only pairs noted in the spring while in the fall 7 birds have been seen on several occasions.

AMERICAN WIDGEON

(Anas americana)

Status: Uncommon migrant

The American Widgeon was first recorded in 1932. It is uncommon in the spring and regular in the fall. In either season it is only seen in small numbers though on October 22, 1967 Whitehead recorded 50 on Mt. Williams Reservoir in North Adams. The spring maximum is 15 seen on Richmond Pond April 2, 1954 (Schumacher). In 1999 six birds were noted at Pontoosuc from December 1st to December 19th (latest date). There are no other winter records. Earliest spring date: March 6, 2002 when 6 birds were recorded on Onota (Neumuth); earliest fall record: September 17, 1964 Gilligans Pond, Sheffield (St. James).

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

(Anas rubripes)

Status: Common migrant, uncommon nester

Once our most common duck, it has greatly decreased in population due to competition and interbreeding with the Mallard. Most of the current breeding seems to be occurring in the uplands though competition with the Mallard is stiff even there. Spring migration occurs in March and April with more than 20 birds rarely noted. The maximum is 120 seen in Sheffield April 2, 1941 (Bailey). Fall migrants begin in September with the maximum of 500 noted on November, 22, 1964 on Richmond Pond (v.o.) Small flocks remain throughout the winter if open water is available.

MALLARD

(Anas platyrhynchos)

Status: Abundant in the spring and fall; very common nester, common in the winter on open water

It seems implausible that the Mallard was until mid-century a rare to uncommon species. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) lists only five records, all taken by hunters. From the collective years 1946-1955 only 79 were reported on the waterfowl counts in November. Large numbers currently exist year round as long as there is open water in the winter. The maximum number in post breeding aggregations is 350 on Cheshire Lake and in the fall the most recorded was on October 18, 1969 on Onota (HBC) when 250 birds were noted. Over the years, feral birds have escaped into the wild mixing with natives. There is also a very high incidence of interbreeding with Black ducks to the point that in many locations, hybrids outnumber the parent strains.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL

(Anas discors)

Status: Uncommon migrant and rare breeder

This species was first noted as a nesting species in 1928 with a pair noted at Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield (though definite proof was not established at this site until 1949). Other nesting sites include Onota, Smilleys Mill (Egremont), and Pontoosuc Lake. On August 13, 2000 a male and female were noted at Bulkley Dunton Reservoir in Becket (Laubach). Maximum: spring 8; fall 75 Onota September 14, 1941 (Hendricks). Spring migrants appear in mid March while fall birds are first noted in late August and disappear by the end of October. The latest date is November 16, 1941 when a wing tipped bird was noted on Onota by Hendricks. There are no winter records.

NORTHERN SHOVELER

(Anas clypeata)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Shovelers are more frequent today than 50 years ago but are still uncommon. The species was first recorded September 29, 1941 on Onota by Hendricks though Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) cite two 19th Century records. Spring records occur from late March (earliest March 26th) into mid May (latest May 13th) with a spring maximum of 12 on Onota, April 19, 1965. Fall birds occur between September 15 to November 15 with a maximum of 3. There is one winter record of an immature on Silver Lake in Pittsfield, December 18, 1978 (Hendricks, Miller).

NORTHERN PINTAIL

(Anas acuta)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Pintails are an uncommon spring migrant noted from late March into early May. Maximum: 10, Ashley Falls March 17, 1964. They are more common in the fall with the height of migration

in October and November with numerous September records. As in the spring, the maximum number recorded is 10. There are several wintering records. Faxon and Hoffmann note only one record prior to 1900, a bird shot in Hinsdale.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

(Anas crecca)

Status: Common migrant; rare nester

Green-winged Teal are known to nest infrequently in the county. The first verification of breeding was by McGee in May 1971 when he found a pair with a nest of 16 eggs on October Mt. Other breeding locations include the East St. Marshes in Pittsfield, Onota Lake, Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield and sites in Lanesboro, New Marlboro, Florida and Savoy. Spring migration occurs primarily in April and fall migration begins in October and lasts until early December peaking in late October and early November. There are many winter records, especially in years of extensive open water. Extreme dates are March 11 and January 2. Maximum numbers: Spring: 63, Pontoosuc Lake on April 8, 2006 (Neumuth) Fall: 50 WFC.

CANVASBACK

(Aythya valisineria)

Status: Uncommon migrant

This bird is very uncommon in spring migration with only 6 sightings reported. Spring dates are from March 18 through May 31. Fall populations may slowly begin to appear in early October, peaking in November occasionally lasting until January. There are few January and February records (occurring as late as February 13, 1977 when Hamilton recorded one bird in Lenox). Fall maximum: 99 Richmond Pond November 23, 1976 (Sanborn, Berg) and 84 on Onota Lake November 29, 1959 (Sanborn). The species is not listed in Faxon and Hoffmann in 1900.

REDHEAD

(Aythya americana)

Status: Uncommon to rare migrant

Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) mention a bird taken on the Pittsfield lakes sometime in the late 1800s. In the Twentieth Century, the first record came on November 10, 1940 (Clarke) when a male was noted. The first spring record was on April 30, 1949 on Pontoosuc (Griscom). Since this time, the bird has appeared almost annually especially in the fall. Spring dates extend from March 5, 2000 (Neumuth, Richmond Pond) to May 31 with a spring maximum of 8. Fall dates

extend through October to late November. The earliest date was September 24, 1977 when four males were noted on Richmond Pond (McNair) and the latest date was December 11. Fall maximum is 12.

RING NECKED DUCK

(Aythya collaris)

Status: Common migrant

First recorded in 1936, Ring necks have since become one of our most abundant migrants especially in the fall. Birds usually arrive in mid-March and stay until early May (March 3, 2002, Neumuth, 136-highest spring maximum) to May 27 (McNair, no data). Fall dates extend from September 1, 2004 with 2 males and a female in West Pittsfield (St. James) through December with wintering birds noted through January and February. Maximum: fall over 1000 birds are often noted most years at Mud Pond, Pittsfield.

GREATER SCAUP

(Aythya marila)

Status: Regular migrant

The first record of this species occurred in 1938 though proof was not obtained until November 23, 1942 when one was shot in Pittsfield. Spring migration begins in late March and continues into May (earliest date is March 13, the latest is May 21. Most of the flocks in the spring rarely reach 50 birds but on April 1, 1953 over 1200 were noted on the Pittsfield lakes (Dunbar, Hendricks, Sanborn). Fall migration arrivals start in late September and extends through December. The earliest fall date is September 26. Fall maximum was 386 on 5 Central Berkshire lakes November 5, 1977 (McNair). There is one winter record: Silver Lake, Pittsfield January 30, 1963 (Vincent, Smith).

LESSER SCAUP

(Aythya affinis)

Status: Regular migrant

This scaup was first reliably identified in 1929. Spring birds arrive in late March and can be recorded until mid-May (March 25-May 19). Fall birds occur from late September to mid-December (December 18, 1971, Onota, St. James). Because of the difficulty in separating the two scaup species, maxima remains questionable. A definite spring figure is 20 and for the fall, 40. This species was noted at Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield on February 23, 1997 (St. James).

KING EIDER

(Somateria spectabilis)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record of this species when 12 birds were noted at Pontoosuc Lake, May 5, 1991 (J. Shampang). Photographed and published in American Birds (45:416).

BLACK SCOTER

(Melanitta nigra)

Status regular migrant

This species is extremely rare in the spring with only 4 records: May 2, 1929, Stockbridge Bowl (Braun); May 13, 2000, Onota (St. James); May 18, 2002 Onota-2 (Lynch) and May 21, 2011 at Stockbridge Bowl (Neumuth). Flights in the fall were modest until after 1969. Up to this point the record number recorded was 118 on Onota, October 22, 1944 (Snyder). On October 17, 1970 over 1000 birds were on Onota (St. James, Addison). 300 were noted on this same date at Mt. Williams Reservoir (Whitehead). Fall dates extend from September 24-November 29 peaking from October 15 to October 25. One bird was noted on Goodrich Pond, December 15, 1973 (HBC).

SURF SCOTER

(Melanitta perspicillata)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Surf Scoters were first recorded in the county in Hinsdale, October 9, 1900 (one immature) but were not seen again until 1940. They are noted in the spring between April 7, 1946 and May 21, 1948 when 6 birds were seen by Hendricks. With a maximum of 250 seen over Mt. Everett May 21, 1967 (Parker, Bowen, Kieber). They are more regular in the fall from September 25 to December 5, 2000 (Stockbridge Bowl, St. James) with a maximum of 25 (Onota, October 17, 1970).

WHITE WINGED SCOTER

(Melanitta fusca)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Small numbers of this scoter may be present in the spring from mid-April through May. Numbers rarely exceed 10 though notable were 121 seen on Onota May 24, 1948 (Hendricks). Earliest spring date: April 14 with a late date of June 15, 1955 from Stockbridge Bowl. Fall records are concentrated through October and November. The earliest fall date is one bird seen August 18, 1966 on Cleveland Reservoir (Ford). The latest dates are: November 29; on December 28, 1933, one was found in the snow (Pell). Seven birds were on Wood Pond, January 5, 1997 (St. James). Fall maximum was 41 on Onota October 26, 1962.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

(Clangula hyemalis)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Faxon and Hoffmann list two birds shot in the 19th Century. The first modern record was October 29, 1933 of one male (Clarke, Hendricks). Seen in the spring during April through mid-May (May 18) with a spring maximum of 41 birds on the Pittsfield lakes April 29, 1988 (Goodrich). Earliest date is April 3, 1987 on Windsor Lake (St. James). Occurrence in the fall is relatively more common. Seen from late September (September 27, 1970 Onota, Goodrich) to early December (December 10th). Fall maximum: 65 Goose Pond November 19, 1977 (McNair).

BUFFLEHEAD

(Bucephala albeola)

Status: Regular migrant

Buffleheads were first recorded in the Berkshires in 1935 though there is evidence of their presence in the 19th Century. They have slowly increased since that time but are never common. In spring they have been recorded from February 28, 1998 at Smilleys Mill Pond in Egremont through mid-May with a maximum number of 26 seen on Onota 4/24/78 (fide McNair). In the fall they are not seen until mid-October (October 15) through mid-December or ice in. One was on the Housatonic River in Sheffield on January 1, 2001. The fall maximum is 115 on the Waterfowl Census November 7, 1993. A bird was recorded on Onota June 14, 1989.

COMMON GOLDENEYE

(Bucephala clangula)

Status: Regular migrant

This is a regular migrant relatively common in spring and fall. The earliest date, March 9, 2004 was noted at Wood Pond by R.&N. King and is seen until early May (May 9). Autumn dates

fall between early October and December. The maximum spring count is 75 seen on Pittsfield lakes on May 9, 1950 and in the fall 125 seen on Richmond Pond and Onota November 26, 1977 (McNair). Single birds have been noted in winter including one on Cheshire Reservoir January 28, 2002 (Mole) and on February 25, 2002 at Richmond Pond (St. James). There are three summer records from the 1940s, all from Onota.

BARROWS GOLDENEYE

(Bucephala islandica)

Status: Accidental

There are only four records of this species in the county. The first county record was April 15, 1931 on Wood Pond (Braun). Two males were noted on Onota on April 15, 1984 (Goodrich). One male was seen on Onota November 26, 1948 (Snyder) and on November 11, 1984 was seen at Pontoosuc Lake (Kellogg).

HOODED MERGANSER

(Lophodytes cuculatus)

Status: Common migrant; common breeder

The status of this species has changed drastically over the past years. As late as 1978 it was considered primarily a migrant and a very rare nester (McNair). But a scant ten years later it was commonly found breeding in 25% of the Wood Duck nest boxes maintained by the state (Gola, MDFW pers.com.). It should be expected to be seen at any time of the year as long as there is open water. A maximum number of 188 was seen by Neumuth on Pontoosuc on November 16, 2003. There have also been counts over the past few years exceeding 100 birds primarily at Pontoosuc. The species was not listed by Faxon and Hoffmann (1900).

COMMON MERGANSER

(Mergus merganser)

Status: Uncommon breeder; common migrant

This species is an uncommon nester primarily along the Farmington and Deerfield drainages. The first indication of nesting was a female and young noted in Sandisfield along the Farmington in either 1942 or 1943. Spring migrants arrive with ice out and retreat in the fall when all is frozen. If open water persists they may be expected throughout the winter. Maximum numbers: spring: 350 noted on April 8, 2006 (Neumuth). Fall: 240 on Pontoosuc Lake November 15, 2006 on the Central Berkshire CBC on December 17, 1983.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

(Mergus serrator)

Status: Uncommon migrant

It wasn't until 1934 that this species was first recorded. Spring counts are usually small though 21 were recorded on Wood Pond in Lenox on May 1, 1934 (Hendricks). Spring dates extend from March (March 7, 2001, Cheshire Reservoir, St. James) to mid-May (May, 13 2000, two on Pontoosuc, Lynch). Fall dates extend from September 25 to December 24, birds rarely staying until ice-in. Reid had four birds at Bartholomews Cobble August 29, 1999. Fall maximum is 35 on Pontoosuc November 18, 1967 (HBC). There are three summer records (1940, 1941, 1948, all from Onota). The bird is very unusual in winter. One was seen on the 2000 Southern Berkshire CBC (January 1) and on January 27, 1980 there was a bird on Stockbridge Bowl (St. James).

RUDDY DUCK

(Oxyura jamaicensis)

Status: Regular migrant

Ruddy Ducks are a rare spring migrant seen between April 9 and May 24, 1948 (Hendricks). Fourteen records are known prior to 1978 and only one record is on file since: April 8, 2002 Cheshire Reservoir (St. James). The maximum spring count is 4. It is more common in the autumn ranging from October 3 to December 5. The maximum fall number is 52 noted at Mud Pond in Pittsfield November 7, 1999 (H. Allen). The species is unlisted in Faxon and Hoffmann (1900).

RING-NECKED PHEASANT

(Phasianus colchicus)

Status: Introduced; regular in fall, uncommon the rest of the year

Introduced for the purpose of hunting, pheasants are pen reared and can be very tame. About 4000 birds are stocked yearly in Berkshire County by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, mostly on state owned land. Mortality is extremely high with figures of 70% being shot within 24 hours of stocking. Winter survival is limited but a few birds usually manage to survive until spring, mostly in valleys.

RUFFED GROUSE

Bonasa umbellus

Status: Regular resident

The Ruffed Grouse is a permanent resident throughout the Berkshires both on the plateau and in the valley. Numbers vary greatly from year to year and may follow a cyclical pattern. There may be some altitudinal migration. The gray color phase is predominate in the Berkshires with the red phase a bit more in evidence in the southern regions of the county.

WILD TURKEY

(meleagris gallopava)

Status: Very common to abundant resident

The Wild Turkey is an example of a very successful reintroduction effort by the state wildlife agencies. The species was eliminated in the county by 1840. In the first half of the 20th Century there were several attempts to re-introduce the bird but none achieved any degree of long term success. In the 1970s birds were released at Beartown State Forest and succeeded to such a degree that by 1979 birds were trapped and released in other portions of the county and eventually the rest of the state. By the late 1980s flocks of over 300 birds were seen in areas such as Alford Valley and Tyringham. Birds have been recorded in every town of the Berkshires. There are two seasonal hunting seasons, one in the spring and one in the fall.

NORTHERN BOBWHITE

(Collinus virginianus)

Status: Introduced; rare

The Bobwhite was never a common denizen of the Berkshires rarely surviving the winters except for small numbers in the southernmost portions of the county. It was felt that by 1900 no truly native birds existed and all sightings were the result of releases by the state, private individuals and sportsmans' clubs. These birds are darker and larger than the original inhabitants. Birds continue to be seen regularly in Sheffield and Lanesboro but winter survival is doubtful.

RED-THROATED LOON

(Gavia stellata)

Status: Uncommon migrant; more likely to be seen in the fall

This species was first recorded on October 31, 1943 on Onota Lake by Snyder. An earlier record of December 5, 1914 by Barron Brainard lacks a location. Prior to 1975, there had only been seven spring records. The earliest spring date is April 11 and the latest May 19. Fall dates are

between October 13 and December 5. Birds are usually seen as singles but a maximum of 21 was noted November 17, 1992 on the Pittsfield Lakes (Neumuth). Prior to this the largest number was 9 seen on the Pittsfield Lakes on November 8, 1959 by Eliot. All records have been on the larger Berkshire Lakes except for a November 28, 1991 bird seen on Mud Pond in Pittsfield by Neumuth.

PACIFIC LOON

(Gavia pacifica)

Status: Rare migrant; no spring records

This loon was first recorded on October 30, 1938 by Eliot. One was noted on Pontoosuc in 1964 and remained from November 1-15 (Herman et. al). Other fall records include one each on Onota Lake November 4 and November 7, 1943 (Snyder, Griscom) and two birds seen by Goodrich on Pontoosuc, November 24, 1985.

COMMON LOON

(Gavia immer)

Status; regular migrant; historic nesting likely; summer records

The Common Loon is usually seen from early April to late May. The earliest date on record is March 13 (location and year unrecorded by McNair as is another March 26 record). Maximum spring records: 73 birds on May 11, 2000, Onota Lake by Ferren; May 19, 1945 Snyder and M. Hendricks saw 54 loons on Onota. Loons in the fall are usually not noted until late September though there are a few late August and early September records. Maximum fall numbers include 64 on Onota November 12, 1979; 61 noted on Onota November 12, 1945 by Snyder and 50 on Onota November 8, 1959 seen by Eliot. Occasional birds have been recorded on the Central Berkshire Christmas Counts (1972, 1973, 1994). Summer and breeding records are scarce. Faxon and Hoffmann had no indication of breeding in the Nineteenth Century but did note one bird seen on Clarksburg Reservoir June 13, 1896. Until 1975 there have been about 10 June and July records. Nesting was suspected on Otis Reservoir during the 1920s with a female and two immatures present in the summer of 1929. On July 7, 2010 Neumuth discovered a nest with young on Bulkley-Dunton Lake in Becket. (photos taken).

PIED-BILLED GREBE

(Podilymbus podiceps)

Status: Regular migrant; rare nester

The Pied-billed Grebe was once an uncommon but regular breeding species. Recently, records indicate that it is still, very rarely, breeding in the county. Historically, breeding was confirmed on Cheshire Reservoir until at least 1928; Pontoosuc inlet until at least 1948; Wood Pond, Lenox, 1922-1975; Clarks Pond, Stockbridge until 1944; Brielmans Swamp recorded sporadically from 1928 until the mid 1960s; Smilleys Mill Pond, Egremont, nesting 1933-1955 and occasionally until 1967 with more recent records of 5/27/00 (Schulze); 5/19/01 (Lynch); 6/24/87 and 5/18/02 (St. James); Onota 1943-late 1960s; Half River in Ashley Falls 5/20/34; Covered Bridge, Sheffield 7/29/6?; Konkopot IBA, Stockbridge 8/16/03 (Lynch); Cranberry Pond, West Stockbridge 7/15/73, 7/28/74 (Goodrich); Watson Rd., Hinsdale 1976-1978 (McNair); Washington Mountain Meadow 8/9/03 (St. James, Tying); Tierney Swamp, Pittsfield 9/1/88, 5/27/96, 6/1/97 (St. James).

Spring migrants are seen soon after ice-out usually in early March and staying into May. Fall birds arrive in September. The maximum number for a single lake is 15 on Pontoosuc, 10/20/2004 with 6 birds on Onota, 5 on Cheshire Reservoir, and 3 on Richmond on the same date (all by Neumuth). Previous to this was a record of 14 grebes on Pontoosuc 9/20/43. Individual birds may stay until ice-in. Winter records are few: Pittsfield 12/17/88; Cheshire Reservoir 2/26/80 (Minnecci); Stockbridge Bowl 1/26-2/2 1980 (Goodrich); 1/3/89 on Silver Lake, Pittsfield (St. James).

HORNED GREBE

(Podiceps auritus)

Status: uncommon migrant

A spring migrant arriving in late March and recorded into mid-May. There is one summer record, a bird in full breeding plumage seen on a small pond in Pittsfield, June 14, 1948 (Hendricks). The maximum spring record is 28 seen on Onota April 21, 1941 by Hendricks. Fall migration begins in mid-October and extends to ice-in. The maximum fall count is 74 on the central Berkshire Lakes (35 on Stockbridge Bowl on November 6, 1955 (Hoffmann Bird Club). There are a number of winter records often picked up alive during very cold periods. On January 20, 1994, eleven were rescued in Pittsfield and later released on the coast (Laubach).

RED-NECKED GREBE

(Podiceps grisegena)

Status: Uncommon migrant

This grebe is an uncommon fall and spring migrant. Spring birds arrive in late March, peaking in April and have departed by mid-May. The maximum spring record is 25 seen on April 24, 1971 at Onota (Goodrich). Spring dates range from March 11 to May 19. Autumn birds usually arrive beginning in mid-October and depart by early December or ice-in. An aberrant fall date is August

28. 2011 on Onota (Blagdon). Autumn dates range from 9/25-12/21. Fall sightings are usually of one or two birds. The fall maximum is 9 recorded by Gagnon in Pittsfield, November 3, 2002. There are several accounts of birds rescued from snow and ice-bound ponds in winter. These records usually correspond with a major freeze of the Great Lakes and the subsequent flight to the ocean. In 1934, thirteen individuals were recorded between the 10th and 15th of February from various locations.

