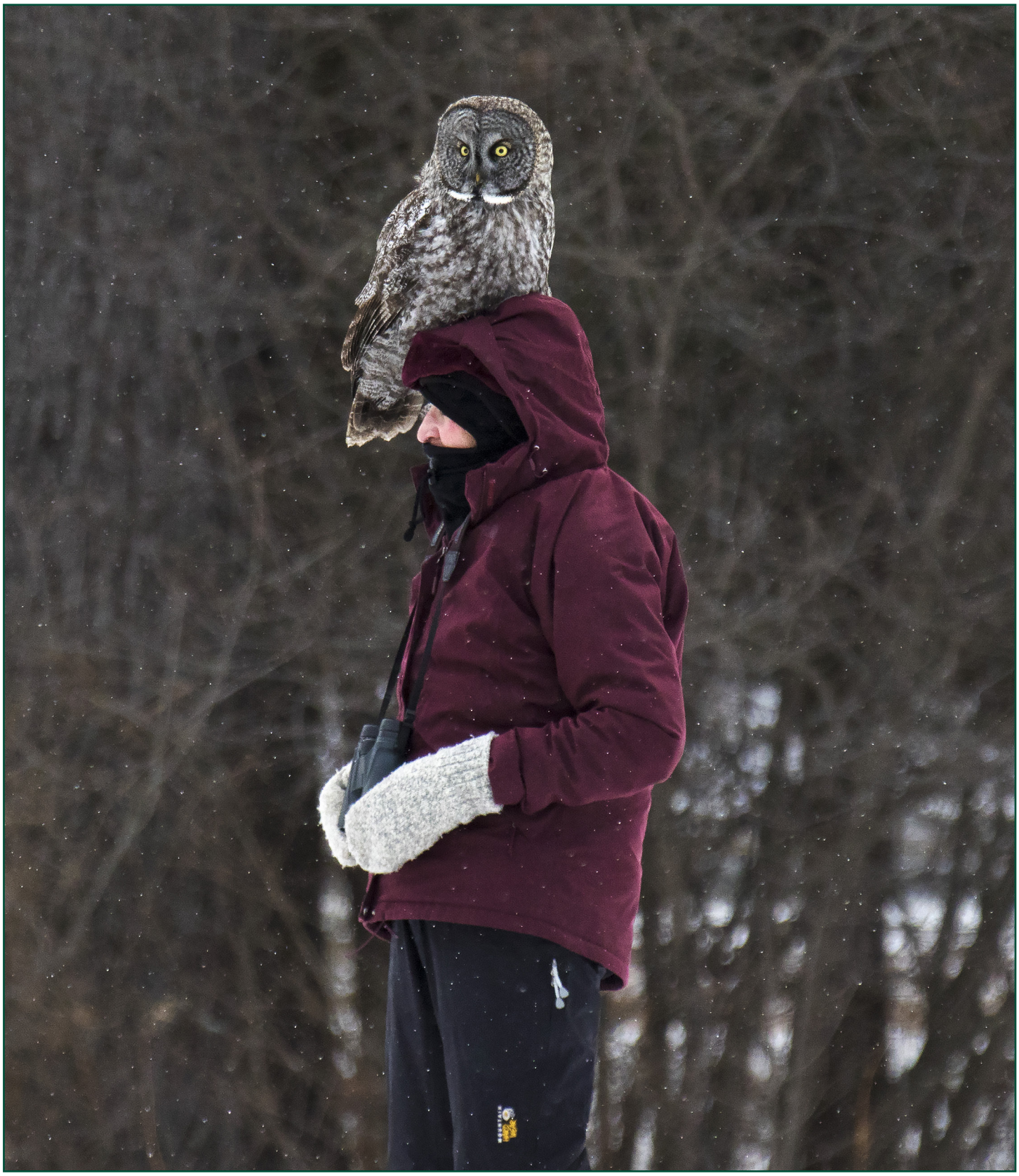
New Hampshire
Bird Records



Spring 2017 Vol. 36, No. 1

NH AUDUBON
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NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS
VOLUME 36, NUMBER 1
SPRING 2017

IN MEMORY OF

Dr. Bev Ridgely

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by NH Audubon and friends in memory of Bev Ridgely. Dr. Ridgely wrote the *Birds of the Squam Lakes Region* in 1973, which he revised and expanded in 1988. He received the Goodhue-Elkins Award in 2002 and we are pleased to honor him.

Bev Ridgely doing something he enjoyed immensely: bird watching. Courtesy of the Ridgely family.

