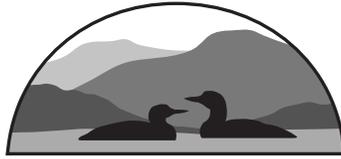


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FALL 2024

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Davis Finch by Steve Mirick.

IN MEMORY OF

Davis Finch

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* is sponsored in memory of Davis Finch—a remarkable man with a gift for gently sharing his passion for birds and birding. Enjoy the treasure trove of memories shared by his friends in this issue.

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From the Editor

FALL 2024

Transitioning Online: Embracing New Opportunities

Since its founding in 1982, *New Hampshire Bird Records* has been a cornerstone of the state's birding community—documenting rare sightings, sharing expert knowledge, and connecting people through a shared love of birds.

When the publication began, there was no widely available internet—and certainly no eBird. Observations were handwritten on paper slips and mailed to NH Audubon, where a dedicated team of volunteers compiled them with care and precision. Over time, the publication evolved: articles became a beloved feature, eBird revolutionized how we report sightings, and digital issues became freely available to NH Audubon members.

The impact *New Hampshire Bird Records* has had over the decades is immeasurable. Yet as times change, so must we. Today, fewer than 70 people pay for the print edition.

To remain sustainable, we will be transitioning to a new format. Print issues will continue through the end of this calendar year, with our final issue (Winter 2024–25) scheduled for release in November 2025. By the time that issue is in your hands, the new *New Hampshire Bird Records* website will be live as part of the NH Audubon site—a place for articles on all things birds and birding in New Hampshire.

This next chapter brings exciting opportunities:

- **Timely content** – Articles can be published as soon as they're ready, allowing us to share stories and sightings closer to when they happen.
- **Greater accessibility** – The new online platform will be open to all visitors, reaching a broader audience beyond NH Audubon membership.
- **Enhanced searchability** – Whether you're looking for birding hotspots, species-specific reports, or seasonal trends, articles will be easier to find and revisit.

We know this transition may bring mixed emotions—especially for those who love the feel of a printed issue arriving in the mail. As someone who values that experience, I understand. But I'm also excited by the potential to reach more readers, highlight emerging conservation issues more quickly, and deliver the same thoughtful, local birding content to a wider community.

A heartfelt thank you to those who have contributed to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund.

Your generosity ensures the continuation of this publication in whatever form it takes and also supports eBird review efforts in New Hampshire—both of which are vital to bird conservation and birding in our state.

Thank you for being part of the *New Hampshire Bird Records* family. Your support has shaped what this publication has become, and we look forward to continuing this journey with you—just in a new and more dynamic format. More information on these changes will be included in the next issue. In the meantime, if you'd like to get in touch, feel free to email me at gmcculloch@nhaudubon.org.

Grace McCulloch, *Editor, New Hampshire Bird Records*

Note: If you've paid in advance for next year's print issues, I will be in touch. You are also always welcome to reach out to me with any questions.

Photo Quiz

by Greg Tillman



Can you identify this bird?

Our photo was taken in May. This summer resident begins migrating south in late August and September.

See the answer on page 39.

three owls banded at our station in 2024 were recaptured in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Over the course of the project, we have had 17 interstation encounters of saw-whet owls (Figure 3). All recaptures help to paint a picture of where these owls move from one year to the next, their rate of travel, important migration routes, their longevity, overwintering areas, and much more.

The Harris Center will continue to monitor the saw-whet owl population, contribute to the continent-wide understanding of their movements, and offer educational programs in 2025. Special thanks to the Harris Center's 50th Anniversary Fund, Project OwlNet, and New Hampshire Fish and Game. This project was also made possible by 23 Harris Center staff and volunteers who contributed hundreds of hours to the project while donning headlamps and braving chilly fall evenings in the woods. The Aurora Borealis was also a treat for volunteers on a couple of occasions this fall.



