

THE TURKEY VULTURE IN NEW ENGLAND AND
EASTERN CANADA UP TO 1950

BY AARON M. BAGG AND HENRY M. PARKER

FORBUSH (1927: 89) described the Eastern Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura septentrionalis*, as "occasional" in all the New England states except Vermont, where he called it "accidental."

During the past quarter-century, however, *C. a. septentrionalis* has been among a group of "southern" species moving northward in eastern North America. Griscom (1949: 133) remarked of this bird: "Breeding range extended from northern New Jersey to the southwestern corner of Massachusetts." In 1947 it was found nesting in Stony Creek, New Haven County, Connecticut.

This penetration of New England by the Turkey Vulture as a breeding bird has been part of a general northward advance. While this study is confined to New England and eastern Canada, there is relevant evidence from areas lying to the west. For this evidence, we are grateful to Dr. A. A. Allen, James L. Baillie, and Dr. J. Van Tyne. Regarding northern New York, Dr. Allen wrote (1950: *in litt.*): "So far as I know, no one has yet found the actual nesting grounds in Central or Northwestern New York State; but there has been an ever-increasing number of summer records of the birds during the past twenty years, particularly around Bergen Swamp, southwest of Rochester and around Howland's Island, and Montezuma Refuge at the north end of Cayuga Lake."

Describing the bird's status in southern Ontario, Mr. Baillie wrote (1950: *in litt.*): "The Turkey Vulture has been gradually extending its range northward in Ontario during the past few decades. Up to 1928, this bird, here at the northern edge of its range, was known to nest only in the Kenora (Lake of the Woods) region and in the southwestern counties of Essex, Kent, Lambton and Middlesex. In 1928, they were first found nesting in southern Bruce; in 1932, in Grey County; in 1938, Norfolk County; in 1943, the Bruce Peninsula and near Georgetown in Halton County; about 1945, in Elgin County; and in 1946, near Forks of the Credit, in Peel County. There is evidence to suggest that they now nest in Manitoulin Island, in Simcoe County, and in the Niagara Peninsula, but actual breeding data from those areas have not been reported as yet."

In regard to the Turkey Vulture's status in Michigan, Dr. Van Tyne reported (1950: *in litt.*): "I personally have seen the species increase from a rare one (1920-25) to a common one in the Ann Arbor

region (1949). In the last 10 years I have seen the Turkey Vulture change from very rare to fairly common in the Crawford-Oscoda county region, 200 miles north of Ann Arbor."

In connection with the recent range-extension of *C. a. septentrionalis* in eastern North America, it appears that the western race had previously decreased in Montana, Minnesota, and southwestern Saskatchewan. This has been mentioned by Cameron (1907: 259), Saunders (1911: 35), Roberts (1932: 295), and Potter (1930: 148).

The northeastern manifestation of the Turkey Vulture's range-extension, up to the southwestern boundaries of New England, ran chronologically somewhat as follows:

Stone (1908: 156) described the species as ranging north in New Jersey, in summer, more or less regularly to Sandy Hook, Plainfield, Lebanon, and Princeton. Griscom (1923: 179), reporting a change in its New Jersey distribution since Stone's 1908 statement, described the species as "a common summer resident in western and northwestern New Jersey right up to the New York State line, especially along the Kittatinny Ridge. . . . [where] it undoubtedly breeds."

On June 8, 1925, the first reported nest of a Turkey Vulture in New York State was found at Lewisboro, Westchester County (Howes, 1926). The second nest was found on May 28, 1927, in Tonawanda Swamp, near West Barre, Orleans County (Smith, 1927: 151).

Sutton (1928: 501-503) reported that this species had "extended its range northward noticeably in the central mountain district" of Pennsylvania in 1928. Observing that deer had become so abundant in certain parts of that state as to suffer heavy mortality from undernourishment or disease, Sutton suggested that the Turkey Vulture had extended its breeding range into those areas "chiefly as a result, it would seem, of the presence of a dependable food supply."

In commenting on the common spring occurrence, and probable breeding, of Turkey Vultures near Lake Mohonk, Ulster County, N. Y., Smiley and Smiley (1931: 121) remarked: "This is one of the many instances of the northward extension of range of the Turkey Vulture since the [1910] publication of Eaton's 'Birds of New York'."

Pangburn (1929: 385-386) suggested that this bird might be "extending its range east of the Hudson [River]." Ogburn (1938: 521-522) reported "the phenomenal increase of Turkey Vultures in . . . [Westchester] county during the last decade," particularly during May and September, observing that "the object of this spectacular annual migration is a provoking mystery."

