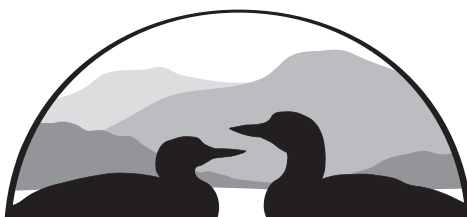


New Hampshire Bird Records



Winter 2009-10

Vol. 28, No. 4



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Winter 2009-10

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Cover Photo:

Peregrine Falcon by Jon Woolf, 12/1/09, Hampton Beach State Park, Hampton, NH.

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IN MEMORY OF **Tudor Richards**

This is the fourth and final 2009 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* honoring Tudor Richards. We are so pleased to have been able to recognize Tudor and his many contributions to birding.



*Left - Tudor Richards (President of NH Audubon) and Ralph Carpenter (Director of NH Fish & Game Dept.) at the dedication of the Pondicherry Wildlife Sanctuary in 1964.
Right - Tudor on his last visit to Pondicherry, November 2006. Photo by David Govatski.*

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From the Editor

by Rebecca Suomala, Managing Editor

Thank You

We appreciate the generous donors who made contributions to *New Hampshire Bird Records* including those who sponsored the “Twitchers in the Rye” during the seventh annual “Superbowl of Birding” organized by Massachusetts Audubon’s Joppa Flats Education Center. The Twitchers were competing in their second Superbowl, and as usual confined their birding entirely to the town of Rye. On January 30, 2010, four bundled figures started in a wind chill of -15°F and by day’s end had tallied 53 species and 78 points, raising money for *New Hampshire Bird Records* in the process. For a full report or to sign up to sponsor the team next year, contact Becky Suomala.

All donations help New Hampshire Audubon bring you this publication and make the bird sighting data available for bird conservation throughout the state. All of us who work on *New Hampshire Bird Records* appreciate your support.

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*The Twitchers in the Rye (l-r: Pat Myers, Patience Chamberlin, Becky Suomala, and Pam Hunt, team captain).
Photo by Pam Hunt, 1/30/10.*

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Time to Renew *This is the last issue of this subscription year and your renewal notice is enclosed with this issue! (If you’ve already renewed or just begun your subscription, you will not receive a renewal notice). Thanks for your subscription to New Hampshire Bird Records.*

Photo Quiz



Can You Identify These Birds?

Answer on page 65
Photo by Len Medlock

Winter Season

December 1, 2009 through February 28, 2010



David Deifik

by David Deifik

Unlike last year, New Hampshire birders enjoyed relatively benign winter weather. Temperatures were near normal for December, but then above normal in January. February's average temperature was over five degrees above normal. Total precipitation was above normal for December and February and December and January had above average amounts of snow. The exception to our fairly moderate winter weather occurred at the end of the season on February 25-26. A fierce Nor'easter struck the state with winds of up to 92 mph on the coast. There were widespread power outages due to numerous downed trees.

Though we certainly had some high quality records this season, it lacked some of the excitement of last winter. We missed highly sought after rarities that were seen for a prolonged period of time. There was also a near absence of winter irruptive species in stark contrast to our last two winters.

It has previously been quite difficult to get to our offshore waters in the winter. Weather conditions and a lack of publicly available boat trips have combined to assure the rarity of birder visits. To illustrate the weather factor, the Isles of Shoals Christmas Bird Count has not run since 2005 because of poor weather on count day. It was therefore particularly exciting that pelagic trips organized by Eric Masterson could get out to Jeffrey's Ledge on December 13 and February 13 (see page 56). These voyages were aboard the Gulf Challenger owned by the University of New Hampshire. The alcid show was truly outstanding with **Dovekie**, **Common Murre**, and **Atlantic Puffin** seen on both trips. As an added bonus, most of the participants on the December 13 trip were able to see a **Black Vulture** coming to a "meat pile" in East Kingston that afternoon after the boat came ashore.

There were three outstanding gull records this season. The rarest was a gull identified as a **Slaty-backed Gull**. This is a common gull of the Western North Pacific, but found only very rarely on the Atlantic Coast. If accepted by the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC), it would constitute a fourth state record. Two other extremely rare gulls were also seen, an **Ivory Gull** and a **Thayer's Gull**. The Ivory Gull is a rare arctic visitor with an apparently declining population. Thayer's Gull winters principally on the West Coast. With the increased interest in gull study, there have been increasing reports regionally over the last several years. Unfortunately, the Slaty-backed Gull, the Ivory Gull, and the Thayer's Gull were only seen by the original observers.



*Black Vulture by Lauren Kras,
12/14/09, East Kingston, NH.*

Winter irruptives were not completely absent as there were some scattered reports of Bohemian Waxwings; however, the only large flock was north in Gorham. Among the few warbler reports, three individual **Orange-crowned Warblers** were only outdone by a report of an **American Redstart**. The one outstanding bird that stayed for a prolonged visit allowing it to be seen by many observers was of an unusual subspecies of Fox Sparrow. What appeared to be a **“Sooty” Fox Sparrow** was seen coming to a feeder in Barrington (see page 37). Pending review and acceptance by the NHRBC this would be only the second record of this western form of the Fox Sparrow to be seen east of Texas and a first record for New Hampshire!

Waterfowl

Although records of Snow Goose are not terribly rare, finding three separate inland records is quite notable. There was only one record of Eurasian Wigeon, seen on Great Bay in early December. There was one inland record for Barrow's Goldeneye on the last day of the winter season, February 28 in Hinsdale.

*Male Barrow's (rear) and Common (front) Goldeneyes,
by Dennis Skillman, 1/8/10,
Great Boar's Head, Hampton, NH.*



<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Snow Goose				
01/14	1	Auburn	Massabesic Audubon Ctr.	A. Nadeau
02/13	1	Nashua		C. Sheridan
02/23	1	E. Kingston	South Rd.	J. Lambert
02/27	1	Nashua	Bishop Guertin High School	J. Besada



*Brant, by Scott A. Young,
2/20/10, Rye Harbor State
Park, Rye, NH.*

Brant				
02/25	1	Durham	Adams Pt., Great Bay	L. Kras
02/26	5	New Castle	s. of Fort Constitution	E. Masterson
02/27	3	Rye	Seal Rocks	S. Mirick
Canada Goose				
12/02	200	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
12/06	190	Hanover	Mink Brook Trail	P. Johnson
02/13	750	Durham	Rt. 155A fields (Moore)	S. Mirick
Swan sp.				
02/17	1	Newbury	Lake Sunapee	K. Sargent, et al.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Wood Duck				
01/09	2	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam	E. Masterson
02/28	2	Concord	Morrill's Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt
02/28	2	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	A. Merritt, C. Seifer, P. Miksis
Gadwall				
12/29	1	Portsmouth	South Mill Pond	S. Mirick
01/09	4	Portsmouth	South Mill Pond	S. Mirick
02/27	4	Portsmouth	South Mill Pond	S. Mirick
Eurasian Wigeon				
12/05	1	Greenland	Sunset Farm	S. Mirick, L. Medlock
American Wigeon				
12/05	16	Greenland	Sunset Farm	S. & J. Mirick, L. Medlock, et al.
12/29	1	Portsmouth	South Mill Pond	S. Mirick
01/04	1	Exeter	Exeter Reservoir	S. Mirick
01/06	1	Exeter	Exeter Reservoir	J. Lambert
01/17	1	Hampton Falls	Brown Road	S. Mirick
American Black Duck				
12/02	29	Rochester	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
12/08	10	Chesterfield	Spofford Lake	J. Russo
01/01	56	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/05	500	Greenland	Sandy Point Discovery Center	L. Kras, M. Harvey, B. Griffith
01/23	128	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	A. Merritt, L. Tanino
Mallard				
12/24	200	Rochester	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/16	1500	Exeter	Exeter Reservoir, 100 Portsmouth Ave.	L. Tanino
01/17	286	Manchester	Merrimack R. above dam	E. Masterson
02/21	1650	Exeter	Exeter WTP	S. Mirick



*Northern Pintail, by Lauren Kras,
1/10/10, Seabrook, NH.*

Northern Pintail

12/08	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/04	1	Exeter	Exeter Reservoir	S. Mirick
01/09	1	Seabrook	Lakeshore Drive	S. Mirick
01/15	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	S. Mirick
01/23	1	Newmarket	Newmarket town landing	G. Tillman
02/02	4	Exeter	Exeter WTP	J. Lambert

Green-winged Teal

12/08	2	Exeter	Exeter WTP	P. Chamberlin
12/08	2	Rochester	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Greater Scaup				
12/05	900	Greenland	Sunset Farm	S. Mirick, L. Medlock
01/05	500	Greenland	Meloon Road	M. Harvey, L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/28	300	Greenland	Sunset Farm	G. Tillman
02/22	1000	Greenland	Sunset Farm	J. Lambert
Lesser Scaup				
12/08	42	Exeter	Exeter WTP	P. Chamberlin
12/17	1	Chesterfield	Spofford Lake	E. Masterson
01/06	11	Exeter	Exeter WTP	J. Lambert
02/21	5	Exeter	Exeter WTP	S. Mirick
Common Eider				
12/13	30	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.
01/07	32	N. Hampton		B. Crowley, J. Scott
01/12	47	Hampton	Hampton Beach SP	B. Heitzman
02/12	41	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	M. Gimpel, D. Small
02/13	125	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	L. Johnson, P. Scully, E. Masterson, et al.
Surf Scoter				
12/13	20	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.
01/01	33	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
02/09	25	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	B. Crowley, J. Scott
02/12	37	Hampton	Great Boars Head	D. Small
02/13	25	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	L. Johnson, P. Scully, E. Masterson, et al.
White-winged Scoter				
12/13	25	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.
01/07	64	Hampton		B. Crowley, J. Scott
02/12	32	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	D. Small, M. Gimpel
Black Scoter				
01/01	23	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy, L. Medlock
01/11	12	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	J. Scott
02/25	22	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy



*Long-tailed Duck, by Scott A. Young,
1/21/10, Hampton Beach, NH.*

Long-tailed Duck				
12/13	40	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.
01/07	21	N. Hampton		B. Crowley, J. Scott
01/25	15	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Bufflehead				
12/06	3	Hanover	Mink Brook Trail	P. Johnson
Common Goldeneye				
12/15	30	Manchester	Fisher Cats Stadium, Merrimack R.	L. Hansche
12/18	1	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
01/05	140	Greenland	Sandy Point Discovery Center	M. Harvey, L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/10	180	Manchester	Merrimack R. above dam	E. Masterson
01/17	90	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	L. Tanino
02/11	7	Errol	Errol Dam	B. Crowley
Barrow's Goldeneye				
12/27	2	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/01	1	Rye	Foss Beach	L. Kras
02/25	2	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
02/28	1	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	A. Merritt, L. Tanino, C. Seifer, P. Miksis
Hooded Merganser				
12/01	2	Kingston	Powwow Pond	P. Chamberlin
12/03	3	Moultonborough	Unsworth Preserve	T. Vazzano
12/05	30	Orford	sheltered bay on Connecticut R.	S. Hardy
12/06	13	Hanover	Mink Brook Trail	P. Johnson
12/28	7	Meredith	Meredith town dock	J. Mullen
01/09	39	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam	E. Masterson
01/10	6	Manchester	Merrimack R. above dam	E. Masterson
01/10	5	Nashua	Fields Grove	C. Sheridan
02/01	20	Belmont	Silver Lake	R. Woodward
Common Merganser				
12/01	25	Surry	Surry Lake	L. Tanino
12/04	21	Jefferson	Cherry Pond, Pondicherry NWR	D. Govatski
01/01	11	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
01/09	49	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam	E. Masterson
01/10	60	Manchester	Merrimack R. above dam	E. Masterson
02/03	40	Wolfeboro	Wolfeboro Bay, L. Winnepesaukee	G. Gavutis
Red-breasted Merganser				
12/18	20	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	L. Main
01/01	44	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/05	12	Greenland	Sandy Point Discovery Center	M. Harvey, L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/07	30	Hampton		J. Scott, B. Crowley
02/12	23	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	M. Gimpel, D. Small
Ring-necked Pheasant				
12/03	3	Bartlett	Intervale, Hill 'n Vale	L. Route
01/14	1	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
02/28	1		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
Spruce Grouse				
02/28	1	Wentworths Location	trail opposite Lake Umbagog NWR headquarters	L. Alexander

Loons through Raptors



There were only two winter records of inland Common Loons, both in early December (there were a few more from the inland CBCs). The only inland record of Horned Grebe was also reported from Spofford Lake on December 2. Spofford Lake contained an even rarer inland Red-necked Grebe during early December. Twenty-three **Northern Fulmar** were seen on the December 13 pelagic to Jeffrey's Ledge.

Although reported more frequently in the state, **Black Vulture** is still very rare in the winter season. There were two reports this winter, from East Kingston and Portsmouth. In contrast to the large number of reports last year, there was only one Turkey Vulture reported this year in Nashua on January 16. The annual Mid-winter Bald Eagle survey was again a great success. The total from the count days of January 7 and 9 matched last year's record of 61 birds (37 adults, 24 immatures). The total number of birds over the count period of December 30 to January 14 was 75, one higher than last year's record number. Seven separate records for Red-shouldered Hawk is markedly higher than the average over the last several years. Both American Kestrel and Merlin also had a few more records than usual.



Merlin preening, by Dan Markey, 2/28/10, Manchester, NH.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Red-throated Loon				
02/02	8	Rye	NH coast	P. Folsom
Common Loon				
12/06	1	Northwood	Northwood Lake	R. Suomala, R. Quinn
12/13	1	Chesterfield	Spofford Lake	P. Brown
12/27	44	Hampton	Great Boars Head	L. Medlock, J. O'Shaughnessy
02/28	162		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Pied-billed Grebe				
12/01	1	Kingston	Powwow Pond	P. Chamberlin
12/06	1	Dummer	Rt. 16 n. of Androscoggin R. dam	K. Dube
12/12	3	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
01/29	1	Portsmouth	North Mill Pond	P. Brown
02/06	1	Portsmouth	North Mill Pond	S. Mirick
Horned Grebe				
12/02	1	Chesterfield	Spofford Lake	P. Brown
Red-necked Grebe				
12/08	27	N. Hampton	NH coast	S. Mirick
12/17	1	Chesterfield	Spofford Lake	E. Masterson
02/28	87		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Northern Fulmar				
12/13	23	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, S. Mirick, B. Griffith, et al.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Northern Gannet				
12/03	24	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	S. Mirick
01/25	9	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert
02/13	25	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	J. Lambert
02/26	6	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	S. Mirick
Double-crested Cormorant				
12/06	2	Exeter	Exeter WTP	R. Quinn, R. Suomala
12/13	2	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	M. Oyler
01/01	1	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/30	1	Seabrook	Beckmans Landing	L. Medlock, et al.
Great Cormorant				
12/13	35		Offshore Waters & Isle of Shoals	B. Griffith, et al.
12/25	1	Exeter	Swasey Parkway	L. Medlock
02/09	10	Hampton	Hampton Beach	J. Scott, B. Crowley
02/20	4	Dover	Gulf Rd.	S. Young
Great Blue Heron				
12/05	3		NH coast	S. Mirick
12/12	2	Stratham	Chapmans Landing	M. Iiff
12/13	1	Concord	Penacook survey route	P. Hunt
01/01	1	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
01/03	1	Keene	Ashuelot R., Winchester St.	W. Ward
Black Vulture				
12/13	1	E. Kingston	South Road	J. Lambert, L. Medlock
12/14	1	E. Kingston	South Road	L. Kras, B. Griffith, S. Mirick, D. Finch
02/18	1	Portsmouth	Clinton St.	M. Anuszkiewicz, et al.
02/20	1	Portsmouth	North Mill Pond	B. Crowley
 				
<p><i>A very bold Black Vulture in a Portsmouth, NH backyard, 2/18/10, by Mike Anuszkiewicz.</i></p>				
Turkey Vulture				
01/16	1	Nashua	over Bishop Guertin High School	C. Sheridan
02/12	1	Durham	UNH	L. Kras
02/21	4	Concord	State Prison quarry	A. Robbins, B. Quinn
02/21	4	Plaistow	Rt. 108	S. Mirick
Northern Harrier				
12/08	1	Exeter	Exeter WTP	P. Chamberlin
12/08	2	Hollis	Arbor Lane	M. Brown
01/01	1	Rye	Foss Beach	L. Medlock
01/16	1	Nashua	Lake & Hunt St. jct.	C. Sheridan
02/27	1	Seabrook	Rt. 286	S. Mirick
02/28	2		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Northern Goshawk				
12/26	1	Kensington	South Rd.	G. Gavutis
01/28	1	Newbury	North Peak Village	J. Krueger
02/15	1	Lyme	Whipple Hill	B. Allison
02/21	1	Errol		M. Oyler
02/22	1	Jefferson	Pondicherry NWR	M. Oyler
02/28	1		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
02/28	1	Webster	Clothespin Bridge Road	R. Quinn
Red-shouldered Hawk				
12/05	1	Westmoreland	Stonewall Circle	P. Brown
01/08	1	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
01/23	1	Newton		K. Lawler
01/24	1	Raymond	Rt. 101	B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/08	1	Strafford	Rt. 126	J. Lambert
02/13	1	E. Kingston	Rt. 107	L. Medlock
02/23	1	Strafford	Rt. 126	J. Lambert
Rough-legged Hawk				
12/24	1	Swanzy	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Airport Rd.	L. Tanino
01/03	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	B. Griffith, L. Kras
01/25	1	Madbury	Kingman Farm area	L. Kras
American Kestrel				
12/22	1	Keene	jct. of Rt. 9, 10 & 12	L. Tanino, D. Cohen
01/01	1	Hampton	Island Path	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/05	1	Seabrook	Hampton Harbor	J. Lambert
01/09	1	Keene	Target	C. Seifer
01/24	1	Portsmouth	Rt. 16	D. Hubbard
02/28	2		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Merlin				
12/05	1	Exeter	Newfields Rd. residence	P. Chamberlin
01/02	1	Dover	Dover Pt. Road	B. Griffith, L. Kras
01/06	1	Rye	marsh w. of Wallis Sands State Beach	J. Lambert
02/23	1	Nashua	Main St. near Field St.	C. Sheridan
02/28	1	Manchester	Belmont St.	D. Markey
02/28	1		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Peregrine Falcon				
12/05	1		NH coast	S. Mirick
12/06	1	Dover	Hilton Park, Dover Point	R. Suomala, R. Quinn
12/21	1	Hanover	Rt. 10 near Kendal at Hanover	A. Greatorex
12/23	1	Concord	downtown Concord	R. Vallieres
12/23	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	S. Mirick
01/21	1	Hampton Falls	Hampton-Seabrook marsh, Depot Rd.	P. Brown
02/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	J. Lambert, P. Scully, L. Johnson
02/28	1		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick

Coot through Alcids

A single Killdeer reported from Rye in early January was the sole report for the season. A Wilson's Snipe reported from Hampton in early February is also the sole record for the season and rare in winter.

