

# New Hampshire

## BIRD RECORDS





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**EDITOR**

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

**TEXT EDITOR**

Dan Hubbard

**SEASON EDITORS**

Eric Masterson, Spring  
Jason Pietrzak, Summer  
Ben Griffith, Fall  
Jim Sparrell/Katherine Towler, Winter

**LAYOUT**

Dyanna Smith

**PUBLICATION ASSISTANT**

Kathryn Frieden

**ASSISTANTS**

Susan Burkhardt, Zeke Cornell,  
Susan MacLeod, Marie Nickerson

**FIELD NOTES**

Anita Fernandez

**PHOTO EDITOR**

Wendy Chatel

**WEB MASTER**

Kathy Barnes

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

Phil Brown, Wendy Chatel,  
Hank Chary, Ben Griffith,  
Dan Hubbard, Pam Hunt,  
Iain MacLeod, Eric Masterson,  
Robert A. Quinn, Rebecca Suomala,  
Greg Tillman, Jon Woolf,  
Susan Wrisley

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**IN HONOR OF**  
**Steve and Jane Mirick**

The 2022 issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* are sponsored in appreciation of Steve and Jane Mirick for all that they do for the birding community. They have been responsible for finding (and re-finding) many rarities, spreading the word, and staying on the bird. Many of us owe life birds to them and we are grateful for all that they do.

*Steve and Jane Mirick. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.*

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Cover Photos: Mountain Bluebird photos from Great Bay NWR, Newington, NH by Susan Wrisley, 1-18-22 (bottom) and Jim Sparrell, 2-7-23 (top right); from Peterborough, NH by Pam Hunt, 2-11-23 (top left).



# What to Watch for in Winter

Winter is the time for Snowy Owls, winter sea ducks and alcids on the ocean. The New Hampshire coast offers the most diversity in winter and there is always something to see. Inland can be more variable. In some years, there's the hoped-for arrival of "winter finches" invading from the north in huge flocks, although it may require a trip north of the White Mountains to find them. Watch for waterfowl to linger on open bodies of water and gather in unfrozen sections of rivers. A few half hardy birds linger into the winter, providing a welcome surprise. Unexpected birds such as orioles, towhees, or Yellow-breasted Chats are often at feeders so be sure to watch for them and keep your camera handy to document their identification. Although it may seem quiet, there are fun birding activities to keep us going – the Christmas Bird Counts, the Superbowl of Birding at the end of January, and NH Audubon's annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey on the second weekend in February.

## December

- Wintering sea ducks and other waterbirds arrive and will stay all winter. For some species, it is the only time we see them in New Hampshire: Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, Horned and Red-necked Grebes, Red-throated Loons.
- Purple Sandpipers are one of the few shorebirds that winter along the coast. Watch for them in rocky areas, not sandy beaches. They blend in very well and are often easiest to find at high tide in Rye or the jetty at the outlet of Hampton Harbor.
- American Tree Sparrows arrive from the north, taking the place of Chipping Sparrows. Dark-eyed Juncos join them at feeders.
- Greater Scaup gather in large numbers (1,000 or more) on Great Bay. Try looking from the Great Bay Discovery Center or the Osprey Cove trail in Greenland, or Adam's Point in Durham. You will want a scope as birds can be distant.

- Barrow's Goldeneye are sometimes seen with large flocks of Common Goldeneye. Stark Landing on the Merrimack River in Manchester can be one of the best spots to see them, but one or two are also usually in Laconia if there is open water, and sometimes at the coast or Great Bay.



*Snow Buntings by Jim Sparrell, 12-4-22, Hampton Beach SP, NH.*

- Hampton Beach State Park usually hosts a flock of Snow Buntings, Horned Larks and an occasional Lapland Longspur. Farms along the Connecticut River Valley from Westmoreland to Walpole and open areas near the Berlin Regional Airport in Milan are also good places to check for these species.
- Northern Shrikes can appear anywhere in the state but good places to check are the Great Bay NWR in Newington or Airport Marsh in Whitefield.

