

# 1995 New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Decisions

Beginning with this issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* and continuing in subsequent Winter Season issues, the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) plans to publish the results of its decisions on rare birds from the preceding four seasons. Here you will find the NHRBC's decisions for Spring, Summer, and Fall 1995, and Winter 1995-96. The current committee members are Bob Quinn, secretary, Dennis Abbott, Alan Delorey, Peter Hunt, Steve Mirick, Andrea Robbins, and George Robbins.

## Spring 1995

### Species accepted by the committee:

- Great Cormorant, Mascoma Lake (Enfield) on May 6 and 26. Presumably this was the same bird that was present at this location during the late fall of 1994.
- Least Bittern, Ballard Marsh (Derry) on May 20. Well-described, seen and heard.
- Least Bittern, Horsehide Creek (Durham) on May 29. Heard and tape-recorded.
- Tricolored Heron, Odiome Point (Rye) on May 29. Well-described.
- White-faced Ibis, Chapman's Landing (Stratham) on April 15. A first state record. Seen by several observers and photographed.
- Black Vulture, Nashua on April 21. Possibly the same bird found on the Nashua Christmas Bird Count the previous December.
- Black Skimmer, Durham on May 16. Photographs conclusive.
- Acadian Flycatcher, Singing bird at Lake Massabesic (Auburn) on May 14.
- Yellow-throated Warbler, Clough State Park (Weare) from April 30 to May 20. This singing male was seen by numerous observers during its extended stay.
- Cerulean Warbler, Pawtuckaway State Park (Nottingham) on May 27. This sighting was notable because it involved a female building a nest, the first confirmed breeding in New Hampshire. Cerulean Warblers have become regular enough at this location that they may no longer require review by the committee.
- Hooded Warbler, Pawtuckaway State Park (Nottingham) on April 28. A well-described male, this was the first state record of this species in several years.
- "Oregon" Junco, Chester on March 14. A well-described individual, probably of the Rocky Mountain subspecies; visiting a feeder.

### Species not accepted by the committee:

- Broad-winged Hawk, Concord on March 30. This date would be very early for this species, and the observer did not convincingly eliminate the more likely Red-shouldered Hawk.
- "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk, Manchester on March 13. The observer described what was definitely a dark-plumaged Red-tailed Hawk, but the bird was not necessarily this rare western subspecies because eastern Red-taileds show extensive variation.

Golden Eagle, Gorham on April 2. Observer did not convincingly eliminate Bald Eagle.  
Upland Sandpiper, Hampton marshes on April 23. This would be an unusual location for this species, and the description did not eliminate other large shorebirds.

Iceland Gull, Horseshoe Pond (Concord) on May 19. Description unclear.

Western Kingbird, Sandy Point (Stratham) on April 11. Although well-described, this species is exceedingly rare in spring in the Northeast, especially at such an early date. Some members of the committee were thus reluctant to accept the record without corroboration from an additional observer.

Kentucky Warbler, Wilton on May 30. The details on this sighting did not eliminate female Common Yellowthroat as a possibility.

Indigo Bunting, Keene on March 24. The exceptionally early date on this sighting is what caused it to go to the committee, who felt that the details provided were not convincing enough to completely eliminate other possibilities.

"Ipswich" Sparrow, Moody Point (Newmarket) on March 4. This species is very rare away from the immediate coast, and the description provided did not eliminate more likely species.

Black-throated Sparrow, Concord on April 6. Description did not eliminate House Sparrow.

Hybrid Hooded x Common Merganser, Lake Wantastiquet (Hinsdale) on March 19. The observers described a bird that certainly could be such a hybrid, but the committee felt that it was not qualified to make a final decision on its parentage.

**Species still under review:**

Sedge Wren, Pontook Reservoir (Dummer) on May 20. Initially not accepted by the committee and still not accepted after additional information was provided. A second sighting has come to light, and the record will be reconsidered by the committee.

## **Summer 1995**

**Species accepted by the committee:**

Black Vulture, two birds at Mt. Monadnock on June 4. The fifth state record for this species.

Little Gull, Dover on July 10. Well-described and very unusual for mid-summer.

