

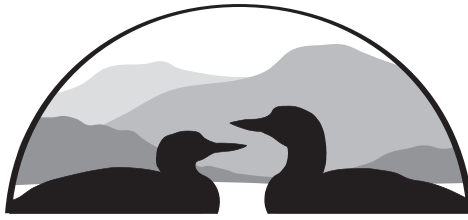
# New Hampshire Bird Records



**Summer 2011**

**Vol. 30, No. 2**

---



# **New Hampshire Bird Records**

## **Volume 30, Number 2**

### **Summer 2011**

<i>Managing Editor:</i>	Rebecca Suomala 603-224-9909 X309, <a href="mailto:bsuomala@nhaudubon.org">bsuomala@nhaudubon.org</a>
<i>Text Editor:</i>	Dan Hubbard
<i>Season Editors:</i>	Eric Masterson/ Lauren Kras/ Ben Griffith, Spring; Tony Vazzano, Summer; Pamela Hunt, Winter
<i>Layout:</i>	Kathy McBride
<i>Assistants:</i>	Jeannine Ayer, David Deifik, Dave Howe, Margot Johnson, Elizabeth Levy, Susan MacLeod, Marie Nickerson, Carol Plato, William Taffe, Tony Vazzano
<i>Field Notes:</i>	Robert A. Quinn
<i>Photo Quiz:</i>	David Donsker
<i>Photo Editor:</i>	Len Medlock
<i>Web Master:</i>	Len Medlock
<i>Where to Bird:</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Editorial Team:</i>	Phil Brown, Hank Chary, David Deifik, David Donsker, Ben Griffith, Dan Hubbard, Pam Hunt, Lauren Kras, Iain MacLeod, Len Medlock, Robert A. Quinn, Rebecca Suomala, William Taffe, Tony Vazzano, Jon Woolf

*Cover Photo: Northern Parula by Jason Lambert. We chose this species for the cover because it was Rozzie Holt's (see Memorial on page 1) favorite.*

*New Hampshire Bird Records is published quarterly by New Hampshire Audubon's Conservation Department. Thank you to the many observers who submit their sightings to NH eBird ([www.ebird.org/nh](http://www.ebird.org/nh)), the source of data for this publication. Records are selected for publication and not all species reported will appear in the issue. The published sightings typically represent the highlights of the season. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication of reports here does not imply future acceptance by the Committee. Please contact the Managing Editor if you would like to report your sightings but are unable to use NH eBird.*

*New Hampshire Bird Records* © NHA February, 2012

[www.nhbirdrecords.org](http://www.nhbirdrecords.org)

**Published by New Hampshire Audubon's Conservation Department**



Printed on Recycled Paper

IN HONOR OF  
*Rosalind S. Holt*

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, with its color cover, is dedicated to “Rozzie” Holt in appreciation of her legacy gift to New Hampshire Audubon. Rozzie’s bird reports came primarily from Star Island where she spent a great deal of time. She became a stalwart volunteer at the bird banding station on Appledore Island where her favorite bird was the Northern Parula, featured on the cover of this issue.



*Rozzie Holt carrying bags of birds to the banding station on Appledore Island.  
Photo by Sara Morris.*

## In This Issue

From the Editor .....	2
Photo Quiz .....	3
Summer Season: June 1 through July 31, 2011 .....	4
<i>by Tony Vazzano</i>	
Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in New Hampshire .....	29
<i>by Stephen R. Mirick</i>	
New Hampshire’s 2011 Breeding Bald Eagles .....	30
<i>by Chris Martin</i>	
Birding Freedom Town Forest .....	32
<i>by Andrea and George Robbins</i>	
Field Notes .....	36
<i>compiled by R.A. Quinn</i>	
Photo Gallery – Common Nighthawk Nests in 2011 .....	38
<i>by Rebecca Suomala and Jane Koliais</i>	
Volunteers and Research – Gulls, Gulls, Gulls...They’re Everywhere .....	40
<i>by L. William Clark</i>	
NHBirds E-mail List .....	42
<i>by Stephen R. Mirick</i>	
A Shrub Full of Warblers and Other Taxonomic Stories .....	43
<i>by Pamela Hunt</i>	
Answer to the Photo Quiz .....	47
<i>by David B. Donsker</i>	
Corrections .....	50

