



by Bob Hines

# PROJECT NIGHTHAWK 2008 SUMMARY

The summer of 2008 was the second year of New Hampshire Audubon's Project Nighthawk – a project that is testing the potential for restoring urban-nesting nighthawks by placing simple gravel “nest patches” on flat rooftops. We continued to install additional gravel patches on buildings in Concord and the Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory (AVEO) spearheaded the effort in Keene in partnership with Antioch University New England graduate student Ken Klapper. A new effort in the Hanover area was started by volunteer, Lou-Anne Conroy and resulted in the installation of six nest patches. By the end of the 2008 field season, a total of 36 gravel patches had been installed statewide. Volunteers surveyed for nighthawks in towns with patches and monitored patches but so far no nighthawks have used a patch. Males have displayed over several patch locations that are on roofs with large stone but there was no sign of nesting.

## NEW THIS YEAR

### *Project Nighthawk Goes Online*

Thanks to the help of volunteer, Len Medlock, there's a new web page for the project that includes project information, a **Gravel Patch Handbook** which gives detailed information about how to set up a gravel nest patch, and a **Photo Gallery** of patches. It's accessible from the *New Hampshire Bird Records* web site or directly at: <http://nhbirdrecords.org/bird-conservation/Nighthawk-main.htm>. Jane Kolias, volunteer Project Assistant, has contributed to all these efforts and is currently finishing up a poster for sites that host a nest patch.

### *Two Chicks!!*



Nighthawk parent and chicks. Photo by Pam Hunt

For the second year in a row we had a unique opportunity to observe nighthawk parents raising young. Two chicks hatched and fledged at an industrial complex in East Concord. The female laid two eggs on June 1. The chicks hatched on June 22 and the younger chick stayed at the site for at least 40 days, according to Stephanie Parkinson who monitored this nest closely. Some fascinating behavior was observed after the chicks began flying, including feedings, practice flights, and chases. There's very little written information on nighthawk behavior after chick fledging and some observations were very puzzling – Is the male chasing away the female? Why won't he let her feed the chick? Is the chick or the female making that funny peent? Who's that third bird? Much of this behavior takes place in the dark and shows how much there is to learn. A special thanks to Sabbow & Company, Inc. for their help and support in monitoring the chicks. *Note cards with this picture of mom and chicks are available in the NH Audubon store or by the enclosed order form.*

### *Grant Received*

In October Project Nighthawk was awarded a \$6,000 grant from The Blake Fund of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. We are very grateful for this support for the project.

## CONCORD SUMMARY

**Nest Patches.** Five new rooftop nest patches were installed and monitored by NH Audubon at the following locations:

- NH Dept. of Environmental Services, Hazen Dr.
- #6 Loudon Road
- Havenwood Health Center, 33 Christian Ave. (2 patches)
- Charter Trust Company, 88 N. Main Street

In addition, two nest patches were installed by NH Fish & Game on Hazen Drive, and one nest patch was installed on private property in Bow. Total patches in Concord to date: 14.

**Coordinated Watches.** Volunteers conducted coordinated watches in Concord on three dates: June 6, June 18, and July 8. Up to nine males were observed calling and booming regularly at the following locations:

- Concord Public Library - 1
- Steeplegate Mall – 2
- Industrial Park Drive - 1
- Chenell & Regional Drive junction – 2
- Chenell Drive East - 1
- Hazen Drive – 1
- Federal Building/Sheraton Building - 1

**Observation Summary.** Nine males were regularly observed at the above Concord locations. This is an increase of two birds over last year's total (2007 had seven regularly observed birds). Generally, birds were observed peenting and booming over the same locations as last year. The second bird at the Mall did not appear as regularly as it had last year. One male appeared to be displaying back and forth between the Federal Building and the Sheraton Building. New sites in 2008 with regular display activity were Chenell Drive East and Industrial Park Drive. Two chicks were hatched and fledged in east Concord. Elsewhere in the state there were no reports of confirmed nighthawk nesting but birds were reported in a few potential breeding locations during the breeding season (mid-June through July): one displaying in Chichester, one in Franklin, one in Lempster, one in Lebanon, two birds on Mt. Cardigan (Orange), one regularly from Mast Yard in Hopkinton (by Whip-poor-will monitors), and one male displaying in Pembroke. All were single one-time reports, except for the last three. See also the Keene summary.

