

Fenwick

Bird Nest Enhancement/Monitoring Project

Fall 2017 Status Report

Hello Birding Fenwickians!

The **2017 Osprey fledging season** was a wonderful success. Nearly all of the birds have headed south for the winter, some perhaps making their way as far as Argentina. There are many hazards ahead for them, so we must wish them luck for a safe return to Fenwick next March.

Satellite telemetry has been used to determine fall migratory movements of Osprey. Migration routes differ among populations but not by sex. East Coast birds migrate along the eastern seaboard of the U.S., through Florida and across the Caribbean, and winter from Florida to as far south as Brazil. Dates of departure from breeding areas differ significantly between sexes and geographic regions, with females leaving earlier than males. Females travel farther than males from the same population, thus typically wintering south of males.

It is time to think about new and replacement platform installations for next year. The east end has a number of suitable spots, and certainly the birds attempting to nest in the cedar tree at Webster's would be best served by giving them a proper foundation. Anyone supplying funds for a platform would have naming rights. The Webster platform is one of the oldest and one we have suggested needs replacement.

Sandy Sanstrom, my wonderfully talented partner in Osprey management, and I will over the next few months inspect all platforms and nests to assure that they are in good shape and free of hazardous materials (especially monofilament fishing line). So far the most interesting item found was the tennis ball in the Hepburn nest.

Osprey Data

<u>Osprey Nest</u>	<u>2016 Status</u>	<u>2017 Status</u>
West End	0 fledged	1 fledged
Hepburn	3 fledged	3 fledged
Neely	3 fledged	3 fledged
Staniford	1 fledged	1 fledged
Sequassen	4 fledged	3 fledged
Hastings	0 young	0 young
Webster I	3 fledged	3 fledged
Webster II	X	0 young
Total Fledged	14	14



Image courtesy of Bill Canosa.

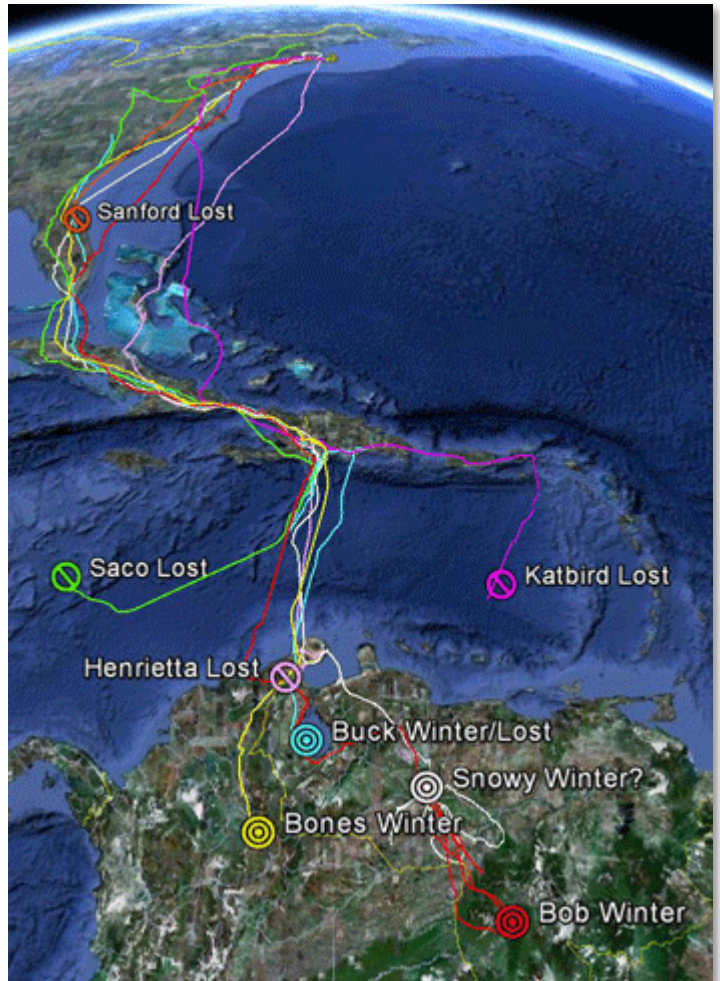


Image courtesy of ospreytrax.com.



Image courtesy of Andrew Griswold.

Purple Martin Data

Counting fledgling martins with complete accuracy is a bit difficult, but now that the houses have been cleaned and stored, we can make the best judgment on these numbers. By getting a firm count on martin nests from examining each compartment, extrapolating by using a per nest multiplier derived from other colonies in Connecticut, we can arrive at a relatively accurate estimate. Of course there are many factors involved as to a given colony's success, including weather, parasites, predators, and more. Increasing number of nests is always encouraging.

