

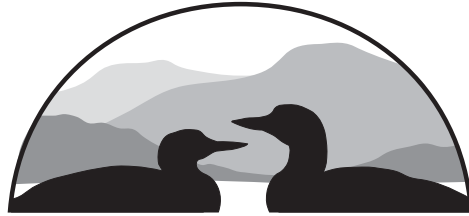
# New Hampshire Bird Records



**Winter 2002-03**

**Vol. 21, No. 4**

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**Volume 21, Number 4**  
**Winter 2002-03**

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### About The Cover

The photograph of the Western Tanager was taken by Stephen R. Mirick in Portsmouth on January 8, 2003. For more information on this vagrant, see the Winter Season report and the Spotlight article.

## From the Editor

by Rebecca Suomala

### Renewal Time

It's time to renew your subscription to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. A renewal form is enclosed with this issue. Thank you to everyone who has already renewed and welcome to new subscribers.

### Thank you, Francie Von Mertens

This is Francie Von Mertens' last issue as a writer for the regular *New Hampshire Bird Records* feature, Research and Volunteer Opportunities. Francie started writing this feature when it began in the Spring 1997 issue and in the past few years has been sharing the responsibility with Susan Story Galt. The feature has been a valuable addition to the publication and Francie has done an excellent job, especially bringing to light many volunteer opportunities for birders to help with local conservation efforts. She is a regular writer for her local paper and is active in many local conservation issues that vie for her time. We very much appreciate her contributions to *New Hampshire Bird Records* and look forward to an occasional article from her in the future.

### Volunteer Writer Needed

We are looking for a volunteer to fill Francie's shoes as regular author of the Research and Volunteer Opportunities feature. This feature profiles the results from selected bird research related to New Hampshire birds, and highlights local volunteer opportunities in bird conservation. The author will share the responsibility with Susan Story Galt and be responsible for two articles a year, focusing primarily on volunteer opportunities. If you are interested, please contact me (see inside front cover).

### Breeding Bird Atlas

The *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire* is back in print. It is now available as a soft-cover book and also as a PDF version on CD. This is an exact reprint of the original edition and no species accounts have been updated. Although some of the distributional information has changed in the past ten years, most is still current and the information in the species accounts is timeless. It provides a valuable reference for any New Hampshire birder. Copies are for sale at the Silk Farm Audubon Center in Concord and the Massabesic Audubon Center in Auburn. Copies may also be ordered by mail using the order form in the ASNH May-June 2003 *Newsletter* or by calling Anne at ASNH in Concord, 603-224-9909 X305.

## Winter Season

### December 1, 2002 through February 28, 2003

by David Deifik, Winter Editor

The winter of 2002–2003 challenged the spirits of all New Hampshire residents, human and avian. Conditions throughout the season could basically be described as miserable with extraordinary cold and plentiful snow. In contrast to last year's near record warmth, this winter was the coldest since the winter of 1976–1977. Temperatures averaged 4.5 degrees below normal for the season at Concord with over 40% heavier snowfall throughout the season. Instead of the very late freeze up in the Lakes Region last year, Squam Lake froze over on December 6, the earliest in over 23 years. Maximum waterfowl counts from the region were therefore substantially lower than last year. As one might expect, the severe conditions did have a major impact on the number of observations submitted. Both fewer observer hours in the field and fewer reportable birds present likely contributed to this decline. This year we will publish about half the number of reports as we did last year. Species diversity was down as well with only 80 species listed this year compared to 123 last year, excluding the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) reports.



David Deifik

A **Monk Parakeet** photographed on January 6 was first reported in the fall season. This introduced parrot from Southern South America has been breeding in the wild, even in New England. Unlike most parrot species, Monks are native to temperate, not tropical climates. At this point it is unknown whether these birds originate from such wild colonies or are released captive bred birds. An **Eastern Phoebe** seen on December 5 in Hanover was only the second record in the western part of the state in at least 15 years. A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** observed the same day in Etna was a remarkably rare sighting as well with only two other winter records. Far from its closest haunts in the Rocky Mountains, a **Western Tanager** made an appearance at a feeder in Portsmouth on January 8. Interestingly, there is one previous winter record in recent times. This was also in Portsmouth, on a nearby street, back in 1997. That bird graced the Seacoast CBC, providing the first Christmas Count record of this species for the state.

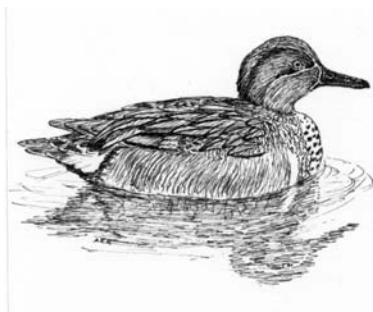
The summaries and listings below do not include CBC sightings except for the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River CBC in Vermont. A summary of the CBC and table of sightings can be found beginning on page 20.

## Loons through Vultures

**A** Great Cormorant seen away from the seacoast or the Merrimack River Valley is very unusual and so an observation on January 29 at Hinsdale was quite remarkable. As one might expect, Great Blue Heron reports were much reduced compared to last year. There was only one record of Turkey Vulture reported, and that was on February 28 involving 2 birds. There were 13 reports last year.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Red-throated Loon</b>				
12-23	3	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	D.& T. Donsker
<b>Common Loon</b>				
12-05	1	Meredith	Meredith Bay	J. Williams
12-21	2	Bristol		J. Williams
12-25	2	Hebron		J. Williams
12-27	45	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey
02-09	20	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>				
12-27	4	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey
01-01	20	N. Hampton	N. Hampton State Beach	A.& B. Delorey, B.& J. Goodwin
01-01	23	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	A.& B. Delorey, B.& J. Goodwin
02-08	7	New Castle	Great Is. Common	M. Harvey
<b>Northern Gannet</b>				
12-01	1	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey
12-23	3	Hampton	Great Boars Head	D.& T. Donsker
01-01	8	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	A.& B. Delorey, B.& J. Goodwin
<b>Double-crested Cormorant</b>				
12-02	2	Hampton	Seabrook Beach jetty	S. Mirick
12-15	1	Laconia	Lake Winnisquam inlet	J. Williams
<b>Great Cormorant</b>				
12-13	1	Laconia	L. Winnisquam off mouth of Winnisquam R.	H. Anderson
01-29	1	Hinsdale	Connecticut R., below Vernon Dam	A.& B. Merritt
01-31	2	Manchester	Merrimack R., just n. of Intervale CC	L. Deming, L. Ireland
02-08	1	Rye	coast	M. Harvey
02-15	2	Manchester	Merrimack R.	S. Sturup
<b>Great Blue Heron</b>				
12-10	1	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
12-21	2	Exeter	Exeter R. at Swasey Pkwy.	G. Prazar
02-15	1	Nashua	Nashua R.	D. Deifik, J. Piper
<b>Turkey Vulture</b>				
02-28	2	Epping	Nottingham Square Rd.	M. Tarr

## Waterfowl



*Green-winged Teal by Andrea Robbins*

Despite the conditions a small number of Wood Ducks was reported from inland sites. Northern Shoveler was seen at the Rochester Wastewater plant, the site of last winter's record. Green-winged Teal and Canvasback were both nice finds for the Lakes Region as they are unusual in this region in the winter period. Redhead is quite rare in the state and so the six birds seen on Great Bay in December were quite remarkable. A single Redhead seen in New Hampshire waters on the

Connecticut River during the Saxton's River (Vermont) CBC was only the third CBC record for this species. There was an inland record for a female Long-tailed Duck from the Connecticut River at Hinsdale. There were no coastal reports of this species. Reports of their status next winter are encouraged. A maximum count of 140 Common Goldeneye were seen in the Lakes Region with 2 Barrow's Goldeneye records as well. Maximum counts of Hooded and Common Mergansers were impressive with 93 Hoodies seen at Laconia on December 23 and 700 Commons seen on December 7 on Paugus Bay, Laconia. A Ruddy Duck seen on December 6 in Windham was quite unusual. It is only the fifth winter record farther inland than Exeter since 1990.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Brant</b>				
12-01	2	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
<b>Wood Duck</b>				
12-06	3	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
01-26	1	Tilton	Winnepesaukee R., downtown	P. Hunt
02-15	1	Tilton	Silver Lake Dam	J. Williams
02-19	1	Newmarket	Newmarket Landing	S. Mirick
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>				
12-01	1	Stratham	Sandy Pt. boat launch	S. Mirick, J. Lawrence, R. & M. Suomala
<b>American Wigeon</b>				
12-01	130	Stratham	Sandy Pt. boat launch	S. Mirick, J. Lawrence, R. & M. Suomala
<b>Mallard</b>				
12-11	1000	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
02-09	330		Connecticut R., Wilder Dam to River Rd.	S. Sturup
02-16	285	Tilton	Winnepesaukee R., census route	P. Hunt
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>				
12-01	1	Exeter	wastewater treatment plant	M. Harvey, B. Griffith

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Northern Pintail</b>				
12-01	1	Exeter	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick, J. Lawrence, R.& M. Suomala
12-02	1	Rochester	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick
12-06	1	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
12-16	1	N. Hampton	Little River marsh off Sea Rd.	D. Donsker
01-30	1	Durham	Adams Pt.	S. Mirick
02-09	1	Lebanon	Connecticut R., Rt. 4, W. Lebanon	S. Sturup
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>				
02-27	1	Laconia	Paugus Bay, w. side, n. of Lakeport	H. Anderson
<b>Canvasback</b>				
12-15	1	Sanbornton	Lake Winnisquam, off Lower Bay Rd.	H. Anderson
<b>Redhead</b>				
12-01	6	Stratham	Sandy Pt. boat launch	S. Mirick, J. Lawrence, R.& M. Suomala
01-05	1		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>				
12-06	18	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
<b>Greater Scaup</b>				
12-16	4	Laconia	Lake Winnisquam, Bartlett Beach	H. Anderson
02-01	1	Plainfield	Connecticut R., River Rd.	S. Sturup
02-01	1	Lebanon	Connecticut R. behind BJs	S. Sturup
<b>Lesser Scaup</b>				
12-01	11	Exeter	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick, J. Lawrence, R.& M. Suomala
12-02	4	Rochester	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick
01-01	3	Sanbornton	Lake Winnisquam, Lower Bay Rd.	J. Williams
<b>King Eider</b>				
12-08	1	Stratham	Great Bay, Sandy Pt.	M.& B. Patten
12-13	1	Stratham	Great Bay, Sandy Pt.	S. Mirick, D. Abbott
<b>Harlequin Duck</b>				
01-01	1		Connecticut R., upriver of Rt. 93 bridges	T. MacPherson
<b>White-winged Scoter</b>				
01-05	1	Stratham	Sandy Pt. boat launch	S. Mirick
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>				
12-13	1	Greenland	Great Bay Rd.	S. Mirick, D. Abbott
01-29	1	Hinsdale	Connecticut R. below Vernon Dam	C. Petrak
<b>Bufflehead</b>				
12-06	16	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>				
12-06	20	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
12-15	32	Laconia	Weirs Beach	J. Williams
12-21	7	Hebron		J. Williams
12-25	10	Bristol		J. Williams
12-26	140		Lake Winnisquam	P. Hunt
01-01	90	Sanbornton	Lake Winnisquam, Lower Bay Rd.	J. Williams



<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
01-26	20	Tilton	Winnepesaukee R. by Rt. 140 bridge	J. Williams
01-30	325	Durham	Adams Pt.	S. Mirick
02-16	29		Connecticut R., Wilder Dam to River Rd.	S. Sturup
<b>Barrow's Goldeneye</b>				
12-07	1	Laconia	Lake Winnisquam, off Fenton St.	P. Hunt
12-13	2	Greenland	off Great Bay Rd.	S. Mirick, D. Abbott
01-01	2	Sanbornton	Lake Winnisquam, Lower Bay Rd.	J. Williams
01-26	1	Hinsdale	below Vernon Dam	H. Galbraith
02-03	1	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam	A. & B. Merritt
<b>Hooded Merganser</b>				
12-03	40	Windham	Canobie Lake	M. Harvey
12-05	44	Meredith	Meredith Bay	T. Vazzano
12-23	93	Laconia	Main St. Bridge, downstream toward Eagar Is.	H. Anderson
01-05	8		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-25	3	Rye	off Rt. 1A	S. Mirick
02-15	13	Tilton	Winnepesaukee R. & Silver Lake Dam	J. Williams
02-16	40		Connecticut R., Wilder Dam to River Rd.	S. Sturup
02-28	1	Nashua	Nashua R. at millyard	R. Andrews
<b>Common Merganser</b>				
12-07	700	Laconia	Paugus Bay	P. Hunt
12-25	2	Bristol		J. Williams
01-05	40		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-26	40	Lebanon	Connecticut R., Wilder Dam to BJs	S. Sturup
<b>Ruddy Duck</b>				
12-06	1	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey

## Hawks

Northern Harrier went unreported for the season. There were fewer accipiter reports this season as well. There was one Red-shouldered Hawk documented by photograph.