## HANOVER SUMMARY

A new effort in the Hanover area, spearheaded by volunteer Lou-Anne Conroy, resulted in the installation of six nest patches at the following locations:

- Town of Hanover, 41 S. Main Street
- Lyme Timber Company, 63 S. Main Street
- Lyme Timber Company, 23 S. Main Street (2 patches)
- Other Hanover locations (2 patches)

Lou-Anne has already met with groups interested in helping with Project Nighthawk in 2009. Stevens High School teacher, Joanna Bitter and her Environmental Science Club in Claremont are eager to install nest patches on the high school roof. According to the NH Audubon's Nighthawk Survey records, Stevens High School was a nesting site for nighthawks in the 1980s. The Woodsville High School Principal, Bob Jones and custodial staff are also interested in installing nest patches in early spring 2009.



Two nest patches with white rubber membrane, 23 S. Main St., Hanover. Photo by Lou-Anne Conroy.



## KEENE SUMMARY

AVEO and Antioch University New England graduate student Ken Klapper installed eight new patches on rooftops throughout Keene at the following locations: (total number of nest patches in Keene area: 15)

- Keene City Hall, 3 Winchester Street
- Keene Housing Authority, 39 Central Square
- Hannaford Supermarket, 481 West Street
- Keene Cinema, 121 Key Road
- Filtrine Manufacturing, 15 Kit Street
- PC Connection, 450 Marlboro Street
- Smiths Medical, 10 Bowman Drive
- Interface Stereo, 660 Main Street

**Coordinated Watches.** Volunteers conducted coordinated Nighthawk Patrols in the Keene area on seven evenings in 2008: June 4, June 11, June 18, June 25, July 2, July 16, and July 30. Males were regularly observed diving and booming over Central Square and the Cheshire County administration building on West Street (1 male, likely part of a breeding pair) and over the Keene Cinema parking lot (2 males). Birds were also observed foraging over Keene Cinema, Hannaford, Production Avenue, the Keene State College campus, and the Colony Mill smokestack. On June 11, four individuals were observed simultaneously at 9:23 pm: one west of the Colony Mill, one southwest of the Keene State College tennis courts, one diving and booming over 33 West Street, and one heard peenting from Filtrine. On June 18, four birds were observed simultaneously at Keene Cinema (3 birds, including 2 males) and above Main Street (1 bird). Although this is the same number of individual birds observed in 2007, more diving and booming was observed in the vicinity of nest patches in 2008.

**Partners and Supporters.** Project Nighthawk is a statewide research initiative coordinated by New Hampshire Audubon and led in Keene by AVEO, in partnership with Ken Klapper. The Melanson Company, Keene State College, the Association for Field Ornithologists and Antioch University New England have generously donated funding, expertise, and materials for the project in Keene

### **Building a Nest Patch**



← Gathering buckets of peastone gravel for nest patch construction. Photo by Ken Klapper.

Pouring peastone gravel onto larger rooftop cobble to make nest patch. Photo by David Moon. →

Raking gravel into nest patch configuration. Photo by Ken Klapper. ↓



## HOW YOU CAN HELP PROJECT NIGHTHAWK

The following is a list of opportunities to become involved in and support the efforts of Project Nighthawk.

- Become a nest patch monitor: Assess the condition of a patch in early spring to determine if repairs are needed, then monitor the patch throughout the breeding season for activity. This includes coordinating with the nest patch host to gain access to the roof a few times during the summer to determine whether the patch is being used.
- IT help: We have a camera that we'd like to use for nest patch monitoring and need help to set it up and determine if it is working.
- Join a coordinated watch. Join other volunteers monitoring nighthawk activity at specific locations in the Concord, Keene, and Hanover/Lebanon area.
- Construct a nest patch using the guidelines from the Gravel Patch Handbook or join a patch building team. This usually takes about 2 hours and may include building a patch frame on site, carrying buckets of gravel, spreading and raking gravel, and photo-documenting the patch construction.
- Make a donation: Project Nighthawk is funded primarily by private donations (a donation coupon is attached to the end of this newsletter).
- Donate to the Wish List: 10x10 sheets of rubber roofing membrane, Family Radio Services (FRS) radios, night vision binoculars, sturdy plastic 5 gallon buckets with metal handles (i.e. joint compound buckets).
- *We also have several research opportunities such as setting up a program to assess nest predation.*

## Donors, Partners and Volunteers

We'd like to thank the following individuals and businesses whose donations of time, space and funding helped make the 2008 Nighthawk Project possible.

### Donors

Mary Boulanger  
Sheridan Brown  
Deb Callahan  
Mr. & Mrs. William D. Chapin  
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Conroy  
Larry Denoncourt  
Mr. & Mrs. John H. Fensterwald

David Healy  
Tina Kirkpatrick  
Stephanie Parkinson  
Arthur & Dawn Stavros  
Margaret Watkins  
Rob Woodward  
Mary Wright

### Partners

Antioch University New England  
Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory  
Association for Field Ornithologists  
Charter Trust Company  
Mark Ciborowski  
Concord Public Library, Pat Immen  
Corriveau-Routhier, Inc.

