

New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS



New Hampshire's Grosbeaks!

Five species of grosbeaks were reported in New Hampshire this fall. Here are three of them, another is on the inside back cover. Read Jim Sparrell's account of seeing all five in the Field Notes.



Blue Grosbeak by Jim Sparrell, 10-2-20, South Street Cemetery, Portsmouth, NH.



Black-headed Grosbeak by Benjamin Griffith, 10-16-20, Deerfield, NH.



Evening Grosbeaks by Len Medlock, 10-31-20, Exeter, NH.

Photo Quiz

Can You Identify These Birds?

Photo by Leo McKillop, 9-25-20.
Answer on page 47.



IN MEMORY OF

Ralph Andrews



NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS

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This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of Ralph Andrews with deep appreciation for his commitment to bird conservation and his warm and friendly personality. He encouraged many a new birder and welcomed all participants to whatever birding activity he was involved with, from the Breeding Bird Atlas to field trips to the Christmas Bird Count. See more on page 2.



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Photo Gallery – Invasion of the Irruptives	Inside Back Cover

Cover Photos: Swallow-tailed Kite (top) by Susan Wrisley, 8-12-20, Deer Meadow Rd., Webster, NH; A hatch-year Anna's Hummingbird (bottom left), captured, banded, and photographed by Scott Weidensaul, New London, NH (according to Scott this is a first record for all of New England!); Chestnut-collared Longspur (bottom right) by Susan Wrisley, 10-20-20, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH.



Late-migrating Yellow-rumped Warblers may be found in numbers at Mill Pond. Photo by Len Medlock.

parking immediately before a barrier across the road. The simplest access to the Mill Pond area is just past the barricade. The right fork goes a bit further where there is much more parking. The pond area is also accessible from that location.

From Rt. 89 in Lebanon, take Rt. 120 toward Hanover, turning right onto Etna Road (aka Great Hollow Rd.) opposite the Wilson Tire Company. Continue about 3.5 miles into and past Etna Village to Ruddsboro Road. Turn right and continue on Ruddsboro Road for 2 miles to the Old Dana Road turnoff on the left. Follow the above instructions for traveling on Old Dana Road and Moose Mountain Road.

From Rt. 120 in Hanover, turn east onto Greensboro Road and continue about 1.9 miles to the junction with Etna Road. Turn left onto Etna Road and travel about 1.4 miles through Etna to Ruddsboro Road. Follow the instructions above for traveling on Ruddsboro Road to Old Dana Road.

Dirt roads are to be expected but Ruddsboro Road is paved. The pond sits within the Hanover trail system. A short way along the barred fork road, there is another fork where a maintained trail departs and eventually joins the Appalachian Trail about a mile further along. There are also birding opportunities along Old Dana Road where ducks can be found in an adjacent farm pond, flycatchers around the pond, and Savannah Sparrows and Bobolinks present in the open farmland before Moose Mountain Road.

For a map of the Hanover trail system in this area:

<https://www.hanovernh.org/conservation-commission/pages/trail-maps>

See the Main Map and the Southeast Sheet

eBird HotSpot

Moose Mt. and Mill Pond, Hanover:

<https://ebird.org/nh/hotspot/L11600102>

Pandemic Birding with the “Bathing Beauties of Webster”

The Epitome of Local Birding

by Robert A. Quinn



The water feature is set up with a garden hose into a bird bath on a rock. The bird bath is tilted so that the water spills out the front onto a curved piece of bark and then cascades down two pieces of wood to a flat rock. There is a depression in the rock that forms a shallow puddle very attractive to small birds. Fill the basin with the hose and then turn the water back to a minimum so it just drips. To see the entire set up, watch the video at the link below. Photo by Bob Quinn.

Migrants! Water! Action! As with a Hollywood spectacular, the “Bathing Beauties of Webster” were on full display in the fall of 2020. Between August 14 and October 12 my yard hosted 20 species of warblers and I produced video recordings of 19 of those species.

