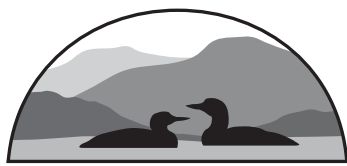


New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS



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IN MEMORY OF

JoAnn O'Shaughnessy

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* is sponsored by friends and family of JoAnn O'Shaughnessy. She is remembered as an avid birder with a great sense of humor. She is missed by many. Photo of JoAnn competing with the "Saw What Owls?" during the Superbowl of Birding, by Len Medlock.

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Cover Photo: The spring of 2024 was exceptional for Hooded Warbler sightings in New Hampshire. This striking male was photographed by Eric Masterson, 4-27-2024, on Star Island. Discover how Hooded Warbler populations are changing in the U.S. in Eric's "Season Summary."

Loggerhead Shrike in New Hampshire

by Iain MacLeod

Many of us know the charismatic Northern Shrike, a regular winter visitor to the Granite State. Its slightly smaller southern cousin, the Loggerhead Shrike, is a rare vagrant here. On April 15, 2024, I was lucky to find one in Laconia. Its time in the region allowed many birders to add it to their state lists.

The Loggerhead Shrike has a fascinating history in New Hampshire. An “open-country” specialist, the bird perches on low shrubs to hunt for insects, small mammals, and small birds. As forests were cleared following European settlement, Loggerheads expanded eastward and occupied New England by the late 1800s. The first New Hampshire breeding record of this species was in 1884. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*, by Foss et al., states: “The population in New Hampshire may have peaked between 1885 and 1910, when nesting occurred in Charlestown, Hanover, Tilton, Jefferson, Lancaster, and in the Durham area (Dearborn 1898, Allen 1903, Dearborn 1903, and Wright 1911).”

As fields were abandoned and forests returned, the Loggerhead retreated. There have been no breeding records in the Granite State since 1910. Loggerheads are widespread in the open, thicket-laced habitats of southern and western states. They’re year-round residents in Florida, Texas, and New Mexico—where I’ve seen them.

Since 1960, there have been less than a dozen records



Known as “butcher birds,” Loggerhead Shrikes and their relatives the Northern Shrikes are notorious for impaling their prey on thorns and barbed wire. Their hooked beak is a powerful tool, allowing them to target their prey’s nape and paralyze it. This Loggerhead Shrike was spotted by Iain MacLeod on 4-15-2024, in Laconia, NH.

of Loggerheads in New Hampshire. The *Atlas* lists records for Lancaster in 1963, Shelbourne in 1971, Canterbury in 1974, and Hebron in 1980. During the *Atlas* fieldwork years, there were three spring reports: 1982, 1983, and 1986. In the *Monadnock Sightings: Birds of Dublin, New Hampshire 1909-1979*, by Elliott and Kathleen Allison, it states of the Loggerhead, “We have but two Dublin records: September 2, 1957; March 29, 1970.”

A young George Robbins found one in September 1974 near Durham Reservoir in Strafford County. His wife, Andrea, shared details:

He was a college student at the University of New Hampshire when he found it. He was all excited to see a shrike in NH, since he was hoping it was a Northern Shrike, which would have been a life bird for him. He was actually a bit disappointed to discover that, instead, it was just a Loggerhead, since he had seen plenty of them while growing up in Maryland. George had no clue how rare a Loggerhead Shrike was in NH until he got back to Ornithology class and his professor, Art Borrer, told him how amazing the record was.

Steve Mirick saw one in Newington on July 18, 1997. After that, there were no records until 2020 when Robin Feustel took a lovely photo of one on a wire near her house in Hillsborough. At the time she was unaware what a rarity she found.

All of these recent sightings were not only “one-day wonders,” but “one-person wonders.” These birds vanished as quickly as they were found. When I found a Loggerhead in April 2024, I spread the word. My goal was for more eyes to see it than just mine. Matt Tarr was the first to join me, then Sue Francesco. Familiar faces kept coming. The bird cooperated and hung around into the next day, allowing many birders to see and photograph it.

On May 27, just over a month later, another Loggerhead was found at Magill Bay on Pontook Reservoir in Dummer, NH. Lori Charron photographed it, as did several others. It stayed for two days. Spring of 2024 was a veritable shrike bonanza!

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- eBird. 2021. *EBird online database* [web application]. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. <http://www.ebird.org>. (accessed: 7-10-2024).

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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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