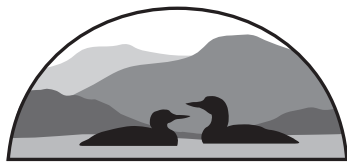


New Hampshire

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IN MEMORY OF

Paul Miliotis

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of Paul Miliotis in his memory. He was a great birder and teacher who loved to observe the natural world and tried to do what he could to protect it. Photo by Doug Hitchcox.

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Cover Photo: Say's Phoebe by Darryl Parker, 5-15-2023, Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, NH.

for at least an hour. There have been a fair number of ibis away from the coast this spring, perhaps a result of the return of this species as a breeder at the Isles of Shoals.

We left the faire a little after 4:00 pm, were back in Concord by 5:30, and at 5:50, I was back in full big day mode and walking around behind Unity's house. I had two goals here: 1) see if any of the Solitary Sandpipers she's been seeing there were still around and 2) listening for White-breasted Nuthatch. I was successful with the sandpipers. For some time now, the nuthatch had been the top contender for the "common species missed on a big day" award, and there it remained as I headed south. There were more people at Turtle Pond than I think I've ever seen there (and of course I'm not usually there at 6:00 pm on a gorgeous May weekend), but they didn't seem to bother the Common Loon. At this point, the sun was starting to set, the wind becoming more consistent, and birds quieting down. I decided to cash in my chips at West Locke Road, where I hoped the mix of forest, wetland, river, and field would produce the four species I needed to reach 100. First to fall was Savannah Sparrow, although they weren't singing and I was lucky to flush them from the side of the road. Second was an Osprey picked up during a random scan of the horizon. And then, as I walked back from the river, a White-breasted Nuthatch called off to my left; the award would have to go to another species. That species was *not* Virginia Rail, which called from the wetland as I continued walking back out. Not a bad species for #100, although it would also have been fun if it had been the nuthatch.

Now it was clean-up time, since the big day adrenaline wasn't letting me quit just yet. In short order, I added Killdeer along West Portsmouth Street, Great Blue Heron at Horseshoe Pond, and Bank Swallows in the fading light at the Steeplegate Mall pond. Sunset was at 8:00 pm, about the time I started driving to my final stop at the Concord Airport. A late flyover by a Merlin was a nice surprise as I walked to the airport fence, and shortly afterward, I heard two Grasshopper Sparrows singing. Also in the dusk chorus were a couple of Savannah and Field Sparrows, a towhee, and a startled robin, but ironically enough, there was not a Vesper Sparrow in earshot.

And so it ended. Despite a 7-hour non-birding gap in the middle of the day, I managed to find 105 species in Concord (plus the ibis!). Who knows what the total would have been if I hadn't gone to the Ren Faire, but I had fun of all sorts on a glorious spring day.

Big Day on May 14

by Logan Anderson, posted 5-16-2023

Every year, I attempt a big day on the weekend of World Migratory Bird Day with the goal of beating the previous

year's record. Last year, I set my personal record in the mountains of Virginia with 127 and this year, I attempted to beat that record with a New Hampshire big day mostly along Route 16. I was able to get 147 species on Sunday with some notable misses, mainly nocturnal birds, and raptors, but was very pleased to beat last year's number. I had a whopping 90 species checklist at Pickering Ponds, my highest checklist anywhere away from Cape May, NJ. I snagged Upland Sandpipers at Pease Tradeport and while looking for the Grasshopper Sparrow across the street, I found a Clay-colored Sparrow singing. Other notables included the Thick-billed Murre at Odiorne and a few Roseate Terns roosting with Common Terns in Hampton Harbor.

Link to the eBird Trip Report:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/129886>

Big Day Record! An Account of a Very Long Day of Birding

by Pam Hunt

New Hampshire's record for the most birds seen in 24 hours stands at 170 species and it was set back in 1997. This article, written by Pam Hunt just after the record was broken, describes that day. It was never published in New Hampshire Bird Records because the year before, Pam had written an article about breaking the Big Day record with 162 species on May 23, 1996 (Spring 1996, Vol 15, #1). It seemed as if the new record might be broken again before the Spring 1997 issue came out, but it wasn't(!), and it hasn't been despite many attempts. The Big Day record of 170 species still stands and we present Pam's article to you now as birders attempted Big Days of all kinds in May 2023.

The spring of 1997 in New Hampshire could only be described as late, not to mention cold and windy. Thus, it was perhaps just as well that we waited almost until the end of May to take a shot at the New Hampshire Big Day record. I had my doubts, however. There just seemed to be no way we could beat last year's phenomenal total [162, see above], especially since we hardly got any scouting in. Nonetheless, Steve Mirick and I got up at 10:30 pm (not that we slept at all!) and drove to Concord to meet Al Strong and Dan Strong at midnight on May 27, 1997. After the obligatory doughnut stop, the Big Day was officially underway.

