



# THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

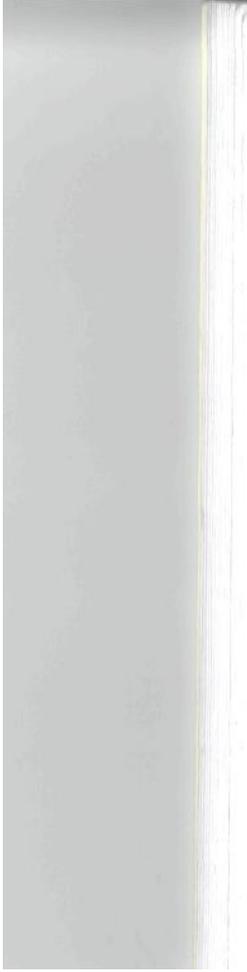
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## THE TOP TEN CONNECTICUT BIRDS IN 2010

By Frank W. Mantlik

Early in 2010, I decided to keep a running tally, with monthly updates, of all the bird species reported to Connecticut's birding list-serve. It was probably the birding "Big January" total of a remarkable 161 species that instigated this endeavor. Month after month brought new birds reported, and by Dec. 31 the cumulative 2010 state list stood at 319 species. This incredible total was augmented by a fabulous autumn and early winter of great rarities. To quote Noble Proctor, "Last year had a load of really good birds. When fall hit, it seemed like every week had us heading somewhere for a rarity".

Then in January, at the suggestion of Joe Zeranski, I decided to take a poll of the top ten species of the year. I set down some guidelines, culled the overall list to a more manageable 80 species, and asked the top 42 birders of the state to select and rank their top ten species. Many factors could play a part in their selection process - sheer rarity, beauty and/or grace, cooperativeness of the bird, length-of-stay, amount of press coverage, whether they personally saw it or not, etc. And comments were solicited. I thank the 29 respondents for their time and effort. Point values were then assigned to the ranked species (10 points for their number one pick, 9 points for number two, etc.) and results were tabulated.

Here are the results, along with each species' point totals:

Northern Lapwing (254)  
White-tailed Kite (251)  
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (220)  
LeConte's Sparrow (113)  
**Mountain Bluebird (93)**  
Western Grebe (89)  
Calliope Hummingbird (78)  
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (54)  
Dovekie (49)

member this bird for many years to come." (CL). "First state record, second record in New England in 100 years". (FG). "While more birders got to see it, its level of significance is slightly less than the Lapwing. It certainly put Stratford Point on the birding map ... and led to many other great sightings." (KE). "This bird's combination of power, grace, and beauty attracted birders from many states. Its cooperative nature greatly enhanced the experience." (NB).

#### Fork-tailed Flycatcher

A bird discovered at Cove Island Park in Stamford by Tina Green Nov. 17, and seen daily through Dec. 4. "Third state record, first that could be chased." (FG). "Another extraordinary rarity, from South America no less! Found in an accessible location and stayed long enough for many to see it." (CL). "Number one any other year." (GW). "Cove Island was overdue for a chaseable rarity, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> record, all the active birders in the state finally got to twitch this vagrant." (KE).

#### LeConte's Sparrow

A skulking beauty positively identified by photographer Tom Sayers Oct. 29 at Milford Point. "Five records since 1987." (FG). "Unusual for such a secretive bird to be rather reliable for such a long period of time. Perhaps the most beautiful North American sparrow." (NB). "Rare and secretive. Was unusually cooperative by staying as long as it did and in a place where people could come to see it." (CL). "Sparrows deserve more respect, especially when they're as elusive as this little bugger. Led to the Western Grebe too." (KE).

#### Mountain Bluebird

A western vagrant (third state record) first discovered at Bradley Airport Dec. 7 by Rollin Tebbetts. "First since the Guilford Sluice bird and how many birds in the state get their own police escort"! (NP). "A real beauty. It stayed for weeks, into the harsh winter, but was in an inaccessible location." (CL). "I didn't get to enjoy this bird, but they are so gorgeous, and got some un-needed press because of its sensi-





*Starrs or Scotland? This photo by Mark Szantyr would be almost impossible to duplicate anywhere in North America. This single image taken on Nov. 28, 2010, shows both the 2010 Connecticut bird of the year, a Northern Lapwing (far upper right) and a Barnacle Goose (lower left). The inset photo, taken the same day by Frank Gallo, offers a closer look at the lapwing, a state first.*

tive location." (KE). "The intense sky-blue color is difficult to describe in words." (NB).