A well described **Ivory Gull** seen on January 11 was unfortunately only seen by the three original observers. This iconic bird of the high arctic is a major rarity for the state; however, this New Hampshire sighting was the first of a rash of Ivory Gull sightings in southern New England that may have involved the same bird. Sightings were subsequently made on Cape Cod, and in southeastern Massachusetts and across the state line in Rhode Island. It was then seen along the eastern coast of Rhode Island. An Ivory Gull was even seen in Georgia on January 25 – the southernmost record for the species – although it later died there, presumably from injuries inflicted by a large predator. Regionally sightings of Ivory Gulls have been increasing over the last five years. Even more remarkable, most of the birds involved have been adults. It has been suggested that this may reflect deteriorating conditions on the northern wintering grounds as a result of climate change. A single Black-headed Gull was reported this season. This individual was observed in mid December in Rye. The rare gulls that the Rochester wastewater treatment plant (WTP) has become known for continued to be reported this season. A **Thayer's Gull** seen in early December was the same bird that was originally found on November 30 and has been accepted by the NHRBC as our state's fourth record. Unfortunately, it was only seen by the initial observers. This was the same situation for what regionally is an even rarer gull. A possible **Slaty-backed Gull** was carefully described and photographed at the Rochester WTP in early January.



Possible Slaty-backed Gull, by Lauren Kras, 1/17/10, Rochester WTP, NH.

This was a good season for **Dovekie** sightings. There were four separate sightings from the coast. It was also seen on both the December and February pelagic trips with a maximum of eight birds closely seen on the February trip. **Common Murre** is anything but common in our waters, but was seen on both winter pelagic trips. The 13 seen on the February trip may constitute a record count for that species in the state. **Atlantic Puffin** is another alcid that is tough to get in New Hampshire waters. It too was seen on both winter pelagic trips to the delight of the participants. The maximum was three birds on the February trip.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
American Coot				
12/03	1	Rye	Eel Pond	P. Chamberlin
12/04	17	Kingston	Powwow Pond	P. Chamberlin
Killdeer				
01/05	1	Rye	Odiome Point SP	J. Lambert
Sanderling				
12/03	100	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	S. Mirick
01/06	70	Rye	Rye Ledge	D. Hubbard, A. Kimball
02/04	115	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert
02/06	106	Seabrook	Seabrook Beach	S. Mirick
Purple Sandpiper				
12/08	38	Rye	Wallis Sands State Beach	S. Mirick
01/11	80	Hampton		J. Scott
01/14	100	Rye	Lunging Island	E. Masterson
02/04	26	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert
02/04	23	Rye	Rye Ledge	J. Lambert
02/13	2	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, L. Johnson, P. Scully, et al.
02/21	52		NH coast	S. Mirick
Dunlin				
01/28	50	Seabrook	Yankee Fisherman's Coop.	S. Mirick
Wilson's Snipe				
02/09	1	Hampton	Winnacunnet High School	P. Lacourse
Black-legged Kittiwake				
12/13	35	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.
02/13	7	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, L. Medlock, J. Lambert, et al.
02/28	10		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Ivory Gull				
01/11	1	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	B. Crowley, J. Scott, L. Thurston
Bonaparte's Gull				
12/05	100		NH coast	S. Mirick
12/13	21	New Castle	mouth of Piscataqua R.	E. Masterson
12/13	10	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	M. Oyler
01/01	1	Dover	Rt. 4. Little Bay	B. Griffith, L. Kras
01/01	9	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
02/28	1		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick
Black-headed Gull				
12/16	1	Rye	Seal Rocks	M. Thompson
Herring Gull				
12/27	1300	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson
01/05	1500	Rochester	Rochester WTP	L. Kras, M. Harvey, B. Griffith
01/13	1900	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	M. Iliff

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
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Thayer's Gull

12/02	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	L. Kras
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Iceland Gull (right) with a Ring-billed Gull, by Lauren Kras, 1/8/10, Rochester wastewater treatment plant, NH.

Iceland Gull

12/13	2	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, S. Mirick, B. Griffith, et al.
12/27	3	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson
01/05	4	Rochester	Rochester WTP	L. Kras, M. Harvey, B. Griffith
01/28	1	Derry	Derry WTP	M. Thompson
02/28	6		NH coast	S. & J. Mirick

Lesser Black-backed Gull

12/05	1		NH coast	S. Mirick
12/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	M. Oylar, M. Bornstein
12/23	3	Rochester	Rochester WTP	S. Mirick
12/27	1	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson
01/22	1	Farmington	Ten Rod Rd. Guinea Fowl Farm	J. Lambert
01/27	1	Seabrook	Hampton Harbor	S. Mirick

Slaty-backed Gull

01/07	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	J. Lambert, L. Kras, B. Griffith, J. Knapp
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Glaucous Gull

12/02	1	Rochester	Rochester WTP	L. Kras
12/08	1	Rochester	Pickering Ponds	D. Hubbard
12/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, S. Mirick, B. Griffith, et al.
01/08	1	Derry	Derry WTP	M. Thompson
01/12	2		NH coast	S. Mirick
02/12	1	Rye	Eel Pond	M. Gimpel, D. Small

Dovekie

12/09	1	N. Hampton	Little Boars Head	S. Mirick
12/13	6	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, M. Bornstein, J. Lambert, et al.
12/27	4	Hampton	Great Boars Head	J. O'Shaughnessy
01/13	1	Hampton	Hampton Beach	M. Iliff
02/13	8	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, P. Scully, L. Johnson, et al.
02/26	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	E. Masterson

Common Murre

12/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, S. Mirick, B. Griffith, et al.
02/13	13	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, L. Medlock, et al.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Thick-billed Murre				
12/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, M. Bornstein, et al.
01/23	1	Rye	Rye Ledge	R. Suomala, P. Hunt
02/04	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	P. Folsom
Razorbill				
12/13	23	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Mirick
01/12	27		NH coast	S. Mirick
01/25	6	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert
02/13	25	Offshore Waters		E. Masterson, P. Scully, L. Johnson, et al.
Black Guillemot				
12/08	3		NH coast	S. Mirick
12/13	4	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	M. Oyler
01/16	3	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	P. Brown, L. Tanino, J. Tilden, C. Seifer
02/21	9		NH coast	S. Mirick
Atlantic Puffin				
12/13	1	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Mirick, et al.
02/13	3	Offshore Waters	Jeffreys Ledge	E. Masterson, P. Scully, L. Johnson, et al.

Owls through Crows

There were only two Snowy Owl reports this season. Both came in January from the seacoast and were likely the same bird. Red-bellied Woodpecker continues to overspread the state. This season the most northerly report came from Chatham on December first. A second northerly report was from Sandwich on New Year's Day. A single Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was reported from Rye at the end of January delighting the "Super-bowl" birders who were able to add it to their list (The Superbowl of Birding is a competition that takes place on the last weekend in January and entices many birders to Rockingham County to see how many species can be found in 12 hours). For the last few years, there has been at least one Fish Crow record for the winter season. This year the sole record came from a bit farther north in Concord. The usual winter reports come from the extreme south near the Massachusetts border.



Snowy Owl by Steve Mirick, 1/2/10, Seabrook, NH.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
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An Eastern Screech-Owl became a celebrity at Odiorne Pt. SP in Rye, NH.

Left - Photographers at the roost site, by Pamela Hunt, 1/23/10; right - the object of their attention, by Dennis Skillman, 1/10/10.



Eastern Screech-Owl

12/12	1	Greenland	Sandy Point Discovery Center	M. Iliff
12/12	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	L. Medlock
01/05	1	Portsmouth	Wentworth Coolidge Historical Site	B. Griffith, L. Kras, M. Harvey
02/09	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	L. Alexander

Snowy Owl

01/02	1	Seabrook	Seabrook dunes	S. Mirick
01/30	1	Seabrook	Hampton Harbor	L. Kras, B. Griffith, J. Knapp, J. Lambert

Northern Saw-whet Owl

12/05	1	Lincoln	Hancock Notch, Kancamagus Hgwy.	J. Sweeney, V. Zollo
12/14	2	Jefferson	Pondicherry NWR	L. Tanino, P. Brown
01/26	1	Newmarket	Ash Swamp Road	J. Lambert, L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/28	1	Newmarket	Lubberland Creek Preserve	P. Brown
01/30	1		Rockingham County	E. Masterson, P. Brown
01/30	1	Stratham		B. Griffith, J. Lambert, L. Kras, J. Knapp
02/09	1	Concord	trails behind Concord Hospital	S. de Nesnera
02/10	1	Ashland	Sanborn Road	I. MacLeod
02/15	1	Concord	trails behind Concord Hospital	R. Suomala, R. Quinn, S. de Nesnera
02/28	1		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander

Belted Kingfisher

12/02	1	Hollis	Heron Pond residence	K. Klasman
12/02	1	Nashua	Fields Grove	C. Sheridan
12/24	1	Lyme	Dorchester Rd.	P. Ackerson
12/25	1	Bartlett	Saco R., Bear Notch ski trails	B. Sloane
12/26	1	Concord	SPNHF Merrimack R. CA	J. Pietrzak, L. McKillop
01/02	1	Laconia	L. Winnisquam, end of Water St.	H. Anderson
01/03	1	Litchfield	backyard	L. McKillop
01/03	1	N. Hampton	Appledore Ave.	L. Medlock
01/04	1	Portsmouth	Urban Forestry Ctr.	L. McKillop
01/17	1	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	L. Tanino
02/02	1	Manchester		D. Allaby

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Red-bellied Woodpecker				
12/01	1	Chatham	residence	B. Crowley
01/01	2	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge	T. Vazzano
01/15	1	Walpole	River Road	L. Tanino
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				
01/30	1	Rye	Central Cemetery	R. Suomala, P. Hunt, et al.
Black-backed Woodpecker				
01/04	1	Franconia	Fransted Campground	G. Jeffryes
02/23	2	Jefferson	Pondicherry NWR	D. Govatski
Northern Shrike				
12/02	1	Dublin	Monument Rd.	resident
12/07	1	Sullivan	Seward Mountain Farm	P. Brown
01/01	1	Keene	Green Wagon Farm	L. Tanino, W. Ward
01/02	1	Chatham	residence	B. Crowley
01/02	1	Surry	Joslin Road gravel pit	L. Tanino, W. Ward
01/07	1	Rochester	Pickering Ponds	D. Hubbard
01/19	1	Easton	North Peak Dr. residence	T. & S. Boucher
02/06	1	Jefferson	Rt. 2 by Starr King Rd.	R. & M. Suomala
02/13	1	Marlow	Kinson WMA	P. Brown
02/14	1	Errol	Greenough Pond Rd.	L. Kras
02/15	1	Madbury	Kingman Farm Area	L. Kras
02/17	1	Sandwich	Beebe Flats Rd.	R. Ridgely
02/18	1	Jefferson	Pondicherry NWR	D. Govatski
02/22	1	Dover	Strafford County Farm	D. Hubbard
02/22	1	Sullivan	Seward Mountain Farm	P. Brown
02/28	1		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander



*Gray Jay atop Mt. Jackson,
by Sue Walker,
1/14/10,*

White Mountain National Forest, NH.

Gray Jay

12/08	1	Bethlehem	Mt. Tom	S. Crowley
01/03	3	Carroll	Bretton Woods	L. Bergum
01/14	1	Beans Grant	Mt. Jackson, WMNF	S. Walker
02/03	1	Gorham		W. O'Brien
02/09	4	Wentworths Location	Lake Umbagog NWR Headquarters	D. Small, M. Gimpel
02/14	1	Errol	Rt. 16	L. Kras
02/17	3	Dixville	Mud Pond warming hut	D. Haas
02/28	2		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander

Fish Crow

12/27	1	Concord	Chesterfield Dr.	J. Pietrzak
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Larks through Waxwings



A late January record of Marsh Wren from Portsmouth was outstanding. Rare at any time of the winter, it should be totally absent by mid-January. There were three Ruby-crowned Kinglet reports this season, with the New Year's Day sighting in Nashua particularly notable as they are rare by this time in the season. For the previous two winters, we have enjoyed a large irruption of Bohemian Waxwing. Though by no means absent this season, there were dramatically fewer records. A trip to the North Country was generally required to tally Bohemian Waxwing this season where they were seen by many observers in Gorham.

Bohemian Waxwing with a leg band, by Leonard Medlock, 2/20/10, Gorham, NH.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
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*Horned Lark,
by JoAnn O'Shaughnessy,
1/1/10, Hampton, NH.*



Horned Lark

12/12	20	Thornton		L. Tanino
01/05	42	Hampton	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
01/09	30	Stratham	Stuart Farm	S. Mirick
01/11	27	Walpole	River Rd.	J. Russo
01/17	65	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson

Boreal Chickadee

12/05	9	Waterville Valley	Shattuck Brook	J. Stockwell
12/18	1	T&M Purchase	Mt. Washington Auto Road	L. Route
02/11	3	Bartlett	Mt. Kearsarge North Trail	S. Crowley
02/14	4	Errol	Rt. 16	L. Kras, B. Griffith
02/18	7	Pittsburg	Rt. 3	M. Thompson, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/28	1		Coos County, Gorham-Errrol	L. Alexander

Carolina Wren

02/03	1	Holderness	Burleigh Farm Road	L. Beeson
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Winter Wren

12/02	6	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
01/08	2	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
01/14	1	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
01/27	1	New Castle	Quarterdeck Lane	S. Mirick
01/30		Greenland	off Great Bay Rd.	S. & J. Mirick, P. Lacourse, D. Donsker

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
02/06	1	Epping	North River Rd. bog	G. Tillman
02/13	1	Nashua	Fields Grove	C. Sheridan
Marsh Wren				
01/24	1	Portsmouth	Great Bog	S. Mirick
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				
12/05	1	Seabrook	Beckman's Landing	S. Mirick
12/08	1	New Castle	off Rt. 1B	S. Mirick
01/01	1	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
Eastern Bluebird				
12/02	50	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
01/04	8	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	L. McKillop
01/10	7	Epping	Lee Flag Hill winery	G. Tillman
01/21	4	Greenland	Sandy Point Discovery Center	P. Brown
01/31	7	Nashua	Cheryl St. at Nashua River	C. Sheridan
02/09	4	Concord	Maple View Farm	P. Brown
Hermit Thrush				
12/15	1	New Castle	off Rt. 1B	S. Mirick
01/05	1	Durham	The Bagelry	M. Harvey, L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/23	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	R. Suomala, P. Hunt
American Robin				
01/16	175	Rochester	Fowler Farm	D. Hubbard
01/17	100	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson
01/19	500	Keene	Brooklyn Way	L. Tanino
01/23	5000	Stratham	Chapmans Landing	S. Mirick
01/28	200	Kensington	Phillips Exeter Academy fields	P. Brown
02/12	150	Laconia	Franklin St., L. Opechee shoreline	H. Anderson
02/22	368	Hinsdale	Vernon Dam, Connecticut R.	L. Tanino
02/26	140	Farmington	Gene's Cocheco	S. Young
Gray Catbird				
01/03	1	Boscawen	Eel Street	P. Hunt
02/06	2	Hollis	Heron Pond residence	K. Klasman
American Pipit				
12/18	2	Rochester	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/14	2	Rochester	Pickering Ponds	S. Young
Bohemian Waxwing				
12/14	1	Conway	Rite Aid, North Conway	B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
01/08	2	Concord	Clinton & Fruit St. jct.	E. Masterson
01/15	1	Keene	Keene State University	P. Brown
02/09	3	Jefferson	Ingerson Rd.	G. Cook
02/09	9	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge	T. Vazzano
02/20	250	Gorham	Rt. 16	D. Hubbard, G. Tillman, et al.
02/28	10		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
02/28	41	Lyme	Dorchester Rd.	P. Ackerson
Cedar Waxwing				
12/17	95	Ashland	Rt. 25	I. MacLeod
01/08	500	Concord	Clinton & Fruit St. jct.	E. Masterson

Warblers through Sparrows

There was a total of three individual **Orange-crowned Warbler** reported this season. One bird was well away from the coast in New London. It was photographed coming to a feeder starting in mid-January and continued into the spring. This was a very bright individual indicative of one of the western sub-species. A male **American Redstart** seen in Concord in early December is the outstanding warbler of the season. Several Yellow-rumped Warbler reports and a single Common Yellowthroat report at the beginning of December complete the warbler list for the season.

Clay-colored Sparrow is rare at any time of year, with most records coming during the fall migration. An individual seen in mid-December in Portsmouth is therefore an outstanding sparrow rarity for this season. The outstanding record of this season involves a well marked subspecies of the otherwise merely uncommon Fox Sparrow. Our eastern form with gray and rusty brown is quite distinct from the western forms. The **"Sooty" Fox Sparrow** is particularly distinct from our eastern form. It was just such a bird that appeared at a feeder in Barrington and spent an extended visit starting on December 11 and reported into March. This form is essentially unknown east of Texas and this is apparently only the second eastern record with one prior record from Connecticut in the 1990s. There is still some debate and ongoing discussion about the designation of sub-species for this bird (see page 37) and it will be reviewed by the NH Rare Birds Committee.

There were two winter reports for Lincoln's Sparrow. It has been three years since they have been reported in this season. The Nashua bird apparently stayed for at least a month starting in early December. The six seasonal records for Swamp Sparrow are consistent with the increased reports of the last few years. Interestingly, earlier in the decade Swamp Sparrow was either unreported or only represented by a single record for the season. There was a single record of Dickcissel this winter. The last February report was in 2006.



"Sooty" Fox Sparrow by Mark Szantyr, 1/10/10, Barrington, NH.