WESTERN GREBE

(Aechmoporus occidentalis)

Status: Accidental

This species has only been seen twice, both spring records: Laurel Lake, Lee on April 27, 1938 (Rinsma, Rurak) and on Onota May 8, 1947 (Rinsma, Derby).

CORYS SHEARWATER

(Calonectris diomedii)

Status: Accidental

One record. Following the Hurricane of 38 (September 28, 1938) an immature was found dying in Peru. The specimen is now in the collection of the Berkshire Museum.

WILSONS STORM PETREL

(Oceanites oceanicus)

Status: Accidental

There are four records. After Hurricane David passed on September 6, 1979, an adult was found in Dalton and later died (McDonald). On September 24, 1985 one was observed on Stockbridge Bowl (Goodrich). After Tropical Storm Irene on August 28, 2011, one bird was seen on Pontoosuc Lake and another on Onota (fide Morris-Siegal)

LEACHS STORM PETREL

(Oceanidroma leucorrhea)

Status: Accidental

There are two county records. One was shot on Lake Ashmere, Hinsdale, October 19, 1894 (Hoffmann). One bird was noted on Stockbridge Bowl, September 24, 1985 (Sanborn, Tynning). [see Wilsons Storm Petrel above]

WHITE TAILED TROPICBIRD

(*Phaethon Irturus*)

Tropical Storm Irene worked its way up the Atlantic Seaboard and dragged with it a number of oceanic species including an adult White tailed Tropicbird. On August 28, 2011 the bird was spotted on Onota by Morris-Siegal. The following day an immature was observed, also at Onota by Ferren (v.o.)

NORTHERN GANNET

(*Sula bassanus*)

Status: Accidental

There are two records for this species. An immature was struck by a car in Cheshire, December 5, 1960 (Hendricks). A bird was found in Adams and released on Cheshire Reservoir October 16, 1964 (Kulish). Both birds were photographed by Hendricks.

WHITE PELICAN

(*Pelecan erythrorhyncos*)

Status: Accidental

White Pelicans have been nearly a yearly occurrence in Massachusetts since 1983 though are extremely rare inland. On 4/8/99 a White Pelican was discovered alongside West Housatonic St. in Pittsfield (Hawley). A White Pelican was discovered a couple of days later in Tyngsboro, MA and thought to be the same bird (both birds had an injury to one eye). One was photographed by Fitch in Pittsfield, 4/9/2000.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

(*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Status: Uncommon migrant; uncommon summer

This species was formerly very rare. The first record was of a bird killed on Pontoosuc Lake in 1897. From that date to 1955 there were only 3 other records and from 1955 to 1969, there were an additional five sightings. By 1978 there were more than 28 reports. (McNair). By 1993, they were summering on Pontoosuc Lake (Flanagan) and are now (2004) regular summer inhabitants of most of our larger lakes. This migratory species usually arrives in April (earliest date 4/2/94 on Silver Lake, Pittsfield by Blagdon)) and except for summering birds, departs by the end of May. Fall migrants appear in September and depart in November though a bird was present until 12/16/02 (Central Berkshire CBC). Maximum: 41, Sheffield, 4/12/80 (HBC).

AMERICAN BITTERN

(Botaurus litigious)

Status: Uncommon breeder

The American Bittern was formerly a relatively regular breeder in valley cattail marshes but has declined dramatically throughout the northeast from the 1960s onward though it is more regularly noted in the Berkshires than in the rest of the state. The loss of suitable cattail habitats for nesting has been cited as the major reason for this change of status. It is currently listed as an endangered species in Massachusetts. In 1946, Snyder visited 14 sites in the Housatonic River valley that had bitterns. The estimate of breeding pairs in the county was about 8 in 1978 (McNair). Birds usually arrive in mid-April though there are records of earlier sightings (March 17, 1945 on Pontoosuc Lake seen by Snyder; April 7, 2000 Goodrich Pond, Pittsfield by Shampang; April 5, 1985 in New Lenox along the Housatonic River by St. James). Birds usually depart by the end of October although there are late dates of November 30, 1937 in Pittsfield—a bird with a broken leg; November 5, 1999 on Goodrich Pond (Shampang). Hendricks lists a December 18th record but gives no details.

LEAST BITTERN

(Ixobrychus excilis)

Status: Rare resident

The status of this heron has always been one of rarity, totally absent for many years then seen with regularity. Historical nesting sites include Onota Lake (1932, Pell); Pontoosuc Lake inlet (1930s and 1940s); Half River, Ashley Falls (1932, Pell); Brielmans Swamp, Pittsfield (intermittently 1950-1971, in 1950 six were seen by Fitz and Sanborn). More recently, breeding was suspected in 1972 at Goodrich Pond (Dennis) where one was seen throughout May of 1978 (Goodrich). And at Post Farm in Lenox (noted by Neumuth first on 5/21/2012). Recent records of non-breeding birds include a bird seen on April 20, 1985 Hover of MDF&W at Muddy Pond in Washington and a bird noted at Tierney Swamp August 18, 1996 (Collins).

GREAT BLUE HERON

(Ardea Herodias)

Status: Regular breeder

Great Blue Herons have increased dramatically over the past 30 years or so. Faxon and Hoffmann found no evidence of a breeding history (1922). The first recorded instance of nesting was at Stevens Pond in Monterey in 1945 (Snyder). From the late 1960s to the early 1980s a small number of colonies were located mostly in the southeast quadrant of the county (e.g. Otis,

Sheffield). Since that time, nesting has been recorded throughout the county including Pittsfield, Lenox, Stockbridge, Hinsdale, Becket, and Mt. Washington). To date, northern Berkshire is little represented. Ten to fifteen platforms are not uncommon per colony. Summer dispersal begins soon after breeding. Counts exceeding 6 are uncommon per location in the fall. Birds can be seen throughout the winter as long as there is suitable open water. The occurrence of some of these birds may be the result of injury. February records are rare.

GREAT EGRET

(Ardea giba)

Status: Uncommon migrant; summer visitor

The first record of this species was at Wood Pond, Lenox when 3 were seen on August 8, 1919 (Faxon and Hoffmann, 1922). It is more uncommon in the spring with the first record on May 31, 1934 in Pittsfield (Noble). Since that time there have been several records, the earliest March 27, 1996 seen along the Housatonic River in New Lenox (St. James). One bird was recorded on June 24, 1967 on Smilleys Mill Pond in Egremont. Maximum spring count:3. In 1948 350-400 birds were reported from the county (194 at Brielmans Swamp, Pittsfield). This flight began on July 4th when 7 were noted and continued until October 27. The largest number of birds recorded in the late summer dispersal is 16 recorded on August 24, 2001 in Lee by Laubach. On July 15, 1948, in South Sandisfield, a pair was observed starting a nest which was later abandoned. The latest fall date is October 28, 2001 in Housatonic (Barrett).

SNOWY EGRET

(Egretta thula)

Status: Rare migrant; summer visitor

The first sighting of this species was in South Sandisfield August 15, 1948. Since that time there have been sporadic reports. The earliest spring date is April 10, 1959 on Coles Field in Williamstown (Cartwright) and the latest May 22, 1977 when 5 were seen in Hancock. This is also the maximum number of birds recorded (Hendricks). The latest date at Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield when one bird was seen by Laubach on September, 1, 1993.

LITTLE BLUE HERON

(Egretta caerulea)

Status: Very rare

The first recording of the Little Blue Heron was a bird captured and banded at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox July 6, 1930 (Braun). Most birds seen in the Berkshires are white colored

juveniles though an adult in breeding plumage was noted at Pontoosuc Lake on May 14, 1944 (Griscom et. al). Two adults were noted at Bartholomews Cobble in Ashley Falls August 8, 2000 (Reid). In 1948 a flock of 29 birds was noted on July 28th (Hendricks, Sanborn). The species is less common today than during the 1930s and 1940s. Dates: May 14-September 18.

TRICOLORED HERON

(Egretta tricolor)

Status: Accidental

This species has only been recorded three times in the county, on adult at Cole Pond in Williamstown, May 19, 1966 (Whitehead), one at Wood Pond, Lenox on May 30, 1980 (Weatherbee) and one at Woods Pond in Lenox in Lenox October 22. 2087 (Weatherbee)

CATTLE EGRET

(Bubulcus ibis)

Status: Rare

The Cattle Egret was first recorded in Ashley Falls on May 4, 1962 (Bailey). Most sightings have been in May except one in Richmond October 22, 1987 (Goodrich) and another bird observed on the General Electric property along East St. in Pittsfield on November 9, 1994 (St. James, v.o.). The earliest date is March 31, 1996 in Lenox (Robinson). In West Stockbridge, Rinsma counted 82 on May 4, 1972.

GREEN HERON

(Butorides virescens)

Status: Uncommon breeder

This species has never been considered abundant and it undertook a sharp population drop in the mid 1900s from which it is now recovering. The largest concentration recorded is of three nests in Wild Acres in Pittsfield in 1977 and 1978 (McNair). It is more common in lower elevations. Dates: April 15-October 31.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

(Nycticorax nycticorax)

Status: Rare

There are no confirmed nesting records for this species although it has been seen during the breeding season especially during the early 20th Century. There was a sharp decline in the 1950-1960s and is now making a slow comeback due to increases in coastal nesting. The maximum count in spring is three, for summer dispersal: 7 (July 7, 1944 Pittsfield/Lenox) and for fall, only single birds. There is a record in Pittsfield of a possibly injured immature bird on November 29, 1952. Dates: April 6-October 9.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

(Nycticorax violacea)

Status: Rare

The Yellow-crowned Night Heron was first recorded on July 1, 1978 in New Marlboro (Langewald). On April 28, 1985 one was found at Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield (Lund) with up to three birds noted through August 8th (Laubach). The following year, 1986, one was seen there from June 1st to September and in 1987, once was present from May 26 to August 2. Gagnon had one bird in Stockbridge on May 26, 2002.

WHITE IBIS

(Eudocinnus albus)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record of this species: May 3, 1973, an adult was seen on Wilhelms Pond in Ashley Falls (Spring).

GLOSSY IBIS

(Plegadis falcinellus)

Status: Rare

The first Glossy Ibis was recorded in Sheffield on April 4, 1966 (Bulkeley, Bain) which is also the earliest date. A flock in Pittsfield/Lenox on May 2, 1972 contained up to 42 birds (Dennis) and was the maximum number recorded. Sightings have decreased in recent years, however Collins reported 5 on April 17, 2004 in New Lenox. The only fall record was of a fly over at Spruce Hill in Savoy on October 12, 1993 (Rancatti).

BLACK VULTURE

(Coragyps atratus)

Status: Regular and increasing

The Black Vulture population has exploded in the southwestern part of the county in recent years. It was first noted in the county in 1932. Prior to 1978 there were only 10 confirmed sightings of this species but since that time it can be seen year round in substantial numbers. Maximum: 36 Sheffield, September 15, 2001 (Lynch). It is usually associated with kettles of Turkey Vultures. No nesting has yet been determined. It has been recorded in most of the valley towns but in much smaller numbers north of Great Barrington and usually three or less birds

TURKEY VULTURE

(Cathartes aura)

Status: Common; rare breeder

The Turkey Vulture was first recorded in 1891. In the first half of the Twentieth Century, sightings were uncommon and only of one or two birds until 1927 when 7 were seen in the Sheffield area. By 1952 over 27 were noted coming to roost in the same town (Shumacher). Breeding records are elusive because of the secretive nature of the bird. Until 1978 only two sites were identified- one in Tyringham where the first breeding was recorded in Massachusetts (8/29/54, Long Mountain) and the other in Otis. On 6/30/03 a nest was found in Dalton in the base of a wooded ravine (Jervis). In recent years it has been more common in winter and should be expected to be seen year round. Maximum: 121 seen in Sheffield 7/1/00 (Lynch)

GREATER FLAMINGO

(Phoenicopterus ruber)

Status: Accidental

Possibly an escape though accepted a bona fide by Veit and Peterson. On August 23, 1964, a flamingo was discovered on the summit of Lenox Mt. in a small town reservoir by Oscar Hutchinson (fide Sanborn) and was photographed.

OSPREY

(Pandion haliactus)

Status: Regular migrant

The Osprey is a common migrant seen over larger lakes, rivers and from hawk watch localities. Its numbers have increased in recent years due largely to the successful use of artificial nest sites erected along the coast. This hawk arrives in mid-March (March 11, 2000, Purdy) and is seen

through May (May 26, 1997, Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield, St. James). There are numerous summer records. Fall migration starts in late August (August 30, 2003, Laubach) and continues through early November (November 10, McNair) The maximum number was 26 seen on Mt. Everett by Dunbar on September 27, 1978. There is one winter record: February 25, 1976, North Adams (Quinlan). Its status in the 1800s was similar to that of today (Faxon and Hoffmann, 1900).

BALD EAGLE

(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)

Status: Regular migrant, winter visitor; uncommon breeder

The Bald Eagle has made a dramatic increase in its population in the past several years due, in large part, to artificial hacking in Massachusetts and other surrounding states. The bird can now be seen year-round. Nesting was confirmed in the late 1999 in Sandisfield near Colebrook Reservoir. Nesting has now been shown to be successful in Pittsfield and Ashley Falls with nest construction occurring in several other sites. Historically, nesting was recorded in Cheshire Reservoir in the late 1800s (Faxon and Hoffmann, 1900).

NORTHERN HARRIER

(Circus cyaneus)

Status: Uncommon migrant; rare breeder

The Harrier is a rare breeder in the county and an uncommon spring and fall migrant. Spring migration begins in mid-February and lasts through May. There is some late summer movement from mid-August blending into fall migration in September and October. There are a number of December reports. Breeding was first discovered at Pages Swamp in Pittsfield June 16, 1926. Breeding pairs were located in the Housatonic Valley until 1952. There is presumed nesting at the Moran WMA in Windsor and Washington Mt. Meadow. Dates: January 2, 1994 Bartholomews Cobble on the Southern Berkshire CBC (Laubach); February 18, 2000 (Rancatti) to May 23, 2004, Washington. Fall dates extend from August 12th to December 29th. Maximum:15 on Richmond Pond, April 19, 1972 (Congdon); Fall: 8.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK

(Accipiter striatus)

Status: Regular migrant; rare breeder; winter visitor

Sharpies migrate through the county in the spring from mid April through mid-May and in fall from late August to mid-October. There are nesting records that indicate a rising trend of

occurrence. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) regarded it as not a common summer resident. Only one proven record up to 1978 (January 18, 1939, Hinsdale, Cleman). The species is increasingly seen in winter probably due to the increase in feeding stations and the subsequent concentration of birds. Maximum: 5 in spring; Fall: 400 Fobes Hill, Windsor September 28, 1977 (McNair).

COOPERS HAWK

(Accipitor cooperii)

Status: Regular migrant; rare breeder

The Coopers Hawk is a relatively common raptor in migration though never reaching the daily numbers recorded for Sharpies. Maximum: 3 in both the spring and fall. Nesting records are sporadic and are usually indicated by adults taking food into secluded areas. There is no record of an actual nest being found until 1982 at Pittsfield State Forest (Sanborn, Tynning with photos). St. James had a pair constructing a nest on Baldwin Hill, Egremont and subsequently watched as birds brought food to the completed nest (March 16, 2002). There are many winter records.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK

(Accipitor gentilis)

Status: Uncommon migrant, winter visitor, rare breeder

Goshawks are noted throughout the year and have increased in recent years especially as a breeder. Nesting success is easily determined by the adults proclivity toward attacking intruders. Breeding usually takes place on the plateau and is initiated in early April with young on nest by early May. In migration the maximum number seen is 2 per day. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) records this species as a rare and irregular winter visitor listing only six 19th Century records. By 1950 Hendricks continues to list this bird as only a rare winter visitor.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

(Buteo lineatus)

Status: Uncommon migrant; uncommon breeder

The Red-shouldered Hawk has decreased dramatically over the last 50 years. It used to be the most common Buteo in the Berkshires and is now very unusual. Spring birds begin trickling through the area in February and continue through mid-May. Fall migrants begin showing up in mid-September with stragglers continuing into December. Maximum in the spring is seven seen on Mt. Everett, April 20, 1974 (Dunbar). Fall maximum is 9 on Lenox Mt., September 17, 1944 (Snyder). It is uncommon and a local nester seen in the more secluded areas of the county

usually around beaver ponds on the Berkshire Plateau. Nesting was studied by McDonald from 1971-1978 when 15 nests were actively monitored. In 1973, he monitored 12 nests while another 18 birds were on territory. Winter records are scarce with only one January record, January 17, 1964, (Williamstown).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK

(Buteo platypterus)

Status: Regular breeder; often abundant migrant

The unobtrusive nature of this hawk lends to underestimates of breeding status though it is one of our most common breeding raptor. Spring migration begins in mid-April and is over by mid-May. In the fall it is most numerous from September 7-September 25 with a little spillover into October. There are two March records: March 20, 1998 Stockbridge (St. James) and March 23, 2003, Great Barrington (Johnson). Maximum numbers: 333 seen April 19, 1972 in Richmond (Congdon) and 4300 seen at Cooper Hill in Sheffield September 19, 1971 (Strauss). An unusually late high count of 42 in North Adams was noted on October 16, 1971.

RED-TAILED HAWK

(Buteo jamaicensis)

Status: Regular breeder, migrant and winter visitor

From the 1950s onward, this species has become the most common resident Buteo in the county surpassing the Red-shouldered Hawk. It nests both in cultivated and heavily wooded areas. Spring migration takes place primarily in late March and April with a maximum number of 25. The fall migration is more notable extending from late September into November peaking in late October. Maximum: 103, October 29, 1999 (fide Kellogg). They are found throughout the winter especially in open areas.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK

(Buteo lagopus)

Status: Very uncommon winter resident

A winter visitor, this species was once seen yearly but of late, several seasons have transpired without a record. Arrival varies year to year with the earliest birds expected in late October. Departure is in April or before though there is a late date of June 24, 1967 from the bottom of Greylock (Stymeist). In the fall the earliest date is October 22, 1962 in Williamstown (Whitehead). A maximum of 4 has been noted at the Brattle Brook Park in Pittsfield. Light phases predominate.

GOLDEN EAGLE

(Aquila chrysaetos)

Status: Rare migrant

The Golden Eagle was listed by Faxon and Hoffmann in 1900 as a very rare permanent resident, though it has subsequently been extirpated. The first 20th Century record was on July 19, 1931 in Ashley Falls. It is rare in spring migration though it is seen with a bit more regularity in the fall primarily from late October through November. Fall maximum is three. Most of the fall records are from the hawk lookout at Berry Mt. in Pittsfield. They may be seen in winter, likely spillovers from a small wintering population from Quabbin Reservoir.

AMERICAN KESTREL

(Falco sparverius)

Status: Regular migrant, uncommon breeder

The Kestrel has declined in the past 50 or so years. In spring migration they peak in April with a maximum number of 16. In the fall, they sprinkle through with 2-6 recorded daily at various hawk watches. The fall maximum is 50 noted by Goodrich in Pittsfield on September 14, 1974. Birds continue on into winter though this is becoming less frequent in recent years. The daily winter maximum of 8 was seen on the Central Berkshire CBC January 14, 1974. Breeding while once regular through the county has decreased dramatically as part of a general decline throughout the east.

MERLIN

(Falco columbarius)

Status: Rare migrant

This species migration concentrates along the coast so inland records are sporadic and uncommon. Spring migration is from late March (3/1/78, Dalton, McNair) into May (5/16). Fall migration begins in early September (9/10) and extends into November (11/19). There is a scattering of winter records (four recorded as of 1978). Only single birds are recorded. The first record of breeding was in 2011 in Great Barrington (v.o., fide Laubach).

PEREGRINE

(Falco peregrinus)

Status: Rare migrant

Historically, Peregrines nested on cliff faces throughout the Berkshires. The last pair nested in 1957 (this was also the last pair recorded in Massachusetts). Former nest sites include Race Mt. (Black Rock) in Sheffield; Bash Bish Falls, Mt. Washington; Monument Mt.; Black Rock, Cheshire; Hanging Rock, Sandisfield. Successful attempts at hacking birds throughout the state may lead to future breeding activity in the Berkshires. Currently the closet nesting sites are in the Connecticut Valley: Springfield and Mt. Sugarloaf in South Deerfield. Migration occurs from early March to May and from September through October in the fall. Only single birds are noted. The earliest date is 2/21 and the latest, 11/20. There is one winter record-December 21, 1997 on the Central Berkshire CBC count.