#### Western Grebe

A bird discovered off Milford Point Nov. 2 by Dennis Varza, and identification confirmed by Frank Gallo. "Third recent record, but prior to these three, not one for a while (6 records)." (FG). "A great example of the 'Patagonia Picnic Table Effect!'" (KE).

#### Calliope Hummingbird

This little gem was first reported Dec. 10 at a Guilford feeder by homeowner, Hank Kranichfeld, then seen by many through Jan.1, when it flew up and away. "Third state re-

since Oct. 14, was believed to have left on the morning of Dec. 11 (fide JA). One that arrived at a Niantic feeder in October stayed until at least Jan. 1 (fide FMa). The state's third Calliope Hummingbird visited a feeder in Guilford, where it was first identified to species on Dec. 10 (HK, FG et al). It was last seen on Jan. 1. Red-headed Woodpeckers were in an Old Saybrook yard on Feb. 17 (DW) and wintering in a beaver swamp in Lyme (HG). An inter grade Northern Flicker, showing characters of both the Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted races, visited a feeder in Tolland in late January (JKo fide TS).

The latest Eastern Phoebe report came from the Cos Cob section of Greenwich on Jan. 14 (SMr). A Fork-tailed Flycatcher discovered Nov. 17 at Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Stamford remained until Dec. 4 (TG et al.). It was a third state record. A Northern Shrike was taken into rehab briefly after a window strike in Falls Village and released in the same area Dec. 6 (fide AD). Other singles were at Station 43, South Windsor on Jan. 1

(MR), in Litchfield on Feb. 17 (RBe), in Hartland on Feb. 20 (NH) and in Canaan on Feb. 27 (RBe). A flock of 50 Fish Crows passed over Paradise Green in Stratford on Feb. 14 (FMa).

Two Northern Rough-winged Swallows lingered until Dec. 4 at the Glastonbury wastewater treatment plant (BA). Single Cave Swallows were at Stratford Point (TL) and Greenwich Point (MSa), both on Dec. 1; two were at East Shore Park, New Haven, on Dec. 2-7 (CL et al.); and one was at Greenwich Point on Dec. 3 (MA). A late House Wren was in Chaplin on Dec. 18 (PR), and a Marsh Wren remained until at least Jan. 6 in Stratford (CB). Windsor Locks (RT). It A Mountain Bluebird, another third state record, was found on Dec. 7 at Bradley International Airport in was last seen on Jan. 6, spending most of its time in inaccessible areas. A very late Wood Thrush was photographed at a feeder in Canton on Dec. 15 (PW), providing excellent documentation of a significant record. Any thrush other than a Hermit Thrush at this season should be



*Julian Hough photo*

*A special arrangement was made to allow birders to see the Mountain Bluebird on restricted property at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks. A good crowd turned out for the third state record. A photo of the bird appeared in the 16th Report of Avian Records Committee of Connecticut.*

photographed if possible. An unusually large winter flock of c. 60 American Pipits was on the salt marsh at HBSP in early January (TD et al.)

The season's only Orange-crowned Warbler was at Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Plainfield on Jan. 19 (RDj). An observer delivering mail in the Compo Beach area of Westport on Dec. 7 found and photographed a Black-throated Gray Warbler that could not be relocated. (FMa). Among a dearth of

Pine Warbler records this season, one was in Groton on Jan. 1 (PR). The only Yellow-breasted Chat report came from a school property in Branford Dec. 18-20 (BZ et al.).

A major snowstorm Jan. 12 brought seven Eastern Towhees to feeders in a Killingworth yard (KM). A Clay-colored Sparrow at Larimer Point in Stonington was present from at least Dec. 19 until early January (BDw et al.). A Vesper Sparrow was