

# New Hampshire Bird Records





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IN MEMORY OF

# Chandler S. Robbins

The 2018 issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* are sponsored by George C. Robbins in memory and honor of his father, Chan Robbins. Each issue has an article by George about his father, highlighting his father's phenomenal accomplishments in the field of ornithology and connections to New Hampshire.



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## Thank You to Donors

We are very grateful to everyone who has donated to *New Hampshire Bird Records*, sponsored an issue, or supported the “Twitchers out of the Rye” during the Superbowl of Birding. Subscription revenue does not cover the full costs of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, including our eBird quality control work. Your contributions help make it possible for NH Audubon to bring you this publication and maintain the quality of the records. We are especially grateful to those who have contributed to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund. This fund is building a secure base of long-term support for the collection, organization, publication, preservation and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information.

The following list acknowledges donations received from October 26, 2018 to September 19, 2019. We apologize if we inadvertently omitted you or misspelled your name – please let us know.

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*Peregrine Falcon by Kyle Wilmarth.*

# Chandler S. Robbins: His Final 24 Years – 1993-2017

by *George C. Robbins*

This final segment of my Dad's life began with his traveling to the tropics at least once a year. He was training local students and volunteers and continuing to sample different habitat types to determine which crops could be grown that would support more migrant species on their wintering grounds. Dad and his colleagues were mist-netting and banding in the different habitats, both cultivated and native, as well as doing point counts and roadside counts, similar to Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route parameters. However, these roadside counts mostly had to be limited to 30 stops instead of 50 because the road systems in most of the tropical countries were just so poor. They constantly had to deal with washed-out roads and broken-down vehicles.

Lest anyone think these trips to the tropics were a vacation, think again. The scientists and local volunteers frequently slept on dirt-floored huts with limited or no running water, mostly cold meals, sweltering heat, bottled water, and outdoor, if any, cold showers and plumbing, not to mention how far gear had to be carried in and out of the jungle over rough and slippery terrain. On one such trip, Dad was thrown from a horse and broke a collarbone. Don't think for a minute his trip was terminated. His arm was bound up with a sling and he continued working, setting a pace that few others could keep up with. On another trip, he described his days as: in the field for 12 hours, banding birds, then a brief break for dinner, then class time with the students for the next three hours. These trips were usually 3-5 weeks long, then, as Dad described it, for every week in the field, another week in the office working up the data was required. Remember, Dad was 75-80 years old at this time. I'm not sure that I could have kept up with him. He offered more than once to have me come down with him and help as a volunteer, but I could never fit it into my schedule. Looking back, I wish I had.

Because of his many trips to Guatemala, and his efforts in helping save the area, study, and train local students and scientists there, a research center was constructed and named for him in a 119,000 acre tract known as Cerro San Gil. This Chandler Robbins Biological Station was dedicated in 1996.

In 1997, Dad and a whole consortium of other scientists

and organizations, succeeded in procuring the last tract of virgin deciduous forest in the Atlantic coastal plain. This 515 acre tract, known as Belt Woods and located in Maryland just outside the Washington beltway, was first censused by Dad 50 years earlier. He and many others had been trying to gain permanent preservation of this tract of huge trees for many years, as it had been slated for development.

One of his last official projects was in re-visiting different areas across the state of Maryland that he had studied 50 years earlier in 1950. He was comparing vegetation and development in areas now crisscrossed with highways, and numbers and species of birds still present or now long gone because of the loss of habitat.

Another of Dad's final projects was in helping to set the parameters for wind turbines. These 395 foot tall turbines were to be erected along the crest of the highest of the Allegheny Mountains, along major flight paths used by migrating birds. The turbines, with blades traveling at 165 mph at their tips, were required by the FAA to be illuminated. Because many birds migrate at night and are attracted to the lights, the risk to migrating birds and bats had been grossly underestimated. Radar and acoustic studies were designed to clarify the extent of the hazard.

At 87 and still working, from late May until mid-July he was in the field every day from 3:00 or 4:00 am until 10:00 or 11:00 am each morning, back in the office by noon, then home by mid afternoon for a nap. Do the math; that's 12 hour work days, seven days a week, at age 87. This was actually nothing that he hadn't been doing for the past 60 years. During the breeding season, Dad was out in the field every day. If he wasn't doing BBS routes, he was working on Breeding Bird Atlas field work, banding studies, or some other field work.

In December of 2005, Dad retired from Patuxent Wildlife Research Center after having worked at his home away from home for 60 years, but that didn't stop him. Two years later, at 89 and retired, he was still at Patuxent five days a week as a volunteer. As he put it, he would go in to his office, check his email, review ornithological journals and manuscripts for colleagues, write book reviews, serve on a committee to plan how the Bird Banding Lab could best store and use



*Chandler S. Robbins with the author, George C. Robbins.*

recapture records of banded birds, and test techniques for improving the accuracy of locating the exact position of BBS stops. The following summer, he did more double sampling of BBS routes (with two observers counting the same route simultaneously for comparison), similar to what he had done in the 1960s (with other birders, including myself). This helped him decide it was time for him to give up his BBS routes.

Mom passed away in 2008. Dad turned 90 and said his field activities were slowing down. On the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) annual May count in the Patuxent floodplain, he only hiked three and a half miles instead of the usual ten. He conducted his six BBS routes that he had been doing since 1965 (the inaugural year) for the last time. His hearing aids could no longer compensate for his hearing loss in the upper range of songs and calls.

His trip to New Hampshire that year included a trip in to the Tudor Richards platform at Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge. Unfortunately, Dad's cousin Tudor was unable to join us that day. We had received special permission to drive in to Big Cherry Pond and then Dad walked with us from there to Little Cherry Pond. He said he had been there many decades earlier with Tudor.

Whenever we would talk on the phone or see each other, conversations would always start and end with what birds we had recently seen, what projects we were working on and, invariably during this last segment of Dad's life, where we wanted to go next. Over his lifetime, he had visited all seven continents. Because his family was also very important to him, even though he had traveled extensively officially, during the last 15 years of his life, he traveled even more with various members of his family; wife, sons, daughters, and granddaughters. We went to Iceland, Trinidad, Panama, South Africa, Spain and Ecuador. These were all trips designed specifically to see birds (as well as mammals, reptiles, butterflies, etc.), most with private, expert bird guides. We all enjoyed these trips immensely.

His other interests included genealogy. Dad had traced his ancestry back to English and French royalty, to original passengers on the Mayflower, and to no less than 25 US Presidents or their wives. Throughout his life, he was also a man of faith who taught Sunday school and sang in his church choir for many decades.

The birds he enjoyed most were the ones he saw every day. How many of us would say that? I think most of us would say a memorable Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Odiorne Point State

Park, or the day both Red and Red-necked Phalaropes in breeding plumage were at Odiorne, or maybe something seen on a special trip to Alaska, Australia, or the tropics, but not Dad. His favorite bird? Winter Wren; I'm sure at least in part because of its long and beautiful song.

What was his life list? He had no idea. Someday, I may try to go through his notes, checklists, and field notebooks. I would guess maybe 3,000? That just was not important enough to him to spend his valuable time to try to figure out. He was far more interested in the what, where, how, when and why. What were the most important conservation of habitat issues? Where? How could he execute the study? When could he get started? And why didn't anyone already think of that and start already?

What about Dad's binoculars? I remember them when they were new, but that was a long time ago, and I

doubt that few other people remember that. I think it was in the early 1960s. They, as someone once described them, are on the down side of well-worn, but he wouldn't have traded them for anything. "A lot of good birds in here," he would say as he patted them. Can any of us say that millions of Dickcissels have passed in front of their binoculars? He said that. Millions, he repeated. (That was on a trip somewhere in Central America, Guatemala, I believe it was.)

Dad was a prolific writer. For 40 years, he wrote an annual Christmas letter of 4-6 pages that he sent to friends and family. He wrote family letters multiple times yearly, and sent us post cards from all corners of the world. Fortunately, most of these letters and cards have been saved and I pored through boxes of them in writing this highly abbreviated synopsis of Dad's life.

When asked what intrigued him most about birds? His answer was simple – that we know so little about them. He continued that he would like to know before he died how birds find their way. The albatrosses, for example, travel thousands of miles, yet return to the same place within a foot of where they nest, year after year. Not that it had much scientific value, he said, but it might help to explain other things.

Data from BBS routes were an important piece of information used to develop the international Partners in Flight program in 1990, and Dad was recognized for a lifetime achievement award by Partners in Flight in 2005. Dad also was one of three caretakers of the phenology data recorded since 1880. This was a six million card data file of migration dates, and was used by countless authors



*Chandler S. Robbins' world-traveled binoculars.*

(including Dad) from many states and Canada in preparing their works for publication. For years, it was stored right next to his office for constant referral.

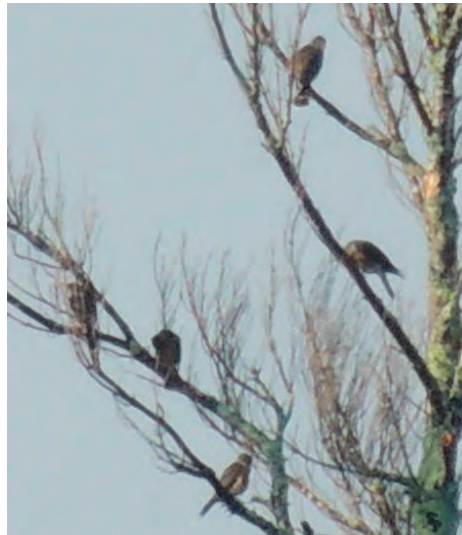
Dad possessed not only seemingly unlimited energy, but the capacity to organize volunteers, initiate programs, educate the public, and publish results of the statistical analyses of his studies. The list of books, papers, and articles authored or co-authored by Dad since 1937 exceeds 650 and his *Birds of North America* field guide has now sold nearly seven million copies. He kept a list of birds seen on his two and a half acre home property every year, as well as a cumulative list; species number 200 being Mississippi Kite, 201 Cackling Goose, and 202 Northern (Common) Raven in 2008.