*Bald Eagles at Bedford nest by JoAnn O'Shaughnessy, December 2002*

There were two seacoast sightings of Rough-legged Hawk similar to last year. The Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey again produced impressive results equal to the count day high of 34 achieved last year. The total number of eagles spending the winter was about 91, which exceeds the previous record of 85 found last year. The age breakdown was 47 adults, 8 sub-adults, and 36 immatures. There were generally more birds reported in the southerly/coastal Merrimack and

Great Bay areas this year compared to last. There were somewhat fewer birds in the northern/interior Androscoggin, Connecticut, and Lakes areas. The icy conditions also produced high concentrations of eagles on Great Bay and the Merrimack River. As many as 12 eagles were present in late January on the Merrimack between Bedford and Concord. A pair of adult Bald Eagles was seen at the nest in Bedford again this winter, and remained through the entire winter season.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Bald Eagle</b>				
12-07	1	Laconia	Paugus Bay	P. Hunt
12-30	1	Franklin	by Eastman Dam on Pemigewasset R.	S. Hollins
01-01	1	Strafford	Bow Lake	M. & R. Suomala
01-05	3		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-17	1	Windham	Castle Hill Rd.	M. & D. Harvey
01-25	1	Tilton	Silver Lake	P. Hunt
01-26	2	Laconia	Martel's Bait Shop, Dixon Pt.	J. Williams
01-28	2	Laconia	Martel's Bait Shop, Dixon Pt.	H. Anderson
01-30	6	Durham	Adams Pt.	S. Mirick
02-01	1	Plainfield	Connecticut R., River Rd.	S. Sturup
02-08	1	Bow	Bow Power Plant	H. Tepe
02-15	1	Manchester	Merrimack R.	S. Sturup
02-21	7	Durham	Great Bay	C. Martin
02-28	2	Hancock	Nubanusit Lake	C. Martin, D. Robinson
<b>Northern Goshawk</b>				
12-01	1	Exeter	wastewater treatment plant	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
01-25	1	New London	Pingree Rd.	A. & R. Vernon
01-25	1	Bradford	off Rt. 103	P. Newbern
02-17	1	Chatham	residence	R. Crowley
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>				
12-08	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence, South Rd.	G. Gavutis, Jr.
12-30	1	Hudson	Daniel Webster Dr.	C. & E. Laffin
02-08	1	Chester	Hillside Haven	A. & B. Delorey
02-19	1	Chester	Hillside Haven	A. & B. Delorey
02-21	1	Hudson	Daniel Webster Dr.	C. & E. Laffin
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>				
01-25	1	Rye	Rye Harbor marshes	S. Mirick
02-09	1	N. Hampton	just s. of Rye border	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
<b>American Kestrel</b>				
12-31	1	Brentwood	county complex, North Rd.	M. Tarr, P. Auger
<b>Merlin</b>				
12-01	1	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	S. Mirick, et al.
02-09	1	Seabrook	Seabrook Beach	S. Mirick, R. Suomala
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>				
01-25	1	Portsmouth	Memorial Bridge	S. Mirick
02-21	2	Rumney	Rattlesnake Mtn.	R. Vallieres
02-21	1	Woodstock	Russell Crag	R. Vallieres
02-28	1	Lyme	Holts Ledge	R. & A. Vallieres

## Wild Turkey through Alcids



*Dovekie by Stephen R. Mirick,  
1/5/03, Rye*

There were a few nice winter shorebird concentrations with a maximum of 80 Sanderling in December, and 90 Purple Sandpipers huddled up during a storm in early January. To the observer, 130 Dunlin seen in early February seemed like a high number for the date. The dark-eyed Iceland Gull was again found in Seabrook this winter, the fifth year in a row for this individual. On first blush this individual looks remarkably similar to a Thayer's Gull. There were again a few reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull similar to the last few years. There was but a single Glaucous Gull record. A Black-legged Kittiwake flying within the Hampton Harbor Inlet in early February was unusual. There was

a single Dovekie report from Dover (photographed). This is a rare location to find Dovekie as they are usually strictly coastal. Only three storm blown Dovekies have been recorded inland since 1990 (1 fall, 2 winter). There were some impressive Razor-bill flights with a maximum of 101 seen at Rye on New Year's Day. The only other alcids were a few reports of Black Guillemot.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Wild Turkey</b>				
12-12	8	Gilsum	Hammond Hollow	M. Wright
12-21	13	Columbia	residence	B. & D. Killam
01-01	15	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd. area	J. Merrill, et al.
01-12	24	Alton	Halls Hill Rd.	K. & B. Palfy
01-20	35	Benton	Rt. 25 farm	J. Williams
02-01	30	Plainfield	River Rd.	S. Sturup
02-10	15	Goshen	Brook Rd.	P. Newbern
02-19	25	Newbury	Rt. 103, Newbury traffic circle	P. Newbern
<b>Sanderling</b>				
12-23	80	Rye	Rye Ledge	D. & T. Donsker
<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>				
12-15	21	Rye	Wallis Sands, Seal Rocks	D. Donsker
12-21	30	Rye	Concord Pt.	A. & B. Delorey
12-23	24	Rye	Rye Ledge	D. & T. Donsker
01-01	20	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	A. & B. Delorey, B. & J. Goodwin
01-01	30	Rye	coast	M. & R. Suomala
01-04	90	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey
<b>Dunlin</b>				
12-02	178	Seabrook	Seabrook Beach	S. Mirick
12-20	1	Rye	Rye Ledge	D. & T. Donsker
02-09	130	Hampton	Hampton Harbor jetty	S. Mirick, R. Suomala

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Bonaparte's Gull</b>				
12-01	100	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
<b>Ring-billed Gull</b>				
12-15	550	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
<b>Iceland Gull</b>				
12-01	1	Stratham	Sandy Pt.	M. Harvey, B. Griffith
12-06	8	Rochester	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick
12-15	1	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
12-23	1	Seabrook	Fisherman's Coop	D. & T. Donsker
12-27	1	Rye	Rye Ledge	M. Harvey
01-11	1	Tilton	Rt. 140 at Winnepesaukee R.	P. Hunt
01-29	4	Rochester	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick
02-02	1	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey, R. Harvey
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>				
12-06	1	Rochester	wastewater treatment plant	S. Mirick
12-09	1	Newmarket	Newmarket town landing	S. Mirick
02-08	1	Rye	Odiorne Pt. St. Pk.	M. Harvey
<b>Glaucous Gull</b>				
12-06	1	Rochester	Pickering Ponds trails	S. Mirick
<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b>				
12-21	2	Rye	Ragged Neck	A. & B. Delorey
02-09	1	Hampton	Hampton Harbor inlet	S. Mirick, R. Suomala
<b>Dovekie</b>				
01-05	1	Rye	n. of Ragged Neck	S. Mirick, D. Donsker
<b>Razorbill</b>				
12-13	9	Rye	coast	S. Mirick
12-21	42	Rye	Ragged Neck	A. & B. Delorey
12-23	3	Rye	Pulpit Rock	D. Donsker
12-23	24	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	D. & T. Donsker
01-01	101	Rye	Ragged Neck	A. & B. Delorey, B. & J. Goodwin
01-01	80	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	A. & B. Delorey, B. & J. Goodwin
01-01	56	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	A. & B. Delorey, B. & J. Goodwin
01-01	9	Rye	coast	M. & R. Suomala
02-08	1	New Castle	Great Island Common	M. Harvey
<b>Black Guillemot</b>				
12-01	3	Rye	NH coast	S. Mirick, et al.
01-01	7	Rye	Ragged Neck	A. & B. Delorey, B. & J. Goodwin
02-09	3	Rye	Odiorne Pt.	S. Mirick, R. Suomala

## Parrots through Waxwings



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*  
by Bob Soule, Concord, 1/03

As mentioned in the introduction, it is not known whether the **Monk Parakeet** was a captive bred individual, or from one of the wild colonies that have become established in New England. Two reported Great Horned Owls were the only owls reported outside of the Christmas counts. The Northern Hawk Owl was first found on the Sandwich CBC. As last year, there was a single Yellow-bellied Sapsucker record, this time from Concord. An **Eastern Phoebe** found in Hanover on December 5 is an outstanding find with only one other inland sighting reported in recent years. Northern Shrike was found in comparable numbers to last year. An early December hike up to the Mizpah Alpine Hut in the Presidential Range produced the only Gray Jay record for the season. Despite the cold weather, there were more than twice as many Carolina Wren records as last year. A Hermit Thrush managed to survive for most of December and early January in Kensington. Two other Hermit Thrushes were documented on ASNH's Backyard Winter Bird Survey in early February. One was seen eating rose hips. As opposed to last year, Bohemian Waxwing was virtually absent from the state this year; there was only one record of nine birds high on the slopes of Cannon Mountain. A single Brown Thrasher report from Hampton in early February was the sole record for the season. This has been typical for the majority of the last ten years.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Monk Parakeet</b>				
01-06	1	Pelham	residence	J. Szafran
<b>Eastern Screech-Owl</b>				
02-25	1	Milford	Ashley Dr.	J. & A. Stevens
<b>Great Horned Owl</b>				
01-28	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
02-28	1	Newmarket	Bay Rd.	H. Chary
<b>Northern Hawk Owl</b>				
12-30	1	Tamworth	Bunker Hill Rd.	M. Suomala

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Belted Kingfisher</b>				
12-15	1	Windham	Cobbetts Pond	M. Harvey
12-19	1	Laconia	Lake Winnisquam off Shore Dr.	H. Anderson
12-23	1	Laconia	Winnepesaukee R., Eagar Is.	H. Anderson
12-29	1	Sanbornton	Lake Winnisquam from Broadview	J. Williams
12-29	1	Northfield	Winnepesaukee R.	P. Hunt
01-01	1	Tilton	Silver Lake dam	J. Williams
01-05	1	Warren	Warren Fish Hatchery	J. Williams
01-14	1	Warner	Warner R. off Rt. 103	P. Newbern
01-26	1	Tilton	Winnepesaukee R., downtown	P. Hunt
<b>Red-bellied Woodpecker</b>				
01-01	1	Nashua	Deerhaven Dr.	R. Andrews
01-02	1	Newmarket	Bay Rd.	H. Chary
01-08	2	Pelham	Jericho Rd. residence	J. Szafram
02-08	1	Hudson	Griffin Rd. residence	J. Kegley
02-22	1	Exeter	residence	G. Prazar
<b>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</b>				
01-04	1	Concord	Heritage Heights, East Side Drive	D. & B. Soule
01-20	1	Concord	East Side Dr.	S. Smith
<b>Northern Flicker</b>				
12-04	1	Columbia	residence	B. & D. Killam
12-14	2	Nashua	Clovercrest Dr.	W. Harris
01-01	1	Nashua	Deerhaven Dr.	R. Andrews
01-01	3	Windham	Castle Hill Rd.	M. Harvey
01-05	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
01-10	1	Laconia	Shore Dr., Wildwood Beach	H. Anderson
01-22	2	Nashua	Clovercrest Dr.	B. Harris
02-01	1	Walpole	residence	P. Trask
02-01	1	New Boston	Carriage Rd.	B. McKinnon, et al.
02-21	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence, South Rd.	G. Gavutis
<b>Eastern Phoebe</b>				
12-05	1	Hanover	Connecticut R., Mink Brook Trail	R. Humphries
<b>Northern Shrike</b>				
12-15	1	Hanover	Blueberry Hill residence	T. Rosenmeier, K. Kluge
12-20	1	Gilmanton	Loon Pond Rd.	J. Stockwell
12-29	1	New London	Hilltop Place	H. Damon, P. Niswander
01-01	1	Durham	Rt. 155A fields	M. & R. Suomala
02-13	1	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge Rd.	T. Vazzano
02-27	1	Chester	Hillside Haven	B. Delorey
02-27	1	Thornton	Hix Mt., WMNF	J. Williams
<b>Gray Jay</b>				
12-09	2	Beans Grant	Mizpah Hut	D. Govatski
<b>American Crow</b>				
02-12	400	Portsmouth	Portsmouth traffic circle	S. Mirick
<b>Fish Crow</b>				
12-10	1	Salem	parking lot near Home Depot	R. & D. Fox
<b>Horned Lark</b>				
12-01	10	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	M. Harvey, B. Griffith

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
01-01	127	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	A.& B. Delorey, B.& J. Goodwin
01-01	48	Durham	Rt. 155A fields	M.& R. Suomala
01-05	333		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
02-02	9	Rye	Ragged Neck	M. Harvey
<b>Carolina Wren</b>				
12-04	1	Nashua	Clovercrest Dr.	W. Harris
12-06	2	Loudon	Loudon Ridge Rd.	B. Young
12-14	1	Sanbornton	Ashram Rd.	R. Schongalla, et al.
12-17	1	Laconia	Wildwood Rd.	H. Anderson
12-17	1	Goffstown	New Boston Rd.	J. Doherty
12-19	1	Bedford	Arrowhead Dr.	S. Hunter
01-01	1	Northfield	Bay St.	E. Spear
01-01	1	Nashua	Deerhaven Dr.	R. Andrews
01-03	1	Nashua	Dublin Av.	M. Hague
01-05	3	Concord	S. Main St.	I. Bridges
01-05	1	Stratham	Sandy Pt. Discovery Center	S. Mirick
01-05	1	Wentworth	Buffalo Rd. residence	J. Williams
01-09	1	New Ipswich	River Rd. residence	E. Danisienka
01-10	1	Newfields	Halls Mill Rd.	K. Pawlak
01-11	2	Portsmouth	residence	M. Harvey, Cavanaghs
01-14	1	Dover	Prospect St. residence	S. Galt
01-15	2	Concord	Elm St.	S. Johnson
01-18	1	Salem	residence	K. Folsom
01-22	2	Littleton		W. Nichols
01-23	1	Lancaster	residence	D. Haas
<b>Winter Wren</b>				
01-01	1	Windham	Foster's Pond NA	M. Harvey
<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>				
12-16	1	Laconia	Wildwood Rd.	H. Anderson
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>				
12-22	4	Chester	Hillside Haven	A.& B. Delorey
01-05	6		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
02-03	2	Rye	West Rd., West Rye	B.& H. Blanchard
02-18	3	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence, South Rd.	G. Gavutis
<b>Hermit Thrush</b>				
12-07	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
01-07	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
01-17	2	Candia	Chester Tpk.	L.& L. Churchill
01-28	2	Candia	Chester Tpk.	L.& L. Churchill
02-08	1	Derry	Gervaise Dr.	J. Koopman
02-08	1	Rye	Brackett Rd.	L. Roper
02-20	1	Amherst	Pavillion Rd. residence	P. Theriault
<b>American Robin</b>				
12-04	1	Columbia	residence	B.& D. Killam
12-27	6	Sandwich	Smarts Brook drainage, WMNF	J. Williams, J. Haartz
01-05	1	Pinkhams Grant	Pinkham Notch visitor center	J. Stockwell
01-05	200	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
01-08	5	Thornton	Thornton Gore Rd., WMNF	J. Williams
01-09	3	Benton	Black Mountain, WMNF	J. Williams

