

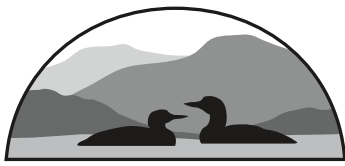
New Hampshire

BIRD RECORDS



WINTER 2023-24

Vol. 42, No. 4



NH AUDUBON

Protecting our environment since 1914

NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS

VOLUME 42 NUMBER 4
WINTER 2023-24

www.nhbirdrecords.org

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IN HONOR OF

The Twitchers out of the Rye

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* is sponsored by Catherine Eames in support of the Twitchers out of the Rye, the New Hampshire team that competes in the Superbowl of Birding and raises money for *New Hampshire Bird Records*. Learn more about this fun competition on page 33.

The “Twitcher Feeding Table” at Bicentennial Park provided by Catherine Eames (left) with hot soup, hot drinks, corn bread, and homemade cookies, plus a puffin!

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A Changing of the Editors

WINTER 2023-24

Retirement

by Rebecca Suomala

After 36 years of working for NH Audubon, I am retiring at the end of 2024! For most of my career, I have been working on *New Hampshire Bird Records*, starting as Managing Editor in Spring 1989 when Diane De Luca was the General Editor. Beginning with the Summer 1991 issue, I took on the full Managing and General Editor tasks which I've continued to this day.

There have been huge changes during my years with the publication. I tried to describe them briefly, but as I looked at past issues, I realized there were even more changes than I remembered. You can read about some of them in my article on page 3.

I am grateful to all of the many wonderful volunteers who have helped make *New Hampshire Bird Records* such a fantastic publication. There are volunteers doing office tasks, volunteers who enter data, volunteer Season Editors, mailing volunteers, eBird reviewers, volunteer writers, assistants, webmasters, proofreaders, etc. It takes a huge team to not only put each issue together but to make sure we have accurate data for the publication and, most importantly, for



Becky Suomala, trying to climb a tree to confirm a calling Least Bittern in Newfields, NH, 6-19-2023 by Steve Mirick.

bird conservation. I am honored to have worked with so many terrific people.

Please join me in welcoming Grace McCulloch to the *New Hampshire Bird Records* Editor position. Grace brings many skills and abilities to the position, a familiarity with technology, and a very friendly personality. I have enjoyed working with her as she takes on the position and I think you will all like the fresh energy she brings.

Thank you to all who have supported *New Hampshire Bird Records* and me over the years, whether as a volunteer, a subscriber, a bird reporter, or a fellow birder. I look forward to being out birding and continuing to contribute to this terrific publication.

Your Retiring Editor,
Becky

Note: No gifts please, but I would be truly honored by any donations to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund at NH Audubon.

Donations may be made:

- By check made out to NH Audubon with NHBR Endowment Fund in the memo line and mailed to NH Audubon.
- On the NH Audubon website under Support Our Research: <https://www.nh Audubon.org/donate/other-ways-to-give/support-research/> (QR code below). Select the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment to contribute to this fund.



For more information, contact Hope Jordan,
hjordan@nh Audubon.org.

A Tough Act to Follow

by Grace McCulloch

Filling Becky's shoes will be no small feat. Nonetheless, I am thrilled to write to you as the new editor of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. Like you, I love the diversity of experiences, tales, and birds highlighted in this publication. Everyone has their own story of how they got into birding. My passion started with a photography obsession. It was deepened while traipsing through forests at the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Brunswick, Vermont, and Bartlett Experimental Forest in New Hampshire, surveying birds for a functional diversity study.

I put my love for birds to good use while studying at the University of New Hampshire. Through my graduate research partnering with Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, I had the privilege of working with the vulnerable Saltmarsh Sparrow, a species threatened with extinction in the coming years due to accelerated sea-level rise. I zig-zagged across salt marshes searching for nests,



Grace in her natural habitat, banding Saltmarsh Sparrows as part of her graduate research at the University of New Hampshire. Photo by Kara Cole.

banding chicks, and consulting on restoration projects. I look forward to sharing more of my work with you as time goes on, including (but not limited to) stories of being waist deep in mud while trying to catch and band this sneaky species. The plight of the Saltmarsh Sparrow is a good reminder of the importance of paying close attention to our local birds, telling their stories, and taking part in conservation action wherever possible.

Editing this publication is an honor I deeply respect. Becky's impact on our community is immense, and while I may never fill her shoes, I embrace the opportunity to learn from all of you—our readers, writers, and fellow editors. Together, we will continue to highlight thrilling discoveries, humorous anecdotes, and above all, a shared love for the natural world and our responsibility to conserve it here in New Hampshire.

Thank you for trusting me with this.

Your New Editor,

Grace

Thirty-five Years of Changes to *New Hampshire Bird Records*

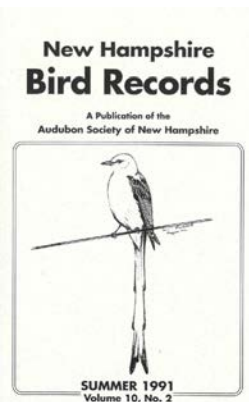
by Rebecca Suomala

Since the Summer 1991 issue, I have been the General Editor of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. There have been huge changes during that time and I was reminded of them as I looked back at the early issues. There was no eBird when I started. If you wanted to know what birds had been seen, *New Hampshire Bird Records* was the only place to find out. We published each season's summary along with **all the bird reports** that were sent in to NH Audubon (on 3" x 5" slips) after entering them in a DOS-based database (computers did not have a mouse in those days).