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Orange-crowned Warbler				
12/05	1	Seabrook	Beckman's Landing	S. Mirick
12/05	1	N. Hampton	Rt. 111 pulloff by Little River Saltmarsh	S. Mirick
02/13	1	New London	Parkside Rd. residence	J. Prew
Yellow-rumped Warbler				
12/05	3		NH coast	S. Mirick
01/21	1	Kensington	Rt. 150 power line corridor	P. Brown
01/24	1	Hampton Falls	Drinkwater Rd.	S. Mirick
01/29	1	Newmarket	Lubberland Creek Preserve	P. Brown
02/06	1	Newmarket	Bay Road	H. Chary
02/13	1	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	S. Barnes

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
American Redstart				
12/07	1	Concord	Chenell Dr.	J. Broyles
Common Yellowthroat				
12/02	1	Kensington	Drinkwater Rd.	G. Gavutis
Eastern Towhee				
12/06	1	Rochester	Ten Rod Road residence	D. Hubbard
12/21	1	Rochester	Ten Rod Road residence	D. Hubbard
American Tree Sparrow				
12/06	12	Concord	Morrill's Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt
12/12	17	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
12/23	13	Bartlett	Intervale, Hill 'n Vale	L. Route
12/31	28	Walpole		J. Russo
01/28	120	Stratham	River Rd.	P. Brown
Chipping Sparrow				
12/24	1	Litchfield	backyard	L. McKillop
12/25	1	Rochester	Ten Rod Road residence	D. Hubbard
01/01	2	Nashua	residence	C. Sheridan
Clay-colored Sparrow				
12/15	1	Portsmouth	off McDonough St.	S. Mirick
Field Sparrow				
01/01	1	Keene	Green Wagon Farm	L. Tanino, W. Ward
01/02	1	Concord	Fisk Road	C. Damon
Savannah Sparrow				
12/27	25	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson
01/09	10	Stratham	Stuart Farm	S. Mirick
Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.				
01/03	1	Seabrook	Cross Beach Road	S. Mirick
01/12	1		NH coast	S. Mirick
01/17	1	Hampton Falls	Depot Rd.	S. Young
01/25	2	Rye	Rye Harbor SP	J. Lambert
01/28	1	Seabrook	Yankee Fisherman's Coop.	S. Mirick
02/27	2	Hampton	Rt. 1A	S. Mirick
Fox Sparrow				
12/11	1	Barrington	Al Wood Dr.	D. Hubbard
01/29	2	Stratham	River Rd.	S. Mirick, D. Abbott, P. Lacourse
Fox Sparrow - western type				
12/11	1	Barrington	Al Wood Dr.	S. Mirick, et al.
01/17	1	Barrington	Al Wood Dr.	P. Hunt
02/15	1	Barrington	Al Wood Dr.	T. Chase
Song Sparrow				
12/04	10	Derry	Derry WTP	M. Thompson
12/06	7	Concord	Morrill's Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt
12/06	2	Exeter	Exeter WTP	R. Quinn, R. Suomala
01/05	13	Stratham	Stuart Farm	L. Kras, M. Harvey, B. Griffith

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Song Sparrow—continued				
01/21	2	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
01/28	5	Derry	Derry WTP	M. Thompson



Lincoln's Sparrow by Deanne Fortnam,
1/11/10, Nashua, NH.

Lincoln's Sparrow

01/06	1	Nashua	Cambridge Rd.	D. Fortnam
01/28	1	Stratham	River Rd.	P. Brown

Swamp Sparrow

12/08	1	Exeter	Exeter WTP	P. Chamberlin
12/08	1	Portsmouth	North Mill Pond	S. Mirick
01/09	1	Exeter	Wheelright Creek	S. Mirick
01/09	1	Greenland	Great Bay Road	S. Mirick
01/17	1	Portsmouth	hospital marsh	S. Mirick
01/23	1	Rye	Wallis Road	S. Mirick

White-throated Sparrow

12/19	10	Newmarket	Bay Road	H. Chary
12/26	15	Durham		D. Keefe
01/01	10	Nashua	Millyard Tech Park	C. Sheridan
01/05	12	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
02/06	14	Concord	Penacook survey route	P. Hunt

White-crowned Sparrow

12/12	2	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
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Lapland Longspur,
by JoAnn O'Shaughnessy,
1/1/10, Hampton, NH.

Lapland Longspur

01/03	2	Seabrook	Cross Beach Road	S. Mirick
01/05	4	Hampton	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
01/10	2	Litchfield	Rodonis Gardens	E. Masterson
01/17	2	Nashua	Nashua landfill	E. Masterson

Snow Bunting

12/06	30	Rye	Odiorne Point SP	R. Quinn, R. Suomala
12/12	4	Newmarket	Smith Garrison Rd.	B. Goodwin
12/13	2	Stoddard	Pitcher Mtn.	L. Tanino
12/15	2	Pittsburg	Murphy Dam, Lake Francis	R. Quinn, S. Stoddard
12/20	10	Pittsburg	Hall Stream Rd.	D. Bourget
12/29	26	Walpole	Rt. 12 gravel pit	W. Ward
01/04	37	Loudon	Upper City Rd.	J. Lambert

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
01/05	40	Hampton	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
01/05	130	Seabrook	Hampton Harbor	J. Kelly
01/08	8	Franconia	Mount Lafayette	S. Crowley
01/09	22	Walpole	Sawyer Farm	E. Masterson
01/10	180	Litchfield	Rodonis Gardens	E. Masterson
01/16	42	Keene	Krif Road	W. Ward
01/29	44	Barrington	Warren Farm	S. Young
01/31	44	Lee	WMA, Old Mill Rd.	S. Young
02/12	120	Conway	East Conway fields	B. Crowley
02/17	40	Sanbornton	town park by redemption center	W. Stanton
02/28	120	Concord	Morrill's Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt
02/28	27		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
Dickcissel				
02/13	1	Portsmouth	Ocean Rd.	R. Stare

Blackbirds through Finches

There was a single Rusty Blackbird record for the season. Coming in late February, one could consider this an early migrant. Most winters, we have one Baltimore Oriole record. This year's record came from Dover at the end of December and was also seen on the Lee-Durham CBC.

Unlike the previous two winters, there was an almost complete absence of irruptive finches this winter. The smattering of crossbill records all came from the North Country with the exception of two White-winged Crossbills reported from Antrim at the beginning of December and one Red Crossbill record from Concord on January 1. There was only one redpoll report and that was of five Common Redpolls seen on the last day of February in Coos County. The few Pine Siskin reports this winter were more widely distributed around the state and were of tiny numbers. The biggest flock reported was only 12 birds in Errol.



*White-winged Crossbill by Lauren Kras,
2/13/10, Rt. 3, Pittsburg, NH.*

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Red-winged Blackbird				
12/03	2	Exeter	Exeter WTP	S. Mirick
12/05	5	Holderness	Squam Lakes Natural Science Center	I. MacLeod
12/14	1	E. Kingston	South Road	L. Kras, B. Griffith
12/14	2	Gorham	Rt. 16 & Rt. 2W jct.	B. Griffith, L. Kras
01/03	12	Exeter	Newfields Rd. residence	P. Chamberlin
01/05	6	Greenland	Great Bay Road	L. Kras, M. Harvey, B. Griffith

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
Red-winged Blackbird—continued				
01/10	6	Nashua	Fields Grove	C. Sheridan
01/16	200	Nashua	Salmon Brook	C. Sheridan
01/28	16	Kensington	Phillips Exeter Academy fields	P. Brown
02/06	40	E. Kingston	South Road	S. Mirick
02/06	40	Kensington	South Road	G. Gavutis
02/08	100	Kensington	South Road	G. Gavutis
02/21	112	E. Kingston	South Road	S. Mirick
Rusty Blackbird				
02/24	3	Dover	Rt. 155	L. Kras
Common Grackle				
02/21	1	E. Kingston	South Road	S. Mirick
02/21	8	Plaistow	Rt. 108	S. Mirick
02/22	1	Nashua	Everett Tpk., exit 3	C. Sheridan
02/24	2	Dover	Rt. 155	L. Kras
02/26	1	Hampton	Bicentennial Park	S. Mirick
02/28	1	Greenland	Target	B. Griffith
Brown-headed Cowbird				
12/13	120	E. Kingston	South Road	S. Mirick
01/06	55	E. Kingston	South Road	J. Lambert



Baltimore Oriole by Jordan Cook, December, 2009, Dover NH.

Baltimore Oriole				
12/29	1	Dover	Old Garrison Rd.	J. Cook
Purple Finch				
02/09	12	Dummer	Hill Road	D. Small, M. Gimpel
02/13	75	Pittsburg	off Spooner Rd.	B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/18	36	Milan	Chickwolnepny Rd.	B. Crowley, J. Scott
02/18	92	Pittsburg	Rt. 3	J. Lambert, L. Kras, M. Thompson
02/22	100	Jefferson	Pondicherry NWR	M. Oyler
Red Crossbill				
01/01	1	Concord	Contoocook R. Park, Island Shores Estates	P. Hunt
02/13	5	Pittsburg	off Rt. 3 s. of Second Connecticut L.	B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/14	3	Errol	Androscoggin River	B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/20	2	Berlin	Success Loop Rd	G. Tillman
02/28	3		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander

<i>date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>town</i>	<i>location</i>	<i>observer(s)</i>
White-winged Crossbill				
12/04	2	Antrim	Willard Pond WS	P. Brown
02/13	25	Pittsburg	Rt. 3 between Second Connecticut L. & US-Canada border	L. Kras, B. Griffith
02/14	3	Errol	Greenough Pond Rd.	B. Crowley
02/18	18	Pittsburg	Rt. 3, two locations	M. Thompson, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/28	7		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
Common Redpoll				
02/28	5		Coos County, Gorham-Errol	L. Alexander
Pine Siskin				
12/06	2	Nashua	Southwest Park-Yudicky Farm	C. Sheridan
12/14	2	Ashland	Sanborn Road	I. MacLeod
01/08	8	Manchester		L. April
01/14	1	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge	T. Vazzano
01/17	1	Epping	North River Rd	G. Tillman
01/19	1	Carroll	Bretton Woods	L. Bergum
01/22	1	Newmarket	Newmarket town landing	P. Brown
02/03	6	Gorham		W. O'Brien
02/22	12	Errol		M. Oyler
American Goldfinch				
01/01	120	Sandwich	Diamond Ledge	T. Vazzano
02/28	120	Chatham	residence	B. Crowley
Evening Grosbeak				
12/04	1	Jefferson	Bailey Road	D. Govatski
12/06	1	Stoddard	Pitcher Mtn.	L. Tanino
01/11	2	Franconia	backyard on Church St.	G. Jeffryes
01/25	12	Berlin	Argonne St.	K. Dube
02/11	30	Milan	Chickwolnepy Rd.	B. Crowley
02/14	90	Errol	Bean Road	B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/18	45	Pittsburg	Rt. 3 by pink house	M. Thompson, J. Lambert, L. Kras



*Bald Eagle by Leonard Medlock,
12/25/09,
Swasey Parkway, Exeter, NH.*

Christmas Bird Count Summary 2009-2010

by David Deifik

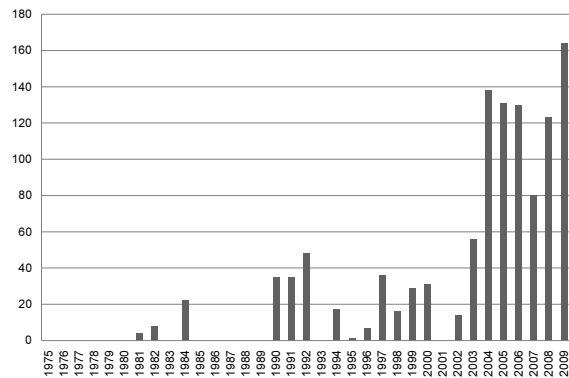
This year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were held between December 14, 2009 and January 5, 2010. There are now 21 counts in the state, although two of these are principally centered in Vermont. Only 20 counts were run this year. The Isles of Shoals count was not run and has not been run since December, 2005 due to unfavorable sea conditions on count day. Sightings from the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River, and Barnet, Vermont counts were not available this year.

Total species across all counts were 132, just two shy of last year's total. There were eight species that set new record high counts for the state, a bit more than last year. The majority of these new records again came from the Coastal CBC. There were 30 individual count high records this year, less than half of the average of the last two years. There were 11 species new to their respective counts, a relatively poor showing compared to last year's 17. No species were new to a New Hampshire count this year. A distinctive subspecies, however, was seen for the first time as was the case last year. Surprisingly, it involved the same species, Dark-eyed Junco. Last year it was the pink-sided form and this year an Oregon Junco was seen for the first time on any count. The Oregon form is one of the dominant forms in our western states but rarely seen on the East Coast. Golden Eagle was also seen for only the fourth time in count history on the Errol-Umbagog CBC. Three of those four have been recorded since 2007 and all but one are from the Errol-Umbagog count.

Inland waterfowl numbers were generally unimpressive this year. The Laconia count did have decent numbers of American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser. The Keene and Hanover-Norwich counts had reasonably good numbers of Hoodies as well. There were only two count highs, Canada Goose for Errol-Umbagog and American Black Duck for the Concord count. New for the Keene count was a Surf Scoter. This is the rarest of the three scoter species for inland locales at this time of year; not that the other two are exactly common. Coastal count waterfowl numbers showed marked improvement over last year; more consistent with numbers of two years ago. This is likely due to the very poor weather conditions for the count last year. Mallard and Lesser Scaup set new count highs for the Coastal count. The only other scarce winter duck seen was Northern Pintail (2) on the Lee-Durham count.

Wild Turkey just missed making a clean sweep this

Figure 1. Numbers of Wild Turkey on the Lee-Durham Christmas Bird Count, 1975-2009, compiled by Stephen R. Mirick.



year appearing in all counts except for Errol-Umbagog. Last year's record number of 1,359 was broken this year with a total of 1,474 across all counts. It is noteworthy that as recently as 1990 Wild Turkey was only seen in two counts for a total of 42 birds! Figure one from the Lee-Durham CBC illustrates this increasing trend.

As for raptors, Bald Eagle continues to do quite well. A total of 52 Bald Eagles were seen on 13 counts. The Coastal count exceeded its previous state high of 17 Bald Eagles set in 2007 with 20 birds. The Littleton count set a count high as well. The Coastal count edged out its own record for Red-tailed Hawk by one bird with 71 tallied. The news continues to be grim for the American Kestrel. For the third year in a row, no kestrels were seen on count day. As recently as eight years ago American Kestrel was seen in at least the high single digits. This year only a single bird was seen during count week on the Keene count.

Both the Lee-Durham and the Coastal counts missed Lesser-Black-backed Gull this year. Previously, they were the only counts to ever record them. Amazingly, three were recorded for the first time on any inland count on the Nashua-Hollis count!

The Coastal count broke the previous record it set for Eastern Screech-Owl with 11 birds, almost double the previous record. The Coastal count also broke the state record for Northern Flicker, and the Peterborough-Hancock count broke the state record for Pileated Woodpecker. Northern Shrike had a great year with over quadruple the number of individuals of last year, exceeding the very strong count of 2007-2008 by two birds. The Coastal CBC topped its previous state record of 18 with a total of 20 Northern Shrikes.

Carolina Wren numbers have decreased somewhat since the record highs of two years ago. It was not new to any count nor did it set any individual count highs. Warblers are never a prominent feature of New Hampshire CBCs, with only Yellow-rumped Warbler found on a consistent basis. Keene had a Yellow-rumped Warbler, the only inland warbler of any species seen. The rarest sparrow of the CBC was a first state record for the Oregon Junco, a western sub-species of the Dark-eyed Junco. This was found



Lapland Longspur by Leonard Medlock, 12/15/09, Rt. 3, near Third Connecticut Lake, Pittsburg, NH.

on the Coastal count. The Coastal CBC also had a rare Lincoln's Sparrow as well as good numbers of Swamp Sparrows. The single White-crowned Sparrow record came from the Peterborough-Hancock count. A first record for Lapland Longspur on the Pittsburg count was quite remarkable. A Baltimore Oriole was new to the Lee-Durham count. Compared to last year, irruptive finches were virtually absent this year. Red Crossbill was recorded for only the second time on the Lee-Durham count. The one bright spot was a new state record set for Purple Finch by the Pittsburg count. Overall, Purple Finch numbers were up by a factor of ten over last year!

Individual Count Highlights

Nashua-Hollis

- First count record: Lesser Black-backed Gull, Short-eared Owl
 - Count high: Savannah Sparrow
- Ring-necked Duck was seen for the third time.

Peterborough-Hancock

- Count high: Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal
- Wild Turkey matched the previous count high. Northern Flicker and White-crowned Sparrow were seen for the second time.

Keene

- First count record: Surf Scoter
- Count high: Blue Jay, Common Raven, Brown Creeper

Coastal New Hampshire

- First state record: Oregon subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco
- New state count high: Mallard, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Northern Flicker
- Count high: Lesser Scaup, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen for the second time. Lincoln's Sparrow was seen for the third time.



*Field Sparrow on the Coastal CBC,
by Leonard Medlock, 12/19/09, Kingston Rd.,
Exeter, NH.*

Lee-Durham

- First count record: Baltimore Oriole
 - Count high: Wild Turkey, American Pipit (second count record), Red Crossbill (second count record)
- Merlin was seen for the third time.

Concord

- Count high: American Black Duck, Cedar Waxwing
- Bald Eagle matched its previous high.

Laconia

- First count record: Merlin

Hanover-Norwich

- New state count high: Pileated Woodpecker
- Count high: Red-tailed Hawk

Baker Valley

Pileated Woodpecker tied its previous count high

Littleton

- Count high: Bald Eagle

Grafton-Bristol

- Count high: Ring-billed Gull

Errol-Umbagog

- Count high: Canada Goose

Golden Eagle was recorded for the third time. Red-winged Blackbird was seen for the fourth time.

Pittsburg

- New state count high: Gray Jay, Purple Finch
 - First count record: Great Blue Heron, Lapland Longspur
 - Count high: Wild Turkey, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Common Loon was seen for the third time. Tufted Titmouse was seen for the third time.

North Conway

- First count record: Red-bellied Woodpecker

Lake Sunapee

- First count record: Red-breasted Merganser, Merlin
- Count high: Wild Turkey, Common Raven

Manchester

- Count high: Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker

Red-bellied Woodpecker tied its previous count record. Red-winged Blackbird was seen for the third time.

Sandwich

Wild Turkey had its third highest count. Eastern Bluebird was seen for the fourth time.

AMC-Crawford

- First count record: Spruce Grouse, Red-tailed Hawk, Herring Gull
- Count high: Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-winged Crossbill

Second records for the following: Brown Creeper, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, and Purple Finch.