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>American Robin—continued</b>				
01-10	67	Chester	Hillside Haven	A.& B. Delorey
01-11	35	Chichester	Horse Corner Rd.	M. Reinhardt
01-12	12	Lincoln	Wilderness & Franconia Trails jct.	J. Stockwell
01-25	1	Lincoln	Cedar Brook Trail	J. Stockwell
01-29	200	Dover	downtown	S. Mirick
01-31	14	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge Rd.	T. Vazzano
02-01	20	Chichester	Smith Sanborn Rd.	R.& M. Suomala
02-02	15	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge Rd.	T. Vazzano
02-08	31	Laconia	Wildwood Rd.	H. Anderson
02-11	1	New London	Pingree Rd.	A. Vernon
02-20	16	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
02-21	40	Durham	Adams Pt.	C. Martin
<b>Brown Thrasher</b>				
02-02	1	Hampton	North Shore Rd.	D. Crowley
<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>				
12-29	9	Franconia	Cannon Mtn. ski area, upper slopes	R. Frechette
<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>				
12-01	110	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
12-13	25	New London	Hilltop Place	H.& P.Damon
12-14	90	Plymouth	South Main St.	J. Williams
12-25	110	Holderness	Plymouth State College fruit trees	J. Williams
01-01	50	Strafford	Bow Lake Rd.	M.& R. Suomala
01-03	50	Laconia	Wildwood Rd.	H. Anderson
01-05	25	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
01-05	77		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-10	75	Laconia	Shore Dr.	H. Anderson
01-16	42	Chichester	Towle Mason Rd.	M. Reinhardt
01-29	100	Dover	downtown	S. Mirick
01-30	50	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
01-30	28	Keene	behind Cheshire Medical Center	M. Wright
01-31	125	Meredith	Mill Falls	T. Vazzano
02-05	15	Newmarket	Bay Rd.	H. Chary
02-13	12	Hanover	Dartmouth College	S. Sturup
02-16	30	Laconia	Lakeport Landing Marina	H. Anderson
02-22	30	Laconia	Holman St.	H. Anderson
02-25	18	Nashua	Burke St. residence	J.& B. Ayer
02-27	32	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt

## Warblers through Snow Bunting

Quite unusual for the season was a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** reported from Etna. There are only two other winter reports in the last 15 years, most recently in 1998. Other warblers went virtually unreported through the season with only one Yellow-rumped Warbler reported outside of the 12 seen on all of the Christmas Bird Counts. A Chipping Sparrow was reported from Canaan December 1 through January 4. Another well described "Chippy" was seen in Concord on December 15. The Ipswich race of Savannah Sparrow is quite scarce in the state. Reports are usually of single



birds. A record of six birds from Seabrook on January 5 is therefore quite notable. A Fox Sparrow survived the coldest of the winter coming to a feeder in Center Harbor from the mid-January to mid-February. Two other Fox Sparrows were reported from Rye and Swanzey on February 8 and 9 during the annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey. A White-crowned Sparrow seen in the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River CBC was a rare find. This is only the seventh winter record since 1990. Three Eastern Towhee records included one bird that spent most of December to early January coming to a feeder in Milford. The sole Lapland Longspur report was of one bird in the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River (Vermont) CBC.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Black-throated Blue Warbler</b>				
12-13	1	Hanover	Partridge Rd.	W.& K. Eaton
<b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b>				
12-08	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence	G. Gavutis
<b>Western Tanager</b>				
01-08	1	Portsmouth	Lookout Lane residence	S. Mirick, B. Cavanagh
01-11	1	Portsmouth	residence	M. Harvey, B. Cavanagh
<b>Eastern Towhee</b>				
01-07	1	Milford	North River Rd.	K. Busch, M. Loignon
01-29	2	Bristol	Crescent St.	J.& M. Westfall, N. Sycamore
02-08	1	Rindge	Thomas Rd.	G. Wolterbeek
02-10	2	Bristol	Crescent St.	J.& M. Westfall, N. Sycamore
<b>American Tree Sparrow</b>				
12-08	14	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
12-15	1	Plymouth	Pine Gate Rd.	J.& R. Williams
12-23	7	Gilsum	Hammond Hollow	M. Wright
01-01	30	Durham	Rt. 155A fields	M.& R. Suomala
01-03	75	Concord	Loudon Rd. fields behind PO	R. Suomala
01-05	25	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
01-05	97		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
02-12	9	Chichester	Smith Sanborn Rd.	R.& M. Suomala
02-13	7	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd.	J. Merrill
02-16	11	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
02-22	2	Campton	Beech Hill Rd. residence	J. Williams
<b>Chipping Sparrow</b>				
12-15	1	Concord	Cherry St.	R.& M. Suomala, I. Malo
01-04	1	Canaan	River Rd.	J. Granton, P. Benham
<b>Field Sparrow</b>				
02-08	2	Hudson	Griffin Rd. residence	J. Kegley
<b>Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.</b>				
12-02	1	Seabrook	Seabrook Beach	S. Mirick
12-23	1	Hampton	Hampton Beach St. Pk.	S. Mirick
01-05	6	Seabrook	Yankee Fisherman's Cooperative	S. Mirick

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Fox Sparrow</b>				
01-16	1	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd.	J. Merrill
02-08	1	Swanzy	Spring St.	B. Skuly
02-08	1	Rye	Sagamore Rd.	P. Wilson
02-16	1	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd.	J. Merrill
<b>Song Sparrow</b>				
12-16	1	Laconia	Bartlett Beach, along RR tracks	H. Anderson
01-01	2	Durham	Rt. 155A fields	M. & R. Suomala
01-03	1	Keene	West St. between Bradford & Base Hill Rd.	R. Ritz
01-03	10	Concord	Loudon Rd. fields behind PO	R. Suomala
01-05	20		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-13	1	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd.	J. Merrill
01-15	1	Windham	residence	J. Romano
01-20	1	Milford	Federal Hill Rd.	B. Becker
01-24	1	Nashua	Burke St. residence	J. & B. Ayer
02-01	1	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
02-08	2	Brookline	residence	M. Neveu
02-08	1	Hudson	Griffin Rd. residence	J. Kegley
02-10	2	Newmarket	Hamel Farm Dr.	P. Hendrickx
02-12	1	Laconia	Wildwood Rd.	H. Anderson
<b>White-throated Sparrow</b>				
12-04	1	Columbia	residence	D. & B. Killam
12-25	1	Milford	Federal Hill Rd.	B. Becker
01-03	5	Concord	Loudon Rd. fields behind PO	R. Suomala
01-05	7		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
02-09	1	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
<b>White-crowned Sparrow</b>				
01-05	1		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
<b>Dark-eyed Junco</b>				
12-29	26	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
01-01	10	Center Harbor	Coe Hill Rd. area	J. Merrill
01-03	20	Plymouth	Pine Gate Rd.	J. & R. Williams
01-05	83		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
01-07	11	Nashua	Burke St. residence	J. Ayer
01-16	9	Gilsum	Hammond Hollow	M. Wright
01-17	3	Exeter	residence	G. Prazar
02-27	15	Northfield	Northfield census route	P. Hunt
<b>Lapland Longspur</b>				
01-05	1		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
<b>Snow Bunting</b>				
12-13	3	Whitefield	Whitefield airport	D. Govatski
12-13	2	Hanover	Reservoir Rd.	S. Sturup
01-05	4		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
02-09	1	Plainfield	Rt. 12A	S. Sturup

## Blackbirds through Evening Grosbeak

**A** Baltimore Oriole was reported to have spent about two weeks at a feeder in Farmington in mid-January. They are reported most winters with one or two records a season. One of the outstanding records of the season was a **Western Tanager** found at a Portsmouth feeder on January 8. There is one previous winter record in the last 15 years, interestingly also from Portsmouth. In contrast to last winter, this was not a banner year for the irruptive finches. A few Pine Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls, and Red Crossbills were seen on the Christmas Bird Counts, but were unreported the rest of the season. There were only two records of White-winged Crossbill and Pine Siskin. Evening Grosbeak likewise was little reported, being seen on the Saxton's River (Vermont) CBC and at one other time in February.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
<b>Red-winged Blackbird</b>				
01-03	5	Concord	Loudon Rd. fields behind PO	R. Suomala
02-21	1	Kensington	Rt. 107 residence, South Rd.	G. Gavutis
<b>Common Grackle</b>				
02-17	2	New London	Colby Sawyer campus	P. Newbern
<b>Brown-headed Cowbird</b>				
01-01	1	Plymouth	downtown	J. Williams
01-05	1	Warren	Rt. 25C residence	J. Williams
01-05	63		Saxtons River CBC - NH sightings	
<b>Baltimore Oriole</b>				
01-11	1	Farmington	Lone Star Rd.	T. Chase, J. Gardner
<b>Purple Finch</b>				
01-01	1	Nashua	Deerhaven Dr.	R. Andrews
02-05	1	Benton	Rt. 116	J. Williams
02-20	5	Chatham	residence	R. Crowley
02-25	1	Gilsum	Hammond Hollow	M. Wright
<b>White-winged Crossbill</b>				
12-11	7	Bethlehem	Zealand Rd.	D. Govatski
01-20	11	Bethlehem	Trudeau Rd.	J. Williams
<b>Pine Siskin</b>				
02-23	2	Chatham	residence	R. Crowley
<b>Evening Grosbeak</b>				
02-11	2	Benton	North-South Rd.	J. Williams

## Reporters for Winter 2002-03

Ralph Andrews	Susan Galt	Judy Romano
Jenny Ashley	George Gavutis Jr.	Lee Roper
Jeannine Ayer	David Govatski	Robert Schongalla
Bertram Becker	John Granton	Wayne Scott
Bud Blanchard	David Haas	Brenda Sens
Helen Blanchard	Bill Harris	Barbara Skuly
Doris Brainard	Michael Harvey	Bob Soule
Kristin Busch	Philip Hendrickx	Dot Soule
Dave Carter	Robert Humphries	John & Anita Stevens
Hank Chary	Pam Hunt	J. R. Stockwell
Tom Chase	Jim Kegley	Stefan Sturup
Laurie Churchill	David Killam	Mark Suomala
Don Clark	Karen Kluge	Rebecca Suomala
H. Cook Anderson	James Koopman	Joseph Szafran
Deborah Crowley	Curt Laffin	Matt Tarr
Robert Crowley	Terry MacPherson	Jean Tasker
Herbert.& Peggy Damon	Chris Martin	Holly Tepe
Elaine Danisienka	Bob McKinnon	Jean Tewksbury
David Deifik	John Merrill	Pauline Theriault
Alan Delorey	Alfred Merritt	Tony Vazzano
Barbara Delorey	Stephen Mirick	Robert Vernon
Laura Deming	Marie Neveu	Jane Westfall
Jane Doherty	Peter Newbern	John Williams
David Donsker	Kathie Palfy	Priscilla Wilson
Walter Eaton	Michael Patten	Georgia Wolterbeek
Kenneth Folsom	Greg Prazar	Mary Wright
Robert Fox	Martha Reinhardt	
Richard Frechette	Robert Ritz	

## Reports for the following species were received in Winter 2002-03 but not listed.

American Black Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Mockingbird
Common Eider	Hairy Woodpecker	European Starling
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Pileated Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Cooper's Hawk	Blue Jay	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven	American Goldfinch
Ring-necked Pheasant	Black-capped Chickadee	House Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Tufted Titmouse	
Herring Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Great Black-backed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	
Rock Dove	Brown Creeper	
Mourning Dove	Golden-crowned Kinglet	

Sightings of the species listed above occurred in average numbers at expected locations, were discussed in the summaries, or are escaped exotics.

## Corrections

The following corrections were found after the issue was published. Minor typos are not included. Please let us know of any inaccuracies you find in any issue so we can correct the sighting records in the computer data file.

### Spring 2001

- p. 10 The Black-bellied Plover in Sandwich was seen on 05-19 not 05-15.
- p. 17 The Yellow-throated Vireo on 05-19 was seen in Sandwich not Tamworth.
- p. 22 The Northern Parula on 05-02 was seen in E. Kingston not Millsfield.

### Summer 2001

- p. 5 In the Loons, Shearwaters, Storm-Petrels, Gannets & Cormorants summary the end of the first sentence should read “about every other year in summer.”

### Fall 2001

- p. 21 The Ash-throated Flycatcher was seen in Concord on 10-26 not 10-06.
- p. 39 In the sixth line, the citation attributed to Ellison and Martin 2001 should also include Hunt 2001 with the following addition to the References: Hunt, Pam. 2001. New England Region report, *North American Birds* 55 (2): 146-150.

### Winter 2001-02

- p. 6 In the Waterfowl summary, the first sentence should read “in central New Hampshire” not “in the Lakes Region”
- p. 7 Ring-necked Ducks on 12-10 at Penacook Lake and 12-16 at Long Pond – these are two names for the same water body.
- p.10 On 12-26, one Merlin was seen by D. Finch and M. Berridge.
- p.17 On 01-23, one Gray Catbird was seen, not ten.
- p. 19 In Blackbirds through Evening Grosbeaks summary, the first sentence should read “one of the most outstanding finds of the season was an immature male Bullock’s Oriole” not “an adult”.
- p. 20 The Bullock’s Oriole on 01-13 was also seen by the homeowner, D. Lunt.
- p. 21 The Hoary Redpolls in Hanover were seen by K. Kluge not K. Bluge.
- p. 29 The Hanover-Norwich CBC was on 01/01/2002 not 01/01/2001.

## Christmas Bird Count Summary

by David Deifik, Winter Editor

### Statewide Highlights

This year's Christmas Bird Count was held from December 14, 2002, to January 5, 2003. These are now fixed dates for the CBC period. New Hampshire added its 20th count for the state with the new Grafton-Bristol CBC. It is located in the West Central area of the state. The Isles of Shoals CBC was not run this year because of inclement weather.

In terms of overall results, this was more of an average year compared to last year's outstanding results. In aggregate 122 species were tallied, compared to 137 last year. Although the total number of birds was reduced by only 5%, there were fewer than one quarter of the statewide high counts set this year. Individual counts set fewer than one half of new record high counts as well. North Conway recorded two Spruce Grouse this year, the first time more than one had been recorded in the state. Clearly the outstanding species found this year on a CBC as well as for the whole season was a **Northern Hawk Owl** observed on the Sandwich CBC (see article on page 47). This bird stayed for one additional day after the count as well. This was the first for the Sandwich CBC and only the third for any CBC in NH. Both of the previous two birds were found on the Laco-nia CBC in 1961 and 1964. Only two other counts in all of North America recorded this owl this year! Aside from the famous Whitefield bird of the winter of 2000-2001, this was the first New Hampshire record since 1991. In other highlights, the Seacoast CBC recorded a Redhead for only the second time for any count. The previous record was in 1967 on the Seacoast CBC as well. Wild Turkey continues to make a strong showing with the Peterborough-Hancock CBC setting a new state record of 243. Despite the cooler conditions Carolina Wrens seem to be doing well. The Lee-Durham CBC set a new state high with 7 individuals. Finally the Hanover-Norwich CBC managed to find 128 Golden-crowned Kinglets to set a new statewide record for that species. Statewide more than twice the number of Kinglets were found this year compared to last year. Four other counts set individual high records for this species.



