

Checklist of Lexington Birds

by John Andrews

Revised April 1991



This checklist provides a comprehensive summary of the status of all bird species which have been recorded within the boundaries of the Town of Lexington since 1977. It is based upon hundreds of hours of field observations which have been concentrated in Town conservation land and other public open space. No species is listed that is without a recent record, even though certain rare species which occur in Massachusetts have undoubtedly visited the Town without being detected. In order to provide as much information as possible while maintaining a compact form, the symbols and abbreviations explained below are freely used.

STATUS. The principal status category indicates the average abundance of the species in the season in which it is most often seen. The following terms are used :

A	Abundant	More than 6 birds seen for each hour afield.
C	Common	Seen in each 1 to 6 hours afield.
U	Uncommon	Seen in each 6 to 36 hours afield.
R	Rare	Of regular occurrence, but seen less frequently than once in 36 hours afield.
X	Accidental	Bird outside normal range. Not present every year.

The birds-per hour measure assumes uniform sampling of open areas in Lexington (not special search for the particular species). The choice between "rare" or "accidental" status was often made with consideration of the known status of the species in eastern Massachusetts.

EXPLANATORY TERMS. The terms in the following table are used to provide further information of biological significance :

I	Irregular	Abundance fluctuating substantially from year to year.
L	Local	Limited to one or two well-defined areas of town.
O	Overflights	Flying over Lexington, but not normally stopping.
R	Resident	Individuals usually remaining for a season or longer.
T	Transient	Individuals usually occurring briefly in passage during migration (usually remaining only a day or two).
V	Visitor	Individuals usually remaining for part of a season (typically a week or more).

When a species tends to be seen only in a particular season, this is indicated by the following terms :

s	Spring	W	Winter
S	Summer	P	Permanent
a	Autumn	•	Small numbers in winter.

BREEDING STATUS. Breeding status is established primarily by observations of territorial behavior, nest building, nests, or recently fledged young. Breeding abundance is assigned according to estimates of the number of breeding pairs which can be observed in 50 hours afield during the peak of the breeding season.

A	Abundant : >33 pairs	R	Rare : 2 or fewer pairs
C	Common : 9 to 32 pairs	*	Has bred, but may not be present every year.
U	Uncommon : 3 to 8 pairs	?	Suspected of breeding, but no conclusive evidence.

RECORDS AND NOTES. Specific records are provide in abbreviated form. For example, "1,HBB,9/27/80" indicates that one individual was recorded at Hobbs Brook Basin on September 27, 1980. Site abbreviations are listed below and site locations are provided on the map at the end of the list. Maximum counts ("max") are the greatest recorded number seen by a single observer in less than a two-hour period. Dependent young are not included in this count. Where records are listed without comment they comprise all records available. Where sites are listed without comment (e.g. "DM,GM") they are the sites where the species is most likely to be found. The number of records in each month is given in the form "[Oct:2, Nov:5]" (meaning 2 October records and 5 November records).

TYLER'S STATUS. In 1912 Dr. Winsor M. Tyler compiled a bird list for Lexington which was published as an appendix to Charles Hudson's *History of the Town of Lexington*. In cases in which the change in status since 1912 is particularly noteworthy, Tyler's rating is provided in the notes. It should be noted that Tyler frequently uses the term TV ("transient visitor") where this list would merely use "transient".

Where to Find Birds in Lexington

Lexington has over 1000 acres of Town-owned conservation land and park land that are open to the public between dawn and dusk. This land, together with other open space under public ownership, provides a variety of habitats that can be explored in search of interesting birds. Good spots for observing the **spring migration** (from late April to the end of May) are Dunback Meadow, Whipple Hill, Meagherville/Pine Meadows, Vine Brook North, and Willard's Woods. Interesting **breeding birds** are scattered at various sites that can be inferred from the information in the checklist. The **fall migration** is well observed at Dunback Meadow, the Idylwild garden plots, and the Lincoln Street Fields. **Migrating nighthawks** can be seen in numbers from Whipple Hill in late August and early September. In the fall, **waterfowl and shorebirds** can be seen at the Hobbs Brook Basin and the Arlington Reservoir. **Winter landbirds** are often found in the pines at Katahdin Woods and visiting feeders in residential areas. Dunback Meadow is home to an assortment of wintering **hawks and owls**. Other areas that can harbor interesting birds are the Great Meadow, Lower Vine Brook, Hayden Woods, and Tophet Swamp.