Griscom (1933: 90) said: "The Turkey Vulture is a regular summer resident in the high hills of Putnam County [N. Y.] and occurs annually

around Mt. Beacon, so it might be found nesting in Dutchess County [N. Y.]. It wanders northward with some regularity into the south central portions of [Dutchess County] . . . further north it decreases rapidly and becomes merely a straggler." E. T. Townsend, Senior

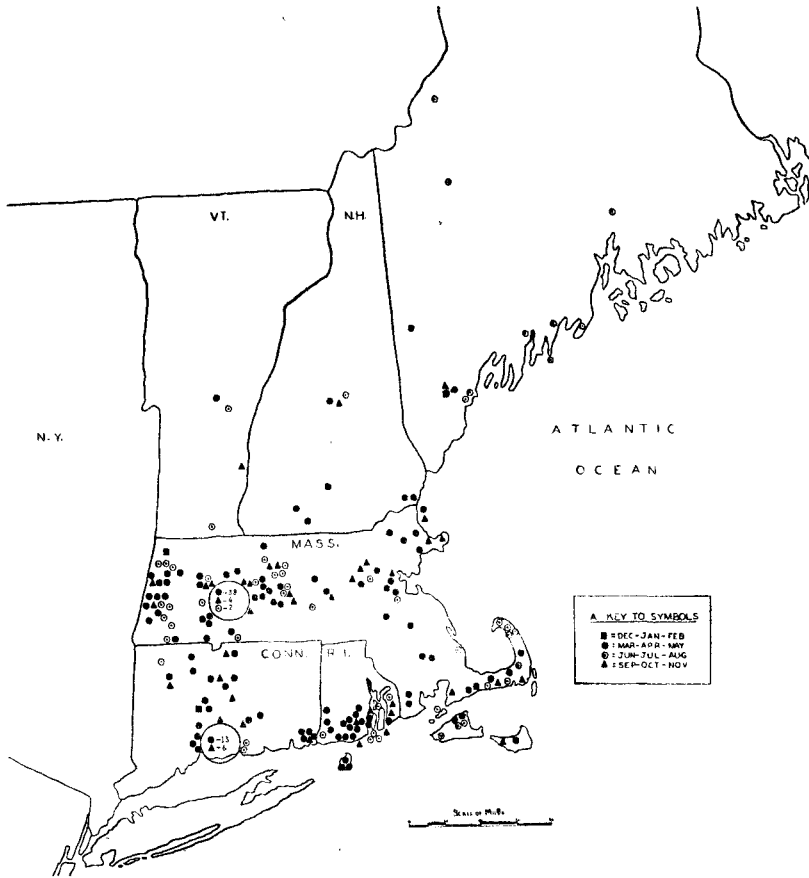


FIGURE 1.—Records of Turkey Vultures in Northeastern United States.

Game Warden of Westchester County, reported (1949: *in litt.*) that, probably in 1946, "a reliable observer noted 63 Turkey Vultures in one day during a drive in Dutchess County."

More recently Cruickshank (1942: 127) has summarized this bird's status in the southwestern approaches to New England: "The picture in New Jersey remains virtually the same today [as in Griscom's 1923 statement] but now the bird has extended its range even beyond the Kittatinny Ridge, up into the lower Catskills and across northern

Rockland County and through Putnam and Dutchess Counties to western Connecticut and extreme northern Westchester County. Each year it becomes more common throughout this extension of its range, and it now undoubtedly breeds regularly in the highlands of Rockland, Putnam and Westchester Counties."

We have no explanation for this northward extension of the Turkey Vulture's range during the second quarter of this century. But, as far as the northeastern states are concerned, several factors, acting in combination, may be responsible. The following might be mentioned:

1. The fact that the climate in the Northeast has grown warmer during the past several decades.

2. The great increase in the deer population in the Northeast, particularly since 1920. This correlation has been suggested by Sutton (*loc. cit.*) and Peterson (1948: 73). Van Tyne (1950: *in litt.*), however, points out that this factor can not be the "single explanation" for the bird's increase in Michigan.

3. The fact that the increased regularity of this species in southern New England has coincided with the increased mortality of animal life on the highways suggests the possibility that Turkey Vultures have availed themselves of this potential food supply in the Northeast, as they are reported to have done elsewhere by Jones (1935: 444-445), Lewis (1936: 76), Spiker (1936: 76-77), and Rapp (1943: 95). In fact, Sprunt (1937: 383-384) remarked: "Throughout much of the South, the feeding of vultures in highways has greatly increased, due to the numbers of small mammals, birds and reptiles which are killed by passing cars. Indeed, this has been advanced by some observers as a reason for the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus atratus*) extending its range northward in recent years." We have found no reports of the phenomenon in New England, however, and we must consider this factor merely an incidental one in the area under discussion.

