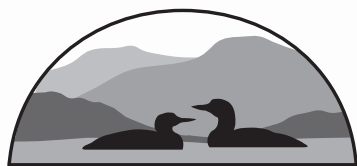


# New Hampshire Bird Records





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**MANAGING EDITOR**

Rebecca Suomala  
603-224-9909 X309,  
rsuomala@nhaudubon.org

**TEXT EDITOR**

Dan Hubbard

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Eric Masterson, **Spring**  
Tony Vazzano, **Summer**  
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# IN HONOR OF David Donsker



*David Donsker birding in Monaco. Photo by Terri Donsker.*

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of David Donsker in honor of his well-deserved receipt of the 2015 Goodhue-Elkins Award (see page 2) and his many contributions to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. Congratulations, David!

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*Cover Photos, top left: LeConte's Sparrow by Susan Buttrick, 4/14/15, Quincy Bog, Rumney, NH; top right: Common Gallinule by Len Medlock, 5/20/15, Exeter WTP, NH; bottom: Red-necked Phalaropes by Len Medlock, 5/25/15, NH Audubon pelagic boat trip (see story inside).*

*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](http://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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plants that can provide fruit into the winter. Native shrubs that hold onto their fruits into winter include staghorn sumac (a favorite of bluebirds!), winterberry holly, red chokeberry, highbush cranberry, and greenbrier. The NH State Nursery offers packages of native fruit producing plants for sale every spring and you can place orders at [nhnursery.com](http://nhnursery.com). If you would like more information about how you can improve bird habitat on your property you can contact your local county Cooperative Extension office.

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## Warbler World . . . Birding Old Cherry Mountain Road

*by Charlie Nims*



*Deception Pond on Old Cherry Mountain Rd., Carroll, NH. Photo by Charlie Nims.*

In spring, we New Hampshire birders cannot wait for the waves of migrants, especially warblers. We want to bird as many days as possible, spending hours searching for fleeting glimpses of warblers that are moving north, not tarrying, as they head toward their breeding grounds. We are happy to get five or six species a day when the first wave comes in late April and hope for 15+ come mid-May. If we get 20, it is a great day. Unless there is a massive fallout, we spend hours twitching with little time for extended observation or behavioral study.

There is a great birding location here in New Hampshire where, from late May to early August, 14+ species of warbler is what I would call normal and 16-20 species a definite possibility. To top it all off, this can be done in a couple of hours over 2.4 easily accessible miles. A bonus is that most of these warblers are on their breeding grounds so they are there all the time allowing those interested to observe breeding behavior and study vocalizations.

The location is Old Cherry Mountain Rd. in the town of Carroll (Coos County), off Rt. 302 very near the Mount Washington Hotel and the Bretton Woods ski resort. It is five miles west of Crawford Notch or 12 miles east of Bethlehem. For those birding Trudeau Road, Old Cherry Mountain Road is about nine miles away. (Detailed directions and GPS coordinates below.)

To be fully transparent, the summer of 2015 was the first time that I birded the area, but I have gone back several times including leading a Massachusetts birding club trip. I have also received input from several birders who have regularly birded there. For the area, there have been 20 warbler species reported to eBird. Some of the highlight warblers include Canada, Tennessee, Cape May, Blackpoll, Palm and Blackburnian. Some of the more common warblers include Magnolia, Nashville, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Chestnut-sided. While warblers may be the big attraction, the area can also have other species of interest such as Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Willow and Alder Flycatchers, Common Nighthawk, as well as several hawk species. The potential exists for other interesting species such as Mourning Warbler, Black-backed Woodpecker and Boreal Chickadee.

When birding the area, be very careful with the songs of the Black-throated Blue Warbler (BTBW) and the Blackburnian Warbler (BLBW). In my experience, both in this area and the White Mountains in general, about a third of the calls of the BTBW's are "alternative" to the standard call. With regard to the BLBW, twice I expected to find a Cape May Warbler, given the song to which I was listening, but both times the bird turned out to be a Blackburnian. The upside of this is that it is a great place to study song variation as a component of bird behavior.