KING RAIL

(Rallus elegans)

Status: Rare; probable nester

The first record of the King Rail in the Berkshires was at Pontoosuc 7/2/30 by Broun and Clark. Evidence of nesting was found there from 1930 to 1954. From 1959 to 1965, breeding birds were noted at Harmon Pond Marsh in Sheffield. Areas where nesting has been suspected include Smilleys Mill Pond, Egremont (1968-1970); Tierney Swamp, Pittsfield (1990); Morewood Lake, Pittsfield (before 1950); Pittsfield Sewage Treatment Plant (before 1950); Housatonic Valley Wildlife Management Area (1993); Stockbridge (2002-3); and the confluence of Willow Creek and the Housatonic River in Lenox (2003). Birds arrive in late April and depart in early September. Hendricks found a dead immature on 10/16/58 in Pittsfield.

VIRGINIA RAIL

(Rallus limicola)

Status: Regular nester

The Virginia Rail is Berkshires most common rail with most cattail swamps harboring one and possibly more pairs. Spring arrival occurs in April (earliest 4/1/72 Brielmans Swamp, Pittsfield, St. James). Fall departure is usually complete by mid October. There are several winter records including one in Stockbridge, 1/30/42, one in Egremont 2/18/75 and another in Richmond 12/29/40.

SORA

(Porzana carolina)

Status: Uncommon breeder.

The Sora is an infrequent breeder in the Berkshires. Nesting is difficult to confirm. Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield has continued over the years to be a proven and successful area. Migration in spring starts in mid April (4/15) and fall departure is usually over by early November (11/6). On 12/18/76, Flor and Collins found a fresh specimen at Stockbridge Bowl. The spring migration maximum is 3 while the fall number is 10 though in recent years 3 is the more likely figure.

COMMON GALLINULE

(Gallinula chloropus)

Status: Very uncommon breeder

The moorhen is listed in Massachusetts as a species of Special Concern. Once a very uncommon breeding species in the county, it is now extremely local. Suspected or confirmed nesting localities in recent years include Smilleys and Marsh Ponds, both in Egremont.; Willow Creek, Lenox; Tierney Swamp, Pittsfield; Konkopot IBA in Stockbridge; and along various places of the Housatonic River in Lenox. The maximum number seen of both adults and juveniles was on 7/23/78 at Tierney Swamp in Pittsfield when Goodrich had 37. One adult was observed at Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox from 11/3 to 11/16/2002 (Laubach).

PURPLE GALLINULE

(Porphyryla martinica)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record in Berkshire County. On 2/12/64 an immature female was found at the General Electric Co. in Pittsfield. It is thought that this bird was brought north in a box car transporting materials from Florida to the Pittsfield plant. The bird is in the collection of the Berkshire Museum.

AMERICAN COOT

(Fulca americana)

Status: Regular fall migrant

Coots are migrants which are very rare in the spring but are to be expected, sometimes in significant numbers in the fall. Spring arrival occurs in late March and extends through April. The maximum spring count is one. Fall counts are higher (maximum: 288 on the Central Berkshire Lakes 11/7/11), . Birds may straggle into area in September but are not seen in numbers until

late October and stay until ice in. The winter records are of a single birds on Cheshire Reservoir 1/28/02 to 2/7/02 (Mole)and 8 birds also on Cheshire Reservoir in 2012 (v.o.). In 1892 a pair may have nested on Cheshire Reservoir (Auk, 1895) and a single bird was recorded at Pontoosuc 6/12/43 by Ball and Pratt.

SANDHILL CRANE

(Grus canadensis)

Status: Very rare resident

Spring records of migrating birds are rare but one was noted in Wild Acres in Pittsfield. on May 21. 2011 (5/21/2011). In the fall of 1990, a crane was noted in a manure spread in Belchertown MA. The bird was captured and brought to Tufts University for rehabilitation. It was subsequently released in January of 1991 in Sheffield. A bird was observed in Lanesboro November 19,2000 (Wilson fide Purdy). From June 2nd through July 9, 2004 two birds was reported from the New Marlboro village of Clayton and photographed (Laubach). . On September 20, 2004, a single bird flew over the Berry Mt. hawk watch in early afternoon (Tynning). By 2004 birds were seen in the Southfield area with nesting confirmed in 2007 Successful raising of young was not accomplished until 2011. Nesting was also thought to have occurred in the Lake Buel area during this time period with no details.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER

(Pluvialis squatarola)

Status: Rare fall migrant

First discovered at Onota Lake on 9/10/35 by Hendricks, this species has never been a common migrant. There are only two spring records: 5/23/69 and 5/23/70, both single birds in Ashley Falls (Parker). Fall migrants arrive in late July and may be recorded until early November. The latest fall record is one bird on 11/20/49. The maximum number in the fall was 14 seen at Onota Lake 11/2/49 (Hendricks). Unlike many of the other shorebirds, Black-bellied Plovers are recorded at the north end of Onota after a draw-down when there is a significant mudflat. They were observed in September of 1984 at Pontoosuc Lake when there was an early draw-down to repair the dam.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER

(Pluvialis dominica)

Status: Rare fall migrant

This species is very uncommon in the Berkshires. There are only two spring records: 5/10/53 Pittsfield Sewer Beds (Fitz); 5/17/80 Sheffield (Parker). Fall sightings are most common in September (8/27-10/14) One bird was noted at the Pittsfield Airport 11/21/80 (Goodrich). The maximum fall count is 10 in Ashley Falls 9/10/53 (Bailey). There is only one record from the 19th Century.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER

(Charadrius semipalmatus)

Status: Rare migrant

The Semipalmated Plover is a migrant more common in the fall than the spring. As with other shorebirds, this species is much less observed since the demise of the sewage treatment plant in Pittsfield. In spring, most records are in May with the notable exception of an April 19, 1964 sighting in Sheffield (P. Bailey). There is an early summer record of 6/11/49 when 2 birds were noted (location?). Fall migration starts in late July and lasts through September. The latest fall date is 11/8/70 at Richmond Pond (St. James). Maximum spring and fall numbers are 9 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds, 5/28/33 (Hendricks) and 22 also at the sewer beds 8/22/38 (Hendricks).

KILLDEER

(Charadrius vociferous)

Status: Common breeder, migrant

During the 19th Century, the Killdeer was almost completely wiped out by the effects of market hunting. By the end of the century it was considered very rare (Faxon and Hoffmann 1900) with only two records mentioned in the 1890s. It wasn't until 1917 that there was another sighting followed two years later by the first 20th Century breeding record (6/22/19, West Stockbridge). By 1937 the bird was firmly established as a breeding species and a common migrant. Currently, the bird nests in gravelly areas, fields and meadows with a surprising affinity to flat graveled roofs. This is one of the earliest spring migrants often arriving in late February. The spring maximum, 33 was recorded on 2/18/year? In Williamstown. The fall maximum is 107 recorded on 7/26/54 in Pittsfield (Schumacher). Fall birds are usually gone by November. There are no winter records and no proven survival.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS

(Tringa melanoleuca)

Status: Regular migrant

This is the more common of the yellowlegs. Spring migration is from late March and extends into June (3/28-6/12). Fall migration yields far more sightings than in the spring. The season runs from mid-July to late November (7/5-11/24). There is one winter record of a bird heard along the Housatonic in Sheffield on the South County CBC 1/1/03 (Cook#). Maximum is 30 at Ashley Falls 5/22/36 (Hendricks) and 33 at Onota 10/8/52 (Hendricks). Hendricks lists a count of 42 but gives no further information.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS

(Tringa flavipes)

Status: Uncommon migrant

This yellowlegs is far rarer in spring than its close relative, the Greater Yellowlegs. Spring migration peaks in mid-May but birds have been recorded as early as late March. Fall migration begins in early June and lasts until early November. Maxima are 30 in Ashley Falls 5/22/36 (Hendricks) in the spring and in the fall 45 were noted at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds 7/25/38 (Hendricks).

SOLITARY SANDPIPER

(Tringa solitaria)

Status: Regular migrant

This sandpiper is more common in the western areas of the state than coastally. Spring migration begins in mid-April (with an unusually early date of 3/30/73 in Ashley Falls by St. James) and extends to the end of May. The spring maximum is 12 recorded several times. Fall migration begins in July and lasts until the middle of October (7/8-10/16) with a maximum of 51 birds at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds.

WILLET

(Catopteryphorus semipalmatus)

Status: Accidental

This record exists based on one record from Williamstown, cited in 1858 (Williams College List 1858).

SPOTTED SANDPIPER

(Tringa macularia)

Status: Regular migrant, breeder

This is the only sandpiper, along with snipe and woodcock which breeds in the Berkshires. Arrival is usually underway by late April (earliest date: 4/13) and fall departure extends into October though there is one date of 11/3 in Cheshire (Packard). Spring maximum is 9 at Mt. Williams in North Adams 5/16/77. Migrants begin to return by mid-July with a maximum fall count of 20 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds seen several times. Breeding occurs along river banks and pond shores.

UPLAND SANDPIPER

(Batramia longicauda)

Status: Rare migrant; historical nester

This species is an extremely rare migrant and has bred historically in the county. Breeding records are from the northern parts of the county with scant records from Faxon and Hoffmann (1922). The most recent confirmed date for breeding in this period was in 1933 (Hendricks, Bagg and Eliot). On July 4, 1985, however, a bird was videotaped in Savoy (Quinlan). Spring migrants have been recorded through April and May and fall birds have been seen from late July to late August. No more than 2 birds have been recorded daily.

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

(Limosa haemastica)

Status: Accidental

There are only three records of this species in the Berkshires: 10/21/63 Onota (Hendricks); Richmond Pond inlet 11/10/91-11/15/91 (Kiewig); 10/15/93 Richmond Pond Pond (Goodrich).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW

(Numinous americanus)

Status: Accidental

There are no records of this species except for a short comment in Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) that Dr. Emmonds stated this curlew to be found rarely on the Hoosic (Catalogue, 1833, p.550)

RUDDY TURNSTONE

(Arenaria interpres)

Status: Rare migrant

This sandpiper was first recorded at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds on 10/2/32 (Hendricks). This was also the latest date. There have only been about 15 records since-four in the spring. An unusually early bird was seen by P. Bailey 4/10/64 in Sheffield. The largest number was 7 on 7/26/55 (Schumacher).

RED KNOT

(Calidris canutus)

Status: Accidental

There are only two records in Berkshire County: 5/27/46 (Bailey) of 8 birds and 7/28/86 when one bird was seen as close as 10 feet at Richmond Pond (Goodrich).

SANDERLING

(Calidris alba)

Status: Rare migrant

For a bird so abundant along the coast, it is surprising to find it so rare inland. There are only 11 records since 8/19/32 when Pell discovered one in Pittsfield. There is a late date of 11/1/93 when two were seen at Richmond Pond (Goodrich#).

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER

(Calidris pusilla)

Status: Uncommon migrant

This sandpiper is a relatively uncommon migrant and it is mostly recorded in the fall than in the spring. Spring birds usually start arriving in mid-May though there is an early record of 5/5/97 at Bartholomews Cobble (St. James). They usually depart by early June. The spring Maximum is 20 noted by Goodrich on 6/11/72. Fall birds start drifting in by mid-July (7/13) and have left by October though there is a date of 11/9/69 of a sole bird at Pittsfield Sewer Beds 7/28/55 (Eliot). In recent years Least Sandpipers have become more abundant than the Semipalmated due in large part by the lack of mud flats at both of the large Pittsfield lakes and the demise of the sewer beds in the early 70s.

WESTERN SANDPIPER

(Calidris mauri)

Status: Very rare migrant

The first date for this species was 9/14/35 at Onota (Eliot). All records are in the fall with the earliest 8/2 and the latest 11/9/86. The maximum is 3 on Onota 10/5/69 (Goodrich).

LEAST SANDPIPER

(Calidris minutilla)

Status: Regular migrant

This is the most commonly observed sandpiper in the county. There are no spring records for the Least Sandpiper outside of May. The spring maximum is 33 seen by Snyder at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds 5/17/46. Fall birds start to trickle into the area in early July (7/1) and depart by early by early October although there is a late date of 11/9/69 at Onota Lake. Fall maximum is 64 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds 9/9/34 (Hendricks).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER

(Calidris fuscicollis)

Status: Rare migrant

This is another rare sandpiper whose occurrence in recent years has dramatically decreased because of the loss of the Pittsfield Sewer Beds as a shorebird attractant. It was first recorded on 9/8/43 (Snyder) at the beds and was not located again for another six years, 10/4/49 (Compton) also at the beds. All records have been in the fall with dates ranging from July 21 to November 13. The maximum number was 7 seen on 11/1/93 (Reid, Laubach) at Richmond Pond. Laubach also found 6 at Wood Pond in Lenox on 9/18/91.

BAIRDS SANDPIPER

(Calidris bairdii)

Status: Very rare migrant

The Bairds was first seen in the Berkshires on 8/30/33 (Eliot) at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds. Prior to the demise of the beds in the early 1970s, this was the best place in Massachusetts to observe the bird. All records in the county came from the beds except for a bird at Center Pond in Dalton 9/7/76. Since then, it has been unrecorded. All records are from the fall (August 16-October 7) with a maximum of 3 noted on several dates.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER

(Calidris melanotos)

Status: Rare migrant

Pectorals are a regular migrant through the county but are never common due to a lack of suitable habitat. Spring migration begins in mid-April (4/10) and extends through May (5/27). Birds are more common in the fall. Single birds are the rule though on 10/9/49 Eliot had 28 at Pontoosuc Lake and another 14 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds. Like most other shorebirds, this species was recorded more regularly when the Pittsfield Sewer Beds were extant.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

(Calidris maritime)

Status: Accidental

There are only two inland records of the Purple Sandpiper in Massachusetts, both at the end of October. One bird was seen at Onota Lake 10/25/53 by Sanborn and Hendricks and another single bird was also noted, also at Onota, by Ford and Hendricks 10/28/63.

DUNLIN

(Calidris alpina)

Status: Uncommon migrant

This species is a very uncommon migrant through the Berkshires. Spring dates are primarily in May (5/4 to 5/24) though there was an extremely aberrant sighting in Washington 4/17/98 by Neumuth. The fall migration is skewed to the latter part of the season with the first birds arriving in mid-September with departure completed by 11/15. Like the spring, there is one fall aberrant date of 8/22/77 when one bird was recorded in Pittsfield by Shampang and Purdy. Maximum spring numbers include a flock of 30 noted on 5/15/76. The greatest fall count is 35 by Snyder on 10/18/48.

STILT SANDPIPER

(Calidris bimanous)

Status: Rare migrant

The Stilt Sandpiper is another species whose sightings have all but disappeared with the demise of the Pittsfield Sewer Beds. It was first recorded in 9/25/32 by Pell at the beds. The second record wasn't until 1946 when Snyder recorded one on 10/1. All Berkshire records are from the fall and between the dates of 8/5 and 10/10. All records are for only one or two birds.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER

(*Tryngites subruficollis*)

Status: Accidental

There have only been three records of this species. The first was 9/10/59 when a bird was identified at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds (Noble). The other two records were also at the beds: 8/27/80 (Vincent) and 9/8/74 (Hendricks).

RUFF

(*Philomachus pugnax*)

Status: Accidental

Despite over 69 spring and 81 fall state records of this species up to 1993, there has only been one identified in the Berkshires when Parker, Howen and Kebler saw a bird under ideal conditions in Sheffield on 5/23/70.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER

(*Limnodromus griseous*)

Status: Rare migrant

The first record for this species in Berkshire County was on 8/19/32 when Pell observed dowitchers at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds. Spring dates extend between 5/20 and 5/24 with a maximum of 150 birds at Ashley Falls 5/20/70 (Bulkley). Fall birds are recorded between 7/5/ and 9/13 with an unusually late date of 10/20 (this birds were not identified to species other than that they were dowitchers). Fall counts are usually of single birds but 22 were seen in South Egremont 7/28/55 by Eliot.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER

(*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

Status: Accidental

There are only two records of this species in Berkshire County: 9/8/43 when two birds were seen by Snyder over several days at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds and on 9/25/77 when McNair had a single bird at the beds.

WILSONS SNIPE

(Gallinago gallinago)

Status: Regular breeder; migrant

The Wilsons Snipe is a common migrant and a regular breeding species in wetlands of sedges, cattails and other non-woody growth. Breeding was not confirmed until 5/9/76 when a nest and eggs were discovered by Dennis at Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield. The nest was flooded and another nest was discovered at this swamp on 6/20/76 though not necessarily by the same pair. Since that time nesting has been determined throughout the Berkshire Valley and up into the plateau (Fobes Hill, Windsor 7/4/78, an adult and one young, McNair). Spring migrants arrive in April (with an early date of March 20. 2012 on Sheep Hill in Williamstown, Reed Evens) and depart by late May. A maximum of 80 was attained on 4/17/63 in Pittsfield. Fall birds drift into the area as early as early July and have left by early November with the height of migration falling in September and October. A fall maximum of 22 was noted at Smilleys Pond in Egremont on 9/21/75. There are many winter records.

AMERICAN WOODCOCK

(Scolopax minor)

Status: Regular breeder, common migrant

Woodcock breed throughout the Berkshires wherever there is suitable habitat of low, wet thickets near clearings. Arrival begins as soon as the first evidence of bare grass and seeps afford them an opportunity to perform their mating flight usually in mid-March but often as early as mid-February (2/12/2012 New Lenox, St. James). Departure is usually by mid-October. Ten to fifteen migrants a day are not unusual. Winter records are scarce, the latest 1/31/65 (Smith, Oltsch) in Great Barrington.

WILSONS PHALAROPE

(Phalaropus tricolor)

Status: Accidental

The Wilsons Phalarope was first discovered in the Berkshires on May 16, 1933 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds by Hendricks. The next sighting wasnt until 8/16/47, also at the beds. The third sighting was on 6/11/72 by Goodrich, again at the beds as two seen on 9/1/74 (Minneci. On 5/7/77, 3 females were discovered in a puddle in Ashley Falls (Kearney).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE

(Phalaropus lobatus)

Status: Extremely rare migrant

The first record of this species was 8/20/33 (Bailey, Hendricks) at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds. There are only 4 spring records: 5/23/60 (Bagg) in South Egremont; May 1973 at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds (Dennis); 5/23/62 (Parker#) in Egremont; there is a date of 6/7 with no additional information. In the fall, arrival begins in mid-August and extends to mid-September though on November 7, 1970 a bird was noted at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds (Weigand). The maximum number is five birds seen at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds 8/17/47 (Hendricks).

RED PHALAROPE

(Phalaropus fulcra)

Status: Accidental

There are only two records of this species in the Berkshires: on 10/10/59 one was seen at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds (Bates) and on 11/9/03 at the Onota Causeway (Packard).

PARASITIC JAEGER

(Stercorarius parasiticus)

Status: Accidental

On 9/17/70, Shampang noted this species at Pontoosuc Lake where it stayed until 9/20. This is also the second record for the entire state.

LAUGHING GULL

(Larus atricilla)

Status: Extremely rare

There are very few records of this gull in the Berkshires. Spring birds include two birds noted at Onota (Kiewig, 4/13/72). Laubach had one at Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield, 5/18/91 and Goodrich had one at Onota Lake on 4/26/92. Fall dates are equally scarce: one at Onota 11/23/53 Noble; 4 adults and immature at Pontoosuc 10/16/64 (Fitz); one at Pontoosuc 11/8/59 (Eliot). Maximum: 5.

FRANKLINS GULL

(Larus pipixcan)

Status: Accidental.

One record. On June 28, 1997 a bird was seen on Onota by Goodrich.

LITTLE GULL

(Larus minutus)

Status: Accidental

The only state inland record for this gull was a bird seen at Onota 4/20/46 by Griscom.

BONAPARTES GULL

(Larus philadelphia)

Status: Rare

The Bonapartes Gull is a rare spring and fall migrant. Spring birds are mostly seen in May but there are numerous records for April (earliest 4/6). There is a late date of 6/7 (no further information). The spring maximum is 37 (Goodrich) seen on the Pittsfield Lakes on April 24, 1988. Fall birds have been recorded as early as late July and they have been recorded through the fall into early December. The largest number of fall birds is 7. Though still considered rare, this was actually the most recorded gull in Berkshire County in the 19th Century.

RING-BILLED GULL

(Larus delawarensis)

Status: Very common to abundant

Considering the present common to abundant status of this species, it is hard to imagine that the ring bill was not recorded until 1941. Even as recently as the 1970s, the maximum was only 35 noted with only one winter record. Today they are seen nearly year round though much less commonly during the breeding season of June and early July. The large increase in numbers has to be attributed to the expansion in numbers in the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. A hatch year bird was captured on Onota Lake on 11/5/89 which had been banded on Lake Champlain (Laubach).

HERRING GULL

(Larus argentatus)

Status: Common migrant

Like the Ring-billed Gull, this species has greatly increased during the 20th Century. Prior to 1900 there was only one unsubstantiated record. The first reliable record wasn't until 1915 and numbers have increased over the years until today it is considered a common migrant. Numbers peak from March to mid-May and from September to November. Large numbers occur in the Hoosic River Valley, undoubtedly by birds which have migrated up the Hudson River to the west. Since the closing of landfills, it is seen less frequently.