Checklist of Lexington Birds

SPECIES	PRINCIPAL STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Pied-billed Grebe	RT	-	HBB
Double-crested Cormorant	UT0	-	Stops at HBB.
Great Blue Heron	UTV	-	HBB,AR
Green-backed Heron	UTV	-	LVB,HBB,AR,GM
Snowy Egret	RTa	-	HBB,AR
Black-crowned Night Heron	RTV	-	HBB
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	RT	-	1,LVB,5/8/80
American Bittern	RT	-	1,DM,5/22/78
Snow Goose	RTO	-	1,LSF,10/24/80
Barnacle Goose	X	-	1,X,12/6/90
Canada Goose	CV	U	max:140,X,3/10/80. Bred HBB 1980.
Wood Duck	CSR	U	max:21,NS,11/2/80. Tyler : RTV.
Green-winged Teal	RTV	-	max : 5,HBB,9/30/80. Also AR.
Black Duck	UTV	-	max:4,AR,10/26/80. Tyler:CTV.
Mallard	CPR	C	max:58,AR,11/6/81
Pintail	UV	-	AR max :2
Blue-winged Teal	RV	-	[Sep:2]
Northern Shoveler	RV	-	2,AR,12/18/83
American Wigeon	RV	-	max:66,MSH,10/25/80. MSH,AR.
Canvasback	RV	-	AR. max:4,AR,11/2/80
Ring-necked Duck	RV	-	13,Old Res,4/82. Tyler : absent.
Bufflehead	RV	-	3,Old Res,4/82. Tyler : absent.
Hooded Merganser	UV	-	AR,HBB. max:15,AR,11/11/80
Common Merganser	UV	-	AR,HBB Tyler :CTV max:23,HBB,3/12/81
Ruddy Duck	RV	-	AR. max:22,AR,11/11/80
Turkey Vulture	RTO	-	1,DM,4/20/80. 1,HBB,10,10/80. Tyler : absent.
Osprey	UT	-	HBB,AR
Bald Eagle	RTO	-	1 imm.,LSF,3/15/86
Northern Harrier	UT	-	DM,GM; [Aug:1,Sep:2]
Sharp-shinned Hawk	CT	-	max:7,DM,10/4/81. Tyler : CT/RSR.
Cooper's Hawk	RT	-	[Oct:1,Nov:1] Tyler: CT/USR.
Northern Goshawk	RT	-	[Apr:1,Oct:1,Nov:1,Dec:1]
Red-shouldered Hawk	RT	-	1,LSR,11/11/80.
Broad-winged Hawk	CT	R	Breeding WW,WH. max:6,KW,9/21/81
Red-tailed Hawk	CPR	R	May breed TS,CH,MSH. Tyler: absent.
American Kestrel	CPR	R	Bred DM 1980.
Merlin	RT	-	1,WH,9/5/86; 1,HBB,10/18/78. AR.

