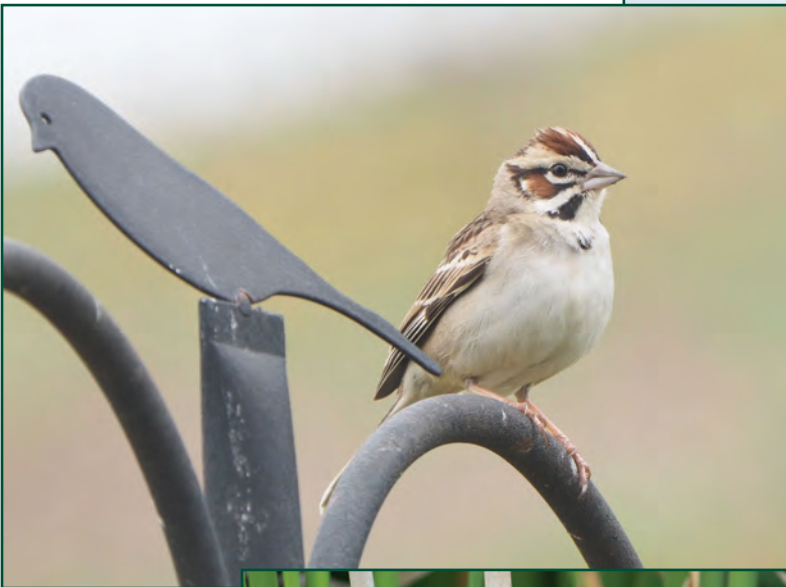


New Hampshire Bird Records





NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS
VOLUME 37 NUMBER 2
SUMMER 2018

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IN MEMORY OF

Chandler S. Robbins

The 2018 issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* are sponsored by George C. Robbins in memory and honor of his father, Chan Robbins. Each issue has an article by George about his father, highlighting his father's phenomenal accomplishments in the field of ornithology and connections to New Hampshire.



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Cover Photos: Least Bittern by Jason Lambert, 7-12-18, Madbury, NH (bottom). Lark Sparrow by George Welch, 6-23-18, Loudon, NH (top left) – the first summer record for the state. Royal Tern by Leo McKillop, 7-6-18, Great Boars Head, Hampton, NH (top right).

New Hampshire Bird Records is published quarterly by NH Audubon's Conservation Department. Thank you to the many observers who submit their sightings to NH eBird (www.ebird.org/nh), the source of data for this publication. The published sightings typically represent the highlights of the season. Not all species reported will appear in the issue. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication here does not imply future acceptance by the RBC.

New Hampshire Bird Records © NH Audubon July, 2019

Published by NH Audubon's Conservation Department



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Mississippi Kites Nesting in New Hampshire in 2018

by Steve Mirick

New Hampshire's famous Mississippi Kites rebounded from last year's disastrous nesting season with at least three successful nests in the State. They also expanded their limited range in the State with the first confirmed nesting outside of Newmarket since the kites were first found nesting in New Hampshire in 2008.

There were three active pairs of kites reported in New Hampshire in 2018. Additional birds included a wandering adult in Langdon (!) on June 8 and a first summer bird in early spring in Newmarket. This means that there were at least eight individual adult or sub-adult birds reported this spring/summer in New Hampshire. Aside from the bird seen in Langdon, all of the sightings were near the three nesting territories in Newmarket, Durham, and Stratham in southeastern New Hampshire.



Mississippi Kite by Steve Mirick, 7-4-18, Newmarket, NH.

As in past years, the nest sites continue to be in residential neighborhoods, often in front or rear yards! The specific nest locations in Newmarket and Stratham have been kept a secret in order to protect the residents of the neighborhood. The birds, however, seem to be fairly tolerant of human activity on the ground below the nest.

Below is a summary of the nest sites from each town.

Newmarket

Following last year's disasters on Huckin's Drive (death of the male and the chick, see the Summer 2017 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*), it appears the female found a new mate and established a new territory. The specific location has been kept a secret; however, the nest was first discovered on August 1, high in an oak tree in a front yard within a residential neighborhood. The single chick was first noted "branching" with weak flight on August 19 and was still in the area being fed by an adult as late as September 1 (13 days after leaving the nest).

Durham

This territory was first noted in 2017, but there was little follow-up and no nest was confirmed; however, it is likely

that there was at least a nest attempt in 2017. This year, the nest was first discovered on July 24 high in a white pine tree in a back yard along Madbury Road in Durham. Thanks to the accommodating property owners, the nest was visited by hordes of birders. The nest was even shown on television when Channel 9 out of Manchester broadcast a segment on the birds! The baby was first reported "branching" as early as August 10, and as of August 26 (16 days after leaving the nest), it was doing well and still being fed by the parents.

Stratham

This territory was first noted in 2017, and I believe they attempted to nest (copulation observed), but I couldn't find the nest despite a lot of searching. In 2018, the nest was discovered on August 1, high in an oak tree in the front yard within a residential neighborhood. The specific location has been kept a secret. The young bird was first noted "branching" with short flights on August 12. On August 29, the juvenile was making long sustained flights and chasing flying insects, but as of September 1 (20 days after leaving the nest), the young bird was still being fed by the parents and even flew back to the nest site to be fed!