Havenwood Health Service Ctr.  
Keene State College  
Lyme Timber Company  
Melanson Company  
NH Dept. of Environmental Svs.  
Doug Noyes  
Sulloway & Hollis, PLLC  
Town of Hanover

### Volunteers

Volunteer activities included nest patch construction, nest patch monitoring, conducting surveys, photo documenting project activities, and engaging in public education/awareness.

Jean Amaral  
Jon Atwood  
Phil Brown  
Sheridan Brown  
Katy Burchett  
Auralee Burchett  
Mark Ciborowski  
Russ Cobb  
Lou-Anne Conroy  
Peter Davenport  
Larry Denoncourt  
Kim Dupuis  
Joel Friedlander  
Tim Garceau  
Stu Goldberg  
Emily Hague  
Doug Hardy

Spencer Hardy  
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Pam Hunt  
Pat Immen  
Annie Jacobs  
Cary Jardine  
Barb Johnson  
Ken Klapper  
Jane Kolias  
Richard Langsner  
Gordon Leersee  
Marcy Leverage  
John Liptak

David Mallard  
Jack Marsden  
Kelly Marsden  
Susan Marsden  
Molly McMillan  
Gail McPeck  
Len Medlock  
Byard Miller  
Wayne Miller  
David Moon  
Lindsay Moon  
Rory Moon  
Ruby Morrison  
Kathleen Murphy  
Cindy Myers-Long  
Robert Norman  
Doug Noyes

Gail Page  
Kathy Palfy  
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Polly Pattison  
Bob Quinn  
Scot Reagan  
Larry Reynolds  
Chris Rimmer  
Jen Rost  
Jonathan Sachs  
Barbara Skuly  
Normajean Smith  
Norm Spicher  
Deb Stevens  
Mark Suomala  
Rebecca Suomala  
Lance Tanino

Brett Amy Thelen  
Russ Thomas  
Town of Hanover employees  
Robert Vallieres  
Roy Van Vleck  
Matt Walter  
Lacie Westbrook  
Emily Wilson  
Sarah Wilson  
Chris Wood  
Rob Woodward  
Mary Wright  
Courtney Younginger

### For Information on Project Nighthawk

- In Concord and statewide, contact Becky Suomala, NH Audubon, [bsuomala@nhaudubon.org](mailto:bsuomala@nhaudubon.org), 603-224-9909 x309.
- In Keene, contact Brett Amy Thelen, AVEO, [brett@aveo.org](mailto:brett@aveo.org), 603-358-2065, [www.aveo.org](http://www.aveo.org).
- In Hanover, contact Lou-Anne Conroy, [lconroy@dl-c.com](mailto:lconroy@dl-c.com), 603-353-4394.

## PROJECT NIGHTHAWK – A PARTNERSHIP

Use this form for donations and to request information.

☐ I would like to volunteer      ☐ I would like gravel patch information

☐ I would like to support Project Nighthawk with a contribution of:

☐ \$50    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$500    ☐ \$1000    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Payment is by:    ☐ Check enclosed. Make check payable to NHA.    ☐ MasterCard    ☐ Visa    ☐ Am. Ex.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form with payment to: New Hampshire Audubon, Membership Department, 84 Silk Farm Road, Concord, NH 03301-8200.



### ← [Suet Feeders for Sale \\$25.00 \(while supply lasts, order below\)](#)

Rectangular suet feeder can be used hanging or standing. Comes with two, 42 1/2" poles that can be connected to make one 85" high pole, or can be used separately to make a shorter feeder. Has three separate platforms inside feeder to accommodate different feeding items.

**Proceeds from the sale of this bird feeder directly supports Project Nighthawk.** You can order a suet feeder using the order form below. ***Feeders will not be shipped and must be picked up at the Audubon Nature Store during store business hours.***

### [Nighthawk Notecards \(order below\)](#)

Packet contains 5 note cards and envelopes. Fill out the information below and include payment with your order. Cards will be mailed to the address on the order form.



## Suet Feeder and Note Card Order Form

Suet Feeder: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25.00 each. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Notecards (packet of 5 cards) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$12.00 per packet (includes postage) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Payment is by:    ☐ Check enclosed. Make check payable to NHA.    ☐ MasterCard    ☐ Visa    ☐ Am. Ex.

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