Where are the migrants? This was a question that Dad was constantly asking during this last segment of his life. He continued to band birds at his home in Laurel until he was 95 when it just became too much for him physically. But, in terms of numbers of birds and species banded, the migrants continued to decline. Years earlier, the commonest species caught and banded were warblers and thrushes. Now, nearly every year, cardinals and other resident species tended to be the most common. This was over a 40 plus years of banding nearly every fall at his house. Over his lifetime he banded somewhere in the neighborhood of 190,000 birds of 450 species, in who knows how many different states and countries. He participated in 420 Christmas Bird Counts over his lifetime, more than anyone else, compiling 207 of them on 10 count circles in four states over 82 years.

Dad belonged to many organizations, some for over 70 years: American Ornithologists Union from 1944, International Ornithologists Union from 1962, Wildlife Society from 1947, Wilson Ornithological Society from 1941, Association of Field Ornithologists from 1945, as well as numerous state organizations, including Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) from 1945, and NH Audubon since sometime in the 1960s. He was a technical editor of *North American Birds* from 1952-1989 and the editor of the MOS quarterly journal, *Maryland Birdlife*, from 1948-2013 – 65 years.

The awards bestowed upon him are practically too numerous to list. In 1995, he was awarded an Honorary

Doctor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland for his 50 years of ornithological research and conservation. In 1998, as part of their 100th anniversary celebration, Audubon magazine selected 100 people to honor as champions of conservation during the 20th century. Dad was one of those chosen. In 1999, Dad was awarded the prestigious 2000 Audubon Medal in recognition of his lifetime of conservation work. Just a few of the other awards he was honored with were: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Arthur A. Allen Award, Audubon Naturalist Society's Paul Bartsch Award, US



*Daughter-in-law, Andrea Robbins, and granddaughter, Michelle Robbins, with Chandler S. Robbins at Berry Bay in Freedom, NH observing Chan's first Merlins for Freedom (a family of five in a dead snag, ¼ mile across the lake) on 7-19-16.*

Fish and Wildlife Service's Meritorious Service Award, American Birding Association's Ludlow Griscom Award, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chuck Yeager Award, American Ornithologists Union's Elliott Coues Award, American Birding Association's Roger Tory Peterson Award for lifetime achievements, and a 60 Years of Service Award by the Department of the Interior. Further, the American Birding Association established the Chandler S. Robbins Award in 2000 that it confers annually to someone for conservation and/or education, two things near and dear to Dad.

Dad continued to vacation at Berry Bay in Freedom, NH, nearly every year until 2016, where we celebrated his 98th birthday (and his last visit to NH) with him.

His job title during his tenure at Patuxent went from Junior Scientist, to Chief of Nongame Bird Studies, to Senior Scientist, to Emeritus after retirement. He still went to his office nearly every day for years after retirement; he just had way too many

unfinished projects and things he wanted to do. He was far and away the longest tenured scientist ever at Patuxent, affiliated with the facility from 1943 until 2016, 73 years. He felt he was a part of it (Patuxent) because he grew up with it. After he retired, he wasn't sure they would allow him to retain his large, corner office, but it was his until the day he died. Even his last few months while in the hospital, the hope was that he could, and would, return to the place he loved so much, to continue the work which he felt was so important – birds and their habitat. He once said, "Who are we to abolish the birds? We need to protect them."

Chandler S. Robbins. To the entire ornithological world, he was known as just Chan. To me, he was just Dad.

## December 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019

by Katherine Towler and Jim Sparrell



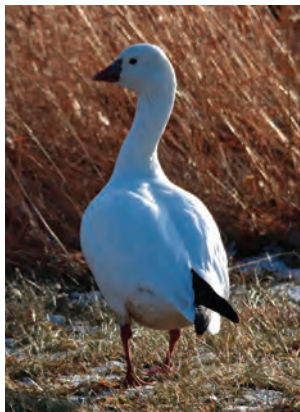
Katie and Jim in full birding mode on a trip to California. Photo by Bruce Aird.

The winter of 2018-2019 continued a trend seen in recent years of dramatic fluctuations in temperature, with repeated rounds of Arctic cold fronts and southern warm fronts following each other in quick succession. In one three-day period in early February, temperatures in central New Hampshire went from a low of -10 to a high of 60. After

a November that brought cold, snow, and, in southern portions of the state, record precipitation, New Hampshire experienced lower than average snowfall in the winter months overall. Snow cover was not consistently established in central and northern regions until mid-January and the first major state-wide snowstorm did not arrive until the third week in January. The changeable weather caused by warm fronts that ushered in rain in February made for inconsistent snow cover. In Concord, a 60-degree day was recorded in February for the fourth year in a row.

The November cold that lingered in the first weeks of December caused the early freezing of inland ponds and lakes, reducing sightings of waterfowl and concentrating these species on rivers that remained open. With warmer weather in the south later in December, some bodies of water re-opened, but most inland ponds and lakes remained frozen throughout the winter months.

A poor year for cone and birch seed crops in the far north sent finch species south, including a major incursion of **Evening Grosbeaks** that delighted backyard birders who had not seen this species at feeders in many years. The irruption of **Common Redpolls** led to reports throughout the state, with sightings of **Pine Siskins** and **Pine Grosbeaks** also widespread. Other notable trends included a decrease in **Blue Jays** and **American Goldfinches**, both species moving south in large numbers due to a low mast crop. Junco sightings were also noticeably



Ross's Goose by Steve Laueremann, 12-19-18, Rochester, NH.

down. **Bohemian Waxwings** were seen in the north this winter, but did not come to the southernmost counties even at the end of the season, as they have in past years. **Red** and **White-winged Crossbill** sightings were sparse.

The season saw some exciting rarities. Of these, the most exciting was without question the first state record of a **Ross's Gull**. Other sightings of note included the first winter record of a **Ross's Goose**, second state record of a **Tufted Duck**, and third winter record of an **American White Pelican**. A **Great Gray Owl** and **Long-eared Owl** were each photographed by a single observer but the owls could not be relocated by the birding community.

See the end of the summaries for a list of references.



Snow Goose by Debra Powers, 12-6-18, Rye, NH.

### Waterfowl through Grebes

The winter season brought some uncommon waterfowl to New Hampshire waterways and provided good opportunities for viewing. One Snow Goose frequented the Rye/North Hampton town line, appearing on various lawns and in the water from early December to mid-January, staying around to the day of the Superbowl of Birding, a fun winter birding competition run by Joppa Flats Audubon (see the Field Trip Report). A **Ross's Goose** was found by Steve Laueremann in mid-December at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant and was seen again the following day. While there are other spring records, this appears to be the first winter record for the species in New Hampshire.

Away from the New Hampshire seacoast, an intrepid **Green-winged Teal** was first observed by Kathleen Toomey and continued to be seen through early February on the Androscoggin River in Gorham, and also coming to a bird feeder with Mallards and American Black Ducks. This appears to be the second winter record for Coos County, with a previous record of one in Errol in December of 1966. This is certainly the latest record of a Green-winged Teal in northern New Hampshire.

Several sightings of **Redheads** and **Canvasbacks** were

# WINTER SEASON

noted from Great Bay and there was one observation of a Canvasback from the Little Harbor area in New Castle. The most exciting bird found in this *Aythya* genus (including Scaup, Redheads, Canvasback, and Ring-necked Ducks),



*Tufted Duck by Jason Lambert, 1-19-19, Exeter WTP, NH.*

was in early January, when Leo McKillop reported a **Tufted Duck** at the Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant, the first winter record for New Hampshire and second record for the state. Its

identification was initially the subject of much discussion and observers were cautious about calling it a Tufted Duck, in part because it didn't have much of a tuft yet. We sent the photos to an eBird reviewer in Sweden (where the species is common) who responded, "To me it looks like a clean Tufted Duck, probably a male as it shows white on the flanks. I showed the photos to my son, who is good at these things, and he thinks the same. The back doesn't show any gray, as I think a hybrid with scaup would do. Head shape, the rather big black tip of the bill, and the white wing band are all excellent for Tufted" (Örjan Sjögren, personal comm., 2019). The bird showed up again in the same spot, during the Superbowl of Birding, and in spring was seen on Great Bay, showing a longer tuft.

A massive flock of 1,200 Black Scoters was observed in Hampton in February and this appears to be a high count for the winter season in the eBird era, although below the state record of a raft of nearly 5,000 observed in the fall of 2006. **Barrow's Goldeneye** were observed in several locations, including the Merrimack River in Manchester, the Connecticut River near Johnson Island in Lebanon, and Bear Brook in Errol, as well as along the New Hampshire seacoast and even on one of the pelagic trips. There was a sighting of a **Red-breasted Merganser** away from the Seacoast in mid-December at Spofford Lake in Chesterfield. This is one of the few inland spots in New Hampshire that has a few reports of Red-breasted Mergansers most winters. A nice flock of 102 Common Mergansers was also observed in mid-December on Lake Winnepesaukee from Leavitt Beach in Meredith, along with two Horned Grebes.