110th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2009 - Jan. 5, 2010

species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak
Snow Goose	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Canada Goose	179	5	29	4688	828	-	23	-	-
Mute Swan	-	-	-	18	3	-	-	-	-
American Wigeon	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
American Black Duck	24	-	24	1691	174	109	32	-	-
Mallard	351	2	162	**2724	497	311	577	278	-
Black X Mallard sp.	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Northern Pintail	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	1	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	325	-	-	2	-	-
Lesser Scaup	-	-	CW	9	-	-	-	-	-
Common Eider	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
Surf Scoter	-	-	*1	161	-	-	-	-	-
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	225	-	-	-	-	-
Black Scoter	-	-	-	55	-	-	-	-	-
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	146	-	-	-	-	-
Bufflehead	-	-	-	95	72	-	-	-	-
Common Goldeneye	-	-	-	668	31	18	353	2	-
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
Hooded Merganser	CW	-	35	-	-	2	127	38	-
Common Merganser	21	6	37	89	1	37	59	75	1
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	CW	266	8	-	-	-	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ruffed Grouse	3	9	2	1	2	4	2	3	2
Spruce Grouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wild Turkey	18	243	91	139	164	49	106	90	49
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-
Common Loon	-	-	2	63	5	-	3	-	-
Pied-billed Grebe	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	41	-	-	-	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	CW	41	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Gannet	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-
Double-cr. Cormorant	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Great Cormorant	-	-	-	67	-	-	-	-	-
Great Blue Heron	1	-	-	8	2	1	-	-	-
Bald Eagle	2	2	-	**20	9	4	1	4	-
Northern Harrier	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	2	2	6	6	1	2	2	-
Cooper's Hawk	8	-	1	17	9	2	1	2	-
Northern Goshawk	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Red-tailed Hawk	26	5	6	**71	26	10	2	23	-
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Buteo sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Golden Eagle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American Kestrel	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-
Merlin	1	-	-	2	1	-	*2	-	-
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	1	CW	-	-	-	-
Killdeer	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Sanderling	-	-	-	221	-	-	-	-	-

Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	12	-	-	9	-	-	-	5773
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	30	-	-	-	9	-	10	-	2103
-	22	-	8	29	137	44	9	-	5151
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	327
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	162
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	225
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	146
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	167
-	-	-	-	-	3	6	-	-	1081
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
2	-	1	-	-	21	3	3	-	232
CW	1	14	1	-	6	1	7	-	356
-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	275
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
7	1	5	-	CW	3	-	7	1	52
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	1
92	12	-	11	116	140	45	106	3	1474
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	76
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	13
3	-	3	1	1	1	1	-	-	52
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	24
-	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	45
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
3	-	2	-	3	2	5	2	*1	187
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	7
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	221

110th Christmas Bird Count (continued)

species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	-
Dunlin	-	-	-	142	-	-	-	-	-
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	16	1	-	-	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	65	-	-	480	63	2	109	-	-
Herring Gull	1378	-	CW	2659	5362	2	36	-	-
Iceland Gull	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Lesser Bla.-bac. Gul	*3	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Great Bla.-bac. Gull	259	-	-	163	609	1	15	1	-
Bla.-leg. Kittiwake	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Dovekie	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Razorbill	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Black Guillemot	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Rock Pigeon	776	106	174	1350	458	427	12	536	-
Mourning Dove	362	216	171	579	448	184	89	432	21
Eastern Screech-owl	-	-	-	**11	-	-	-	-	-
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Barred Owl	2	2	1	1	1	-	-	2	-
Short-eared Owl	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Belted Kingfisher	2	-	-	2	2	-	1	1	-
Red-bel. Woodpecker	16	6	4	34	27	1	1	-	-
Ylw.-bel. Sapsucker	CW	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Downy Woodpecker	63	112	74	175	117	61	33	92	7
Hairy Woodpecker	29	92	42	63	52	27	35	56	1
Bla.-bac. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Flicker	6	1	-	**30	9	-	-	1	-
Pileated Woodpecker	3	10	6	5	9	2	4	**20	5
Northern Shrike	1	-	-	1	6	-	1	3	1
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue Jay	417	605	451	642	608	300	145	488	132
American Crow	189	138	290	1023	351	318	783	1175	32
Fish Crow	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-
Common Raven	4	42	25	4	8	9	4	31	5
Horned Lark	25	-	8	71	40	-	-	-	-
Black-cap. Chickadee	453	697	862	1026	729	566	526	1719	56
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tufted Titmouse	111	142	129	263	332	146	54	114	9
Red-br. Nuthatch	4	26	23	19	30	14	6	50	5
White-br. Nuthatch	104	146	107	185	229	101	56	140	5
Brown Creeper	6	11	17	14	23	9	1	20	2
Carolina Wren	4	2	3	15	5	5	CW	3	-
Winter Wren	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-
Golden-cr. Kinglet	13	37	59	49	42	10	3	2	3
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Eastern Bluebird	44	14	7	108	28	9	1	-	-
Hermit Thrush	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-
American Robin	278	20	92	4925	837	484	37	40	-
Gray Catbird	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
N. Mockingbird	36	1	1	65	22	8	1	4	-

Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	142
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
1	4	-	1	-	-	3	1	-	729
12	-	-	2	-	1	-	2	*1	9455
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	1054
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
89	15	-	4	73	65	171	13	2	4271
83	7	4	4	129	110	55	107	-	3001
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	11
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	9
-	-	-	-	*1	-	9	2	-	101
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	3	4	8	39	43	26	28	6	900
21	9	5	15	43	39	14	24	7	574
-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	48
1	2	1	3	5	5	4	4	1	90
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
-	-	4	**22	-	-	-	-	6	32
109	78	45	52	344	269	89	218	40	5032
75	26	13	18	111	131	82	40	14	4809
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
46	2	46	20	34	13	5	12	5	315
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	144
335	184	351	718	488	595	191	482	157	10135
-	-	8	23	-	-	-	-	7	38
4	17	-	1	32	35	60	49	-	1498
91	8	64	301	43	43	-	23	55	805
22	23	3	6	94	49	35	76	18	1399
7	1	1	3	5	8	-	5	3	136
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
11	-	35	64	9	8	3	6	19	373
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
-	-	-	-	-	-	36	2	-	249
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
2	-	1	-	1	3	286	24	5	7035
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	140

110th Christmas Bird Count (continued)

species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak
Brown Thrasher	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
European Starling	341	230	307	3562	2330	572	336	720	19
American Pipit	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Bohemian Waxwing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cedar Waxwing	164	105	445	173	452	1402	320	148	-
Ylw.-rumped Warbler	-	-	1	7	2	-	-	-	-
Am. Tree Sparrow	77	30	56	458	134	132	19	103	6
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Field Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Savannah Sparrow	25	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-
Ipswich Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Fox Sparrow	-	1	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	31	-	2	103	41	12	1	5	-
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-
White-thr. Sparrow	108	11	27	151	89	63	-	7	-
White-cr. Sparrow	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dark-eyed Junco	1125	320	619	642	892	988	141	289	6
Oregon Junco	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Lapland Longspur	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Snow Bunting	-	-	38	40	1	15	5	17	-
Northern Cardinal	168	71	88	270	241	114	15	70	1
Red-winged Blackbird	-	1	1	17	1	-	-	32	-
Br.-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Baltimore Oriole	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-
Purple Finch	-	4	CW	-	11	1	-	2	-
House Finch	165	28	121	322	74	107	4	129	-
Red Crossbill	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Whi.-wing. Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Common Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Pine Siskin	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	-
American Goldfinch	210	139	74	464	315	382	113	484	59
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
House Sparrow	354	91	239	1377	834	261	171	234	-
Number of Species	59	44	47	99	70	50	49	50	22
Number of Participants	31	34	25	40	29	21	15	22	3

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 132

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/27/2009)

Pet = Peterborough-Hancock (12/19/2009)

Kee = Keene (12/20/2009)

Cst = Seacoast (12/19/2009)

Lee = Lee-Durham (12/26/2009)

Con = Concord (1/3/2010)

Lac = Laconia-New-Hampton (1/2/2010)

Han = Hanover-Norwich (1/ /2010)

Bak = Baker-Valley (12/20/2009)

* = New species to count

** = New count high for the state

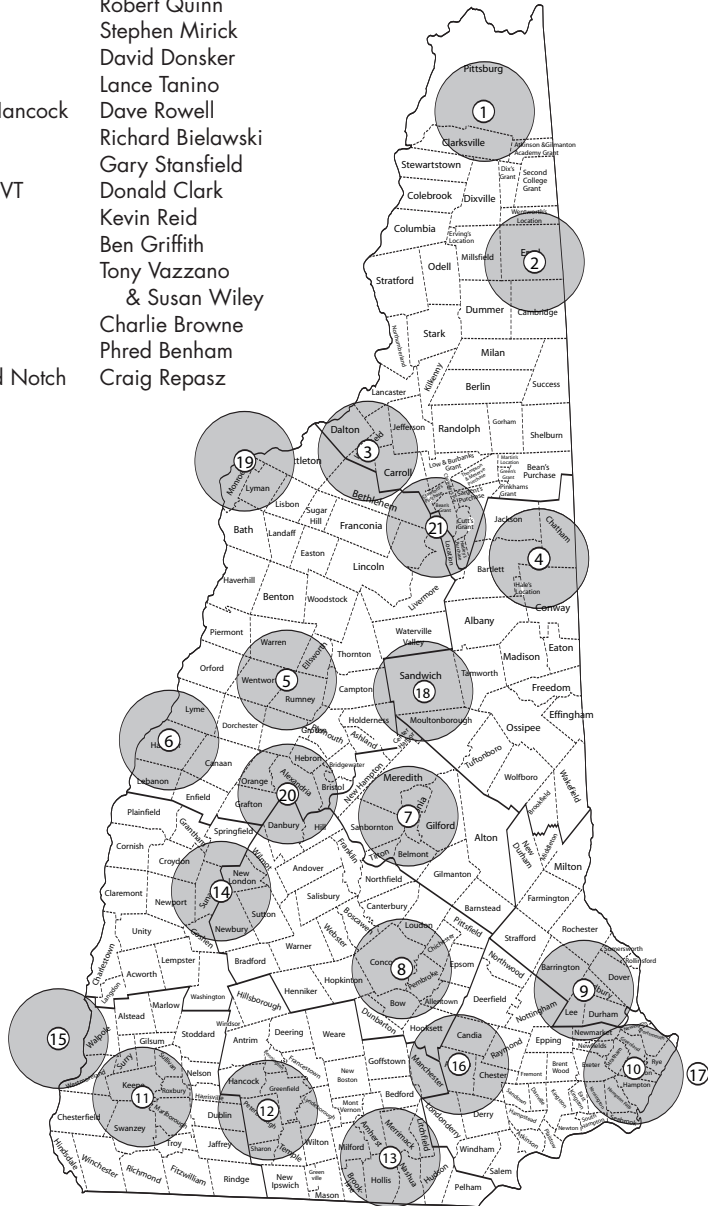
New individual count high

Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
12	2	CW	40	74	73	530	128	-	9276
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	3	-	-	31	43	80	45	3	3414
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
8	-	2	3	70	22	14	21	1	1156
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	198
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
-	-	-	-	2	2	12	-	-	472
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
11	20	8	5	31	105	190	66	4	5462
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
-	-	-	*2	-	-	-	-	-	2
-	-	1	3	-	-	1	3	-	124
11	4	-	-	10	7	54	1	-	1125
1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	56
1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	6
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
25	-	143	**697	-	4	-	8	2	897
3	-	-	-	10	1	13	-	-	977
-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	6
-	-	6	16	6	-	-	-	9	37
-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	5
11	-	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	21
191	110	116	30	143	64	103	510	3	3510
-	-	67	87	-	-	-	-	-	156
15	-	-	-	36	72	58	4	-	3746
35	26	32	35	34	42	39	38	26	
11	3	13	12	27	15	8	23	14	

Lit = Littleton (12/20/2009)
 Grf = Grafton (12/27/2009)
 Erl = Errol-Umbagog (12/16/2009)
 Pit = Pittsburg (12/15/2009)
 Cnw = North-Conway (12/19/2009)
 Sun = Lake-Sunapee (12/19/2009)
 Man = Manchester (1/2/2010)
 San = Sandwich (12/27/2009)
 San = AMC-Crawford (12/19/2009)

Christmas Bird Count Compilers

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Pittsburg | David Govatski |
| 2 | Errol-Umbagog | Chris Martin |
| 3 | Littleton | David Govatski |
| 4 | North Conway | Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr. |
| 5 | Baker Valley | Steve Rounds |
| 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 | Lance Tanino |
| 12 | Peterborough-Hancock | Dave Rowell |
| 13 | Nashua-Hollis | Richard Bielawski |
| 14 | Lake Sunapee | Gary Stansfield |
| 15 | Saxton's River, VT | Donald Clark |
| 16 | Manchester | Kevin Reid |
| 17 | Isles of Shoals | Ben Griffith |
| 18 | Sandwich | Tony Vazzano
& Susan Wiley |
| 19 | Barnet, VT | Charlie Browne |
| 20 | Grafton-Bristol | Phred Benham |
| 21 | AMC Crawford Notch | Craig Repasz |



A Western Fox Sparrow in New Hampshire

by Marshall J. Iliff and Louis R. Bevier

On December 9, 2009, a Fox Sparrow appeared at the feeders of Tom and Lori Chase on Mendums Pond, in Barrington. Mid-winter Fox Sparrows are unusual enough in New Hampshire (we get a few reports each year), but of far more interest was that this bird was overall dark and wholly unlike the “Red” Fox Sparrows that migrate through the state. It was tentatively identified it as a “Sooty” Fox Sparrow, a bird that normally



Fox Sparrow by Mark Szantyr, 1/10/10, Barrington, NH.

winters along the Pacific coast. Excellent photos were soon taken by Steve Mirick, Mark Szantyr (see the Back Cover), and others, documenting this rare find. The bird lingered through March 20, although it was not always cooperative for those who traveled to see it. Here we summarize the taxonomy of the Fox Sparrow and attempt to identify the possible geographic origin of the New Hampshire bird.

The Fox Sparrow comprises four groups, each of which includes two to several subspecies. Some authors regard these groups as separate species (e.g., Beadle and Rising 2002), and Fox Sparrows are a prime candidate for a future split by the American Ornithologists' Union. The four groups are distinguished by geographic range, plumage coloration and pattern, and, to some extent voice (e.g., contact call notes). Identification to group is usually straightforward, but, as is shown below, can be complicated by populations that are intermediate. A brief summary of these groups follows.

Group 1: “Red” Fox Sparrow (*Passerella [iliaca] iliaca*): Birds in this group breed across the Boreal zone from Newfoundland to western Alaska and winter chiefly in the southeastern United States. These birds have bright, foxy-red wings, tail, and back streaking that contrast markedly with its variably gray face, back, and rump. The underparts show blurry reddish streaks across the breast and relatively more distinct streaks along the flanks. Call note: ‘chup’, somewhat like a soft Brown Thrasher.

Group 2: “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow (*P. [i.] schistacea*): This is the Rocky Mountain breeding form, wintering from New Mexico to southern California. Its reddish wings, tail and uppertail coverts contrast with a generally gray to brownish-gray head, back, and rump. The grayish back is obscurely streaked with brown, and the breast streaking is distinct and blackish-brown. Call note: ‘chup’, like “Red” Fox Sparrow.

Group 3: “Sooty” Fox Sparrow (*P. [i.] unalascensis*): This form breeds along the coast from northwest Washington north to southwestern Alaska; it winters along the Pacific coast south to northern Baja California. The six subspecies include a wide range of color types, ranging from dark chocolate in color to a rather rich warm brown. All members of this group are relatively monotone above, with comparatively little contrast between the back, wings, tail, and breast streaking. The back is unstreaked, and the breast densely spotted, sometimes forming an almost checkerboard pattern with a largely dark breast sparsely marked with white. Call note: ‘chup’, similar to “Red” Fox Sparrow.

Group 4: “Thick-billed” Fox Sparrow (*P. [i.] megarhyncha*): The four subspecies in this group breed in the Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades, inner Coast Ranges and Peninsular Ranges of California; they winter nearby, but their wintering ranges are poorly known. They most resemble the “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow but with a much larger bill and plainer, grayer back and rump, although this varies by subspecies. The most distinctive character of this group is its call note: a sharp “tink” (recalling a California Towhee or Hooded Warbler) that is totally unlike that of the other three subspecies groups.

One particularly problematical subspecies of Fox Sparrow, *P. i. altivagans*, has been difficult to align with any group. It breeds in western Alberta and central to southeast British Columbia, an area renowned for intermediate and hybrid birds (e.g., Myrtle x Audubon’s Warblers, Mourning x MacGillivray’s Warblers, Oregon x Slate-colored Juncos, and many more). The subspecies *altivagans* is classified by Rising and Beadle (2002) as a “Red” Fox Sparrow, but they note that it is “much duller and more uniformly brown” and has “dull chestnut wings and tail that contrast with the grayish brown upperparts and head.” Although placed with the “Red” Fox Sparrow in an early monograph by Harry Swarth in 1920, later authors placed *altivagans* in the “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow group (e.g., Weckstein et al. 2002). The problem is that *altivagans* occupies a range where three types of Fox Sparrows meet: “Red” Fox Sparrows in the north, “Slate-colored” in the Rocky Mountains to the south, and “Sooty” Fox Sparrows in the Pacific slope to the west. *P. i. altivagans* appears to be a name given to a broad intergrade zone. Given that *altivagans* may be an intergrade, it may also take on characteristics of any of the three parent species, and thus almost defies categorization at the group level.

The New Hampshire bird, as pictured on the back cover, is overall warm reddish-brown, without any obvious patterning to the back. The auriculars (ear coverts) and eyebrow are faintly grayer than the rest of the face and the wings only slightly redder than the back. Small areas of white are present in the lores, malar region (moustache area), and chin. The breast is heavily marked with arrowhead-shaped spots that are dense in a patch around the throat and upper chest, but become smaller and finer on the lower breast and belly. From the front, the spotting is not too dissimilar to that of “Red” Fox Sparrow, although the spots are somewhat more brownish in color (equivalent to the back color). On the flanks, the spots condense to a wash of reddish brown (same color as the back) which continues to the undertail coverts. The rump is somewhat grayish and contrasts somewhat with the rich rufous-brown uppertail coverts and tail base, which is the brightest part of the bird. The bill is yellow at the base. (Additional photographs of the bird by Mark Szantyr may be viewed at

<http://birddog55.zenfolio.com/p100574993>, and some representative specimens of the subspecies discussed here may be viewed at <http://gallery.me.com/lrbevier/100090> with thanks to J. Trimble, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard.)

With its unstreaked back and overall monotone plumage, the New Hampshire bird is clearly not a “Red” Fox Sparrow or a typical “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow. It has some strong reddish-brown tones to the plumage and limited but contrasting gray ear coverts. This pattern eliminates the darker, southernmost breeding forms of “Sooty” Fox from the Queen Charlotte Islands south to northwest Washington (*P. i. townsendi* and *P. i. fuliginosa*). These are also the shortest distance migrants among “Sooty” Fox Sparrows. The New Hampshire bird more closely resembles in coloration the “Sooty” populations breeding along the south-central and southwest parts of coastal Alaska (e.g., from north to south: *P. i. unalascensis*, *P. i. insularis*, *P. i. sinuosa*, *P. i. chilcatensis*, *P. i. annectens*). These are also the longest distance migrants.

