

## Summary

Golden Eagles are a rare but annual migrant through New Hampshire. Their breeding population is increasing to our north and sightings of migrants in spring and fall is increasing in the east. Although Bald Eagles are much more likely to be seen migrating past watch sites in New Hampshire, take a second look and make sure that eagle isn't a "goldie."

For detailed information on hawk migration throughout North America, check out the Hawk Migration Association of North America website at [www.hmana.org](http://www.hmana.org). The HMANA member newsletter, *Hawk Migration Studies* is also an excellent resource. Check the NH Audubon Web site, [www.nhaudubon.org](http://www.nhaudubon.org), for information about fall hawkwatches and programs.

## References

- Wheeler, B. K., 2003. *Raptors of Eastern North America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Foss, C. R., ed. 1994. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Concord, NH.
- Hawk Migration Studies*, Vols. XXV–1999, XXVI–2000, and XXIX–2003, Hawk Migration Association of North America.
- Zalles, J. I., and K. L. Bildstein, eds. and comps. 2000. *Raptor Watch, A Global Directory of Raptor Migration Sites*, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.

## New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

The following report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains decisions for records voted on by the Committee since the last report in the Winter 2002–03 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. 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 current voting members of the committee are Dennis Abbott, David Deifik, Alan Delorey, David Donsker, Davis Finch, and George Gavutis. Please contact any one of them if you have questions. Addresses and general information on the committee are available from the non-voting chair, Pam Hunt, at [biodiva@cyberportal.net](mailto:biodiva@cyberportal.net) or work phone at 224-9909 X328.

## Spring 2003

### **Records accepted by the committee:**

Black Rail in Greenland in late May. First state record; seen or heard by many, call recorded.  
Sandhill Crane in Lebanon on April 30.  
Sandhill Crane in Lancaster on May 5.  
Jaeger species offshore Rye on May 24.  
Acadian Flycatcher at Pawtuckaway on May 31  
Varied Thrush in Gilford from late February to late April.  
Yellow-throated Warbler at Pawtuckaway on May 3.  
Yellow-throated Warbler in Hanover on May 11.  
Pine Warbler in Lee on March 2.  
Hooded Warbler in Hampton on May 9–10.  
Hooded Warbler on the Isles of Shoals on May 19.  
Blue Grosbeak in Frankestown on May 3.  
Blue Grosbeak in Charlestown on May 18.

### **Records not accepted by the committee:**

Common Murre on White Island on May 26. Description of head color and pattern was unclear or inconclusive enough that Thick-billed Murre could not be eliminated. The identification was accepted as Murre species.  
Barn Owl in Deerfield on May 3. Bird was heard only, and description of call does not eliminate immature Great Horned Owl.  
Bicknell's Thrush in Livermore on April 29. Bird was heard only, and despite detailed description of call, the difficulty of vocal identification of this species, combined with the exceptionally early date, resulted in the committee deciding to err on the side of caution.  
Summer Tanager in Lincoln on May 24. Although at least one of the three similar birds reported was described fairly well, the presence of such a high number and absence of additional descriptive details resulted in the committee not accepting the record.  
Pine Grosbeak in Thornton on April 22. Based on the photograph, the committee believed that the bird in question was actually a Red Crossbill.

## Summer 2003

### **Records accepted by the committee:**

Tricolored Heron in Rye on June 15. Photographed.  
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Hampton on June 1–8. Photographed.  
American Oystercatcher on White Island on June 28.  
Little Gull in North Hampton on June 1.  
Little Gull in Rye on June 18. Photographed; different plumage from previous bird.  
Black-headed Gull in Rye June 3–6. Photographed.  
Caspian Tern in Pittsburg on June 10.  
Common Murre at White Island on June 22–27.  
Murre species on White Island on June 15.  
Razorbill at Isles of Shoals on June 8.  
Atlantic Puffin at White Island on June 15–24.  
Red-headed Woodpecker in Nottingham on July 20.  
Acadian Flycatcher at Pawtuckaway on June 7–8.  
Acadian Flycatcher in South Hampton on June 28.  
Louisiana Waterthrush in Nashua on July 27.

### **Records not accepted by the committee:**

Royal Tern at White Island on June 26. Although generally well described, the description of a black crown is inconsistent with this species' plumage at this time of year.

Thick-billed Murre on White Island on June 14. Unclear description failed to fully eliminate either Common Murre or Razorbill, and the record is best left as “large alcid species.”  
Chuck-will’s-widow in Canaan on June 20. This date is unusually late for this species, which is a very rare spring vagrant to New Hampshire. This combined with some missing details about the observation resulted in the committee deciding to err on the side of caution. The possibility exists that the bird in question was an aberrant Whip-poor-will.