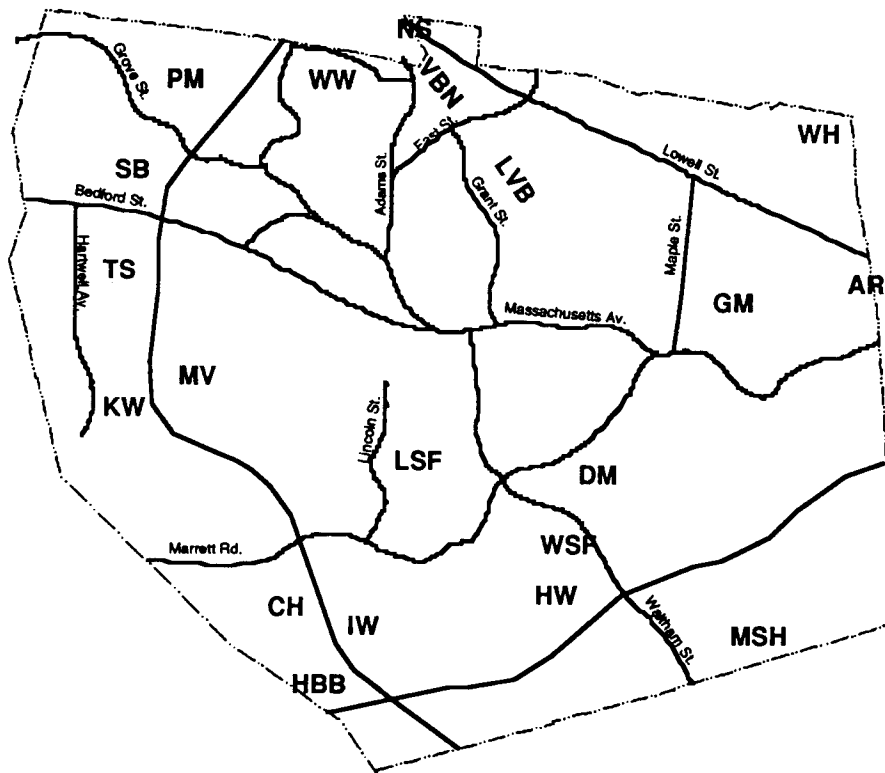
SPECIES	PRINCIPAL STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Ring-necked Pheasant	CPR	C	max:10,GM,9/13/80. Reduction since 1980.
Ruffed Grouse	RPR	R	HW,MV,CH. Tyler :CPR.
Sora	RT	-	1,DM,5/79
American Coot	RT	-	AR
Black-bellied Plover	RTa	-	max:14,HBB,9/14,83
Lesser Golden Plover	RTa	-	[Sep:1,Oct:2,Nov:1],WSF,AR,HBB.
Semipalmated Plover	RTa	-	max:4,HBB,8/81
Killdeer	USR/CT	U	max:20,HBB,8/15/81. Tyler: absent.
Greater Yellowlegs	UT	-	max:2,HBB,10/18/78
Lesser Yellowlegs	UT	-	max:7,HBB,9/27/81
Solitary Sandpiper	UT	-	DM,HBB
Spotted Sandpiper	UT	?	max:4,HBB,8/81
Hudsonian Godwit	RT	-	2,HBB,10/9/78
Semipalmated Sandpiper	UT	-	HBB,AR. max :12,HBB,9/18/81
Least Sandpiper	UT	-	max:17,HBB,8/81
Pectoral Sandpiper	RT	-	max:17,HBB,8/81
Stilt Sandpiper	RT	-	1,HBB,10/9/80
Common Snipe	UT*	-	max:4,DM,4/5/80
American Woodcock	USR	U	max:10,DM,5/20/80. DM,LSF,TS,MSH.
Ring-billed Gull	UTV	-	max:14,AR,10/26/80
Herring Gull	CV	-	max:50,HBB,3/12/81. Tyler :RV
Iceland Gull	X	-	1,X,12/20/82
Gt. Black-backed Gull	UV	-	max:6,HBB,4/11/80. Tyler : Absent.
Rock Dove	CPR	C	
Mourning Dove	CSR*	C	max:86,DM,11/8/80
Black-billed Cuckoo	USR	U	Somewhat irregular.
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	USR	U	Less numerous than Black-billed. Somewhat irregular.
Screech Owl	UPR	U	Undercounted. Found in most woodlots.
Great Horned Owl	UPR	R	Nesting at WW,WH,MSH.
Great Gray Owl	X	-	1 Near WW,2/10/79. See Lex Minuteman of 2/15/79.
Long-eared Owl	RWR	-	max:21,DM,2/81
Northern Saw-whet Owl	RWR	-	[Jan:1,Feb:1,Apr:1,Dec:1], DM
Common Nighthawk	CT	-	max:245,WH,8/29/85
Whip-poor-will	RT	-	1,X,5/80. Tyler : USR.
Chimney Swift	CSR	C	max:12,X,8/24/80
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	UT	?	max:10,DM,8/21/78
Belted Kingfisher	CV	?	max:2,HBB,10/15/80
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	RT	-	1,MV,5/9/79. 1,WH,5/9/80.
Downy Woodpecker	CPR	C	Frequents residential areas.