Around 12:20 am, we had our first bird, Common Nighthawks over the state capitol building, but the second had to wait until we heard a distant Barred Owl in the White Mountains around 2:00 am. Then, it was north through the notch to Cherry Pond and its boreal bonanza. Along the way, we stopped at Trudeau Road to try for saw-whets. There weren't any (no surprise there), but we did get to hear a few

coyotes, and the spruce and fir were beautiful silhouettes against the bright moonlight. A little later, before heading in to Cherry Pond, we actually did get a saw-whet, when Al's keen ears picked up its tooting against the background noise of the local power plant, a definite bonus indeed.

As we approached the parking spot for the hike to the pond, we noticed another car already there and the *frost* on its windshield indicated that it had been there for some time. My first guess was that it could be nobody else but Bob Quinn, another New Hampshire birder who was conducting surveys around Cherry Pond and who had provided us with some excellent staked out birds in the area. Bob it was, since our driving up effectively woke him up, and we were greeted with the immortal words "It's 3:30 in the morning!!" (or something like that). Bob accepted our apologies (although it was certainly time for him to get up anyway – dawn was a mere two hours away!) but refused a doughnut and we were off.

The spot Bob had found the previous week was a newly created beaver wetland along the railroad tracks [Moorhen Marsh] and it did not let us down. Upon our arrival around 4:15 am, we were greeted by two or three American Bitterns, three or four Virginia Rails, two Soras, two or three Marsh Wrens, and, best of all, a Common Moorhen. As the light increased, large numbers of ducks began to fly out of the area and we tallied Ring-necked Duck and Green-winged Teal among the more common species. At this point, I really should refer back to my description of Bob's car, note the word *frost*.

This means that the temperature dropped below freezing at some point during the night and, given that the night is coldest right before dawn, we figured it was pretty damn cold (probably under 30 degrees F). This became abundantly clear as we stood alongside this most excellent wetland and actually even took a serious turn. Steve was not feeling well; he complained of feeling tired ("walked into a wall" was the term he used) and seemed far more lethargic than he should have, even for someone who had half an hour of sleep in the last 20 hours. All he really seemed to want was a doughnut and a nap and neither was available this close to the polar ice cap (I didn't mention the ice cap? What else could explain the cold, since the glaciers had largely retreated from northern New Hampshire the previous weekend.). Conversation later in the day revealed that Steve had actually felt even *worse* than he looked, but when we finally got him his nap and carbohydrate, he perked up quite rapidly.

But I digress. As the light started peeking over the eastern horizon, we decided to head on to Little Cherry Pond, where we picked up a few more species including the increasingly rare Rusty Blackbird. On the way back to the car we wrapped up our northern warbler list with Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, and Mourning. More impressive, however,

was the view to the east over the pond. Through the cold, clear morning air, we had an awe-inspiring view of Mount Washington and the rest of the Presidential Range, all still cloaked in snow and reflected in the almost becalmed waters of the pond. The calls of Common Loons only added to the moment. It is at times like this that going without sleep for 24 hours becomes worthwhile and the crazy pace of a Big Day must simply slow down to accommodate the rest of the natural world.

But not for long. We were actually a little ahead of schedule, and after a quick harrier-less swing by the Whitefield airport, we headed back south. At this point, we already had over 80 species under our belt and felt we had done darn well at Cherry Pond. At Trudeau Road, we wrapped up the northern species list with Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Pine Siskin, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (thank goodness, since we normally get lots at Cherry Pond), and Common Raven. Then back through Franconia Notch, where we decided against scanning for Peregrine Falcons in favor of a more reliable spot a little farther south. The latter required a half-hour side trip, but since we were ahead of schedule we thought it was worth a try. It wasn't and we actually got a little behind schedule in the process. Time to head seriously south, slowing down for Laconia's Purple Martins along the way.

We arrived at Pawtuckaway State Park a little after 11:00 am, more or less on schedule, and at a much better time of day than in 1996. All the expected species fell in short order, including Cerulean Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Yellow-throated Vireo. Louisiana Waterthrush was a little harder and, in the end, the only one we got was a single song heard by Al out the car window. The singer steadfastly refused to respond to a tape and we reluctantly left for the coast. Our journey seaward was a circuitous one, however, involving an extended side trip through Brentwood and Kensington in search of cuckoos, pheasant, and Willow and Alder flycatchers. We only got the latter and Steve and I recalled the similar futility of this side trip the year before. Then again, I don't think we got Alder Flycatcher anywhere else later in the day, so go figure.