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
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## **Snow Goose**

12/09	1	cove at Rye/N. Hampton town line	E. Masterson, C. Seifer, G. Tillman, C. McPherson
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<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
01/04	4	Roberts Rd., Rollinsford	A. Murray, A. Aldrich, K. Couture
01/19	1	Fuller Gardens, N. Hampton	S. Lamonde, et al.
02/09	1	Fort Stark, New Castle	A. Schenck
02/11	1	Portsmouth High School	J. Sparrell
02/14	1	UNH, Durham	G. Clucas
02/16	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

## **Ross's Goose**

12/19	1	Rochester WTP	S. Laueremann
12/20	1	Rochester WTP	A. Murray, et al.

## **Brant**

12/13	2	Concord Pt., Rye	P. Miliotis
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## **Cackling/Canada Goose**

01/10	1	World End Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
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## **Mute Swan**

12/11	6	Great Bay, Greenland	J. Maher
02/23	3	Nashua R., Nashua	J. Gray

## **Wood Duck**

12/01	2	Exeter WTP	L. McKillop
12/29	2	Rocky Bound Pond, Croydon	D. Peirce
01/10	1	Tilton Hill Rd. by Suncook R., Pittsfield	A. Robbins
02/10	1	Lambert Park, Hooksett	J. Lambert
02/16	1	Powwow Pond, Kingston	S. Heron, K. Wilmarth

## **Northern Shoveler**

12/01	4	Exeter WTP	L. McKillop
01/06	1	Exeter WTP	K. Murphy, S.& D. Stoddard, D. Jackson, A. Parsons, D. Hubbard
02/10	1	Tide Mill Rd., Hampton	G.& A. Robbins

## **Gadwall**

12/15	1	Great Bay	S. Heron
12/17	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	J. Lambert

## **Eurasian Wigeon**

12/01	1	Sunset Farm, Greenland	K. Wilmarth
12/05	1	Newington Rd., Greenland	S. Wrisley

## **American Wigeon**

12/01	12	Sunset Farm, Greenland	K. Wilmarth
01/01	1	Independence Dr. pond, Londonderry	A. McDermott
01/05	14	Bayview Dr., Newmarket	C. Duffy
01/13	25	Great Bay, Greenland	S. Mirick
02/17	20	Great Bay, Greenland	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
02/20	1	Powwow R., Small Pox Rd., Kingston	J. Maher

## **Northern Pintail**

12/01	1	Penacook survey route	P. Hunt
12/12	1	Parson's Creek, Rye	R. Prieto
12/16	1	Suncook R. Reservoir, Allentown	A. Robbins
01/05	1	Downing Court, Exeter	R. Prieto
02/02	1	Town Docks, Meredith	K. Wilmarth
02/08	2	Powwow R., Small Pox Rd., Kingston	S. Heron
02/27	2	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	J. Sparrell

## **Green-winged Teal**

12/05	1	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzy	K. Klapper, P. Brown
12/09	1	NH coast	S. Mirick, et al.



Date	#	Location	Observer
12/23	1	Androscoggin R., Gorham	K. Toomey
12/29	4	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer
01/05	1	Krif Rd., Keene	R.& A. Burnett
01/06	1	Wheelwright Creek, Exeter	S. Mirick
01/16	1	Androscoggin R., Gorham	P. Moynahan, N. Houlihan, J. Stevens
02/10	1	Androscoggin R., Gorham	K. Toomey

**Canvasback**

12/05	2	Newington Rd., Greenland	S. Wrisley
12/08	1	Brackett's Pt., Osprey Cove, Greenland	K. Wilmarth
12/23	1	Little Harbor	M. Dunham

**Redhead**

12/15	1	Great Bay	S. Heron
01/19	1	Brackett's Pt., Osprey Cove, Greenland	E. Masterson, et al.

**Ring-necked Duck**

12/08	6	Brackett's Pt., Osprey Cove, Greenland	K. Wilmarth
12/21	1	Fields Grove City Park, Nashua	C. Sheridan
12/23	8	Little Harbor	M. Dunham
01/02	2	World End Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
01/06	1	Exeter WTP	D. Jackson, et al.
01/25	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	Z. Cornell
02/20	1	Fields Grove City Park, Nashua	C. Sheridan, S. Heron

**Tufted Duck**

01/05	1	Exeter WTP	L. McKillop, et al.
01/17	1	Exeter WTP	E. Masterson
01/20	1	Exeter WTP	S.& D. Stoddard



Two photos showing the change in the Tufted Duck's plumage over two weeks. Photos by Len Medlock and Jason Lambert, compiled by Steve Mirick.

**Greater Scaup**

12/15	1165	Great Bay	S. Heron
01/05	1000	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	S. Mirick
01/28	300	Adams Point WMA, Durham	S.& D. Stoddard

Date	#	Location	Observer
02/17	1200	Great Bay, Greenland	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

**Lesser Scaup**

12/08	5	Exeter WTP	L. McKillop
01/05	8	Exeter WTP	S. Wrisley, J. Pettipas, L.& L. Medlock
02/03	6	Adams Point WMA, Durham	A. Murray
02/17	12	Exeter WTP	L. Medlock, R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
02/18	3	Hampton Harbor restroom, Seabrook	J. Keator
02/28	3	Rye Harbor	S. Mirick

**Common Eider**

12/15	200	NH coast	H. Stevens
12/29	150	Hampton Beach SP	K. Rosenberg
02/03	120	Fort Constitution, New Castle	C. Duffy
02/10	120	Seabrook Beach	A. Robbins
02/17	117	NH coast	S. Mirick

**Harlequin Duck**

12/20	1	Seabrook	K. Wilmarth
01/01	1	Bicentennial Park, Hampton	K. Towler, J. Sparrell
02/15	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	J. Sparrell



Harlequin Duck by Jim Sparrell, 2-15-19, Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.

**Surf Scoter**

12/29	100	Hampton Beach SP	K. Rosenberg
01/16	47	NH coast	J. Maher
02/17	53	NH coast	S. Mirick

**White-winged Scoter**

12/15	30	Concord Pt., Rye	P. Hunt, R. Suomala, D. Smith
12/15	50	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	P. Hunt, R. Suomala, D. Smith, R. Prieto
01/06	45	Hampton Beach SP	D. Jackson

**Black Scoter**

12/05	150	Little Boars Head, N. Hampton	S.& D. Stoddard
12/20	100	Seabrook Beach	K. Wilmarth
01/10	150	Little Boars Head, N. Hampton	J. Lambert
02/03	318	NH coast	C. Duffy
02/10	1200	Seabrook Beach	A.& G. Robbins
02/17	957	NH coast	S. Mirick
02/28	175	Hampton Beach SP	D. Prima

**Long-tailed Duck**

12/20	22	NH coast	K. Wilmarth
12/29	40	Hampton Beach SP	K. Rosenberg
01/18	14	Ancient Hgwy., Hampton	S. Lamonde
02/17	68	NH coast	S. Mirick

# WINTER SEASON

Date	#	Location	Observer	Date	#	Location	Observer
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## Bufflehead

01/01	1	NHTI boat ramp, Concord	R. Quinn, J. Kolas
01/02	2	Fields Grove City Park, Nashua	C. Sheridan
02/23	3	Webster NA, Kingston	S. Heron, B. Green
02/23	1	Stark St., Manchester	D. Sylvester
02/24	1	Clough SP, Weare	B. Bateman

## Common Goldeneye

12/06	200	Sunset Farm, Greenland	S.& D. Stoddard
12/15	37	Stark Landing, Manchester	R.& K. Frieden
12/21	8	S. Sector, Errol CBC	L. Charron
12/24	1	Leavitt Beach, Meredith	K. Klapper
12/31	77	Lake Wantastiquet, Hinsdale	K. Fenton, L. Burford
01/04	28	Stark Landing, Manchester	C. Sheridan
01/06	7	Androscoggin R., Errol	L. Charron
01/08	61	Stark Landing, Manchester	S. Mirick
02/08	18	Androscoggin R., Errol dam	L. Charron
02/17	54	Merrimack R., Manchester	C. McPherson
02/23	10	Lake Winnisquam, Laconia	A.& G. Robbins



Which one is it?

## Horned Grebe

12/03	2	Leavitt Beach, Meredith	K. Klapper
12/31	9	North Beach, Hampton	H. Bauer

## Red-necked Grebe

12/15	23	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	P. Hunt, R. Suomala, D. Smith
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Barrow's (left) and Common Goldeneye by Susan Wrisley, 1-2-19, Manchester, NH.

## Barrow's Goldeneye

12/06	1	Stark Landing, Manchester	S. Mirick
12/08	1	Connecticut R., Lebanon	W. Scott
12/09	1	Jeffreys Ledge	Eastman's boat, 12 observers
12/15	1	Hinsdale Setbacks	C. Witko, G. Amrhein, C. Ross
12/26	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	R. Prieto
01/18	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	L. McKillop
01/21	3	Merrimack R., Manchester	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
02/07	1	Androscoggin R., Errol dam	L. Charron

## Hooded Merganser

12/14	60	Brackett's Pt., Osprey Cove, Greenland	S.& D. Stoddard
12/15	1	Dahl WS, Conway	W. Broussard, A. Bourque
12/19	15	Town Docks, Meredith	K. Klapper
01/02	16	Connecticut R., Lebanon	W. Scott

## Common Merganser

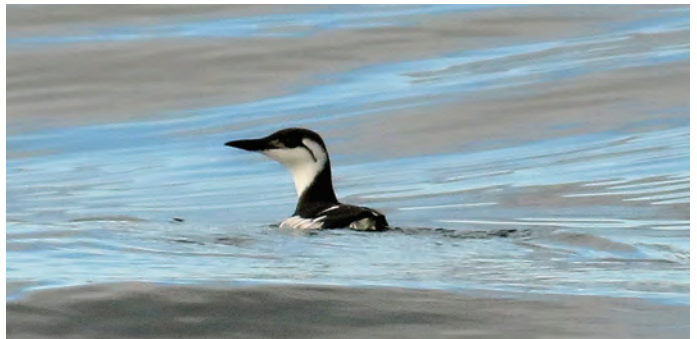
12/09	102	Leavitt Beach, Meredith	K. Klapper
12/31	46	Lake Wantastiquet, Hinsdale	K. Fenton, L. Burford
01/12	47	Lambert Park, Hooksett	D. Lipsy

## Red-breasted Merganser

12/11	1	Spofford L., Chesterfield	A. Burnett
12/11	46	Great Bay, Greenland	J. Maher
12/23	50	Little Harbor	C. Marchant

## Shorebirds through Raptors

Shorebirds were relatively scarce in the winter season with a few reports of Dunlins and Sanderlings, in addition to the expected flocks of Purple Sandpipers roaming the coast. An early Killdeer was reported in mid-February in Exeter.



