



**NH AUDUBON**

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# 2017 PROJECT NIGHTHAWK

## A SEASON SIMILAR TO ONE FROM THE PAST

The 2017 nesting season was affected by wet, cool weather bringing back memories of 2013. The comparisons below include statistics from the National Climatic Data Center.

### 2013

- 8 consecutive days of wet weather as nighthawks returned to the area
- Wet conditions continued from May into June
- The region experienced 7.65" of rain in June making it the 5th wettest June on record.
- No confirmed nests
- 9 birds in Concord

In 2013 we had low numbers of birds and no confirmed nests - the only year that's happened. In 2017, numbers were depressingly low in Concord with shifting activity that made it next to impossible to figure out what was going on. A quote from 2013 applies equally well to 2017. "It was frustrating for the volunteers who kept watching for the consistent behavior that indicates nesting and just couldn't find it." Thank goodness the Ossipee/Tamworth area was a bright spot with our only confirmed nest.

### 2017

- The season began with a period of cool, wet weather
- Rain observed on 6 of the first 7 days of June with 2 inches falling on June 6.
- June 11 - 13 Concord saw 3 straight days above 90°. After 2 more weeks of warm weather the pattern returned to cooler, showery weather
- Only 1 confirmed nest in Ossipee
- 7 - 8 birds in Concord

Was this inactivity because of the weather? After 2013, nighthawk activity rebounded but it never returned to pre-2013 levels, indicating a combined effect from the weather and overall population declines.

We are currently seeking funding for next year's monitoring so we can see if the numbers bounce back in Concord and elsewhere, or determine if this was part of the ongoing decline of nighthawks in the state and region.



Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

*Can you spot the roosting nighthawk? It was found at NH Audubon's Silk Farm Sanctuary's new forest clearing on May 22 causing excitement here at the McLane Center. Much to our disappointment it only stayed a few days.*

### PAST ACTIVE LOCATIONS

- ♦ Broken Ground - a fly by
- ♦ Franklin - no nighthawk sightings
- ♦ Black Cap Mt. - no nighthawk sightings
- ♦ Bayle Mt. - a fly by

## CONCORD

After signs of good activity at the season's start nighthawks gradually disappeared with only three on our second coordinated watch! We have never had a watch with so few birds!

The areas that initially looked very promising for nesting were Henniker St./White Mountain Imaging, the Concord Airport and the Steeplegate Mall, but activity didn't continue and we suspect possible nest failure at one or two sites.

Nighthawk numbers were the lowest in Concord since the project began. The only other year with less than 10 nighthawks in Concord was 2013 (9 birds).

### Concord Coordinated Watch Results

- ◆ 2 watches held
- Totaling
- ◆ 5-6 males
- ◆ 2 females

Broken Ground has usually had 3-4 birds with at least two active males. There was only one brief male flyby this year.

Was it the weather? Habitat change due to forest growth? Birds not returning after the winter? Next year's surveys will hopefully tell us more.

## OSSIPEE

20 Nighthawks  
12 Males  
3 Females  
5 Unknown

Ossipee hosted the only confirmed nest of the season which was located off of Depot Road.

During the third coordinated watch held on 7/20, a record setting number of nighthawks for a watch was tallied. Volunteers observed a total of 20 nighthawks consisting of 12 males, 3 females and 5 unknown.

The nest and 11 of the birds were along Depot Road, a relatively new site for our monitoring. These could have been foraging adults from nearby territories or possibly fledged juveniles, although it was early for them to be flying on that date.

*"Ossipee is the bright spot of the 2017 Nighthawk Nesting Season"*

### Ossipee Coordinated Watch Results

- ◆ The **only** confirmed nest site of the season!
- ◆ One coordinated watch produced 20 Nighthawks!

#### Active Sites

- ◆ Depot Road
- ◆ Thicket
- ◆ Red Baron
- ◆ West Branch

## NIGHTHAWK DIVE

Photos captured from a video show the male inverting before making a classic display dive.



Video by Bob Quinn.