SPECIES	PRINCIPAL STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Hairy Woodpecker	UPR	U	Nests WH,HW.
Northern Flicker	CSR*	C	max:12,GM,9/13/80
Olive-sided Flycatcher	RT	-	[May:6]
Eastern Wood Peewee	USR	U	Nests WW,WH.
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	RT	-	1,WW,5/22/84; 1,DM,9/5/82.
Alder Flycatcher	RT	-	[May:2] Non-singing birds often escape identification.
Willow Flycatcher	USRL	UL	Breeds at GM,DM. max:5,GM,6/14/80
Least Flycatcher	RT	-	[May:3]
Eastern Phoebe	CT	R	
Gt. Crested Flycatcher	CSR	C	max:3,WH,6/7/80
Eastern Kingbird	CSR	C	
Horned Lark	RT	-	1,LSF,10/31/79. Tyler : CTV/RSR.
Tree Swallow	UT	R	
Rough-winged Swallow	USR	R	Breeds LVB,VBN. Tyler : Absent.
Barn Swallow	CSR	C	
Blue Jay	APR	C	
American Crow	APR	C	max:260,DM,2/4/78 (roost flight)
Fish Crow	RTV	-	1,x,1/21/80. 1,WH,4/21/80.
Black-capped Chickadee	APR	A	max:30,MV,2/9/80
Boreal Chickadee	RWV	-	1,KW,12/24-6/77
Tufted Titmouse	CPR	C	Tyler : absent.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	UWVI	?	max:8,DM,10/19/80. Possible breeding at DM following invasion of '77-78
White-breasted Nuthatch	CPR	C	
Brown Creeper	UWV	-	max:3,WW,12/27/80
Carolina Wren	RPR	R	2,X,1/20/91. Nesting through April.
House Wren	CSR	C	Tyler : RSR
Winter Wren	RTa	-	[Jan:1,Oct:3,Nov:1,Dec:1] Tyler : CTVa
Marsh Wren	RT	-	1,GM,9/13/80; 1,LSF,11/11/82.
Golden-crowned Kinglet	UT	-	max:7,KW,10/23/80. Tyler : CTV.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	CT	-	max:5,DM,10/4/81
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	RT	-	max:2,HBB,4/30/81
Eastern Bluebird	RT	-	2,WW,5/13/81. Tyler:CSR
Veery	UT	R	Breeding HW 1980.

SPECIES	PRINCIPAL STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Gray-cheeked Thrush	RT	-	1,TS,5/23/78; 1,WH,5/25/78;
Swainson's Thrush	CT	-	max:2
Hermit Thrush	CT	-	max:5,HW,4/13/78
Wood Thrush	CSR	C	Tyler : RSR.
American Robin	ASR	A	max:500,8/81 to roost
Gray Catbird	CSR	C	max:11,DM,7/13/80.
Mockingbird	CPR	C	max:8,DM,9/5/80. Tyler : one record.
Brown Thrasher	CSR	C	max:6,GM,6/10/78
Water Pipit	RT	-	AR,HBB,[Sep:1,Oct:2]
Cedar Waxwing	CSR	IC	max:75,TS,9/21/80
Northern Shrike	IRWV	-	[Jan:2,Mar:3,Apr:1,Dec:4]
Starling	APR	A	max:390,TS,9/21/80. Tyler : absent.
White-eyed Vireo	RT	-	1,X,5/79; 1,DM,5/13/84.
Solitary Vireo	CT	-	
Warbling Vireo	USR	U	Breeding VBE,GM
Red-eyed Vireo	CSR	C	max:3,LVB,5/22/79
Blue-winged Warbler	RSR	R	LVB,WH,WW,GM
Golden-winged Warbler	RT	-	1,WW,5/26/81
Tennessee Warbler	UT	-	
Orange-crowned Warbler	RT	-	[Sep:1,Nov:1]
Nashville Warbler	CT	R	max:3,WH,5/26/80. Nested WH 1980.
Northern Parula	CT	-	max:5,DM,5/12/78
Yellow Warbler	CSR	C	max:13,DM,5/14/80
Chestnut-sided Warbler	UT	R	5 May records. Tyler : ASR.
Magnolia Warbler	CT	-	max:5,WH,5/17/80
Cape May Warbler	RT	-	max:2,MSH,5/19/78
Black-throated Blue Warbler	UT	-	max:3,WH,5/14/81
Yellow-rumped Warbler	AT	-	max:41,DM,10/10/80
Black-throated Green Warbler	CT	-	max:4,WH,5/14/80
Blackburnian Warbler	CT	-	max:2,WH,5/14/80
Pine Warbler	RT	-	[Apr:1,May:1,Jul:1], Tyler : Locally CSR.
Prairie Warbler	USR	U	Nests WH,CH.
Palm Warbler	CT	-	max:8,WH,4/19/80
Bay-breasted Warbler	UT	-	
Blackpoll Warbler	CT	-	max:10,LVB,10/7/78
Black-and-White Warbler	CT	R	max:5,WH,5/26/80. Nesting WH 1980.
American Redstart	CT	R	max:5,WW,5/17/78

