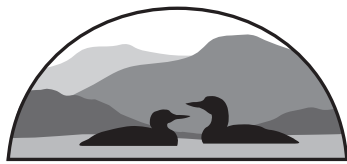


# New Hampshire

## BIRD RECORDS





**NH AUDUBON**

Protecting our environment since 1914

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS**  
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**IN HONOR OF**

**Steve and Jane Mirick**

The 2022 issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* are sponsored in appreciation of Steve and Jane Mirick for all that they do for the birding community. They have been responsible for finding (and re-finding) many rarities, spreading the word, and staying on the bird. Many of us owe life birds to them and we are grateful for all that they do.

*Steve and Jane Mirick by Leo McKillop, 9-5-20.*

**In This Issue**

Late Fall Migrants .....	Inside Front Cover
From the Editor .....	2
Interview with a Birder: Steve Mirick <i>by Kathryn Frieden</i> .....	2
Fall Season: August 1 through November 30, 2022 <i>by Ben Griffith</i> .....	4
Regional Report – Coos County <i>by Robert A. Quinn</i> .....	10
Tropical Kingbird in Greenland <i>by Stephen Mirick</i> .....	13
November County Challenge 2022 compiled <i>by Rebecca Suomala</i> .....	14
Fall 2022 New Hampshire Raptor Migration Report <i>by Iain MacLeod</i> .....	16
New Hampshire's Newest Hawkwatch at Alton Bay <i>by Rob Woodward</i> .....	20
Fall 2022 Nighthawk Migration .....	21
Nighthawk Migration Musings <i>by Rob Woodward</i> .....	21
Nighthawk Migration in Concord, NH <i>by Rebecca Suomala</i> .....	22
Nighthawk Watches Piloted in Hancock and Swanzey <i>by Phil Brown</i> .....	22
Field Notes, <i>Anita Fernandez, Editor</i> .....	24
Look Who's Looking at You.....	24
Swooping Cedar Waxwings in Peterborough <i>by John Ranta</i> .....	24
A Hole in Your Apple? Don't Blame the Worm <i>by Anita Fernandez</i> .....	25
Leucistic Chickadee in Warren since 2017 <i>by Anita Fernandez</i> .....	25
A Ray of Sunshine in an Evening Grosbeak Flock: Schizochromism <i>by Anita Fernandez</i> .....	25
American Goldfinch Eat to the Beet (Greens) <i>by Anita Fernandez</i> .....	26
A Ruffed Grouse Making a "Friend" in Warner <i>by Anita Fernandez</i> .....	26
Why did the Cattle Egrets cross Rt. 108? <i>by Steve Mirick</i> .....	27
There's No Place Like Home: A Dream Season in Sandwich <i>by Ken Klapper</i> .....	28
Fall Pelagic Trip and Photo Gallery <i>by Steve Mirick</i> .....	29
Northern Saw-Whet Owl Banding in the Monadnock Region <i>by Hillary Siener</i> .....	31
Birding Grey Rocks Conservation Area <i>by Suzanne Smith, Mirka Zapletal, and Tom McShane</i> .....	33
Broad-winged Hawk Nest Monitoring and Tracking <i>by Phil Brown</i> .....	35
What to Watch for in Fall.....	39
Colors of Fall.....	Inside Back Cover





Staff and volunteers holding saw-whet owls in bags (a method to keep the bird calm) after a net check on the big owl night, October 27, 2022. From left to right: Brett Amy Thelen, Annamarie Saenger, Julie Brown, and Will Stollsteimer.



A saw-whet owl about to be extracted from a cloth bag at the banding station.

## Birding Grey Rocks Conservation Area

by Suzanne Smith, Mirka Zapletal, and Tom McShane



The channel at Grey Rocks Conservation Area adjacent to the Sandy Point Trail by Mirka Zapletal, 9-26-22, Hebron, NH.