Birding had been a challenge in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but unexpected time at home had a brightly shining silver lining. It provided me with an unprecedented opportunity to observe the daily appearance and behavior of my local migrants. I had worked for over ten years to create a bird friendly yard (with wildlife plantings) and now I added a simple, but effective, running-water feature. The results greatly exceeded my expectations. A steady stream of warblers and other species flowed through my yard and many stopped at the water to frolic and bathe.

As soon as I cobbled together this “temporary” cascading water feature, the response was instantaneous. Black-capped Chickadees, Chipping Sparrows, and Northern Cardinals came into the tumbling water within the first few minutes. Soon, they were joined by migrant warblers and the exceptional “Show” went into full production!

The daily antics and entertainment were priceless. The routine worked this way. I would be doing office work on

my screen porch when the scolding calls of Tufted Titmice and Black-capped Chickadees would alert me to their presence at my feeders. I came to learn that warblers would be close behind them, therefore, I would leap into action and turn on the water. As it began to dribble and then to cascade, numerous birds would come in to drink and bathe. This behavior was consistent. Two-to-four times a day, the ravenous hordes of titmice and friends would arrive, I would turn on the water, and the fun would begin! An amazing variety of warblers, vireos, and other species poured through my yard for two months. Some of the best “aquatic” performances and behaviors included:

Canada Warbler – being an uncommon and early-departing fall migrant, they were one of the initial warblers to appear. The first ones were seen August 18 when *four* graced my yard. I tallied at least 13 for the season.

Prairie Warbler – another early fall migrant that I worried I had missed, but a bright male came into the yard on August 21. I tallied a few more after that with the last one on September 15, making it my latest fall Prairie ever in my yard.

Tennessee Warbler – a wonderful and still uncommon species which allowed for great close-ups, making identification easier. The first Tennessees were four on August 29 followed by at least seven more, with my final yard sighting on September 21.

Other delightful routines included: several Nashville Warblers showing their red crowns as they bathed; a challengingly dull Cape May Warbler to puzzle over; and multiple Bay-breasted Warblers. The best acts had *combinations* of species such as:

- side-by-side Bay-breasted and Blackpoll warblers;
- a Pine Warbler next to the two “Bay-poll” species (Bay-breasts and Blackpolls are sometimes lumped as “Bay-polls” because they are hard to differentiate);
- two Ovenbirds *together*; four species seen

simultaneously twice;

- then, on one memorable day, *six* species of warblers seen bathing at the same time (Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Nashville, Blackpoll, Blackburnian, and Northern Parula).

Other species seen at the water included: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Downy Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, both nuthatches, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, relatively few sparrows (Chipping, White-throated, Lincoln, and Dark-eyed Junco), Baltimore Oriole (a relative rarity in my yard), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, and Purple Finch.

Some species were conspicuous by their absence (so far). That list includes grouse, Mourning Dove, woodpeckers other than Downy, thrushes in general, Scarlet Tanager, and migrant sparrows beyond White-throated and Lincoln’s Sparrow.

There are four secrets to having your own “Bathing Beauties” show/spectacle:

- **Moving water.** Running water is *much* more productive than a still bird bath. Dripping or cascading water is a magnet for these migrant sprites. Furthermore, most of them prefer *very shallow* pools for bathing.
- **Seed Feeders** or some other significant attractant. I have noticed that migrant warblers follow the Tufted Titmice and chickadees around, ergo, feeders attract the seed eaters and the warblers follow them.
- **Cover.** Another key ingredient is some nearby bushes/shrubs/trees for protective cover. Nothing fancy needed.
- **Time.** To get the most out of your efforts it is essential that you devote quality time to watching.

My most enjoyable moments have been witnessing the “hourly” changes, recognizing different flocks, counting each species, identifying individuals, watching their unique

behaviors, and video recording them. *What will be the most fun for you?*

Watch Bob Quinn’s videos of the Webster Bathing Beauties on NH Audubon’s YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/WrgwHb5OcrU>



Several of the “Bathing Beauties of Webster” taking a bath in the fall of 2020, photographed by Bob Quinn.

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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.

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