4. The possibility that we have here a vigorous species which is not unduly persecuted but which, nevertheless, is forced by the spread of civilization to occupy more of its potentially usable breeding range. Miller (1942: 213) called the Turkey Vulture "a species of great vigor and versatility."

5. Trotter (1909: 230-231) considered "the Carolinian birds [to be] the laggards . . . in a general tendency of various species of birds to spread gradually northward into a region of new environing conditions which has been opened to them since the Glacial Period." He then continued: "Some of the Carolinian species, as the Cardinal, the Carolina Wren, the Tufted Titmouse, and the Turkey Buzzard show but a slight tendency to recede from their breeding range during the

winter, owing, no doubt, to the less northerly position which they have attained." The prophecy implied in this statement becomes interesting when we consider the Turkey Vulture's range-extension since 1909.

Whatever the reason may be for this range-extension, a result has been that this bird has occurred far more frequently during the past 20 years in certain parts of southern New England than it did in Forbush's time. Consequently, it seems fitting to review the history of *C. a. septentrionalis*, up to 1950, in New England and those sections of eastern Canada lying north and northeast of New England.

The authors would acknowledge most gratefully the very generous assistance given them in several ways by various persons. Certain records were made available by the following: Roland C. Clement and Douglas L. Kraus, Rhode Island; Leslie Campbell, Quabbin Reservoir Area, Mass.; David Wetherbee, Worcester County, Mass.; Lucretius Ross and Wendell P. Smith, Vermont; Raymond Cayouette, Ian MacLaren, Rev. Rene Tanguay, and L. McI. Terrill, Quebec Province; W. A. Squires, New Brunswick; Robie W. Tufts, Nova Scotia. Regional accounts for parts of southwestern New England have been provided by Dr. Stanley C. Ball, E. Alexander Bergstrom, Leonard J. Bradley, Gordon Heck, Helen Hunt, Mrs. Harry Long, Aretas A. Saunders, and E. V. Stoddard, for Connecticut, and by G. Bartlett Hendricks for Berkshire County, Mass. Information from publications not available to the authors was supplied by Eugene Eisenmann, William A. Lunk, Douglas S. Miller, and Oliver S. Owen. Certain facts regarding the western race of the Turkey Vulture were obtained from Dean Amadon and James L. Peters. Various other data were made available by Sherman Bleakney, James Bond, Allan Cruickshank, R. G. Kuerzi, and Dr. Harrison F. Lewis. Finally, James L. Baillie and Ludlow Griscom offered valuable criticism of the manuscript. To each one goes the authors' sincere gratitude.

Here we would digress to remark that since 1930 the Turkey Vulture has occurred so regularly in certain parts of western Connecticut and extreme southwestern Massachusetts that the available published records do not indicate accurately its true status in those areas. Accordingly, the authors arbitrarily have set off this section of New England by means of a line passing through Great Barrington, Mass., and New Haven, Conn. Neither the tables nor the map will present records for the area lying west of this line. Rather, the status of the bird in that region will be summarized in the text.

CONNECTICUT

As late as 1927, in reporting a bird shot at East River (New Haven County) on May 25 of that year, Townshend (1927: 419) remarked: "The occurrence of the Turkey Vulture in Connecticut is of sufficient rarity [*sic*] to make it worth while recording . . ." According to Townshend's text, the 1927 bird constituted the 19th record for Con-

necticut, the first of these having been obtained at New Haven in 1853. For details of early Connecticut records, see Sage, Bishop and Bliss (1913: 73-74).

Porter (1922: 275), reporting a Turkey Vulture seen in Stamford, Fairfield County, April 24, 1921, said: "This is the first one of these birds I have ever seen in Connecticut, and the number reported for Connecticut is so few that it seems worth while to add this to the list."

Mathers (1931: 257-259), however, recorded the finding, on July 28, 1930, of two young Turkey Vultures ("their bodies still covered with white down") on a hillside ledge at Lake Candlewood, Conn., some 20-25 miles north of the 1925 Lewisboro, N. Y., breeding location. The presumed nesting-site was on the east side of Lake Candlewood; according to Kuerzi and Kuerzi (1934: 6) it was in Fairfield County.

Describing this bird's recent status in one part of Fairfield County, Heck (1948: *in litt.*) said: "During the 10 years that I have summered in Wilton, the Turkey Vulture has definitely increased in numbers. I had always seen them quite regularly during the migration months, but for the past 2 or 3 years they have become more and more common during the summer months, often in pairs. I know of no nesting sites in Wilton or in other parts of Fairfield County."

Bradley (1949: *in litt.*) also wrote of the region around Wilton: "There are rumors of vultures nesting in Redding. Some years ago, Mr. Novack, of the Fairfield Bird Sanctuary, was presented with a young bird, from that general area."

