

Concord Bird List and Quiz

by Robert A. Quinn

For many years I have been compiling a list of all the bird species seen in the city of Concord, New Hampshire, since the early 1900s. I updated the list in June of 2006 after the sightings of Lesser Black-backed Gull and Clay-colored Sparrow, and the tally was a surprising 275 species. The list comes from records by Francis B. White, Charles Goodhue, Tudor Richards, Kimball Elkins, Kay Dymont, Hazel Miller, Adelma Lajoie, Jane Grant, Rob Woodward, Mark and Becky Suomala, Pam Hunt, Phil Brown, Carol Foss, and many others, plus records I have culled from *New Hampshire Bird Records*.



Green Heron by Debbie Stahre, 08/19/06, Concord, NH.

The full list of 275 species is too long to reproduce here in its entirety. Some of the highlights include a surprising number of rarities such as Greater White-fronted Goose, Tundra Swan, Black Tern, Northern Hawk Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, Sedge Wren, Spotted Towhee, and Bullock's Oriole. Rare warbler species are represented by Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Hooded, and sparrows include Lark, Henslow's (but not since 1963), and Grasshopper, as well as the Clay-colored Sparrow at Concord Airport in the summer of 2006. Also on the list are coastal species that you would not expect to see so far inland, such as 16 Black-legged Kittiwakes and a Forster's Tern on Turkey Pond on a sunny day in May, Baird's Sandpiper, King Eider, and Dovekie.

Two waterbird fallouts in 1996, which brought some remarkable numbers of typically coastal species, were major events in Concord's bird history.

April 24, 1996

Horned Grebe – 40
Red-necked Grebe – 42
Double-crested Cormorant – 16
Greater Scaup – 18
Long-tailed Duck – 12
White-winged Scoter – 2
Bufflehead – 32

May 11–13, 1996

Solitary Sandpiper – 26
Spotted Sandpiper – 19
Least Sandpiper – 120

Another somewhat smaller fallout brought scoters and Short-billed Dowitchers on May 23, 2004. There was a grebe fallout on April 29, 1971 (with a few Long-tailed Ducks too) and another waterbird fallout from May 14 to 22, 2006 brought two species of phalaropes, Common Moorhen, Sandhill Cranes, shorebirds, and the first (and second and third) Lesser Black-backed Gulls for Concord. A total of 19 shorebird

species, with more than 40 waterbird species in all, were seen during the drawdown of Turkey Pond in the summer and fall of 1982. Some of the rarities included Stilt and Baird's Sandpipers, and Red Phalarope.

A planting of sorghum in a field normally filled with corn produced incredible sparrows in the fall of 2002. And there was the Yellow-throated Warbler in the parking lot at Audubon House during the start of a Capital Area Chapter field trip in May 1997 as well as the Western Kingbird and Ash-throated Flycatcher found by the Suomalas in subsequent Octobers (1998 and 2001) at the Silk Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, plus the White-eyed Vireo in April of 2004.

Of course there are the "missing" species that, while not exactly expected, certainly might be seen in Concord: Ruddy Turnstone, Wilson's Phalarope, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Three-toed Woodpecker, and other truly rare birds not yet on the list. This list is still a work in progress and I encourage all readers to provide additional thoughts, records, and stories.

Bob Quinn is a New Hampshire native who has birded throughout 49 states. He worked for the New Hampshire Audubon for nine years and continues as an active volunteer. With his business, Merlin Enterprises, he has led dozens of field trips throughout the world. For 20 years he was NHBR editor of the summer season. He was a founding member of the NH Rare Birds Committee, and has a keen interest in the status of breeding birds in the state.

Quiz: Test your knowledge of the birds in Concord

How many species of warblers have been reported in November in Concord, New Hampshire, over the years?

Hint: Cape May and Pine Warblers are not on the list—they have been reported in December, but not in November.

Answer: 13 warbler species:
Nashville, Nov. 11, 2000; Northern Parula, Nov. 12, 1960; Magnolia, Nov. 8, 1969; Black-throated Blue, Nov. 13, 2001; Yellow-rumped, regular; Black-throated Green, Nov. 18, 1979; Palm, Nov. 10, 2006; Bay-breasted, Nov. 3, 1962; Black-and-white, Nov. 23, 1975; American Redstart, Nov. 1970s; Ovenbird, Nov. 28, 1975; Common Yellowthroat, Nov. 16, 1962; Yellow-breasted Chat, 4+ Nov. reports.

Watch for an article on where to bird in Concord in the next issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* and more on the birds of Concord in a future issue. *Ed.*