## Fall 2003

### Records accepted by the committee:

Common Eider in Littleton on October 22.  
Common Eider in Bartlett on October 22.  
Sandhill Crane in Concord on October 8.  
Little Stint in Rye on August 7–8. This bird was photographed, seen by numerous birders, and constitutes a First State Record.  
Lesser Black-backed Gull in Errol on September 30. Photographed.  
*Selasphorus* hummingbird species in Merrimack on August 17.  
Tropical/Couch’s Kingbird in Claremont on November 2. Although the bird in question was never heard, and thus cannot be identified to species, this represents a First State Record of this species pair.  
Cave Swallows in Rye on November 26. Photographs; qualifies as a First State Record.  
Northern Wheatear in Epsom on September 7. Well-described individual.  
Bell’s Vireo in Exeter on November 1 and beyond. Photographed and seen by many, this bird represents a Second State Record.  
Golden-winged Warbler in Rye on September 14.  
Western Tanager in Plymouth on November 30.  
Black-headed Grosbeak in Derry on November 3. Photographed and seen by many.  
Spotted Towhee in Grafton on November 17 (and through winter). Photographed; represents a First State Record.  
Yellow-headed Blackbird in Merrimack on August 2.

### Records not accepted by the committee:

Wood Stork in Dover on September 2. The details provided were not comprehensive enough for a rarity of this magnitude; the bird’s head was not described.  
Fulvous Whistling-Duck in Grantham on August 7. Bird was unusually tame, and the possibility of a variant domestic duck was not considered.  
Harlequin Duck in Jefferson on October 24. Sketchy description did not eliminate immature or female scoters.  
Golden Eagle in Northwood on August 22. Details were insufficient for a report of this species so early in the season.  
Sandhill Crane in Alexandria on October 1. The observer had no optics and was unfamiliar with this species. Some aspects of the bird’s behavior were inconsistent with Sandhill Crane.  
Long-billed Dowitcher in Lancaster on October 31. Poor description; observer did not conclusively eliminate Short-billed Dowitcher.  
Red-necked Phalarope in Portsmouth on September 26 was not sufficiently distinguished from Red Phalarope. Identification was accepted as Phalarope species.  
Lark Bunting in Franklin on October 2. Description of bill color inconsistent with female Lark Bunting; female Purple Finch not conclusively eliminated.  
Clay-colored Sparrow in Peterborough on October 31. Did not conclusively eliminate Chipping Sparrow.

## Winter 2003-2004

### Records accepted by the committee:

Golden Eagle in Raymond on December 9.

Varied Thrush in Bradford for most of the winter. Seen by numerous birders.

Brown Thrasher in Loudon on February 14.

Spotted Towhee in Concord for most of the winter. Photographed and seen by many. Represents a Second State Record.

The following Hoary Redpoll reports were accepted. Many of these were accompanied by photographs:

Sandwich on December 8, December 31, January 1, and February 6 (all different birds)

Keene on December 8 and onward (multiple birds)

Ossipee on December 30

Belmont on January 4

Stratford on January 9

Franklin on January 11

Newbury on January 31

Errol on February 3

Hanover on February 6

Chester on February 29

### Records not accepted by the committee:

Chipping Sparrow in Newmarket on February 4. Documentation did not conclusively eliminate other sparrows, including Clay-colored and Swamp.

The following Hoary Redpoll reports were not accepted. In all cases the observer failed to distinguish the bird from Common Redpoll:

Bedford on January 9

Thornton on January 13

Newmarket on February 29

New London in January

### Records awaiting additional discussion:

The committee has not had a chance to meet and discuss the documentation for the following records:

"Nelson's" Gull in Rochester on December 29.

Slaty-backed Gull in Rochester on December 23–27.

Baltimore Oriole in Groveton on January 2.

Hoary Redpoll in Northfield on January 24.

Hoary Redpoll, 10 in Keene during the winter.

## Decisions of Late Submissions

Records that the Committee was unable to evaluate in time for publication with the other votes from that season.

### Records accepted by the committee:

Red-headed Woodpecker in Merrimack on July 10, 2002. Photographed.

Clay-colored Sparrow in Newington on June 24, 2001. Well-described; an unusual mid-summer record.

The following record from Fall 2002 was accepted by the Committee but inadvertently omitted from the 2002 summary in the Winter 2002–03 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*:

Redhead, 6 on Great Bay in Stratham, November 27, 2002.

### Records not accepted by the committee:

Hooded Warbler in Sugar Hill on May 10, 1992. Insufficient description.