Writing from Fairfield, Saunders (1947: *in litt.*) observed: "Actually, I haven't noted any increase in the Turkey Vulture here . . . I believe [that the bird] likes hilly country some miles back from the coast, and I don't get to such places often." However, Mrs. Long (1950: *in litt.*) reported that in the summers of 1948 and 1949 these birds appeared quite regularly in the vicinity of Westport, Fairfield County, and "two have been around all winter [1949-1950] at the Easton town dump, where Mr. Novack saw 13 in December, 1947."

In 1934, Kuerzi and Kuerzi (1934: 6) called the species an "occasional visitant" in western Litchfield County. By 1940 it had become a regular, though not common, visitor in the vicinity of Sharon, West Cornwall, and Lime Rock (Bagg: personal observations). More recently, Hunt (1948: *in litt.*) has written of the region around Washington, Litchfield County: "For the past 4 or 5 years I have seen them in summer around my place in small groups of 3 to 6 at a time. A neighbor says he has seen as many as 9 at once near Sheep Rock, and they are there throughout the nesting season each year."

In reporting a Turkey Vulture seen in West Haven, New Haven County, on May 7, 1913, Bishop (1921: 585) remarked: "This is the only Turkey Vulture I have seen in Connecticut." Ball (1948: *in litt.*) has written as follows concerning the New Haven region: "Curiously enough most of our records of turkey vultures have come from east of New Haven—many of them from near the Connecticut River between Saybrook and Middletown and from the shore towns, especially Guilford. The trap rock ridge extending north from West Rock, New Haven, seems to be a favorite avenue [of spring migration]. I have seen from 4 to 8 [there] on several occasions during March and April since 1942 . . . I have no certain nesting records, but feel sure the species does so in Connecticut."

Bergstrom (1949: *in litt.*) quoted a personal communication from Dr. Locke MacKenzie concerning this bird in the Guilford region as follows: "We have seen the bird during every month of the year, first on March 26, 1940. It became, in our area, increasingly common until 1946 and 1947, since when it has seemed to decrease in regularity and abundance. It was not unusual to see 6 to 8 in the air at one time in North Guilford during the summers of 1946 and 1947. On July 19, 1947, a nest with 2 young was found in a buttonwood tree in Stony Creek by William Seifert. He showed us the tree and the nest later on. That same summer he told me that several pairs were nesting in a hemlock grove well back in the woods at North Guilford, although I was never able to visit the area."

Merriam (1877: 91-92) cited reports by Linsley (1843) and Purdie (1873) concerning reputed early occurrences of the Turkey Vulture in areas of south-central Connecticut where the species recently has appeared with regularity. We do not consider these early reports sufficiently valid, however, to warrant our developing any hypotheses which they may suggest.

Stoddard (1948: *in litt.*) wrote that the Turkey Vulture is now a regular summer visitant in the area about the mouth of the Connecticut River. "Prior to 1941, when I first saw one on the southern border of East Haddam-Salem (May 25), I had no record of the species in southeast Connecticut. This summer (1948) seven were reported from Killingworth feeding from a dead calf. 'More than a dozen during day' reported several times."

Table 1 has been assembled from records found in Merriam (1877), Brockway (1898), Sage, Bishop and Bliss (1913), Saunders (1918), Townshend (1927), Bagg and Eliot (1937), the Massachusetts Audubon Society's 'Bulletin of New England Bird Life' and 'Records of New England Birds,' and personal records of Dr. Stanley C. Ball and

Douglas L. Kraus. As Palmer (1949: 17) has remarked, data such as those obtained from 'Records of New England Birds' fall under the category of processed literature. Nevertheless, we feel that such material is sufficiently accurate to warrant its use. It should be

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF RECORDS OF THE TURKEY VULTURE IN CONNECTICUT

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Month?	TOTALS
1860-69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1870-79	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	—	—	1	11
1880-89	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1890-99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
1900-09	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1910-19	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1920-29	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1930-39	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	1	1	—	—	7
1940	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1941	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1942	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	3	1	1	—	—	9
1943	—	—	—	5	6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
1944	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
1945	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1946	—	—	3	1	9	—	—	—	—	11	21	—	—	45
1947	—	—	—	22	18	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	41
1948	—	—	—	—	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23
1949	—	—	—	7	2	—	—	—	3	3	—	—	—	15
TOTALS	1	1	6	49	62	2	—	1	9	25	23	—	1	180

emphasized again that the records represented in this table are *exclusively* from that part of the state lying east of the arbitrary line passing through Great Barrington, Mass., and New Haven, Conn.

Summary for Connecticut

1. During the past 20 years the Turkey Vulture has become a regular, but not common, migrant and summer resident in certain parts of western and southern Connecticut. In 1949-1950 the species wintered in Fairfield County.