## January

- If the fishing boats are still running (e.g. Eastman's Docks, Seabrook), an offshore trip can produce Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Dovekie, Common Murre, and an occasional puffin or Thick-



*Part of the large flock of Greater Scaup that is usually present on Great Bay in the winter. Photo by Steve Mirick, 12-28-22.*

billed Murre. These species are rare from shore and a boat trip is often required to see them.

- Razorbill and Black Guillemots are the most likely alcids to see on the ocean from shore. Scan from pullouts such as Pulpit Rocks and Seal Rocks in Rye, Rye Harbor State Park, Hampton Beach State Park, or Seabrook Beach. Great Island Common in New Castle is also a good spot for Razorbills.



*Iceland Gull by Kyle Wilmarth, 1-26-23, Salem, NH.*

- White-winged Gulls (Glaucous and Iceland) visit in the winter but are seldom reliable on any given day. Hampton Harbor and Rochester WTP (only open on weekdays) are the most likely places to find them.
- The best places to look for Snowy Owls are Rye Harbor State Park and Hampton Beach State Park. Numbers vary each year and they can be absent some winters.
- Winter finches, such as Pine Siskins or Common Redpolls, can arrive in big flocks or not at all. Watch for them at feeders and stands of Birch trees with catkins.
- As rivers and lakes ice up, Bald Eagles gather at remaining open water on the major rivers, largest lakes, and the coast. Great Bay is a winter hotspot for eagle watching, and eagles are regular along the Merrimack River from Concord to Nashua, as well as southern stretches of the Connecticut River, and the Lakes Region.

## February

- Check fruit trees for waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks. Cedar Waxwings are the most common. Bohemian Waxwings can visit from the north at any time during the winter in big years, but sometimes wait until February. Pine Grosbeaks appear in some years but typically in low numbers. Any place with crabapple or ornamental cherry trees that still have fruit, including supermarket parking lots, will attract these fruit-eating species.

- Black-capped Chickadees start to sing their spring “fee-bee” song making it easy to think that your Eastern Phoebes are back, but they won’t return until April.
- Hinsdale can be one of the first places for returning waterfowl as open patches appear on Lake Wantastiquet above the dam on the Connecticut River. Check also for open water in other towns that border Massachusetts.
- Short-eared Owls can occasionally be seen at the Seacoast or the Dillant-Hopkins Airport in Swansey in winter but are more likely as we transition from February to March.
- South winds can bring the first influx of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. If there is some open ground the first Killdeer and American Woodcock will put in an appearance in the southernmost parts of the state.

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## Submitting Unusual Sightings to eBird

### A Quick Review

In eBird, unusual birds are flagged for review. That sighting is then reviewed by a volunteer. It is a huge job. Please help these volunteers by following these guidelines:

#### What is unusual?

Any record that is flagged by eBird for being rare, early, late, or a high count.

#### How do you know if a record is flagged?

You will be asked to review the observation and add comments.

#### What to include in your comments?

A description of the bird e.g., color, markings, size, behavior, bill size and shape, vocalizations.

#### The following descriptions alone will result in a rejected submission:

Bird was at my feeder  
First of the year  
Seen well  
Identified by Merlin

Please do not take a rejected record personally. Many good records are rejected not because the observer’s identification was incorrect but because the description was insufficient. Sometimes just a few words will do.

For more details, see the article by Steve Mirick in the Fall 2021 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.  
<https://nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/NHBR%20Fall%202021-Documenting%20Rarities.pdf>

# 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.

Leave a Legacy for the Birds with a bequest in your will to the Fund:

I give and bequeath \_\_\_\_ % of my residuary estate (or a specific sum of \$ \_\_\_\_ ) to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund, a permanently restricted fund of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH.

For more information, contact the Managing Editor or Hope Jordan, Development Director (603) 224-9909 x307; [hjordan@nhaudubon.org](mailto:hjordan@nhaudubon.org).

## Rare Bird ALERT

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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

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