ICELAND GULL

(Larus glaucoides)

Status: Accidental

There have been very few records of the Iceland Gull in Berkshire County: 4/4/54 (Noble) along the Housatonic River in Lenox and Stockbridge (separate birds?); 11/7/83 on Pontoosuc (Gagnon); 12/20/98 (Central Berkshire CBC) on Laurel Lake; 11/39/03 on Pontoosuc Lake (Gagnon).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

(Larus fuscus)

Status: Accidental

There have been two sightings of this species in Berkshire County: 5/8/92 at Richmond Pond (Goodrich) and one bird was noted at Pontoosuc Lake on 11/13/96 (Laubach, Goodrich).

GLAUCOUS GULL

(Larus hyperboreus)

Status: Accidental

The three records for this species have all been in the spring: 4/19/62 on Wood Pond, Lenox (Dunbar); 5/9/83 On Onota Lake (Dunbar); 3/15/04 Onota (Purdy, Drummond).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

(Larus marinus)

Status: Regular migrant

The Great Black-backed Gull was first discovered on Onota on 5/16/53 (Griscom) and has since increased though their yearly occurrence fluctuates. They are more common in the spring than in the fall, passing through from late March to late May. In the fall, sightings occur primarily in late October and early November. There are winter records, most notable 55 birds seen on the North Berkshire CBC in December of 1990.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE

(Larus atricilla)

Status: Accidental

Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported from Pontoosuc and Onota Lakes on 11/22/97. (Bieda, Champlin).

CASPIAN TERN

(Sterna caspia)

Status: Very rare migrant

There have been very few records of this tern in the county, the first being on 5/11/85 on Pontoosuc Lake (Drees). Other records include a 4/19/93 in Ashley Falls (Dunbar, Reid); 4/25/93 on Onota Lake (St. James); 6/24/94 on Pontoosuc Lake (St. James); 4/24/00 on Onota (Watz); 5/1/85 on Pontoosuc (St. James).

ROSEATE TERN

(Sterna dougallii)

Status: Accidental

There is only one sighting of this species, a bird noted by Hendricks 5/26/40 at Wood Pond in Lenox.

COMMON TERN

(Sterna birundo)

Status: Rare migrant

Common Terns are uncommon inland. In the Berkshires, there are only about 10 spring records, most in May (5/8-5/26) but there is one record on June 22, 2012 on one of the Pittsfield Lakes (Luscier). Fall sightings are of about the same magnitude with dates ranging from 8/25-10/18. The maximum count in the spring is 4 and in the fall 7 birds were observed by Goodrich on Richmond Pond 8/25/78. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) has anecdotal evidence of this species occurrence in the 19th Century. More recent dates include one at Onota 6/1/92 (Laubach), Smilleys Mill Pond, Egremont on 7/15/96 (Laubach) and Silver Lake in Pittsfield on 4/14/94 (Blagdon).

ARCTIC TERN

(Sterna paradisaea)

Status: Accidental

There is one record of the Arctic Tern: two birds were seen by Noble 4/18/54 at Onota Lake.

FORSTERS TERN

(Sterna fosteri)

Status: Accidental

Only two records of this species exist. The first was 10/16/54 at Onota (Fitz). The second was also at Onota when Goodrich and Dunbar saw one 6/2/86.

SOOTY TERN

(Sterna fuscata)

Status: Accidental

There are a surprising three records and a near miss for this bird in the Berkshires: in September of 1876 one was found in Williamstown (Faxon and Hoffmann, 1900); one bird was picked up in Pittsfield on 8/13/55 but soon died. After Tropical Storm Irene on August 8, 2011, two birds were noted on Onota Lake (fide Morris-Siegal). A bird was found in Middlefield, just to the east of the Berkshires on 9/9/79.

BLACK TERN

(Chilodnias niger)

Status: Rare migrant

The Black Tern was first recorded in the Berkshires on 8/20/43 at Pontoosuc Lake. It has since been noted at a migrant in May and early June, the earliest date being 5/2; the latest spring date is 6/23/87 at Smilleys Mill Pond in Egremont (St. James). The spring maximum is 9 seen at Onota 5/6/56 (HBC). Fall dates extend from 8/6/72 Pontoosuc (McDonald) to 9/28/63 on Pontoosuc (Purdy). The fall maximum is 4 noted at Onota Causeway by Neumuth 8/16/99. Essentially, all records are from the north end of Pontoosuc, Onota causeway and Smilleys Mill Pond in Egremont flying over small cattail beds.

DOVEKIE

(Alle alle)

Status: Accidental

Occasionally, after severe coastal storms these birds will be blown inland. On 11/27/50 one was found alive in North Adams and another was found there on the 30th. Both birds died and are in the collection of the Berkshire Museum. Also in 1950, Three were found on the Hoosic River in Williamstown on 11/28 (Winn) and one was found in Adams of 11/30. This bird is also at the Berkshire Museum. One was found in Otis 10/26/72 (fide Sanborn).

THICK-BILLED MURRE

(Uria lomvia)

Status: Accidental

Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) reported one taken at Onota 11/30/1899 and supplies anecdotal comments on two other birds taken in South Berkshire with no supporting evidence. Two were shot on Onota about 1929 (Clark). In December 1932 Pell found one at Wood Pond in Lenox which soon after died. He found another bird there 12/30/32. On December 1 and 6. 1950 one was recorded at Onota (Hendricks)

ATLANTIC PUFFIN

(Fratercula arctica)

Status: Accidental

There is only one inland record of the Puffin in the state and it was recorded at Goose Pond 11/8/70 when one was observed with a flock of Ruddy Ducks. (Stiles, S. Smith). There was a report of a puffin seen on Wood Pond in the late 1990s but no further information is available.

ROCK PIGEON

(Columba livia)

Status: Abundant

Rock Pigeons are an introduced species and are found commonly throughout the state. They nest year round and have been recorded in flocks of over 300 in the Berkshires.

MOURNING DOVE

(Zenaida macroura)

Status: Very common to Abundant

During the 19th Century, Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) considered this dove a not uncommon summer resident especially in the southern regions of the county though its presence was noted in Williamstown by 1858. This status persisted until the mid-1900s when the birds became more evident throughout the county and lingered into the winter months, again especially in South Berkshire. Today they are common throughout the year with winter counts of over 250 not uncommon on CBCs.

PASSENGER PIGEON

(Ectopistes migratorius)

Status: Extinct

The Passenger Pigeon was in noticeable decline in the 1870s and the last of the once phenomenal flocks occurred by the early 1880s. By 1892 for all intents the Passenger Pigeon was gone from Massachusetts and by 1914 the last bird of this once over abundant species perished. This bird was never a noted breeder in the county being found primarily in migration though Hendricks states that when the county was first settled the pigeons were common summer residents. Dewey also states that they came annually to the Berkshires in large flocks to raise their young as late as 1829.

BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO

(Coccyzus erythrophthalmus)

Uncommon breeder.

Like the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, this species is highly erratic from year to year ranging from being totally absent to fairly common. Spring arrival begins in mid-May (5/4) and fall departure is

completed by mid-October (10/28). The most recorded in one day in summer is 6 (6/16/62, Forster). The fall maximum recorded is 4 on 10/3/71 (Shampang). Like its cousin, the Black-billed shows little change in status since the 1800s. There is a strong correlation between the two species occurrence and tent and gypsy moth caterpillar outbreaks.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

(Coccyzus americanus)

Status: Uncommon breeder.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a rare and extremely erratic summer resident of the Berkshire Valley. Both as a resident and a passing migrant, they may be common some years and totally absent others. Spring arrival usually begins around mid-May (5/6) and the last birds usually depart by mid-October. If the season is a particularly severe one in terms of hurricanes and tropical storms, migration may be delayed into early November. Overall, the population seems to be in moderate decline throughout the northeast. Currently, when it does breed, it seems to concentrate from Pittsfield south in the valley towns. Little has changed in the status of this cuckoo from the 19th Century to today.

BARN OWL

(Tyto alba)

Status: Accidental

This owl is extremely vulnerable to the cold which precludes any long term survival in the Berkshires. The last nesting record was in 1952. Following breeding there is a dispersal of juvenile birds. Two December records were of birds found dead. Breeding locations include: the steeple of South Congregational Church in Pittsfield in 1945; Unkamet Farm in Pittsfield, 1952; and in a Vandusenville church in the 1950s (Bulkley).

EASTERN SCREECH OWL

(Otus also)

Status: Uncommon resident.

The Eastern Screech Owl is a very uncommon breeding bird in the Berkshires more apt to be found in the valley than in the plateau regions. It is seen most in the fall and winter months possibly dispersing from other areas outside the county. Three or four birds have been recorded on the Southern Berkshire CBC on a couple of occasions most recently in 2008. The gray color phase is the predominant one in the Berkshires.

GREAT-HORNED OWL

(Bubo virginianus)

Status: Regular resident.

These owls are most commonly noted in the river valleys as opposed to the uplands. Upwards of 20 birds were heard calling on the Sheffield CBC (1959, Noble, Allen). Most reports are from December and January due largely in part to increased vocalizations prior to nesting which usually is initiated by late February.

SNOWY OWL

(Nyctea scandiaca)

Status: Rare winter visitor.

The Snowy Owl is unreported most years and when present is only seen as single birds. The birds reported are mostly juveniles. Arriving in early December they disappear by mid-March. The most common spot to see this species is perched on the rooftops in the center of Pittsfield. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) considered this owl a rare and irregular visitant.

NORTHERN HAWK OWL

(Surnia ulula)

Status: Accidental.

There are only two records of this species in the Berkshires: one was a vague mention in Chadbourne's list for Williamstown (1858), several were taken in Westfield and also in Berkshire County, among the Green Mountains. The other record is from Hinsdale by Fitz and observed from 1/17/65 until 3/7/65.

BARRED OWL

(Achene funicular)

Status: Regular resident

Barred Owls are recorded year round. They are more likely to be found in upland areas than its main rival, the Great horned Owl. Because they are extremely vocal, oftentimes during the daylight hours, they are easily discovered. They are often seen in late winter flying through woodlots due to food stress when snow cover has kept them from obtaining sufficient food. Breeding can be started as late in February but most nesting isnt initiated until mid-March.

LONG EARED OWL

(Asio otus)

Status: Extremely rare in any season.

The status of the Long eared Owl is easily the most poorly known of all Berkshire bird species. It has been recorded in every month of the year but it does seem to be more prevalent in March and April when resident numbers may be augmented by migrants. As of 1978, only about 25 occurrences have been recorded. No evidence of nesting has been found. Only one instance of more than a single bird sighting has occurred, of two birds freshly killed in Pittsfield, 3/16/46.

SHORT EARED OWL

(Asio flammeus)

Status: Extremely rare migrant.

There are about a dozen 20th Century records of this species. It is most commonly recorded during the migration periods of April (4/17) through May (5/27) and October (10/20) into November (11/26). There are three January records. All sightings are of single birds. Birds have been recorded both in the valley and on the plateau.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL

(Aegolius acadicus)

Status: Regular migrant, uncommon breeder.

Saw-whets are highly secretive and have a poorly understood status in the county. They are known primarily, until lately, as a winter visitant largely due to their distinctive vocalizations throughout the winter and into the breeding season. In the past few years, an aggressive banding program at Hopkins Forest in Williamstown has demonstrated a vibrant fall migration through the area. Fall seasonal counts often number in the low hundreds. They are considered an uncommon nester being found on the plateau as high as 2500 feet. Migrants are noted between March and April and in the fall from early October until late November.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK

(Chordeiles minor)

Status: Very rare breeder; uncommon spring and common fall migrant.

Nighthawks used to be regular residents of the urban area of the county but in recent years have essentially disappeared as a nester. This has been attributed to the marked increase in the crow population in the area and the susceptibility to predation especially when this bird nesting on rooftops, its preferred breeding habitat. Rooftop nesting was confirmed in Pittsfield in 1917 and in North Adams in 1924. It is felt that since the early years of the 20th Century this species has ceased to be considered a ground nester. Spring migration occurs from mid-May (with an early date of 5/2) to early June. Spring flocks rarely exceed 20 birds though there was a maximum of 40 noted over Pontoosuc Lake on 5/30/46. Fall migration is more impressive with flocks in the 100s common. The largest was 5000 birds seen in groupings of 50-75 on 8/22/81 flying over Dalton (Smith). Fall migration peaks in late August and early September with a late date of 10/10/03 (Collins) in Pittsfield.

WHIP-POOR-WILL

(Caprimulgus vociferous)

Status: Very uncommon breeder.

The Whip-poor-will is an uncommon resident of the county, decreasing in numbers dramatically since the early 1900s. Though it has been recorded throughout Berkshire County, it is decidedly more scarce in the hill towns and the northern sections. Spring arrival begins in mid-April (4/11) and fall departure is complete by the end of September (9/29). Pittsfield State Forest, up until the mid-1960s was a successful breeding area for this species where 7-8 pairs were found yearly. From the late 1990s this bird has regularly utilized the area devastated by the tornado in Monterey north of Lake Buel though this has ceased to be the case by 2008. Little is known about migration.

CHIMNEY SWIFT

(Chaetura pelagica)

Status: Common to very common breeder.

Swifts are common nesting species in the Berkshires utilizing chimneys and occasionally the sides of buildings. Ancestral nesting locales of hollow logs and trees have only rarely been recorded. Returning migrants begin arriving in late April (with an early date of 4/8/99 (Collins) of one in Pittsfield. They depart by mid-September though there is a late sighting of 150 birds in Williamstown on 10/11/77 (Quinlan). The highest numbers are 150 on 5/2/44 (Snyder) in Pittsfield and 800 on 9/14/40 which Bailey had in the Hoosic Valley. Birds commonly nest in the chimney of Bascom Lodge on the summit of Greylock.

RUBY THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

(Archilochus colubris)

Status: Common breeder.

The Ruby throated Hummingbird is a common summer resident arriving in early May with a maximum number in spring migration of 15 (5/26/57, HBC) There is a record of an April bird 4/29/2000 in Windsor by Therrian. Departure is usually completed by mid-September though there are records of later stragglers. There is are late dates of 10/8/03 in Lenox (Mann) and 10/12/03 in Lenox (Collins). A very late occurrence was of a bird coming to a feeder in Lanesboro from 11/13/06 to 11/20/06 (Lynch). The maximum number of birds in a day is seven. Birds have been recorded on the summit of Greylock.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD

(Selasphorus rufus)

Status: Accidental

There are only two records for Berkshire County. Between 10/11/03 and 12/2/03 one was seen coming to a feeder on Rte. 7 just north of the town of Lanesboro (Dion fide Gagnon). One was photographed and banded by Becker in Pittsfield between 11/1/07 and 11/10/07.

BELTED KINGFISHER

(Ceryle alcyon)

Status: Common breeder, migrant.

The Kingfisher is a common migrant, local nester and a winter lingerer in areas of open water. Spring migration occurs mid-March and through April. Fall movement peaks in October with 8 the maximum number of birds recorded in one day. Nesting occurs in gravel beds and sand banks in the vicinity of ponds and streams. This species is highly territorial so only one pair is noted at a time. The status of this species is little changed from the 1800s.

RED HEADED WOODPECKER

(Malanerpes erythrocephalus)

Status: Very rare breeder, migrant and winter visitor

This species, while assuredly quite rare, has been recorded as a migrant, winter visitant and breeding species. The status of this woodpecker has little changed from the days of Faxon and Hoffmann (1900). The latest confirmed nesting occurred in 1978 when a pair and two young were watched on Holmes Rd. in Pittsfield. Nesting occurred there in 1979 as well. During 2004 a number of reports were noted in New Ashford, Becket and Pittsfield. From November 9, 2004 through May of 2005, one immature was coming to a feeder in Tyringham. A summer record for Mt. Washington came from Tynning on June 2, 2010.

RED BELLIED WOODPECKER

(Melanerpes carolinus)

Status: Common resident.

The first record of the Red bellied I Berkshire County did not occur until 10/31/72 in Ashley Falls (Hurlburt). Nesting was first observed on 5/26/94 in Sheffield when two adults were seen feeding young (Proper). By the end of this decade it was considered the most common woodpecker at Bartholomews Cobble surpassing the seemingly ever present Downy (Reid, pers. com.) and has been recorded throughout the county extending even to the hill towns. Twenty five were recorded on the South Berkshire CBC in 2002.

YELLOW BELLIED SAPSUCKER

(Sphyrapicus varius)

Status: Regular breeder and migrant

Sapsuckers are a regular summer resident and seem to be expanding in both numbers and range over the last 25 years. They used to be considered breeding birds only in the higher elevations of Greylock and the Berkshire Plateau but have since had nests discovered in the valley as low as 900 feet as far south in the county as Sheffield. Spring migration begins in earnest in early April though there are several late March dates (earliest 3/20). Fall migration peaks in September and stragglers have been noted into November, December and January. There seems to be no February records though one did stay in Pittsfield until 1/29/61 (Shampang). The maximum number has not exceeded 15 in either season.

DOWNY WOODPECKER

(Picoides pubescens)

Status: Very common resident

The Downy Woodpecker is common throughout the Berkshires in a variety of habitats. While it is found year round, there is a definite though poorly defined spring and fall migration. The highest daily count is 96 noted on the South Berkshire CBC on 1/1/2002.

HAIRY WOODPECKER

(Picoides villosus)

Status: Common resident.

This species, like the closely related Downy Woodpecker, is widespread in Berkshire County throughout the year and like the Downy exhibits an irregular fall and spring migration. The Hairy is more apt to be seen at higher elevations in winter and are less likely to be seen around homes and prefer a more mature forest than the Downy. The highest daily count came on the Central Berkshire CBC in 1941 of 48 birds.

AMERICAN THREE TOED WOODPECKER

(Picoides pterodactylus)

Status: Extremely rare winter visitant

There are only 5 credible records of this species in the county, all from the 20th Century. The first report was of a pair feeding young on Mt. Greylock in August of 1919 (Cartwright). One was also recorded the same year on 1/18/19 in Dalton (Clarke). More recent sightings are: 5/13/75 in Pittsfield (Goodrich) and 11/30/77 in Peru (Keefe).

BLACK BACKED WOODPECKER

(Picoides arctica)

Status: Extremely rare winter visitant.

The Black backed Woodpecker is a very rare visitant from the north. There are only about a half dozen credible reports in the 20th Century. There are no reports since 1970 when a female was noted at Burbank Park in Pittsfield (Goodrich).

NORTHERN FLICKER

(Colaptes auratus)

Status: Common breeder, migrant

Flickers begin arriving in late March and are found through October peaking in late September. There are many records of single birds through the winter. Ten birds were noted on the South Berkshire CBC 1/1/03. The maximum number of birds seen in the spring is 40. In the fall, the maximum number counted over a period of one hour, is 75 (McNair) on 9/31/77.

PILEATED WOODPECKER

(Dryocopus pileatus)

Status: Regular resident.

This, the largest of our woodpeckers, was considered one of the rarest birds in Massachusetts in the beginning of the 20th Century. It was recorded only in Berkshire County where it was considered rare being limited to densely wooded regions. By 1937, Hendricks notes that it had become more evident but still uncommon. It is a permanent resident there being no evidence of a migration. It now breeds in selective areas of the rest of the state but is absent from the southeastern coastal plain. The maximum number on a CBC is 11 in South Berkshire 1/1/96.

OLIVE SIDED FLYCATCHER

(Contopus borealis)

Status: Uncommon breeder, migrant

The status of the Olive sided Flycatcher has decreased dramatically since the mid 1800s when it was considered a regular breeding bird throughout the state. By the advent of the 20th Century, the range had diminished leaving only a few isolated pockets in Worcester and Berkshire County. It is mostly relegated to Greylock and the Berkshire Plateau. There are a few lowland records some being the Berkshire Garden Center in Stockbridge(1952 Sanborn); Wild Acres in Pittsfield (1975-7, Dunbar); Wizards Glen in Dalton (2004, Blagdon); and the Tyringham Valley in 2005 (Blagdon). Migrating birds are first noted in mid-May (5/9), returning in mid-August and have left by mid-September. Migrants are usually silent making detection more difficult, the maximum is 3 in either season.

EASTERN WOOD PEWEE

(Contopus virens)

Status: Common breeder

Resident Wood Pewees usually arrive in mid-May and depart by mid-September but there are early records from late April in Williamstown (4/26/03, E. Johnson) and of stragglers staying until early October (10/2 fide McNair). Spring and fall maxima rarely exceed 5.

YELLOW BELLIED FLYCATCHER

(Empidonax flaviventris)

Status: Extremely rare breeder, breeding undocumented), migrant

Birds have been found throughout the breeding season on Mt. Greylock but, to date there has been no substantiation of breeding. Most summer records come from the Greylock-Saddleball

section of the Appalachian Trail. Spring migration begins in late May with an early record of 5/14 and extends into mid-June. Spring maximum has never exceeded three in one day. Fall birds begin to show up in early August (8/6) and straggle through until mid-September (9/22). On August 6, 1959 Stone recorded six dead birds at the base of the Mt. Greylock Memorial tower. Daily maximum in the fall is again three.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER

(Empidonax virescens)

Status: Extremely rare breeder, migrant.