2. There is only one definite breeding record for the state—New Haven County, 1947. It is probable, however, that the bird has nested in Fairfield, and possibly in Litchfield and Middlesex counties.

3. There are Connecticut records for every month in the year.

4. Through 1949 there were no records for the two northeastern counties, Tolland and Windham. A possible factor here may have been the lack of observers in that area. On July 1, 1950, Wendell Taber and Allen Morgan saw a Turkey Vulture in North Woodstock, Windham County (Taber, 1950: *in litt.*). To the best of our knowl-

edge, this was the first record from the triangular area formed by lines connecting Hartford, Conn., Worcester, Mass., and Providence, R. I.

5. Records for New London County should be considered in connection with those for adjacent Washington County, R. I.

RHODE ISLAND

The following table, which contains *all* records which we have found for the state, has been compiled from material appearing in Howe and Sturtevant (1899), Hathaway (1913), Forbush (1927), Birkhead

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF RECORDS OF THE TURKEY VULTURE IN RHODE ISLAND

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Month?	TOTALS
1860-69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
1870-79	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1880-89	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1890-99	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	3
1900-09	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1910-19	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1920-29	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1930-39	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
1940	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
1941	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
1942	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
1943	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1944	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
1945	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1946	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
1947	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1948	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1949	—	—	—	17	7	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	25
TOTALS	—	—	2	21	11	2	2	1	3	1	2	—	1	46

(1941), 'Bulletin of New England Bird Life,' 'Records of New England Birds,' and the personal records of Roland Clement and Douglas Kraus, both of whom have been extremely active in the field over a period of years, keeping detailed records of Rhode Island birds.

Summary for Rhode Island

1. Of the 46 individuals represented in the table, 39 (85 per cent) were reported during the period of 1930-1949.

2. *All records* are from the two southern, coastal counties, Washington and Newport. There are three records for Block Island. The recordless northern part of the state is adjacent to similarly blank areas in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

3. The bird remains an occasional visitant in Rhode Island.

MASSACHUSETTS

Faxon and Hoffmann (1900: 138) had only one record for the Turkey Vulture in Berkshire County—one shot in Williamstown, January 9, 1891. Describing the bird's recent status in this westernmost county of Massachusetts, Hendricks (1948: *in litt.*) remarked: "The first regular reports of the Turkey Vulture in the Mt. Everett region [extreme southwestern Massachusetts] began to appear in 1938, and since then they have been seen yearly, with as many as seven observed at one time. I would call the Turkey Vulture a regular summer visitor in the Mt. Everett region, and rare and irregular in other parts of Berkshire County. There are plenty of records from April to mid-July, but not so many after that, and *no* late autumn observations. This may be largely due, however, to lack of field trips in the southwestern corner of the state during that period. So far, we have no positive record of the species breeding here." However, we believe that the bird has nested in the vicinity of Mt. Everett. Griscom (1949: 133) evidently shared this belief.

In writing of a Turkey Vulture seen near Ludlow, Mass., on September 17, 1932, Eliot (1933: 212–213) remarked: "It seems, this is the second record for the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts—the first being a specimen . . . that was shot at Becket (40 miles farther west) on June 8, 1905." Beginning in 1937, however, at least one Turkey Vulture per year has been reported as seen at, or within ten miles of, Mt. Tom, in the Connecticut Valley. The great majority of these reports which extend from March through November—with the exception of July—involve single birds; on a few occasions two birds have been seen, and on April 24, 1949, three were observed at Mt. Tom. Over half of the reports concern birds seen *at Mt. Tom in April*, when observers gather there to watch hawk-flights. These latter migrations, indeed, may draw the vultures to the Mt. Tom area. Only occasionally, however, has the bird appeared near Mt. Tom during the fall hawk-flights; Bagg and Eliot (1937: 112) included the reports of seven Turkey Vultures seen by reliable observers on September 18 and 28, 1933, in Amherst and over the Mt. Holyoke Range. In the vicinity of Mt. Tom the earliest record is for a bird seen in Westhampton on March 15, 1947; the latest is one observed in Amherst, November 11, 1949.

Bagg and Eliot (1937: 112) reported a Turkey Vulture seen in Hardwick, June 18, 1933. According to 'Bulletin of New England Bird Life,' an immature was shot in the same township, September 14, 1944. Another bird was seen there July 17, 1946. Then, in 1948,

according to records kept by Leslie Campbell, of Ware, the species began to appear more frequently in Hardwick and other nearby sections of what had become the great Quabbin Reservoir area. In 1949, Mr. Campbell listed the species on ten different occasions between April 26 and September 13, with a high count of five on May 4. Inconclusive as these records are, their recent increase suggests that Turkey Vultures may have nested in the Quabbin Reservoir region or used it as a summering ground for non-breeding birds.