Common Murre by Steve Bennett, 12-1-18, offshore waters, NH.

Big excitement (and not a little envy) was generated on the first day of December when a group of birders on an Eastman's fishing boat out of Seabrook were briefly visited by a **Ross's Gull**, the first record of this species in New Hampshire waters (see full story in this issue). Observers on that trip also reported four **Atlantic Puffin**, a species that tends to winter far out at sea. The following week another group went out on the Eastman's fishing boat, but saw no sign of the Ross's Gull. Both trips recorded **Northern Fulmar**, **Black-legged Kittiwake**, high numbers of **Dovekie** and **Razorbill**, and many **Common Murre**. The second trip sighted several **Pomarine Jaegers**. Sightings of **Thick-billed Murre** were all coastal observations during the winter season.

Answer: One of each! Common (right) and Red-breasted Merganser by Steve Mirick, 12-9-18, Portsmouth Harbor, NH.

A Razorbill on Great Bay proved to be the first record of the species for Strafford County (see the Field Notes). There was a remarkable number of Razorbills seen in the Piscataqua River in early December. On December 9, 55 were tallied from Fort Constitution in New Castle and Steve Mirick had a similar number in the area, noting that they were in the Piscataqua River as far up as the Portsmouth Fish Pier and also in Little Harbor. The 58 **Dovekies** observed from Rye Harbor State Park in mid-December is the highest count from land since the 1980s. Larger flights have been recorded at the coast prior to 1980, but recent high counts have all come from offshore boat trips. All but one of this December's Dovekies was flying north. Bonaparte's Gulls were observed through the end of January, stopping over during migration. This species is the only gull that usually nests in trees. They leave their breeding grounds in the boreal forest and taiga in mid-July to September and will linger on open water and in bays on their way to overwintering grounds in southern states and all the way down to Panama and Venezuela (Burger & Gochfeld 2002).

While the seacoast, fishing boats, and wastewater treatment plants are often hotspots for gulls in the winter, Coos County had an exceptional year with sightings of Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull during the winter months. These were mostly around the Androscoggin River in Berlin, joining scant reports from earlier years for that northern and inland location. The Glaucous Gull in Seabrook continued to preside over the bathhouse there, as it has done since the winter of 2008-09. Great Cormorants were somewhat scarce on the coast this winter with only two counts of 20 or more birds.

Another coastal star of the winter season was an **American White Pelican** that was first reported on December 11 and last seen on December 31. The pelican spent much of its time near the Wentworth Marina in New Castle, but was also seen from Odiorne Point State Park on many occasions. Curiously, it was not seen on December 25, but photos suggest that the same bird was sighted in the Portland, ME area that day. While American White Pelicans are near annual visitors to Massachusetts, this was only the third known winter record for New Hampshire, with one bird seen in Manchester and Hollis in December 2004 and another bird seen on Great Bay in Newmarket in December of 2006 (Keith & Fox 2013; eBird data). Breeding populations east and west of the Rocky Mountains generally migrate in separate directions with the eastern breeders wintering in Texas, Florida, and the Gulf States down through Mexico, with stragglers on foraging grounds as late as December 19 (Knopf & Evans 2004).



*American White Pelican by Scott Turnbull, 12-11-18, Rye, NH.*

Reports of single Red-shouldered Hawks occurred throughout the winter season in the southern counties, while Rough-legged Hawks were less common and more widespread, ranging from Coos County to Hillsborough, Strafford and Rockingham Counties.



*Bald Eagle by Debra Powers, 2-17-19, Dover, NH.*

NH Audubon's 39th annual New Hampshire Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey on January 12 (Lakes region, 1-10-19) found a steady number of 85 Bald Eagles which was more than the 2018 tally but lower than the record-high of 95 birds in 2017. These numbers still suggest a sustained recovery compared to the fewer than 10 eagles from 1981-88 (NH Audubon data). According to Survey Coordinator Chris Martin, the Connecticut River watershed had the most eagles with 23 Bald Eagles and one Golden Eagle. The Lakes Region tallied 21 Bald Eagles, the Great Bay/Seacoast area 19, and the Merrimack River watershed 18. Other regions had lower numbers. The one **Golden Eagle** on the survey was first found in early January by Rand and Adam Burnett at Chickering Farm in Westmoreland. The bird was seen from several locations for almost a month, from January 6 to February 1. This appears to be the second record of a Golden Eagle in Cheshire County for the winter season; one was photographed flying overhead on February 4, 2015.

## WINTER SEASON

Elsewhere in New England, Montpelier, VT hosted a Golden Eagle that was observed from December 15 to January 15, and there were scattered sightings along the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts. Golden Eagles formerly bred in the White Mountains of New Hampshire with the last documentation of breeding in 1956 (Keith and Fox 2013). The only sighting of **Black Vultures** for the winter season was in mid-February, also in Westmoreland.

*Date # Location Observer*

### Killdeer

02/16 1 Exeter WTP M. Mahata, B. Hall

### Sanderling

12/07 45 Hampton Beach SP J. Hughes  
 12/08 120 Hampton Beach SP T. Keyel  
 12/15 30 NH coast H. Stevens  
 12/20 1 NH coast K. Wilmarth

### Dunlin

12/07 2 Hampton Beach SP J. Hughes  
 12/15 12 Hampton Beach SP D. McDermott  
 01/19 15 Seabrook Beach R. Suomala, et al.



*Purple Sandpiper flock by Steve Mirick, 1-26-19, and a single individual by Leo McKillop, 2-2-19, showing this species' preference for wave-splashed rocks (Rye, NH).*

*Date # Location Observer*

### Purple Sandpiper

12/08 30 Ancient Hgwy., Hampton K. Oeser  
 01/07 55 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton D. Hubbard  
 01/26 50 Rye Ledge S. Mirick

### Pomarine Jaeger

12/09 2 Jeffreys Ledge Eastman's boat, 12 observers

### Dovekie

12/01 38 Jeffreys Ledge Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley,  
 J. Maher, S. Bennett  
 12/09 211 Jeffreys Ledge B. Griffith, J. Lambert  
 12/16 58 Rye Harbor SP S.& J. Mirick, J. Lambert  
 12/21 2 Sawyers Beach, Rye C. Marchant  
 02/16 1 North Beach, Hampton H. Bauer  
 02/17 1 Seal Rocks, Rye R. Prieto  
 02/23 2 Jeffreys Ledge S.& J. Mirick

### Common Murre

12/01 7 Jeffreys Ledge Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley,  
 J. Maher, S. Bennett  
 12/09 39 Jeffreys Ledge B. Griffith, J. Lambert  
 02/23 39 Jeffreys Ledge S.& J. Mirick

### Thick-billed Murre

12/15 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye R. Prieto  
 01/13 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye K. Bailey, B. Binder  
 01/19 3 Bicentennial Park, Hampton R. Suomala, et al.  
 02/16 1 Great Boars Head, Hampton R. Suomala, Z. Cornell  
 02/16 1 Seal Rocks, Rye A. Vicciarelli  
 02/17 1 Great Boars Head, Hampton K. Wilmarth, R. Prieto

### Razorbill

12/09 55 Fort Constitution, New Castle E. Masterson,  
 C. Seifer, G. Tillman  
 01/06 8 NH coast J. Pettipas, S. Wrisley  
 02/08 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham D. Prima

### Atlantic Puffin

12/01 4 Jeffreys Ledge Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley,  
 J. Maher, S. Bennett

### Black-legged Kittiwake

12/01 29 Jeffreys Ledge Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley,  
 J. Maher, S. Bennett



*Black-legged Kittiwake by Steve Bennett, 12-1-18, offshore waters, NH.*

# WINTER SEASON

Date	#	Location	Observer
12/09	20	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, J. Lambert
12/15	2	Rt. 1A, "stone angel" pullout, Rye	P. Hunt, R. Suomala, D. Smith
12/16	6	Rye Harbor SP	S.& J. Mirick, J. Lambert
02/23	9	Jeffreys Ledge	S.& J. Mirick

## Bonaparte's Gull

12/09	44	Portsmouth Harbor	S. Mirick
12/15	30	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	R. Prieto
12/20	40	Little Harbor	D. Jackson
01/28	1	Hampton Beach SP	N. Houlihan, P. Moynahan

## Ross's Gull

12/01	1	Jeffreys Ledge	Z. Cornell, S. Wisley, J. Maher, S. Bennett
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## Ring-billed Gull

12/19	3	Main St., Berlin	L.& P. Charron
01/04	9	Main St., Berlin	L. Charron

## Herring Gull

12/06	9	St. Anne Hall, School St., Berlin	L.& P. Charron
12/19	3	Main St., Berlin	L.& P. Charron
01/04	36	Main St., Berlin	W. O'Brien
01/16	3	Prospect St., Berlin	N. Houlihan, P. Moynahan, J. Stevens