This species is a very rare spring migrant and extremely rare nester. Prior to around 1950 there were no satisfactory records in Berkshire County but since that time birds have been noted as spring migrants from late May into mid June on several occasions. Breeding was established in 1990 in Savoy (Rancatti). In 2008 a bird was heard singing on Lenox Mt. throughout the month of June (St. James). Statewide the Acadian is definitely increasing in population. There are no known fall records.

ALDER FLYCATCHER

(Empidonax alnoratum)

Status: Regular breeder

The Alder Flycatcher is a regular nesting bird favoring wet alder wetlands and thickets (the Willow is more prevalent in upland pastures but ranges greatly overlap). Spring migration commences in mid-May and blends into the breeding season. Fall migration is largely presumed because by early August they are much less vocal. The spring maximum is 6. Breeding density has been recorded at 23 in 1978 at the Hinsdale Flats. This species is far more common in the Berkshires than in the rest of the state.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER

(Empidonax traillii)

Status: Regular breeder

This species was considered to be one and the same with the Alder until the mid-1970s which causes considerable confusion with most if not all of the earlier dates. The habitats of brushy wetlands favored by the Alder and the upland pastures enjoyed by the Willow greatly overlap. The first proven record of breeding was at Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield (Goodrich, 1971). The two species may successfully be identified by song but both become quiet by mid-summer making departure date determination very difficult. Both species appear quite late in spring migration oftentimes not showing up until the very end of May.

LEAST FLYCATCHER

(Empidonax minimus)

Status: Common-very common breeder, migrant

This is the most common of the Empidonax flycatchers. Arrival begins in late April (4/21) and fall departure, largely presumed because of the similarities this and others of the genus, is over by mid-September (9/21). Breeding occurs throughout the county in open deciduous woodlands. A census in Savoy State Forest in 1977 produced 20 pairs along 6 miles of roadway.

EASTERN PHOEBE

(Sayornis phoebe)

Status: Common breeder

Spring arrival for the Phoebe is quite early, commencing in mid-March (3/12/99, Bartholomews Cobble, Reid) with an equally late fall departure occurring in late October (10/28). There is at least one December record (12/1/53, Great Barrington, Scott). Phoebes are prone to nest on man made structures- bridges, house eaves, etc. They have been found on upper Greylock. There is a 2/2/98 record of a bird seen at BCC in Pittsfield (Ferren).

SAYS PHOEBE

(Sayornis sayo)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record of this species in Berkshire County: On 11/6/02 Richard Ferren recorded a Says Phoebe outside his office at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield.

GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER

(Myiarches crinitis)

Status: Regular breeder

The Great crested is a regular breeding species in the Berkshires found primarily in wooded swamps and deciduous forests. There is no indication of a change of status since the late 1800s. Spring birds begin arriving in early May peaking in the middle of the month. Departure is usually by mid-September (9/12). Daily counts of migrants have not exceeded 4 in either season.

WESTERN KINGBIRD

(Tyrannus verticalis)

Status: Accidental

This species was first recorded by Bailey in Ashley Falls on September 5, 1955. There have been only three other observations of this bird in the Berkshires: in 1959 (Nov.1-3) Bailey again found one in Ashley Falls; one bird was noted in Pittsfield by Vincent 6/2/64; one bird was seen in Sheffield by McGee 10/10/74.

EASTERN KINGBIRD

(Tyrannus tyrannus)

Status: Common breeder

This species breeds in brushy fields and other open habitat. They arrive in early May though there are April records with an especially early date of 4/16/03 from Kelsey Rd. in Sheffield (Alexander). Fall migration is well underway by the first week of August though some birds linger until mid-September (9/20). There is a record of 9/30/71 at Onota (St. James). Maximum migration numbers in either season is 25.

SCISSOR TAILED FLYCATCHER

(Tyrannus forficatus)

Status: Accidental

One bird was reported in Pittsfield 6/1/81 but was only seen on that day and never verified.

FORK TAILED FLYCATCHER

(Tyrannus savana)

Status: Accidental

On 5/14/1985 a bird of this description was reported in Pittsfield but remained only briefly and was never verified.

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

(Lanius ludovicianus)

Status: Accidental

This species has never been either common or even regular in the Berkshires. There is only one record that indicates that the bird nested in the Berkshires when a nest was found in Williamstown in 1883 and another a short distance away. Three years later another nest was found in the same vicinity. There is a vague record of nesting in Savoy in 1913 but little data is available. The bird can be seen rarely in migration from late March to late April and again from early August to late October. Eliot and Bagg recorded one individual in North Adams on February 22, 1941. This species as a whole has experienced a severe recession in range in the east making sightings even less likely with often many years transpiring between reports. The most recent bird noted was one seen in Pittsfield by J. Shampang (10/23/91).

NORTHERN SHRIKE

(Lantus excubitor)

Status: very uncommon winter visitant

The Northern Shrike occurs every winter but in such low numbers that it is easily overlooked. It is found both in the valleys and on the plateau but is more prevalent in the higher country. Arrival is first noted in mid-October (10/16) and departure is complete by April (4/10). Birds are solitary and rarely reach a total of three birds together. The status seems little changed from the 19th Century.

WHITE EYED VIREO

(Vireo griseous)

Status: Extremely uncommon migrant

The White eyed Vireo was a regularly breeding species during the 1800s in the eastern part of the state. Nesting occurred in Sheffield (1888,1896) and there has been no suspected nesting then. Since the mid-1900s breeding has increased in the southeastern section of the state and records have moved slowly west and northward. As a migrant, it is found almost solely in May though there have been infrequent fall records. The only recent sightings on record is a bird noted in New Lenox by Collins on 9/3/03, a bird in Becket on 5/24/92 (Laubach), a bird noted at the Post Farm in Lenox (v.o.) in May of 2011.

YELLOW THROATED VIREO

(Vireo flavifrons)

Status: Regular breeder

The Yellow throated Vireo is a relatively common resident found primarily near water in the valley and occasionally among the shade trees in the towns. Up until 1978, there has been only one suspected breeding occurrence in the uplands, a male heard singing in Savoy at 2100 on 6/15/59. In spring it arrives toward the last of April and remains until September (10/11). It seems that its status has little changed since the 1800s. McNair records a maximum of 2 in either the spring or fall seasons.

BLUE HEADED VIREO

(Vireo solitarius)

Status: Regular breeder

The Blue headed Vireo, formerly known as the Solitary Vireo, is the first vireo to arrive in the spring and the last to depart in the fall. Breeding occurs regularly in higher elevations and on occasion and on occasion in coniferous forests of the valley and in lowland ravines. The earliest for the spring arrival is 4/12 (McNair). The latest date is 11/25/75 of one bird noted by Quinlan in North Adams. The maximum number of migrants in either season is 7.

WARBLING VIREO

(Vireo gives)

Status: Common breeder

This vireo is far more common in the valley. It prefers country roads and areas immediately in the vicinity of river bridges. It arrives in early May (5/2) and departs by early September (9/24 is the late date given by Hendricks). The maximum number of migrants is 2 in either the spring or the fall. Its status is little changed from the 1800s (Faxon and Hoffmann, 1900).

PHILADELPHIA VIREO

(Vireo philadelphicus)

Status: Very common migrant

The Philadelphia Vireo migrates primarily through the Mississippi Valley during the spring so reports in the east are extremely infrequent. They are most likely to be seen in late May mixed with large warbler flocks. McNair gives the spring season as extending from 5/11 to 6/7 with no citations. While relatively more common in the fall, this species is often missed. Fall dates extend from late August (8/20) to early October (10/8). Fall maximum is two. The bird is unlisted in Faxon and Hoffmann (1900).

RED EYED VIREO

(Vireo olivaceus)

Status: Extremely common breeder

The Red eyed Vireo is one of eastern North Americas most common woodland bird. It is found in the Berkshires at all levels of elevation. It usually arrives in the first week of May and departs by early October (10/19). There is a late date of 11/2/03 at the Moran Wildlife Management Area in Windsor (Wood). A spring maximum of 35 (North Adams, 5/18/77 is probably not unusual. On 6/22/02, dEntremont had 65 on Mt. Greylock. The fall maximum is 15. Faxon and Hoffmann lists the species as abundant (1900).

GRAY JAY

(Perisoreus canadensis)

Status: Accidental

Once known as the Canada Jay, there are fewer than a dozen records in the county. The first definite record occurred in 1918 in West Stockbridge. All records are of single birds noted between 10/15 and 4/3 The most recent sighting was 2001 when a single bird was seen coming to a feeder in Windsor (Quinlan,v.o.). In 2006 Quinlan reported another jay in Windsor but supplied no further details (11/4).

BLUE JAY

(Cyanocitta cristata)

Status: Abundant resident

The Blue Jay, while observed year round is migratory though some birds are definitely permanent. Most numbers recorded for this species are during the period of migration in late April to early June and mid-September to early October. A maximum count of 2875 was recorded on an 6 hour hawk watch at Fobes Hill in Windsor on 9/28/77. Daily spring counts have reached 400. A typical count of 150-200 birds have been recorded on count CBC (288 found on 1/1/94 for the South Berkshire CBC).

AMERICAN CROW

(Corvus brachyrhynchos)

Status: Abundant resident

Like the Blue Jay, the Crow, while commonly seen year round, is a migratory species. It is during these times of migration that the highest numbers are recorded with single flocks of up to 250 noted in the spring and up to 1000 birds seen during the fall (10/22/50). Winter roosts, in recent years have increased especially around the Pittsfield area with flocks of up to 350 birds noted. As of this writing (2008) there has been some evidence of crow populations in the state being seriously diminished by West Nile Virus.

FISH CROW

(Corvus ossifragus)

Status: Uncommon breeder

This species was first recorded on 5/1/73 in Pittsfield (Ferren) and one was recorded in May of 1986 (Sanborn, Ferren). There were no further sighting until the 1990s. The first recorded nesting was in 1990 when Flanagan monitored a pair in Lenox. Since that time, the bird is increasing seen through the year but is decidedly less noted in winter. Fast food establishments in Pittsfield and Great Barrington with its attendant garbage seem to be an attractant for this species.

COMMON RAVEN

(Corax caras)

Status: Regular resident

While Ravens were thought to occur regularly in the Berkshires in the earlier part of the 19th Century the numbers diminished rapidly until the last two known birds were shot on Greylock in the mid-1870s. They remained absent until 9/29/73 when Ferren sighted a bird in New Ashford. Their status since then has dramatically improved. Breeding has been proven at many sites. They are common throughout the year. Laubach counted 55 leaving a roost in Becket on 12/15/99, 55 birds were on 11/12/04 in Becket and 53 on 12/15/99 also in Becket.

HORNED LARK

(Eremophila alpestris)

Status: Regular winter visitant, historical nester

Since 1978 there has been no evidence of breeding for this species in Berkshire County. Prior to this, the Prairie Horned Lark subspecies nested throughout the valley below 1500. In the late fall, winter and early spring the Northern Horned Lark may be found in relatively small flocks rarely exceeding 130 birds around airports, fields and agricultural areas though 334 were counted on the South Berkshire CBC 1/1/06. Birds may arrive as early as early October (10/10) and linger until mid-April.

PURPLE MARTEN

(Progne subis)

Status: Very rare migrant; historical breeder

During the 19th Century and at the very beginning of the 20th, the Purple Marten was an uncommon nester in the northern part of the county primarily along the Hoosic River. During the 1900s it was rarely, if ever, recorded. Most records are from the spring between April 23 and June 20th with a maximum count of 3. There are four fall records, two at Bartholomews Cobble in Ashley Fall: 7/1/00, 8/28/99 (both by Reid) and two birds noted by Laubach in Pittsfield 8/26/88. The latest record was again from Bartholomews Cobble on September 3, 2010 (Drucker)

TREE SWALLOW

(Tachycineta bicolor)

Status: Very common breeder, migrant

The earliest date for this species is 3/10/06 in Lenox (Collins) but birds normally begin arriving very shortly afterward depending on the conditions that particular year. It is a common breeder, often usurping bluebird houses, but are content in hollow trees and stump cavities. In fall, numbers peak in September but often straggle into October. The latest were on November 7 (both in 1965 and 1976). Spring maxima is 1500 counted throughout Berkshire County 4/20/46 (Griscom) though on 5/17/02 Lynch had 1000 in Stockbridge. The fall maximum is 500 seen on several occasions.

NORTHERN ROUGH WINGED SWALLOW

(Stelgidopteryx serripennis)

Status: Regular breeder

This swallow is not as gregarious as the other local species, nesting with single pairs under bridges, in culverts or old kingfisher holes. This species was first recorded breeding in Massachusetts in July of 1895 when Faxon and Hoffmann found two pairs nesting on a limestone ledge in North Adams. In 1978 McNair estimated a county wide population of nesting pairs at 30-40. There does not seem to be any change in their status since the 1940s. Birds arrive in early April, often, in some years competing with Tree Swallows for the earliest swallow recorded for the year. The earliest date is 4/6/00 in Alford (St. James). Birds generally leave immediately after the nesting cycle is complete with August 14 being the latest date recorded. There is an unusually late date of 9/24/54 in South Egremont (Sauders). The maximum fall count is 16.

BANK SWALLOW

(Riparia riparia)

Status: Common breeder

The Bank Swallow nests in colonies in sand and gravel banks, the edges of rivers and highway cuts. Colonies average between 30 and 50 pairs but 304 holes were counted at Tobey Lime Works in West Stockbridge by McNair in 1977 and 1978. Birds arrive in mid-April and depart by early September. The maximum spring flock is 50 while fall flocks approach 100 birds. The earliest date is 3/14/78, West Stockbridge (McNair) and the latest is 9/11.

CLIFF SWALLOW

(Hirundo pyrrhonato)

Status: Uncommon breeder

The Cliff Swallow is a locally uncommon nester locating its gourd-like nests on the sides of unpainted barns, under the eaves and on the underside of bridges. The highest density of breeding birds is 74 nests noted in Hinsdale in 1952 (Mason and Sanborn). Spring migrants begin arriving in late April (4/18) and have a maximum count of 500 birds in Stockbridge (4/18/42) recorded by Hanson. Fall migrants have usually departed by early September (9/12) with a maximum of over 800 birds in Sheffield on 8/30/78 (McNair). Over time, this species seems to be declining dramatically largely due to loss of nesting habitat.

BARN SWALLOW

(Hirundo rustica)

Status: Common breeder

The Barn Swallow is a common breeding species in the county utilizing barn interiors and the underside of bridges as the location for their nests. Spring migrants are first noted in mid-April though occasionally there have been earlier dates (4/3) with a high spring count of 250 (recorded several times). In the fall they have generally disappeared by September 7 but occasionally a straggler will be noted through October. There are two November records: 11/3 and 11/7 (both by Goodrich). Fall maximum is 500 recorded on Pontoosuc Lake on 8/20/43 (Belden).

HORNED LARK

(Eremophila alpestris)

Status: Regular winter visitant, historical nester

Since 1978 there has been no evidence of breeding for this species in Berkshire County. Prior to this, the Prairie Horned Lark subspecies nested throughout the valley below 1500. In the late fall, winter and early spring the Northern Horned Lark may be found in relatively small flocks rarely exceeding 130 birds around airports, fields and agricultural areas though 334 were counted on the South Berkshire CBC 1/1/06. Birds may arrive as early as early October (10/10) and linger until mid-April.

BLACK CAPPED CHICKADEE

(Parus atricapillus)

Status: Abundant resident

This chickadee is one of our more common birds found year round in many habitats. This species is irruptive and may not show signs of seasonal movement one years though other years may be noted moving in relatively large numbers. Ferren counted 40 in one minute moving past a point in Pittsfield on 10/1/75. On the South Berkshire CBC, 704 birds were recorded on 1/1/96.

BOREAL CHICKADEE

(Parus hudsonicus)

Status: Very rare winter visitant

This species is extremely irregular in its occurrence in the Berkshires. If present it is seen primarily in the winter months though there is a late date of 6/10/44 on Greylock summit (Ball) and another date of 7/12/52 on Greylock (Bond). There is an early arrival on 9/16/75 (Minneci). Its occurrence seems to correspond with irruptive years of the Black capped Chickadee. Presently the Eugene Moran Wildlife Management Area n Windsor is the most likely spot to locate this species it the birds are at all present.

TUFTED TITMOUSE

(Parus bicolor)

Status: Very common resident

The now very common titmouse was only first recorded in the county on 1/10/45 (Snyder). The next record didnt occur until 8 years later. The first indication of nesting was in 1964 in Pittsfield. Though once only found in the valleys, it is now found throughout the Berkshire Plateau. In 2003 on the South Berkshire CBC, 109 individuals were noted.

RED BREASTED NUTHATCH

(Sitta Canadensis)

Status: Regular resident, migratory and irruptive

While this species is found in the Berkshires year round, it is subject to highly irruptive seasonal movements. Since the mid-20th Century the species has expanded its county range and is now not limited to merely higher elevations for breeding but is also noted in coniferous woodlands of the valleys. Ninety plus birds have been recorded three times on CBCs in 1993 and 1994.

WHITE BREASTED NUTHATCH

(Sitta carolinensis)

Status: Very common resident

The White breasted Nuthatch is a denizen of deciduous woodlands and suburban areas in all seasons. They display a weak migratory tendency and it is hard to separate migrants and sedentary populations. The maximum count on the South Berkshire CBC is 97 on 1/1/05 while a Central Berkshire CBC count was 97 on 1/1/05.

BROWN CREEPER

(Certhia Americana)

Status: Common resident

The Brown Creeper is a migratory species which is found year round in the Berkshires. Whether some of these birds are sedentary or if winter birds are completely different from breeding individuals is difficult to determine. The migrants arrive in early April into early May while fall migration peaks in late September. Density levels for this species is quite low. A count of 7 birds along 2 miles of road at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox (10/26/44, Bailey) was considered a very high figure. Seven pairs were located along back Sheffield roads in 1978 (McNair). Winter densities are considerably lower. In Massachusetts it was considered of regular occurrence only in Berkshire County until the mid-20th Century. It has since increased its presence across the state.

CAROLINA WREN

(Thryothorus ludovicianus)

Status: Uncommon resident

The first Carolina Wren was recorded in Berkshire County in the summer of 1931 in Williamstown (Treadway). Another bird was recorded in Becket in May 1945 (Derby). The first recorded nesting was in 1954 in Stockbridge (Riggs). The male was first noted the previous winter and remained following winter in 1955. The next recorded nesting was until 1975 in North Adams when Quinlan discovered an adult with two fledged young. One bird remained until December of that year. The reports have greatly increased in recent years with birds recorded throughout the county year round. After a severe winter, there is a distinct drop in population the following year. The bird is considered non-migratory but wanderers replenish diminished stock after especially cold winters.

BEWICKS WREN

(Thryomanes Benicia)

Status: Accidental

There are only three records of this species in the county: one bird was seen in Ashley Falls 4/29/47 (Bailey); one was seen there on 10/17/51 by Bailey and Mazzeo, independently of each other; one was noted in Stockbridge 9/12/59 (Rinsma).

HOUSE WREN

(Troglodytes aedon)

Status: Common breeder

House Wrens are common breeding birds throughout the Berkshires though they avoid unbroken, dense forested regions. Migration starts in late April though there are earlier records (earliest 4/9). Most birds have left in the fall by October (latest 10/15).

WINTER WREN

(Troglodytes troglodytes)

Status: Regular breeder

The Winter Wren is rarely found in winter though it has been recorded in December, January and February. Returning migrants return at the end of March and early April (3/25) and depart by early November. They are most likely to be encountered in upland tangles of spruce and hemlock. The fall maximum is 11 seen at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox on 10/9/42 (Bailey). Estimated nesting density on Greylock is 4-5 pairs (McNAir, 1978). Among winter records are one on the Central CBC 12/15/01, one in Clayton and one in Sheffield on the South Berkshire CBC 1/1/97, one bird in Cheshire 1/8/08 (Rancatti), and one bird in Great Barrington on 12/26/00 (Barrett).

SEDGE WREN

(Cisothorus platensis)

Status Extremely rare breeder; historically more common

This species was, historically, an uncommon nesting bird of wet sedge meadows dominated by tall grass and a few bushes. By the end of the 1930s, this wren had all but disappeared as a breeding species. Historical nesting localities include: Pontoosuc Lake inlet; Spurr Pond, Egremont; Mud Pond, Washington; Bog Pond, Savoy; Blythwood Farm, Pittsfield. In 1966 Whitehead had a singing male spend the summer in a Hancock swamp but there was no evidence of successful breeding. In 1993, Quinlan had up to three pairs spending the summer at the Moran Wildlife Management Area in Windsor, assumed to be nesting. In 2000 a singing male was noted along the Appalachian Trail in Egremont (7/17/00, St. James) and one was seen during migration along Rannapo Rd. in Ashley Falls on 9/5/04 (St. James).