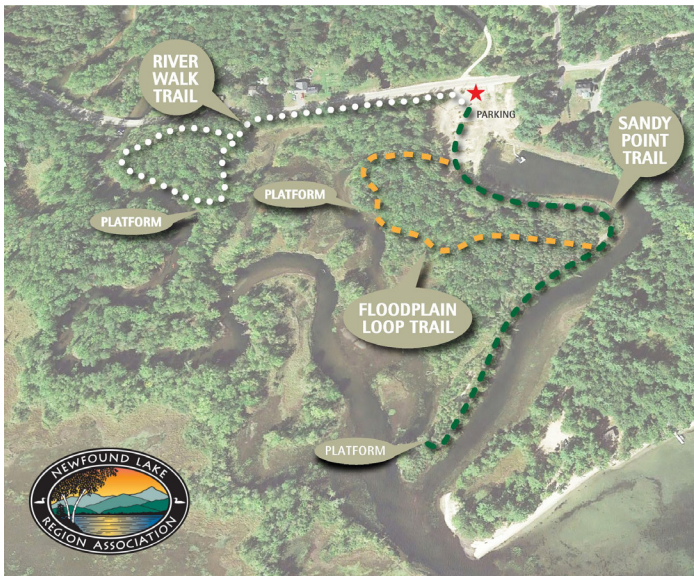
eBird Hotspot: Grey Rocks Conservation Area  
<https://ebird.org/nh/hotspot/L3119331>

Grey Rocks Conservation Area is a parcel of over 29 acres located on the north shore of Newfound Lake in Hebron, NH. Owned by the Newfound Lake Region Association (NLRA), the area sits at the mouth of the Cockermouth River between the Charles L. Bean Sanctuary and NH Audubon's Paradise Point Nature Center. Prior to being placed under conservation easement and donated to NLRA in 2011, the area had been used as a girl's camp in the 1930s followed by Newfound Lake Marina which included buildings and a dredged channel. Structures were removed before donation to NLRA and restoration work since then has focused on returning the site to a more natural state, including replacing a falling retaining wall with rocks and adding trees, shrubs, and other plants. Today visitors can explore the area by foot or non-motorized boat and enjoy a variety of habitats and wildlife along the lake and river.

Grey Rocks Conservation Area is located at 178 North Shore Road in Hebron. From Bristol, go north on Rt. 3A to the far end of the lake and turn left onto North Shore Road. Drive 1.6 miles and the parking lot will be on the left. From Plymouth, go south into Hebron on Rt. 3A and turn right onto North Shore Road. In the parking lot, you'll find a kiosk with trail and access information. As you enter the parking lot, there are picnic tables in the open area directly in front of the lot. A portable toilet facility is available from May to October. Access is maintained year-round and is free to the public. In the winter, trails are packed down by snowshoe volunteers.



Adjacent to the parking lot is an open area that is bordered by early successional forest with birch, aspen, maple, and oaks; at times Wild Turkeys and sparrows are found foraging here. Birding can be done on land using one of Grey Rock's three trails. The total mileage for the trails is 1.5 miles and all trails are accessed from the parking lot.



*The trails of Grey Rocks Conservation Area, Hebron, NH.*

## 1. Sandy Point Trail

The most popular trail is the Sandy Point Trail which begins to the left of the picnic tables and runs adjacent to the channel, passing pollinator gardens and terminating at a viewing platform that overlooks the wetland toward the Cocker mouth River and Charles L. Bean Sanctuary. Along the way, there are viewpoints across the channel where White Pine trees are present. Aquatic vegetation within the channel expands throughout the summer, creating habitat for dabbling ducks, herons, and bitterns. A resident Bald Eagle family nests in the White Pines in that area and can be seen frequently flying and hunting out over the wetland and lake. Highbush Blueberries and alder grow in thickets along the far end of the trail, providing food and shelter for wildlife and you may encounter foraging mixed flocks with Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, and Black-and-white Warblers. Other warblers frequently found at Grey Rocks include Yellow, Common Yellowthroat, and American Redstart. Vireos include Red-eyed, Blue-headed, and Warbling. The wetland is fed by the Cocker mouth River which has created a delta with winding channels which are prime habitat for a variety of ducks including Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, and both Common and Hooded Merganser. During migration, Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye can also be found. Sandy Point Trail is wide, level packed ground to accommodate wheelchairs and strollers. Changing environmental conditions may affect the accessibility.

## 2. Floodplain Loop

The Floodplain Loop Trail is accessed from the southwest corner of the parking lot. It can be a seasonally wet trail, but foot bridges and a small, elevated walkway make the trail passable by foot; it is not accessible by wheelchair or stroller. Veery are found along the trail as it winds through a maple and White Ash floodplain. There are several seasonal and year-round pools to either side that support wildlife. A viewing platform provides a second viewpoint of the marsh and more duck habitat. Two small islands with silver maples and low brush provide cover for flycatchers, warblers, Gray Catbirds, and Song and Swamp Sparrows. Belted Kingfishers and Great Blue Herons are regularly observed. The far end of the trail intersects with the Sandy Point Trail and visitors can return to the parking lot or continue to the Sandy Point viewing platform.