In summary, it appears 2018 was a great year for the kites in New Hampshire with three nests and three fledged young (one from each nest). Kites typically only have a single chick in New Hampshire. The only other kites nesting in New England that I know of are in Connecticut where there are reportedly one or two nest territories which have been kept a secret.

Pied-billed Grebes Nesting in Dixville Notch

by Lori Charron

Photos taken by Lori Charron at the Panorama Golf Course.

In 2017 I discovered a nesting pair of Pied-billed Grebes at the Panorama Golf Course in Dixville Notch (Colebrook portion). They were in one of several ponds that had not been maintained since the golf course closed and they had become great habitat for grebes.

They returned in 2018 and on May 20 I observed that they had a nest. On June 12 I saw my first chick. On July 5 I had my first look at the grebe family – six in all! How exciting! I spent many hours observing this family. The first thing I noticed was the chicks were at different ages and stages. By July 12 one adult had left leaving the other adult to raise the chicks. It was fascinating to see how the adult could hide all six on its back (see the photo on the back

cover). By July 16 the chicks were no longer allowed on the adult's back. The oldest chick was pretty independent by this time.

On August 1 the adult had moved to another pond adjacent to the nesting pond and by August 3 the chicks were left on their own. It became a challenge to locate them each day as they moved around from pond to pond. They would be found in three ponds, all close together. By September 10 all but one grebe had left. This one began to hang out with a Mallard family. One month later the last grebe left.

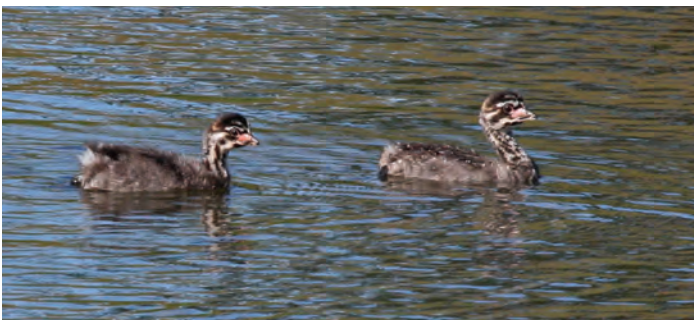
For five months I watched this family grow. Even though I spent almost every day down by the ponds the adult was quick at rousing the young chicks to get on her back. She also taught them to head for the reeds and hide. I never saw them fly. I did observe the last one practicing take off. It was shortly after that, that the ponds were empty. I am anxious to see what next year brings!



Pied-billed Grebe pair, 5-28-18.



Pied-billed Grebe family of six young, 7-16-18.



Two juvenile Pied-billed Grebes, 7-25-18.

How Should We Count the Barred Owls?

by Kathryn Frieden

We live in Nottingham near the end of a mile-long dirt road. There are woods lining the road that extend for several miles in each direction and we have heard adult Barred Owls calling many times during spring and summer nights. On July 19, 2018 we were driving home around 9:00 pm. When we reached the dirt road,



Juvenile Barred Owl by Kristen Ward.

we rolled down the windows of the car as usual to listen for owls. Immediately, we heard a series of hissing, shrieking calls that made one think an animal was dying. Looking up in the trees, we saw two juvenile Barred Owls perched near the side of the road and realized they were responsible for all the noise. There was also a third one calling from out of sight. We then proceeded slowly with the windows open, but heard nothing else until reaching home about five minutes later. We got out of the car and were immediately barraged by those same loud hissing calls. There were three young Barred Owls clearly visible in the trees next to the house! They stayed almost the whole night calling within earshot.

Were there **six** juvenile Barred Owls in two family groups, or were there just **three** that had followed us home?

The Barred Owl is New Hampshire's most common owl. They nest primarily in mature mixed/deciduous forests. There have been numerous studies looking at territory size, concluding that the average is around one square mile. There were higher densities in areas that were nearer water, as well as in suburban parks. The woods around us are contiguous with both Pawtuckaway Lake and some marshy areas associated with several brooks, so would seem to be able to support more than one Barred Owl territory.

In New England, Barred Owls lay their eggs during late March or April, averaging a clutch of two or three. The incubation period is one month. Flightless fledglings can leave the nest at one month of age, well before they can fly. They perch on nearby branches, remaining near the nest while continuing to be fed by the parents. They don't begin short flights until approximately ten weeks of age and by twelve weeks, they can manage longer flights (Soucy 1976).

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Great Egret by Len Medlock, 4-13-18, Hampton, NH.

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

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Summer 2018 Highlights

Photo Quiz



Can You Identify This Bird?

We are once again able to offer a color Photo Quiz, thanks to George Robbins' sponsorship of all four 2018 issues. See inside for the answer. Photo by Jason Lambert.



Lori Charron photographed this Pied-billed Grebe family on 7-5-18 in Colebrook, NH. See more photos and her article inside.



An orange Scarlet Tanager? Aren't they supposed to be red? Read inside for what causes orange variants like this one photographed by Jennifer McKown.



Green Heron by Debra Powers, 7-2-18, Newmarket, NH.



This robin's nest was discovered in a backyard bush with both eggs and blueberries in it. We can only speculate on why! Photo by Vicki LaPorte, 07-23-18, Peppermint St., Goffstown, NH.