Acadian Flycatcher, Lyndeborough on June 18. Singing male heard by observer familiar with the species.

Grasshopper Sparrow, Pease Airfield (Newington) on June 1.

**Species not accepted by the committee:**

Brown Pelican, Newcastle on June 13. The observer did not provide an adequate description of this bird.

Long-eared Owl, Hancock on June 7. There were insufficient details provided for the committee to properly evaluate this record.

Say's Phoebe, Wolfeboro in early June. Observer did not convincingly eliminate the more likely Eastern Phoebe.

## Fall 1995

### Species accepted by the committee:

- Manx Shearwater, seen from shore in Rye on October 21 during a strong fall storm.
- Leach's Storm-Petrel, Hampton Harbor on October 6. Well-described.
- Eurasian Wigeon, Great Bay on November 24. A well-described young male.
- Eurasian Wigeon, Exeter Sewage Ponds on November 28. Believed to be same individual as the above sighting due to plumage similarities.
- Eurasian Wigeon, Great Bay on September 24. An adult seen through the fall.
- Sandhill Crane, Marshes near Odiorne Point State Park (Rye) on November 4. Conclusive photographs of a bird that flew over and landed in the marshes.
- American Avocet, Hampton Beach on September 15. Four birds landed on the beach and were well-described.
- Parasitic Jaeger, Seen from shore in Rye on October 21. Accepted as Jaeger sp. unless further information can help to pinpoint the species.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull, Mascoma Lake (Enfield) from November 11 to 20. A well-described bird seen on three occasions.
- Black-legged Kittiwake, Mascoma Lake (Enfield) on November 19 and 20. Seen two consecutive days by two different observers.
- Caspian Tern, Hampton Beach State Park on October 28. Seen at very close range.
- Rufous Hummingbird, Tamworth on August 10. This extremely rare western species has now been seen in the last three fall seasons.

### Species not accepted by the committee:

- Rough-legged Hawk, Hinsdale on August 11. Because of the extremely early date and the similarities with dark plumaged Red-tailed Hawks, this report could not be accepted in a fall when very few were reported in the east.
- Rough-legged Hawk, Peterborough on September 11. See comments for previous sighting.
- Gyr Falcon, Keene on November 22. Short observation period with no optics.
- Black-backed Woodpecker, Hinsdale on August 11. Short observation period with no optics.
- Loggerhead Shrike, New London on October 20. In a fall season that was inundated with Northern Shrikes, there was insufficient information to support identification of this rare and declining species.
- Orange-crowned Warbler, Sandwich on August 27. Insufficient details to accept for such an early date.
- Pacific Golden-Plover, Hampton Harbor (Seabrook) on September 16. A well-described and photographed bird from an experienced observer, but photos were inconclusive. More information was needed to separate the more common American Golden-Plover from this recently named species.
- Common Ringed Plover, Hampton on August 31. Unfortunately, the only sure way to identify this species from the Semipalmated Plover is by its call note, which was not heard.
- Brambling, Rochester on October 23. A very interesting report from an experienced observer, but insufficient to accept as a first state record.

## Winter 1995-96

### Species accepted by the committee:

Eurasian Wigeon, Great Bay in Newmarket on December 12.

Great Gray Owl, Sanbornton on January 12. Well-described.

Great Gray Owl, Dover on January 13. This bird was found dead a few days later.

Great Gray Owl, Rochester on February 28. This bird was seen by many observers and photographed.

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich on December 23 was accepted. This bird was photographed.

### Species not accepted by the committee:

Great Gray Owl, Somersworth on January 9 was not accepted due to lack of sufficient details. The observers had no binoculars and did not note the "bow tie" or the eye color.

Boreal Owl, Epsom on December 26 was not accepted due to lack of sufficient details. Northern Saw-whet Owl and Eastern Screech-owl were not eliminated as possibilities.

Boreal Owl, Manchester on January 16 was not accepted due to insufficient details (no mention of bill color and forehead pattern) and concern about night-time lighting conditions.

Hoary Redpoll, Newbury on February 4 was not accepted due to lack of sufficient details. Details such as the abbreviated red cap, unstreaked undertail coverts, head and bill shape were not noted.

