

# New Hampshire Bird Records





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**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Rebecca Suomala  
603-224-9909 X309,  
rsuomala@nhaudubon.org

**TEXT EDITOR**  
Dan Hubbard

**SEASON EDITORS**  
Eric Masterson, Spring  
Chad Witko, Summer  
Lauren Kras/Ben Griffith, Fall  
Jim Sparrell/Katie Towler, Winter

**LAYOUT**  
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David Deifik, Elizabeth Levy,  
Susan MacLeod, Marie Nickerson,  
Carol Plato, Tony Vazzano

**PHOTO QUIZ**  
David Donsker

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**WEB MASTER**  
Kathy Barnes

**FIELD TRIP REPORTS**  
Phil Brown

**WHERE TO BIRD**  
Scott Heron

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IN HONOR OF  
**Rob Woodward**

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of Rob Woodward in appreciation of all he's done for birds and birders in New Hampshire.

*Rob Woodward leading a field trip at the Birch Street Community Gardens in Concord (10-8-2016) and counting migrating nighthawks at the Capital Commons Garage (8-18-2016, with a rainbow behind him).*



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Cover Photos: White Wagtail by Josh Gahagan (top) who discovered the bird on 11-2-2016 at Rye Harbor SP, Rye, NH, and Steve Bennett (bottom), 11-3-2016, Hampton, NH.

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## Backyard Birder

### Chukars – What Are They Doing in New Hampshire?



*Chukar by Richard Johnson, 5-6-2016, Newmarket, NH.*

by Brenda Sens

Many calls and emails come in to NH Audubon from people who have a Chukar in their backyard or have spotted one in the general area. They look exotic, are listed as living out west, seem to be a very rare find, and cause a great deal of excitement. We would like to try to set the record straight and explain what they are doing in New Hampshire.

Chukars are members of the pheasant family that are native to mountainous areas of the Middle East and Asia. They were brought to this country in the early eighteenth century as a game bird and have established themselves in some of the western states, but not in the Granite State. Here in New Hampshire, they do not naturally occur. People raise them for meat and eggs, as pets, and for the training of hunting dogs. NH Fish & Game requires permits to raise or possess Chukars, but they may be purchased with the appropriate certification. Although Chukars are not known for flying great distances, they are excellent runners and often manage to escape from wherever they are being housed, thus making an appearance where least expected. They may also be released for the purpose of hunting. They are included in the state's small game hunting season with dates and bag limits set by the NH Fish & Game Department: <http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/small-game-season.html>.

Chukars will come to bird seed and feed on the ground. You may want to check local notice boards for lost birds or put up notices in neighborhood stores to see if the owner can be found. Beyond that, there is little you can do for these birds except enjoy them.

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## Photo Quiz

by David B. Donsker

This small, streaked bird with a sharp, conical bill is clearly a sparrow. That's the easy part. Sparrows, especially those with streaked breasts, frequently present identification challenges to both beginning and experienced birders.

Why is this so? Sparrows by their very nature are cryptic. Many skulk in thick tangles, grasses or sedges, allowing only for tantalizing glimpses. But even if seen well, these "little brown jobs" with their confusing array of streaks, crown stripes and facial markings and their frequent lack of a single definitive "field mark" can make them look frustratingly similar to one another. Accurate identification generally requires the recognition of a set of structural and plumage characteristics combined with knowledge of selected habitat, behavior and voice.

When viewing a photograph, of course, we are limited to features of structure and plumage and only small clues about habitat. Our featured bird is perched on a small branch in a tangle of branches. This isn't much of a clue about habitat, but it helps a bit.

Our featured bird has a finely streaked upper breast and flanks. The breast streaking is rather sharply separated from the unmarked, white lower breast and belly. Even in this black-and-white photograph, we can see that the tone of the breast is slightly darker than the belly. If this were a color photograph, we would see that the background breast coloration is actually warm buffy. There is a faint "spot" in the center of the breast. The facial pattern is moderately complex. The sides of the crown are finely streaked. The crown feathers are slightly raised, giving the bird a rather crested look. There is a wide pale supercilium or eyebrow that is continuous with the similarly toned pale lores (region between the eye and the base of the bill). The eye itself is surrounded by a narrow eye-ring. The cheeks, or ear coverts, are bordered above and below by a thin, black eye-stripe behind the eye and moustachial stripe, respectively. Below the moustachial stripe is a submoustachial stripe that is clearly paler than the supercilium. Below that is a relatively distinct, dark malar or lateral throat stripe. The throat is nearly white. The bill is conical, but relatively long and moderately stout.

Where do we start? Certainly, all of our sparrows that have unstreaked breasts as adults can be eliminated immediately. That still leaves a lot of sparrows to deal with, however, the *Ammodramus* sparrows—Seaside, LeConte's, Henslow's, Nelson's and Saltmarsh—have a completely different structure. They are chunky, short-tailed birds whose heads, with their flat, sloping foreheads, are quite unlike the nearly



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## Abbreviations Used

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

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