Birds of Deer Hill WMA, Brentwood

This site was one of the birding hotspots in Spring 2020 and we share some of the many great photos taken here. See also the rarities (on the back cover) and the article inside on how to bird this great location.

Photo Quiz

Can You Identify This Bird?

Photo by Jon Woolf.
Answer on page 35.
This issue of New Hampshire Bird Records with its color cover is sponsored in appreciation of Ann Kimball by her birding friends. Ann, an avid birder, has shared many birding adventures with friends and in the past, with her dear husband Bill. The birding community is grateful for her volunteer work, and her warmth, caring, friendliness, and positive attitude (see page 2).

In This Issue

Photo Quiz ...........................................................................................................Inside Front Cover
From the Editor ......................................................................................................2
Ann Kimball ........................................................................................................2
Spring Season: March 1 through May 31, 2020 by Eric Masterson ..................3
Birding Deer Hill Wildlife Management Area by Terry Bronson and Greg Tillman.....12
Using Birdsong to Study Migratory Connectivity in Mourning Warblers
by Dr. Jay Pitocchelli and Dr. Donald H. Rhodes.............................................16
The Song of the Cerulean Warbler (Or Not)
compiled by Kathryn Frieden and Rebecca Suomala ........................................19
Spring 2020 Field Notes, Diana Stephens Editor .................................................20
  Hermit Thrush in the Snow compiled by Diana Stephens.................................20
  White-breasted Nuthatches Protect Their Nest with Insects by Kathryn Frieden....20
  Hummingbird on Snow-Covered Feeder ..........................................................21
  Color-banded Peregrine Falcon on Star Island by Diana Stephens....................21
  Banded Baltimore Oriole by Rebecca Suomala ................................................22
  White-crowned Sparrow Spring Songfest by Jim Sparrell.................................22
  Fledgling Great Horned Owl in Manchester....................................................23
What Pandemic Birding Taught Me—and It Isn’t Pretty…. by Kurk Dorsey..............24
A Socially-Distant Christmas-in-May Birdathon 2020
  compiled by Rebecca Suomala and Kathryn Frieden ......................................25
Backyard Birder – A Fledgling Robin Learns to Fly by Diana Stephens ................25
New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report: Spring 2019 through Winter 2019-20 Seasons, and Selected Historical Records .........................................................30
New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Update by Mike Resch ..........................32
Checking the Status of Spring Migrants by Rebecca Suomala .............................34
Answer to the Photo Quiz by Jon Woolf ............................................................35
Photo Gallery – The Transformation of a Red-headed Woodpecker .................Inside Back Cover

Cover Photos: Pink-footed Goose (top) by Donna Ellis, 3-22-20, Concord, NH; Tricolored Heron (bottom) by Len Medlock, 4-25-20, Rye, NH.
The Song of the Cerulean Warbler (Or Not)
compiled by Kathryn Frieden and Rebecca Suomala

Identifying a Cerulean Warbler by song alone can be problematic in New Hampshire. Black-throated Blue Warblers have a regional song variation that is extremely similar to Cerulean. In Spring 2020, there were quite a few comments about this situation, so here's a summary of this issue.

Cerulean Warbler is currently listed as "threatened" in New Hampshire. They bred reliably at Pawtuckaway State Park (Nottingham/Deerfield) for 20 years starting in the early 1990s, but they have not been regular there since at least 2015.

Pam Hunt conducted Cerulean Warbler surveys statewide from 2017-19 and during that time there were only two isolated sightings at Pawtuckaway State Park and two at Mount Wantastiquet (Hinsdale/Chesterfield). Birders usually search for Ceruleans in New Hampshire at these two locations. The difficulty is that Black-throated Blue Warblers can sound like Ceruleans and Ceruleans themselves can be variable.

Mark Suomala posted the following typical observation (NH Birds email list, 5-26-20):

**During the past weekend, I heard what sounded like a Cerulean Warbler singing. It was in a forested area and sang a fast song persistently from high up in the trees. It took about one hour to see the bird and it turned out to be a Black-throated Blue Warbler (I got a picture). This is not too surprising to me, as I have chased a number of birds with Cerulean Warbler songs only to have them turn out to be Black-throated Blue Warblers. Also of note, when Pawtuckaway State Park used to have a few Cerulean Warblers nesting regularly near Middle Mountain, the Cerulean Warblers sometimes sang atypical songs. There was one bird that sang a song that sounded like a Hooded Warbler and another bird that sounded like a Mourning Warbler.**

David Sibley has posted an article online which states:

*A local variation of Black-throated Blue Warbler, however, is extremely similar to the typical song of Cerulean Warbler. This variant is common in birds breeding across southern New England: from Connecticut north to Vermont and east to Maine. It can be heard from spring migrants south of those areas as well.*

[https://www.sibleyguides.com/2020/05/a-cerulean-like-song-variant-of-black-throated-blue-warbler/](https://www.sibleyguides.com/2020/05/a-cerulean-like-song-variant-of-black-throated-blue-warbler/)

During Pam Hunt's surveys in 2017-19, she reported hearing this song variant from Black-throated Blues in Pawtuckaway State Park, Tower Hill Pond (Candia), and Mount Wantastiquet. Steve Mirick's eBird report from Mt. Wantastiquet NA (6/6/20, S70113574) states that he tracked down every Cerulean/Black-throated Blue Warbler type song and they were all Black-throated Blue Warblers. Of the six males along the trail leading to the top, only one of them sang a typical Black-throated Blue Warbler song. The rest were Cerulean type.

It is clear that using song alone to identify a Cerulean Warbler in New Hampshire is not adequate. A visual confirmation is critical, and ideally a photo also. This isn't easy given the Cerulean's preference for being high in the forest canopy but please take the time to track down any suspect songs.

Chris McPherson posted the following links to NH Birds (5-26-20):

A visual of Black-throated Blue Warbler songs (category 1 and 2) with a Cerulean Warbler for comparison:

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/127251358@N05/49931747587/in/dateposted/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/127251358@N05/49931747587/in/dateposted/)

A series of recordings of Black-throated Blue Warbler songs (category 1 and 2) with a Cerulean Warbler (the third song series); each series is separated by an Eastern Wood-Pewee song:

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 Managing Editor (see inside front cover).

NHBR Subscription Form

I would like to subscribe to NH Bird Records.
☐ NHA Member $25.00  ☐ Non-member $35.00

All renewals take place annually. Mid-year subscribers will receive all issues published in the subscription year.

☐ I would like to join NH Audubon and receive NH Bird Records at the member price.
☐ Family/$59  ☐ Individual/$45  ☐ Senior/$29

Name: ____________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________
City, State: _______________________________________
Zip: _____________________________________________

Payment is by:
☐ check enclosed— payable to NH Audubon
☐ MC ☐ VISA
Card #: _________________________________________
Exp. Date: _______________________________________

Return to: Membership Department, NH Audubon, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH 03301

Rare Bird ALERT
☎ 603-224-9909
Available twenty-four hours a day!
Also online at www.nhaudubon.org

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. 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 May, 2021
Published by NH Audubon’s Conservation Department
Printed on Recycled Paper