Birding the area is quite easy as Old Cherry Mountain Road is a very well maintained dirt road that leaves Rt. 302 just west of the Bretton Woods ski area. (Access is also available from Rte. 115 if coming from the Jefferson area.) An interesting geological note is that this section of the road follows an esker, a glacially deposited ridge. All birding can be done from the road, which generally parallels Deception Brook, crosses it at 0.8 miles, and provides other views of it at several points along the way. While there are numerous places for birding stops, I will list a few of my favorites starting from the Rt. 302 intersection.

Immediately north off of Rt. 302, Lower Falls Road is on your left. A short detour down that road gives the opportunity for Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart and Alder Flycatcher, among other species. At 0.1 miles (all mileage from Rte. 302 intersection), there is a large field becoming overgrown with small shrubs and brambles on your left which can be good for open area birds.



*The Fabyan Guard Station historic site, Old Cherry Mountain Rd., Carroll, NH. Photo by Charlie Nims.*

At 0.6 miles, there is an interesting historic site, a 1923 National Forest Service cabin called the Fabyan Guard Station, which was restored in 2014. It is the oldest remaining guard station in the White Mountain National Forest. The cabin, with a historical information plaque, is also a good place to stop to listen for various woodland species.

At 1.0 miles, a high spot on the esker is reached which can be good for Blackburnian Warbler, kinglets and Red-breasted Nuthatches which seem to be everywhere! At 1.2 miles, Deception Brook comes closer to the road. I tend to park here and walk the next 100 yards or so, an area which can have a good variety of species highlighted by Canada Warbler. The next spot I stop at (1.6 miles) overlooks Deception Brook on the west side of the road. Similar to the previous spot, this can be good for Canada and other warbler species, as well as Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Scarlet Tanagers, Hermit Thrushes and Swainson's Thrushes can be heard or seen almost anywhere along the route.

At 2.2 miles, I like to stop at a small stream crossing which is worth checking for Canada Warbler, thrushes, Cedar Waxwing, and Winter Wren, as well as Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks. While I have not seen reports of Cooper's Hawk or Red-tailed Hawk, I am sure that they are in the area, not to mention Northern Goshawk. This spot is one of the few places where there are dead snags and an open sky view. About 50 yards south of this stop is a small campsite that can be explored.

The final stop I recommend is at Deception Pond (2.4 miles), a spruce-dominated setting in the shadow of the Dartmouth Range to the east. At this spot, there have been warblers such as Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia and Blackburnian, along with Mallard (nesting), Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Bufflehead, Belted

Kingfisher, breeding Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Olive-sided Flycatcher and thrushes. It is a jewel of a spot, beautiful and birdy.

If you have time, you might want to continue north on the road to its intersection with Rt. 115. For the ambitious, there is a trailhead at 3.2 miles which leads to the 3,573 foot summit of Cherry Mountain which has great views and where Bicknell's Thrush has been reported. Continuing on Old Cherry Mountain Road, there are several large fields shortly before you reach Rt. 115. Here you can search for grassland birds such as American Kestrel, Eastern Bluebird, swallows and sparrows. From here, it is less than four miles to the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge trailhead for Cherry Pond and other refuge highlights, and only another mile to the Whitefield Airport with its pond and grassland habitat.

Old Cherry Mountain Road is seasonal, closed in winter. It opens in late May or early June depending upon winter weather and road condition so plan accordingly. For current road information, go to the White Mountain National Forest web site: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/whitemountain/conditions/?cid=STELPRDB5183538>.

Enjoy this wonderful place for warblers and please be sure to post your sightings to the eBird Hotspot: Old Cherry Mt. Rd., Carroll/Jefferson. To date, there have been 85 species reported to eBird, so the 20 warbler species recorded here represent a large percentage of the total. Finally, have a try at birding areas beyond those I have described, as there is lots of unexplored territory!

### **Detailed Directions**

The GPS coordinates for the intersection of Rt. 302 and Old Cherry Mountain Rd. are: N 44° 16' 11.4", W 071° 28' 21.3". From southern New Hampshire, go north on either Rt. 93 or Rt. 16.