*American Bittern at Grey Rocks Conservation Area, 7-31-22, by Tom McShane.*

## 3. River Walk Trail

The River Walk Trail is accessed from the west side of the parking lot adjacent to North Shore Road. Walkers proceed along the south side of the road and along wetlands until turning down into the maple and White Ash forest. The trail is a loop with a viewing platform which overlooks the Cocker mouth River. The River Walk Trail is the narrowest and least accessible of the three with uneven ground and tree roots along the trail. In addition to species previously mentioned, Baltimore Oriole, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatch, and Cedar Waxwing can be found in the conservation area.

## Exploration by Boat

To explore Grey Rocks by water, a boat ramp for kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards is at the edge of the parking lot. The water provides access to the main part of Newfound



Lake, the wetland area between Grey Rocks and the Charles L. Bean Sanctuary, and the Cockermouth River. The Northern Newfound Water Trail includes locations within a variety of habitats encompassing the ecology and history of the area. Map brochures are available at the kiosk during the boating season and can also be found online at [NewfoundLake.org](http://NewfoundLake.org).

In the summer of 2022, members of NLRA worked with the Loon Preservation Committee to place a nesting raft in marsh adjacent to the Charles L. Bean Sanctuary on Newfound Lake. As is the case in many of the water bodies in New Hampshire, the nesting pair of Common Loons has struggled to consistently produce young. As part of an ongoing effort to assist the loons, NLRA has established two lead tackle exchange sites on Newfound Lake during the boating season. One is located at the state boat ramp at Wellington State Park; the other is at Grey Rocks Conservation Area. Loons are often seen within the conservation area as well as nearby marsh.

The Grey Rocks Conservation Area habitat provides for a variety of species in all seasons. The well-maintained trails and three viewing platforms in a range of accessibilities provide birders an opportunity to experience a satisfying day along the Newfound Lake wetland and Cockermouth River Delta. The NLRA manages Grey Rocks Conservation Area as a place for people, plants, and wildlife as part of its broader work to protect the high-quality waters of Newfound Lake and its watershed, maintaining a healthy and diverse ecosystem. Along with community data collection on water quality and educational programming, NLRA conserves land, manages storm water pollution, and monitors for invasive species. For more than 50 years, NLRA has been protecting Newfound Lake and the results of that conservation are as clear as Newfound's water. You can learn more about NLRA's initiatives at [NewfoundLake.org](http://NewfoundLake.org).

*Tom McShane is an NLRA and NH Audubon volunteer from Plymouth, NH. Suzanne Smith is a long-time volunteer with NLRA and NH Audubon and co-chairs the Hebron Conservation Commission. Mirka Zapletal is the Education and Outreach Manager at NLRA and a New Hampshire native.*



*Wood Ducks at Grey Rocks Conservation Area, 4-2-22, by Toby Slackton.*



*The Grey Rocks marina several decades ago and the same area in 2015 several years after remediation began and the property was donated. Photos courtesy of Newfound Lake Region Association.*

## Broad-winged Hawk Nest Monitoring and Tracking

*by Phil Brown*

The Broad-winged Hawk is a medium-sized Buteo and a common breeding raptor of the Monadnock Region and in parts of the eastern forests of the US and southern Canada. As a complete migrant, Broad-wingeds winter entirely south of their breeding range, from southern Mexico to Bolivia. The core of the winter population is thought to be centered in northern portions of South America. Broad-wingeds make spectacular fall migrations along the ridgelines of the Appalachian Mountains and are widely celebrated by hawkwatchers at migration monitoring sites along the Eastern Flyway and into Central America. The Harris Center for Conservation Education's own Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory in Peterborough, NH is one such location. During mid-September each year, crowds gather to view this spectacle as hundreds, or even thousands, form massive flocks and ride thermals as they migrate south. This spectacle compounds as populations converge in Texas, Mexico, and Central America, where almost two million birds –



# Fall 2023 Rarities



*Ross's Goose by Ed North, 12-1-22, Rochester WTP, NH.*



*The Audubon's subspecies of the Yellow-rumped Warbler (note the yellow throat) by Steve Mirick, 11-22-22, Willow Ave., N. Hampton, NH.*



*Rufous Hummingbird by Steve Mirick, 11-5-22, Newmarket, NH.*



*LeConte's Sparrow by Jim Sparrell, 10-31-22, Goss Farm, Rye, NH.*



*Black Tern found and photographed by Tom Momeyer, 8-21-22, Peterborough WTP, NH.*



*Rufous Hummingbird by Cameron Johnson, 11-5-22, Newmarket, NH.*