In eastern Massachusetts, particularly along the coast, Turkey Vultures have appeared occasionally for years, but with greater regularity recently. Outside of southern Berkshire County, the Mt. Tom region, and the Quabbin Reservoir area, the bird remains occasional, but on the increase.

The following table has been compiled from material found in these references: Mason (1889), Brewster (1890 and 1906a), Miller (1892), White (1894), Mackay (1899), Faxon and Hoffmann (1900), Howe and Allen (1901), Morris (1905), Townsend (1905), Allen (1914), Noble (1914), Farley (1919), Eldredge (1930), Eliot (1933 and 1941), Bagg and Eliot (1937), 'Mass. Aud. Soc. Bulletin' (1941 and 1944), Griscom and Folger (1948), Griscom (1949), 'Bulletin of New England Bird Life,' 'Records of New England Birds,' and the personal records of Leslie Campbell and David Wetherbee. It should be emphasized that *no* records are included from the Mt. Everett region, in the extreme southwestern corner of the state, where (as explained above) the available records do not adequately portray the bird's true status.

Summary for Massachusetts

1. Since 1930 the Turkey Vulture has become, on a very small scale, a regular summer resident in southern Berkshire County, a regular spring migrant near Mt. Tom, and (in recent years) a possible summer resident in the vicinity of Quabbin Reservoir.

2. Omitting records for the three localities just mentioned, the species was reported in the rest of the state about six times per year during the period of 1940-1949.

3. While the bird has been reported in every month except December, there is a heavy preponderance of spring records, April and May together accounting for 51 per cent. According to Forbush (1927: 89), "one bird remained on Marthas Vineyard most of one winter."

4. The bird has occurred in every county in the state. There are, however, apparently no records for southern Worcester County or for northern Bristol. These regions are adjacent to similarly blank areas

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF RECORDS OF THE TURKEY VULTURE IN MASSACHUSETTS

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTALS
1860-69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
1870-79	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1880-89	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	4
1890-99	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	3	—	—	—	6
1900-09	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
1910-19	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	3
1920-29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
1930-39	—	—	—	15	1	3	1	—	9	—	—	—	29
1940	—	1	—	5	3	1	—	3	—	—	—	—	13
1941	—	—	1	1	4	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	8
1942	—	—	1	6	4	—	—	1	2	2	1	—	17
1943	—	—	1	—	3	3	1	—	1	1	—	—	10
1944	—	—	—	5	2	—	6	—	4	—	—	—	17
1945	—	—	1	4	—	7	—	2	—	4	—	—	18
1946	—	—	4	3	—	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	11
1947	—	—	1	2	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
1948	—	—	—	8	2	1	1	2	4	—	—	—	18
1949	—	—	1	18	16	1	1	2	2	1	3	—	45
TOTALS	1	1	10	68	41	21	14	11	29	9	6	—	211

in northeastern Connecticut and northern Rhode Island. Here again, absence of records may reflect lack of coverage.

VERMONT

According to Wendell Smith (1947: *in litt.*), Cutting (1884) said of the Turkey Vulture in Vermont: "Not often seen, but I have known of one capture." No further details are given by Cutting, and one might consider the reference as having a possible relation to the report, given by Forbush (1927: 89), of a bird taken prior to 1875 in "Eutaw." On the basis of a report in 'Forest and Stream' (vol. 4: 5, 1875) Stearns (1894: 137) gave this "record" as follows: "One was shot where Eutaw, Greene County, Vt., now stands." According to H. H. Chadwick, however, there is nothing like "Eutaw" in a fairly complete list of place-names compiled by the Vermont Development Commission. Moreover, Vermont has no "Greene County." But there is a "Eutaw" in "Greene County," Alabama. Accordingly, there seems to be no definite record for this species in Vermont prior to the following items: June 22, 1926, Woodstock, 1 taken (Forbush, 1927: 89); April 24, 1938, Gaysville Mt., 1 seen ('Bull. New Eng. Bird Life'); ca. Sept. 1, 1939, near Springfield, 1 seen (*fide* Smith); Aug. 19, 1940, Jacksonville, 1 seen (Eliot, 1941: 403).

Summary for Vermont

1. While there is less field-work done in Vermont than in many other parts of New England, the above probably represents a fairly accurate picture of the species' status in the state.

2. Accordingly, there would appear to be no reason for changing Forbush's estimate that the Turkey Vulture is accidental in Vermont.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Turkey Vulture records for the state are as follows: April 6 or 7, 1882, Hampton Falls, 1 taken (Cory, 1882: 184); spring, 1887, North Weare, 1 taken (Forbush, 1927: 89); May 15, 1898, Hampton Falls, 1 seen (Forbush, 1927: 89); April 30, 1928, Jaffrey, 1 taken (Shelley, 1928: 503); Aug. 10, 1940, Squam Lake, 1 seen (Eliot, 1941: 403); April 9, 1941, Harrisville, 1 seen ('Bull. New Eng. Bird Life'); April 13, 1947, New Hampton, 1 taken ('Rec. New Eng. Birds'); Oct. 12, 1948, New Hampton, 2 seen ('Rec. New Eng. Birds').