Two characters of the bird are inconsistent with any of the “Sooty” group and suggest that the bird may be *P. i. altivagans*. First, the breast spotting is large and blurry in the center of the upper breast, but becomes smaller, crisper, and blacker arrowhead marks on the lower breast and belly. This trait is typical of the “Slate-colored” group. Second, and perhaps more important, the rich reddish uppertail coverts and tail contrast fairly strongly with the grayish-brown back and rump. This contrast is typical of *P. i. altivagans*, but should be rather subtle in all forms of “Sooty.” One trait of the New Hampshire bird that seems to better match “Sooty” subspecies (such as *P. i. unalascensis*) is the relatively solid dark flanks; *altivagans* specimens often show more distinct flank streaking. Conclusively eliminating a “pure” Sooty Fox Sparrow may not be possible without a specimen, but based on the photos, this bird seems to best match *P. i. altivagans*. Thus, while the bird was identified as a “Sooty” Fox Sparrow for most of its stay, it may have been a “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow.

Weckstein et al. (2002) note that *altivagans* is known to intergrade with “Sooty,” “Red,” and “Slate-colored” at the margins of its range. Given the similarity of the New Hampshire bird to the “Sooty” group, it seems most probable that it is an *altivagans* from the northwest portion of the range where *altivagans* intergrades with “Sooty.” If the Fox Sparrow groups are split and regarded as species, then this bird might best be termed a hybrid Slate-colored x Sooty Fox Sparrow! Although this may frustrate future listers (who may or may not feel comfortable “counting” such a bird), it actually gives us important information about the probable origins of the bird, since it probably comes from the relatively narrow area in central-western British Columbia where *altivagans* meets *P. i. townsendi* (of the “Sooty” group).

This marks the first occurrence of another Fox Sparrow subspecies in New Hampshire and only the second physically documented western Fox Sparrow in the East! None of the western forms are known for straying well to the east, and even “Slate-colored” is considered a rarity in west Texas and eastern Colorado. There are just four prior reports from eastern states:

- 1) A specimen collected on the remarkable date of May 12, 1971 on Long Island, NY and identified as *P. i. altivagans* (Buckley 1979).
- 2) One seen in Connecticut on December 5, 1996 and identified as a member of the “Sooty” group (Hanisek 1997; identification by J. Rising to M. Szantyr in

litt.). Description here: http://listserv.arizona.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind9702b&L=birdwg_01&T=0&P=3413 accessed 29 April 2010.

- 3) One seen in Herndon, Virginia on March 20, 1998 was believed to involve a "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow (Rottenborn and Brinkley 2007).
- 4) One seen in Maryland November 23, 2001 and believed to involve a "Slate-colored" Fox Sparrow (*North American Birds* 56:41).

Looking at general patterns, western vagrants to the Northeast tend to involve birds that breed far to the northwest (e.g., Varied Thrush, Say's Phoebe) or in Texas or Northeast Mexico (e.g., Ash-throated Flycatcher); vagrants from the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast are exceedingly rare. Not surprisingly then, the specimen record of *altivagans* from New York and the current record from New Hampshire both originate from the far northwest; we might also watch for "Sooty" Fox Sparrows from the *unalaschensis* and *sinuosa* subspecies.

In the end, the appearance of this sparrow was a great learning experience for New Hampshire birders and an incredible stroke of luck for the Chases!

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Marshall Iliff (miliff@aol.com) grew up in Annapolis, Maryland and has birded around the country and around the world since age 11. He works as the Project Leader for the popular eBird program and is currently the chair of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee. Prior to moving to West Roxbury, MA, Marshall lived in southern California where he enjoyed the opportunity to study the three western Fox Sparrow groups and a dozen subspecies. Louis Bevier lives in central Maine. He edited the Connecticut breeding bird atlas and The Birds of North America series, is associate editor for North American Birds, and has guided for Field Guides, Inc. He is returning as naturalist for the Golden Trout Natural History camp in the Sierra Nevada and looks forward to being serenaded by Thick-billed Fox Sparrows beside mountain meadows.

“Why don’t I do it?”

by *Lauren A. Kras*

Lauren’s Big Year

Mark Obmascik, author of *The Big Year*, once noted that the big year is “the grandest birding competition of them all, the most grueling, the most expensive, and occasionally the most vicious.” At its very simplest, a big year is an attempt to see as many species as possible from January 1 to December 31 in a given calendar year within any designated geographical boundary. A big year is not just keeping track of a year list, it is a concerted effort to see every bird possible no matter the energy that it requires. It is exhausting, stressful, and all consuming, but it is also a lot of fun.



Lauren Kras in the field during her Big Year, by Jessie Knapp, at Exeter WTP, 9/4/09.

Most people who have done a big year on the state or national level start the year with the intentions to do so. I never even considered attempting a big year, however, until March 15, 2009, the day of the Spring Pelagic trip (see the Photo Gallery on page 56). Several birders on the boat were chatting about their year lists and whether or not anyone would break Mike Harvey’s 2003 record of 280 species. The birders on the boat speculated that it would be either Steve Mirick or Eric Masterson who would break 280. I was reminded of how a young Kenn Kaufman encountered a similar situation in the 1970s in response to discussion about the possibility of a single year total of 600 species within North America. Instead of deflecting the challenge to the most famous birders in the country at the time, Kaufman thought, “Why don’t I do it?”

At the time, Len Medlock and Jason Lambert were in the lead followed closely by Steve Mirick and Eric Masterson. What no one realized was that my species total was right in the middle. At that moment I thought, “Why don’t I do it?”

As a relatively new birder who had only lived in New Hampshire five months, I knew others had the advantage of experience. Yet, I also knew that I had the advantage of sheer insanity; I was willing to do anything and go anywhere. I also had a favorable schedule and a flexible job that required my “work” time be spent in marshes all along the New Hampshire coast. I knew that to break the record, I would need to do more than keep a year list and lazily tally birds, so immediately my strategy changed. From that day forward, I attempted to see new birds as soon as they showed up in the state and to spend any free moment in the field searching for migrants, breeding birds, and rarities. I once drove three hours to Chatham, New Hampshire at the drop of a hat (in

fact I started driving before I even knew where Chatham was!) to see eight Tundra Swans in Maine for five minutes and in New Hampshire for fifteen seconds.

By the end of May, this approach landed me a total of 250 species and on August 7, I tied the state record with a Western Sandpiper on Foss Beach. Seventeen days later, I was doing my laundry when I got a call from Steve Mirick informing me that Mike Harvey had just found a Franklin's Gull at the Rochester wastewater treatment plant. I was so frantic that I even left my iced coffee on the top of my car (fortunately it survived the drive). When I arrived, I ran over to Mike who had the bird in his scope. It was meaningful to me that it was Mike who found the bird that allowed me to break his record – it seemed as if he was passing the torch on to me.

Two months later, I saw my 300th bird for the year in the form of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird. My last bird species of the year came in the small and adorable form of four Dovekies on the Winter Pelagic (see page 56), where I also had my closest miss – an Atlantic Puffin which was seen by three people on the boat before it dove out of sight never to be seen again. My final chase of 2009 was on December 31 when Ben Griffith, Jason Lambert, Denny Abbott, Davis Finch, and I went looking for a “Sooty” Fox Sparrow which was visiting a feeder in Barrington. This is the rare Alaskan race of Fox Sparrow which had never been recorded in New Hampshire. In fact, there is only one record for the subspecies prior to this bird in the eastern United States. We got to see it and it stands as one of the rarest birds I saw in 2009. I could not add it to my list as it's not considered a distinct species; however, it was one of my best memories in 2009.

When I got home on December 31, I was utterly worn out, but had tallied 308 species (including 64 life birds) in New Hampshire; thirteen more than the next highest count that I was aware of that year. I woke up on January 1 to a total of zero species for 2010; five species behind Jason Lambert who got out to an early head start. I felt rejuvenated and started jotting down species the moment I walked outside; not because I wanted to catch up or try to end 2010 on top, but because being a birder is who I am.

Some people may criticize “big years” and say that trying to set a record, or listing in general, is more about numbers than the birds themselves; however, for me, 2009 and my big year was about much more than tallying 308 species. It was about birding every single day and enjoying everything I saw. It was about being inspired to learn and improve my skills as a birder to a point that I would be able to earn respect and actually deserve it. It was about learning about bird distribution and observing bird behavior that I had not seen before. It was about finding myself and my place in this world while making memories that are truly unforgettable. Finally, and most importantly to me, it was about getting to know a group of people who I now count as my closest friends: Steve and Jane Mirick, Len Medlock, Jason Lambert, Jessie Knapp, Mike Harvey, and of course, Ben Griffith– I couldn't have done it without you all.

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The First Documented Occurrence of Red Crossbill Call Types 1, 2, 3 and 10 in New Hampshire

by Matthew A. Young

Different populations of Red Crossbills around the world exhibit very different traits, ranging from overall size, to bill size, to voice. Given this variability, Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) are a complex species made up of more than 20 different call types, many of which likely represent species or subspecies. Their taxonomy is confusing but there are differences in their flight calls that may be key to separating various call types. These call types correspond with slight differences in morphology and ecological specialization. For example, the average bill depth for call type 2, which is most efficient feeding on pines like red pine or ponderosa pine, is 9.67mm, whereas the small billed type 3, which is most efficient feeding on western and eastern hemlock, is 8.19mm (Groth 1993a). Despite this bill depth difference, it is nearly impossible to definitively identify crossbills in the field based on morphology and therefore it's essential to record crossbill calls and then analyze their call type. As many as ten call types of Red Crossbill can be found across North America (Groth 1993, Benkman 1999, Ken Irwin unpublished manuscript), and as already stated, each may represent a different species, or more likely, an evolving species (Parchman et al. 2006). The most widespread call types in North America are types 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10.

It can be quite challenging to differentiate flight calls of the various Red Crossbill call types. The flight calls are the sound typically described as “jip-jip” and most frequently heard when the birds are flying overhead. In order to find and identify crossbills, it's essential to develop a familiarity with these flight calls, which can also be given by perched birds. Knowing when and where to look for crossbills is very important. For example, birds flying over are often the most vocal, and believe it or not, birds feeding atop a conifer just 15 meters away can be very quiet and easily missed. When intently feeding, the sound most often heard is the very subtle crackling of the birds extracting the seed from the seedcoat. Sometimes this is the only sound they make as the seedcoats drop to the ground. Do not fret however, with much practice, many of the call types can be identified in the field.

To be able to identify most of the call types with certainty, audiospectrographic analysis is needed. This analysis gives you a computer printout of the bird's voice, a signature of the species so to speak. However, birders can help by collecting recordings of Red Crossbills for professional analysis. After hearing about Robert Ridgely seeing crossbills near his home, I contacted him to see if he could record the birds. Ridgely did just that, recording a flock of approximately 45 birds on July 31, 2009 in North Sandwich, New Hampshire and another flock of 15 birds at the same location on August 10, 2009, likely comprised of many of the same individuals. Robert sent the calls to me at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology for analysis. To analyze them I used Raven Pro 1.3 (Charif et al. 2008). Given that there are no known previous recordings of crossbills in New Hampshire, I was excited to discover that this analysis likely included the first ever recordings of four different call types in New Hampshire: Types 1, 2, 3, and 10.

Red Crossbill Flight Call Types and Ecological Associations

Type 1 flight call is very similar to Type 2. In both types, the spectrograms are dominated by a downward component. To be able to identify these two types with complete certainty, audiospectrographic analysis is essential. The Type 1 spectrogram starts with an initial upward component most of the time, and the downward part descends more quickly than that found in the Type 2 (Figure 1). Overall, the Type 1 flight call is a quicker, dryer and sharper flight call than Type 2 and sounds like a chewt-chewt-chewt.

Type 1 appears to be more frequent in the East than the other call types (Young unpublished manuscript), but not necessarily the most common in the northeast. It likely only utilizes hard pines such as red pine in late winter into spring, whereas the larger-billed Type 2 can utilize harder coned conifers earlier in the winter. Type 1's main ecological associations here in the East are red spruce (and white spruce in the Northeast), white pine, and Eastern hemlock; but during the late winter months, when these conifers have dropped most of their seed, it appears to switch to harder coned pines such as red pine, pitch pine, and Virginia pine (pers. obs. Groth 1993). In one area of central New York, this type can be seen feeding and nesting in Norway spruce every year in at least small numbers from February to September. Type 1 is probably the least common of the "widespread" Red Crossbill call types in North America but the most frequent type in the East most years since its core range extends from at least central New York to the mountains of Georgia. An exception would be in years when there's a large invasion of one or a few of the other call types. It is uncertain at this time how frequent or common Type 1s are in New Hampshire and northern parts of the Northeast.

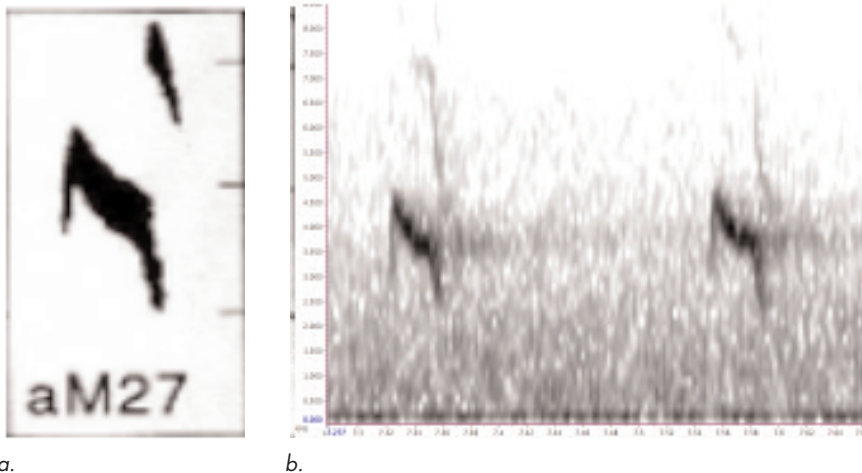


Figure 1. Spectrograms of Type 1 Red Crossbill flight calls. a) spectrogram of Type 1 used and adapted with approval of Groth 1993. b) Type 1 Red Crossbill recorded by Robert Ridgely, North Sandwich, NH, August 10, 2009.

Type 2 flight calls are a bit more powerful and husky sounding than those of Type 1. The downward component of the spectrogram is more gradual, and the initial

upward component found in Type 1 is absent (Figure 2). Additionally, the call (as it appears on the spectrogram) will often level out a bit before continuing its downward trend. The call sounds like cheewp-cheewp-cheewp. Both types 1 and 2 often have secondary ending components (an upward modulated note that comes after the initial call). Additionally, the Type 2 flight call is given near or below 4.5kHz whereas the highest point of the initial upward component of the Type 1 flight call is usually between 4.5-5kHz (Figure 2). This subtle distinction is very hard to hear and therefore analysis to discern the difference between type 1 and 2 is essential. Occasionally, Type 2s will produce what is called a “kinked” spectrogram (Figure 2b).

More than any type, Type 2s will readily feed on hard pines like red pine, pitch pine and likely plantation Scotts pine in the Northeast. This type also readily feeds on white pine, as do many of the other types except for Type 3, and will also feed on various spruces. This type has perhaps the most varied diet and is the most widespread Red Crossbill call type in North America (Groth 1993), even occurring in areas of the Plains where ornamental conifers have been planted. Small numbers of Type 2 can be found every year somewhere in the East, but its center of abundance is the ponderosa pine forests of the Mountain West.

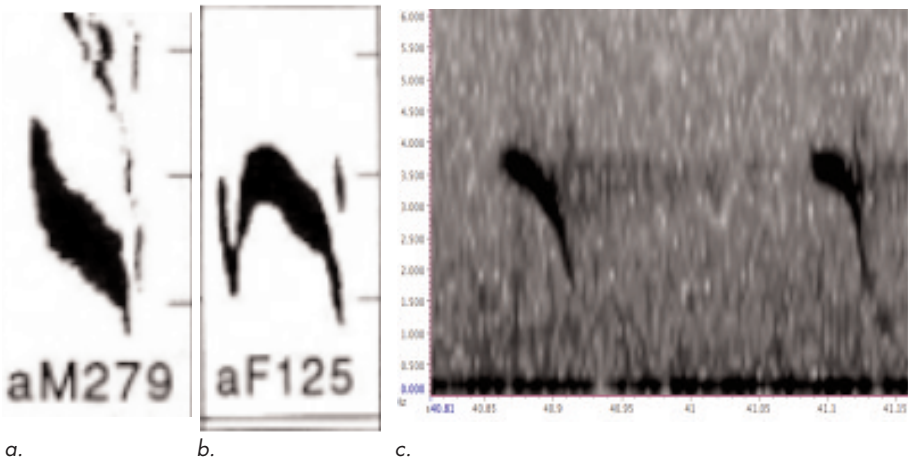


Figure 2. Spectrograms of Type 2 Red Crossbill flight calls. a) spectrogram of a typical Type 2 used and adapted with approval of Groth 1993. b) spectrogram of a “kinked” Type 2 used and adapted with approval of Groth 1993. c) Type 2 Red Crossbill recorded by Robert Ridgely, North Sandwich, NH, July 31, 2009.

Type 3 flight call is weaker and squeakier sounding than the other types. The spectrogram (Figure 3) looks a bit like a lightning bolt with its zig-zag appearance; it starts out with a downward component followed by a short upward component connected to a second downward component. The Type 3 flight call is as fast as Type 1, but its flight call is squeakier and weaker than the sharper sounding Type 1. Type 3 will more readily use Eastern hemlock than any of the other call types found in the East. Type 3s are likely the most highly irruptive type in the East, occurring in moderate to high numbers usually every 5-10 years (pers. obs.). When here, they mostly feed on Eastern hemlock and various spruces. Although some nest in the Northeast, after invasions

nearly all Type 3s seem to migrate back to the Pacific Northwest where they're most common in coastal Western hemlock forests.

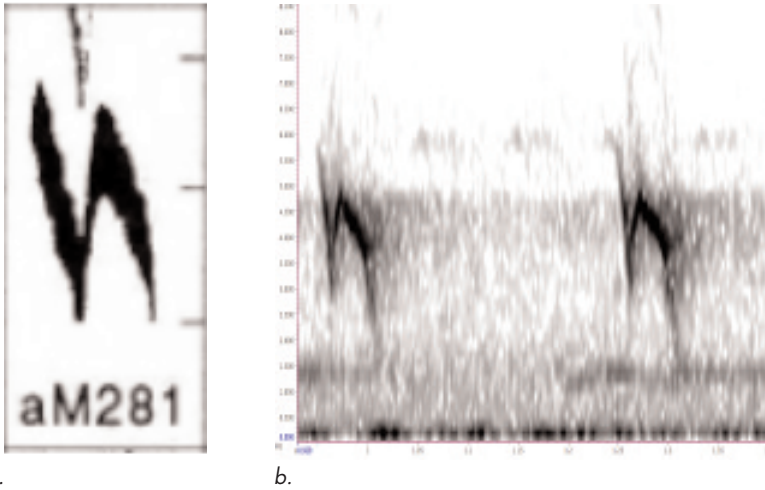


Figure 3. Spectrograms of Type 3 Red Crossbill flight calls. a) spectrogram of Type 3 used and adapted with approval of Groth 1993. b) Type 3 Red Crossbill recorded by Robert Ridgely, North Sandwich, NH, August 10, 2009.