MARSH WREN

(Cistothorus palustris)

Status: Very rare breeder

The Marsh Wren seems to nest exclusively in cattail marshes which are increasingly susceptible to natural plant succession and invasion of more dominant exotics. The Marsh Wren virtually disappeared during the 1950s though remnant populations lingered at Brielmans Swamp in Pittsfield and Smilleys Pond in Egremont. Historically, up to 12 singing males have been recorded at Pontoosuc Lake inlet. In the 1970s, a viable population of up to 5 nesting pairs were discovered in an extensive cattail marsh just south of Richmond Pond. This colony exists to this day (2008). Spring migration begins in mid-May (5/2), but birds are secretive until they have begun the breeding cycle sometime in early June. Departure is usually by mid-September though birds will linger through October into early November (11/1).

GOLDEN CROWNED KINGLET

(Regulus satrapa)

Status: Regular breeder

Golden crowned Kinglets are regular migrants in spring and fall. They breed in the higher regions of spruce and fir woodlands though in the northern portions of the county they may also utilize White Pine and Norway Spruce plantations. They rarely breed south of Lenox and Becket though there is a small population on Mt. Washington. Small numbers will regularly winter over but are very susceptible to prolonged periods of cold weather. Spring migration begins in March and extends into April. Fall migrants peak during October. Twenty five birds have been the maximum daily count in either season. The maximum on the Berkshire CBCs is 36.

RUBY CROWNED KINGLET

(Regulus calendula)

Status: Common migrant, very rare nester

Ruby crowned Kinglets are common migrants first arriving in spring in early April (3/28/04, Sheffield, Ryan) and remaining until about the third week of May. In the fall, kinglets start showing up in early September (8/31/57, Adams), peak in October and in a few instances linger into early November. Birds have been noted in winter but with one exception, did not survive. Between 12/8/74 and 4/13/75 Shampang had one bird coming to his feeders in Pittsfield. Occasional breeding has been noted since July, 1915 when Cartwright had over 20 birds, including young, in Savoy. On 7/27/32, Bagg and Cartwright saw a fledged young and an adult in Savoy. On 7/27/76, McNair and Quinlan recorded young with two males and a female they had been monitoring in Florida. There have been a few other instances of singing males but no proven nesting. The spring maximum is 100 recorded 4/28/48 in Pittsfield by Snyder. Fall maximum is 50 birds seen at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox on 9/30/44 (Snyder).

BLUE GRAY GNATCATCHER

(Polioptila caerulea)

Status: Uncommon breeder, migrant

This species was first recorded in the Berkshires in 1922 in Williamstown by Cartwright. Prior to 1954 there had been only three records. The first recording of a nesting gnatcatcher in the county was on Kelsey Rd. in Sheffield on 5/4/68 by Fitz. Young were noted at this nest later in the season by Bulkeley. This bird arrives in early to mid April and becomes most numerous by mid-May. Most nesting records are concentrated in the Sheffield area. By late summer the bird becomes extremely difficult to find. There are essentially no fall records. Two wintering sightings exist: one bird was seen coming to a feeder 2/10/70 in Stockbridge (Rinsma) and one bird at Taft Farms in Great Barrington 12/23/01 (Johnson). The increase in Berkshire records in recent years corresponds with a national trend of increasing population numbers.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR

(Oenanthe oenanthe)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record of the Northern Wheatear in Berkshire County. In mid-October 1994 Bob Wood found one at the very summit of Mt. Greylock where it stayed for several days and was seen by many observers.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD

(Sialia sialis)

Status: Regular breeder, regular winter visitant

Bluebirds are very susceptible to a variety of environmental factors. Late in the 1800s and early in the 20th Century, extremely cold winters would decimate bluebird populations but recovery would be complete in a couple of years or so. By mid-Century cold winters were assisted by detrimental effects of pesticides and competition with House Sparrows, Starlings and House Wrens and a decrease in suitable farms for nesting which rendered bluebird populations to new lows which took many years to fully recover. This recovery was assisted by the many bird houses erected throughout the east. Spring arrivals begin in early March and fall migrants have usually left by late October but there is an increasingly notable wintering population in recent years. Over 100 birds have been recorded in favored spots chiefly in South Berkshire.

VEERY

(Catharus fuscescens)

Status: Common breeder

This species is a common breeding bird throughout the Berkshires known to be found in suitable habitat to the 2500 level. Spring migration commences at the very beginning of May and departure is by mid-September with very few noted later in the month. Veerys migrate both day and night. Diurnal maxima in the spring is difficult to assess but nocturnal maxima is 30. In fall the maximum is 40 during the day (8/24/78, Savoy, McNair). The autumnal nocturnal high count is 200+ in Richmond 8/24/78 at 4-5 AM. (McNAir). The status of the Veery is little changed from the 19th Century.

GRAY CHEEKED THRUSH

(Catharus minimus)

Status: Uncommon migrant

The Gray cheeked Thrush is easily confused with the Bicknells Thrush which was recently designated a separate species. The Bicknells, which once nested on Greylock has a completely different breeding range than that of the the Gray cheeked which nests completely north of the lower 48 states. The status is poorly understood in migration. This species occurs briefly in late May and again in September.

BICKNELLS THRUSH

(Catharus bicknelli)

Status: Very uncommon migrant, historical breeder

This species was considered a subspecies of the Gray cheeked Thrush until 1995 when a variety of factors including differences in size, song, bill color, range and DNA considerations allowed full species designation. The Bicknells form was first found in the county in 1888 on Greylock. Birds were not noted every year, sometimes long periods occurring between sightings. Early in the records, it seems that only one or two pairs were ever found on Greylock. From 1934 through the 1950s between 6 and 11 pairs were breeding though after that period there was a steady decline in this nesting population. Since 1972, no birds were noted during the breeding season. When the birds were actively nesting there, the dates ranged from May 6 to October 20. Dates outside the breeding season may be easily confounded with the Gray cheeked Thrush. There have been a few single sightings in the 2000s but no further information is available.

SWAINSONS THRUSH

(Catharus osculates)

Status: Very Uncommon breeder

The Swainsons Thrush is a breeding species found primarily on Greylock and the Berkshire Plateau (there is only one nesting record on the Taconic Range: Honwee Mountain, Lanesboro in 1934). Since the 1950s there has been a marked reduction in abundance. Migrants pass through the area in middle and late May (May 20) and again in late September though birds have lingered into October (10/10).

HERMIT THRUSH

(Catharus guttatus)

Status: Regular to uncommon breeder, regular migrant

The Hermit Thrush is the first of the Catharus to arrive in spring and the last to depart in the fall. There are many winter records. The birds breed as high as 2690 at the summit of Mt. Prospect. The spring migrants begin to arrive in April (with March examples) and depart by the end of October. The fall maximum is 20 recorded on a mid October day. While most common in the uplands, there are several nesting records in the valleys including examples in the Pitch Pine woods of Sheffield.

WOOD THRUSH

(Catharus mustelina)

Status: Common breeder

Though all *Catharus* thrushes have declined in recent years, the Wood Thrush has actually gained somewhat at the expense of the Hermit and Swainsons Thrush. This may be due, in large part, to the Wood Thrush's ability to survive in closer proximity to the habitations of humans. Nesting birds rarely exceed 2500 feet. The first spring birds appear in early May (4/26/02, Canoe Meadows, Collins) and leave by mid-October (10/17). Fall maximum is 6. There are no winter records.

AMERICAN ROBIN

(Turdus migratorius)

Status: Very common breeder; abundant migrant; commonly seen in winter

The Robin is no longer the harbinger of spring that it once was. Birds are in evidence year round, often in large numbers. It nests throughout the county both valley and upland right to the summit of Mt. Greylock. Wintering flocks have often exceeded 200 and on the South Berkshire CBC on 1/1/02 1646 were recorded. Over 3000 Robins have been recorded on a fall day while in migration. The trend of later years is still one of noticeable increase.

VARIED THRUSH

(Isoreus noevius)

Status: Accidental

There are only four records of the Varied Thrush in Berkshire County, all of single birds: Jan, 28-Feb. 9 1965, Lee (R. W. Smith); 12/31/71-1/9/73, Great Barrington (Bulkeley and Sanborn); 3/31/80, Williamstown (Weatherbee); 2/18-3/5/83, Pittsfield (Purdy).

GRAY CATBIRD

(Dumetella carolensis)

Status: Very common breeder, migrant

The Catbird is a common nesting species throughout Berkshire County preferring brushy area and is often found around human habitation. Migratory birds are difficult to distinguish from the breeding population. Birds commonly arrive in early May (Apr. 13) and depart by October. The daily maximum in either season is 30. There are several winter records with most of these birds surviving at feeding stations. There is little to suspect any significant change in status since the mid-1800s.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

(Mimus polyglottas)

Status: Uncommon resident

Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) reports only one instance of the Mockingbird in the Berkshires prior to the turn of the 19th Century (1896, Cheshire). Little was noted of this species until the 1930s when Hendricks considered it casually occurring. During the 1940s sightings increased reaching an average of 2/year. Up to this time all records were of winter birds except for one noted by Hendricks in the summer of 1942 in Pittsfield. The status of the mocker increased progressively throughout the 50s and 60s with breeding finally confirmed in 1966 (Ashley Falls, Williamstown, Pittsfield). It is now seen yearly but is susceptible to cold, hard winters and the population may decline for several years thereafter often taking a number of seasons to recover. On the Southern Berkshire CBC a high count of 9 was achieved on 1/1/94.

BROWN THRASHER

(Toxostoma rufum)

Status: Uncommon breeder

The least common of the Mimic Thrushes, this species is regular to hedgerows and shrubby agricultural areas. Thrashers arrive around mid-April and leave by mid-September (Oct. 12). There are occasional reports of wintering birds. Spring maxima have not exceeded 5 birds in one day.

EUROPEAN STARLING

(Sturnus vulgarus)

Status: Abundant resident

The Starling was introduced into North America in 1890 in New York City. It took several years before it became firmly embedded in the residential avifaunal and the began to expand rapidly. Hendricks believes that the first birds arrived in Berkshire County around 1910 though these birds may have been augmented by birds and subsequent offspring that were released in Springfield, MA in 1897. Since that time they have invaded all suitable habits and often reach prodigious numbers. There is some seasonal movement but large numbers occur throughout the year. 3,095 were recorded on the South Berkshire CBC on 1/1/03.

AMERICAN PIPIT

(Anthus spinoletta)

Status: Uncommon migrant

Pipits are fairly uncommon migrants in the county. Their occurrence is greater in the fall than in the spring. Fall migration is most prevalent between mid-September and early November but there are lingering dates into December and early January. Spring migration is noted from early March with one record in Ashley Falls on 2/25/75 (Carpenter), through May, always in small numbers and not seen every year. The spring maximum is 35 birds noted in Ashley Falls on 5/11/63 (Dunbar) and a fall maximum of 100 in Pittsfield on 5/18/69 (Yenlin). They are most commonly recorded in open agricultural fields and the borders of drawn-down lakes in the fall.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

(Bombycilla garrulous)

Status: Erratic winter visitant

This highly erratic species is often absent for many years before making an explosive resurgence before disappearing again for an extended period of time. If present, Bohemians begin arriving in mid-November, usually more in the hill towns and depart in late March. They are often found amongst flocks of Cedars. There is only one record prior to 1900 (1858) and only three sightings from 1900 to the 1960s (1919, 1921, 1940). From the 1960s on they have appeared more frequently. There were notable flight years in 1968-70 and in the early 2000s. Maximum was 250 seen by Collins in Pittsfield 3/27/04.

CEDAR WAXWING

(Bombycilia cedrorum)

Status: Regular breeder, common migrant, winter visitant

Cedar Waxwings are seemingly less effected by the strict demands of the calendar than most other species having their numbers more reflected in the available food supply. They usually arrive by late May but nomadic bands may be noted much earlier. Breeding occurs in shrubby wood edges and along roadsides where they may be found in loose colonies. After breeding birds gravitate to ponds and wet areas where they are often observed in large numbers hawking for insects. Spring flocks rarely reach 100 birds while fall flocks are much larger. A maximum of 600 has been noted in September. From September on the numbers begin to dwindle. Two hundred birds noted by Goodrich in November 1971 is unusual. Winter birds are highly erratic. The maximum in one flock was 100 birds noted on 2/2/62 though the South Berkshire CBC recorded 475 on 1/1/02.

BLUE WINGED WARBLER

(Vermivora pinus)

Status: Regular breeder

The Blue winged Warbler was first discovered in Berkshire County in 1929 at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox. Nesting was first discovered at the sanctuary in 1941. The population remained extremely low until 1938 when it increased noticeably through to the present. It was in direct competition with the Golden winged Warbler with which it often interbred. By the 1960s it was surpassing the Golden winged in numbers in the county (and throughout the Northeast). Spring birds arrive in the first week of May (4/28/90, Bartholomews Cobble, St. James). And depart by mid-September (9/17/00 Washington, Neumuth). This species is more common in the valley than in the uplands.

GOLDEN WINGED WARBLER

(Vermivora chrysoptera)

The Golden winged Warbler was first located in Berkshire County in 1917 and it was not until the early 1940s when it was established as a regular though uncommon resident. From this time, its numbers increased until the 1970s when loss of habitat and competition with the Blue winged Warbler likely caused its population to plummet until by 2000 the species was no longer a viable member of the countys avifauna, often going unrecorded for a number of years one being noted on 5/21/11 in New Ashford (Kelly). Migrants appear in the first weeks of May and depart by mid-September. Only single birds have been recorded away from nesting areas. The decline of this species is not specific to western Massachusetts but is evident throughout the Northeast.

BREWSTERS AND LAWRENCES WARBLERS

Status: Very rare, the Lawrences the much rarer of the two

The hybrid form of the Golden winged and Blue winged Warblers (Brewsters Warbler) began to become noticed in the Berkshires in the 1940s when both parent species were in evidence. Birds approaching the Lawrences back-cross were also described. In recent years an occasional Brewsters have been noted in mostly southern Berkshire County. In 2003 Neumuth had a Brewsters in New Lenox. In 2002 Collins had a Lawrence's form near the Pittsfield Airport where it returned the following year. Blue wings were also quite evident at this site. In 2004, Neumuth had both forms on separate dates on Fernside Rd. in Lee also recurring in latter years.

TENNESSEE WARBLER

(Vermivora peregrine)

Status: Uncommon migrant but numbers fluctuate greatly

The status of the Tennessee Warbler has changed dramatically over the years. Faxon and Hoffmann cited summer records at Pittsfield State Forest., Savoy, Florida and Greylock strongly indicating breeding. For the first half of the 20th Century the population greatly decreased and Hendricks describes no more than 3 migrants/day. By the 1970s, coinciding with a large outbreak of Spruce Budworm in the northern coniferous forests, the population of this warbler greatly increased with up to 20 noted/day. Fall migrants during this period numbered 150/day several times. In more recent years, this species has again lapsed into scarcity. Spring migrants arrive in force during the third week of May being a relatively late migrant (5/3) and ending by early June. Fall migrants begin in early September (6/26/01, Packard) and often linger through October (10/30).

ORANGE CROWNED WARBLER

(Vermivora celata)

Status: Very

This is a rare migrant through the Berkshires, more so in the spring than in the fall. The few spring records are concentrated in the middle of the month (5/6/00, Williamstown, Blagdon). Fall birds are seen through September and into October (11/1). There is one late fall record of 11/25/66 in Adams (Brierley). The maximum in both spring and fall is two.

NASHVILLE WARBLER

(Vermivora ruficapilla)

The Nashville Warbler is a regular breeding species especially in second growth woodlands in the uplands. It is a relatively early migrant in the spring often showing up in late April (4/21) and does not depart in the fall until late October. The maximum for spring is 12 birds, in the fall, 7. Six nesting pairs were noted at Fobes Hill in Windsor in 1977 (McNair) but densities are usually much smaller. The fact that there are probably fewer birds today than in the 19th Century is largely due to succession of second growth into mature or into development.

NORTHERN PARULA

(Parula americana)

Status: Regular nester, historical breeder

This species was historically a breeding member of the local avian community. Faxon and Hoffmann call it not common and local. Its distribution is determined by the growth of Usnea lichen which is used in nesting. A bird was noted on Greylock on 6/23/02 (Hoye) and 7/14/02 (Silverstein) but breeding was not indicated. There are several summer records but these may be

post season vagrants. As a spring migrant, it usually arrives in the first week of May (5/2). Fall migrants are rarely seen as early as late August and increase in frequency through September and October. The late date for this warbler is 10/28 (McNair) and 11/23, Hendricks (there is no further information on either of these records). The maximum for either season is 10.

YELLOW WARBLER

(Dendroica petechia)

Status: Very common breeder

The Yellow Warbler is one of the most common warblers in the Berkshires. It is only slightly less common in the uplands than in the valley where it prefers edges of woodlands and swampy areas. It arrives in late April (4/27) and begins its fall departure quite early, peaking in July and August though a few birds linger into the early fall (10/18). Spring maximum numbers have reached 15 while fall figures are slightly lower at 10. The status has little changed since the 1800s and if anything has increased.

CHESTNUT SIDED WARBLER

(Dendroica pensylvanica)

Status: Very common breeder

Like the Yellow Warbler, this species is common especially along the margins of woodlands and open swamps in both the uplands and in the valley. Spring arrival occurs in late April (4/20/86, Brielmans, Dunbar) and departure is usually complete by mid-September though a few stragglers have been noted into mid October. Fall migrants rarely exceed 10. In spring, Lynch noted 43 on 5/19/01 and 41 on 5/17/03 on Greylock.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

(Dendroica magnolia)

Status: Regular breeder

This is a common breeding species of the spruce-hardwood forest of the higher elevations and the hemlock-mixed hardwood forests of lower areas. As many as 30 singing males have been recorded on Mt. Greylock. Birds arrive in the spring in early May (5/2) and depart in the fall by the end of September but there have been occasional records continuing until 10/25. The spring maximum is 45 while that of the fall is 20. Faxon and Hoffmann found the bird to be common from Becket northward.

CAPE MAY WARBLER

(Dendroica tigrina)

Status: Very uncommon migrant

This species abundance, or lack of it, seems to be tied directly to the incidence of Spruce Budworm infestations in the north. This warbler was scarce in the 19th and 20th Centuries until the 1970s when a budworm outbreak occurred and their numbers increased in a corresponding manner. Spring migrants are noted through the month of May (5/2-5/30) while fall birds are first noted in late August (8/14) into early October. There is a late date of 11/16/55 in Pittsfield by Dunbar. The spring maximum for the Cape May is 25 seen in Williamstown, 5/15/71 (Weigand) while the fall maximum is 35, recorded several times.

BLACK THROATED BLUE WARBLER

(Dendroica carelessness)

Status: Common breeder

The Black throated Blue Warbler is a common nesting species in the Berkshires wherever Mountain Laurel is found growing. It also favors spruce woodlands at higher elevations. Birds in spring are first noted in late April (4/28) and remain until the middle of October. There is a late date of a female seen in Lenox by Ferren on November 17, 2011. Maximum counts are 25 in the spring and 15 in the fall. From the description of Faxon and Hoffmann there has been little change since the 1900s.

YELLOW RUMPED WARBLER

(Dendroica coronate)

Status: Regular breeder, often abundant migrant

This species, formerly known as the Myrtle Warbler, breeds commonly in the spruce/fir forest association at higher elevations and occasionally in pine stands in lower areas of the valleys. Spring birds arrive in early April though on occasion are noted sooner. Birds have usually left by late October but often there are stragglers through November and on occasion, into December. One bird survived coming to a feeder from 12/16/72 until 4/16/73 (Shampang). There were three birds at Bartholomews Cobble 2/24/04 (St. James). Maximum counts are high: 200 noted 5/4/74 and 200 seen over two hours in Windsor 9/30/77 (McNair).

BLACK THROATED GRAY WARBLER

(Dendroica nigrescens)

Status: Accidental

There is only one citation for this species in the Berkshires: one discovered in Lenox on 12/8/23 by Clark Vorhees and found dead the following day. It is in the collection of the Berkshire Museum.

BLACK THROATED GREEN WARBLER

(Dendroica virens)

Status: Common breeder

This is a common migrant and breeding species in the Berkshires. It nests in the coniferous forests of the higher elevations. Rancatti noted 21 in the town of Florida on 7/3/99. Migration is first noted in mid-April (4/18) and birds do not depart in the fall until early October (11/2/75, Goodrich). Spring maximum is 20; fall, 50 seen on numerous occasions. It holds the same status today as it did in the 1900s.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER

(Dendroica fusca)

Status: Regular breeder

Blackburnian Warblers nest commonly in spruce forests and spruce/deciduous woods in the uplands and in evergreens in the valleys. Spring migration can begin as early as late April (4/24/01, North Egremont, Kai Reed) though it usually does not start until early in May. The maximum spring numbers recorded are 125 on Mt. Greylock on June 9-10, 1945 by Griscom though numbers rarely exceed 30/day. In the fall birds have departed by mid-October (10/11) with a maximum count of 12 (Pittsfield, 9/30/45, Fitz). Status remains as it was in the 1900s.

