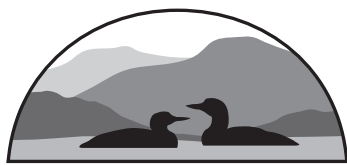


# New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS





**NH AUDUBON**

Protecting our environment since 1914

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS**  
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**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.

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Summer Babies..... Inside Back Cover

Cover Photos: Little Stint, 7-29-22, Hampton, NH. Standing by Steve Mirick (top), in flight by Leo McKillop (bottom). Inset by Jim Sparrell shows the toes that lack the webbing of the Semipalmated Sandpiper.

The Common Pathway in Peterborough runs all the way from Noone Falls off Rt. 202 south of town to Rt. 202 north of town, but the hotspot includes only the part from Summer Street in the heart of downtown north to Rt. 202 at Scott Mitchell Road (3.5 miles). The eBird Hotspot pin is one-third of the way up this north-south route, at a commodious parking area on Summer Street. To access this parking area from the intersection of Rt. 101 and Rt. 202 north, drive north on Rt. 202 for 0.6 miles to the new bridge into town. Turn left to cross this bridge and in under 0.1 miles turn right onto Summer Street. In 0.9 miles, the parking area is on your right.

The downtown area also offers many (free) parking options including a large lot with public L2 EV chargers on the Riverwalk (part of the Common Path). From that lot, the Common Path to Summer Street consists of 0.2 miles along paths by the river and then sidewalks. The hotspot begins at Summer Street's southern end, where it follows its footpaths north to the hotspot pin lot mentioned above. It is 2.6 miles from the hotspot pin to the northern terminus, where there is another ample parking area just off Rt. 202 north. (Across Rt. 202 from here is the parking area and trail start for another rail trail, Peterborough's Old Railroad Trail, a separate eBird Hotspot. A footpath under the road [that often floods in spring] provides a pedestrian connection between the two.)

The trail passes through wooded sections, and follows stretches of the Contoocook River and related wetlands for much of its length. After crossing Hunt Rd., the route briefly follows the side of a quiet residential street (Tarbell Rd.) before it becomes a pedestrian and bike path again. A particularly scenic and productive section is the rail trail between Tarbell Road and Southfield Lane, which includes a large wetland, a variety of woods and a shrubby area. (There is a small parking area on Tarbell Road just before the trail runs north into the woods.) A variety of waterfowl including Mallards, American Black Ducks and Wood Ducks as well as Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Swamp Sparrow and Belted Kingfisher are often observed. Ring-necked Ducks and Northern Pintail have also been seen in water bodies adjacent to the trail. There is a good variety of forest birds and during

migration songbird fallouts (especially warblers) can be impressive.



Wood Duck by Debra Powers.

## The Odd Behavior of Anting and Sunning

compiled by Anita Fernandez

These two stories describe the interesting bird behavior of “Anting” and “Sunning.” These behaviors are not well understood, but are considered to be possible anti-parasite behaviors. “Anting” is thought to be a type of “anointing” behavior in which birds apply pungent materials to their feathers and has been observed in more than 200 species of birds.

In contrast to a chemical deterrent, “Sunning” could assist birds in the removal of parasites through heat. This behavior is also common, as it has been observed in over 50 bird families. Sunning birds pant and show signs of heat stress, which may make this a voluntary behavioral “fever” that works to kill off pathogens and parasites. Sunlight may also cause ectoparasites to move around on feathers, increasing their vulnerability to preening. The preen gland in bird species is also thought to contain material that converts to vitamin D when exposed to the ultraviolet light in sunlight, which can then be digested by birds during their preening behavior.

See the article “Anti-parasite behaviour of birds” at [rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org](http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org) for additional information.

## Tufted Titmouse Sunbathing in East Kingston

by Dennis Skillman

*This story was originally posted to the NHBirds email list on 8-9-22. Photos taken by Dennis Skillman on 8-9-22 in East Kingston, NH.*



*“Help me, I’m melting...” A Tufted Titmouse finds a low perch in the sun. By its position and expression, you can imagine its words.*

While staked out to photograph birds in my backyard, I witnessed a Tufted Titmouse suddenly fly down on



*"That's it. I'm done for. Goodbye world." The preen gland is clearly visible in this prostrate Tufted's posture.*



*"Wait. No. I'm still alive!" This bird perks up a little bit after a few minutes of face down sunbathing.*

some hot stones and spread eagle on its belly. Like a crash landing, it was all very fast. At first, I thought it had died right in front of me as it remained motionless, but after a minute it got up and flew away without any difficulty. The same bird or others did the same thing several times over the next 10 minutes. I had never seen this before, so I searched the internet and found it is known behavior that has a variety of possible reasons ranging from getting mites out of their feathers to getting some sunshine vitamin D by exposing the oil gland at the base of their tail.