## Iceland Gull

12/01	2	Androscoggin R. at Bridge St., Berlin	B. Griffith, R. Prieto
12/09	6	Jeffreys Ledge	Eastman's boat, 12 observers
12/21	4	Eel Pond, Rye	J. Lambert
12/22	6	Rochester WTP	K. Wilmarth, R. Prieto
12/31	1	Fields Grove City Park, Nashua	C. Sheridan
01/01	2	Exeter WTP	S. Mirick
01/05	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	S. Mirick
02/08	6	Rochester WTP	J. Lambert
02/09	1	Rt. 3A, Hooksett	L. McKillop
02/24	3	Hampton Beach SP	J. Lambert



*Glaucous Gull by  
Jason Lambert,  
1-11-19, Seabrook,  
NH.*

## Lesser Black-backed Gull

12/21	1	Eel Pond, Rye	J. Lambert
12/27	1	Rochester WTP	J. Lambert
01/01	1	Hampton Harbor restroom, Seabrook	R. Prieto

Date	#	Location	Observer
01/02	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard
02/15	2	Rochester WTP	J. Lambert
02/16	1	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer
02/28	1	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard

## Glaucous Gull

12/01	1	Androscoggin R. at Bridge St., Berlin	B. Griffith, R. Prieto
12/01	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	A. Murray
12/04	1	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook	M. Watson
12/09	2	Jeffreys Ledge	Eastman's boat, 12 observers
12/20	1	Mason St. bridge, Berlin	K. Toomey
01/04	1	Main St., Berlin	W. O'Brien, L. Charron
01/23	3	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
02/08	2	Rochester WTP	J. Lambert
02/28	1	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard

## Great Black-backed Gull

12/06	36	St. Anne Hall, School St., Berlin	L.& P. Charron
01/04	22	downtown Berlin	C. Nims, S. McCarthy

## Common Loon

12/03	1	Leavitt Beach, Meredith	K. Klapper
12/04	1	Newfound L., Bristol	B. Hall
12/11	6	Spofford L., Chesterfield	A. Burnett
12/29	1	Rocky Bound Pond, Croydon	D. Peirce
02/17	80	NH coast	S. Mirick

## Northern Fulmar

12/01	8	Jeffreys Ledge	Z. Cornell, S. Wisley, J. Maher, S. Bennett
12/09	13	Jeffreys Ledge	B. Griffith, J. Lambert
02/23	22	Jeffreys Ledge	S.& J. Mirick

## Great Cormorant

12/15	1	Parlin Airfield, Newport	D. Jackson
01/06	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	J. Sparrell
02/03	27	NH coast	C. Duffy

## Double-crested Cormorant

12/20	5	Little Harbor	D. Jackson
01/01	2	salt marshes s. of Rye Harbor	S. Mirick
01/07	1	Rye Harbor SP	D. Hubbard



*American White  
Pelican by Jim  
Sparrell,  
12-22-18, New  
Castle, NH.*

## American White Pelican

12/11	1	Rt. 1A wooden bridge, Rye	S. Turnbull
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# WINTER SEASON

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>American White Pelican (Con't.)</b>			
12/14	1	Little Harbor, Wentworth By The Sea Marina	H. Schram, et al.
12/31	1	Little Harbor	J. Lambert, M. Jacobson, A. Kallenbach, L. McKillop, D. Ellis, J. Pietrzak

Date	#	Location	Observer
02/17	1	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	R.& A. Burnett

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Turkey Vulture</b>			
12/31	22	Seabrook Greyhound Park	J. Lambert
01/01	2	Hollis-Brookline HS, Hollis	C. McPherson, S. Wisley
01/11	25	New Zealand Rd., Seabrook	W. Angell
01/19	21	Sanborn St., Exeter	L. Medlock
02/08	6	Broad St., Nashua	J. Gray
02/23	7	Hollis-Brookline HS, Hollis	C. McPherson

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Golden Eagle</b>			
01/06	1	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	R.& A. Burnett
01/17	1	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	D. Clark, A. Burnett
01/26	1	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	C. Lawlor
02/01	1	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	T. Parody

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Northern Harrier</b>			
12/14	2	Hampton Marsh	L. Medlock
12/22	1	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	C. Sheridan
12/26	1	Tigola Trail, Stoddard	J. Anderson
01/18	2	Hampton Beach SP	S. Lamonde
01/25	1	Broad St., Hollis	C. Sheridan
02/16	1	Seabrook Back Dunes	G. Bashline
02/28	1	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer



Northern Harrier by Len Medlock, 12-14-18, Hampton, NH.

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Northern Goshawk</b>			
12/13	1	Groveton WTP	M. Centner
12/15	1	Long Pond Rd., Lempster	J. Swatt
12/27	1	Muchmore Rd., Bethlehem	H. Bauer
01/05	1	Antrim Rd., Hancock	E. Masterson
01/13	1	River Rd., Walpole	M. Adams, A. Deen
01/24	1	Concord St., Antrim	L. Burford
01/27	1	Beede Flats Rd., N. Sandwich	K. Klapper
01/31	1	Northland Restaurant, Rt. 16, Berlin	L. Charron
02/25	1	True Rd., Plainfield	S. Hardy

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>			
12/01	1	South Rd., Kensington	G. Gavutis Jr.
12/31	1	Hammond Hollow Rd., Gilsum	M. Wright
01/09	1	Rt. 9 at Rt. 9A, Spofford	J. Dunham

Date	#	Location	Observer
01/14	1	Great Pond, Kingston	S. Heron
01/26	1	Piscassic St., Newmarket	E. Norton
02/02	1	Steven's Hill Rd., Nottingham	S. Mirick
02/23	1	Newton Rd., Plaistow	K. Wilmarth

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>			
12/01	1	Sunset Farm, Greenland	C. Schlotterbeck
12/08	1	Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease	K. Towler
12/09	1	Great Boars Head, Hampton	S. Mirick
12/14	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	H. Bauer
12/20	1	Sector 3, Pittsburg CBC	K. Fenton, L. Burford
12/29	1	Concord St., Antrim	K. Fenton, L. Burford
01/04	1	Hilton Park, Dover	J. Lambert
01/27	1	Gosling Rd., Newington	S.& D. Stoddard
01/31	1	Rye Harbor	Z. Cornell
02/02	1	Rt. 101, Hampton	C. Duffy
02/09	1	Colby-Sawyer College, New London	S. Bonamo, K. Endersen
02/17	1	NH coast	R. Prieto
02/23	1	Sunset Farm, Greenland	T. Peterson

## Owls through Waxwings



Long-eared Owl by Debbie Crowley, 1-21-19, Hampton, NH.

In contrast to the previous winter season, this year there was only one **Snowy Owl** sighting away from the coast in Sharon. The previous year they were seen in the western part of the state. Sightings along the coast were relatively scant compared to recent years. **Barred Owl** reports were widespread, with many accounts coming in of owls found injured or killed along roadsides. Rescue and rehab facilities reported record numbers brought in for care. Scott Williams, a wildlife biologist in Connecticut who monitors white-footed mouse populations, noted that banner years for mice in 2016 and 2017 may have led to greater breeding success for Barred Owls. Mice populations tend to fluctuate cyclically, depending on berry and mast crops. The crash in

the mouse population in 2018 may have contributed to the owls having greater difficulty finding food this winter and, consequently, they frequented roadsides to look for rodents. Barred Owls, like Great Horned and Eastern Screech-Owls, are strongly territorial and non-migratory, but can become nomadic in search of food. In contrast, many (although not all) Northern Saw-whet Owls are more predictably migratory; however, this species was rarely observed in New Hampshire this winter season, with just three reports in December and one in February. There was also one sighting each this season for **Short-eared Owl**, **Long-eared Owl**, and **Great Gray Owl**. The Short-eared Owl was seen flying over the road near a coastal marsh at Odiorne Point State Park. Also, along the seacoast, the Long-eared Owl was perched in someone's backyard in a dense, residential area, but near a marsh. It was seen briefly and photographed by one person who posted it on Facebook, but it was not found again. The Great Gray Owl was photographed in the Dalton area and not re-found.



*Canada Jay by Jason Lambert, 12-20-18, Pittsburg, NH.*

One **Red-headed Woodpecker** was still present at Great Bay NWR during the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), presumably the same bird observed at that location in the fall. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were most commonly reported in the southeastern part of the state, but there were reports as far north as New London and west as Westmoreland. Adult males migrate last and are generally found in higher numbers in more northern wintering grounds (Walters, Miller and Lowther 2002). A lingering **Eastern Phoebe** was discovered by Eric Ray and Chris Heys on Airport Road in Swanzezy at the end of December, a first winter record for Cheshire County.

Northern Shrikes were reported from every county in New Hampshire during the winter season. Steady numbers of Canada Jays were reported in Coos County during the CBC as well as from some winter hikers in the White Mountains, suggesting that these birds have not used the occasion of their name change to flee north across the border. Meanwhile, in the southern part of the state, Fish Crows have maintained a toehold and were observed throughout the winter at various locations along the seacoast and inland Rockingham County. For the second year in a row, a lone Tufted Titmouse came to a feeder throughout the winter in Lancaster.