*Northern Hawk Owl  
by Mark Suomala,  
12/30/02, Tamworth*

### Individual Count Highlights

#### Nashua-Hollis

- First count record: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Count highs: Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and American Robin.

A Green-winged Teal report was unique for the state this year. Great Blue Heron and Belted Kingfisher were equal to previous high counts.

### **Peterborough-Hancock**

- New state count high: Wild Turkey
  - Count high: Golden-crowned Kinglet.
- A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen for only the second time.

### **Keene**

- Count high: Bufflehead

Eastern Bluebird was seen in numbers just one bird shy of last year's record high for the count.

### **Seacoast**

The Seacoast CBC was held amidst a full blown nor'easter this year! This might explain the relatively low species diversity for this year (86) versus last year (114). Despite the miserable conditions a Redhead was recorded for only the second time in New Hampshire count history, the first one also being on the Seacoast CBC in 1998. The count recorded the state's only Red-shouldered Hawk this year.

- New state count high: Carolina Wren

### **Lee-Durham**

- New to count: Merlin
- Count highs: Common Loon, Great Cormorant, Canada Goose, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren, and Eastern Bluebird

Lee-Durham had the only reports of Merlin, Lesser Black Backed Gull and Northern Saw-whet Owl for any count in the state this year.

### **Concord**

- Count highs: Ruffed Grouse, American Crow, and Common Raven; also Red-winged Blackbird (unrecorded for the last 10 years)

The only Ruby-crowned Kinglet for the state was recorded on the count. This was only one of two seen throughout the season.

### **Laconia**

- First count record: Lesser Scaup
- Second count records: Great Cormorant and Long-tailed Duck



*Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
by Andrea Robbins*

### **Hanover-Norwich**

- First count record: Yellow-rumped Warbler. This was one of very few warblers of any species found on any count and for the whole season.
- New state count high: Golden-crowned Kinglet. Pileated Woodpecker tied the previous state count high.
- Count highs: Hooded Merganser, American Crow, American Robin, and Northern Cardinal.

### **Baker Valley**

- Count highs: American Black Duck, Mallard, and Golden-crowned Kinglet

### **Grafton-Bristol**

Ben Griffith established the new Grafton-Bristol CBC, which recorded 32 species. Many thanks to Ben for making the substantial effort involved in getting a new count up and running! It was one of only three counts to find Common Loon away from the seacoast. The only Horned Grebe away from the coast was also found on the count. White-winged Crossbill was notable as well.

### **Littleton**

- Count highs: Ring-billed Gull and American Robin

The state's only Rough-legged Hawk was found on the Littleton CBC this year. There were only two other reports for the whole season, both from the Seacoast Region.

### **Errol-Umbagog**

- First count record: Cedar Waxwing
- Count highs: Ruffed Grouse and Golden-crowned Kinglet

### **Pittsburg**

- Second count record: Bald Eagle
- Count high: Boreal Chickadee

### **North Conway**

- New state count high: Spruce Grouse (only two previous count records)
- First count records: Fox Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow
- Second count record: Great Blue Heron
- Count high: Cedar Waxwing

### **Lake Sunapee**

- Count highs: Wild Turkey, Common Raven
- Belted Kingfisher was seen for the fourth time. This is interesting given the colder conditions of the season.



### Manchester

- First count record: Northern Goshawk, Red-winged Blackbird
- Count highs: Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, House Finch, and House Sparrow

The only Peregrine Falcons in the state this year were reported from this count as well as one of only two Chipping Sparrows found statewide.

### Sandwich

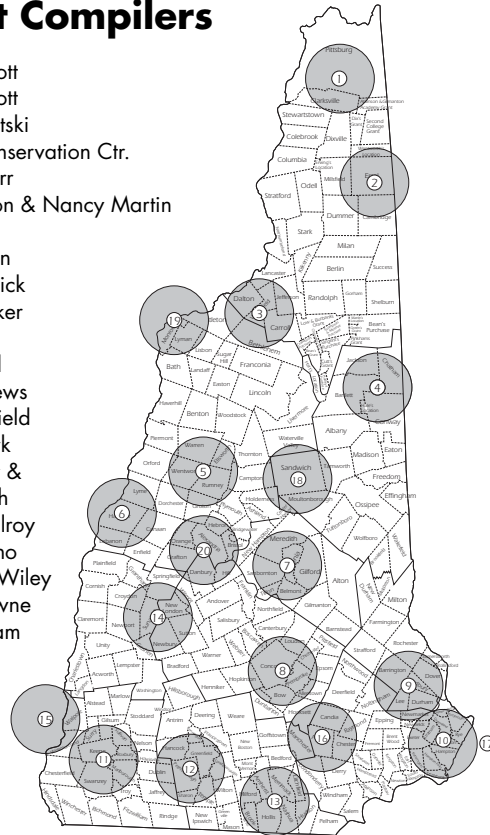
The Northern Hawk Owl found on the Sandwich CBC was THE truly outstanding bird for any count in the state this year.

- First count records: Cooper's Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Carolina Wren, and Hermit Thrush
- Count highs: Northern Shrike (highest number found in the state this year), American Crow, Boreal Chickadee, American Tree Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal.

**Vermont Counts:** We were unable to obtain results from the Barnet CBC, which extends into New Hampshire. Reports for the New Hampshire section of Saxton's River CBC are in the regular season listings.

## Christmas Bird Count Compilers

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Pittsburg             | Dennis Abbott                 |
| 2 Errol-Umbagog         | Dennis Abbott                 |
| 3 Littleton             | David Govatski                |
| 4 North Conway          | Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr.    |
| 5 Baker Valley          | Northam Parr                  |
| 6 Hanover-Norwich       | Walter Ellison & Nancy Martin |
| 7 Laconia-New Hampton   | Pam Hunt                      |
| 8 Concord               | Robert Quinn                  |
| 9 Lee-Durham            | Stephen Mirick                |
| 10 Coastal              | David Donsker                 |
| 11 Keene                | Robert Ritz                   |
| 12 Peterborough-Hancock | Dave Rowell                   |
| 13 Nashua-Hollis        | Ralph Andrews                 |
| 14 Lake Sunapee         | Gary Stansfield               |
| 15 Saxton's River, VT   | Donald Clark                  |
| 16 Manchester           | John Munier & Dorothy Fitch   |
| 17 Isles of Shoals      | Megan McElroy                 |
| 18 Sandwich             | Tony Vazzano & Susan Wiley    |
| 19 Barnet, VT           | Charlie Browne                |
| 20 Grafton-Bristol      | Phred Benham                  |



### 103th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2002 - Jan. 5, 2003

species	Nshua	Petrb	Keene	Coast	LeeDu	Cncrd
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	3	-	-
Common Loon	-	-	-	62	8	-
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	4	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	21	-	-
Double-cr. Cormorant	-	-	-	1	-	-
Great Cormorant	-	-	-	40	9	-
Great Blue Heron	6	-	-	5	4	2
Canada Goose	547	22	135	1665	1800	324
Mute Swan	-	-	-	37	5	-
American Wigeon	-	-	-	25	-	-
American Black Duck	117	-	13	972	230	4
Mallard	1042	4	69	1115	552	83
Northern Pintail	-	-	-	CW	2	-
Green-winged Teal	1	-	-	-	-	-
Redhead	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	CW	-	-
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	403	-	-
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	-	-	-
King Eider	-	-	-	CW	-	-
Common Eider	-	-	-	67	-	-
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	45	-	-
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	67	-	-
Black Scoter	-	-	-	4	-	-
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	49	-	-
Bufflehead	-	-	8	27	125	-
Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	196	50	19
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	CW	1	-
Hooded Merganser	2	-	4	-	2	1
Common Merganser	65	1	2	26	40	24
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	-	264	17	-
Duck sp.	-	-	5	-	-	-
Bald Eagle	-	-	1	3	6	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	2	1	4	6	1
Cooper's Hawk	3	-	1	3	2	2
Northern Goshawk	1	1	-	-	-	1
Accipiter sp.	3	-	-	-	-	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-tailed Hawk	33	-	2	16	38	12
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buteo sp.	-	-	5	-	-	-
American Kestrel	-	-	-	2	2	-
Merlin	-	-	-	-	*1	-
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	1	-	3	-	-
Ruffed Grouse	2	9	1	1	6	17
Spruce Grouse	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wild Turkey	17	**243	65	4	14	40
Sanderling	-	-	-	133	-	-
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dunlin	-	-	-	1	-	-

\*=New species to a count

\*\*=New state high

Individual count high

Lcni	Hnovr	BkrVI	Ltltn	Grftn	Errol	Pttsb	NCnw	LSunp	Manch	Sandw	Total
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	74
-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	CW	-	-	18
20	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	540	-	5055
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
59	5	<b>6</b>	11	34	-	-	-	29	3	5	1488
514	101	<b>90</b>	-	61	-	4	<b>150</b>	123	397	1	4306
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	407
*1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	163
284	12	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	21	-	613
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
107	<b>21</b>	-	2	-	1	3	-	9	2	-	154
379	52	-	-	5	12	-	-	-	39	-	645
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	281
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	6
2	2	-	1	1	3	1	-	-	<b>7</b>	1	30
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	CW	21
1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	*1	16
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	CW	4
-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	1
2	9	-	2	1	1	-	-	1	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	137
-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	6
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
-	2	1	10	1	<b>21</b>	18	2	4	-	3	98
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>**2</b>	-	-	-	2
-	56	15	13	-	-	-	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	-	12	578
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

### 103th Christmas Bird Count (continued)

species	Nshua	Petrb	Keene	Coast	LeeDu	Cncrd
Wilson's Snipe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	128	10	-
Ring-billed Gull	46	-	-	802	373	70
Herring Gull	3533	4	5	1848	6000	19
Iceland Gull	1	-	-	4	4	-
Lesser Bla.-bac. Gul	-	-	-	-	1	-
Glaucous Gull	1	-	-	1	1	-
Great Bla.-bac. Gull	863	8	3	909	358	23
Larus/black-backed s	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gull sp.	-	-	138	-	-	-
Bla.-leg. Kittiwake	-	-	-	1	-	-
Razorbill	-	-	-	4	-	-
Black Guillemot	-	-	-	2	-	-
Alcid sp.	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rock Dove	1341	124	348	881	470	575
Mourning Dove	873	182	273	300	504	435
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	1	6	1
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-
Northern Hawk-owl	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barred Owl	3	-	CW	-	2	-
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	-	2	-
Belted Kingfisher	13	-	1	7	4	5
Red-bel. Woodpecker	9	-	-	2	2	-
Ylw.-bel. Sapsucker	*1	1	-	-	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	122	56	37	30	98	44
Hairy Woodpecker	72	30	17	9	37	11
Bla.-bac. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Flicker	16	-	-	9	12	-
Pileated Woodpecker	4	5	1	2	4	5
Northern Shrike	-	-	-	-	3	-
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue Jay	901	360	252	233	555	251
American Crow	1301	131	195	486	726	1040
Common Raven	2	4	5	1	8	17
Horned Lark	-	1	32	52	-	2
Black-cap. Chickadee	706	726	451	460	771	442
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tufted Titmouse	251	100	62	110	184	97
Red-br. Nuthatch	21	28	6	1	21	9
White-br. Nuthatch	157	88	65	37	176	70
Brown Creeper	22	8	4	1	16	4
Carolina Wren	3	-	CW	5	**7	-
Winter Wren	3	-	-	-	2	-
Golden-cr. Kinglet	15	116	60	3	8	6
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastern Bluebird	65	-	8	16	80	7
Hermit Thrush	1	-	-	1	-	-
American Robin	391	10	CW	35	97	8
N. Mockingbird	54	1	6	42	53	12
European Starling	2369	414	520	4185	4753	570

\*=New species to a count

\*\*=New state high

**Individual count high**

Ln	Area	Hovr	Bkr	VI	Litn	Grftn	Errol	Pttsb	NCnw	LSunp	Manch	Sandw	Total
-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	138
226	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	1	51	-	1585
41	3	-	-	110	-	-	-	-	5	-	390	-	11958
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
16	22	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	106	-	2373
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	138
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
128	846	69	43	2	-	-	94	38	874	15	5848	-	5848
220	396	66	159	44	8	15	177	126	109	179	4066	-	4066
-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	11
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	1
3	3	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	-	18
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	2
1	CW	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	33
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	14
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
40	99	10	12	12	6	3	24	20	28	39	680	-	680
22	53	14	17	3	8	9	29	8	18	43	400	-	400
-	-	-	1	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
2	14	-	2	-	4	5	4	2	-	11	65	-	65
-	2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	11	-	11
-	-	-	1	-	7	13	1	-	-	-	22	-	22
368	723	313	63	129	41	42	143	311	218	269	5172	-	5172
122	3817	72	143	70	14	25	148	109	1231	150	9780	-	9780
7	36	7	38	5	24	22	12	10	4	-	202	-	202
-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	88	-	88
595	2033	346	242	390	374	229	528	682	314	605	9894	-	9894
-	-	-	3	-	19	68	-	-	-	19	109	-	109
49	113	8	CW	6	-	-	-	25	105	41	1151	-	1151
12	59	13	58	28	82	30	64	25	4	60	521	-	521
92	134	33	3	15	-	-	47	24	58	95	1094	-	1094
2	18	4	5	8	6	-	6	3	-	12	119	-	119
1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	20	-	20
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	7
15	**128	18	67	66	96	19	21	41	12	42	733	-	733
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	184	-	184
-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	5	-	5
25	51	-	40	-	1	1	-	1	5	4	669	-	669
5	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	25	-	204	-	204
452	691	102	215	71	11	48	175	198	892	122	15788	-	15788

