

New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

Committee Year: 2009

David B. Donsker, Chair (2011-2012)

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee during the calendar year 2009. The last report of the Committee, covering decisions made in 2008, was published in the Summer 2009 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (NHBR).

The NHRBC reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity of the bird records in New Hampshire. It is independent of NHBR and 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. Unfortunately, several birds during this time period were rejected for lack of documentation. 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.

Voting members of the Committee during 2009 when these votes took place were: Dennis Abbott, Ralph Andrews, Jim Berry, David Donsker, George Gavutis, Jr., Stephen Mirick, Tony Vazzano, and Rob Woodward (Chair). Terry Bronson served as Secretary at the April meeting. Steve Mirick served as the acting Committee Secretary in the latter half of the year.

Revision of Mandatory Review List

Cory's Shearwater was removed from the mandatory review list at the April 15, 2009 meeting of the Committee since it has become predictable in New Hampshire waters in the late summer and fall. For a listing of those species which require mandatory review by the New Hampshire Rare Bird Committee, refer to the NHBR website www.nhbirdrecords.org.

It was decided that Greater White-fronted Goose would remain on the review list due to its possible confusion with other "gray geese" and the difficulty in determining subspecies which may be elevated to species in the future.

Summer 2008

Records accepted by the Committee

Mississippi Kite	6/14/2008	Newmarket	
Red-headed Woodpecker	6/5/2008	Bedford	Accepted as one bird only.
Red-headed Woodpecker	7/4/2008	Bedford	
Hooded Warbler	6/7/2008	Holderness	
Summer Tanager	7/16/08	Concord	

Records rejected by the Committee

Cory's Shearwater	7/25/2008	Offshore waters	No documentation.
Cory's Shearwater	7/30/2008	Offshore waters	No documentation.
Yellow Rail	6/18/2008	Stratham	No documentation.
Common Murre	6/16/2008	Newcastle	No documentation.
Long-eared Owl	7/18/2008	Hancock	Heard-only bird. No documentation.
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	6/12/2008	Rindge	Not credible.
Cerulean Warbler	6/25/2008	Strafford	No documentation.
Cerulean Warbler	7/3/2008	Strafford	No documentation.
Summer Tanager	6/25/2008	Fremont	No documentation.
Western Tanager	7/25/2008	Chester	No documentation.

Fall 2008**Records accepted by the Committee**

Cory's Shearwater	8/4/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater (17)	8/9/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater (9)	8/9/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater	8/18/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater	9/11/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater	9/13/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater	10/5/2008	Offshore waters	
Cory's Shearwater	10/10/2008	Offshore waters	
Mississippi Kite	9/7/2008	Newmarket	
Willet, Western subspecies	8/9/2008	Hampton	
Stilt Sandpiper	11/14/2008	Hampton	
Wilson's Phalarope	8/16/2008	North Hampton	(two reports)
Red-necked Phalarope	8/7/2008	Effingham	
Red-necked Phalarope	8/19/2008	Exeter	
Red-necked Phalarope	8/31/2008	Moultonboro/Center Harbor	
Red Phalarope	9/19/2008	Exeter	
Thayer's Gull	11/24/2008	Rochester	(two reports)
Royal Tern	8/2/2008	Rye	(two reports)
Royal Tern	8/9/2008	Offshore waters	
Royal Tern	8/9/2008	Rye	
Rufous Hummingbird	8/22-24/2008	Antrim	
Rufous Hummingbird	10/15-31/2008	Plaistow	(two records)
Myiarchus Flycatcher	11/13/2008	Rochester	
Western Kingbird	10/13/2008	Concord	
Cave Swallow	11/9/2008	Hampton	
Sedge Wren	11/28/2008	Stratham	
Gray-cheeked Thrush/Bicknell's Thrush	9/12/2008	Strafford	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	10/6/2008	Pittsfield	
White-eyed Vireo	10/4/2008	Rye	(two reports)
Golden-winged Warbler	10/2/2008	Lee	
Cerulean Warbler	10/3/2008	Dover	
Worm-eating Warbler	9/29/2008	Lee	
Lark Bunting	10/11/2008	North Hampton	(two reports)
Le Conte's Sparrow	10/18/2008	North Conway	(two reports)
Yellow-headed Blackbird	9/4/2008	Rye	

Records rejected by the committee

Cory's Shearwater	8/10/2008	Offshore waters	No documentation.
Cory's Shearwater	9/5/2008	Offshore waters	No documentation.
Cory's Shearwater	9/21/2008	Offshore waters	No documentation.
Gyrfalcon	11/8/2008	Peterborough	No documentation.

Worm-eating Warbler	10/8/2008	Rye	Description was missing some critical morphological features and further included inconsistent features including that described for head plumage and bill size.
Brewer's Blackbird	11/1/2008	Haverhill	Sighting retracted by observer.