## **Pine Warbler Anting in Portsmouth City Park**

*by Jim Sparrell*

*Photos taken by Jim Sparrell on 05-27-22 in Portsmouth, NH.*

Part of the rush of spring migration is the great looks at flocks of warblers in low trees and bushes as they touch down before moving on. Typically, I get a few great photos of Pine Warblers in April and May and then spend the rest of the summer listening to them trilling high in the treetops and rarely getting a glimpse of them. That's why this bird surprised me. I was walking in the city park, which has a nice mix of habitats from brushy powerlines to an extensive



*This Pine Warbler is actively "anting" by applying the ant in its beak to the tail feathers.*



*A right profile view of the bird, its left elevated wing just visible.*



*An acrobatic view of this Pine Warbler from behind, seen here now rubbing the ant on its wing feathers.*

marsh to a small pond and a few acres of mixed forest. Early morning on May 27 as I walked the road, I noticed a Pine Warbler hopping along just in front of me. At first, I thought it might be foraging for insects, but as I watched it, I noticed that it picked something up and then was all aflutter and appeared to be rubbing it under its wings and on its

feathers. I wondered if it was taking a dust bath or picking up grit to rub on itself to help with mites. I followed it and took pictures along the way. It continued to do this for five minutes or so and I was intrigued because I had never seen a warbler engaged in this kind of behavior.

Later, when I got home and looked at the photos, I noticed that the warbler was holding a tiny ant in its bill in each of the pictures, and that's what it was rubbing under its feathers. Somewhere in the dusty halls of my memory I thought I had heard the word "anting" before, but I had never seen the behavior. So, I looked up anting and discovered that it has a long and enigmatic history for birdwatchers trying to understand it. Wenny (1998) notes that "surprisingly few warblers have been observed anting..." (p. 122). He notes four hypotheses as to why a bird might ant: removal of parasites; protection against an infection from fungus or microbes; to soothe irritated skin during molt; or as a method of food preparation to remove toxic or irritating substances. In discussing the current understanding of typical "anting," Kricher (2020) explains that birds are thought to pick ants with a high level of formic acid and crush them with their beaks to release the acid before rubbing them on their feathers. Formic acid from ants has been shown to be a strong repellent to bird lice. So, there I was, watching the Pine Warbler apply its own version of DEET. This was new learning for me as well as a sense of wonder in considering how this small bird that will have a short lifespan learned or instinctively knew to do this.

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# Backpack Birder

## Nest-finding on a Father's Day Hike: Teaching a Two-Year-Old About Nests

by Jason Pietrzak

*All photos of the Dark-eyed Junco nest on Mt. Kearsarge were taken by Jason Pietrzak on 6-19-22.*

On Father's Day (6-19-22), I took a daddy-daughter walk with my two-year-old, Prinia. I'd been enviously reviewing eBird reports from the White Mountains for weeks and wondered if any exciting high-elevation species could be hiding out closer to home. Living in Merrimack County at the time, I settled for Mt. Kearsarge, the county high-point, and my wife Anne drove us up to Winslow State Park.

There's a great little playground at the upper parking lot at Winslow, which makes this an especially great place to hike with kids. Prinia burned a ton of energy sliding and swinging for about an hour so she was perfectly happy relaxing and enjoying the ride in her kid carrier backpack during the challenging stretches of the hike.

Winds were strong at the parking lot and my birding expectations were low, but several woodland species could be heard even from the trailhead. Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue and Yellow-rumped Warblers were all singing on territories in decent numbers. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was singing away near the top. Being only two years old, Prinia wasn't too interested in the songs, but she laughed as the gusting winds blasted us, nearly knocking us over on the bald summit.

After cresting the peak and beginning our descent, we found a sheltered spot to have our snacks. We'd just sat down on a broad granite slab when a Dark-eyed Junco male popped up near us with a bill full of black, winged insects.

Prinia repeated "junco" after me. The black-and-white bird stood out handsomely against the unbroken green forest. I didn't want to confuse things with "dark-eyed" or "slate-colored" just yet. I told her birds don't normally carry food around, they just eat it where and when they find it. Unless of course, they're bringing it to their young babies! Two-year-olds love babies and Prinia was thrilled that we might see a daddy junco feeding his baby. The junco slowly and quietly circled us, mouth full, hopping along the boulders and spruce branches...

Another hiking party stumbled through our patch. Their dog ran over sniffing our snacks and snouting the cracks of our boulder, and moving on. Daddy junco hopped more urgently now. A second junco joined, a female with a bill full of green caterpillars, almost glaring at us. Watching the birds holding Prinia's attention was awesome...

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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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