In This Issue

Cover Photo: David Lipsy captured the moment when the Great Gray Owl landed on the head of Marsha Richelli (who is coincidentally a NH Audubon volunteer), 3-11-17, Newport, NH. According to Marsha, she saw it coming and told herself not to move. "I felt safe, I had three layers on my head. I knew it landed but I didn't feel any pressure from the talons." She was hoping it wouldn't stay long, and it didn't, taking off across the field to a better perch.

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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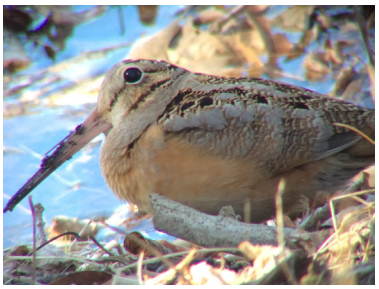
miles to Indian Pond. This is a beautiful, undeveloped lake, excellent for canoeing and kayaking. Common Loons have bred here and waterfowl during migration have included all three scoters, Horned and Red-necked Grebe and Ruddy Duck. Check the shoreline for Spotted Sandpipers. American Bittern have been heard in the swamp at the outlet. Interestingly, New Hampshire's only record for Common Chaffinch occurred at a feeder on Indian Pond.

Another interesting spot to explore is Thompson's Tree Farm, over a thousand acres in size and surrounding the southern base of Mt. Cube. Tom Thompson, the son of former New Hampshire governor Meldrim Thompson, operates the tree farm and opens the road every year on the third weekend in June for a "lupine tour." Four-wheeled vehicles are necessary to drive the long road to this remote spot. The payoff is splendid views of blooming lupines with Mt. Cube in the background. The birding is good also. The habitat here has a decidedly boreal feel, at about 2,000 feet in elevation and interspersed with bogs. Interesting birds recorded here have included Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and Northern Goshawk. The tree farm is at the end of Quinttown Road, which follows the scenic Upper Jacobs Brook and begins on the left side of Route 25A, 10 miles west of Wentworth.

The old hayfields and secondary growth forests around the western base of Mt. Cube, where I live, is my favorite spot in town for several species. American Woodcock breed in my fields and the fields of my neighbors. I have counted as many as eight males displaying while walking our road at dusk. Broad-winged Hawk, Alder Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler and Indigo Bunting are also found throughout the breeding season. One morning in February of 2017, I looked out to see a Townsend's Solitaire in my crabapple tree! Although quite a few birders saw it that day, I was disappointed that it turned out to be a "one-day wonder." It was fun while it lasted and it goes to prove that special birds can be found in your yard and "patch." I encourage birders to explore Orford sometime, but to also bird your own neighborhood and town thoroughly, because there is a lot to learn and enjoy about birds by doing so.

Jeff MacQueen has lived and birded in NH for 28 years. He leads field trips for the Mascoma Chapter of NH Audubon. He taught science and art in Merrimack and Lebanon.



American Woodcock in Orford by Jeff MacQueen.

Bird-glass Collisions

by Laura Deming

Each year in the United States, nearly a billion birds die by colliding with windows, doors, and other glass structures. Another 200 million die in collisions with wind turbines, cell towers, and powerlines, and a staggering 1.5 to 3 billion birds are killed by feral and domestic cats every year. Humans cause these sources of mortality and therefore, we must – and can – solve them. We may have limited influence over energy and communication infrastructure, but we all have the ability to make our homes safe for birds. Free-ranging cats are deadly for birds and many other wildlife species, so if you have a cat, please keep it indoors. If you have windows (which I assume you do), consider treating them with bird-friendly products to deter birds from hitting them.

The problem: birds can't see glass! They fly into windows that reflect vegetation, or glass that they can see through, such as railings, sound barriers, gazebos, breeze ways, and bus shelters. Large windows and doors are especially dangerous, but even small windows pose a threat, as many birds naturally fly through small, dark spaces among trees.

In general, the more glass in a building, the more deadly it is for birds. High-rises (over 12 stories) kill millions of birds each year, especially modern structures with glass facades, however, these buildings account for less than one percent of annual collision mortality. Low rises (4-11 stories) and residences (1-3 stories) account for 56% and 44% of mortality, respectively, because there are so many more of them (Loss et al. 2014). In addition, low buildings reflect surrounding vegetation. Another study found that high rises in less urbanized areas may be especially deadly, because their bright lights are powerful beacons to birds migrating across relatively dark landscapes (Hager et al. 2014). Essentially, no matter where glass is, or what type of structure it is on, it is deadly for birds.

