

New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Decisions

We are continuing to publish the results of the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) decisions on rare birds. In this issue you will find the NHRBC decisions for spring, summer, fall 1997, and winter 1997-98. Records not accepted by the NHRBC will be reconsidered if significant new information is submitted, such as reports from additional observers, photographs, or field notes.

In addition, there are occasional records that the committee is unable to evaluate in time for publication with the other votes from that season. The decisions for these records also appear in the following summary, as is the case with the Blue Grosbeak from the summer '94.

The NHRBC is an independent Technical Advisory Committee to *New Hampshire Bird Records* (NHBR). It reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity for both *New Hampshire Bird Records* and the historical database of birds sightings maintained by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Sightings are evaluated based on the details submitted. A record must have a vote of 7-0 or 6-1 to be accepted by the committee.

A rejection is not an indication that the identification was incorrect but that the information received was not enough to allow its inclusion into the state record. Adequate documentation is the key to whether a report is accepted. For information on the committee and its decision making process, please see the article in the summer '96 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. The fall '96 issue has an article on how to document rare bird sightings. Contact the *New Hampshire Bird Records* Managing Editor at ASNH for a copy of either of these articles.

The current committee members are Dennis Abbott, Alan Delorey, P.D. Hunt, Steve Mirick, Bob Quinn, Andrea Robbins, and George Robbins. Feel free to contact any one of them if you have questions.

1997 Decisions

Spring 1997

Species accepted by the committee:

Little Gull, Enfield on April 7. Good description at close range.

White-eyed Vireo, Odiorne Point in late May. Well-described and seen over several days by multiple observers.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Whitefield on May 7. Excellent description.

Yellow-throated Warbler, Concord on May 11. Good details; seen by several observers.

Cerulean Warbler, Derry on May 28. Heard only, but good description by an observer familiar with the species.

Hooded Warbler, North Hampton on May 21. Well-described and seen by multiple observers.

Summer Tanager, Millsfield on May 7. Excellent description of a bird seen at close range.

Western Tanager, Dublin on May 24. Good description of a species more likely in fall.

Species not accepted by the committee:

Least Bittern, Hopkinton on May 30. A heard-only bird; details did not eliminate Black-billed Cuckoo.

Little Egret, Rye on April 20 and 21. This intriguing bird was not accepted because of the possibility of its being a hybrid between Snowy and Little Egrets.

Whooper Swan, Hampton on April 5. Although correctly identified, this record was rejected because the bird may have been of captive origin.

Hairy Woodpecker (Pacific Northwest form), Madbury on April 29. Probably just an unusually dark Hairy Woodpecker, as there is no pattern of vagrancy of the NW form.

Three-toed Woodpecker, Canterbury in late May. Observer did not convincingly eliminate the more likely Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Sedge Wren, Lisbon on May 18. Heard only; description of song inconclusive.

Summer Tanager, Westmoreland on May 20. Inadequate details.

Bobolink, Middleton on April 21. Insufficient details to accept such an unusually early record.

Pine Grosbeak, Goffstown on May 11. Description unclear, especially for such a late date and southerly location in a non-invasion year.

Summer 1997

Species accepted by the committee:

Manx Shearwater, July 26, Rye. Good description of a bird seen well offshore at Jeffrey's Ledge by observers familiar with the species.

White Pelican, two birds on June 11, Tuftonboro. An excellent description with a good sketch of this easy to identify (though rare) species.

Least Bittern, June 11, Jefferson. Good description of a heard only bird, in appropriate habitat by an observer familiar with the species.

Arctic Tern, June 12, Hampton. A good description separating this species from the Common Tern.

Loggerhead Shrike, June 18, Newington. An adequate description by an observer familiar with the species; the only shrike likely in June.

Blue Grosbeak, June 1, Wilmot. An excellent description of a male, seen by observers familiar with the species.

Blue Grosbeak, June 20, Milford. Another good description of a male.

Fox Sparrow, throughout June, Pittsburg. Good descriptions of a pair of birds seen by numerous observers; in the same spot as 1996.

Species not accepted by the committee:

Three-toed Woodpecker, two birds in Hillsboro on July 10. Far south of its normal range, insufficient details to eliminate other more common species.

Fall 1997

Sightings accepted by the committee:

Greater Shearwater, Durham on October 5. Well seen from a boat in the middle of the bay.

Manx Shearwater, nine birds from Rye on August 21. Storm driven birds along the coast.

Leach's Storm-Petrel, Lake Winnepesaukee, Moltonborough on November 2. Well described by experienced observers.

Greater White-fronted Goose, Stratham on November 21. Stayed on Great Bay for several weeks, seen by many.

