

New Hampshire Bird Records





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Little Blue Heron by Steve Mirick, 8/24/14, N. Hampton, NH.

Cover Photos: Clockwise from top: Yellow-headed Blackbird by Steve Mirick, 10/26/14, Seabrook, NH. Swainson's Hawk by Christopher McPherson, 9/21/14, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH. Western Grebe by Jason Lambert, 11/7/14, Hampton, NH.

New Hampshire Bird Records is published quarterly by New Hampshire 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. Records are selected for publication and not all species reported will appear in the issue. The published sightings typically represent the highlights of the season. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication of reports here does not imply future acceptance by the Committee. Please contact the Managing Editor if you would like to report your sightings but are unable to use NH eBird.

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Backyard Birder

What is That Strange Bird? Leucism in Birds

by Aiden Moser

Some of the most frequently asked identification questions received at NH Audubon are a result of leucistic birds. Leucism is a condition where a bird's feathers are abnormally white or paler than normal. In some cases, leucistic birds can be completely white; however, unlike albinism, leucistic birds do not have pink eyes and skin.

Despite the less extreme effects of leucism compared to albinism, the condition can often make even the most common species look unique. Here is a selection of photos that are good examples of this.

When identifying a leucistic bird, it is often helpful to pay attention to the birds around it, as they will often hang out with normally plumaged birds of the same species. For example, you will often see a leucistic grackle in a flock of blackbirds or a leucistic junco in a flock of juncos. It is also good to look at the overall size and shape of the bird as well as its habitat and behavior. With all this in mind, it should be easier to recognize and identify leucistic birds.

Aiden Moser is an avid 14-year old birder and photographer. He volunteers for New Hampshire Bird Records and New Hampshire Audubon.



This photo is of a leucistic Chipping Sparrow. Its crown is white where it is usually reddish brown, its eye line is faded, and the normally dark brown back is white along with a large white patch on the wings. Photo by Chris McPherson, 5/18/14, Brookline, NH.



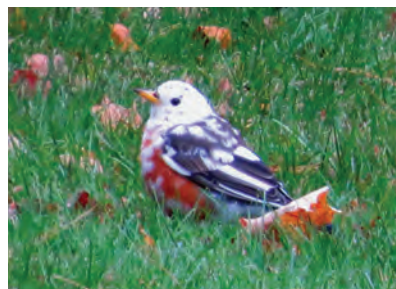
This Black-capped Chickadee exhibits only a partially black crown, and white extending all the way down the nape into the normally gray upper back of the bird. Photo by Judy Detzel, 11/10/14, Ellsworth, NH.



This photo is not from New Hampshire! It was taken by Iain MacLeod in Bosque Del Apache NWR, NM. It shows a leucistic Sandhill Crane amongst others that have normal plumage. Due to its very white pigmentation, it looks like a Whooping Crane (especially with its head down); however, it is exactly the same size (Whooping Cranes are larger) and shape as the nearby Sandhill Cranes. Also, although you can't see it in black and white, the bird's legs are unusually pink.



This Blue Jay has an abnormally white tail, indistinct black collar, and generally faded plumage (that is gray even when viewed in color). Photo by Maggie McCall, 11/13/14, Northfield, NH.



Unlike most American Robins, this individual has a white (as opposed to slate) head, and is speckled in the normally orange breast and mostly monochromatic back and wings. Photo by Tom Delaney, 11/2/14, Peterborough, NH.

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For more information, contact the Managing Editor (see inside front cover).

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Abbreviations Used

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
PMRO	Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory
PO	Post Office
R.	River
Rd.	Road
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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