## Common Nighthawk Nests in 2011

by Rebecca Suomala and Jane Koliás

**C**ommon Nighthawks nest on the ground and their nests are very difficult to locate, especially in natural settings. They do not build a nest but lay their eggs directly on the ground (or a gravel rooftop) where both the eggs and young are well camouflaged. New Hampshire Audubon's Project Nighthawk volunteers have only located one nest each year in the Concord area and there have been only two other confirmed nests in the state since 2007 (in Lempster and Grantham). Part of this is a reflection of their declining population in the state, and part is due to the difficulty of locating their nests.

In 2011, Project Nighthawk was excited to report three confirmed nests – one on a rooftop and two on the ground. They included the first confirmation of nesting in the Ossipee pine barrens in many years and the discovery of a new nighthawk hotspot in the Broken Ground area of east Concord.



Can you find the one Common Nighthawk egg in this nest at Broken Ground? Photo taken by Rebecca Suomala, 7/22/11, Concord, NH.



The Broken Ground nighthawk nest was in a much smaller opening in the trees than expected. Photo by Rebecca Suomala, 7/22/11, Concord, NH.

### Broken Ground, Concord NH

Rob Woodward discovered this late nest in July:

*“While hiking the trails of the Broken Ground area in Concord this summer, I was very surprised to hear a Common Nighthawk call from nearby. I walked off the trail into the woods to investigate and eventually the male nighthawk flew low and landed nearby. I had never seen a nighthawk on the ground in the woods before! Moments later a female flew up from the ground 10 feet away. I knew there had to be a nest in this*

general area despite the unlikely habitat. A preliminary search turned up nothing. Several visits later and after a careful search, I located the female on the nest. I waited until dusk and watched her take off for her evening feeding flight. With the coast clear, I went up to the nest and there, on the bare ground, was a single egg!"

A nest with one egg, instead of the usual two, indicates a re-nest after an unsuccessful earlier attempt. Later observations indicate that the nest probably failed in mid-August. Rob heard three different nighthawks calling in the area! Despite the many surveys in Concord for Project Nighthawk, we had not suspected nighthawk activity in this area before this year.

### Ossipee Pine Barrens

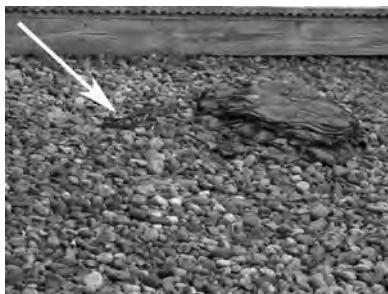
NH Audubon's whip-poor-will field crew discovered this nest on the ground in a clearing. The Ossipee Pine Barrens is one of the few known natural nesting areas for nighthawks in the state but it has been many years since a nest was confirmed here. The female was observed incubating two eggs and we believe the nest was successful. During a coordinated watch at this site least five males were seen displaying in the area.



Common Nighthawk female (left) and the two eggs she was incubating (right) in the Ossipee Pine Barrens. Photos by Pam Hunt, 6/15/11, Ossipee, NH.

### Rooftop nest in Concord, NH

After a homeowner in downtown Concord reported bird activity on his stone rooftop, NH Audubon staff and volunteers confirmed a nesting pair of Common Nighthawks. The male was observed displaying over the rooftop during the evening and the female was incubating two eggs. Sadly the nest was predated shortly after the eggs were laid.



Common Nighthawk female incubating one egg on a rooftop in Concord, NH. Photos by Rebecca Suomala, 6/30/11.

## Gulls, Gulls, Gulls ... They're Everywhere

by L. William Clark

All photos were taken by the author except as noted.