*Bohemian Waxwing by Len Medlock, 1-21-19, New London, NH.*

While Winter Wrens were scattered around many marshy spots in the southern half of the state, a single **Marsh Wren** was found in Rye, joining about a dozen records of the species during the winter season. A first record for Coos County in winter was established for an Eastern Bluebird in Errol found by Robbie Prieto. Similarly, out of typical range was a **Hermit Thrush** heard by Lori Charron giving a “way” call in Errol, representing a second Coos County record for winter. A Brown Thrasher was found in a thicket by Odiorne Point State Park and remained for about a week. American Pipits were represented by only two reports of single birds along the Seacoast in December. In the northern counties, **Bohemian Waxwings** were found ranging in good-sized flocks, but they were not found in any of the southern counties of Strafford, Rockingham, or Hillsborough. Small flocks, however, were found in Cheshire during the winter season.

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
<b>Eastern Screech Owl</b>			
12/15	2	Brackett Rd., Rye	P. Hunt
12/31	1	Hollis	C. Sheridan
01/02	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	J. Lambert
01/02	1	Highland Ave., Salem	K. Wilmarth
01/04	1	Rt. 101 at Camp Rd., Amherst	T. Young
01/04	1	Amherst St., Nashua	S. Wrisley
01/19	1	Exeter	L.&L. Medlock
01/19	1	Great Bay Rd., Greenland	S. Lamonde, et al.
01/19	1	Brackett Brook fields, Greenland	S. Lamonde, et al.

# WINTER SEASON

Date # Location Observer

## Eastern Screech Owl (Con't.)

01/19 1 Winnicutt Rd., N. Hampton G. Bashline  
02/28 1 5th St., Dover M. Ward

## Snowy Owl

12/14 1 Spring Hill Rd., Sharon J. MacEachran  
01/05 1 Hampton Beach SP J. Sparrell, J. Lambert,  
S. Mirick, E. Norton, R. Prieto  
02/03 1 Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease K. Towler, J. Sparrell  
02/23 1 Hampton Beach SP S. Wrisley, S. Bennett,  
R. Suomala, Z. Cornell, D. Lania, C. Duffy  
02/28 1 Massacre Marsh, Rye S. Mirick



*Snowy Owl by Len Medlock, 2-5-19, Newington, NH.*

## Great Gray Owl

01/05 1 Dalton M. Noel, R. Anderson

## Long-eared Owl

01/21 1 Kings Hgwy., Hampton D. Crowley

## Short-eared Owl

12/14 1 Rt. 1A wooden bridge, Rye M. Watson

## Northern Saw-whet Owl

12/15 2 Great Bay NWR K. Wilmarth  
12/16 1 Murray Farms, Penacook P. Hunt  
12/16 1 Horatio Colony Preserve, Keene P. Kirkhart  
02/22 1 Little Chatham Rd., Chatham J. Scott

## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

12/13 1 Horseshoe Pond, Concord H. Siener  
12/15 1 Rye Elementary School, Sagamore Rd., Rye P. Hunt,  
R. Suomala, D. Smith  
12/29 1 SE Sector, Nashua-Hollis CBC C. Sheridan  
01/03 1 Laurel Ln., Stratham S. Szarmach  
01/14 1 Newport Rd., New London S. Wrisley  
01/21 1 River Rd. N., Westmoreland R. & A. Burnett  
01/29 1 Columbia Ave., Nashua J. Maher  
01/29 1 Evelyn Ave., Raymond D. Prima

## Red-headed Woodpecker

12/15 1 Great Bay NWR K. Wilmarth

## Red-bellied Woodpecker

12/01 1 Upton Rd., Errol B. Griffith, R. Prieto

Date # Location Observer



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
by Terri Fratus, 2-2-19,  
Dover, NH.*

## Black-backed Woodpecker

12/27 1 Back Lake Rd., Pittsburg R. Heil, S. Arena  
12/31 1 Cherry Pond access trail, Pondicherry NWR  
R. & K. Frieden  
01/13 1 Mud Pond, Pondicherry NWR D. Govatski  
02/10 1 Little Cherry Pond, Pondicherry NWR D. & T. Swain  
02/16 1 Hancock Mt., WMNF D. Bates

## American Kestrel

12/05 1 Rt. 1A second pullout s. of Odiorne Pt., Rye  
S. & D. Stoddard  
12/08 1 Rt. 101 at Rt. 101A, Milford J. Wing  
12/08 1 Islington St., Portsmouth C. Michaud  
12/16 1 Joslin Rd. gravel pit, Surry W. Ward  
12/23 1 O'Kane Rd., Durham I. Traynor  
12/30 1 Elm St., Nashua K. Fenton, L. Burford  
01/06 1 Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease K. Wilmarth  
02/03 1 Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease K. Towler, J. Sparrell  
02/06 1 Rt. 101, Milford N. Houlihan



*Merlin by Jason  
Lambert, 2-17-19,  
Dover, NH.*

## Merlin

12/01 1 Rt. 2, Gorham B. Griffith, R. Prieto  
12/02 1 Great Bay NWR G. Chapin



Date	#	Location	Observer
12/16	1	Horse Corner Rd., Chichester	R. Suomala, H. Seiner, M. Nork
12/24	1	West Portsmouth St., Concord	P. Hunt
01/05	1	Fort Eddy Rd., Concord	D. Lania
01/15	1	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook	K. Dorsey
02/11	1	Portsmouth High School	J. Sparrell
02/17	1	Court St., Dover	M. Ward
02/23	1	Messer St. bridge, Laconia	C. Wennert

**Eastern Phoebe**

12/27	1	Airport Rd., Swanzey	C. Heys, E. Ray
12/30	1	Airport Rd., Swanzey	D. Hoitt

**Northern Shrike**

12/01	1	Hollis-Brookline HS, Hollis	C. McPherson
12/04	1	Tracy Dr., Errol	L. Charron
12/06	1	Great Bay NWR	S.& D. Stoddard
12/10	1	South Rd., Kensington	G. Gavutis Jr.
12/10	1	Wilton	S. Lemire
12/11	1	Steven's Hill Rd., Nottingham	P. Miliotis
12/15	1	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	S. Wisley
12/16	1	Morrills Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
12/22	1	Lamprey River Preserve, Durham	K. Dorsey, H. Zirkle
12/29	1	Giunta Dr., Sanbornton	B. Griffith
01/09	1	True Rd., Plainfield	S. Hardy
01/10	1	Piper Cove, Holderness	I. MacLeod
01/14	1	Indian Cave Landing, Sunapee	D. Jackson
01/21	1	Range Rd., Sandwich	K. Klapper
02/17	1	Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich	T. Vazzano
02/20	1	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	A. Burnett



*Canada Jay by Jason Lambert, 2-16-19, Mt. Pierce, WMNF, NH.*

**Canada Jay**

12/01	2	Mt. Jackson, WMNF	D. Ellis
12/26	3	Deer Mountain SP, Pittsburg	J. Pettipas, S. Wisley, S. Bennett

Date	#	Location	Observer
01/17	3	Webster-Jackson Trail, WMNF	D. Lania
02/16	3	Crawford Path, WMNF	K. Shulgina
02/23	1	Bretton Woods X-C Ski Area, WMNF	K. Shulgina

**Fish Crow**

12/13	2	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer
12/13	1	Great Pond, Kingston	S. Heron
01/04	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	C. Duffy
02/07	23	Rockingham Park Blvd., Salem	K. Wilmarth
02/10	2	Swasey Pkwy., Exeter	K. Wilmarth
02/20	4	Great Pond, Kingston	S. Heron
02/23	2	Newmarket	K. Wilmarth

**Horned Lark**

12/15	23	Rt. 155A fields, Durham	K. Dorsey
12/24	37	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	L. McKillop
01/03	53	Hampton Beach SP	L. McKillop
01/11	40	N. Meadow Plaza, Walpole	A. Burnett
01/14	40	Dingman Farm, Kensington	D. Finch
01/19	60	Stuart Farm, Stratham	E. Masterson, et al.
01/25	275	Chickering Rd., Westmoreland	J. Smith
01/28	70	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	M. Chadwick, J. Gamble
01/30	18	Red Oak Hill Rd., Epping	A. Harvey
02/09	45	Hollis-Brookline HS, Hollis	C. McPherson
02/20	39	Hampton Beach SP	D. Hubbard

**Boreal Chickadee**

12/23	1	Trudeau Rd., Bethlehem	L. Burford
12/27	5	Rt. 3, Pittsburg	S. Arena, R. Heil
12/31	4	Falling Waters Trail, Franconia Notch SP	J. Dunham
01/04	3	Mt. Adams, WMNF	C. Cadow
02/04	3	Tracy Dr., Errol	L. Charron
02/17	3	Kearsage North Trailhead, Bartlett	D. Ressler, H. Otto
02/23	3	Owl's Head Mt., WMNF	D. Ellis

**Tufted Titmouse**

01/01	1	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain	N. Mitiguy
01/22	1	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain	N. Mitiguy
01/28	1	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain	G.& A. Robbins
02/20	2	Summer St., Lancaster	A. Griffin
02/25	1	Twin View Dr, Twin Mountain	N. Mitiguy

**Winter Wren**

12/24	4	West Locke Rd., Concord	P. Hunt
12/29	1	J. Jill campus, Tilton	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
01/29	1	Colby Marsh, Durham	A. Murray

**Marsh Wren**

12/15	1	Heritage Ave., Rye	P. Hunt
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**Carolina Wren**

01/19	2	Mink Brook wetlands, Hanover	J. MacQueen
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**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**

12/15	1	Dearborn Rd., Greenland	S.& J. Mirick
01/13	1	Dearborn Rd., Greenland	S. Mirick
01/18	1	Shaw's Hill Rd., Kensington	K. Klapper
01/19	1	Dearborn Rd., Greenland	S. Mirick, et al.