Figure 3. Map showing locations where Northern Saw-whet Owls banded on Harris Center for Conservation Education lands have subsequently been encountered, and where previously banded owls encountered at Harris Center sites were originally banded. Solid lines indicate same-season encounters, and dashed lines indicate owls that were banded in a previous season before they were re-encountered. Data shown here represents encounters from 2022-2024. Map created by Mike Valentino. Updates by Nate Marchessault.

Birding in Pawtuckaway State Park

by Mark Suomala



Pawtuckaway Lake by Karen Rydeen.

Pawtuckaway State Park is located in Deerfield and Nottingham. It is 5,500 acres in size and contains a variety of landscapes centered around the Pawtuckaway Mountains and Pawtuckaway Lake.

The park has recorded several bird species normally found farther south in New England, including Cerulean Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Acadian Flycatcher. These occur in the park irregularly and mainly in association with the Dry Appalachian Oak Forests, primarily restricted to the park's south-facing slopes. Red and White Oak as well as Shagbark Hickory dominate the tree canopy on these slopes.

The park's most productive birding areas are accessible by gravel roads and hiking trails. The last three weeks in May are a particularly good time to visit. Tower Road and Round Pond Road are usually gated until Memorial Day, consequently there are no motorized vehicles on the roads. This is also a peak time for returning avian migrants. Some breed in the area, others just stop over as they travel farther north.

The Reservation Road, Tower Road, and Round Pond Road Loop

To get to the west entrance, travel on Route 107 to Reservation Road and drive east. There is a small brown sign indicating the way to the Fire Tower. In 1.1 miles, there is a power line crossing. This is not the park but is a good place to pull over, as long as the "No Trespassing" signs are heeded. Early successional trees and shrubs under the wires are maintained by regular cutting. From the roadside, a number of species can be encountered; Prairie Warbler, Chestnut-

sided Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Indigo Bunting nest here. Most of these species can also be found in the park.

In 0.1 miles, bear right to continue on Reservation Road, which is dirt. After about 0.25 miles, you will enter the park, and in another short distance there is a sign for North Mountain trail, formerly the designated parking lot. To get to the current parking area, continue 0.3 miles until a large, signed parking area on the left. Park here to hike the North Mountain Trail (since you already passed it, you will have to walk back on the road to the trailhead). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker have nested in this area; they can be heard “tapping” Morse code-like on trees.

After another 0.5 miles, Reservation Road crosses a wetland. This wetland can attract a variety of species. Look for Wood Duck, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Baltimore Oriole. In a short distance, Round Pond Road branches off to the left; it is usually gated until the end of May. Continue straight on Reservation Road for a short distance until you see a pull-out on the right. Four or five cars can fit. There is a small stand of pole-sized trees here that can attract Yellow-billed Cuckoo when there are webworms or hairy caterpillars present. Black-throated Green Warbler is also sometimes found on the other side of the road. Park here to continue on foot.



Black-throated Green Warbler in Pawtuckaway State Park by Roger Frieden.

Just a little farther on Reservation Road brings you to a left turn onto Tower Road. After about 0.3 miles, Tower Road travels along the edge of an extensive wetland. This habitat can yield many species. Potential species include Hooded Merganser, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Purple Finch, and Swamp Sparrow. In May, migrants can include Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Parula, and Palm Warbler.

Evening Grosbeak was formerly regular but is now rare.

Traveling another 0.4 miles will bring you to the Middle Mountain trailhead, and then to the Tower trailhead. A small stream-crossing here often hosts Louisiana Waterthrush, and this area was where Cerulean Warblers nested for several years. Great Crested Flycatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak can all be found here. If needed, there is a pit-toilet here.



Scarlet Tanager by Benjamin Griffith, 5-12-2024, Pawtuckaway State Park, Nottingham, NH.