YELLOW THROATED WARBLER

(Dendroica dominica)

Status: Accidental

There are only three records for this species in the Berkshires. A male was heard and seen singing 5/18/79 to 5/23/79 in Stockbridge by Parker, Kiebeer, and Bowen. Another male was observed coming to a feeder in Pittsfield 10/31 to 11/1/2002 (St. James), On May 12.2-12 a male was seen on the east side of October Mt. (Crossen)

PINE WARBLER

(Dendroica pinus)

Status: Regular resident

The Pine Warbler should be looked for wherever there are large stands of White or Pitch Pine especially near water. In the 1900s the bird was considered a rare summer resident and it maintained this status until the middle part of the 20th Century. By the late 1950s, it disappeared until the late 1980s when it returned to its former haunts. It is currently a relatively regular resident in suitable habitat in the valleys. Spring birds arrive quite early (3/10) and are much in evidence by early April. The last of the fall migrants depart by the end of October (10/22). Maximum counts have not been established, the only cited figure is 2/day (McNair) in the fall and 1/day in the spring.

PRAIRIE WARBLER

(Dendroica discolor)

Status: Uncommon resident

This species was first recorded in the county in 1939 and breeding was not established until 1951. While this warbler has never been considered anything but uncommon, its numbers seem to indicate a consistent increase especially where suitable habitat is available. Spring birds arrive in early May (4/30) and depart in the fall by the end of October. Maximum numbers are extremely low: 2 for the spring and only single birds in the fall. In 1978 only 6 nesting localities were known in the county, all in the valley but this number has grown in the subsequent 25 years.

PALM WARBLER

(Dendroica palmarum)

Status: regular to very common migrant

Much has been made of the fact that the Palm Warbler may be easily separated into two subspecies by minor differences in the plumage. The eastern form is the bird that in the early spring migrant while the western form is most noted in the fall. Spring birds arrive in early April (4/2) and leave by the latter part of May (5/24). Fall birds may begin to straggle through by late August but begin the migration in force in late September. They tarry quite late and records may extend into November (11/20). The maximum for either season is 20 birds. According to Faxon and Hoffmann, there seems little difference in late 19th Century records and those of today.

BAY BREASTED WARBLER

(Dendroica castanes)

Status: Uncommon migrant

The Bay breasted Warbler has population fluctuations which seem to coincide with the abundance of Spruce Budworm to our north. Some years it may go unnoticed. Spring migration begins in early May and ends promptly at the end of the month (6/3). Fall birds begin to show in late August and linger through early October (10/10). The maximum number is 30 in the spring (5/22/67) and 25 in the fall. These numbers occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when budworm inflated populations were in evidence. This species was once recorded breeding in spruce trees in Rowe, just outside the county (no further information available, reported by Hendricks).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER

(Dendroica striata)

Status: Uncommon breeder; regular migrant

The Blackpoll breeds in Massachusetts only on Mt. Greylock, Saddleball and occasionally on the northern portions of the Berkshire Plateau. Spring migration normally does not begin until mid-May making it one of the last warbler species to arrive. There have been earlier dates, the earliest being 5/2/01 in Monterey (K. Ryan). Spring maximum is 20. Fall departure begins in late August and is completed by mid-October (11/7/99, Pittsfield, Suriner). The fall maximum count is 100 seen by Snyder on 10/6/45. Breeding in the state is focused on the summit of Mt. Greylock and along the Appalachian Trail toward Saddleball and Jones Nose. In the 1940s Snyder estimated 25 pairs based on singing males; by the 1970s, McNair felt there to be 12-14 pairs and 30 years later there are far fewer. Faxon and Hoffmann did not find any evidence of breeding prior to 1900 with the exception of a report by Brewster in 1878 who observed 3 fledglings in North Adams. Brown and Treadway observed summering males in 1930 but breeding was not confirmed until 1934 by Eliot and Treadway.

CERULEAN WARBLER

(Dendroica cerulea)

Status: Very rare migrant

This species has only been reported in the spring between the dates of 5/14 and 6/6 with the exception of two birds found in Savoy 7/17/20. The species is undergoing range expansion to both the east and west of the county and should be anticipated as a breeding species at any time. Currently the species is nesting at Mt. Tekoa in Russell and in the Boston Corner section of the Taconic hills along the Massachusetts/New York border.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER

(Mniotilta varia)

Status: Common breeder

The Black and White Warbler is one of the first warblers to arrive in the spring. It has usually made its presence known by late April though it is often recorded by mid-month. The maximum spring number is 50 (5/17/52). Fall counts are lower. They have usually left by early October (10/21/70, Lenox, St. James). This bird is rarely seen above 2000 feet. They are one of the most common breeding warblers in mature woodlands.

AMERICAN REDSTART

(Setophaga ruticilla)

Status: Very common breeder

The American Redstart arrives in the spring during the first week of May (4/29/79. Lenox, St. James) and has departed in the fall by 10/6. Maximum numbers are often surprisingly large: 43 on Greylock 6/18/00 (Lynch) and 31 also on Greylock 6/16/01 (dEntremont). Figures in the valley are substantially lower. On 11/7 and 22-3, 1950 Fitz had a female in Lanesboro and between 12/3-5/79 Ferren had a male in Pittsfield. This extremely common breeder shows great flexibility in the choice of breeding areas: mature deciduous woodlands, forest openings and edges and low growth shrubby areas.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

(Protonotaria clitlea)

Status: Accidental . The first record of this warbler occurred on May 14. 1945 when Bailey identified one at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox. Following records include one in Pittsfield on May 4-8, 1954 (Noble#) and one in North Adams on September 4. 1975 (Quinlan).

WORM EATING WARBLER

(Helmitheros vermivorus)

The first sighting of this species was in 1913 when Cartwright found a nest with young in Savoy. Nesting has almost entirely been confined to the southern tier of the county on slopes of oak and Mountain Laurel. This species has been found on Mt. Washington including Bash Bish Falls, and on the road to the mountain from South Egremont. It has also been noted at Sages Ravine in Sheffield. In 1987 a singing male was heard throughout the breeding season in Lenox (Oltsch). Spring arrival begins in mid-May (5/13) and has been recorded as late as September 8, 1985 at the Moran WMA in Windsor (St. James).

OVENBIRD

(Selurus aurocappus)

Status: Common breeder

The Ovenbird may be recorded with more frequency because of its loud and incessant vocalizations. They are found in mature deciduous woods. Spring arrival is usually noted in the last week of April and fall birds leave by mid-October though Weatherbee found one in Williamstown 11/11/79 albeit with an injured wing. Some numbers recorded are: 56 in Otis 5/10/03 (Swochak); 42 in Sandisfield 5/9/03 (Swochak); 42 on Greylock 5/17/03 (Lynch).

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH

(Selurus noveboacensis)

Status: Regular breeder

This species commonly first occurs at Bartholomews Cobble in Sheffield in early to mid April though widespread arrival is not until early May. Collins had this water thrush at Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield 4/3/02. Fall departure begins early, often by early July though the bird will continue to be present until September (10/12). Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) considered this species a transient with no confirmed nesting. It wasn't reported as a breeding species until 1937. Maximum numbers are 10 in the spring and 6 in the fall.

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH

(Selurus motacilla)

Status: Regular breeder

This species arrives in spring earlier and also departs in the fall earlier than the Northern. Arrival is usually noted in the first week of April (4/6/85, Lenox, St. James) and departure is complete by August (8/19) Fall status is poorly known and in this season only single birds are seen. Breeding occurs in suitable habitat throughout the county to about 2000 in elevation. This bird was first noted in 1896 when a pair was seen feeding young. In 1935, Griscom and Snyder reported it as regular throughout the county.

KENTUCKY WARBLER

(Oporonis formosus)

Status: Accidental

This is a very rare species in the Berkshires with only a handful of records, all in May. On 5/22/67 one male was noted in a warbler fallout in Pittsfield by St. James. Goodrich, Dunbar and Minneci had a singing male at Richmond Pond 5/12/76. One was seen and heard by Parker# in Sheffield 5/20/88 and one was heard and seen in Windsor 5/23/86 by Neumuth.

CONNECTICUT WARBLER

(Oporornis agilis)

Status: Very rare migrant

This is an extremely rare spring migrant and very uncommon migrant in the fall. There are only 3 spring records: 5/16/65, Washington, (Purdy); 5/11/81 Lanesboro, (Collins); 5/7/00 Mt. Washington, (Tynning). In the fall it should be looked for in wet thickets of jewelweed and creepers. It is recorded in September and October with the bulk of the dates occurring around the last week of September and the first few days of October. The fall maximum is two.

MOURNING WARBLER

(Oporornis philadelphia)

Status: Rare breeder

William Brewster first determined this species to be a breeding species on Mt. Greylock, at that time the only breeding locality in the state. It is still largely restricted to Greylock and the Berkshire Plateau with a few localities in the Connecticut Valley. By 1900 the bird was still found to be common by Faxon and Hoffmann but as shrubby areas grew into mature forest, populations declined until the 1970s when McNair felt there to be only 2-4 pairs on Greylock. With the cutting of trees for power lines and ski slopes, increased suitable habitat has allowed this species to grow. It is now found increasingly on the Berkshire Plateau. Around 2000, a nesting pair was found nesting on Baldwin Hill in Egremont which continues to date (2008). Spring migration begins quite late with most birds passing through in the latter part of May although there are records as early as 5/12. Fall migration begins in late August and continues on through September with a few stragglers. The maximum number in either season is 3.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

(Geothlypis triches)

Status: Very common breeder

The Yellowthroat is extremely common wherever wet thickets are found. It is found throughout the county even to upper Greylock. Spring migration begins in the first part of May (5/3) and fall departure isn't complete until November (11/29, Great Barrington Johnson). On December 15, 1984 Shampang# had a Yellowthroat in Lee. McNair lists the maximum number for either season as 15 but on 5/17/02 Lynch had 49 in Egremont.

HOODED WARBLER

(Wilsonia citrina)

Status: Very rare breeder

This bird was first recorded at Bartholomews Cobble by Amber Spring on June 8, 2008. A male and female were noted together through the summer and the female was observed carrying material into a dense barberry patch. Nesting was presumed. Two male were observed singing in the same area the following year but no female was in evidence. On June 24, 2010 Tynning observed on at Race Brook Falls on Mount Washington.

WILSONS WARBLER

(Wilsonia pusilla)

Status: Regular to uncommon migrant

The Wilsons Warbler is a uncommon migrant through the Berkshires but should be expected yearly. Although considered a late spring migrant, dates as early as 5/6 have been recorded though the bulk of the birds passing through do not arrive until the third week of May and have gone by early June (6/5/77 Windsor, McNair). Fall migrants first appear in late August (6/21) and depart by October. Exceptional records include a bird seen by Neumuth in Washington 7/26/02; 8/10/77 Windsor, McNair and a late bird on 11/27/66 coming to a feeder in Adams by Brierley. The maximum record is 6 in the spring (5/22/66 Sheffield, Parker) and 5 in the fall.

CANADA WARBLER

(Wilsonia canadensis)

Status: Regular breeder

The Canada Warbler arrives in early May (5/7) and does not depart in the fall until late September (9/26). It breeds commonly in the higher elevations in the county and as many as 29 have been recorded on Greylock (6/6/52, Snyder). In spring a daily maximum is 20 while in the fall it is 8. Its status remains about the same when Faxon and Hoffmann recorded it in the late 1900s.

YELLOW BREASTED CHAT

(Icteria virens)

Status: Very rare migrant; uncommon breeder

This is a highly erratic species, the occurrence of which has declined dramatically over the last 50 years. Faxon and Hoffmann described this bird as a not rare summer resident in the Housatonic Valley in Sheffield and also found in limited numbers in Lenox and Stockbridge. Breeding declined during the early 20th Century and was centered in shrubby wet areas of the southern regions of

the county. It would first arrive in the area around 5/15 and depart by 9/16 with a late date of 10/3. No breeding records have occurred since the late 1960s and is now found only as a high rare and erratic migrant with only single birds being noted.

SUMMER TANAGER

(Piranga rubra)

Status: Accidental

There are only five records for this species in the county, four in May and one in late September (9/23/58. Pittsfield, Hendricks). The spring sightings occurred between May 11 and May 31: in 1944 a female in Pittsfield (Snyder); 1960 a male in Pittsfield (Keith); 1961 a male in Alford (Bonn) and 1962 a male in Ashley Falls (Bailey)

SCARLET TANAGER

(Piranga livable)

Status: Regular breeder

Scarlet Tanagers are common in the deeper deciduous woodlands however their numbers are decreasing in recent years due to fragmentation of the breeding habitat and loss of suitable wintering areas. Spring arrival is in early May (5/3) and fall departure is complete by mid-October. There are two November records: a bird found dead in Windsor 11/2/32 and a male found in Pittsfield 11/12/54. Spring maximum is 15 while fall counts are usually lower.

WESTERN TANAGER

(Piranga ludoviciana)

Status: Accidental

There are only four records of this species in Berkshire County. On 9/23/30 a male was seen at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox (Broun); 9/4/51 and 10/9/60, a pair each time at Bartholomews Cobble (Bailey); on 12/25/65 a male in Lanesboro which persisted until 11/28/66 (v.o.).

EASTERN TOWHEE

(Pipilo erthrophihaimus)

Status: Common breeder

Towhees are common in brushy areas. Spring arrival begins in mid-April (with a very early date of March 20 2012 by Reed-Evens at Sheep Hill in Williamstown). and fall departure is usually complete by mid-November. There are numerous records of winter survival. It seems to be especially a more common breeder near summits (Mt. Greylock, Mt. Everett, Berry Pond). For breeding. It is not as common in the Berkshires as it is in the eastern portion of the state. A fall maximum of 20 birds was recorded by Bailey 9/27/44 at Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox. Its status is little changed from the 19th Century.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW

(Spizella arborea)

Status: Common winter visitant

The Tree Sparrow is a winter visitor which makes its first appearance usually about the later part of October (10/8/63, Stockbridge, Smith) and usually departs by late April although Dunbar had one as late as 6/16/62 coming to a Pittsfield feeder. The highest count was on the Central Berkshire CBC 12/19/71 of 241.

CHIPPING SPARROW

(Spizella passerina)

Status: Very common breeder

The Chipping Sparrow is a common resident in the county. Spring arrival is by mid-April (4/1/68, Lenox, St. James) and autumn departure is usually complete by mid-October although there are records of birds lingering into November (11/13). There are December records of 12/15/63, Adams, Brierley) and 12/19/81 of a bird on the Central Berkshire CBC. McDonald had a bird on 1/4/76 in Lanesboro. Migrating maxima are 40 in the spring and 100 (9/3/03, Pittsfield, Collins) in the fall. They have been recorded as nesting at 2500 feet in the 1940s but not since.

CLAY COLORED SPARROW

(Spizella pallida)

Status: Accidental

There are very few records of the Clay colored Sparrow in the Berkshires, the first being on 11/21/40, Pleasant Valley Sanctuary in Lenox (Wallace). A potential nest record was in May of 1987 when Rancatti and Goodrich recorded a bird at the Stafford Hill WMA in Cheshire and found one in the same location in June of 1993. On 6/21/04 I. Lynch reported this species on Greylock.

FIELD SPARROW

(Spizella pusilia)

Status: Regular breeder

Field Sparrows usually appear in the spring in early April (3/29) and depart in autumn by early November. Spring migrants are only recorded in low numbers but the fall figures can approach 25 birds. There are several winter records some with proven survival; 12/15/76-3/11/77, Ashley Falls (Bain) ; in the winter of 1966-7, Brierley recorded 4 coming to a feeder in Adams.

VESPER SPARROW

(Pocoetes gramineus)

Status: Very uncommon migrant; historical breeder

The Vesper Sparrow has had a very dramatic change in status in the past fifty years. It was considered a common summer resident in the 19th Century by Faxon and Hoffmann but by 1960 the county range had been constricted to Sheffield, Great Barrington and an occasional sighting in Otis, Savoy and Jones Nose on Greylock. It has since disappeared as a breeding species in the Berkshires. In 1992, a July bird was noted in a Washington forest clearing dominated by slash (Goodrich). They are recorded from late March (3/13) with autumnal departure completed in early November (11/5). Spring maxima reached 15-20 birds in the 1940s but were less than 7 by the 1970s. Fall migration is most abundant in the first three weeks of October with a maximum of 15 in Williamstown on 10/19/74 (McNair). On 12/10/65 a bird was coming to a feeder in Adams (Brierley).

LARK SPARROW

(Chondestres grammacus)

Status: Accidental

The Lark Sparrow has only been recorded in the county a very few times. It was first seen in October of 1943 in Cheshire (Bailey). In July of 1948 an immature was noted at the Pittsfield Sewer Beds by Snyder. On 5/18/88 a very rare spring bird was recorded at Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield by Laubach and in 1995 a bird was noted in Williamstown in late October by St. James. There is one November record.

LARK BUNTING

(Colamospiza melanocorys)

Status: Accidental

There are four records of this species in the county, all in the fall, the first being in October of 1944 (Snyder). The earliest date is 9/23/63, Adams (Brierley) and the latest is 11/1/48 in Ashley Falls (Bailey).

SAVANNAH SPARROW

(Passaculus sandwiches)

Status: Common breeder

The Savannah Sparrow is a grassland species whose numbers are decreasing due to habitat loss. Spring arrival may occur as early as late March (3/21) but the bulk of migrants appear from late April into May. Fall departure is relatively late in mid-October into early November (11/12). Winter records include a bird coming to a feeder from 12/29/66-1/5/67 in Adams (Brierley) and another that successfully survived the winter of 1961-62 in Great Barrington. The maximum spring number is 50 in Pittsfield 5/12/47 while the fall number is 100 recorded several times.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

(Ammodramus savannarum)

Status: Very rare breeder, migrant

This is a highly secretive species, which, like other grassland species, has decreased markedly in the last 50 years. It was considered a locally uncommon breeding species until the 1960s when nesting had all but ceased in the county. The spring migrants usually pass through starting in the first week of May with birds finally departing in October. On November 13, 1943 one was killed by a cat in Pittsfield and in the winter of 1961-2 (11/28-May) one came to a feeder in Pittsfield (Nichols). Recent records include one noted on the Hoffmann Bird Clubs Century Run on 5/20/89 in Egremont and another bird was seen by Blagdon at the Moran WMA in Windsor on 6/15/96. Mole discovered three singing males in Lanesboro during the summer of 2007. Breeding was confirmed by a bird bringing food to a nesting site.

HENSLOWS SPARROW

(Ammodramus henslowe)

Status: Historic breeder

The Henslows Sparrow was once a regular breeding species in the Berkshires found in meadows of high grass. It was found throughout the Housatonic River valley in Egremont (where up to

7 singing males a day could be heard), Great Barrington, Pittsfield, Lanesboro and Hinsdale. It was recorded in the higher elevations in Savoy and Peru. The decline began in the early 1950s and continued for the next dozen or so years, the last record in Pittsfield being in 1965. From 1974-1983 the bird was not reported breeding anywhere in the state. In the summer of 1983, 4 singing males were discovered at Moran WMA in Windsor with breeding presumed (Stemple et. al). They have not been recorded since. The earliest record is April 16 and the latest October 18.

NELSONS SHARP TAILED SPARROW

(Ammodramus nelsoni)

Status: Extremely rare migrant

The Nelsons Sharp tailed Sparrow was until recently considered a subspecies of *A. cuadaculus* so most early records do not specify between the two species. This bird is a rare migrant and was first discovered by Pell in Interlaken on 5/25/32. All other dates are from the fall: 9/8/41, Brielmans (Wallace); 9/25/49, Brielman's (Smart#) and 10/12/90 (Goodrich). The 1949 bird was described as being so orange that it was felt at the time to be the Nelsons variety.

FOX SPARROW

(Passerella iliaca)

Status: Regular migrant

This species is a regular migrant through the area first arriving in spring in early March (3/2), leaving by mid-May (5/14). In the fall, they have been known to arrive as early as late August (9/29) but usually do not occur in numbers until late October, remaining until early December. They occur in winter lingering at feeders. The maximum spring count is 25 on several dates but usually not more than 10 birds are seen at any one time. Numbers in the fall are usually larger with the maximum of 50 being recorded 10/24/54 in Pittsfield.

SONG SPARROW

(Melospiza melodia)

Status: Extremely common breeder; regular in winter

The Song Sparrow is a very common summer resident, migrant and is regularly seen through the winter months. Maximum counts from both spring and fall seasons are 200 (McNair) and pass through the area in March and April and again in September to early November. The maximum number in winter was found in Stockbridge by Fidelis (120-date?). Small numbers of this species were found in the 19th Century.