Summary for New Hampshire

1. Of the eight records, six are for spring months; half of them were obtained during the 1940s.

2. The status of this bird remains as occasional in New Hampshire.

3. While the data for Vermont and New Hampshire are extremely limited, they are consistent with the over-all impression that Turkey Vultures tend to avoid the Catskill-Adirondack-Green-White mountains system.

MAINE

Norton (1911: 263-264) revised the Turkey Vulture records for Maine, as he believed they should stand, up to that time. Recently, Palmer (1949: 132) brought the list up to date. The records accepted by him are as follows—see Palmer (*loc. cit.*) for references: prior to 1862, Calais region, 1 taken; *ca.* Nov. 1, 1874, Standish, 1 taken, 2 seen; *ca.* Dec. 31, 1876, Buxton, 1 taken; March 15, 1883, Denmark, 1 taken; prior to April, 1897, near Bangor, 1 seen; dates unknown, localities unknown, 2 caught in bear traps; Aug. 5, 1904, Scarborough, 1 seen; Aug. 27, 1910, Cape Elizabeth, 1 taken; *ca.* Aug. 1, 1916, near Bingham, 1 taken; *ca.* 1931, Bar Harbor, 1 seen (disabled?); July 3, 1940, Jackman, 1 captured alive; Aug., 1940, near Bangor, 2 seen; April 14, 1944, Gorham, 1 seen.

Since Palmer's list was published, the following reports have been published by Cruickshank (1950: 8), all possibly referring to the same bird: June 26, 1949, Pemaquid Pond, 1 seen; early July, 1949, near Bath, 1 seen; early July, 1949, near Friendship, 1 seen.

Summary for Maine

1. While Maine records exceed the combined total for Vermont and New Hampshire, the bird's status in Maine is, as Palmer observed, "rare *visitant*, March 15 to late December, chiefly in coastal counties."

2. The July and August records suggest summer wandering—*cf.* Cruickshank (1942: 127).

3. There is a slight increase in the number of records during the 1940s.

EASTERN CANADA

The following records obviously represent extreme marginal-fringe wanderings. They are included, however, not only to show the extent to which Turkey Vultures have drifted northward beyond New England, but also because such records are gathered together here probably for the first time.

QUEBEC PROVINCE

Johnson (1945: 46) discussed some of the following records for the province. The remainder have been provided through the kindness of Raymond Cayouette, Ian MacLaren, Rev. Rene Tanguay, and L. McI. Terrill. Labrador records appear under a separate heading below. Counties are given in parentheses: Aug. 27, 1893, Pointe des Monts (Saguenay), 1 caught in bear trap (Comeau, 1909: 434); July 31, 1917, Hatley (Stanstead), 1 seen (Mousley, 1918: 84); 1938 or before, Nicolet (Nicolet), 1 seen (*vide* Tanguay, 'Ann. Rept. Provancher Soc. Nat. Hist.', 1938); June 4, 1938, St. Michel des Saints (Berthier), 1 found dead (*in* 'Rept. Prov. Quebec Soc. Prot. Birds,' 1938-1939: 9); *ca.* Aug., 1942, near Wright (Gatineau), 1 taken (Johnson, 1945: 46); April 2, 1949, Barrington (Huntingdon), 1 seen (MacLaren, *in litt.*).

Summary for Quebec

1. As Cayouette observed (*in litt.*), the Turkey Vulture is "a rare sight and purely accidental" in Quebec.

2. It will be noted that the Wright specimen, taken some 50 miles north of Ottawa, almost surely entered Quebec by way of Ontario. The question arises as to how many of the other birds reached Quebec via the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Valley.

3. As in Maine, the July and August records suggest summer wandering.

NEW BRUNSWICK

The authors are indebted to W. A. Squires, of the New Brunswick Museum, St. John, for furnishing them with the following 12 records of Turkey Vultures for the province: April, 1875, Grand Manan, 3

seen, of which 1 shot (Stearns, 1894: 137); 1879, Grand Manan, 1 taken (S. L. Boardman, 1903); *ca.* 1882, Kingston, now Rexton (Kent), 1 taken (Cox, 1887: 210); Jan. 29, 1884, Neguac (Northumberland), 1 taken (Cox, 1887: 208); Sept., 1886, Black Brook, now Loggieville (Northumberland), 1 found in net (Cox, 1887: 209); March, 1898, Victoria County, 1 taken (Moore, 1900: 177); spring, 1898, Keswick (York), 1 seen (Moore, 1900: 177) *ante* 1900, Grand Manan, 1 taken (Pettingill, 1939: 329); fall, 1900, Inner Wood Island, Grand Manan, 1 taken (Pettingill, 1939: 329); May 3, 1924, Scotch Lake (York), 4 seen (Peters, 1941: 129); June 16, 1940, Allandale (York), 1 taken (Peters, 1941: 129); July 24, 1946, Hampton (Kings), 1 seen (Squires, *in litt.*).