The Middle Mountain Trail is roughly one mile and ends at a rocky outcrop with a view. Early spring arrivals found in this area include Pine Warbler, with its variable trilling song. White Pine are found throughout the park, but most Red Pine has been removed due to an infestation of Red Pine Scale. Louisiana Waterthrush can be heard singing and seen foraging along streams. Blue-headed Vireo usually arrive in April. Listen for Yellow-throated Vireo here. Their song is similar to Blue-headed Vireo but listen for a phrase that sounds like “three-eight” or “ee-yay.” Also listen for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher’s song, with its whispery high thin notes. Dark-eyed Junco nest at the top of Middle Mountain. A section of the trail is steep and rocky, but the open woodland allows for good views of the birds.

A half-mile hike on the Tower Trail brings you to the peak of South Mountain (908 ft.) and the fire tower. This can be a good place to look for migrating raptors in September and October. A short distance on Tower Road past the tower trailhead, there is a large parking area on the left next to the small Mountain Pond. Continuing on the road you will see a small clearing on the right, which is gradually filling in with trees. Least Flycatcher nests in this area. Aspen stands attract resident Ruffed Grouse, which can be heard “drumming” with their wings on downed logs. Just beyond the clearing, a swamp is on the right and Tower Road can be rough on the way to the intersection with Round Pond Road. The steep

slope on your left has hosted Worm-eating and Kentucky Warblers, but that was at least 25 years ago!

Turn right onto Round Pond Road. It is roughly a mile on the rough road to Round Pond. It leads past some Eastern Hemlock trees with nesting Blackburnian Warbler. Acadian Flycatcher has occurred at the Boulder Field trailhead on the left and a Black-backed Woodpecker was photographed here once—very rare! Winter Wren and Louisiana Waterthrush can sometimes be found along the streams and in the ravines past the Boulder Field trailhead. You will eventually see a swamp on the left that attracts Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Tree Swallows. In a short distance, you will reach Round Pond on the right. In the Round Pond area, some possible birds are Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Turkey Vulture. The road does not end at Round Pond but is usually underwater for a short distance before it continues to Route 156. Plan on turning around and backtracking.

Head back on Round Pond Road. A short distance past the intersection with Tower Road you will see a marsh on the left. There is a right turn leading into a parking lot. Park here to explore the marsh. This is a good place to look for Great Blue Heron, Eastern Kingbird, Veery, Yellow Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, and Gray Catbird. Mid-March through early April is a good time to look and listen for early-returning Red-shouldered Hawks soaring and vocalizing over the wetland areas. Resident Barred Owls can be heard hooting in the same habitat.

Continuing on Round Pond Road, there are numerous recent clearings and some wetlands. Broad-winged Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Canada Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Virginia Rail are all possible on the way back to Reservation Road.

Geology

The Pawtuckaway Mountains in New Hampshire are a small, rocky, circular range. They form the outline of an ancient volcanic ring dike, dating from 110-130 million years ago, the

Cretaceous Period. The inner ring is about one mile in diameter, the outer is nearly two. There is a geologically unusual field where large boulders known as glacial erratics were deposited when glacial ice melted near the end of the Ice Age. This is known as Boulder Field and is frequented by those seeking to climb them.