**103th Christmas Bird Count (continued)**

<b>species</b>	<b>Nshua</b>	<b>Petrb</b>	<b>Keene</b>	<b>Coast</b>	<b>LeeDu</b>	<b>Cncrd</b>
Bohemian Waxwing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Waxwing	470	95	124	222	180	53
Ylw.-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	10	1	-
Am. Tree Sparrow	237	75	71	154	176	138
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1
Field Sparrow	3	-	-	-	-	-
Savannah Sparrow	1	-	-	1	1	-
Fox Sparrow	1	-	1	1	-	-
Song Sparrow	40	3	4	66	48	39
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	3	3	1
White-thr. Sparrow	29	2	-	28	46	20
Dark-eyed Junco	574	92	104	245	289	112
Sparrow sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snow Bunting	-	31	-	24	-	15
Northern Cardinal	182	44	20	100	107	39
Red-winged Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	4
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	1
Br.-headed Cowbird	3	-	-	4	9	-
Pine Grosbeak	6	-	-	-	-	-
Purple Finch	5	-	-	-	1	-
House Finch	214	3	73	179	254	139
Red Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-
Whi.-wing. Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pine Siskin	-	5	-	-	-	-
American Goldfinch	310	232	170	168	589	262
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	CW	-
House Sparrow	886	107	137	1186	952	197
Number of Species	60	40	42	86	70	53
Number of Participants	36	28	22	32	28	18
Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 122						

CW = Count Week

Nshua = Nashua-Hollis (12/28/2002)

Petrb = Peterborough-Hancock (12/14/2002)

Keene = Keene (12/15/2002)

Coast = Seacoast (12/14/2002)

LeeDu = Lee-Durham (12/21/2002)

Cncrd = Concord (12/15/2002)

\* = New species to a count

\*\* = New state high

**Individual count high**

	<b>Lcni</b>	<b>aH</b>	<b>novr</b>	<b>BkrVl</b>	<b>Lltn</b>	<b>Grftn</b>	<b>Errol</b>	<b>Pttsb</b>	<b>NCnw</b>	<b>LSunp</b>	<b>Manch</b>	<b>Sandw</b>	<b>Total</b>
-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
95	644	2	-	50	*20	-	-	78	6	150	128	2317	
-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
49	138	18	26	20	17	13	56	38	53	27	1306		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	4
2	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	1	219	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	8
15	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	5	1	6	CW	160	
81	247	19	21	14	-	15	67	44	137	60	2121		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	25
-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	5	-	-	100
43	112	12	4	1	-	-	5	21	38	19	747		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	5
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
20	1	21	2	-	16	53	4	-	-	-	5	128	
184	354	12	-	7	-	-	3	67	69	8	1566		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	13		
-	-	-	9	7	31	54	4	-	-	1	106		
1	-	-	19	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	27		
-	1	-	2	-	11	2	-	-	-	-	21		
123	296	221	292	209	83	35	176	57	90	446	3759		
-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	0		
289	636	75	6	7	-	17	71	35	770	12	5383		
52	53	28	42	32	27	28	38	36	45	41			
18	27	6	8	7	6	6	46	10	12	23			

Lcni = Laconia-New-Hampton (12/28/2002)  
Hnovr = Hanover-Norwich (1/1/2003)  
BkrVl = Baker-Valley (1/5/2003)  
Lltn = Littleton (12/15/2002)  
Grftn = Grafton-Bristol (12/15/2002)  
Errol = Errol-Umbagog (12/18/2002)  
Pttsb = Pittsburg (12/19/2002)  
NCnw = North-Conway (12/28/2002)  
LSunp = Lake-Sunapee (12/14/2002)  
Manch = Manchester (12/15/2002)  
Sandw = Sandwich (12/29/2002)

## Spotlight on Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

by Eric Masterson

### Background

The family name tanager is taken from the Tupi Indian word for the bird, tan-gare. Tanagers are members of a diverse family of birds confined to the Americas, primarily Latin America, with close to 250 species described thus far. The Western Tanager's specific name, *ludoviciana*, is Latin for Louisiana, a state that extended far into the western United States, and into the normal range of the bird, when Western Tanager was first described.



Western Tanager by Stephen R. Mirick,  
Portsmouth, 1/8/03

### Breeding Status

Western Tanager is the western counterpart of the Scarlet Tanager. It occurs farther north than any other tanager, reaching far up into northwestern Canada in the summer. Its normal range does not extend east of the plain states.

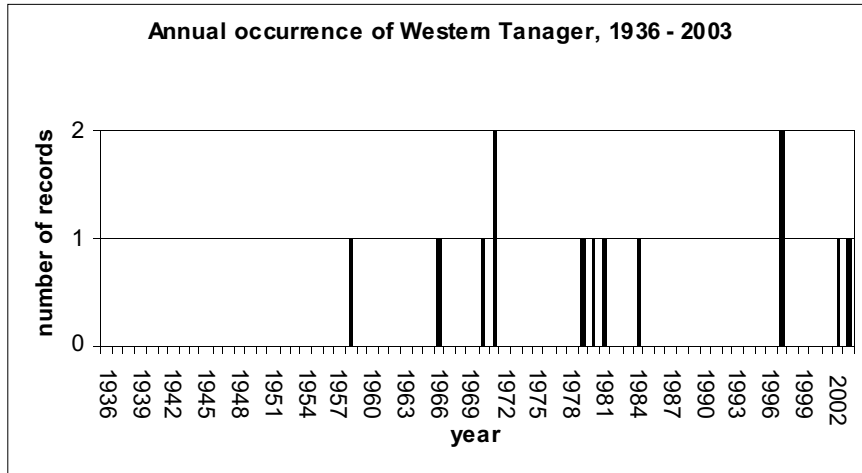
### Occurrence in New Hampshire

There are 13 documented occurrences of Western Tanager in New Hampshire since 1934 (Figure 1). All records but one involve single individuals. Of the 13 records, six occur between August and October (Figure 2), three occur in April or May, and single records occur in March, November, December and January (the December individual staying until February). Six of the records come from the seacoast region; the rest of the records are widely scattered geographically (Figure 3). Of the 13 individuals, a sex determination was recorded for nine (six males and three females). Four of the records involve long-staying individuals (4 days to 55 days), all involving birds found late in the season (October to January) as follows:

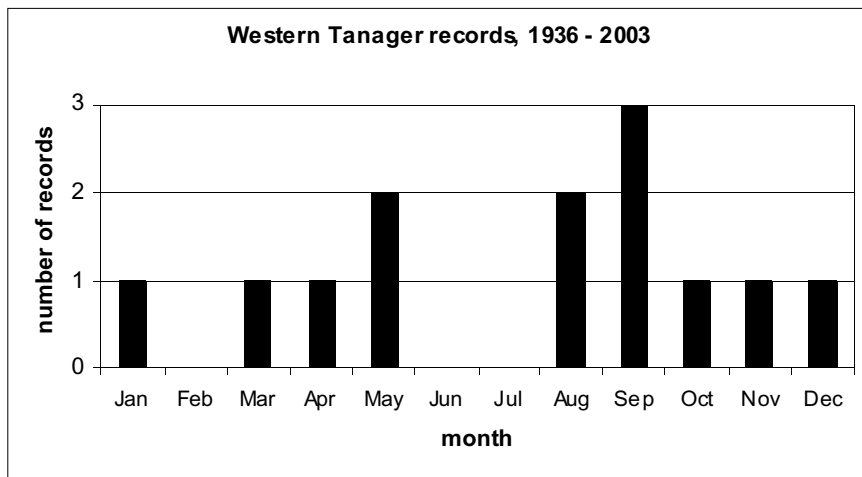
- one November 4–14, 1966 in East Andover
- one male October 17–24, 1979, Dunbarton Street, Manchester, joined by a second male on October 23–24. Both were seen feeding in neighborhood fruit trees.
- one December 15, 1997 coming to a feeder on Thornton Street in Portsmouth, last seen on February 8, 1998
- one January 8–11, 2003 at a residence in Portsmouth one mile from the Thornton Street record.



**Figure 1.**  
**Occurrence of Western Tanager by year in New Hampshire**



**Figure 2.**  
**Occurrence of Western Tanager by month in New Hampshire**

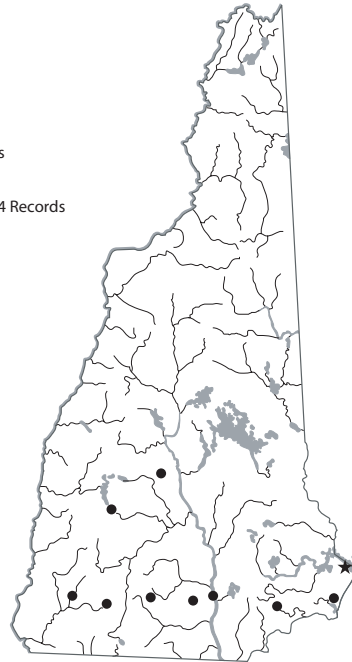


**Comments**

Western Tanager is a very rare vagrant, occurring on average once in every four years in New Hampshire (in Vermont, it has occurred five times in the last 30 years, or once in every six years on average). It occurs predominantly during fall migration, a pattern echoed in Massachusetts where it is a near annual visitor. In Massachusetts it is recorded most frequently between mid-November and late December, where it often turns up at feeding stations. The disparity in frequency between Massachusetts

**Figure 3.**  
**Location of Western Tanager records**  
**in New Hampshire,**  
**1936–2002**

- Single Records
- ★ Portsmouth - 4 Records



and New Hampshire can probably be explained by the greater relative density of birders in Massachusetts, by the longer Massachusetts coastline (vagrant birds are recorded far more frequently at coastal locations), and by its more southerly latitude, which offers a more clement winter environment.

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## Winter Birding in the White Mountains

by David Govatski

**W**inter birding in the White Mountains can be fun and productive, but prior planning is necessary to make it a safe experience. This article describes how to plan a trip, where to go, and what birds you might see. For the purposes of this article, the area covered includes the White Mountain National Forest and other lands north to the Canadian border in Pittsburg, New Hampshire.

### The Joy of Winter Birding

Winter can be long in the White Mountains and North Country of New Hampshire for folks who don't spend time outdoors. For many active birders it is a great time to get out and see and hear what winter visitors are around. Many birders are finding that winter birding can be a safe, comfortable, and rewarding experience. Trails are often easier to travel in winter and you don't have bugs or humidity to deal with.



Snowy Owl,  
from ASNH files.  
Photographer unknown.

Please let us know if this  
photograph is yours so  
credit can be given in  
the next issue.

### Specialty Birds of Northern Winters

Target species for winter birders in the White Mountains include the Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, White-winged Crossbill, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Common and Hoary Redpolls, Black-backed Woodpecker, Bohemian Waxwing, Spruce Grouse, Northern Shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl and "Black-backed" Robin. [Note: The Black-backed Robin, *Turdus migratorius nigriceus*, is a subspecies/race of the American Robin, recognized by many but not all observers. For more information see the references at the end of the article.]

Check the New Hampshire Rare Bird Alert and local area e-mail lists for current sightings. It is also worth noting what is being seen in Ontario, Quebec, and northern New York as these sites give advance notice of any irruptions (see sidebar). Keep an eye on the cone crops of black, white, and red spruce to help predict whether we might see good numbers of winter birds, especially White-winged Crossbills. Spruce and larch trees provide good seed crops at irregular intervals. Good cone crops may indicate a good irruption of crossbills and other species. Robins, especially the Black-backed subspecies, and both Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings will often spend the winter if the Mountain Ash berry crop is large.

### Irruption Migration

Irruptions are migratory movements that are irregular in time and space and are often caused by food availability and similar factors. White-winged Crossbill numbers vary from year to year depending on spruce seed availability. Northern Hawk Owls irruptions occur periodically and are thought to result from declining numbers of rodents in the sub-Arctic. Redpolls often appear in good numbers every other year.

Tree Species	Good Seed Crop Interval	Age at Start of Optimum Cone Production	Cone Ripening
Red Spruce	3–8 years	>40 years	Sept–Oct
Black Spruce	2 years	>30 years	Aug–Sept
White Spruce	2–6 years	>30 years	Aug–Sept
Larch	3–6 years	>40 years	Sept–Oct

Softwood stands tend to be the most productive sites for birds. Several species of birds may be found in mixed foraging flocks and for that reason you should carefully check them out.

### Where to Bird

Your level of experience and physical ability helps decide where to go birding. Snowshoeing twelve miles in deep snow on high mountain ridges is not for everyone and can be dangerous for those who are unprepared. There are, however, many opportunities to walk on gentle mountain trails on packed snow and stay only a few miles from a road.

One of the best ways to start winter birding is to participate with experienced leaders on Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Many of the New Hampshire CBCs will give you good experience and the Pittsburg, Errol-Umbagog, Littleton, and Conway CBCs are particularly good opportunities to see and learn about winter birds.

Some winter birds such as Pine Grosbeak, Bohemian Waxwing, and Northern Shrike can be found along country roads. Pine Grosbeaks can be found on recently sanded roads where they search for grit. Bohemian Waxwings travel in large flocks that settle in and devour crab apples in places as varied as the Field House at Plymouth State University or local backyards. Northern Shrikes are best found in brushy areas near fields although they may show up at backyard feeders looking for a feathered meal.

My favorite winter birding trip is a ten-mile loop trip starting in Crawford Notch and going over the summits of Mount Pierce, Jackson, and Webster. This trip requires snow-

shoes and good stamina. Gray Jays, Boreal Chickadees, White-winged Crossbills, and Black-backed Woodpeckers are commonly seen. The Crawford Path up to Mount Pierce travels through old growth red spruce and the Webster Cliff Trail to Mount Webster is a good place to see Gray Jays and even Spruce Grouse. The Webster-Jackson Trail down from Webster is a good place to find numerous Boreal Chickadees.

Another favorite trip is over Mount Tom, Mount Field, and Mount Avalon in Crawford Notch. The birds are similar to the Mount Pierce loop but the trails tend to be less used. The best birding is normally below 3,000 feet in elevation in softwood stands. As mentioned earlier, softwood stands, in general, are probably the best places to find birds in winter.

A hike over Mount Starr King and Mount Waumbek in Jefferson in winter can be very productive. An easier hike for properly equipped winter birders is to ride the ski lift up Mount Wildcat and hike the Wildcat Ridge trail. Hiking to the Appalachian Mountain Club Huts at Lonesome Lake, Zealand Falls, and Carter Notch provides excellent winter birding.

The *AMC White Mountain Guide* is the best source of information on trails referenced in this article. Parking places can be a limiting factor for some trails and it would be wise if you have questions or concerns to call the Appalachian Mountain Club or US Forest Service for information on specific trail and parking conditions.

The extensive trail system at the Balsams Grand Resort in Dixville Notch provides many opportunities for winter birding. A staff naturalist at the resort can help direct you to the best locations for birding. Errol has excellent birding opportunities along Route 16 north of Errol where a variety of winter birds can be seen. Pittsburg also has great winter birding along Route 3 and on side roads. Be careful with traffic on any of these roads if you are walking. Snowmobiles are common on weekends.

