

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, and Fall 1999, and Winter 1999–2000 and additional records voted on by the committee.

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 6-0 or 5-1 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 in 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 Managing Editor at ASNH for a copy of either of these articles.

The committee members are Dennis Abbott, Alan Delorey, David Donsker, Pamela Hunt, Steve Mirick, and George Robbins. Please contact any one of them if you have questions.

Spring 1999

Records accepted by the Committee:

Manx Shearwater offshore Newcastle on May 2. Well described.
Manx Shearwater offshore Rye on May 24. Well described.
Tundra Swan (6), Haverhill on March 2–19. Well described.
Sandhill Crane in Seabrook on May 14–25. Well described.
Sandhill Crane in Monroe on May 27. Seen by numerous observers, present through fall.
Little Gull in Rye on May 24. Well described.
Black-headed Gull in Rye on May 24. Well described.
Lesser Black-backed Gull in Rochester on March 5. Adequate description.
Acadian Flycatcher at Pawtuckaway on May 17. Well described, present for some time.
Worm-eating Warbler in Enfield on May 9. Well described.
Blue Grosbeak in Goffstown on May 1. Well described.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Hampton on May 24. Well described.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Stratham on May 28. Well described.

Records not accepted by the Committee:

Gray-cheeked Thrush in Tamworth on May 22. Although details were good, they were not sufficient to eliminate the very similar Bicknell's Thrush.

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Black-headed Grosbeak in Contoocook on May 14. Insufficient details to eliminate female Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Blue Grosbeak in Raymond on May 16. Description matched this species, but video footage clearly showed Indigo Bunting.

Blue Grosbeak (female) in Hampton on May 26. Details did not completely eliminate the similar females of Brown-headed Cowbird and Indigo Bunting.

Hoary Redpoll in Chatham on April 1. Insufficient details to eliminate Common Redpoll.

Summer 1999

Records accepted by the Committee:

Sooty Shearwater offshore in Rye on June 30.

Gadwall in Errol on June 1.

Forster's Tern in Rye on June 2.

Black Skimmer on Seavey Island on June 6.

Atlantic Puffin on Star Island on June 9.

Atlantic Puffin on Seavey Island on June 15.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows in Stratham on June 16 and 26.



Atlantic Puffin
by Iain C. MacLeod

Records not accepted by the Committee:

Rufous Hummingbird in Milford "throughout the summer." Details were insufficient to eliminate Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Caspian Tern in Pittsburg on June 7. Description inconclusive.

Fall 1999

Records accepted by the Committee:

Cory's Shearwater, Rye on September 17. Adequate description.

Manx Shearwater, Rye on September 17. Adequate description.

Golden Eagle, Moultonboro on September 28. Adequate description.

Red Phalarope, Rye on September 17. Adequate description.

Red Phalarope, Piedmont on October 2. Adequate description with field sketch.

Parasitic Jaeger, North Hampton on August 22. Adequate description.

Parasitic Jaeger, Rye on November 1. Adequate description.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rochester on November 14. Photograph submitted.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rochester on November 14. Adequate description.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Dover on October 13. Adequate description.

Gray-cheeked Thrush, Nashua on September 23. Adequate description.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Exeter on October 23. Adequate description.

Orange-crowned Warbler, Gilsum on September 9. Adequate description.

Black-throated Gray Warbler, Rye (Star Island) on September 21. Documentation from multiple observers with photographs to establish first documented state record.

Clay-colored Sparrow, Rye (Star Island) on September 24. Photographs submitted.

Lark Sparrow, Rye (Star Island) on August 25. Adequate description.

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Milford on September 22. Adequate description.

Golden Eagle, Deering on October 16. Adequate description.

Arctic Tern, Seabrook on September 4. Adequate description.

Clay-colored Sparrow
photo by R. Suomala



Records not accepted by the Committee:

Orange-crowned Warbler, Plymouth on October 3.

Description given is inconsistent with the field marks for this species.

Clay-colored Sparrow, North Chatham on October 20.

Description insufficient to rule out fall-plumaged Chipping Sparrow.

Lark Sparrow, North Sutton on October 3. Description insufficient to rule out other similar species.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, Hampton on October 17. Description written many months after the sighting and lacked sufficient information to rule out Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Winter 1999–2000

Records accepted by the Committee:

Hoary Redpoll, Lancaster on January 30. Adequate description.

Hoary Redpoll, Center Sandwich on February 2. Adequate description.

Hoary Redpoll, Center Sandwich on February 8. Adequate description.

Hoary Redpoll, Center Sandwich on February 9. Adequate description.

Hoary Redpoll, Orford on January 20. Adequate description.

Records not accepted by the committee:

Eurasian Wigeon, Webster on February 28. American Wigeon not eliminated.

Merlin, Walpole on February 6. Sharp-shinned Hawk not eliminated.

Mew Gull, Rye on January 29. Ring-billed Gull not eliminated.

NHRBC Decisions on Late Submissions

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 appear below.

Species accepted by the committee:

Yellow-throated Warbler in East Kingston on May 13–14, 1997.

Kentucky Warbler in Pawtuckaway State Park on May 17, 1997.

Kentucky Warbler in Rye on May 18, 1997.

Summer Tanager in New London on May 6–7, 1998 — photographed.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Effingham on April 29, 1993.

Species not accepted by the committee:

Gyrfalcon in Rye on May 23, 1998. Insufficient details to eliminate some races of Peregrine Falcon.

Sandhill Crane in Milford on September 5, 1997. Insufficient details to eliminate Great Blue Heron.

Pacific Golden-Plover in New London on September 26, 1998. Insufficient details to eliminate the extremely similar American Golden-Plover.