Type 10. It wasn't until Ken Irwin recently described Type 10 (Irwin unpublished manuscript) that it was even known to many. However, the idea had been known for several years that there was a crossbill call type similar to Type 4 but lacking a strong downward component. Irwin found large flocks of this Type 10 regularly in the Sitka spruce forests of coastal California and Oregon. The spectrogram (Figure 4) is dominated by an upward component that can sometimes be preceded by a very weak and highly variable downward component. This downward component is often completely missing. There are subtle but distinct differences between Type 4 and 10 spectrograms, and the Type 4 and Type 10 complex is best looked at as a gradation with Type 4 containing a downward component and Type 10's giving a weak downward component. They never, however, consistently give the strong downward component that's diagnostic of a Type 4. The spectrogram for Type 10 can look like a checkmark, up tick or the letter "u" (Figure 4). As Irwin described (unpublished manuscript), the Type 10 Red Crossbill spectrogram can be highly variable, more so than any of the other call types. This might point to a recent evolutionary split with Type 4, or perhaps it could point to a change in ecological associations and therefore a change in core zone, where birds of a given type are most abundant.

Overall, to the human ear, this flight call is one of the easiest to recognize even when compared to Type 4. Type 4 is musical and bouncy with a down up jeyip-jeyip-jeyip, while Type 10 is a very thin, non-musical whit-whit-whit much like the "whit" call of an *Empidonax* flycatcher (e.g., Least or Dusky Flycatcher). Type 10 appears to be one of, if not the most frequent and common call type in the Northeast, and unlike Type 3s, some appear to linger at locations for years at a time after an influx (which generally happens every few years and often with influxes of Type 3s). Whether Type

10s are relatively new to the Northeast is unknown at this time. They seem to associate with various spruces first and foremost, but can also utilize white pine (and other pines) and Eastern hemlock to a lesser degree.

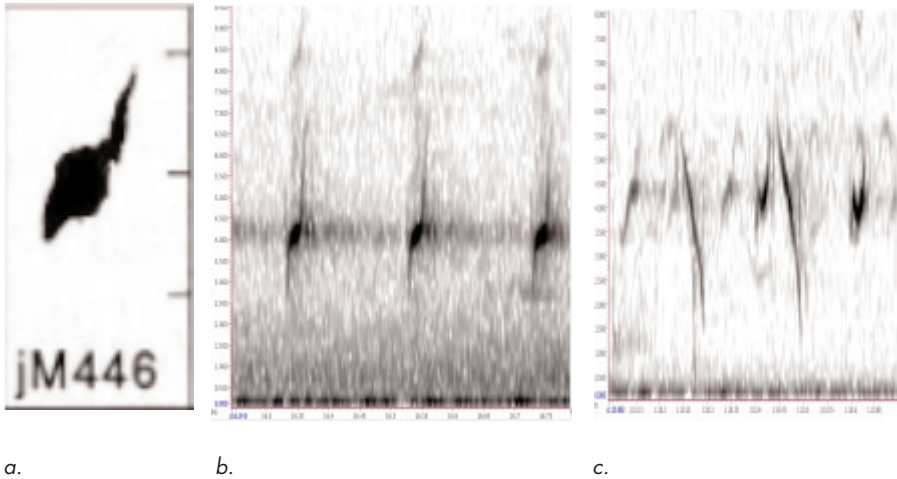


Figure 4. Spectrograms of Type 10 Red Crossbill flight calls. a) spectrogram of Type 10 used and adapted with approval from Groth 1993. b) Type 10 Red Crossbill recorded by Robert Ridgely, North Sandwich, NH, July 31, 2009. c) alternating Types 1 and 10 recorded in Maine (the "u" shaped spectrogram is the Type 10), Cornell catalog recording #12984.

Type 4 was not recorded in New Hampshire; however, because it is similar to type 10, and has been recorded in several northeastern states, I am including it here. Type 4 calls are one of the easiest to recognize even when compared to Type 10, as previously described. It's a very bouncy, almost musical down up jeyip-jeyip-jeyip. The spectrogram (Figure 5) is dominated by a down-up component with the ending section looking very similar to Type 10. Type 4's core zone is the Douglas fir forests of the Pacific Northwest, but it is also widespread and found in the East. Here in the Northeast, it associates with spruce and white pine (and other pines).

Summary of Red Crossbill Types in New Hampshire

On July 31, 2009, the Sandwich, NH crossbill flock numbered approximately 45 birds and was comprised of 20-25 Type 10s, relatively equal numbers of 5-10 Type 1s and 2s, and just one or two Type 3s. Interestingly, 11 days later on August 10 roughly 15 birds remained. These birds were likely the same flock recorded on July 31 minus the Type 10s. In October, 2009 Robert Ridgely reported a few Red Crossbills continuing to linger in the area, and on December 10, 2009, the flock contained juveniles, which would be indicative of birds born this past September. Lastly, Robert sent me another recording of birds recorded near Sand-



Figure 5. Spectrogram of Type 4 used and adapted with approval of Groth 1993.

wich, NH in an area dominated by white pine. This last recording from January 30 contained approximately 15 birds with at least two Type 1 and the rest Type 10. Some of the birds in this recording were also noted singing.

Despite certain ecological associations, all crossbill call types appear to switch between various conifers that provide the highest energy throughout the cone cycle year (June-May). In the northeast, dietary overlap between types can be high, particularly during the summer (all crossbill types seem to utilize spruce in late summer) when food is most abundant and early spring months when food is most limited. Throughout the cone cycle, crossbills move around much of North America looking for available cone crops. During the summer and fall months, they spend much of their time feeding on softer-coned conifers (i.e., hemlocks and spruces) that have much more accessible seeds. As these softer coned conifers drop much of their seed in fall and early winter, crossbills start to feed on harder coned conifers (i.e., red pine, pitch pine) that retain their seed later into the cone cycle (late winter into spring). White pine and Douglas fir (a western species) are both semi-soft coned conifers and therefore a crossbill's ability to access the seed is intermediate between a spruce and a hard-coned red pine. These two species would therefore be utilized in fall and winter depending on the size of their cone crops.

Robert Ridgely's recordings (Figure 6) added significantly to the call types known from New Hampshire. There are now four types documented in the state: Type 1, 2, 3 and 10 with a fifth type, type 4, also likely occurring at least rarely in the state. Thus far, evidence suggests that Type 10 is likely the most frequently occurring call type in New Hampshire during most years, except every 5-10 years when Type 3s inundate parts of the Northeast. Even then, Type 10s often "irrupt" with Type 3s, which isn't surprising given they both have core zones in the coastal Pacific Northwest and would experience similarly poor cone crops. Type 1 is possibly the next most frequent type given it is the type most often found in the East (Groth 1993). Type 2s are also one of the more frequent types in the East, but how frequent and abundant they are in the Northeast still remains a bit of a mystery. In the great 1984-85 invasion, Benkman (pers. comm.) found a number of Type 2s in the Northeast (he also recorded Types 3, 4 and 10 in the Northeast in 1985). Some have speculated that Type 2 is the most common type in Algonquin, Ontario; however, there continues to be a lack of recordings of any crossbill type from Algonquin, despite several sightings over the years. At this time, only a single recording of Type 5 Red Crossbill (Young in press 2010) exists for the Northeast, and therefore, they aren't likely to be common in New Hampshire. This could change, however, if the Mountain Pine Beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) continues to kill 100,000's of acres of lodgepole pine in the Intermountain West. Lodgepole pine has been identified as the core range for type 5.

One thing is certain: birders in New Hampshire should have their "crossbill radar" on any time they are in appropriate conifer habitat. With much practice, many of the types can be identified in the field, but audiospectrographic analysis is always recommended. When Red Crossbills are encountered anywhere, an attempt to record their flight calls using any available means (including video recorders or camcorders with audio) may lead to a better understanding of the true distribution of call types in New Hampshire and the Northeast. Any recordings can be sent to me at the address below.

For updates, more analysis, and recordings of calls go to: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/introduction-to%20crossbill-vocalizations>.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Craig Benkman, Jeffrey Groth, Tom Hahn and Nathan Pieplow for continued discussion about the Red Crossbill complex. I'd also like to thank Rodd Kelsey and Ken Irwin for their continued response to my many crossbill questions. Jeffrey Groth was instrumental in helping me go through dozens of recordings so I could fine tune my ability to audiospectrographically analyze the various flight calls of the Red Crossbill call types. Craig Benkman is always great with giving details about the natural history of the various call types. Most importantly, I'd like to thank Robert Ridgely for his enthusiasm towards going out and recording the crossbill flock. It would not have been possible to write this paper without this recording! Lastly I'd like to thank Julie Siler for editing help and for listening to me go on and on about crossbills!

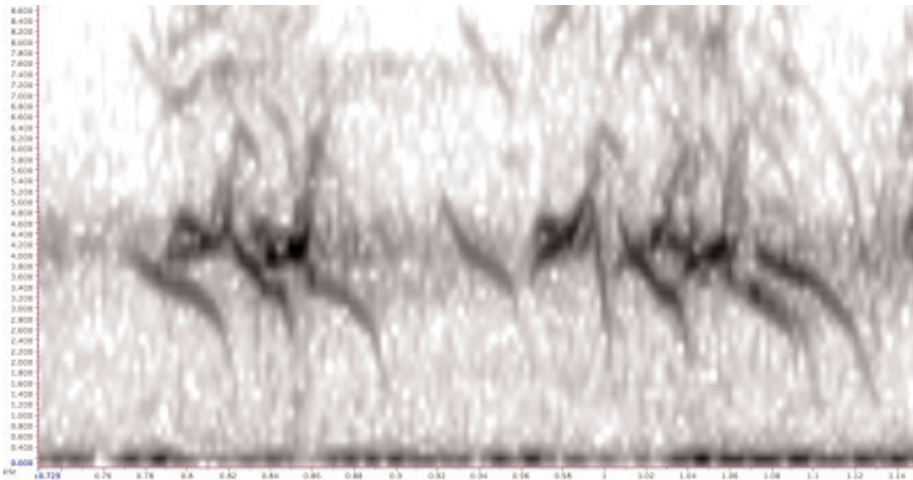


Figure 6. Call Type 1, 2, and 10 Red Crossbills recorded by Robert Ridgely, North Sandwich, NH, July 31, 2009. Look for flight call with initial upward components above 4.5 kHz (type 1), lower modulated call notes largely given at or below 4.5kHz (type 2) and then checkmarks, up ticks or the letter "u"s (Type 10).

Appendix 1. Latin names of tree species:

red pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>)	Norway spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>)
red spruce (<i>Picea rubens</i>)	Sitka spruce (<i>Picea sitchensis</i>)
white spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i>)	Western hemlock (<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>)
white pine (<i>Pinus strobes</i>)	Scotts pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)
Eastern hemlock (<i>Tsuga Canadensis</i>)	ponderosa pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>)
pitch pine (<i>Pinus rigida</i>)	Douglas fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)
Virginia pine (<i>Pinus virginiana</i>)	lodgepole pine (<i>Pinus contorta</i>)

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Birding at Southwest Park/Yudicky Farm, Nashua, New Hampshire

by Chris Sheridan

It was in the early fall of 2008 that I admitted to myself that I was, indeed, a “birder.” Did I not sit into the wee hours of the morning comparing mediocre photos to illustrations in mountains of field guides? Did I not bolt from my workplace at every lunch hour to wander undeveloped portions of the Industrial Park? Did I not haunt quaking bogs and snag-lined kettle holes after work until it grew dark? I was a “birder,” an avid if not a very good one!

On excursions to Lovewell Pond, a kettle hole bordering the state line in Nashua, I began to realize that certain hawks, ravens, and herons were commuting between the pond and... someplace else. One wintry Saturday I followed a huge Red-tailed Hawk down an access road past the city-owned recreation fields that I knew as “Yudicky Farm.” Soon finding my car thoroughly stuck in a snowy parking lot, I watched my hawk sail out-of-sight over a row of white pines, then flagged down some helpful passers-by, and vowed to return. What was behind the gate at the rear of the parking lot? I’d driven by that land for years, and had thought that Yudicky Farm ended behind the lot. I examined a map on a wooden signboard; I’d missed a lot.

One morning in early April I walked down the access road beside the playing fields past the gate and into the woods. To my right was a wooded swamp, a beaver lodge and ... Brown Creepers. Dozens of Brown Creepers, singing their little twee song, flut-

tering, spiraling, and probing. A pair of Common Ravens hop-scotched through the trees after me, loudly letting it be known that this was their territory. Turning left at a little path marked by boulders, I walked past a hemlock wood bordered by a scrubby field, through stands of young aspen, birch and pine, and into another wooded swamp to find....more Brown Creepers. I don't know how many creepers were there that day; I stopped counting at 30. There were probably double that many. I wended my way along the path through the swamp, walked out through open field and spent hours wandering trails that meandered through forests, old fields, and wetlands.

I had discovered the Yudicky Farm/Southwest Park complex of the City of Nashua!

History of the Park Complex

Of course, I had "discovered" the park as Columbus had discovered the Americas. In the mid-1960s, the Yudicky family sold to the City of Nashua a tract of over sixty acres off Groton Road (Route 111A) in southwest Nashua, stipulating it be used only for school or recreational purposes. Later, another small parcel was added on the north of the Yudicky piece. The old farm was partially leased for agriculture but remained largely fallow for many years, crisscrossed by trails long used by hikers, nature-lovers, hunters and local residents.

Inevitably, the southwest quadrant of the city became the focus of development pressure as condominium complexes and subdivisions began to replace pasture, orchard, field and forest. In the mid-1980s, local developer Samuel A. Tamposi presented the city with concepts for the development of hundreds of acres in the southwest corner. He'd purchased the land from William H. Hall whose family had owned extensive tracts of farmland, forest and wetlands since the early 1900s. As originally proposed, the "Hall's Corner" development would intensively develop over 800 acres, with a mix of high and low density housing, commercial development and related infrastructure, increasing the population of the city by over 10% within a few years. As news of the project emerged, Nashua residents turned their attention to the vanishing remnants of undeveloped land and city officials began to consider how the growth in the rural southwest could be mitigated to allow for conservation and recreation.

As years passed, the complexion of the Hall's Corner development evolved from the original concept. A temporary slowdown in the real estate market in the early 1990s bought time for consideration and action. Voters petitioned for a referendum strengthening wetland protection throughout the city. City government and developers pursued compromises as the city began to work toward a coherent plan for the southwest quadrant that mixed housing with recreation and conservation. A land swap financed the purchase of a tract of over 120 acres surrounding the subdivision on the north side of the Yudicky tract creating "Southwest Park." As part of the same agreement, 43 acres surrounding Lovewell Pond and over 100 acres of associated land on the south side of Route 111A were later transferred to the City as a gift from the developer and placed under easement to the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

Ball fields and parking were built on the old Yudicky Farm land. Conservation buffers and large areas of wetland limit much of the back lands from development (although much of the land appears not to be covered under deeded restrictions). Current city plans for the land include the development of about 30 acres of upland along Gilson Road into active recreational facilities and the conservation of the remainder.

Although the park had expanded almost threefold and was officially dubbed “Southwest Park”, the old name of Yudicky Farm lives on in daily use.

The Birds of Southwest Park

The Brown Creepers I encountered that April day taught me a new concept – that seemingly resident birds also migrate. Within days, most of the little birds dispersed or moved onward, while some stayed to live and breed. As spring progressed, other species migrated into the park. Brilliant Indigo Buntings appeared, many settling down to create a conspicuous presence in the brushy fields. Waves of warblers arrived: Yellow, Prairie, Palm, Pine, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Nashville, Black-and-white, Magnolia and Blackpoll Warblers, American Redstart, and, of course, Common Yellowthroat, were some I was able to identify. Others reported Canada and Mourning Warblers. Ovenbirds defended territories on the forest floor. A Yellow-breasted Chat graced the park with his remarkable “song” for a few days in early June. Birders with more experienced eyes, more educated ears, and better optics would undoubtedly identify others.

If there is a signature warbler of this park, it is the Blue-winged Warbler. Many nest in the brushy thickets and along the woodland edges. One May afternoon, I was confronted by the quizzical face of a Lawrence’s Warbler, one of the hybrids of the Blue-winged Warbler and related Golden-winged Warbler. This bold little bird with his loud “bee-buzz” and confident nature entertained visitors from as far away as Ohio and Montreal. He eventually found a Blue-winged Warbler mate and also turned out not to be the only Lawrence’s Warbler in the park! Forty years ago, in breeding surveys just to the south of here, the Golden-winged Warbler was the predominant species in the Golden/Blue-winged complex. Now it appears that they continue here only in the genetics of the interbreeding Blue-winged and Lawrence’s Warbler population.

Flycatchers present included: Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow, Great Crested, and Least Flycatcher. Thrushes included: American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, and Hermit and Wood Thrush. One spring morning, the air was filled with the songs of a score of migrating Veery that had flown in overnight, some to stay, others to fly onward. Gray Catbirds flourished, and Brown Thrashers and Northern Mockingbirds sang from the treetops.

Other residents included: Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Towhee, Red-eyed, Warbling and Blue-headed Vireo, Baltimore and Orchard Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Wild Turkey, American Goldfinch, House Finch, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, House and Winter Wren, Barn and Tree Swallow, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Mourning Dove. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglet flit through the trees. Twittering flocks of Chimney Swifts swooped in. A flight of Common Nighthawks late one afternoon suggests that this might be a good spot for a nighthawk watch. Cedar Waxwings are common nesters and can be found here throughout the year.

A Fish Crow spent the summer season with the gang of American Crow that range through the park. (A few Fish Crows can be found along the Nashua River nearby.) I’ve been alerted to the presence of Great Horned and Barred Owls by mobs of crows and Blue Jays.

Chipping Sparrows are extremely common, especially in and around the sandy field next to the Tanglewood Subdivision. Song and a few Swamp Sparrows turn up. In fall, White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos move in, and in winter numbers of juncos increase and American Tree Sparrows join them. In early winter and spring I've seen a few White-crowned Sparrows. Fox Sparrows visit and though Field Sparrows breed on a sandy tract of land close by, I've yet to see one here.