The Trudeau Road wetlands in Bethlehem is a great place to go for easy birding along packed trails. Watch out for snowmobiles that are common on weekends along the historic Profile Railroad Grade, which is now a snowmobile trail. You may also come across a rabbit hunter with beagles looking for snowshoe hare at the start of the trail to the wetlands.



*Mount Washington from Cloudland Bog on Mount Jackson by David Gavotski, 2/20/03*

## Birding Weather

As a rule I don't go birding in the mountains if the daytime temperature is not predicted to rise above 0° F. I also don't go birding when the winds are above 15 mph or it is snowing. These conditions limit productive birding and the wind makes it difficult to hear the tapping of woodpeckers. Winter birders get to "sleep in" a bit; there is no reason to get an early start in the mountains because the birds are usually not active until after the sun is up.

## Equipment

There are usually few opportunities to use a spotting scope unless you are aware of a Snowy Owl or Gyrfalcon that has been seen in an area. Scopes are too heavy to carry on long hikes in the mountains. Snowshoes are highly recommended, along with a pair of comfortable winter boots. I use a variety of snowshoes but my favorite mountain shoes are a pair of Mountain Safety Research "Denali" snowshoes. Ski poles are a good idea for snowshoeing. I sometimes use cross-country skis when I go birding but have noticed that they tend to frighten birds more than snowshoes do. Many White Mountain National Forest hiking trails are well packed but resist the urge to leave your snowshoes behind.

Dressing for the winter involves layers of clothing designed for winter conditions. Most winter hikers avoid cotton and we often hear the slogan "Cotton Kills" due to the fiber's inability to keep you warm when it is wet out. Gore Tex® is a popular wind and somewhat waterproof fabric. The disadvantage is that it tends to be a noisy fabric compared to wool or fleece. Avoid wearing bright solid colors and instead pick earth colored items that have a broken pattern that help camouflage you from birds.

Food and water are important to keep a body fueled. Dehydration is a common winter problem because people don't think they need to drink fluids in cold weather. A good tip is to carry your water bottle upside down because ice forms at the top of a layer of water and you can still drink from the outlet. I carry water in an insulated bottle parka that is available from local mountaineering supply stores. These items are much lighter than a stainless steel thermos. Regarding food, it is a good idea to plan on eating more frequently throughout the entire day.

## Safety

Winter hiking is not free from risk. Trails can easily be lost in blowing snow and blazes that were at eye level in summer may be buried in snow. Spruce traps occur when snow covers small spruce or fir trees and can cause snowshoers to disappear from sight when they step on them. Trails often have ice on them early in the season requiring the use of instep crampons or snowshoes with crampons to prevent slips and slides. Avoid walking on ice covered beaver ponds or streams unless you have thoroughly tested the ice. Your author has had his share of experiences of getting wet after breaking through weak ice in the winter.

There are many safety precautions you should take to properly manage risk in the winter environment. Cell phones often don't work in the mountains and North Country because of the characteristics of the cell phone signal.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the White Mountain National Forest have established a new web site called Hike Safe that should be studied by any prospective winter birder. Go to [www.hikeSafe.com](http://www.hikeSafe.com) for more details.

### Where to Stay in the White Mountain Area

There is a wide spectrum of opportunities for overnight lodging next to some of the best birding opportunities. Winter tents and snow caves are for the hardiest while others may prefer 4-star hotels or mountain huts and cabins.

The Appalachian Mountain Club has three mountain huts and two roadside camps that provide excellent access to fine birding and offer reasonable rates. Lonesome Lake, Zealand Falls, and Carter Notch Huts are open in the winter. No meals are provided and you will have to pack in all of your food and a sleeping bag, but at least you will have a roof over your head, water, gas stove and lights, and toilet facilities. The cost varies during the self-service season. Both Pinkham Notch Camp and the brand new Highland Center in Crawford Notch are full-service facilities that provide food and lodging in a heated facility. Contact the Appalachian Mountain Club at 603 466-2727 or [www.outdoors.org](http://www.outdoors.org).

The Randolph Mountain Club also operates two self-service huts at Gray Knob and Crag Camp in the Northern Presidential Range. Contact the Randolph Mountain Club at [www.RandolphMountainClub.org](http://www.RandolphMountainClub.org).

The US Forest Service has two rustic cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s that are available for rent at Black Mountain and Doublehead Mountain near Jackson, New Hampshire. Contact the White Mountain National Forest at 603 447-5448 for details on the cabin rental program.

Three "Grand Hotels" operate all winter in prime winter birding areas. They include the Balsams Grand Resort in Dixville Notch ([www.thebalsams.com](http://www.thebalsams.com)), the Mountain View Grand Hotel in Whitefield ([www.mountainviewgrand.com](http://www.mountainviewgrand.com)), and the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods ([www.mtwashington.com](http://www.mtwashington.com)). Winter birders may also wish to consider other fine inns that exist in the White Mountains and North Country.

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## The Red-bellied Woodpecker in New Hampshire: Invasion, Consolidation, and a Regional Context

by Pam Hunt

The Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) is a common species in forests throughout the southeastern United States, but until relatively recently it was a pretty rare bird here in New Hampshire. In the last ten years, however, this attractive woodpecker has shown a dramatic range expansion into the Granite State, and it seems a fitting time to summarize the invasion.

The first Red-bellied Woodpecker recorded in New Hampshire was in the unlikely location of Tamworth, way back in the winter of 1958-59. A female first appeared at a Wonalancet feeder on December 27 and was seen on and off through March 21. She was joined briefly by a male on February 24 and 25. After this initial sighting, no Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported until the fall of 1966, when a single bird appeared in Concord. This individual apparently stayed into the spring, at which point two additional birds were found in Hopkinton and Milford.

Between 1967 and 1980, the number of woodpeckers reported in a given year varied between zero and two, with the bulk of records from the southern third of the state (Figures 1a-b). The species became annual starting in the fall of 1980, although numbers still only ranged from one to three until 1988. During the 1980s, records were predominately from the Merrimack Valley and southwestern New Hampshire. Farthest from this core was a bird in Eaton in January 1989 (Figure 1c).

Red-bellied Woodpeckers made major advances in the southern Merrimack Valley in the winter of 1990-91. At this time a pair regularly visited a feeder at Beaver Brook in Hollis, where they were sought out by many birders. This pair was even observed copulating in May 1991, a strong indication of probable breeding (although no nest was documented). A couple of years later, Red-bellieds began to show up regularly in southeastern New Hampshire, especially in the area around Great Bay (Figure 1d). Once again, there were a couple of isolated sightings far to the north: Bath in 1991 and Jackson in 1993.

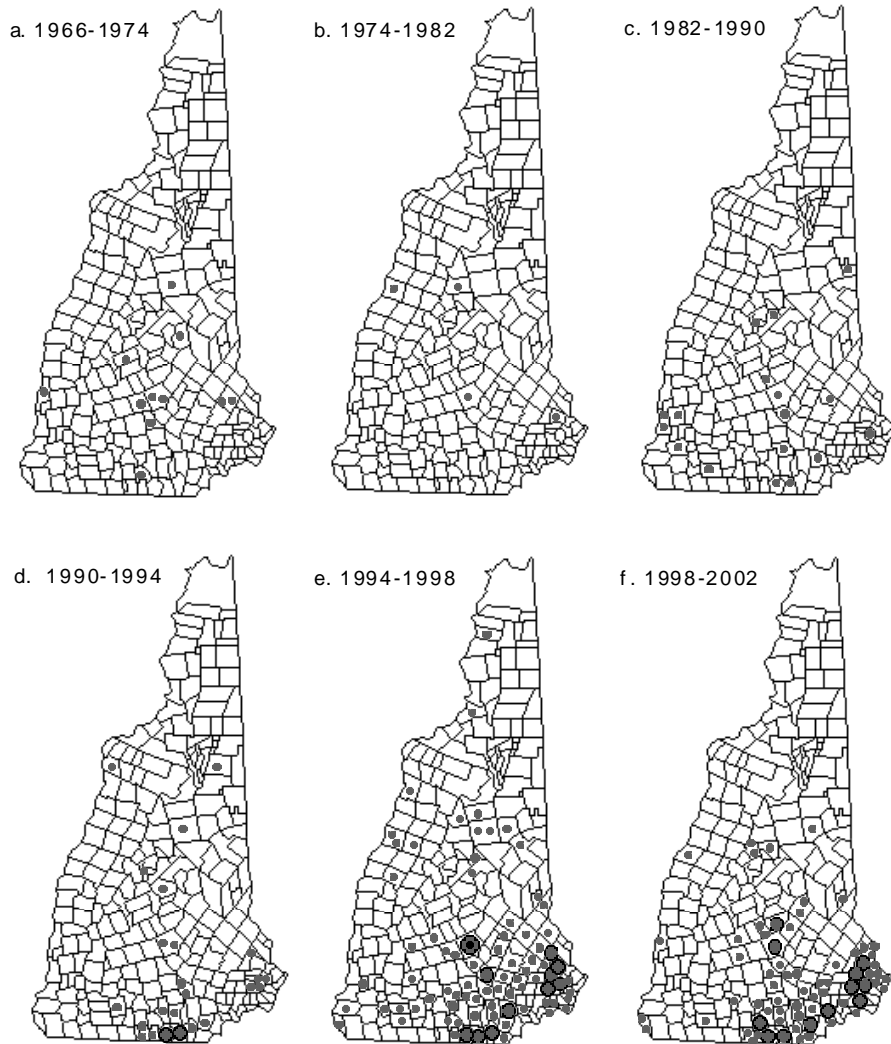
The situation changed dramatically in the fall of 1995. During the ensuing 12 months, the number of birds reported to *New Hampshire Bird Records* jumped to a mind-boggling 55. Woodpeckers were found as far north as Lancaster and Colebrook, in several locations in central New Hampshire, and in previously unoccupied towns in the southwest (Figure 1e). In the Merrimack Valley and southeast, they were everywhere. The invasion was short-lived, however, and even one year later only 40 birds



Red-bellied Woodpecker  
by Mike Milligan



**Figure 1. Distribution of Red-bellied Woodpecker in New Hampshire: 1966-2002.** For the purposes of these maps, a year starts in August and ends in July of the following year. Small dots indicate single records, large dots with a black border represent 4-8 records, and the large circle with a central dot represents 11 records.



were reported. For unknown reasons, numbers declined to roughly 25 between 1997 and 2000. Despite this apparent decline, several birders reported birds at possible nest holes, suggesting breeding in the state.

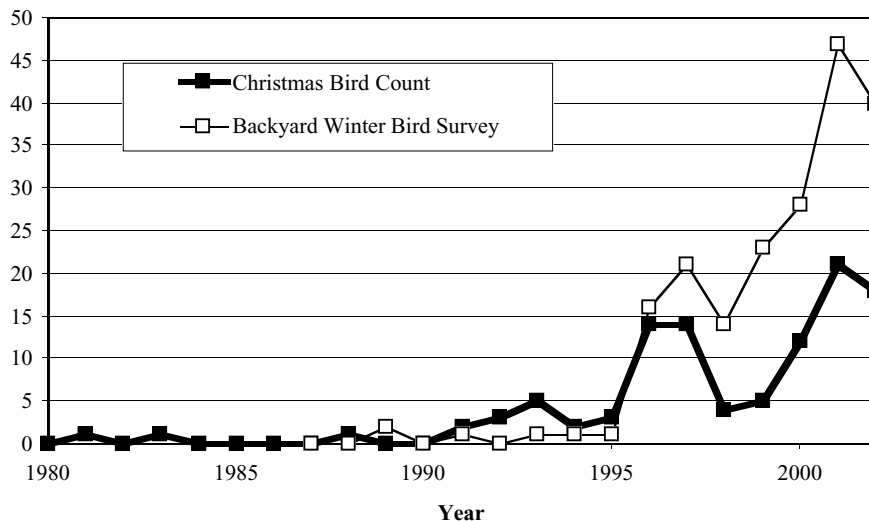
Numbers recovered in 2001, and for the last two years it appears that Red-bellied Woodpeckers have consolidated their range in the aforementioned strongholds of the Merrimack Valley and Seacoast. They also appear regularly in the southernmost Connecticut Valley (Figure 1f), but there have been no records north of the Lakes Region

since 1998. In 1999, there was new evidence of breeding in the state, when young birds were seen in Plymouth. In subsequent years, breeding was also suspected in Raymond, Pelham, and Durham, and finally, in 2002, actual nests were located in Merrimack, Windham, and Stratham. It looks like the Red-bellied Woodpecker is here to stay!

The range expansion into the state is illustrated in the series of maps included in Figure 1, but changes in abundance are not as clear. To summarize the latter, I have plotted New Hampshire data from three sources since 1980. Figure 2 compares data from all New Hampshire Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) with totals from the Audubon Society of New Hampshire's Backyard Winter Bird Survey (BWBS). Both data sets clearly show the dramatic increase in 1996, subsequent decline in 1998, and rebound starting in 2000. The BWBS is compared to the New Hampshire Bird Records database in Figure 3. The biggest difference here is the height of the 1996 peak. This probably reflects the initial fall increase in 1995, after which many birds disappeared before the February feeder counts. Despite the different survey periods involved, the similarity of the two trends is remarkable.