**G**ulls are plentiful and visible. They are delightful and annoying. They have personalities as unique as individual New Hampshireites. Some are good parents, some 'just can't seem to get it'. In spite of the ubiquitous presence of gulls, however, much is unknown about the birds and much is to be learned about the 'artists of the air currents'.

Did you know that a hatch year Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG) was banded with a green field-readable band on June 14, 2011 at Nova Scotia's Sable Island and, by August 18, had already traveled over 530 miles westward to be seen on Appledore Island at Shoals Marine Laboratory by Ben Griffin and David Holmes? How about the 'Famous' Lesser Black-backed Gull (LBBG) documented breeding since 2007 with Herring Gull (HERG) mates on Appledore Island. The male LBBG banded with F05 is a dedicated parent and has raised a chick this year that was banded as F07. F05 has been photographed in the Daytona Beach area of Florida for several winters and offspring have also been sighted in Florida. Now that gull knows how to live; summers in New England and winters in Florida!



The "famous" Appledore Island breeding Lesser Black-backed Gull F05 (left) and its 2009 Herring Gull mate F01.



Protective Conscientious Parent. LBBG F05, watching over his 2011 hybrid chick, F07 at the nest site on Appledore Island, August 13, 2011. This LBBG (F05) has nested on Appledore Island since 2005, each year with a Herring Gull mate. Photo by Lauren Kras.

Now how does this involve you? Since 2004, Dr. Julie Ellis of Tufts Veterinary School has conned a group of 'motley' gull wranglers into banding over 2000 Great Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls on Appledore Island forming the base for multiple gull study projects and research efforts. Dr. Ellis supervises the research projects which are operated by Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, University of New Hampshire, Cornell University, Shoals Marine Laboratory and students from several other universities. The common key is the individually identifiable gull—the "field-readable banded gull."

Shoals Marine Laboratory on Appledore Island is located in a noisy gull nesting colony. Each May, a team of ‘gull wranglers’ gather at Shoals to band adult Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls. The incubation urge is very strong with gulls and both parents alternate the incubation duty. This allows the safe capture of both parents for banding by setting a trap over the nest. The incubating gull enters the trap to resume incubation and the trap is sprung. The gull is removed from the trap by the “wranglers,” placed in a cloth sleeve, banded with both US Geological Survey (USGS) and field-readable bands, measured, and samples for DNA analysis are taken. The gull is quickly released and returns to incubation.

In July on Appledore Island, the gull wranglers spend a week capturing young gulls about ready to fly. Since the legs develop to adult size before the wings, the young gulls can be ‘run down’, banded, measured, and sampled as the adult gulls were in May. The ‘Full House’ of the banding effort is to have both parents as well as three ‘chicks’ from the same nest banded. Gulls and wranglers, however, cannot always agree on goals and a few adults or chicks always evade the process.

If you ever attempted to read a USGS band on a live bird, you know why the field-readable bands are used. The tiny metal USGS band requires extreme patience, superb optics, and the utmost in cooperation from the gull to decipher the tiny nine digits, thus the success rate is abysmal. The large field-readable band attracts attention and allows the public to contribute to understanding of movement and survival rates of gulls by reading and reporting the band.

You can help by reporting EVERY sighting of a field-readable banded gull. Even sightings two days in a row are of value. What do the bands look like? The Great Black-backed Gulls have black bands with white letters and the Herring Gulls sport green bands with white letters. The bands have two numeric and one alpha character. See the photos below for examples. Bands may be reported directly to Julie Ellis at [julie.ellis@tufts.edu](mailto:julie.ellis@tufts.edu), through the Shoals Marine Laboratory web site [http://www.sml.cornell.edu/sml\\_research\\_gull\\_program.html](http://www.sml.cornell.edu/sml_research_gull_program.html), or to the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory at <http://www.reportband.gov/>.