## KEENE

During one of the three coordinated watches held in Keene a male and a female observed at the Keene State College Sculpture Studio were exhibiting signs of being a nesting pair. Roof access was not available to confirm the presence of eggs or chicks.

After three more individual observations the behavior pattern changed. Whatever was going on at the Sculpture Studio had ceased, indicating probable nest failure.

### Keene Coordinated Watch Results

- ◆ Probable Nest Failure
- ◆ Total: 2 Males, 1 Female
- ◆ Plus: 1 Male at Sand Pond, Marlow, by Katie Koster, Harris Center, AVEO intern

## GRANTHAM 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL PEENT SOCIAL

*"PEENT - People Enthusiastically Enjoying Nighthawks Together"*

Hosted by Sheridan and Deb Brown

Even though the PEENT was held on June 23, two weeks later than last year, our number of observations remained about the same. Two silent nighthawks were observed. One flying over and a possible female landing across from the lumber yard. Much like last year. However, last year there were 13 nighthawks, possible migrants, feeding early in the watch and we did not see that in 2017.



*A Common Nighthawk roosted for several days at Pickering Ponds in Rochester and was photographed by several birders. These photos were taken by Charlee Breen on May 30, 2017. (Unfortunately the bird moved on.)*



## NIGHTHAWK MIGRATION



Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

Rob Woodward retired to Arizona after spearheading the Migration watch since 2008. Zeke Cornell took over the reins. Zeke's total count for the 2017 Fall Migration was 3,999. Observers tried very hard to find one more migrating nighthawk which would bring the count to 4,000 but that was not to be.

*A migrating nighthawk going after an insect.*



Photo by David Lipsy.

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOATSUCKER GALA

This event began as a means to express our appreciation to the numerous volunteers who've helped with goatsucker projects over the years. We gather to share food and stories, and generally have a great time.

In 2017 we expanded the invitee list to include volunteers who helped with a few other projects (bats and American Pipits), making the name more symbolic than anything.

At least we kept the theme to aerial insectivores. Look for the event's new name in 2018



## VOLUNTEERS

Bob Basile  
Siobhan Basile  
Chris Borg  
Deb Brown  
Sheridan Brown  
Hilary Chapman  
Kathleen Conley  
Zeke Cornell  
Colleen Dubois  
Renee Gustafson  
Leah Hart  
Lynne Hart  
Dick Hocker  
Caroline Hoen

Dave Howe  
Rich Kaszeta  
Jane Kolias  
Katie Koster  
Carol Kowalski  
Susan Lee  
Bob Linna  
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Ted Lyman  
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Laura Nagy  
Charlie Nims  
Bill Parkinson

Stephanie Parkinson  
Bob Quinn  
Linda Rauter  
Udo Rauter  
Marsha Richelli  
Carolyn Ryan  
Dennis Ryan  
Becky Suomala  
Mark Suomala  
Robert Vallieres  
Jeanne West  
Jane Wing

## Harris Center for Conservation Education Volunteers

Mary Bauer  
Pam Blair  
Christy Bonneau  
Jennifer Brown  
Lea Carpenter  
Courtney Dillon  
Tina Downing  
Diana Duffy  
Zazo French  
Dave Hoitt  
Corrie Holtz  
Lisa & Jim Holtz  
Joshua Jarvis  
Mickayla Johnston

Katie Koster  
Mark Landolina  
Cheryl Martin  
Sonjia McNear  
Mike Moses  
Anthony Oatley  
Karen Seaver  
Cliff Seifer  
Barbara Skuly  
Brett Amy Thelen  
Jane Wing  
Mary Wright  
Sara Yager

## 2017 DONORS



Thank you to everyone who helped us successfully meet the generous challenge grant made by the Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation in honor of Tracy Holmes. This season was possible thanks to you!

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Matching gift from Pfizer

We gratefully acknowledge the many hosts who have installed nest patches on their roof tops and the many others who have helped support Project Nighthawk with their donations over the past year.

\* Matched by the Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation Challenge Grant in honor of Tracy Holmes.