

New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Decisions

1998 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, and Fall 1998, and Winter 1998-99.

The NHRBC is an independent Technical Advisory Committee to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. It reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity for both *New Hampshire Bird Records* and the historical database of bird 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 or not. For information on the committee and its decision-making process, please see the article in the Summer 1996 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. The Fall 1996 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.

Spring 1998

Species accepted by the committee

Manx Shearwater, offshore Portsmouth on May 30. Photographed.

Red-necked Phalarope, Exeter on May 27. Well described.

Three-toed Woodpecker, Pittsburg on May 16. Well described and in appropriate habitat.

Acadian Flycatcher, Pawtuckaway State Park on May 31. This bird stayed well into the summer and was seen by many observers.

Sedge Wren, Derry on May 19 and 21. Well described by an observer familiar with the species.

Summer Tanager, New London on May 6 and 7. Photographed at a feeder.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Seavey Island (Isles of Shoals) on May 25. A well-described bird from an unusual location for this species.

Dark-eyed Junco, Chester from March 5-21. One of the western subspecies, well described.

Species not accepted by the committee

Greater White-fronted Goose, New London on May 21. Documentation did not convincingly eliminate the more likely domestic goose.

Golden Eagle, Concord on March 17. Documentation did not eliminate the more likely Bald Eagle.

Black-necked Stilt, Rye on May 23. The committee believed this bird was identified correctly, but as a single-observer record it fails to meet the criteria for a first state record.
Yellow-throated Warbler, Hill on May 26. Documentation did not eliminate the more likely Common Yellowthroat.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Milford on April 4. An exceptionally early date for this species, and Purple Finch was not eliminated.

Indigo Bunting, Milford on March 30. Details were inadequate for such an exceptionally early record.

Indigo Bunting, Bedford on April 17. Documentation did not convincingly eliminate Cowbird.

Brewer's Blackbird, Groveton on April 12. Documentation did not convincingly eliminate the more likely Common Grackle.

Sightings still under review

Gyr Falcon, Rye on May 23.

Hoary Redpoll, Concord on March 28.

Summer 1998

Species accepted by the committee

Sooty Shearwater, Rye on June 16. Adequate description.

Manx Shearwater, Rye on June 8. Adequate description.

Manx Shearwater, Rye on June 13. Adequate description.

Manx Shearwater, North Hampton on June 14. Adequate description.

Manx Shearwater, Rye on June 15. Adequate description.

Little Egret, Newmarket on June 30. Seen by numerous observers and photographed.

American Oystercatcher, North Hampton on June 29. Adequate description.

Parasitic Jaeger, Rye on June 13. Adequate description.

Parasitic Jaeger, Rye on June 14. Adequate description.

Little Gull, Rye on June 13. Adequate description.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Nottingham during June and July. Adequate description of song.

Acadian Flycatcher, Nottingham on July 13. Seen and well described by many observers.

Cerulean Warbler, Salisbury on June 18. Adequate description.

Cerulean Warbler, Hinsdale on June 20. Adequate description.

Hooded Warbler, Durham on June 6-19. Well documented.

Dickcissel, Rochester on June 10. Adequate description.

Species not accepted by the committee

Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Concord on June 11. Unusual location. Description did not eliminate Black Tern.

King Rail, Lempster on July 3. Description did not eliminate Virginia Rail.

Gull-billed Tern, Rye on July 23. Species identification accepted as correct. However, only two observers with no photograph is insufficient to establish a first state record.

Royal Tern, Dummer on June 7. Description did not eliminate other possible tern species.

Vermilion Flycatcher, Lee on July 8. Very rare in the northeast. Observer did not have optics and was not familiar with the species. Description not conclusive.

Worm-eating Warbler, Nottingham on July 11. Difficult to identify by song.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Stratham on June 30. Juvenile Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow was not eliminated.
Common Redpoll, Barrington on June 4. Unusual location in this season. Details not convincing enough.