From Rt. 93, take Exit 36 to Rt. 3 just north of Franconia Notch. Drive to the junction of Rt. 3 and Rt. 302 at Twin Mountain and turn right onto Rt. 302. Drive about 3.5 miles to Old Cherry Mountain Rd., which is a well-marked left turn shortly before arriving at the Bretton Woods ski area.

From Rt. 16, drive through the North Conway area, staying on Rt. 302 towards Crawford Notch when Rt. 16 turns right towards Pinkham Notch. After reaching Crawford Notch, Old Cherry Mountain Rd. will be five miles on the right just beyond the Mount Washington Hotel and Bretton Woods ski area.

From the north on Rt. 2 in Jefferson, take Rt. 115 west for three miles, and turn left onto Old Cherry Mountain Rd. opposite Rt. 115A. Coming from the Pondicherry NWR trailhead on Hazen Rd., turn left (east) on Rt. 115 to reach the turn.



Thanks to Nancy Mitiguy, Sam Stoddard and David Govatski for their review of and input to this article.

*Charlie Nims is an experienced birder who moved to the Mt. Washington Valley almost three years ago. He was actively involved with Massachusetts Audubon and the South Shore Bird Club and now volunteers with NH Audubon. Charlie also enjoys skiing and hiking recently completing the 48 New Hampshire 4000 footers.*

## Osprey Satellite Tagging

by Iain MacLeod

*Photos by David Lipsy, Eagle Eye Photography*

On Tuesday May 19, 2015, I led an Osprey research team to the Ayers Island Dam in New Hampton to attempt to capture the breeding male Osprey at the nest there and fit him with a GPS satellite transmitter. The tagging team was Dr. Rob Bierregaard, Chris Martin and I, ably assisted by Dallas Wrath, owner of Donovan Tree Experts, who provided the bucket truck needed to access the nest atop a 40 foot pole.

Curtis Mooney of EverSource Energy (owners of the hydro station at the dam) was also present, as were three employees of 3M, who had helped fund this year's Osprey Tracking Project, and two guests, Fran and Kevin Mandeville. We were also joined by photographer David Lipsy of Eagle Eye Photography, who documented the process.

A transmitter weights 30g (1.1 oz) and includes a mini solar cell to charge the battery.

Capturing an Osprey is like fishing, hours of hanging around, then a few minutes of action. In 2015, we targeted the males to find out about their foraging (males do all the hunting for the nest), but males are **much** harder to catch than females because they are off foraging, leaving the females to tend and guard the nest. We use what is known as a noose carpet, a 48 square inch section of mesh covered with hundreds of monofilament nooses. The carpet is secured on top of the nest and the returning Osprey gets its toes snared in the nooses.

When we arrived, the female was incubating three eggs. In 2011, we had caught and banded her, so we knew she was a veteran female. We don't deploy the trap until we know that the male is close by. This can take hours, as the male may be off fishing for the majority of his day. We always wait until he delivers a fish to the female and she flies off to feed, while the male sits on the eggs. We give her ten minutes or so to eat her fish (if we deployed the trap right away, she would defend the nest and likely drop her meal, which she may have waited all night for). This time, after several hours of waiting, the male arrived with a fish, delivered it to the female and then sat on the eggs. We waited the prerequisite ten minutes and then moved in with the trap. Rob was hoisted in the bucket truck and he attached the trap. Both adults were very vocal and swooped at Rob as he reached the nest (the female was still holding her lunch). We replaced the three eggs with dummy wooden eggs and put the real ones in an insulated box to keep them safe, then we stepped back and waited.



*Dr. Rob Bierregaard holding a noose carpet used to capture an Osprey at the nest.*



*While we waited for the male to arrive with a fish, the female sat tight on her three eggs.*



*The female Osprey circled overhead carrying her lunch, as the trap was set on her nest.*



*The eggs were replaced with wooden eggs and stored safely in an insulated box.*



*The male Osprey arrived and his toes were quickly caught in multiple nooses.*



*After the male was caught, Rob was quickly lifted to the nest to retrieve him.*

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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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