History

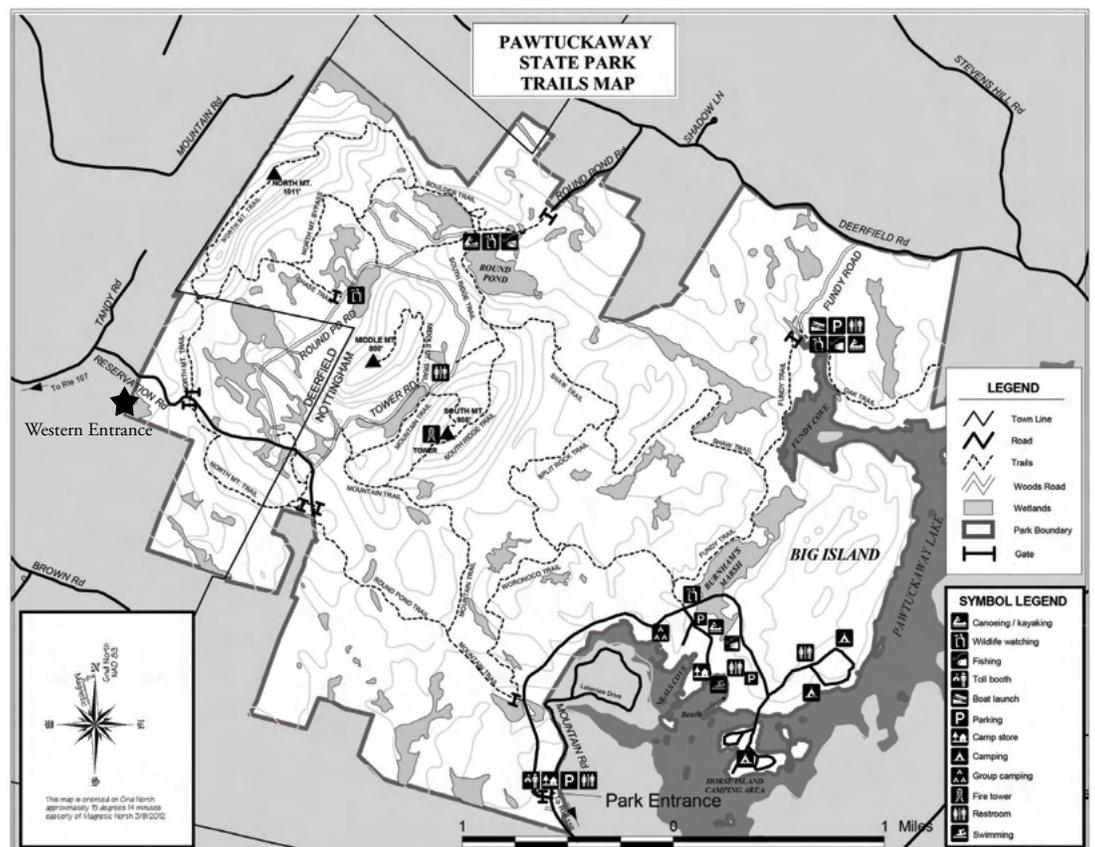
One source claims the name “Pawtuckaway” came from the Algonquian language, meaning “the Place of the Big Buck”. Another source notes that Native Americans called the area of Pawtuckaway “Land of Sticks and Stones,” since the lake area was not suitable for agriculture.

Restrooms

There is a pit toilet at the Tower Trail, but this should only be used in an emergency. The main park entrance and Fundy Road boat launch both have toilets.

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- Delorey, A. 1996. *A Birder's Guide to New Hampshire*. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
 Foss, C. 1994. *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*. Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Concord, NH.
 Spurduto, D., and B. Kimball. 2011. *The Nature of New Hampshire*. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.



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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.

Getting the Shot and the Shot



Cameron Johnson paddles the extra mile to photograph this Common Murre. Photos taken 11-10-2024, Hampton Harbor, NH. Top photograph by Ken Faucher.

Information at www.nhbirdrecords.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 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. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication here does not imply future acceptance by the RBC.

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Fall 2024 Rarities and Unusual Species



Long-tailed Jaeger by Debra Powers, 9-3-2024, NH waters between Isles of Shoals and Jeffreys Ledge.



New Hampshire's second record of a South Polar Skua. Photo by Leo McKillop, 9-3-2024, NH waters between Isles of Shoals and Jeffreys Ledge. Read more about this exciting finding on page 27.



A juvenile Little Gull by Leo McKillop, 9-20-2024, Odiorne Point State Park, Rye, NH.



Long-billed Dowitcher by Cameron Johnson, 10-14-2024, Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area, NH.