We printed out the issue and glued on bird cut-outs where we wanted graphics. There were no photos in the publication and no articles. The interior pages were color coded by season: green for spring, blue for summer, orange for fall, and white for winter. Drawings by Iain MacLeod and others graced our covers. The first photo cover was Spring 1997 of a Peregrine Falcon taken on the 18th floor of the City Hall Plaza in Manchester before they started nesting in the city. The first color cover appeared, thanks to sponsorships, in Spring 2005. We were able to add more color photos thanks to continuing sponsorships.

Articles began to appear regularly with the Winter 1995-96 issue. They were popular and have increased over the years. As birding grew, the number of reports mushroomed and we couldn't publish them all. When we switched to eBird in September of 2009, the number of spring reports jumped from 4,760 to over 43,000 in Spring 2010, and eventually to over 200,000! It was time to change the format again and convert the list of sightings to the narrative that you see today (which is the same format used for the season summaries when *New Hampshire Bird Records* first became an independent publication in Spring 1982). With the advent of digital photography, the number of excellent photos skyrocketed making for some wonderful images in each issue. We're grateful to all the photographers who share their pictures.

Long-time subscribers will remember that timeliness was a challenge from before I started. There were even six



Becky Suomala became the sole Editor for New Hampshire Bird Records with the Summer 1991 issue (Vol. 10, No. 2) after having shared the responsibilities with Technical Editor, Diane De Luca. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher drawing by Iain MacLeod.

seasons that had never been published (Spring 1986 through Summer 1987). It seemed we were always running late and I was continually saying “We’re catching up” in my From the Editor piece. Finally, we settled on the goal of getting the publication out before that season started again the following year. It wasn’t until the Spring 2021 issue, after yet more delays from COVID, that we met that goal and have maintained that schedule since—yay! Bob Quinn wrote up the missing seasons after volunteers entered the data, and we published them in 2006, maintaining NH Audubon’s unbroken record of publishing New Hampshire’s bird sightings since 1921.

When I started with *New Hampshire Bird Records*, it was a free member benefit and funding was not always available to print the issue. I was surprised to rediscover that my parents, Nan and Ted Waldron, sponsored at least four issues so we could get them printed. We changed to a subscription publication (Spring 1992), but funding remained a challenge, prompting the establishment of the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund to provide long-term support for “bird sighting data collection, organization, utilization and publication, and the preservation of New Hampshire bird information,” while also allowing flexibility for the changing format of these efforts. It’s so exciting to see the publication once again going out to all the members and in a full-color digital version.

It has been wonderful to see the growth of the birding community in New Hampshire. There are so many more birders finding more birds and sharing them with each other. I have had a unique opportunity to share my passion for birds as I worked with *New Hampshire Bird Records* and the special community of New Hampshire birders. I look forward to seeing what exciting changes the future will bring.



Left: The first issue with a photo on the cover, Spring 1997 (Vol. 16, No. 1). The photo was by Anne St. Cyr in August 1997 from her office window. According to NH Audubon’s Chris Martin, it was an unbanded male with some juvenal plumage. Right: The first color cover, Spring 2005 (Vol. 24, No. 1). This Red-necked Phalarope was part of a phalarope fallout during a May nor’easter. Garth McElroy photographed it on May 25, 2005 in a puddle at the Rye Harbor State Park parking lot.

Photo Quiz

Can You Identify These *Winter* Birds?

by Greg Tillman

Photo 1 comes from Roger Frieden taken in January in Nottingham, NH. The bird perches nicely for us, waiting to be identified.

The bird in Photo 2 is somewhat uncommon during New Hampshire winters. The family might be easy, but can you identify the bird to species? (We’ve blacked out a bit of the branch in this photo, because feet are difficult to black out individually!). Jim Sparrell took this photo in February in Portsmouth, NH.



Photo 1.



Photo 2.

See the answer on page 43.

Payment for Printed Copies Due

If you wish to receive a **print copy** of *New Hampshire Bird Records* it’s time to send in your payment for the coming year. The publication will continue to be available **to members** for free in the digital format. Printed copies are available to members for an annual fee that helps cover the cost of printing and mailing. See page 44 for details.

New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund

Donations to this fund provide long-term support for all facets of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, from the publication to the collection, organization, quality control, dissemination, preservation, and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information.

Leave a Legacy for the Birds with a bequest in your will to the Fund:

I give and bequeath ____ % of my residuary estate (or a specific sum of \$ ____) to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund, a permanently restricted fund of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH.

For more information, contact the Editor or Hope Jordan, Development Director (603) 224-9909 x307; hjordan@nhaudubon.org.

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Abbreviations Used

AMC	Appalachian Mountain Club
BBC	Brookline Bird Club
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
CA	Conservation Area
CC	Country Club
CFT	NH Audubon Chapter Field Trip
FT	Field Trip
IBA	Important Bird Area
L.	Lake
LPC	Loon Preservation Committee
NA	Natural Area
NHA	New Hampshire Audubon
NHBR	New Hampshire Bird Records
NHRBC	NH Rare Birds Committee
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PO	Post Office
R.	River
Rd.	Road
RO	Raptor Observatory
Rt.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SPNHF	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Concord
T&M	Thompson & Meserves (Purchase)
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WMNF	White Mountain National Forest
WS	NHA Wildlife Sanctuary
~	approximately
WTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

New Hampshire Bird Records Payment Form

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84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH 03301

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New Hampshire Bird Records © NH Audubon October 2024

Published by NH Audubon's Conservation Department

Printed on Recycled Paper



Information at www.nhbirdrecords.org