Summary for New Brunswick

1. Of the 12 records, 9 involve birds captured.
2. Rather interestingly, there are two spring sight records involving more than single birds: April, 1875, and May 3, 1924.
3. The bird's status in this province is rare visitant, mainly coastally or along the St. John River.

NOVA SCOTIA

The following nine records for the province are provided through the generosity of Robie W. Tufts, who took them from his permanent records. Previously, Douglas S. Miller had found some of them for the authors in the files of the 'Canadian Field-Naturalist': fall, 1892, Clark's Harbor, Cape Sable Island, 1 taken (Tufts, 1927: 65); 1896, Seal Island (Yarmouth), 1 taken (*vide* Tufts); *ca.* 1899, Middleboro (Cumberland), 1 taken (Tufts, 1927: 65); Nov. 10, 1909, Kemptville (Yarmouth), 1 taken (*vide* Tufts); Nov. 8, 1913, near Sydney (Cape Breton), 1 imm. taken (Tufts, 1927: 65); Nov. 25, 1919, Westchester (Cumberland), 1 trapped (*vide* Tufts); Jan. 1, 1926, Upper Canard (Kings), 1 imm. taken [According to Tufts, a second bird, seen at the time, was not shot] (Tufts, 1927: 65); Feb. 2, 1946, Cook's Cove (Guysboro), 1 taken (*vide* Tufts); Oct. 12, 1946, Bucklaw (Inverness), 1 seen (Goodwill, 1948: 41).

Summary for Nova Scotia

1. Of the nine records, all but one involve birds taken.
2. The emphasis upon fall and winter is apparent. This fact suggests the possibility that these birds drifted into Nova Scotia from New Brunswick in early fall, and subsequently failed to escape southward from the peninsula. About April 10, 1950, however, a

Turkey Vulture was picked up exhausted at East Port Medway, Queen's County, as reported by Griscom (1950: 192).

3. The coastal nature of the records is apparent.

4. The bird is a rare visitant, mainly in fall and winter, in the coastal areas of the province.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

No records found.

NEWFOUNDLAND

We find one record for Newfoundland: fall, 1905, Renewes, 1 taken (Brewster, 1906b: 221). Brewster cited reports indicating that the bird was shot "a few weeks before" Nov. 23, 1905, "near Renewes, not far from the whale factory at Aquaforte." Renewes is about 20 miles from Cape Race.

LABRADOR

The two records which we have found are: Nov. 10, 1906, West St. Modest, 1 caught in fox trap (Townsend and Allen, 1907: 364); early summer, 1941, Nain, 1 taken (Sutton, 1942: 304-305).

According to Dr. Harrison F. Lewis, West St. Modest is on the Strait of Belle Isle. Nain is in Lat. 56° 40' North, considerably farther north than Moose Factory, James Bay, where a Turkey Vulture was taken in June, 1898 (Fleming, 1903: 66). The Nain specimen, which thus constitutes the most northerly record for the species for eastern North America, is in the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Memorial Bird Collection, Cornell University.

SUMMARY

This paper reviews the occurrence of *Cathartes aura septentrionalis* in New England and eastern Canada, through 1949, as follows:

1. The bird's history in southwestern Connecticut and southwestern Massachusetts is described in the text.

2. All records for the remainder of Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as for Rhode Island, are arranged in tabular form to show monthly and annual occurrence.

3. All records are listed for northern New England and eastern Canada (east of Ontario).

From these data, the following generalizations may be drawn:

1. For years, vagrant Turkey Vultures occasionally wandered northward into New England and the Maritime Provinces.

2. Reflecting the general northward advance which became evident in the 1920s, Turkey Vultures began to appear far more regularly in parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts in the 1930s and 1940s.

3. In 1947 the bird was found nesting in New Haven County, Conn., and it probably has nested in Fairfield and Litchfield counties, Conn., and in southern Berkshire County, Mass.

4. The bird appears to enter southern New England along two main channels: (1) coastally; and (2) northeastward across western Connecticut and Massachusetts.

5. North of Massachusetts, the Turkey Vulture remains a rare or occasional visitant, occurring more frequently in Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia than it does in Vermont and Quebec.

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