Finally, it's worth concluding with an attempt to put the species' status in New Hampshire into some sort of regional context. Prior to the 1960s, the Red-bellied Woodpecker was a rare vagrant even to southeastern New York, although a separate population was well established in the western portion of that state (Andrle and Carroll 1988). In the winter of 1960-61, however, there was a large influx into southeastern New York and southwestern Connecticut (Bull 1964). A second invasion occurred in 1962, and this time reached parts of Massachusetts (Bull 1964, Veit and Petersen 1993). The first breeding record in Connecticut also occurred at this time (Zeransky and Baptist 1990). Through the rest of the 1960s and 1970s, the species continued to increase, especially in Massachusetts. The first breeding in that state was recorded in 1977, by which point populations were well established in the southern Connecticut

**Figure 2. Winter abundance of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in New Hampshire: 1980-2002.**



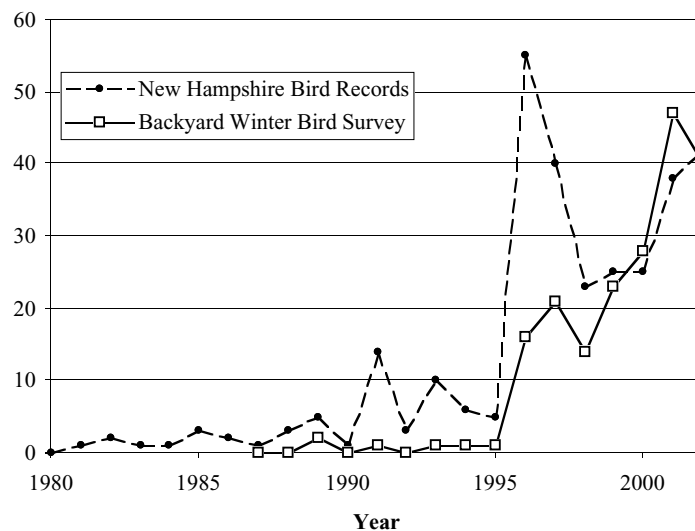
Valley and the southeastern coastal plain (Veit and Petersen 1993). In New Hampshire, the species' more regular appearances after 1980 is likely tied to its increase in Massachusetts in the late 1970s.

There are two data sets that are directly comparable across all of New England: the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). The latter turns out to be less useful because Red-bellied Woodpeckers have yet to be recorded regularly on New Hampshire BBS routes. However, it is worth noting that Red-bellied Woodpeckers have increased 60% in Massachusetts since 1980, with most of the increase occurring since 1995 (Sauer et al. 2002). The CBC data set, on the other hand, is something of a goldmine. Figure 4 shows the total number of Red-bellied Woodpeckers recorded on CBCs in three states. Massachusetts obviously has the mother lode, as befits its hosting the species for a longer period of time. The graph also shows the more rapid increase starting in the 1990s that is mirrored in the BBS data. The leveling off between 1997 and 1999 occurs at the same time as the 1997 decline in New Hampshire and remains unexplained.

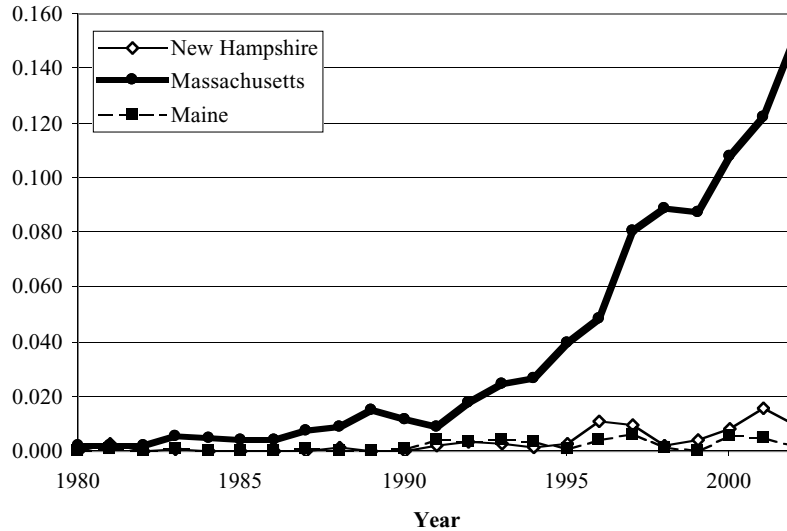
Both New Hampshire and Maine show similar patterns in the CBC data, with a trend toward higher numbers in New Hampshire in recent years. Both states show the 1996 increase followed by a decline, and then (more clearly in New Hampshire) another increase in 2001. CBC data from Vermont are not shown, but in that state there was the expected incursion in 1996 followed by a period of minor ups and downs. Red-bellied Woodpeckers even reached Nova Scotia (but, interestingly, not New Brunswick) in 1996, an invasion that was—as you might have guessed—followed by a decline and subsequent increase.

So what does all this tell us about Red-bellied Woodpeckers? What spurred them to start invading New England in the early 1960s, and what was behind the region-wide invasion in the fall of 1995? Theories on the former abound and tend to focus on three

**Figure 3. Comparison of winter Red-bellied Woodpecker abundance with New Hampshire Bird Records database reports: 1980-2002.**



**Figure 4. Comparison of Christmas Bird Count data for three New England States: 1980-2002.**



independent factors: Dutch elm disease, bird feeding, and climate change (Andrle and Carroll 1988, Jackson and Davis 1998). Dutch elm disease is a fungal parasite that was accidentally introduced into the eastern U.S., and by the 1950s it had killed American elms over a large part of the species' range. The increased numbers of large, dead trees provided nest sites and food sources that may not have been previously available, possibly allowing Red-bellied Woodpeckers to expand into previously unoccupied areas. The use of bird feeders also increased in the 1960s and might have aided the survival of the already expanding woodpecker population (Jackson and Davis 1998). At the same time, a gradually warming climate may have allowed this southern species to gradually expand northward, perhaps even occupying areas previously vacated by forest clearing in the late 1800s (Jackson and Davis 1998).

It is likely that all of these factors have some role in the gradual colonization of New England by the Red-bellied Woodpecker, but they do little to explain the more dramatic increases in 1995-96. The climate that year was not particularly warmer than other years, there was no sudden die off of mature trees, and it is unlikely that the numbers of bird feeders increased by a factor of ten. We are thus left invoking smaller-scale population phenomena that cannot be rigorously investigated in hindsight. In other words, we're on our own.

Dramatic population increases in any species are usually the result of a good reproductive season. Young birds produced in a season of plenty are left to their own devices and must seek out new territories for the following summer. For populations at the edges of their species' range, these young birds are likely to wander into previously unexplored territories and thus contribute toward local population increases. In non-migratory species such as the Red-bellied Woodpecker, such juvenile dispersal usually occurs in the fall, since it behooves the birds to find a suitable habitat in time for the upcoming winter.

And thus it makes sense that the influx of Red-bellied Woodpeckers into northern New England in the fall of 1995 was largely a result of juvenile dispersal. Perhaps populations in Massachusetts had an exceptional breeding season, and, given the already high densities of adults in many areas, their offspring were forced to wander north and east. And wander north and east they did, reaching as far afield as northern New Hampshire and Nova Scotia.

Over the following winter, spring, and summer, natural mortality took its toll on these original colonists, and numbers declined (especially at the farthest reaches of the invasion). Where colonists occurred at higher densities—usually closer to the source population—new breeding populations were established and numbers became more stable. The temporary decline in 1997 was thus potentially a simple result of normal mortality in the absence of new colonists. By 2000, however, the expanded breeding range was able to contribute new recruits to the population, and numbers increased or stabilized.

If all the above is true, the future of the Red-bellied Woodpecker in New Hampshire should be one of gradual expansion up the Connecticut River, along tributaries of the Merrimack River, and into the Lakes Region. Populations in adjacent parts of Maine and Vermont will show similar trends. Eventually there will be another banner reproductive year, and the species' range will take another sudden jump, perhaps north of the White Mountains. Stay tuned, and in the meantime, keep collecting and contributing data in the form of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, the Christmas Bird Count, the Breeding Bird Survey, and the Backyard Winter Bird Survey. You never know when your data will be of use!

*Pam Hunt is the Spring Editor of New Hampshire Bird Records and New Hampshire Important Bird Areas Coordinator for the Audubon Society of New Hampshire.*

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## Answer to the Fall 2002 Photo Quiz

by David Donsker

**H**ere's a gift: A hawk lands in your backyard, only a few yards from your window. It's so close that you can see every feather. So why is it such a challenge to identify?

Raptors, in general, are just hard. Although there is a relatively limited number of species from which to choose, there can be a confusing array of plumages in adult birds, and the juvenile plumages are frequently quite different from those of adults. Further, plumage differences between many species are



often quite subtle. Finally, we are used to seeing raptors in flight and many of the field marks that we have learned for identifying species are based on flight profiles and plumage patterns. Perched raptors deprive us of many of these well-established field marks, so we must look at the birds a bit differently to help us confirm the identification.

When looking at perched raptors, shape and plumage pattern remain the key features to study when attempting to identify a particular bird. Important shape characteristics to consider include the relative length of the tail and the proportionate length of the wings to the tail. The latter can be determined by examining how far the wing tips extend to the tail tip. Also note the length of the legs and the proportions of the feet and bill. Plumage features that are important to observe are the pattern of the back and underparts, the presence and pattern of any tail banding, and any pattern of stripes and marks on the head. Soft part features to consider are eye color and the amount of feathering on the legs, or tarsi.

Just as with shorebirds and gulls, it is important to try to determine if the bird is an adult or a juvenile. In general, juvenile hawks have streaked underparts and brown upperparts with prominent pale feather edging. It is more difficult to generalize about adult plumages, but many of our species have more uniformly patterned backs than juveniles and have at least some barring on their underparts.

Let's look at the bird that has landed in our backyard. Judging from the fence in the background, it is a small to medium sized raptor. It is clearly a long-tailed species with relatively short wings that extend much less than halfway down the tail. The crown is streaked, and there is a faint pale eyebrow, or supercilium. The iris is pale. The legs are bare, or free of feathering. The back is mottled with white, and the wing coverts have distinct pale feather edges. The breast and flanks are distinctly streaked. The belly and undertail coverts appear pure white. The tail is distinctly broadly banded with at least three dark bands alternating with even wider, paler bands and a whitish tail tip.

The shape alone helps us to place this bird in the proper group of hawks. It is an accipiter, the short-winged, long-tailed group of woodland hawks. Buteos, such as Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk, have short tails; when perched, their wing tips usually reach or nearly reach the tip of the tail. Falcons are also long-tailed, but their long, pointed wings extend more than halfway down the tail in perched birds. Besides, even though all young falcons, adult Merlins and female kestrels are streaked below, the banding on the tail is too broad for these species, and all have moustache marks, even though this marking is faint on the Merlin. Harriers also are both long-winged and long-tailed.

This individual is also clearly a juvenile accipiter with its heavily streaked underparts and mottled upperparts with prominent pale feather edging. In accipiters, the pale eye also helps us establish this as a juvenile.

So which accipiter is this? There are only three to choose from: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk. But the identification isn't trivial.

Northern Goshawk is, perhaps, the easiest to eliminate. It is a large accipiter, much more robust than the bird in the photo. It has the longest wings of all of our accipiters. On perched birds, the wing tips extend halfway to the tail tip. Immature Goshawks are heavily streaked below and unlike our bird, the streaks extend onto the belly and undertail coverts. The back is generally more mottled and paler than the bird in the photograph. The tail's darker bands in Goshawk are wavy and of unequal width. Usually these darker bands are edged with thin white borders. Juveniles of each of our accipiters may have white superciliary lines, but this mark is usually very prominent in young Goshawks and widens behind the eye.

This leaves the difficult distinction to be made between Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. These two species are very similar in both adult and juvenile plumages, and their proper identification frequently requires that several field marks be seen well. The perceived size and proportions of the bird in the photograph are reasonably good for either of the species. Both typically have pure white undertail coverts, pale edging on the wing coverts and evenly banded tails. The tarsi of Sharp-shinned Hawk are thin and pencil-like. Those of Cooper's Hawk are thicker and proportionately shorter, closer to that seen in the bird represented here. The pale supercilium is a good feature for Sharp-shinned Hawk and is less commonly seen in Cooper's Hawk, but both species may have this marking. Cooper's Hawk has a broader white terminal tail band than Sharp-shinned Hawk, a feature that is suggested in this photograph, but that is hard to distinguish in these photographs. The backs of juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawks have little or no white mottling. In contrast, young Cooper's Hawks are characteristically mottled on the back, a feature that is shown in this bird. Perhaps the best distinction between young Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks is the quality and distribution of the streaking on the underparts. Juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawks have thick, heavily streaked underparts on a buffy-white background, which become denser and more barred on the belly and lower flanks. In contrast, the underparts of juvenile Cooper's Hawks are finely streaked on a cleaner white background and become sparse or absent on the belly. On Cooper's Hawk, the flank feathers typically show central dark tear-drop markings. Although young male Sharp-shinned Hawks may have finer streaking than young females, a

clear white belly, when present, is a feature typical of Cooper's Hawk, the species represented in these photographs.

Like all accipiters, Cooper's Hawk is a woodland species, "alert, swift and dauntless, it roams the green wood with falcon-like freedom, carrying terror to the hearts of weaker creatures and leaving behind it a trail of destruction and death."<sup>1</sup> The creatures that it favors as prey include perching birds, grouse, squirrels and chipmunks. With its short wings and long tail, it is very maneuverable in dense woods. It frequently hunts on the wing, either low to the ground or just over tree level or, more commonly, makes forays from secretive perches in trees near a clearing. It is an uncommon nesting species in New Hampshire that appears to be making a comeback from a steep population decline in the middle 20th century, a victim of pesticides and persecution. Its nest is in dense canopy, usually near a clearing. Hemlock and spruce forests are their preferred habitat in our state. Most Cooper's Hawks migrate further south in winter, arriving back in New Hampshire in March or early April. A few, as is the case with this featured individual, overwinter in the state.

<sup>1</sup> Forbush, E.H. *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States.*, 1927.

*The juvenile Cooper's Hawk, on page 44, was photographed by Joyce Mancarella in her Manchester backyard during the winter of 2003, the week before the Backyard Winter Bird Survey.*

## Photo Quiz

### Can You Identify This Bird?

*Photo by Stephen R. Mirick*



Answer in the next issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.



## A Christmas Bird Count in Carroll County

by *Tony Vazzano*

**C**hristmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are held across the continent each year as a way to monitor winter bird populations. Each count has a compiler whose job is to organize the count and find birders to count birds in what is usually less than desirable weather. In a northern area far from the coast, like Sandwich, winter birding is even less enticing because most of the birds encountered are Black-capped Chickadees and Blue Jays. Sure, we have Mourning Doves, European Starlings and their ilk, but sometimes it seems that the only interesting years are when the northern finches invade. I agreed to be the compiler for the Sandwich CBC last year when friends who had been doing it were having trouble finding the time. My wife, Susan, agreed to help with the paperwork. I soon discovered that nearly everything for the CBC, including all communication with National Audubon and data entry, is done electronically so there is almost no paperwork. As a weather forecaster who specializes in winter weather, I work seven days a week during the winter and barely have time to do any birding. Fortunately I have a little extra time in the office during stretches of dry weather and while waiting for phone calls or data, I did find time to organize the CBC.