SPECIES	PRINCIPAL STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Ovenbird	CT	R	max:3,MV,5/9/79
Northern Waterthrush	RT	-	
Mourning Warbler	RT	-	1,DM,5/29-31/79
MacGillivray's Warbler	X	-	1,DM,11/77. First state record. See Bird Observer, Vol. 7, No. 1, Jan-Feb 1979.
Common Yellowthroat	CSR	C	max:10,GM,6/14/80
Wilson's Warbler	UT	-	max:3,WW,5/14/80
Canada Warbler	CT	-	max:2,WH,5/22/80
Yellow-breasted Chat	RT	-	[Oct:2,Nov:1]
Scarlet Tanager	CT	R	Probably nesting WH,CH.
Northern Cardinal	CPR	C	Tyler : absent.
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	CSR	C	Nesting LVB,DM,GM.
Blue Grosbeak	X	-	1,AR,9/30/90
Black-headed Grosbeak	X	-	1 imm. male, Fern St., 2/79
Indigo Bunting	CSR	C	Nesting LVB,WH,GM.
Rufous-sided Towhee	CSR	C	max:5,WH,5/15/80
Tree Sparrow	CWV	-	max:20,DM,11/6/77
Chipping Sparrow	CSR	C	max:12,IW,10/24/80.
Field Sparrow	CSR*	U	Nests GM,WH,WW.
Vesper Sparrow	RT	-	[Oct:2]; LSF,DM; Tyler : CSR.
Savannah Sparrow	CT	-	max:20,LSF,10/13/80
Grasshopper Sparrow	RTa	-	DM,LSF; [Oct:3,Nov:1].
Fox Sparrow	UT	-	max:9,DM,11/1/80
Song Sparrow	APR	A	max:50,DM,10/5/80
Lincoln's Sparrow	UT	-	[May:1,Aug:1,Sep:4,Oct:5]
Swamp Sparrow	CT*	U	max:7,DM,10/27/79. Nests GM,TS.
White-throated Sparrow	CT*	-	max:52,LSF,10/6/81
White-crowned Sparrow	UT	-	max:10,DM,10/24/81.
Dark-eyed Junco	ATV	-	max:29,DM,11/1/80.
Snow Bunting	RT	-	max:115,LSF,11/7/80; [Nov:4]
Bobolink	CTL	-	max:120,DM,9/18/80
Red-winged Blackbird	ASR	A	Large population at GM.
Eastern Meadowlark	UTV	R	LSF,DM
Rusty Blackbird	UT	-	max:25,HW,4/8/78
Common Grackle	CSR/AT	C	max:400,HBB,10/10/80
Brown-headed Cowbird	CSR	C	max:40,DM,4/15/79
Orchard Oriole	RSR	R	[May:6,Jun:4,Aug:1]; Nesting VBE,GM.
Northern Oriole	CSR	C	Nesting in residential shade trees.
Pine Grosbeak	RWVI	-	max:6,DM,2/9/78
Purple Finch	CTV	R	max:35,DM,10/19/80. Tyler : CPR.
House Finch	CPR	C	max:23,X,1/1/79. Tyler : absent.

SPECIES	PRINCIPAL BREEDING STATUS	BREEDING STATUS	RECORDS AND NOTES
Red Crossbill	RWVI	-	9,VBN,6/2/78; 2,LVB,4/16/82.
White-winged Crossbill	RWVI	-	11,LVB,2/11/82
Common Redpoll	RWVI	-	max:53,X,2/18/78 (at feeder)
Pine Siskin	UWVI	IR	max:76,X,12/24/77. Nested after invasion of '77.
American Goldfinch	CPR	C	max:42,TS,10/12/80
Evening Grosbeak	IUWV	-	max:45,DM,5/6/78. Tyler : absent.
House Sparrow	APR	A	



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|-----|-----------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| AR | Arlington Reservoir | MV | Meagherville/Pine Meadows |
| CH | Cranberry Hill | NS | North Street Sand Pits |
| DM | Dunback Meadow | PM | Paint Mine |
| GM | Great Meadow | SB | Simmonds Brook |
| HBB | Hobbs Brook Basin | TS | Tophet Swamp/landfill area |
| HW | Hayden Woods | VBN | Vine Brook n. of Emerson Rd. |
| IW | Idylwild Conservation Land | WH | Whipple Hill |
| KW | Katahdin Woods | WSF | Waltham Street Fields |
| LSF | Lincoln Street Fields | WW | Willard's Woods |
| LVB | Lower Vine Brook | X | Unnamed site |
| MSH | Metropolitan State Hospital | ? | Unknown site |

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