Winter 2008-09

Records accepted by the Committee

Tundra Swan	2/14/2009	Hinsdale	
Cackling Goose	12/14/2008	Belmont	
Thayer's Gull	12/16/2008	Rochester	
Thayer's Gull	1/12/2009	Rochester	
Glaucous-winged Gull	1/10/2009	Rochester	First state record.
Northern Hawk Owl	12/5/2008	Meredith	
Northern Hawk Owl	1/12/2009	Center Harbor	(two reports)
Northern Hawk Owl	1/13/2009	Center Harbor	
Red-headed Woodpecker	Winter 08/09	Auburn	
Red-headed Woodpecker	1/2/2009	Conway	
Varied Thrush	12/20/2008	Rye	
Varied Thrush	12/22/2008	Rochester	
Varied Thrush	12/23/2008	Rye	(two reports)
Varied Thrush	Jan-Feb/2009	Rochester	
Hoary Redpoll	1/22/2009	Farmington	
Hoary Redpoll	1/22/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	1/23/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	1/25/2009	Keene	
Hoary Redpoll	1/25/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	2/3/2009	Keene	
Hoary Redpoll	2/5/2009	Charlestown	
Hoary Redpoll	2/5/2009	Keene	
Hoary Redpoll	2/5/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	2/7/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	2/14/2009	Colebrook	
Hoary Redpoll	2/14/2009	Pittsburg	
Hoary Redpoll	2/18-19/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	2/21/2009	Berlin	
Hoary Redpoll	2/21/2009	Milan	
Hoary Redpoll	2/22/2009	Swanzy	

Records not accepted by the Committee

Thayer's Gull	2/18/2008	Rochester	Written description was lacking in detail. The committee evaluated the photos on-line during the meeting and felt that they were inconclusive to eliminate the possibility of a dark winged Kumlien's Gull.
Hoary Redpoll	2/8/2009	Madbury	No documentation.
Hoary Redpoll	2/27/2009	Milan	No documentation.
Blue Tit-Chickadee hybrid	12/21/2008	Concord	The committee felt that this strange looking bird was likely a hybrid. However, the parentage of the bird was deemed to be impossible to tell from the photos or description. Although several e-mails from "ID Frontiers" suggested a Blue Tit-Black-capped Chickadee hybrid, the committee was surprised that other parids were not fully evaluated as possible parents, especially European species including Willow Tit. Accepting a specific hybrid pair was believed to be pure speculation. The committee decided to accept the record as a parid hybrid.

Spring 2009

Records accepted by the Committee

Gr. White-fronted Goose	3/16/2009	Merrimack	(two reports)
Gr. White-fronted Goose	3/19/2009	Litchfield	
Mississippi Kite	5/13/2009	Newmarket	
Mississippi Kite	5/13/2009	Newmarket	
Red-necked Phalarope	5/28/2009	Concord	
Arctic Tern	5/29/2009	Hinsdale	
Common Murre	3/15/2009	Offshore Waters	
Great Gray Owl	4/4/2009	Durham	(two reports)
Gray-cheeked Thrush	5/30/2009	Rye	
Hooded Warbler	4/29/2009	Exeter	
Blue Grosbeak	5/12/2009	Pittsburg	
Hoary Redpoll	3/1/2009	Newton	
Hoary Redpoll	3/1/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	3/6/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	3/12/2009	Sandwich	
Hoary Redpoll	3/18/2009	Rochester	

Records not accepted by the Committee

Cackling Goose	3/15/2009	Hinsdale	No documentation.
Cackling Goose	3/20/2009	Hinsdale	No documentation.
Baird's Sandpiper	5/7/2009	Concord	Insufficient details submitted for documentation of a very rare sighting. There are no known spring records for this species in New Hampshire. In particular, details of size were inconsistent, and no mention of wing length was mentioned. ID seems to be based primarily on call note, but no mention of how many calls were heard.
Yellow-headed Blackbird	4/19/2009	Nottingham	Full documentation not submitted. Observer calls sighting "possible" and identification seemed to be heavily based on call note when plumage characteristics should have been far more conclusive. Due to the rarity of spring sightings in New Hampshire, the committee felt that full documentation with further details was required.
Hoary Redpoll	3/7/2009	Mont Vernon	Insufficient details to omit Common Redpoll as a possibility.

Earlier Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Brambling	10/23/1987	Plymouth	Accepted as hypothetical first state record based on excellent field sketch. However, only one observer and without photographic documentation, three is required for a first state record.
Northern Lapwing	3/2/1988	Rye	Accepted as hypothetical first state record. Only one observer.

Records rejected by the Committee

Brewer's Blackbird	10/9/1988	Littleton	Insufficient details to omit Rusty Blackbird as a possibility.
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	4/28/1989	Surry	Only the head of the bird was actually seen, which is inconclusive.
Red-headed Woodpecker	Fall 2005	Newington	No specific date provided. No documentation received.
Hoary Redpoll	2/19/2008	Strafford	Insufficient details to omit Common Redpoll as a possibility.