Houses being used (or attempted to be used) for the first time in many years include those referred to as **Keeney**, **Bulkely**, **Fourth Fairway**, and **29 Pettipaug**. Indications are that Fenwick has a growing martin population with an increase of at least four pairs over last season.

Nest Boxes

Tree Swallow, House Sparrow, House Wren, and Carolina Wren again did well in the nest boxes, some able to produce a second brood.

Other

I want to thank **Jim** and **Jan Sherwonit**, my two assistants, who helped with the removal, cleaning, and storage of the martin houses. This is a big project, so the assisting hands were greatly appreciated. If any of you Fenwick residents would like to "get your hands dirty" in 2018, drop me an email. It's a fun time with a wonderful spirit of camaraderie.

Birds of Note

Winter Birds

With the fall migration past its peak, we can look forward to the season of northern visitors, represented by those birds that nest to our north but use the lower Connecticut River Valley as a wintering ground. Many of these winter visitors are in the duck family. South Cove, around the breakwaters, and Long Island Sound are perfect places to find the many duck species as they forage on eel grass, sea weeds, and mollusks. The Ruddy Duck is well represented in South Cove, generally found west of the causeway in ever growing rafts that at times have exceeded 300 individuals. Less common species like Long-tailed Duck, Northern Pintail, and Barrow's Goldeneye are always a possibility around Fenwick.

<u>Martin House</u>	<u>2016 Nests</u>	<u>2017 Nests</u>
1. Riggio	3	1
2. Walton	3	3
3. Ryder Course	0	0
4. Keeney	0	2
5. 34 Pettipaug	0	0
6. Bulkeley	0	1
7. 29 Pettipaug	X	0
8. First Fairway	0	0
9. Agawam	0	0
10. Second Fairway West	3	3
11. Second Fairway East	3	3
12. Neely West	3	2
13. Neely East	3	3
14. Fourth Fairway	0	1
15. Gay	3	5
16. Webster	5	6
17. Ninth Fairway	0	0
Total Nests:	26	30



Image courtesy of Andrew Griswold.



Image courtesy of Andrew Griswold.

In addition to ducks, other families are represented, most notably the raptors. Northern Harrier is already here, easily identified by its lilting flight with wings held above horizontal in a shallow “V” shape. This hunter is in search of rodents and will often be seen working back and forth across the marsh and surrounding grassy fields. Adult males (called “The Gray Ghost” because of its distinctive grayish upper wing and back) are infrequent to our area, since most spend their winter along the central flyway. This separation of male and female is a wonderful way Mother Nature has helped to reduce the competition within a species for food resources during the winter months, a time that can be physiologically stressful.

A not so common species to keep an eye out for is the Rough-legged Hawk. This Arctic-nesting species has the distinctive behavior of hovering in place for extended periods of time while looking at the ground below. Plumages are variable, so take a look at your field guides to get yourself familiar with this species, while noting the long white tail with a dark band or bands as a helpful field mark.

Please feel free to email any **sightings** you think significant or would like to share.

Enjoy your wonderful bird garden!

Cheers,

Andy

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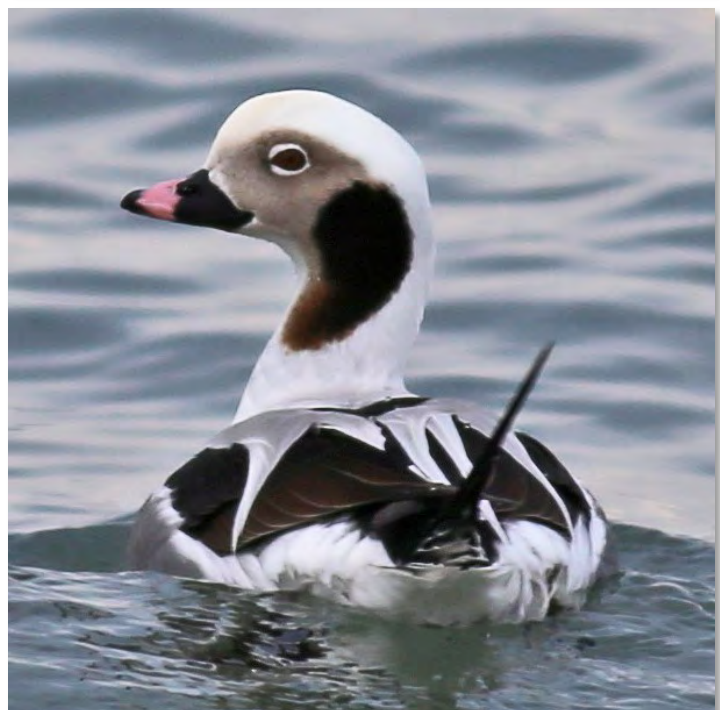


Image courtesy of William Keim.