

# Unusual bird species likely to pop up in autumn

What is that lurking under your bird feeder? All summer, nothing strange happens out in the backyard. Suddenly, when autumn arrives, so do some unusual birds.

Some are relatively predictable. Fox sparrows nest in Maine. They breed up in the North Woods and on many mountaintops. Some guide books and websites suggest they don't breed in Maine, but I assure you they do. Hop in the car with me right now, and I'll go show you some.

Because fox sparrows winter nearby in the southern United States, they linger longer before migrating, and you're more apt to see one in October. They are unlikely to perch up on a feeder, preferring to scratch the ground beneath feeders. They are larger than most sparrows and typically are a ruddier shade of brown. There are several races across the country, some with a remarkable amount of gray color.

White-crowned sparrows are sneaking through Maine right now. They don't nest here. Their summer range extends across northern Canada, with many inhabiting northern Quebec, Labrador and Newfoundland. They winter just below the Mason-Dixon Line, so they are frequently seen in migration. They look and act much like our white-throated sparrows, but the striped crown is more distinctly black and white. An individual under the bird feeder is not a big surprise this time of year, and sometimes there are small flocks traveling together.

Lark sparrows are rare visitors to Maine feeders. These are birds of farm fields, grasslands and weedy roadsides. They are com-



BOB DUCHESNE

White-crowned sparrows look and act much like our white-throated sparrows, but the striped crown is more distinctly black-and-white.

mon throughout the West. Ohio is the eastern edge of their range. They are prone to wander during migration, and a few inevitably show up somewhere in Maine. Lark sparrows have a unique facial pattern with broad patches of chestnut color punctuated by bold white streaks. They walk.

Dickcissels look like colorful house sparrows, though they are more closely related to cardinals. They inhabit the grasslands of Middle America. Their fondness for seeds lures them to feeders whenever one strays into Maine. I've heard of two sightings so far this autumn.

Warblers are insect eaters, but a few can supplement their diets with small seeds. Orange-crowned warblers are denizens of northern Canada and western United States. They are prone to wandering in migration and sometimes turn up after all the other warblers have left. I was surprised to see one in late August, which is unusually early.

Identifying an orange-crowned warbler is a humorous exercise, because they have virtually no field marks. The orange crown is useless as a field mark unless you're holding the bird in your hand. Nor does it

have wing bars or any color variation. A close observation might reveal a partial eye ring or some barely perceptible breast streaks. Otherwise, I recognize these guys by their complete lack of field marks. It's a drab, olive-colored bird that often stumps birders.

Two robin-like birds are possible at feeders. The Townsend's solitaire is a medium-sized thrush of the Rocky Mountains. It's a gray bird with an eye ring and a long tail. They don't migrate far — the Great Plains and the Mississippi River are normally great barriers to any western bird wandering east. They shouldn't be here. But, somehow, it happens. One was reported in Clifton last week.

The varied thrush is similar to a robin. Its range is confined to the Pacific Northwest, but a few individuals get wanderlust. Like robins, they can switch from a summer diet of insects and arthropods to a winter diet of seeds and fruit. Thus, when a varied thrush meanders into Maine, it is likely to scrounge for a meal at a bird feeder or visit backyard ornamental fruit trees.

You have a good chance to see the white-crowned or fox sparrow this autumn, since they definitely forage through Maine on their way

south. You probably won't see any of the others. Sightings are rare. But unusual species do pop up in autumn. It pays to keep an eye on the feeder.

It also pays to keep the hummingbird feeder up for another month. Our ruby-throated hummingbirds have mostly departed by now, bound for Cen-

tral America. But there are 15 other species of hummingbirds in the United States. Most keep their distance from Maine and few get to this side of the Mississippi. But some do. That almost always happens in autumn, when a few hummingbirds misread their internal compass. If they find a feeder

they like, they just may stick around a few days.

Bob Duchesne serves as vice president of Maine Audubon's Penobscot Valley Chapter. He developed the Maine Birding Trail, with information at [mainebirding-trail.com](http://mainebirding-trail.com). He can be reached at [duchesne@midmaine.com](mailto:duchesne@midmaine.com).



BOB DUCHESNE  
GOOD BIRDING

## MAINEIACS CHARITIES

### Half Marathon & 5K

**SUNDAY  
SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>**  
*Bangor, Maine*

**MAINEIACS**  
Charities  
*One Community. Our Community.*

**USATF**  
CERTIFIED COURSE  
2016  
SANCTIONED EVENT

**Register online at Active.com**  
*We added new age groups for 18 and under!*

*New this year*  
**SUPER HERO 5K FUN RUN**

- Dress up as your favorite Super Hero (or not)!
- Prizes for best individual and team costumes!