**Eastern Bluebird**

12/01	40	Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease	R. Suomala
12/12	21	Bellamy River WMA, Dover	P. Hunt, D. Gagne

## WINTER SEASON

Date # Location Observer

### Eastern Bluebird (Con't.)

12/12 24 Rochester WTP S.& D. Stoddard  
 12/29 31 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis W. Byrnes,  
 G.& K. Coffey, N. Lebedzinski  
 12/30 1 Sandwich Sector, Holderness CBC S. Francesco  
 01/14 26 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis G. Coffey  
 02/03 4 Bridge St., W. Lebanon J. Norton  
 02/06 7 Rt. 10, Orford D. Gildersleeve  
 02/11 1 S. Sector, Errol CBC R. Prieto

### Hermit Thrush

12/01 1 Pickering Ponds, Rochester A. Murray  
 12/22 1 Tracy Dr., Errol L. Charron  
 01/20 1 Ten Rod Rd., Rochester D. Hubbard  
 02/23 1 Pickering Ponds, Rochester D. Hubbard

### American Robin

01/09 300 Court St., Laconia T. Vazzano  
 01/12 160 Waste Management landfill, Rochester S. Young,  
 D. Hubbard  
 01/25 150 Meadow Pond, Hampton H. Bauer  
 01/28 250 Perry Ave., Concord H. Siener  
 01/29 9 Gorham, NH K. Toomey  
 02/09 165 Hollis-Brookline HS, Hollis C. McPherson

### Gray Catbird

01/01 1 Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye R. Prieto  
 01/06 1 NHA Massabesic Ctr., Auburn H. Otto  
 01/11 1 Cheshire Rail Trail, Keene N. Cross  
 01/17 1 Folsom Mill Ln., Epping E. Miller  
 02/20 1 Ashuelot River Park, Keene N. Cross  
 02/23 1 Pickering Ponds, Rochester D. Hubbard

### Brown Thrasher

01/13 1 Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye N. Cross  
 01/19 1 Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye S. Mirick, S. Lamonde, et al.

### American Pipit

12/03 1 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard  
 12/22 1 Rye Harbor SP S. Heron

### Bohemian Waxwing

12/01 40 Rt. 3, Twin Mountain D. Hubbard  
 12/01 50 Akers Pond, Errol B. Griffith, R. Prieto  
 12/05 125 Rt. 175A, Plymouth K. Klapper  
 12/16 175 Newport Rd., New London D. Jackson  
 12/27 180 Holderness Rd., Holderness S. Arena, R. Heil  
 01/01 158 Mechanic St., Gorham L. Charron  
 01/05 250 Academy Quad, New London J. Nathan, D. Lipsy  
 01/06 250 Main St., New London M. Nelson  
 01/27 200 Rt. 16 at Rt. 302, Conway C. Hedderig,  
 M. Marchessault, P. Jacobson  
 01/27 300 Main St., Gorham C. Hedderig, M. Marchessault,  
 P. Jacobson, P. Donahue, S.& C. Whitebread,  
 S. McCarthy, S. Avery, K. Rawdon  
 02/09 200 Main St., Berlin M. Wilson, L.& P. Charron  
 02/09 11 N. Main St., Newport S. Bonamo, K. Endersen

## Finches through Dickcissel



*Pine Grosbeak by Jason Lambert, 1-13-19, Strafford, NH.*

Although White-winged and Red Crossbills were less in evidence this winter, there were many observations of **Evening Grosbeaks** and **Pine Grosbeaks** around the state. Flocks of **Common Redpolls**, and **Pine Siskins** were smaller, but still widely distributed. In the 2017-2018 winter season, there were only 14 reports of Common Redpoll flocks, while in the winter of 2018-2019 there were well over 250 reports, with the largest flock a group of 100 in Haverhill. There were only three reports of White-winged Crossbills, all flyovers identified by the distinctive call note. Red Crossbills were recorded on CBCs in Portsmouth and Pittsburg, as well as one in Concord and two in Lincoln. Evening Grosbeaks were seen in every county, with the largest flock a group of 148 coming to feeders in Marlow. Pine Grosbeaks were observed over much of the state, but there were no reports of them in Strafford or Hillsborough Counties. Large flocks were reported from Main Street in Gorham and the Colby-Sawyer College campus in New London.

Lapland Longspurs are widespread in the United States during the winter, and individuals or small groups were observed around the state in coastal and agricultural areas where they can forage on seeds from weeds like crabgrass. Snow Buntings have similar foraging habits, eating seeds from knotweed, ragweed, goldenrod, and other weeds and grains (Montgomerie and Lyon 2011). Snow can force both of these birds along the roadside to find food. Because of fierce competition for nesting sites in rock cavities, these birds are often relatively early to leave and the first arrivals on territory in the Arctic, representing the northernmost breeding songbirds.

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was seen at Odiorne Point State Park from early December through January 11 foraging on berries in the thickets. Another chat was found in Seabrook in the same area that hosted the Orange-crowned Warbler.

In this same weedy area (Field of Dreams?), a **Vesper Sparrow** remained through January 19, a record late date for Rockingham County and the second latest date for the state (Keith and Fox 2013). A Field Sparrow was also seen in this field during the Superbowl of Birding on January 19. Across the state, in Walpole, the Vesper Sparrow found by Rand and Adam Burnett in December established a first winter record for Cheshire County.



*Vesper Sparrow by Len Medlock, 1-19-19, Seabrook, NH.*

A **Seaside Sparrow** found in the fall continued into early December on the Seacoast, joining three previous winter records for New Hampshire, all in the 1990s (Keith and Fox 2013). While **Chipping Sparrows** can linger into the winter, usually in the southeastern part of the state, one photographed coming to a feeder in Lancaster in January was the most northerly winter record in at least the last ten years. There was a single report of a Baltimore Oriole at a feeder in early December in Hampton. A **Brown-headed Cowbird** spotted by Kathleen Toomey in Gorham in January and February represents a second winter record for Coos County, joining a previous record from Errol in 1973. Two Dickcissels were observed during the winter season, one found in Keene by Wendy Ward, a third winter record for Cheshire County, and another found by George and Andrea Robbins in Laconia, a second winter record for Belknap County. Both were affiliating with flocks of House Sparrows.



*Yellow-rumped Warbler by Evy Nathan, 2-27-19, Kingston, NH.*

With harsher winter weather early in the season, warblers were much less in evidence than in the previous winter.

An **Orange-crowned Warbler** hung on in a weedy field in Seabrook from early December until mid-January. Two Common Yellowthroats were found in southern areas of the state in mid-December. Other warblers adapted to the cold temperatures and foraging challenges by coming to feeders. A **Black-throated Blue Warbler** frequented a feeder in Raymond until December 19 (see the Field Notes), and a Yellow-rumped Warbler was a regular visitor at two feeders in the southeastern part of the state until the end of February. There was a single report of a Pine Warbler at a feeder in Rye in mid-January, and a Palm Warbler was seen foraging in a field in mid-December.

*Date # Location Observer*

**Evening Grosbeak**

12/01	40	Umbagog Lake SP, Errol	B. Griffith, R. Prieto
12/01	18	Penacook survey route	P. Hunt
12/01	60	Bean Rd., Errol	B. Griffith, R. Prieto
12/01	12	Broad St., Rochester	S. Lauermann
12/02	40	Ridgewood Rd., Glen	R. Steber
12/02	4	Shore Dr., Nottingham	R.& K. Frieden
12/06	6	New Ipswich	N. Moreau
12/12	44	Lund Ln., Warren	M. Cordero
12/14	45	Steven's Hill Rd., Nottingham	P. Miliotis
12/17	22	Long Pond Rd., Lempster	J. Swatt
01/01	70	Groveton WTP	M. Centner
01/07	23	Durrell Mountain Rd., Gilmanton	N. Mitchell
01/13	2	Steven's Hill Rd., Nottingham	P. Miliotis
01/25	148	Honey Rd., Marlow	S. Tickner
01/30	80	Old Chesham Rd., Marlborough	S. Jaffe
02/14	64	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski

**Pine Grosbeak**

12/03	28	Red Hill Cemetery, Bean Rd., Moultonborough	K. Klapper
12/20	44	Second Connecticut L., Pittsburg	J. Keator, L.& P. Charron
12/24	57	Rt. 2, Gorham	J. Maher
01/10	58	Landing Rd., Enfield	J. MacQueen
01/11	36	Pleasant St., Berlin	B. Crowley
01/12	50	County Rd., New London	S. Barker, A. Bean
01/13	13	Strafford School	J. Lambert
01/15	11	Rt. 202, Northwood	S. Young
01/18	22	Lake Ave., Sunapee	D. Jackson
01/24	9	Foundry Ave, Meredith	K. Klapper
01/26	46	Exchange St., Gorham	R. Schain
02/09	21	Winter St., Newport	S. Bonamo, K. Endersen
02/14	16	Rt. 123, Walpole	D. Clark

**Common Redpoll**

12/07	60	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	S. Jaffe
12/09	50	Boggy Meadow Farm, River Rd., Walpole	A.& R. Burnett
01/17	50	Westmoreland Boat Launch	A. Burnett
01/27	62	Exchange St., Gorham	R. Schain
02/03	65	Pike Industries, Reeds Mill Rd., Newport	D. Jackson
02/05	50	Star Ridge Rd., Thornton	T. McShane
02/07	80	Krif Rd., Keene	J. Ells
02/12	100	Brown Hill Rd., N. Haverhill	R. Hacking

# WINTER SEASON

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Common Redpoll (Con't,)</b>			
02/16	52	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
02/23	40	Groveton WTP	M. Centner
02/26	42	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski
02/27	23	Antioch U. of New England, Keene	J. Dunham, S. Lamonde



Common Redpoll by Iain MacLeod, 1-13-19, Plymouth, NH.

