

New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee since the report published in the Winter 2007-08 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR)*.

The NHRBC is an independent technical advisory committee to *NHBR*. It reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity of the database of bird records maintained by New Hampshire Audubon. All sightings are evaluated based on details submitted. The Committee requires a vote with not more than one dissention for acceptance of a record. Any new state record requires a unanimous vote.

A rejection is not necessarily an indication that the identification was incorrect but that the information received was not sufficient to allow its inclusion in the state record. Adequate documentation is key to whether a report is accepted or not. For information on the Committee and its decision-making process, see the articles in the Summer 1996 and Winter 2005-06 issues of *NHBR*. The Fall 1996 issue has an article on how to document rare sightings. Contact the Managing Editor of *NHBR* for a copy of these articles.

Voting members of the Committee during 2008 when these votes took place were Dennis Abbott, Ralph Andrews, Jim Berry, David Deifik, David Donsker, George Gavutis, Jr., Tony Vazzano, and Rob Woodward (chair). Terry Bronson served as the Committee Secretary.

Revisions to Required Documentation List

The Committee adopted a list several years ago, available on the *NHBR* web site, www.nhbirdrecords.org, of species that require review by the Committee before they can be accepted into the official state records. These birds are very rare in the state or very difficult to identify. The latest revisions to this list are as follows:

Ross's Goose (added)
Least Bittern (removed)
Black Vulture (removed)
American Oystercatcher (removed)
Red Phalarope (now required if other than pelagic or coastal sighting)
Red-necked Phalarope (now required if other than pelagic or coastal sighting)
(Both Phalarope changes are not new requirements but simply adoption of the same language restrictions used for other coastal and pelagic species.)
Rufous Hummingbird (removed)
Any hummingbird other than Ruby-throated or Rufous (added)
Clay-colored Sparrow (removed)
Lark Sparrow (removed)

Observers are still encouraged to continue detailed reporting of unusual species not on the review list to help *NHBR* staff, Season Editors, and the Committee evaluate such sightings.

Summer 2007

Records accepted by the Committee

Western Grebe in Holderness on July 21.
Least Bittern in Hinsdale on July 5.

Atlantic Puffin in Hampton on June 10.
Kentucky Warbler in Kensington on June 1.
Hooded Warbler in Surry on June 7.
Blue Grosbeak in Concord on June 7.

Records not accepted by the Committee

Least Bittern in Sandwich on June 2. No documentation.
Golden Eagle in Pittsburg on July 27. Photo too distant to identify.
Common Murre in Rye on June 13. No documentation.
Barn Owl in Auburn on June 7. More likely juvenile Barred or Great Horned owl. Unlikely habitat.
Long-eared Owl in Chester on June 11. Call of unseen bird insufficient to identify species.
Acadian Flycatcher in Surry on June 7. Sound not well described for species visually identical to other *Empidonax* flycatchers.
Hooded Warbler in Kensington on June 3. View not good enough to be conclusive.

Fall 2007

Records accepted by the Committee

Greater White-fronted Goose in Portsmouth on November 24.
Cackling Goose in Rollinsford on November 16.
Barnacle Goose in Rye on October 7.
Eared Grebe in Rye on November 17.
Common Moorhen in Hinsdale on September 18.
Red Phalarope in Rochester on September 14.
Sabine's Gull in Rye on September 22.
Rufous Hummingbird in Westmoreland on October 23.
Red-headed Woodpecker in Rye on September 9.
Black-backed Woodpecker in Nottingham on September 22.
Black-backed Woodpecker in Concord on November 18.
Western Kingbird in Exeter on September 15.
Cave Swallow in Hampton on November 4.
Cave/Cliff Swallow species in Hampton on November 17.
Sedge Wren in Rye on October 21.
White-eyed Vireos in Rye on October 6, 14, and 20, (likely same bird, different observers).
Painted Bunting in Concord on October 1.
Clay-colored Sparrow in Stratham on September 16.
Clay-colored Sparrow in Hinsdale on September 24.
Lark Sparrow in Rye on October 21.
Lark Sparrow in Rye on November 24.
Hoary Redpolls in Sandwich on November 26 and 28.

Records not accepted by the Committee

Pacific Loon in Rye on October 20. Not sufficiently distinguished from small Common Loon.
Flight view only.
American Three-toed/Black-backed Woodpecker species in Hopkinton on November 24. Immature Hairy Woodpecker not ruled out.
Hoary Redpoll in Rochester on November 25. Not enough written detail.

Winter 2007-2008

Records accepted by the Committee

Golden Eagle in Second College Grant on December 19.
Great Gray Owl in Campton on February 3.
Hoary Redpolls in Sandwich on December 16, Lancaster on December 18, Millsfield on December 19, Sandwich on December 27, Brentwood on January 19, Sandwich on January 22, Acworth on

January 26, Sandwich on January 27, Strafford on January 27, Sandwich on January 29,
Deerfield on February 10, Sandwich on February 10, Westmoreland on February 11.

Records not accepted by the Committee

Golden Eagle in Second College Grant on December 19. Different bird than the one approved. No documentation.
Gyr Falcon in Bedford on January 28. Insufficient description. Didn't eliminate Northern Goshawk.
Northern Hawk Owl in Sugar Hill on January 26. Insufficient description, especially tail length.
Hoary Redpolls in Ashland on December 22, Sandwich on January 8, Strafford on January 20. No documentation.

Spring 2008

Records accepted by the Committee

Eared Grebe in Hampton on April 16.
Greater White-fronted Geese in Hinsdale on March 22 and 25, and Charlestown on March 23.
Ross's Goose in Durham on March 29–31. First state record, three reports.
Cackling Geese in Hinsdale on March 30 and Charlestown on April 6.
Mississippi Kite in Newmarket on May 29.
Gyr Falcon in Whitefield on March 9.
Common Moorhen in Rochester on May 24.
Red-headed Woodpecker in Sharon on May 11.
Red-headed Woodpecker in Bedford on May 31.
Cerulean Warbler in Exeter on May 10.
Cerulean Warbler in Concord on May 13.
Hooded Warbler in Keene on May 8.
Summer Tanagers in Moultonborough on May 3.
Summer Tanager in Sandwich on May 20.
Painted Bunting in Bow on March 6.
Painted Bunting in Jefferson on May 30–31.

Records not accepted by the Committee

Great Gray Owl in Richmond on March 23. Incomplete description.
Acadian Flycatcher in Marlborough on May 14. Incomplete description.
Gray Kingbird in Walpole on May 8. Unconvincing description by inexperienced observer.

Historical Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Mississippi Kites in Bristol on April 16, 1982. Qualified accepted* as first state record.
Mississippi Kite in Durham on May 9, 1982. Qualified accepted.*
Mississippi Kite in Exeter on May 7, 2004. Reconsideration of prior non-acceptance.
Mississippi Kite in Newmarket on May 30, 2004. Reconsideration of prior non-acceptance.
Mississippi Kite in Kensington on April 24, 2007. Reconsideration of prior acceptance.
Golden Eagle in Pittsburg on June 8, 2004.
Yellow-headed Blackbird in North Hampton on June 17, 1989.

Records not accepted by the Committee

Least Bittern in Sandwich on May 24, 2007. No documentation.
Mississippi Kite in Kensington on July 9, 2006. Reconsideration of prior non-acceptance. Not seen well.
Swallow-tailed Kite in Franconia on April 29, 1878. Reconsideration of prior non-acceptance.
Probable misidentification of collected egg. April nesting too incredible in New Hampshire for a southern species.

*Qualified accepted is a category for very old records before documentation was required, based on knowledge of the qualifications of the observers.