## VARNEY MAZDA

GET A ZERO TO DRIVE LEASE OFFER ON ANY NEW 2016 MAZDA

\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
DOWN PAYMENT	SECURITY DEPOSIT	1 <sup>ST</sup> MONTH'S PAYMENT	DUE AT SIGNING

EXAMPLE: 2016 MAZDA3 SPORT 4-DOOR AUTOMATIC \$219/MONTH 36-MONTH LEASE\*  
EXCLUDES TAXES, TITLE AND FEES. MONTHLY PAYMENT INCLUDES \$595 ACQUISITION FEE.

## VARNEY MAZDA

2016.5 Mazda CX-5 Sport      2016 Mazda6 Sport      2016 Mazda3 / Sport 4-Door Automatic

\*2016 Mazda3 / Sport 4-Door Automatic \$18,895 MSRP plus \$835 destination charge (Alaska \$880). Payment based on capitalized cost of \$17,935 after \$1,630 Mazda Customer Lease Support. Total payments of \$7,883. Dealer participation required. Not all lessees will qualify for \$0 down payment and lowest monthly payment through participating lender. Some payments higher, some lower based on residency and other factors. Lessee responsible for excess wear and mileage over 36,000 at \$0.15/mile. Lease-end purchase option is \$10,062 plus tax or price negotiated at signing. Must take new retail delivery from dealer stock by 8/31/2016. See participating dealer for qualifications.

### 2017 Mazda CX-3 AWD

LEASE FOR **\$308**\*/MO  
36 month lease/30K miles, Zero down due @ signing, LEV \$13,831.05

- 18" Alloy Wheels
- Blind Spot Monitoring System
- Heated Outside Mirrors
- Backup Camera
- Bluetooth
- Advanced Keyless Entry
- VIN #JM1DKFC78H0149517
- STOCK #M1084

\*includes lease competitive conquest

**Ask a Certified Sales Consultant about what additional rebates you may qualify for:**  
**CX-5 Conquest Cash, Owner Loyalty, Lease Loyalty, Military Appreciation, \$500 Step-Up Bonus Cash.**  
**You may be eligible for one or more of these rebates!**  
**Advertised prices do not include any of the rebates mentioned above**

### 2016 Mazda MX-5 Miata

BUY FOR **\$30,490**

- Leather
- Bose Stereo
- Bluetooth
- Blind Spot Monitoring
- Auto Transmission
- LED Head Lights, Tail Lights, Running Lights
- Navigation
- 27/36 MPG
- VIN #JM1NDAD70G0116848
- Stock #M1050

### 2016 Mazda3 s Touring

BUY FOR **\$24,490**  
OR LEASE FOR **\$313** /MO  
36 months + 30,000 miles, Zero Down Sign + Drive.

- 2.5L engine
- 18" wheels
- Navigation
- Satellite Radio
- Mazda Mobile Start
- Heated Seats
- STOCK#9981

### 2016 Mazda6 Sport

BUY FOR **\$19,956**  
OR LEASE FOR **\$259** /MO  
36 Months + 30,000 miles, Zero Down Sign & Drive. LEV \$10,776

- Power Options
- Alloy Wheels
- Bluetooth
- 6 Speed Manual Transmission
- 25/37 MPG
- VIN #JM1GJ1U52G1471384
- Stock #M1025

### 2016 Mazda CX-5 Touring AWD

BUY FOR **\$26,790**  
OR LEASE FOR **\$314** /MO  
36 Months + 30,000 miles, Zero Down Sign & Drive. LEV \$16,784.15

- Heated Front Seats
- Navigation
- Blind Spot Monitoring System
- Rear Back Up Camera
- Bluetooth
- VIN #JM3KE4C4Y9G0848155
- Stock #M1088

260 HOGAN RD., BANGOR  
217-6397 • 1 800-288-3071  
[rich@varneygmc.com](mailto:rich@varneygmc.com)

All Prices Include Rebates and Dealer Incentives. Tax & Title Not Included. Dealers are Ineligible. Customers must qualify for rebates and Incentives. Pictures May Not Be Actual Vehicle. All Pending Credit Approval. Sale Ends September 26, 2016.

## VARNEY MAZDA