Fall 1998

Species accepted by the committee

Manx Shearwater, Seabrook on September 18. Good description from offshore location.
Manx Shearwater, Rye on August 29. Good description.
Leach's Storm-Petrel, Hampton on September 18. Good description from offshore location.
Tundra Swan, two birds from Orford on November 14. Good description. Seen by many birders.
Tundra Swan, eight birds from Great Bay on November 15. Good description. Seen by many birders and photographed.
Eurasian Wigeon, five birds on Great Bay on November 14. Good description.
Golden Eagle, Moultonboro on October 22. Good description.
Purple Gallinule, Hanover on November 9. Injured bird picked up on side of road. Photographs submitted.
Red-necked Phalarope, 50 birds offshore from Rye on August 22. Good description from offshore location.
Red Phalarope, Exeter on October 12. Well-seen bird with good description.
Parasitic Jaeger, Rye on August 22. Good description from offshore location.
Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rochester on September 18. Adult bird, well seen and with good description.
Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rye on November 21. Excellent description of a well-seen, sub-adult bird in a strange plumage.
Rufous Hummingbird, Londonderry on October 31. Seen by many birders and photographed.
Western Kingbird, Concord on October 28. Good description.
Cliff Swallow, Rye on November 7. Well seen. Good description.
"Audubon's" Warbler, Lebanon on October 16. Good description.
Orange-crowned Warbler, Weare on September 24. Good description.
Orange-crowned Warbler, Enfield on October 11. Good description.
Orange-crowned Warbler, Rye on October 17. Good description.
Orange-crowned Warbler, Seabrook on November 1. Good description with two separate reports submitted.
Connecticut Warbler, Amherst on September 26. Good description.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Hampton on November 1. Good description by experienced observers.

Species not accepted by the committee

Tundra Swan, Bow Lake on November 11. Insufficient details.

Golden Eagle, Lakeport on October 3. Insufficient details.

untain Bluebird, Warren on August 31. Extremely rare vagrant in New England with no records from New Hampshire. Insufficient details for acceptance. Indigo Bunting and Eastern Bluebird can pose identification problems for this species.

Bohemian Waxwing, Sandwich on November 11. Bird identified by vocalization only, which can be difficult. No other Bohemian Waxwings were reported for fall, making this record more unusual.

Black-and-white Warbler, Exeter on November 27. Insufficient description to accept this very late sighting.

“Oregon” Junco, Plymouth on November 20. Insufficient description to rule out other junco sub-species.

“Pink-sided” Junco, Lee on November 29. Insufficient description to rule out other junco sub-species.

Sightings still under review

Eared Grebe, Rochester on September 14. Good description. Seen by many birders over several days. Identification accepted, but insufficient documentation submitted for acceptance as a first state record. Photographs, subsequently submitted, have not yet been reviewed by the committee.

Winter 1998-99

Species accepted by the committee

Tundra Swan, Great Bay, lingered to January 6. Adequate description.

Northern Shoveler, Rye on January 5. Adequate description of an immature drake.

Harlequin Duck, Nashua CBC on December 27. Well documented and photographed.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Seabrook on February 24. Adequate description.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rochester, three birds during February. Adequate description.

Common Murre, Hampton Beach on February 9. A dead bird. Specimen carefully examined and compared to Thick-billed Murre. Good details provided.

Atlantic Puffin, Hampton Beach on January 25. An injured bird picked up and photographed.

Ash-throated Flycatcher, Lyme on December 6. Photographed and seen by many observers. This establishes a first state record for this species.

Varied Thrush, Pembroke on January 11. Photographed.

Ovenbird, Newington on December 18. Adequate description.

Lark Sparrow, Hampton on December 20. Photographed.

Grasshopper Sparrow, Stratham on December 19. Adequate description.

Species not accepted by the committee

“Oregon” Junco, Keene. Seen during December and January. Female Dark-eyed Junco could not be ruled out.