The tide was almost high, so we worked our way through the high tide shorebird roosts, unfortunately with little initial success. Then, in a toned down repeat of last year's shorebird bonanza, we scanned the grasses at the south end of Hampton Harbor. Here there were shorebirds, and while their numbers were recorded in the dozens rather than the thousands, most of the expected species were there. Our only real miss was Short-billed Dowitcher, and we had a single Dunlin and several White-rumped Sandpipers to compensate. Next task, head north along the coast and look for lingering sea ducks. It took a while, but in the end we

found them all, and a Willet nest to boot, and a tally revealed the unexpected – we were within 12 of a new record, had over two hours of light left, and had easily a dozen good bets for additional species! Steve was so excited that he started to drive away at one point when Dan was still outside of the car.

The needed dozen fell one by one, and, at Rye Harbor, we found two stake outs that tie for bird of the day: a female King Eider (present since the winter) and a male Blue-winged Teal (present since the day before). A detour to Odiorne Point State Park proved pointless and we left the coast for our inland finish. Somewhere in here the pressure finally got to Steve and he held a conversation with the Gumbie toy that he keeps above his rear view mirror. Maybe he hadn't fully recovered from his morning ailment after all. At the Pease airfield, we got Field and Vesper Sparrows and, at 6:56 pm, Upland Sandpiper became species number 164. A new record, but there was still over an hour of light, and we knew that we would not rest until we reached or surpassed 170. So, we were off

Thus began the standard mad-scramble-around-Durham phase that looks to become a tradition in my Northern Route Big Days. This time the scramble picked up, each at a separate spot, kestrel, Willow Flycatcher, Fish Crow (had the nerve to call before we had a chance to try the tape), Blue-winged Warbler (singing, albeit barely, at 7:45 pm), and Black-crowned Night-Heron (good eyes, Dan!). The total now, if you can't do the math, was 169 and with four hours left in the day, we figured 172 was a reasonable goal.

Then things got hard. Great Horned Owls and Pied-billed Grebes could not be found in Durham and a snap decision to try (unsuccessfully) for the latter at the Rochester sewage ponds effectively denied us the possibility of getting it at Cascade Marsh. So, it was on to Clough State Park for whip-poor-will and whatever else. The whips were not cooperative and as the minutes ticked away, we did a mad dash across the park to try one more spot. No goatsuckers, but a Great Horned Owl at 11:50 pm saved the day and our last doughnut (long since crushed) was tossed into the woods to thank the Owl Gods. Appropriately enough, this is the same spot where our 1996 Big Day ended with a saw-whet.

Then Steve and I had to drive for an hour to get back to his house. To keep him awake, I tried teaching him the correct taxonomic order. This process was complicated by my own inability to stay awake and a very bizarre tendency to toss totally inappropriate phrases such as “Fish and Game” and “helping my sister move” into the Charadriiformes. I can only guess that I was dreaming, so it's amazing that we made it home at all. But we did, since I'm writing this (or am I dreaming it?!). Next stop, 175.

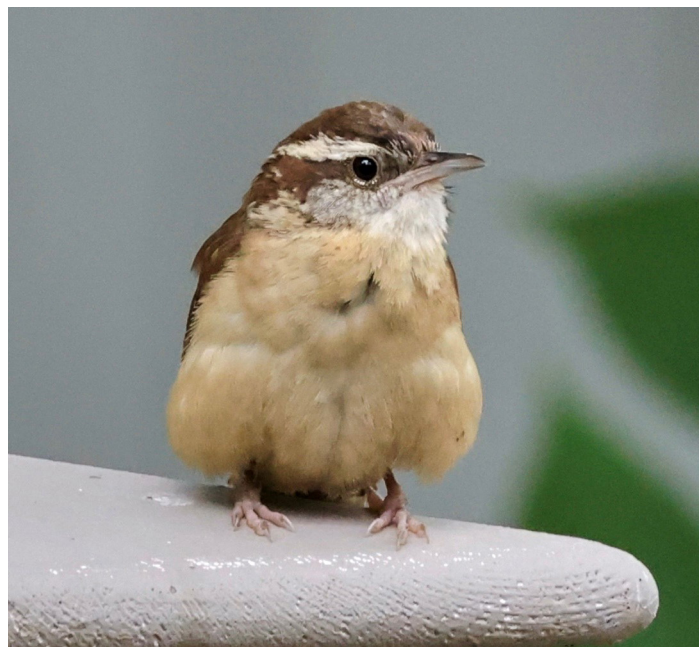
Backyard Birder

Carolina Wren Feeds Fledglings

by Kathryn Frieden



A hungry-looking fledgling Carolina Wren by Jim Sparrell.



This adult Carolina Wren perched on a post in our yard in Nottingham. Photo by Roger Frieden.

We have been lucky enough to have Carolina Wrens in our yard all winter and have become accustomed to their many songs and calls, including the trilled “cheer call.” On the morning of May 9, 2023 I heard this cheer call loudly repeated many times and coming from very close by. I

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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

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