No birds are immune. At least 258 species (about one-third of the species found in North America) have been documented as victims of collisions, from hawks to hummingbirds. Unlike natural dangers, collisions indiscriminately kill healthy, as well as weak, birds, successfully breeding adults, and recently fledged young. Smithsonian researchers have found that White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Song Sparrows were consistently the most commonly reported in collisions, representing nearly 35% of over 92,000 records from 26 databases (Loss et al. 2014). These species may account for so many collisions due to their large populations relative to other species. When population size and range distribution are accounted for, many other species still exhibited disproportionately high vulnerability to collisions regardless

of building type, including Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Brown Creeper, Ovenbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Painted Bunting, Canada Warbler, Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, and Worm-eating Warbler (Loss et al. 2014). Because most of these data were collected in eastern cities, they do not reflect collision mortality rates for the rest of the country.

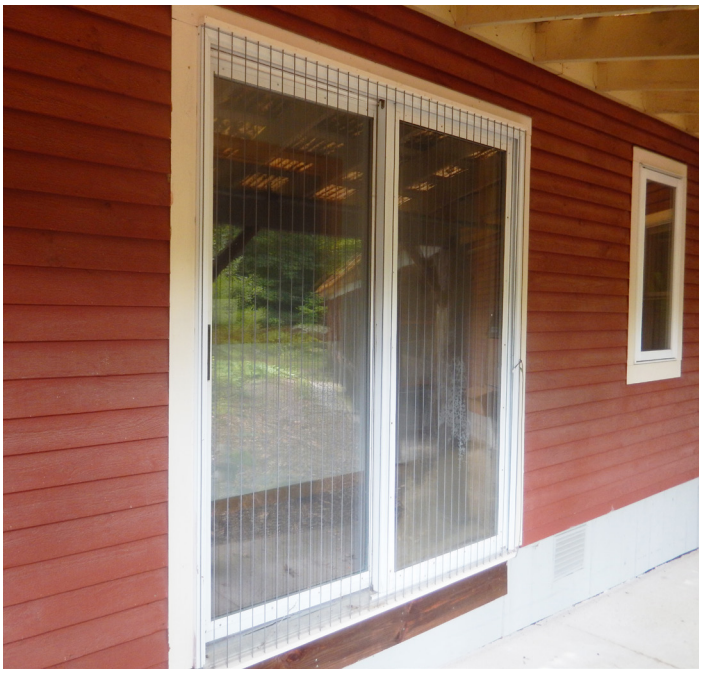
Collision deaths occur year-round, but increase significantly during spring and fall migration seasons when birds are traveling through unfamiliar territory. Night-migrating songbirds are the most frequent victims. Nocturnal migrants navigate along migration routes using a variety of cues, depending on the species, including the earth's magnetic field, the stars, patterns of polarized light created by the setting sun, prevailing winds, and topographic features. Night-flying migrants become disoriented by artificial lighting and magnetic fields generated by powerlines and communications equipment. Veering off-course, hundreds of thousands of birds gravitate toward brightly lit urban and suburban areas, eventually landing in patches of vegetation around homes and buildings. In cities, thousands of disoriented birds become trapped in the lights of skyscapers, flying for hours before dropping exhausted to the ground.

A dramatic example of this phenomenon is the two light beams of the 9/11 Memorial in New York City, which reach four miles into space and are visible to humans 60 miles away. First lit in 2002, people immediately noticed thousands of birds flying around within the intense beams, many eventually colliding with buildings, or dropping exhausted to the ground. New York Audubon has been monitoring the lights during spring and fall migration, notifying the National September 11 Memorial and Museum (who runs the tribute), to turn off the lights when 1,000 or more birds become trapped. The lights are turned off for 20 minutes, allowing birds to clear the area. In 2010, a new moon and cloudy skies caused an estimated 10,000 birds to become trapped through the night, resulting in the lights being shut down five times. A video of this event can be seen at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWpyLgkKuKc.

On May 4, 2017, nearly 400 songbirds were killed when they hit the American National Insurance Company's 23-story building at the north end of Galveston Island, Texas. After storms swept through the region the previous night, northbound migrants seeking refuge were lured to the brightly lit building, which sits nearly on the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico. Birds lost included 90 Nashville Warblers, 60 Blackburnian Warblers, 42 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 41 Ovenbirds and over 160 other individuals of 21 more species; a tragic end to a miraculous journey. This dramatic event fortunately prompted leaders at the insurance company to make the building less dangerous for migrating birds by extinguishing nonessential lights during the migration season. Working with Houston Audubon and other organizations, the American National Insurance Company has also resolved to help raise awareness of birds in the region.

These dramatic bird-kills highlight the dangers faced by migrating birds, but as mentioned above, high-rises account for less than 1% of building collision mortality. More than 99% of birds die hitting windows and other glass of our homes, schools, businesses, and bus shelters. It's time to do something about it.