LINCOLNS SPARROW

(Melospiza lincolnii)

Status: Uncommon migrant; extremely rare breeder

The Lincolns Sparrow is an uncommon migrant through the area and in recent years has been recorded nesting on the Berkshire Plateau. It is less likely to be seen in spring migration than in the fall with most of the birds recorded from mid-late May (4/28/86, Collins, St. James) with a maximum daily count of 2. In the fall it is found from mid-September to early October (9/4-10/26; 11/2/03, Windsor, Wood) with up to 18 birds recorded in the Hoosic Valley on a single day on 9/29/75 (McNair). There are reports of stragglers in early winter, most notably a single bird coming to a feeder in Richmond 12/18/79 to 12/31/79 (Sanborn). Nesting was first discovered in Florida when a bird was found on 6/21/81 (Stemple#) and later with a nest with 3 young on one egg (7/11). A second nesting record occurred in Florida 6/18/93 when Rancatti found a nest with 4 eggs.

SWAMP SPARROW

(Melospiza georgiana)

Status: Common breeder

The Swamp Sparrow arrives at its nesting grounds in the Berkshires in the early part of April. Only small numbers (1-4) are recorded away from breeding areas. Fall migrants are far more numerous with up to 35 being recorded in one day (10/16/46, Pittsfield, Snyder). These sparrows have usually departed by mid-November (11/9) There are several winter sightings but no record of winter survival. Faxon and Hoffmann report that their status was about the same in the 19th Century.

WHITE THROATED SPARROW

(Zonotrichia albicollis)

Status: Common breeder, migrant and uncommon in winter

The White throated is a regular nesting species on the Berkshire Plateau and on Greylock in spruce-fir stunted growth associations though it also nests in wooded swamps and wet deciduous forests in the valley. Spring migration is concentrated from mid-April to mid-May with a maximum recorded of 50 on 5/2/48 in Egremont (Bailey). Numbers are far larger in the fall with a maximum of 1000 recorded several times (McNair). The first winter record occurred in 1951-2 when Brierley had 2 coming to a feeder in Adams. They are now a regular occurrence in winter.

HARRIS SPARROW

(Zonotrichia querula)

On November 24, 2011 this species was seen on Scott Hill Rd. in Williamstown (March).

WHITE CROWNED SPARROW

(Zonotrichia leucophrys)

Status: Regular migrant

White crowned Sparrows migrate in the spring around the first of May though there are earlier records of migrants from mid-April (4/19/04, Williamstown, Soucie). Spring migration is usually finished by the end of May although there is one citation of a lingering bird in Great Barrington on 6/15/41 (Varney). Numbers in spring rarely exceed 10. Fall migration is more extended with birds arriving in late September (9/21) and filtering through the county until early November. The maximum fall number is 100 in one field on 10/12/74 (McNair). There are several wintering records, survival confirmed in Egremont, Pittsfield, Cheshire, Adams, and Williamstown.

DARK EYED JUNCO

(Junco hyemalis)

Status: Very common migrant; regular breeder, regular in winter

Juncos breed in the higher elevations in spruce/fir and northern hardwood forests and locally at lower elevations above 800 feet in pine and hemlock woodlands. Spring migrants begin arriving in large numbers in March and stay until mid-May. The maximum is 300 birds. Fall migration peaks in mid-October with numbers maximizing at around 350. Winter lingerers will fluctuate yearly depending on the severity of the winter and are usually centered around bird feeding stations. The maximum in the South Berkshire CBC was 872 in 2001.

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LAPLAND LONGSPUR

(Calcarius lapponicus)

Status: Rare winter visitant

The Lapland Longspur often associates with Snow Buntings and Horned Larks in plowed or recently manured fields though never commonly. Prior to 1955, there were only five records and since then perhaps 20+ sightings. It was first recorded in 1920 in Pittsfield. The largest number is 20 seen on Greylock Summit by Phinney 10/20/85.

SNOW BUNTING

(Plectrophenax nivslis)

Status: Uncommon winter visitant

Snow Buntings are infrequent winter visitors. Flocks average between 20 and 50 birds but numbers over 300 have been recorded on several occasions. They are mostly seen on plowed or newly manured field though they are also noted at airports, snow covered fields, lake shores and bare, rocky mountain peaks including Greylock. On rare occasions they have been recorded coming to feeders. Birds arrive in late October (10/18) and depart by mid-March (4/11). The status is little changed since the time of Faxon and Hoffmann (1900).

NORTHERN CARDINAL

(Cardinalis cardinalis)

Status: Very common resident

The first Cardinal recorded in the Berkshires was on 5/11/27 in Stockbridge (Cheney) and there were only two other sightings before 1946 (in 1938 and 1942), both in North Adams) From the late 1940s to 1957, Cardinal sightings averaged 2-4/year. In the fall of 1957, a great flight occurred and in 1958, the countys first breeding record (3 reports of nesting in Pittsfield). Since that time there has been a progressive increase to where this species is one of our more common year-round members of the countys avifauna. As many as 25 birds have been reported at one feeding station. The Cardinal is found at most altitudes in the county to 2000 feet.

ROSE BREASTED GROSBEAK

(Pheucticus ludovicianus)

Status: Common breeder

The Rose breasted Grosbeak is first noted by late April but widespread spring arrival isnt until the middle of May (4/25/00, Lanesboro, Hendricks). Fall departure is usually complete by early October (10/14). Nesting occurs throughout the county including at an elevation just below the summit of Greylock. There are two December records (Great Barrington and Pittsfield). Maximum counts include 20 in spring and 80 in the Hoosic Valley 9/77 (McNair).

BLACK HEADED GROSBEAK

(Pheuciticus melanopcephalus)

Status: Accidental

There are only two records of this western species in the county. It was first noted coming to a feeder in Pittsfield in 1953 (5/2/53, Keith). A Williamstown bird was photographed on 8/18/88 by Thomas.

BLUE GROSBEAK

(Guiraca caerulea)

Status: Accidental

There are few records of the Blue Grosbeak in Berkshire County. Forbush reported one in West Stockbridge in 1918. A bird was in West Becket in July 1931 (Bailey). A pair was seen there in 1940 by Derby (8/9). A male was seen in Mt. Everett 6/30/61 (Storer).

INDIGO BUNTING

(Passerina cyanea)

Status: Common breeder

This species is a more common breeding species in the uplands than in the valley. Spring arrival occurs in early May with the migration peaking in the latter part of the month though there are two records from April (4/19 in Hendricks, and 4/25/75, a male in Pittsfield, Shampang). Fall departure is complete by mid -October though there is a late record of 11/4/01 of a bird in Washington by Neumuth. A daily maximum is 8 in either season.

PAINTED BUNTING

(Passerina cyanea)

Status: Accidental

One record. A female was reported in Williamstown on October 11.1945 (Agee).

DICKCISSEL

(Spiza Americana)

Status: Accidental; historical breeding records

This bird was recorded as a breeding bird in the county in Williamstown prior to 1858 and mentioned by Faxon and Hoffmann. Since that time, it was not found until 5/1/53 (3, Stockbridge). Individuals sporadically were recorded coming to feeders until 1973 when there were no more sightings until 1996. On 11/6/99 in Pittsfield (Mole) had one coming to a feeder. In 1996, Quinlan found birds at Moran WMA with breeding highly suspected. They have been recorded in every month of the year.

BOBOLINK

(Dolichonyx oryzovorvus)

Regular breeder

Like most grassland species, the Bobolink has declined in recent years due to the loss of habitat and the increased incidence of early and frequent mowing. This decline is not as dramatic as in other species such as the Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow and others. Spring arrival begins in early May (4/29/00, Sheffield, St. James) and fall departure is usually complete by early October.

RED WINGED BLACKBIRD

(Agelalus phoeniceus)

Status: Abundant breeder, migrant, winter records

Redwings begin to arrive in late February and increase in numbers through the spring migration when they will sometimes exceed 3000 birds. Large flocks, likewise seen in the fall have usually departed by late November. Small pockets of birds can be found along river valleys and occasionally at feeders in winter. Females arrive around 2-3 weeks after the males in the spring. It is a very common nesting species in most wetlands, wet hay fields, and meadows.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK

(Sturnella magna)

Status: Uncommon breeder

Spring arrival occurs usually around mid-March (3/7/88, Hancock, St. James). Breeding birds have declined markedly in recent years due to the decrease of meadows and farm fields and as a result of early and frequent mowings. Fall migration ends by late October though winter birds have been recorded with a certain degree of regularity, notable among which were 23 birds seen on Baldwin Hill in Egremont 1/31/83 (Gola, St. James).

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

(Sturnella neglecta)

Status: Accidental

There is only one record for this species in the Berkshires. Between July 8 and 19, 1944 a male of this species was observed at the Berkshire Hills Country Club by Eliot and Clarke.

YELLOW HEADED BLACKBIRD

(Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus)

Status: Accidental

There are only five confirmed records of this species in the county. There is only one spring observation (2/19/50, Williamstown, Treadway). Four fall records were noted between 9/13 to 10/23. On 6/26/2010 an adult male was photographed on Pomeroy Ave. in Pittsfield (Cuddihy).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

(Euphagus carolinus)

Status: Regular to uncommon migrant; very rare breeder

Rusty Blackbirds are regular migrants usually arriving by mid-March and departing by early May. Fall migrants first arrive in late September and depart by mid-October. Birds will often linger throughout the winter. Purdy reported 25 Rusties at B.C.C. in Pittsfield on 2/1/2000. There is a report of nesting in Williamstown in 1901 but is unconfirmed (Blake). The first recorded breeding in the state was on 6/11/77 in Florida (McNair) when a nest with three young were noted. The following year in Savoy adults were seen carrying food presumably to a nest (Quinlan). Maximum numbers in the spring are 125 in Pittsfield 4/19/35 (Hendricks); in the fall 200 birds were recorded by Goodrich 10/11/75 in Richmond. By the 21st Century, migrant populations of this species had plummeted for reasons yet fully understood.

COMMON GRACKLE

(Quiscalus quiscula)

Status: Very common to abundant migrant and breeder

Grackles, along with Redwings are true harbingers of spring arriving in the latter half of February. The species breeds throughout the county especially in swamps and residential areas preferring evergreens. Large spring and fall flocks have been calculated at over 3000. In mid December 1998 on the Central Berkshire CBC, Neumuth recorded a remarkable 7500 birds on Washington Mt. Surprisingly there has been little or no proof of winter survival.

BROWN HEADED COWBIRD

(Molothrus aber)

Status: Very common breeder and migrant. Winter records

Cowbirds may be seen at any time of the year but are most notable in the spring migration with flocks breaking up at the onset of the breeding season when the birds become remarkably secretive. The spring maximum is 200 noted in Pittsfield of 3/19/77 (Ferren). Birds become more visible in the latter part of summer when blackbirds begin staging for the fall migration. Fall maximum of 300 has been recorded several times. Small numbers are present throughout the winter, mostly at farm silage and at bird feeders in rural areas.

ORCHARD ORIOLE

(Icterus spurius)

Status: Very rare spring migrant; one modern nesting record

The Orchard Oriole is today considered a rare spring transient but in the 1800s Faxon and Hoffmann listed the species as not uncommon summer resident in the southern part of the Housatonic Valley at Sheffield, and breeding in small numbers as far as Lanesboro. After a dramatic population decline, the bird was not recorded again until the 1940s when Snyder saw one in Pittsfield 5/88/44. The only 20th Century record of nesting was in Egremont during 1945. The bird has been seen sporadically since, mostly in May in the Sheffield and Egremont area. Seemingly all records are of lone males. Increases in the rest of the northeast in recent years bode well for increased sightings and possible nesting records especially in the Sheffield/Egremont area.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE

(Icterus galbula)

Status: Common breeder

Baltimore Orioles are common in the Berkshire river valleys where there are suitable nesting trees and ample open spaces. Rarely, the species has been recorded as high as the summit of Greylock. Spring migration commonly begins in early May but late April dates are frequent. Spring maximum is 25 birds in a day. Fall migration proceeds from mid-August until October with occasional stragglers lasting into December, usually associated with feeding stations. There are no records after the first of the year. Daily fall maximum is 22.

PINE GROSBEAK

(Pinicola enucleator)

Status: Uncommon and erratic winter visitant

Highly erratic, the Pine Grosbeak will oftentimes be absent for a number of years before making an appearance for several winters only the disappear for an extended period. Winter flocks arrive in early November (10/12) and depart by the end of March with stragglers sometimes extending into May (latest date is 5/14/46, Bailey). The maximum winter flock is 90 birds recorded on several occasions. Its status was the same in the late 1800s according to Faxon and Hoffmann (1900).

PURPLE FINCH

(Carpodacus purpurea)

Status: Regular breeder, migrant; winter records

In the last 50 years or so, the Purple Finch has declined dramatically in the county. This species is most commonly a breeding bird of the higher elevations but has also nested in the valley where the population decline is more evident, thought to be the result of competition with the House Finch which arrived in numbers in the Berkshires in the 1970s. Migration inflates area numbers. The height of the spring season occurs between March and April with a maximum on occasion exceeding 100 birds while the fall flight extends from September through October. On 9/30/77, 125 were counted in two hours in Windsor (McNair). Small wintering flocks, rarely exceeding 50, are noted in the uplands and in the vicinity of bird feeders.

HOUSE FINCH

(Carpodacus mexicanus)

Status: Very common resident

After an accidental release on Long Island, N.Y. in 1940, the House Finch, a native of the American West, began a colonization of the Northeast that was rapid and quite successful. It was first recorded in the Berkshires in 1955 (Ashley Falls, Bailey). Nesting was noted three years when Bailey discovered a family of 6 in Ashley Falls (6/12/58). The subsequent increase progressed somewhat slowly, the next proven nesting came 14 years later when a female was observed feeding young (Drummond, Pittsfield 8/71). This species is now extremely common, especially in the lowlands. Shortly after the turn of the 21st Century the species was decimated by form of conjunctivitis suffering a disproportionate mortality with other bird feeder associated species. The species is only now (2008) recovering to its former numbers. Most wintering flocks are associated with human habitation.

RED CROSSBILL

(Loxia curvirostra)

Status: Erratic winter visitant, migrant and vagrant throughout the year

This species has been recorded in every month of the year but breeding has never been determined. A highly erratic bird, it is not recorded yearly with occurrence apparently determined by the amount of spruce and hemlock cones available for food. A migratory period occurs from March to May and from October to November when numbers reach their peak. Flocks rarely exceed 20. Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) noted in the summer of 1895 it was abundant on Greylock.

WHITE WINGED CROSSBILL

(Loxia neuroptera)

Status: Erratic winter visitant; migrant and vagrant throughout the year. Breeding confirmed

This is a highly erratic species, seen primarily in winter but should be looked for in other seasons. Flocks rarely exceed 30. Lynch recorded flocks of approximately 140 birds in Savoy in the winter of 2001. The years of 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1995 were particularly productive years for this crossbill with birds especially abundant in the winter of 1989-90 with stragglers remaining through the summer. Even in years when large flights are not recorded, small numbers may be identified in the coniferous woods of Greylock and the Berkshire Plateau. On occasion mixed flocks of crossbills have been noted. First breeding was confirmed for the county (and the state) on February 22, 2001 when a male feeding four young was seen by LaBaron on North St. in Windsor. Later that year (late May), adults were seen feeding young on Greylock (Allen).

COMMON REDPOLL

(Carduelis flammea)

Status: Erratic winter visitant

Like many winter finch species, the Common Redpoll may be highly erratic: commonly recorded for several years in succession and then becoming rare or entirely absent for extended periods. The birds arrive in November (11/5/99, Washington, Neumuth) and usually depart by the first of April (5/4/02, Hinsdale, Robeson). Flock size is usually in the order of 20-30 birds but a maximum of 500 was recorded by Whitehead in Williamstown 3/27/64. Neumuth has twice recorded flocks exceeding 200 birds in March of 2000 and again in March of 2004. Both records were in the town of Washington. The largest number recorded on a CBC was 320 of the Central Berkshire tally in 1975.

HOARY REDPOLL

(Carduelis hornemanni)

Status: Accidental

This is an extremely difficult bird to identify as it closely resembles the Common Redpoll in the field. Approximately 10 records of this species have been deemed acceptable. The first sighting of this species occurred in Pittsfield on 12/14/43 (Snyder). It was maintained on the hypothetical list for Berkshire County until the 1950s. The last verified sighting came in 1997 in Savoy (R. Shampang). It should be looked for in winters when Common Redpolls are experiencing a major flight year.

PINE SISKIN

(Carduelis pinus)

Status: Winter visitant; very rare breeder

The Pine Siskin is usually present every year but has distinct flight years when it becomes quite common throughout the winter and into spring. It is during these years that summer records occur. Although nesting was suspected since Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) noted summer records in the uplands, breeding wasn't confirmed until 5/18/1978 when Smith found proof of nesting in Dalton when he had 2 adults and 4 fledglings coming to his feeder and Shampang later that year found fledged young in Pittsfield. The largest flock is 150 (McNair). The highest CBC count is in 1977 is for the Central Berkshire tally of 191.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

(Carduelis tristis)

Status: Very common resident

Faxon and Hoffmann (1900) considered this species to be rare in winter but in the 20th and 21st Centuries it has become very a very common component of the winter landscape. In 2003 over 259 birds were recorded on the North Berkshire CBC and have been noted on every one of the counts of the three surveys. It is equally present throughout the remainder of the year though there is significant movement and some years and seasons may vary from year to year. The spring maximum is 250 recorded of 5/2/52 (Griscom) in Great Barrington while the fall maximum is 100 noted several times.

EVENING GROSBEAK

(Coccothraustes vesterinus)

Status: Erratic winter visitant; rare breeder

Evening Grosbeaks were first recorded in the county and Massachusetts during the winter of 1889-90. This was a notable incursion throughout the east. Subsequently, small flocks would filter through the area in winter but never reach substantial numbers until 1913. During this period, the largest flock recorded was of 42 birds seen in Pittsfield in the winter of 1915-6 (Bird Lore, 1917). By the early 1940s, increasingly large flocks were noted which continued through the 1980s and early 1990s. From that point a dramatic decrease in winter numbers occurred, the species totally absent some years. Breeding was not positively determined until 1980 when Shampang recorded adults and young coming to his feeder in Pittsfield. Other suspected nesting occurred on the Berkshire Plateau especially in the October Mountain area. The maximum daily count was of 3000+ recorded multiple times in the winter of 1974-5 in North Adams by McNair. Aside from summer records, the species usually appears in October and stays until late May.

HOUSE SPARROW

(Passer domesticus)

Status: Abundant resident

This species was first introduced into Boston in 1868 as a method to control Gypsy Moths. By 1900, Faxon and Hoffmann described it as a permanent resident abundant in the larger towns and cities, uncommon in farming country of the lowlands, but not encroaching upon the higher reaches of the county. The numbers have steadily declined since the advent of the automobile and demise of the horse for transportation. Numbers have never exceeded 400 birds on any of the area CBCs.

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List of Abbreviations

CBC - The annual late December - early January Christmas Count sponsored by the National Audubon Society

HBC - Hoffmann Bird Club

MDFW - Mass. Division of Fish and Wildlife

WFC - The HBC annual November waterfowl census

v.o. - Various Observers. Seen by a number of other qualified people

- Also seen by one or more qualified people

List of People Mentioned in Text

Addison, David	Graefe, ? Look under Gadwall	Miller, Mark
Allen, Harvey	George Hamilton	Minneci, Linda
Bailey, S. Waldo	Harwood, ? Look under Mute Swam	Mole, Noreen
Barrett, Cheryl		Morris-Siegal, Jacob
Benchley, ? - - Look under Brant	Hawley, Fiona,	Neumuth, Edwin
Blagdon, Christopher	Hendricks, Bartlett	Parker, Henry
Bowen, Richard	Hendricks, Mary	Pell, S. Morris
Brainard, Barron	Hoffmann, Ralph	Reid, Donald
Broun, Maurice	Hurley, Gael	Rinsma, Margaret
Clarke, Stanley	Johnson, Chuck	Rurak, Mrs. John
Derby, Ruth	Kellogg, Seth	Sanborn, Alvah
Dunbar, Edna	Kiebler, Richard	Schultz, Lorraine
Eliot, Samuel	Kulish, William	Schmacher, Gladys & Ruth
Fitz, Mr. and Mrs. Elmore	Lynch, Mark	Shampang, Jerry
Flanagan, Timothy	King, Richard	St. James, David
Ford, Mrs. David	Laubach, René	Smith, Thomas G.
HBC- Hoffmann Bird Club	McDonald, Joseph	Snyder, Dorothy
Gagnon, Thomas	McGee, Andrew	Tynning, Thomas
Gola, Tony	McNair, Douglas	Whitehead, Donald
Goodrich, Robert	MDFW- Mass. Division of Fish and Wildlife	

Index of English Names

Names followed with the abbreviation 'col.' are names no longer in use (2012) but are sufficiently familiar that they are listed as a aid in locating species accounts in the text. Some marked 'col.' are also rearrangements of official (names) that are also listed as an aid in locating species accounts.

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