King Eider, Rye on August 25. An immature male seen for two days off Seavey Island.

King Eider, Portsmouth on September 13 and September 16. A female seen by several observers over a few days.

Golden Eagle, Londonderry on October 26. A well described immature bird apparently migrating.

Golden Eagle, North Hampton on October 2. A well described immature bird.

Golden Eagle, two immature birds from Rye on October 7. Photographed.

Golden Eagle, Millsfield on November 4. A well described immature bird.

Marbled Godwit, Seabrook on August 9. Well seen and described bird on harbor mudflats.

Black-legged Kittiwake, Rye on August 21. An early storm blown immature bird along the coast.

Caspian Tern, one in Rye on October 4. Possibly one of the same birds noted by other observers that day.

Caspian Terns, 30 in Rye on October 4. Seacoast migration witnessed by a group. Some very close.

Black Guillemot, Piscataqua River, Newington on August 29. Seen at close range from a boat.

Long-eared Owl, Concord on November 23. Perched for a day outside a residence in Concord.

Rufous Hummingbird, East Kingston on August 18. Photographed adult male.

Three-toed Woodpecker, Bethlehem on August 6. In appropriate spruce-fir habitat at 2900 feet elevation.

Western Kingbird, Portsmouth on September 22. Photographed and seen by several.

Townsend's Solitaire, Franconia on October 6. A very convincing description and sketch of this rare western thrush.

Varied Thrush, Bedford on November 19. Photographed.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Rye on October 7. Nice description and sketch provided.

Dickcissel, Rye on August 15. Seen and photographed on Seavey Island.

Lark Sparrow, Exeter on October 18. Stayed for several days, seen by many.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Stratham on August 19. Well seen adult bird with good description.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Juvenile in Stratham on August 20. Well seen juvenile bird with good description.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Hampton on October 7 and 9. Well seen adult bird with good description.

Dark-eyed Junco - Pink-sided subsp., Nashua on October 16. Well described bird.

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Wakefield on September 25. An immature male videotaped at a feeder!

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich on November 8. Well described bird at feeder with many Common Redpolls.

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich on November 30. Well described bird at feeder with many Common Redpolls.

Townsend's Warbler, Conway in early November. Stayed for several weeks and photographed at suet feeder.

Connecticut Warbler, Newington on September 25. Well described bird seen from close range.

Sightings not accepted by the committee:

Pacific Loon, Rye on October 31. Unfortunately, distance did not allow for good observation and positive identification.

Red-necked Grebe, North Sandwich on September 1. A bird identified as an immature. There were insufficient details to rule out more likely species.

Black Vulture, Merrimack on September 12. Documentation was not provided for this sighting which was received through a phone call.

Golden Eagle, Loudon on September 29. Insufficient details to eliminate immature Bald Eagle.

Golden Eagle, North Walpole on September 2. Insufficient details to eliminate immature Bald Eagle.

Yellow Rail, Dummer on August 2. An intriguing report of vocalizations, but the exact pattern was not described, and the possibility exists for confusion with other species.

This species has never been known to nest in New Hampshire.

Prothonotary Warbler, two birds in Richmond on August 28. Insufficient details to eliminate the more likely Yellow Warbler.

Winter 1997-98

Species accepted by the committee:

Barrow's Goldeneye (female), Great Bay February 9. Adequate description, associating with male.

Gray Jay, Greenville (south of usual range) February 8. Adequate description.

Varied Thrush, Meredith, January-February. Photographed.

Varied Thrush, Rindge, January-February. Well described, seen by many observers.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Derry December-February. Video taped.

Yellow-breasted Chat, Laconia December-January. Well described.

Western Tanager, Portsmouth December-March. Photographed, seen by many observers.

Lincoln's Sparrow, Concord December-January. Well described.

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich December 23. Well described.

Hoary Redpoll, Columbia January 13. Well described.

Species not accepted by the committee:

Yellow-nosed Albatross, Hancock on December 28 was not accepted due to insufficient details for such a rarity.

Broad-winged Hawk, Salem on January 19 was not accepted due to insufficient details to eliminate Cooper's Hawk or Red-shouldered Hawk.

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich on December 3 was not accepted due to photos being inconclusive. Could have been a Common Redpoll.

Hoary Redpoll, Sandwich on December 4 & 16 was not accepted due to photos being inconclusive. Could have been a Common Redpoll.

Hoary Redpoll, Rochester on February 22 was not accepted. Common Redpoll could not be eliminated.

Summer 1994

Species not accepted by the committee:

Blue Grosbeak, June 9, Hollis. Description did not adequately eliminate Indigo Bunting.