The eighth Sandwich CBC was ready to go for December 29, 2002. If the weather behaved and was relatively calm, I would even have some time to go out and bird for a few hours during the count! We lined up a great group of birders, some of them participating in this count for the first time. The weather was looking good and even though there were few winter finches around, I felt that we would have a good day. After I arose a little earlier than usual that morning, a Barred Owl responded to an imitation of its call at 5 a.m. from my driveway and a short time later, from the same location, a friend heard a Great Horned Owl. My list of birds in the yard stands at about 165 but Great Horned Owl is not on it! We were indeed off to an interesting start as it was also a bird that had not been checked off on count day in the seven years of this CBC. Oddly enough, we later discovered that another team had already counted a pair a few hours earlier. We also saw a Hermit Thrush later that morning, a first for the count. They rarely winter this far north. Our count circle covers a wide range of habitat and the elevation of Sandwich Dome provides us with a chance to find some birds that are almost never seen south of here. During this count the various teams not only found "southern" birds like a Red-bellied Woodpecker, a Carolina Wren and a record 19 Northern Cardinals, but also a record 19 Boreal Chickadees. While the ranges of Northern Cardinal and Boreal Chickadee obviously overlap, I suspect it would be difficult to find another CBC with that many of each. The mountain team tried to pass off a digital photograph of bird tracks in the snow as those of a Spruce Grouse, since the picture was taken in the boreal zone, but I have seen too many Ruffed Grouse spending their time where Spruce Grouse are purported to be to accept that one!

By 10:30 a.m. I was back in my office diligently preparing weather forecasts. Little did I know that the real fun was about to begin. Susan and I had invited several of the bird counters from out of town to stop by at lunchtime for some food and warmth and to compare notes before they went back out for the afternoon. At 11:20 a.m. the phone

rang—probably a client. No such bad luck. It was Bob Ridgely calling from the field on a cell phone to tell me that he was looking at a Northern Hawk Owl near the Sandwich/Tamworth line. He naturally assumed I would be there in a few minutes and was surprised when I told him that work commitments came first but that I would be able to get a break within half an hour. A few minutes later I posted the sighting on the NH.Birds list serve and tried to call some local birders to alert them. Of course, they were all out in the field counting chickadees—they are the “chickadee soldiers”. I did manage to leave a few messages that were received in time. I called a few participants’ cell phones only to find that people were either out of range or had neglected to turn their phones on. Meanwhile, I was helping to prepare lunch for ten people while trying to get my work done. Shortly before noon the friend I had birded with earlier arrived for lunch and we took off to see the owl. Susan assumed her role as co-compiler and was prepared to give directions to the owl location to everyone who showed up at our house for lunch. As we drove down the road, a couple of friends who had been out counting birds were driving up the road and we managed to turn them around within a few seconds so they could follow us. It was probably the most hectic half hour I have ever experienced.



*Northern Hawk Owl by Mark Suomala, 12/30/02, Tamworth*

When we arrived at the site there were already several birders there. We quickly walked out onto the frozen swamp and were able to get a good view. By the time the friends who had followed us there got onto the swamp, the bird had flown towards the east. Timing is everything. We managed to relocate the bird several hundred yards away and a few minutes later well over a dozen other birders were able to see it. It was very satisfying to have folks come from near and far expecting to see mostly common species and have them leave with such a high quality birding experience. Back at the house for lunch, ten of us were counting our blessings and talking about the Northern Hawk Owl. We joked about how it

had to be Bob that found it. He is a well-known ornithologist who has discovered three new species of birds in South America. Why couldn't it have been one of the “chickadee soldiers”? We decided that it was not only because he is a great birder but also that he is better equipped to handle the glory, as he's had so much experience in that department. Besides, he had counted his share of chickadees that day. It was the first Northern Hawk Owl seen on a CBC in New Hampshire in nearly forty years. Early the next morning the owl was photographed but then was never seen again. My one regret was that Susan, who has never seen one, did not have time to try for it since she stayed behind to alert the others to the owl's presence.

The rest of the count went well, although I'm sure we missed a few chickadees because of people spending time to view the owl. Life is a compromise. We came close to having four species of owls for the day, but the Northern Saw-whet Owl that was calling before midnight failed to respond before dawn. I felt compelled to let Bob

know that if he could not find an even more exciting bird during next year's count, we would at least be expecting something comparable—like a Great Gray Owl.

*Tony Vazzano has been birding in Sandwich for twenty years. He is a director of the Lakes Region Audubon Chapter and a volunteer for New Hampshire Bird Records, providing monthly weather summaries for the season editors.*

## Research and Volunteer Opportunities

by Francie Von Mertens

### **Seabird Ecological Assessment Network (SEANET) Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine & Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies**

The SEANET project to monitor seabird mortality along the New England coastline is seeking volunteers to help establish baseline data. This start-up project is coordinated by the Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine (TCCM) in North Grafton, Massachusetts, and the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. The ultimate goal is a long-term study of the spatial pattern of bird carcass deposition, and how it varies over time. When possible, cause of death will be related to local algal blooms, contaminants, oil spills, net entanglement, predation, disease, and so on.

Volunteer participation ranges from reports from coastal birders of dead seabirds encountered on random field trips to monitoring a consistent route with a consistent timetable—monthly, during the last week of each month with an additional survey after a major storm. Consistent coverage is the goal of this program modeled after Pacific Coast beached bird studies pioneered by the University of Washington and Bird Studies Canada—complete with a field guide to beached birds.

Volunteers are supplied with maps, data sheets, calipers, wing ruler, ID badge, and gloves. Digital photos of beached birds and GPS positioning are helpful but not essential.

The project has gotten a strong start in Massachusetts, particularly in the Wellfleet area, with promising outreach to conservation organizations in other New England coastal states. Here in New Hampshire, initial outreach to the Office of State Planning's New Hampshire Coastal Program became sidetracked by reshuffling and budgetary unknowns at the OSP.

Dr. Rebecca Harris at Tufts (TCCM) reports that SEANET's ultimate and ambitious goal is to necropsy a majority of "fresh dead" seabirds. Volunteers willing to put such birds on ice for pick-up or delivery are especially prized.

Data to be collected include sightings of live birds seen along a volunteer's route, a fact that could make volunteering more appealing to *New Hampshire Bird Records* readers. For further information, contact Becky Harris at [becky.harris@tufts.edu](mailto:becky.harris@tufts.edu) or by phone at 508-887-4933. SEANET's web page is [www.tufts.edu/vet/seanet](http://www.tufts.edu/vet/seanet).

SEANET is also part of a collaborative assessing and identifying impacts to loons outside of Buzzard's Bay following the oil spill there on April 27, 2003. Scientists are concerned that oiled birds that lived to reach their summer habitats may still suffer adverse effects of the oil. Oiled loons may exhibit some or all of the following behaviors: dark staining on the breast feathers, excessive preening, listing on the side while in the water, beaching. Report any observations of oiled loons in New Hampshire directly to Kate Taylor, [Kate.taylor@briloon.org](mailto:Kate.taylor@briloon.org). Report sightings of any other marine or coastal bird species dead on beaches (oiled or not) to Becky Harris.

## New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

The following report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains decisions for records voted on by the Committee since the last report in the Winter 2001-02 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. The NHRBC is an independent technical advisory committee to *New Hampshire Bird Records*. It reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity for both *New Hampshire Bird Records* and the historical database of bird sightings maintained by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Sightings are evaluated based on the details submitted. A record must have a vote of 6-0 or 5-1 to be accepted by the Committee.

A rejection is not an indication that the identification was incorrect but that the information received was not enough to allow its inclusion in the state record. Adequate documentation is the key to whether a report is accepted or not. For information on the Committee and its decision-making process, please see the article in the Summer 1996 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. The Fall 1996 issue has an article on how to document rare bird sightings. Contact the Managing Editor at ASNH for a copy of either of these articles.

The current committee members are Dennis Abbott, Alan Delorey, David Donsker, Davis Finch, Pamela Hunt, and David Deifik. Please contact any one of them if you have questions. Addresses are available from the chair, Pam Hunt, at [biodiva@cyberportal.net](mailto:biodiva@cyberportal.net) or work phone at 224-9909 X328.

### Spring 2002

#### Records accepted by the committee:

Western Grebe in Rye on May 18.  
 Western Grebe on Great Bay on May 29.  
 White-faced Ibis in Stratham on April 17.  
 Sandhill Crane in Newington on April 26.  
 American Oystercatcher at the Isles on Shoals on May 2.  
 Wilson's Phalarope in Exeter on May 22.  
 Acadian Flycatcher in Weare on May 17.  
 Lawrence's Warbler in Lee on May 24.  
 Cerulean Warbler in Windham on May 25.  
 Worm-eating Warbler in Hanover on May 12.  
 Summer Tanager at the Isles of Shoals on May 17.  
 Western Tanager in Portsmouth on May 20.

Clay-colored Sparrow at the Isles of Shoals on May 17.  
 Oregon Junco in Bradford on March 30.  
 Hoary Redpoll in Sandwich on March 14 and March 29.  
 Boreal Owl in Bartlett on May 29.

**Records not accepted by the committee:**

Audubon's Warbler in Pinkham Notch on May 18. Insufficient details. The description of song was inconsistent with this form of the Yellow-rumped Warbler.  
 Worm-eating Warbler in Lyme on May 16. A heard-only bird. The committee was reluctant to accept an identification based only on vocalization for this species whose call is difficult to identify and similar to more common species in the area.  
 Broad-winged Hawk in Stratham on March 30. Description did not eliminate Red-tailed Hawk.

## Summer 2002

**Records accepted by the committee:**

Least Bittern at Great Bay NWR, Newington: 2 on June 25, 1 on June 18 and July 8.  
 Black Vulture in Durham on June 11.  
 Black Vulture in W. Lebanon on June 18.  
 Greater Scaup on Great Bay on June 8 and 25.  
 Lesser Scaup, female, in Exeter on July 12 and 21.  
 King Rail at Great Bay NWR, Newington on June 8.  
 Common Moorhen at Great Bay NWR, Newington, on June 25.  
 Purple Sandpiper on White & Seavey Islands, Isles of Shoals, on June 20.  
 Red-headed Woodpecker on White Island, Isles of Shoals, on June 5.  
 Red-headed Woodpecker on Dahl Road in Merrimack on June 25.  
 Red-headed Woodpecker at Haines Terrace in Merrimack on July 26.  
 Red-bellied Woodpecker in Windham on June 25 through July 24. First documented state breeding record.  
 Acadian Flycatcher at Pawtuckaway State Park in Nottingham on July 4 and July 13.  
 Yellow-breasted Chat at Bellamy WMA in Dover on June 4.

## Fall 2002

**Records accepted by the committee:**

Red-necked Grebe in Washington on August 3.  
 Northern Fulmar offshore Rye on October 16.  
 Cory's Shearwaters offshore Rye on September 21 and October 12.  
 Leach's Storm-Petrel at Cashes Ledge, offshore Seabrook, on September 9.  
 Baird's Sandpiper in Ashland on August 25.  
 Baird's Sandpiper in Windham on September 8.  
 Red Phalarope at Cashes Ledge, offshore Seabrook, on September 9.  
 Pomarine Jaeger off Seabrook on September 9.  
 Pomarine Jaegers, 5 off Rye on September 22, 2 accepted to be in New Hampshire waters.  
 Pomarine Jaegers off Rye on September 26.  
 Parasitic Jaegers off Rye on September 2, September 26 and October 16. One each date.  
 Lark Sparrow in Seabrook on September 15.  
 Harris's Sparrow in Campton on November 17-22. Photographed.  
 Blue Grosbeak in Kensington on September 23.

**Records not accepted by the committee:**

White-tailed Kite in Moultonborough on August 13. Although the description was good, it was insufficient for a record of this magnitude. The possibility of a variant Rock Dove was also not considered by the observer.

### **Fall 2002 - Records not accepted by the committee: (continued)**

Golden Eagles in Tuftonboro on September 28 and November 8. Observer had no optics and did not conclusively eliminate immature Bald Eagle.

Sanderling in Gilford on November 11. Description did not eliminate other possible shorebirds such as Dunlin and Red Phalarope.

Bewick's Wren in Hillsborough on August 11. Description sufficiently vague to not eliminate juvenile Carolina Wren and there was no description of vocalizations.

Yellow-breasted Chat in Concord on October 7. This report went to the Committee because it was of an unprecedented seven birds. However, only one was described to any extent, and barring more details on all seven birds, the committee felt that a sighting of seven chats at the same time in New Hampshire was sufficiently unusual to not accept the sighting, despite a good description of one of the birds.

### **Winter 2002-2003**

#### **Records accepted by the committee:**

Harlequin Duck in Littleton on January 1.

Eastern Screech-Owl in Milford in late February. Recorded calling.

Northern Hawk Owl in Sandwich on December 29-30. Photographed.

Eastern Phoebe in Etna (Hanover) on December 5.

Brown Thrasher in Hampton on February 2. Photographed.

Black-throated Blue Warbler in Hanover on December 5.

Chipping Sparrow in Canaan from December 1 through January 4.

Western Tanager in Portsmouth on January 8. Photographed.

Baltimore Oriole in Farmington on January 11.

#### **Records not accepted by the committee:**

Two Pine Warblers in Rye on February 3. The report did not satisfactorily eliminate American Goldfinch.

### **Decisions on Late Submissions**

Records that the Committee was unable to evaluate in time for publication with the other votes from that season.

#### **Records accepted by the committee:**

Lesser Black-backed Gull in Seabrook on September 23, 2001.

Clay-colored Sparrow in Rye on September 30, 2001.

#### **Records not accepted by the committee:**

Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow in Portsmouth on October 21, 2001. The committee did not feel that the observer eliminated the more likely races of this species.

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## Abbreviations Used

ASNH	Audubon Society of NH	Rd.	Road
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	Rt.	Route
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	SF	State Forest
CA	Conservation Area	St. Pk.	State Park
CC	Country Club	SPNHF	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Concord
FT	Field Trip	T&M	Thompson & Meserves (Purchase)
L.	Lake	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
LPC	Loon Preservation Committee	WMNF	White Mountain National Forest
NA	Natural Area	WS	ASNH Wildlife Sanctuary
NHBR	New Hampshire Bird Records	~	approximately
NHRBC	NH Rare Birds Committee		
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge		
PO	Post Office		
R.	River		

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