The typical woodpeckers for this part of the state are present; Northern Flicker, and Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, and Pileated Woodpecker. I have not yet seen a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and consider it a mythical bird until proved otherwise to my own eyes.

Shorebirds and waders include Great Blue and Green Heron, Spotted and Solitary Sandpiper and Killdeer. Others may appear during migration. An adult Little Blue Heron flew over my head on an early spring visit and may have flown on through Hollis, where one was sighted a day or two later.

I've accidentally startled and been startled by American Woodcocks, and hope to take in a woodcock show some spring evening. Belted Kingfishers dive and rattle around the ponds and open areas of Lyle Reed Brook on the northern edge of the park.

Mallards raise broods in the ponds and Wood Ducks breed in the wooded swamps. American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, and Canada Goose fly over in season. With the Nashua River nearby, Common Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, and other ducks are possibilities here during migration.

Forest edges and open fields provide hunting grounds for raptors. Red-tailed, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, and Broad-winged Hawks are common and most of them probably breed here. Less common are Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawks. Ospreys occasionally fish the open beaver pond, and Bald Eagles pass through.

Gulls and large kettles of Turkey Vultures often soar over the park. Having serendipitously blundered upon a young Black Vulture among a flock of Turkey Vultures early in my birding career, I carefully scan the flocks, but haven't found another...yet.

Access, Trails and other Considerations

The main access to the park is from Route 111A (Main Dunstable Road/Groton Road) off Exit 5 West of the Everett Turnpike. Parking is located behind the playing fields visible from Route 111A opposite Gregg Road. On the north side of the parking lot is a scrubby area (good for sparrows, Indigo Bunting and some warblers) and trails into the hemlock forest.

Other trails (the Swamp Trail to the wooded swamp and the Tirrell Trail across the top of the sandy field) exit the paved emergency access road to the Tanglewood subdivision. Feeders put up by residents attract and concentrate numerous birds along the Tirrell trail — there is a risk of setting off barking dogs here. (I usually leave this loop for last.) A favorite path is to follow the Swamp Trail and bear right onto the Beaver Trail to an open beaver pond and associated marsh near Gilson Road. A little brook connecting the pond and marsh is used by a colorful array of birds for drinking and bathing. It's a pretty sight to watch finches, waxwings, cardinals and robins bathing in

the stream, while Baltimore Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, catbirds and thrashers dash in to drink.

The trail past the magnificent “Legendary Oak” leads past vine-covered thickets, a stone wall hedgerow and stands of young aspen and birch. Past a gap in the stone wall it opens into a bowl-like field, which is now being invaded by young pines and mixed growth and is bordered by a snag-filled swamp that stretches from the beaver pond marsh to Lyle Reed Brook. It’s a great spot for hawk and vulture watching, and for observing blackbirds and woodpeckers in the dead trees and marsh. This is where I first found the Lawrence’s Warbler.

Gilson Road branches off on the right from Route 111A about 0.2 miles before the playing fields mentioned above, opposite a small commercial complex (Captain’s Corner.) On Gilson Road, there is small pulloff providing parking for a couple of cars opposite an opening in the fencing and a kiosk. This area has both dedicated mountain bike trails and pedestrian trails. Walking here can be difficult due to heavy erosion in places. A narrow trail off the main path leads through thick woods to the south end of the beaver pond.

Continuing along Gilson Road leads to the Gilson Road Rail Trail parking lot opposite Countryside Drive. A path leads behind the pond there, past some large boulders and bears to the left down a wide trail which leads into the Park’s northwest corner at the pair of boulders shown on the city map. Plans are to formalize access along this trail, which provides a shorter route into the north part of the park. (The Gilson Road Rail Trail parking lot can also be reached by following Route 111 (W. Hollis St.) about 3.0 miles to Countryside Drive on your left, and taking Countryside Drive to its end at the intersection of Gilson Road. The lot is directly across the intersection.)

While it’s a good sized tract of land, it’s hard to get lost, and part of the fun of Southwest Park is to wander the trails and unmarked tracks and find one’s own favorite spots. Less heavily used and managed than other large parks in the city, it provides a variety of habitats and therefore hosts a diversity of avian and non-avian life, including common and not-so-common species of plants, reptiles and amphibians.

It’s not pristine. A few classic cars are rusting away in unlikely places, and (illegal) ATV use creates huge puddles, ruts and erosion on some trails. The lots on Groton and Gilson Roads are generally unplowed in the winter. Although hunting with firearms is prohibited here—I’ve heard varying stories on bow-hunting from different city departments—private land to the west of the park is open to hunters and the western boundary is not well marked. Hunters do cross into the park, so awareness of open seasons and wearing Hunter Orange is advisable.

It’s a “buggy” place. There’s a huge population of ticks, pesky deerflies, and mosquitoes. Precautions against insects and especially ticks are in order.

I look forward to the species that may appear in seasons to come. Are the calls of Whip-poor-will and the pumping of American Bittern still heard here on summer nights by the streams and marshes? Might a Northern Shrike or Snowy Owl fly in to hunt the open fields.... or some rare warbler flit in some spring or fall? It’s been a joy to explore this preserve just a couple of miles from home, to expand my city, state and life lists, to share it with other New Hampshire birders, and to begin to become a better birder.

Thanks to Katherine Hersch, City of Nashua Director of Community Development and former Alderman for sharing her experience of the history of the southwest quadrant and the complex interplay between development and conservation from the 1980s to date and to Mike Resch for the history of Golden and Blue-winged Warbler populations along the state line from records of Massachusetts Breeding Bird Surveys. Additional information was provided by the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds.

Chris Sheridan is an accomplished wildlife photographer and birdwatcher who resides in Nashua, NH.

Park map from: www.gonashua.com/gis_maps/Southwest%20Park%20Trail%20Map.pdf

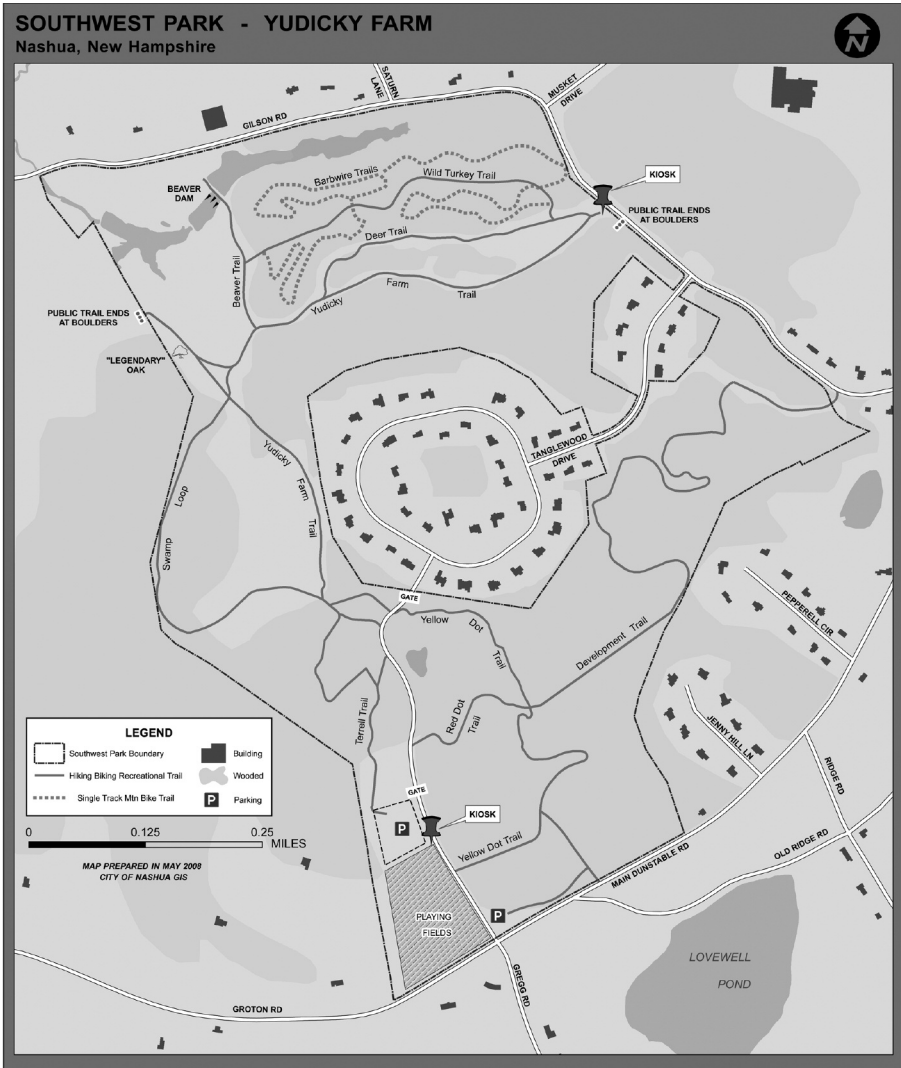


Photo Gallery

Winter Pelagic Boat Trips

by Eric Masterson

I organized three winter birding pelagic trips to Jeffreys Ledge (“the ledge”) aboard the UNH MV Gulf Challenger during the last two years: March 15, 2009; December 13, 2009; and February 13, 2010. The following is an overview of the results of these trips.



Steve Mirick chumming for birds off the stern of UNH Gulf Challenger, by Deb Brewitt, 12/13/09.

The purpose was to venture far enough offshore (20 plus miles) to encounter the pelagic seabirds that frequent New England waters during the winter. These include five species of alcid (Dovekie, Common Murre and Thick-billed Murre, Razorbill, and Atlantic Puffin – Black Guillemot is more likely to be seen within a few miles of shore), that breed on the eastern seaboard of the United States and Canada, plus Black-legged Kittiwake and Northern Fulmar. Northern Gannet is also sought after, although it can be seen close to shore. Great Skua and South Polar Skua are outside possibilities.

The choice of dates is a key component of the success of winter pelagics to the ledge. Relative to coastal and inshore winter bird distribution, relatively little is known about the distribution of pelagic species on Jeffreys Ledge from November to April. It appears from data gathered from New Hampshire and other New England avian databases, that alcids (Black Guillemot excepted) tend not to arrive on Jeffreys Ledge until November, and begin departing in late March/ early April.

Apart from the date, the weather is the other greatest variable that contributes to the success of winter trips to the ledge. Waves in excess of three feet provided difficult conditions for finding and watching birds for the trip on December 13, 2009. The seas

were exceptionally calm on March 15, 2009 and February 13, 2010, and consequently offered terrific opportunities to study several birds under excellent conditions.



Above - Common Murre by Leonard Medlock, 2/13/10.

Right - Dovekie by Jason Lambert, 2/13/10.

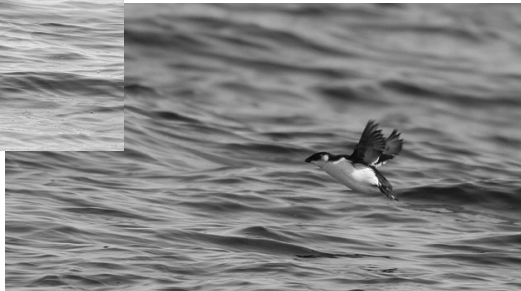


Table 1. Sightings from three winter birding pelagic trips to Jeffreys Ledge ('the ledge') aboard the UNH MV Gulf Challenger.

	Mar. 15, 2009	Dec. 13, 2010	Feb. 13, 2010
Northern Fulmar	12	23	0
Northern Gannet	2	0	10
Black-legged Kittiwake	1	35	7
Dovekie	0	6	8
Common Murre	1	1	12
Thick-billed Murre	2	0	0
Razorbill	40	23	22
Alcid sp.	0	0	2
Black Guillemot	0	2	4
Atlantic Puffin	0	1	3

Data from these (Table 1) and other recent winter pelagic trips show some changes in winter seabird abundance. Common Murre was the uncommon murre off our coast until recently. For reasons that are not established but may include changes in the murre range and/or winter food distribution, they are now being seen more commonly on the ledge during winter, as is Atlantic Puffin. Both are now expected on off-shore winter trips. Numbers of Thick-billed Murre and Dovekie recorded in offshore waters exhibit great fluctuation, year on year (*New Hampshire Bird Records*, 1980-2009). In the winter of 2008-09 (vol. 27, #4), only one Thick-billed Murre was recorded, compared to 78 birds published in Winter 1998-99 issue (vol. 17, #4). As more of these trips are run, we will continue to get a greater understanding of the winter dynamics of these wonderful birds.



Northern Fulmar by Leonard Medlock, 12/13/09.



Black Guillemot by Jason Lambert, 2/13/10.



Atlantic Puffin by Eric Masterson, 2/13/10.

Eric Masterson has been birding for more than 30 years, 20 of which were spent in Ireland where many of the described seabirds are common. He leads birding trips off New Hampshire's coast throughout the year.

All photos were taken during one of the pelagic trips mentioned above to Jeffreys Ledge.

Volunteers and Research

Binoculars For Haiti



by Cliff Seifer

The earthquake in Haiti has disrupted the lives of millions of people including educators and conservationists doing critical work to protect Haiti's native habitat. Fortunately, there is something that concerned New Hampshire residents can do to help.

Background

On January 12, a magnitude seven earthquake struck the town of Leogane, Haiti, 16 miles west of the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The effects of the disaster on the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation defy comprehension. It's estimated that as many as 230,000 people lost their lives with another 300,000 injured and over 1,000,000 left homeless. In total, over three million people have been affected. The effects on the nation's infrastructure and economy will take years to repair. In the wake of the tragedy, humanitarian aid has poured in from countries around the world.

Beyond the numbers, there lies a human toll that is hard for us living in New Hampshire to imagine. We've all seen the pictures on television and in the newspapers. A disaster of this magnitude disrupts every aspect of daily life for those in the affected areas. As relief efforts begin to restore the bare necessities needed to survive, Haitians are looking to put their lives back together. In a country where resources were stretched thin by a troubled economy prior to the earthquake, this is no easy task.

Among those whose lives have been disrupted are scientists and educators in the ornithological community. Conservationists in Haiti have been fighting an uphill battle with limited resources for decades. Now they find themselves without the basic tools needed to continue their work, threatening both their livelihood and Haiti's last chance to protect its remaining native habitat.

The stakes for Haiti's ecology are high. Hispaniola, comprised of Haiti and its neighbor, The Dominican Republic, is the second largest island in the Caribbean. Hispaniola is home to 31 endemic bird species and serves as the wintering ground for numerous North American migrants. This biodiversity and the high density of endemic species has led BirdLife International to designate Hispaniola as a critically important Endemic Bird Area; however, decades of political unrest and economic strife have left Haiti as one of the most ecologically devastated countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Less than 1.5% of Haiti's native forest remains, most of it occurring in two large blocks in the Massif de la Hotte and Massif de la Selle mountain ranges. Two National Parks, Pic Macaya National Park and La Visite National Park, formally protect this remaining forest; however, a lack of resources and continued instability in the country hinder efforts to implement and enforce conservation measures.

Bicknell's Thrush, a species of concern in New Hampshire, is among the North American migrants currently threatened by deforestation in Haiti. It breeds in New Hampshire's high elevation spruce-fir forests and winters almost exclusively on Hispaniola. With habitat pressures existing on both breeding and wintering grounds, Bicknell's

Thrush serves as a reminder that conservation efforts must be global, accounting for a given species' entire life cycle.

International cooperation has been at the heart of Haiti's conservation efforts for some time now but for these efforts to succeed, scientists in Haiti need material support. The Société Audubon Haiti (SAH) was formed in 2004 with the goal of protecting Haiti's avian heritage. SAH has partnered with international organizations, including the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) and the Sociedad Ornitologica de la Hispaniola, to document Haiti's avifauna, update stewardship protection plans, and train local biologists and park rangers. Without proper funding and equipment, these efforts have little chance of success.

Chris Rimmer, Director of the VCE, has led several research expeditions in Haiti and has been instrumental in drawing up recommendations for protecting Haiti's remaining forest habitat and developing local educational and biological resources dedicated to saving Haiti's diverse avifauna. He worries that displacement of Haitians affected by the earthquake will put further pressure on the country's already threatened preserves and notes, "Our conservation colleagues in Haiti need all the support they can get."

How You Can Help

International relief efforts in Haiti have appropriately focused on restoring basic services to the millions affected by the earthquake. Those efforts will continue and, as they do, focused efforts to assist specific communities whose lives have been disrupted will become increasingly important. For those looking to help the conservation community in Haiti, several options exist.

1. Optics For The Tropics

This nonprofit organization is dedicated to providing high quality optical equipment to those in areas of the Caribbean and Latin America where resources are limited. Joni Ellis, Director of Optics For The Tropics, says, "I feel that instilling dignity is an important part of what we do. We all want to be treated as professionals, therefore, I made a commitment early on to distribute new, quality equipment." Accordingly, Optics For the Tropics works with their partner, Eagle Optics, to match every donation, dollar for dollar, to provide this quality gear.

As security and communication services are restored in Haiti, applications for equipment will start coming in via the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds. Optics For The Tropics is currently accepting donations, specifically earmarked for Haiti, to ensure that these vetted applications can be fulfilled rapidly.

Individuals looking to contribute towards a pair of binoculars can visit the Optics For The Tropics website at: <http://www.opticsforthetropics.org>. Online donations should reference Haiti in the notation area. Contributions can also be made by check sent to: Joni Ellis, Director, Optics for the Tropics, 2205 SE 23rd Place, Gainesville, FL 2641, 352-262-7300. Joni Ellis notes that, "Matching funds for one pair is \$100, but any part of that would still be appreciated."

2. Birders' Exchange

Finally, for those looking to donate high quality used equipment, the American Birding Association's Birders' Exchange Program (see related article, *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Spring 2005) will be running an equipment drive as the situation on the ground stabilizes. Watch their website for updates on this program: <http://www.aba.org/bex>.

Special thanks to Chris Rimmer, Joni Ellis and Philippe Bayard.

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Clifford Seifer lives with his fiance Hilary and their two children in Keene, NH. He is an avid birder and enjoys volunteering for NH Audubon and other citizen science endeavors. He can be reached at clifdisc@gmail.com.

Tudor Richards and the Winter of 2009-2010 – The Continuing Legacy of a Remarkable Birder

by Robert A. Quinn



Tudor Richards and Paul Casey on the Magalloway River on the way to Lake Umbagog, 11/19/98. Photo by Robert A. Quinn.

This is the last in the series of four articles about Tudor Richards for the New Hampshire Bird Records 2009 issues sponsored in his memory. This article focuses on those aspects of his birding that are connected to the winter season. The articles by Tudor Richards on inland waterbirds referred to below appeared in the New Hampshire Audubon Quarterly (Vol. 25 #2, #3; 26 #1; 27 #4).