*Great Black-backed Gull with a black field-readable band (left) and Herring Gull with a green band. Both have white letters.*

Other banding and research programs are in operation and sighting of banded birds may be reported on the USGS web site. For example, the banding program at Sable Island, Nova Scotia bands and marks both Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls. Sable Island Great Black-backed Gulls have green field-readable bands. Sable Island Herring Gulls have pink field-readable bands or wing tags. See: <http://sableislandgulls.wordpress.com/>

Wherever you go this fall, keep ‘looking at the chicks’ and ‘checking the legs’ of the GBBGs and HERGs for those field-readable bands. Meanwhile, go to: [http://www.sml.cornell.edu/sml\\_research\\_gull\\_program.html](http://www.sml.cornell.edu/sml_research_gull_program.html) and <http://gullsofappledore.wordpress.com/> for more information on the fascinating, handsome, and personable Gulls of Appledore. Photos are always most welcome.

Think you would like to help with gull banding on delightful Appledore Island? Well, if you don’t mind being attacked, defecated upon, cold, sore, screamed at and are willing to pay your own expenses (some funding is often available for students), then contact Dr. Ellis and say; “I want to join that wonderful group of gull wranglers on Appledore.” Then, as the engineer from Baltimore who took a leave from work without pay and paid her own expenses, you’ll truly fall in love with the feisty Great Black-backs of Appledore.

Also, the Appledore Gull Project is seeking funding for satellite monitoring of several gulls to answer some serious questions about where they feed and the role of the birds in the natural and human environment.

*The writer, Bill Clark, has been assisting with the gull banding project on Appledore Island since 2005. Bill enjoys birding in the Americas and Australia although he has neither the eye nor ear of an outstanding birder. Being from inland Pennsylvania and with limited contact with seabirds, Bill foolishly responded in 2005 to an item requesting help with gull banding at Shoals Marine Laboratory. He was quickly entrapped by the mystique of the Appledore Gulls. You may contact him at [lwc1@ptd.net](mailto:lwc1@ptd.net).*

## NHBirds E-mail List

by Stephen R. Mirick

**F**or the most up to date information on birds and birding events, you can subscribe to a popular e-mail list known as “NHBirds”. The list has been around since the fall of 1999, but the “host” computer system recently changed from the University of New Hampshire to Google Groups.

NHBirds was created as an e-mail forum to discuss birds and birding in New Hampshire including recent sightings of rare or not-so-rare birds, conservation issues, upcoming field trips, or any other topic which may be of interest to birders in New Hampshire.

As of November in 2011 the list has over 400 internet subscribers who are tuning in and sharing their experiences with other New Hampshire birders. You don’t need to



## Abbreviations Used

BBC	Brookline Bird Club	R.	River
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	Rd.	Road
CA	Conservation Area	Rt.	Route
CC	Country Club	SF	State Forest
CFT	NH Audubon Chapter Field Trip	SP	State Park
FT	Field Trip	SPNHF	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Concord
IBA	Important Bird Area	T&M	Thompson & Meserves (Purchase)
L.	Lake	TNC	The Nature Conservancy
LPC	Loon Preservation Committee	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
NA	Natural Area	WMNF	White Mountain National Forest
NHA	New Hampshire Audubon	WS	NHA Wildlife Sanctuary
NHBR	New Hampshire Bird Records	~	approximately
NHRBC	NH Rare Birds Committee	WTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge		
PO	Post Office		

**Rare Bird ALERT ☎ 224-9909**

**Available twenty-four hours a day!**

**Also online at [www.nhaudubon.org](http://www.nhaudubon.org)**

### NHBR Subscription Form

I would like to subscribe to *NH Bird Records*.

NHA Member \$25.00    Non-member \$35.00

*All renewals take place annually. Mid-year subscribers will receive all issues published in the subscription year.*

I would like to join NHA and receive *NH Bird Records* at the member price.

Family/\$55    Individual/\$39    Senior/\$24

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Payment is by:

check enclosed— payable to NH Audubon    MC    VISA

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

Membership Department, NH Audubon, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH 03301

***Subscribe online at [www.nhbirdrecords.org](http://www.nhbirdrecords.org)***