There are two main strategies for stopping bird collisions: minimize night lighting and treat windows, doors, and other glass with products that birds can see. Many cities have instituted Lights Out programs to encourage building owners and managers to extinguish excess lighting during months when migrants are traveling overhead. The first of these programs, Lights Out Toronto, was established in 1993. Since then, groups in 18 additional cities have started programs to diminish night lighting serving not only to reduce bird collisions, but also helping building owners save energy.



An example of a window treatment that prevents collisions at NH Audubon's McLane Center. This "zen curtain" was modeled after the Acopian Bird Saver (https://www.birdsavers.com/buildyourown.html), and consists of wooden top and bottom rails with paracord spaced two inches apart. This curtain was expertly made by volunteer Tabor Browder.

Solutions for making buildings bird-safe include minimizing the use of glass, using glass that has visible patterns, and covering existing glass with screens, films, tape, or other products. These last products are the most sensible for most homeowners, as they are inexpensive, relatively

easy to apply, and are very effective at deterring birds. The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has been leading the charge to raise awareness of the bird collisions issue, conducting research on the effectiveness of various products in deterring collisions, and producing a downloadable document on Bird-friendly Building Guidelines. More information can be found on their website (http://collisions.abcbirds.org).

NH Audubon's Bird-friendly Buildings Program began in 2011 when we joined a dozen other organizations nationwide to endorse the ABC's first edition of *Bird-friendly Buildings Guidelines*. Since then, we have collaborated with the ABC to promote their "Bird-Friendly Buildings" program to raise awareness of the devastating collisions problem and present effective solutions for buildings of all sizes. We have been treating the windows and doors at the McLane Center in Concord to make the building safe for birds. The variety of treatments, which includes films, tape, decals, and screens, will exhibit practical and effective solutions for homes, schools, and other buildings.

You can prevent bird collisions at home by covering your windows and other glass. A few products are now on display at the McLane Center as we work to make the building safe for birds. For more information, visit the ABC website noted above. The birds will thank you!

References

Hager, et al. 2017. Continent-wide analysis of how urbanization affects bird-window collision mortality in North America. *Biological Conservation* 212:209-215. doi:10.1016/J.BIOCON.2017.06.014

Loss, S. R., T. Will, S. S. Loss, and P. Marra. 2014. Bird–building collisions in the United States: Estimates of annual mortality and species vulnerability. *The Condor* 116(1): 8-23.

It takes a special place to produce a Little Egret for your yard list. Steve Mirick was lucky enough to see this individual from inside his porch on Great Bay in Newmarket. This Little Egret was present for just over two months in the summer of 1998 in the marsh at Lubberland Creek Preserve where Steve took this particular photo, not far from his yard.

Yard Listing: The Fascination, the Anecdotes, and, of course, the Numbers

by Phil Brown

The Many Virtues of Yard Listing

I'll admit it, I don't enjoy chasing birds. I'd prefer that they come to me. Maybe this is why I'm such a fan of yard listing. What can initially seem a matter of happenstance, whether or not a bird should stop by your little patch of yard, may, in fact, have some rhyme and reason. I've come to realize that accumulating a growing yard list is a factor of several aspects: location, longevity, awareness, strategy, and a whole lot of luck!

New birders will sometimes ask me my life list total and I typically answer the truth: "I have no idea, but I can tell you how many species I've seen in my yard!" This reply usually intrigues a new birder who has not yet heard of yard listing. It's a good conversation starter and yard listing is a useful strategy for beginning birders to begin accumulating knowledge of species identification, better understand migration timing, learn bird behavior, and learn about other occurrences in the avian world. Regardless of skill level, yard listing also keeps you in touch with common species even as birding can become focused on the unusual. Speaking of which, even rarities can be observed in your own backyard and perhaps with some regularity, if you know where and when to look. Unlike chasing rarities for your state list, however, yard listing requires no fossil fuel! You might even get some exercise if your yard is large. Lastly, it will connect you with your yard in new and exciting ways and you may just discover the wildness of the place you call home.

I interviewed many New Hampshire birders, particularly those involved with this publication, and came up with several suggestions and themes, some of which are detailed in the following sections.

What Defines a "Yard Bird?"

Is it something that you have seen, or do "heard" birds count? Does the bird have to be occurring in your actual yard instead of flying overhead or seen in a next-door-neighbor's tree? Or, even more of a stretch for some, could the species have been recorded, and not even detected in real-time, by either a trail camera or audio recording device? The latter has been deployed by my neighbor and *New Hampshire Bird Records* Spring Editor Eric Masterson over the past couple of years. This tactic has undoubtedly helped Eric stay ahead of my yard list as his recording equipment captures the call

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.

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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
RA	Recreation Area
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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