In the earlier articles, I focused on Tudor's keen interest in the inland migration of waterbirds in New Hampshire and that will continue. In addition, I will look at his impact on the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) in New Hampshire. His pioneering efforts are significant to birders and birds today because he established five CBCs, probably more than any other individual. In this article, I will also look at some significant changes in our winter birds since Tudor began birding in New Hampshire.

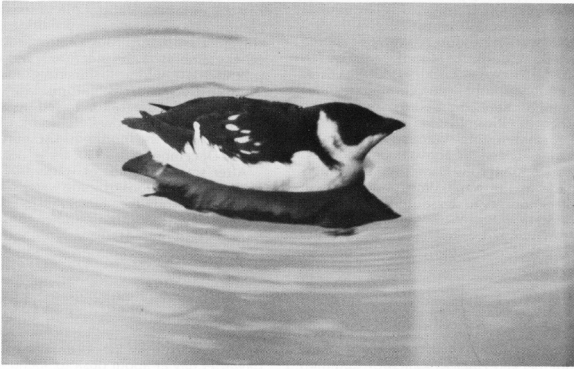
Early and late winter migrants

The "fall" migration lasts well beyond the end of the autumn season, into early winter, and some "spring" migrants begin moving north before the end of February. Tudor was well aware of this phenomenon and, because of his abiding interest in waterbirds, he was in the field as much as possible when there was any open water. Tudor went in search of roost sites for waterbirds and apparently he was the first birder to do that systematically. The following table lists just a few of his more interesting winter records.

Table 1. Data from Tudor Richard's *Inland Water Birds* articles (see beginning of article for reference).

SPECIES	DATE	NUMBER	LOCATION	NOTES
Black Duck	undated- winter (pre 1972)	500	Spofford Lake	evening roost
Hooded Merganser	undated- winter (pre 1972)	75	Spofford Lake	evening roost
Common Merganser	12-7-46	1000	Squam Lake	estimate
Common Merganser	12-23-52	350	Lake Massabesic	with Herring Gulls
Red-throated Loon	12-7-50	1	Lake Francis	with murre
Horned Grebe	12-14-57	"at least 300"	Lake Winnisquam	
Red-necked Grebe	12-7-50	3	Lake Francis	with murre
Herring Gull	12-23-52	250	Lake Massabesic	first known inland roost
Iceland Gull	1-7-49	1	Laconia	first inland record
Glaucous Gull	2-5-49	1	Laconia	first inland record
Dovekie	December 1966	1	Laconia	see photo
Thick-billed Murre	12-7-50	4	Lake Francis	with grebes

In Table 1, there are several items worth noting. These have to do with the changing populations of inland waterbirds as well as changes in bird populations on a statewide basis. Gulls have increased dramatically since the time that Tudor began birding in New Hampshire nearly 60 years ago. Inland records of alcids are almost unheard of now, especially with Dovekie numbers being very low even coastally. More on these and other population changes follow.



Dovekies are occasionally blown inland by severe storms. This little fellow was photographed off Governor's Island on Lake Winnepesaukee in December, 1966. Photo: Tudor Richards

Dovekie photo by Tudor Richards from Part IV of "Inland Water Birds" in the NH Audubon Quarterly, Fall, 1974, (Vol. 27, # 4).

The lessons-As we move into the 21st century, New Hampshire birders are striving to learn more about the local movements of birds in every season. Just a couple of pertinent examples include the efforts to document waterfowl roosts at sites including Penacook Lake in Concord (a.k.a. Long Pond), Lake Wantastiquet in Hinsdale, and Great Bay. Also, think of the amazing numbers of some migrants that Steve and Jane Mirick and others

have tallied along the coast in recent years. The point is that there are many sites with great potential that have not been discovered yet, including in your neck of the woods. Are you up to the challenge?

Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs)

In part II of the *Inland Water Birds* articles, Tudor says this about his first New Hampshire CBC in Laconia on December 22, 1947: "This was a count I was determined to make because of having noticed that New Hampshire was the only state in which no such census had been made the previous winter". Tudor continues: "By a remarkable coincidence, the only other New Hampshire count that winter of 1947-48, aside from another of mine carried out a day later in Waterville, was one made by two ladies in Laconia on December 22. They even recorded the same number of species I did, but tallied fewer waterbirds and more land birds!"

Another Laconia CBC, on January 2, 1954 was, in his words, "...something of an eye-opener". Not surprisingly, it was the waterbirds that opened his eyes. Again quoting Tudor: "Over 200 individuals of four different waterbirds were recorded—Horned Grebe, Black Duck, Common Merganser, and Common Goldeneye. The greatest rarity was a Northern Gannet, reported by Muriel Kendrick and never seen again. Other rare birds were a Common Loon, Ring-necked Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, and American Coot". The 213 Horned Grebes recorded that day are almost as amazing as the Northern Gannet, which is still the only inland CBC record for New Hampshire.

Not all of Tudor's noteworthy CBC activities took place, as he would have put it, "in the dim past". He established the Concord CBC in 1952 though it became inactive when he moved to Cheshire County for about ten years. When he returned to the Concord area, he rejuvenated the local count in 1964 and he participated in it every year up to 2006 when he was 90 years old. Over the years, he discovered many unusual birds for the Concord count, but more importantly, he inspired many of us to have fun and to continue to expand our knowledge of our local winter birds.

He also started CBCs at Waterville (alas, that count was never continued), plus the Coastal CBC and the Pittsburg CBC. These last two have become some of the longest running and most interesting counts in New Hampshire. If you have not participated in both of these CBCs, you should plan on it for the future. Besides being a lot of fun, participation will give you a unique perspective on the winter birds of New Hampshire!

The lessons- Help out! Christmas Bird Counts are lots of fun, you can participate in different ways, and you will contribute to the vast amount of important data that is being accumulated. Most of the state is now well-covered by a series of CBC circles but Dave Govatski has recently showed that it is still possible to begin a new count, by establishing the mountainous Crawford Notch count.

Changes in the winter bird life

There have been some major changes in our winter bird life since Tudor first went in search of late migrants and roosting sites and founded those Christmas Bird Counts. A few of those changes are both significant as well as on-going. I will briefly discuss gulls, Mallards, and a few land birds in this context.

In the 1940s and 1950s when Tudor and others started counting them, gulls were very low in numbers across the state, including the coast. This was largely because of uncontrolled shooting dating back to the late 1800s. Representative examples of Herring Gull numbers on the Laconia CBC were 40 in 1954, 729 in 1972, and currently back to below 100 on most Laconia CBCs. In Concord the changes are even more extreme with examples being 39 Herring Gulls in 1952, then peaking at 2500 in the late 1980s, and now we are lucky to see any in Concord during the entire winter. These dramatic changes are the result of the gulls flourishing during the decades when open dumps provided an unlimited source of food for them. As most of the dumps have been closed since the 1980s, the gulls have left most inland sites.

Mallard numbers also show dramatic ups and downs. Originally, wild Mallards were rare birds in New Hampshire, being a duck that mostly lived west of the Mississippi River. At the same time that duck numbers were increasing through conservation efforts, hunters expressed a strong interest in having Mallards in the east. So, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department began introducing large numbers of this species into New Hampshire in the early 1960s. The tally of Mallards on the Laconia CBC in 1954 was only 13 birds but by 1986 the number in Laconia had grown to an amazing 1,948! In recent years, the Mallard numbers seem to have declined a bit but they are still abnormally abundant. All New Hampshire counts, including the coast, have seen these changes.

Some of the obvious changes in land birds include the huge increase in many "southern" species such as Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Red-bellied Woodpecker, to name just a few. Bird feeding and climate change seem to be the reason for these increases. But there have been several other changes in land birds that are less explainable. For example, the Evening Grosbeak has declined as a winter visitor while the Bohemian Waxwing has increased. Also, many of the blackbirds used to be seen by the dozens and even hundreds on almost all the CBCs in the southern part of New Hampshire and now are quite scarce. These are just a few of the major changes that the CBC data clearly shows.

The lessons—Our direct personal activities such as bird feeding and open dumps have resulted in tremendous changes in our winter birds. Now it seems that our indirect activities, resulting in climate change, are causing continuous and dynamic differences in our winter bird life. Stay tuned and stay involved for what the next 30-50 years will bring!

Courtship and breeding plumage

Tudor was the first person to point out to me another fun and less well known aspect of winter birding – observing waterfowl courtship rituals. Many waterfowl develop their alternate (breeding) plumage and begin courtship during the winter. This is most easily observed in the winter ducks that are common throughout the interior of the state, such as Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers. On calm and quiet bodies of water, the mid-winter calls and posturing of these birds is entertaining to watch and also speaks of the spring and breeding seasons to come. These behaviors can also be observed with many of the numerous coastal waterfowl. Most of this behavior occurs well before “spring” arrives, no matter what our calendar says.

The lessons—Going beyond simple identification is the next logical step for most birders. There are limitless possibilities, from the timing of molt, to local movements, to migration, to behavior watching and beyond, that we can all observe and enjoy. In many cases, we can also add a lot to what we know about the birds in New Hampshire. Any birder can watch activities like these almost anywhere in the state, so give it a try and you will be well rewarded.



*Tudor and Barbara Richards on their last visit to Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge, November 2006.
Photo by David Govatski.*

Continuing Tudor's Legacy

Tudor's wife, Barbara Richards, deserves as much credit and respect as Tudor does, especially when it comes to the Christmas Bird Counts. An outstanding birder in her own right, Barbara helped Tudor with many of the early counts and her sharp eyes found many of the more interesting species. In his later years, she was his driver as well as spotter, and always his companion.

Many people have made positive and meaningful comments to me about these stories. That is very gratifying. Even more heart-warming is the field work that some of you have decided to do with Tudor's example in mind. Nothing can be better than that and I ask you to join us in this quest to have fun, learn more, and protect and enjoy our birds and please let me know what you see.

Writing these articles, which have conjured up so many wonderful memories, has been a very rewarding effort, albeit difficult at times. It is clear that I have barely scratched the surface of what Tudor's legacy really means to us in New Hampshire. As we continue the wonderful birding journey in the years ahead, it is quite obvious that there is more, much more, to share with you about Tudor Richards, the birder and the man.

Answer to the Photo Quiz

by David B. Donsker

In keeping with our tribute to Tudor Richards this year, it is only fitting to include a Photo Quiz that features waterfowl, a group of birds to which Tudor devoted much of his professional career and personal delight. This season's quiz features a pair of ducks that represent one of the classic conundrums of field identification.

New England ducks can be broadly divided into four groups, each with its own distinctive structure and behavior. These are the dabbling ducks, diving ducks, mergansers and stiff-tailed ducks. The fish eating, thin-billed mergansers and our only stiff-tailed duck, Ruddy Duck, with its cocked tail and disproportionately large head and bill are quite distinctive and present no problem here. Dabbling ducks favor relatively shallow freshwater or brackish creeks, ponds and marshes. They feed by dabbling their bills on the surface of the water and tipping forward to grab subsurface food. They take off from the water directly, often in explosive flight. This group of ducks includes largish, large-billed species such as American Black Duck and Mallard and smaller-billed, compact species such as American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal. The only member of this group that resembles either of the ducks in the photograph is male Mallard. Like both of these individuals, male Mallard has a dark head and breast and dark rear end which contrast with its pale body. Mallard, however, has a proportionally longer and larger body than these fairly compact ducks. Further, it has conspicuous white outer tail feathers and a white neck ring. Its striking yellow bill would look much paler and brighter than those in the photograph. Its iris is dark which gives it a different facial expression from these pale-eyed ducks, especially from the bird on the right.

Diving ducks are, in general, rather compact species that prefer the deeper open water of our bays, inshore ocean or larger lakes. They dive for their food and take off from the water by first running along its surface. This group comprises a diverse set of species including eiders, scoters, goldeneyes, and typical diving ducks of the genus *Aythya*. With the obvious exception of male Harlequin Duck, this group of ducks tends to be rather conservatively colored and the individual species are best recognized by their structure and plumage patterns. In the earlier Peterson field guides, they were merely depicted in black-and-white plates.

Shape and structure are particularly important when identifying subtly plumaged, generally brownish, female diving ducks. Female and males differ tremendously in plumage, but both sexes maintain the same general structure which is the key to their identification, once the sex of any individual has been determined.

With that in mind, let's look at these features in the illustrated birds. By virtue of their generally black and white plumage, both are males. The two ducks are similarly patterned. Both have blackish heads and breasts and blackish rear parts which contrast with paler flanks. Both birds have pale gray, finely barred backs. In this black-and-white photo, both have pale grayish bills. Despite their similarities, these two individuals show subtle differences. The bird on the left has whiter flanks than the bird on the right. It is also marginally smaller. Its head is peaked towards the rear of the crown rather than rounded as is the head of the right bird. Its bill is slightly smaller and straighter.

Most of the diving ducks can be easily eliminated as likely candidates. Scoters and female eiders are rather large, dark ducks that lack the generally black-and-white plumage of these birds. Male eiders are generally black below and white above with large or medium sized triangular bills and whitish breasts. Long-tailed Duck has a small triangular bill and, in both sexes, a very distinctive, bold plumage pattern. The diminutive Bufflehead has a white ear patch or large white head patch, depending on sex. Males of both species of goldeneyes are dark-headed and pale sided with black rear parts, but both have white breasts and black backs.

The only diving ducks that combine dark heads and breasts and dark rear parts which contrast with paler flanks are the males of the five very closely related ducks in the genus *Aythya*. Two of these, Redhead and Canvasback are reddish-headed ducks. As such, the heads of these birds are distinctly paler than their contrastingly black breasts. In addition, male Canvasback has a gleaming white back as well as flanks and a distinctive sloping "nose" and dark bill. The flanks of male Redhead are gray, which is similar in tone to its gray back. The effect is quite unlike the white flanks of the left bird, in particular. Redhead also has a distinctly patterned bill with a black tip bordered behind by a white band.

Ring-necked Duck has a peaked crown similar to the left bird. Unlike both of these ducks, however, it the male has a blackish back, a white vertical bar behind the breast and a highly patterned black-tipped, white-banded bill.

The only diving ducks that combine the blackish head and breast, pale flanks, gray back and black rear parts shown by these two ducks are the males of the two very similar Greater and Lesser Scaups. At a distance, both male scaups look "black-white-black", a pattern that is unique to these two species. Indeed, the two featured birds are male scaup.

But to which of the two scaup species, Greater and Lesser Scaup, do these individuals belong? The two scaups are notoriously challenging to identify, particularly if they are not seen in association with each other. In this case, however, we have the advantage of seeing both species side by side which allows us to compare their subtle differences.

The single most reliable feature to differentiate these two species is the shape of their heads. The crown of Lesser Scaup is peaked or pointed towards the rear. In contrast, Greater Scaup has a smoothly rounded crown. The crown of Lesser Scaup may be briefly rounded after completing a dive, but once the feathers are dried and the bird is relaxed, the peaked rear crown resumes its shape. This distinctive head shape can be appreciated even at some distance.

Head shape alone is sufficient in this case to identify each of these individuals. The left bird has the distinctly peaked crown of Lesser Scaup while the right bird shows the rounded, flatter crown that is so characteristic of Greater Scaup.

Other features separating these two species are even more subtle and either require good light, close views, side-by-side comparisons or a combination of these.

An often-taught field mark is the difference in the color of the head gloss of the males. But head gloss can be misleading, and should never be used as a sole identifying feature. In proper light, the head of Greater Scaup has a greenish gloss and that of Lesser Scaup is dull purple, sometimes mixed with green.

As can be seen in the photograph, Greater Scaup is marginally (approximately 10%) larger than Lesser Scaup. This is nearly impossible to appreciate unless the birds are seen in close proximity. Similarly, the bill of Greater Scaup is proportionally larger and deeper at the base than that of Lesser Scaup. It also has a more curved upper margin or culmen than that of the straighter bill of Lesser Scaup. The bill of Greater Scaup also has a more prominent nail or "hook" at the tip although this feature cannot be appreciated from the perspective of the accompanying photograph.

Other subtle points of difference include the markings of the back and flanks. Although at a distance the backs and scapulars of both scaups look pale gray, at close range it can be seen that they are composed of closely spaced, wavy black and white bars. As this photograph shows, the barring is finer in Greater Scaup than it is in Lesser Scaup. Even more subtle is the pattern on the flanks. At close range, the flanks of Greater Scaup are immaculately white while those of Lesser Scaup show very faint gray vermiculations. The latter can be seen very well in the photograph of the Lesser Scaup on the left. The reason the flanks of the male Greater Scaup in this photograph are dusky is that it is a first year male. Young scaup molt continuously from juvenile plumage to near adult plumage from summer throughout the fall but attain an adult-type plumage by mid winter. First year winter male scaup are patterned much like adult males but are generally duller with coarser back markings and darker flanks.

There is a final plumage characteristic that can be helpful in separating these two species but it can only be appreciated in flight. Both species have a prominent white wing stripe on the upper aspect of the wing. In Greater Scaup, the wing stripe typically extends from the secondary flight feathers well onto the inner primary feathers while in Lesser Scaup it is generally confined to the secondaries. Therefore, most Greater Scaup have a distinctly longer white wing stripe than Lesser Scaup. Be aware, however, that some birds have wing stripes of intermediate length. The length of the wing stripe may be a more useful field mark in differentiating females.

Generally, in winter Greater Scaup prefer open salt or brackish water while Lesser Scaup tend to favor freshwater lakes and ponds. Greater Scaup is a common winter visitor to Great Bay where it can be seen in the hundreds from such access points as Sandy Point. Lesser Scaup may be one of the most abundant ducks in North America. In migration, it can be seen on virtually every lake and river in the central United States but the center of its winter distribution in the East is south and west of New England. As such, it is a relatively uncommon bird in New Hampshire. However, it can fairly reliably be found in small numbers during migration on Lake Massabesic in Auburn, Lake Winnisquam in Laconia, Turkey Pond in Concord, Eel Pond in Rye or at the Exeter wastewater treatment plant. It will rarely overwinter at the treatment plant.

These two male scaups were photographed by Len Medlock on January 4, 2009 at the Exeter wastewater treatment plant.



Acknowledgement: Thanks to Steve Mirick who kindly reviewed this article and added some salient points to this discussion.

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Abbreviations Used

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

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A western-type Fox Sparrow in NH



Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.

This bird, tentatively identified as a "Sooty" Fox Sparrow, spent most of the winter at a feeder in Barrington, NH where it was seen by many birders. It is only the second physically documented western Fox Sparrow in the East, according to Marshall J. Iliff and Louis R. Bevier. For more, see their article inside this issue.



Photo by Mark Szantyr.



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