## Red Crossbill

12/15	1	Urban Forestry Ctr., Portsmouth	R. Prieto
12/16	1	Turtle Pond, Concord	G.& A. Robbins
12/20	6	Pittsburg	L.& P. Charron
12/20	2	Sector 3, Pittsburg CBC	K. Fenton, L. Burford
12/31	2	Falling Waters Trail, Franconia Notch SP	J. Dunham

## White-winged Crossbill

12/03	1	Autumn Ln., Nottingham	R. Prieto
12/31	1	Tilton Hill Rd. by Suncook R., Pittsfield	G.& A. Robbins
02/06	2	Clear Creek Way, Manchester	L. McKillop

## Pine Siskin

12/02	8	Oak Hill Rd., Brookline	C. McPherson
12/06	11	Broad St., Rochester	S. Lauermann
12/13	14	Old Chesham Rd., Marlborough	S. Jaffe
12/23	11	Autumn Ln., Nottingham	R. Prieto
12/31	20	Concord St., Antrim	L. Burford
01/03	20	High Meadow Rd., Moultonborough	M. Giovonizzi
01/06	23	Tanglewood Dr., Henniker	D. Ellis
01/18	12	Concord St., Antrim	L. Burford

## Lapland Longspur

12/24	1	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	L. McKillop
01/08	1	Hampton Beach SP	J. Lambert
01/09	1	Pinnacle Ln., Walpole	W. Ward
01/11	6	River Rd., Walpole	A. Burnett
01/15	1	Hampton Beach SP	D. Hubbard
01/24	9	River Rd., Piermont	W. Scott
01/25	5	Chickering Rd., Westmoreland	J. Smith
01/26	1	Milan	L. Charron
02/01	1	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	N. Cross, S. Lamonde
02/03	2	Cornwell Dr., Keene	J. Ells

Date	#	Location	Observer
<b>Snow Bunting</b>			
12/08	14	Bald Mountain Rd., Newport	D. Jackson
12/09	40	Boggy Meadow Farm, River Rd., Walpole	R.& A. Burnett
12/22	2	Rt. 16, Milan	L. Charron
12/26	52	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	W. Ward, T. Parody
01/13	200	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	A. Burnett
01/26	50	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	R. Suomala
02/02	70	Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
02/14	25	Rt. 25, Haverhill	W. Scott
02/23	11	Lancaster WTP	A. Griffin

## Chipping Sparrow

01/01	2	Parkersville Ln., Seabrook	S. Mirick
01/02	1	Improved Machinery Pond, Nashua	C. Sheridan
01/18	1	Mechanic St., Conway	W. Broussard
01/19	3	Shaw St., Hampton	R. Suomala, et al.
01/21	1	Summer St., Lancaster	A. Griffin
02/24	1	Woodridge Park, Durham	K. Dorsey



Chipping Sparrow by Steve Mirick, 1-1-19, Seabrook, NH.

## Field Sparrow

01/19	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	J. Lambert, S. Lamonde, et al.
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## Fox Sparrow

12/12	1	Mechanic St., Conway	W. Broussard
12/13	2	Spring St., Swanzey	D. Hoitt
12/24	2	Marlboro St., Keene	W. Ward
12/25	1	Evelyn Ave., Raymond	D. Prima
01/17	1	Perkins Rd., Rye	S. Mirick, P. Lacourse
02/12	1	Marlboro St., Keene	W. Ward

## White-crowned Sparrow

12/02	1	Rt. 202, Peterborough	T. Pirro
12/29	1	Elm St. fields, Milford	A.& G. Robbins
12/29	1	Vista Heights, Tilton	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
01/01	1	Hampton Falls Rd., Exeter	P. Wood
01/05	1	Marlboro St., Keene	T. Parody
01/13	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	S. Mirick

## Vesper Sparrow

12/09	1	Boggy Meadow Farm, River Rd., Walpole	R.& A. Burnett
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Date	#	Location	Observer
01/01	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	J. Lambert
01/19	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	L.& L. Medlock, S.& D. Stoddard, J. Lambert, S. Lamonde, E. Masterson, S. Mirick, et al.

Date	#	Location	Observer
02/17	1	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	J. Pettipas, S. Wrisley, P. Hunt, U. Dienes
02/22	1	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	Z. Cornell

**Common Grackle**

02/17	180	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
02/23	100	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

**Orange-crowned Warbler**

12/08	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	J. Lambert
01/19	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	S.& D. Stoddard, J. Lambert



*White-crowned Sparrow - Gambel's subsp. by Steve Mirick, 1-13-19, Great Bay Farm, Greenland.*

**Seaside Sparrow**

12/02	1	Little Jacks restaurant, Rt. 1A, Hampton	K.& A. Wilmarth
12/05	1	Little Jacks restaurant, Rt. 1A, Hampton	S.& D. Stoddard

**Savannah Sparrow**

01/19	12	Stuart Farm, Stratham	E. Masterson, et al.
02/01	4	Boggy Meadow Farm, River Rd., Walpole	A. Burnett
02/02	3	Rt. 155A fields, Durham	J. Lambert
02/02	2	Seal Rocks, Rye	J. Lambert
02/17	2	Morrills Farm, Penacook	P. Hunt

**Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.**

01/19	1	Hampton Beach SP	E. Masterson, et al.
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**Yellow-breasted Chat**

12/01	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	L. McKillop, R.& K. Frieden, J. Sparrell
01/06	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	D. Jackson
01/11	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	R. Lessard
01/17	1	Seabrook Greyhound Park	Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley

**Baltimore Oriole**

12/05	1	Kings Hgwy., Hampton	D. Crowley
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**Red-winged Blackbird**

02/17	30	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	J. Pettipas, S. Wrisley
02/23	50	Hodgdon Farm Ln., Newington	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

**Brown-headed Cowbird**

12/20	3	Fogarty Rd., Barrington	D. Sanders
01/06	1	Gorham, NH	K. Toomey
01/10	1	Mechanic St., Gorham	L. Charron
01/19	1	Mechanic St., Gorham	J. Poelstra, A. Kocher, A. Lin-Moore, S. Uebbing
01/26	2	South Road, E. Kingston	Z. Cornell
01/28	1	Gorham	K. Toomey
02/18	1	Gorham	W. O'Brien

**Rusty Blackbird**

12/16	3	West Portsmouth St., Concord	A. Robbins, D. Lania
01/26	1	West Locke Rd., Concord	P. Hunt



*Orange-crowned Warbler by Jason Lambert, 1-13-19, Seabrook, NH.*

**Common Yellowthroat**

12/15	1	Great Bog, Banfield Rd., Portsmouth	P. Hunt
12/15	1	Blanchard Brook, Walpole	T. Schottland

**Black-throated Blue Warbler**

12/01	1	Evelyn Ave., Raymond	D. Prima
12/19	1	Evelyn Ave., Raymond	D. Prima

**Palm Warbler - yellow subsp.**

12/12	1	Bellamy River WMA, Dover	P. Hunt, D. Gagne
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**Pine Warbler**

01/12	1	Meadow Ln., Rye	S. Mirick
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**Yellow-rumped Warbler**

12/09	1	SPNHF Merrimack R. CA, Concord	H. Siener
01/01	1	Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye	R. Prieto
01/04	1	Beckman's Landing, Seabrook	J. Lambert
01/10	1	Autumn Ln., E. Kingston	K. Elwell
01/20	1	Scotland Rd., Kensington	E. Nathan
02/27	1	Autumn Ln., E. Kingston	K. Elwell

**Dickcissel**

12/08	1	Valley St., Keene	W. Ward
12/09	1	Valley St., Keene	W. Ward
02/23	1	Fair St. at Winnisquam Ave., Laconia	A.& G. Robbins

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## A Unicorn Does a Fly-by

by Steve Bennett, for "the Ross's Five"

It was the last day of November, and 2018 had been a good year for birders. Some of us had made nice additions to our New Hampshire state lists, including such beauties as



Ross's Gull by Susan Wrisley, 12-1-18, NH offshore waters.

Northern Wheatear, Hooded and Connecticut Warblers, the Wood Stork in Rochester and the South Polar Skua on the NH Audubon Fall Pelagic trip. The mega-lifer Great Black-Hawk was still being seen in Portland, Maine. Little did we know, it was about to get better.

That Friday evening, Susan Wrisley called me to say that Steve Mirick posted a trip report from an off-shore excursion that he and Jason Lambert took that day aboard a UNH research vessel. They had had several Atlantic Puffins on the trip. Both Susan and I needed Atlantic Puffin for our state list so we decided to go out the next morning (12-1-18) on the Eastman's deep-sea fishing charter out of Seabrook that would take us into those same off-shore waters. The next morning we were joined on the dock by three other hearty birders, Zeke Cornell, and Jeanne-Marie Maher and her husband Michael.

Eastman's is accommodating to birders. While the fishermen fish from the rails along the lower deck, they give us free access to the upper open-air observation deck. While offering a wonderful opportunity to bird, it can also

be a daunting experience, especially in December as you are totally outside and exposed to the elements while steaming out 20+ miles to the fishing grounds. The two hour ride out offered good views of the usual suspects. We even had a Song Sparrow visit the boat about ten miles off-shore.

When the boat anchored on the fishing grounds, we still did not have our puffins. For the next few hours, while the fishermen did their thing, we scanned from the upper deck and called out the kittiwakes, fulmars, gannets, and gulls, but nothing unusual. That is, until a bird appeared behind the boat that none of us could immediately identify. In an instant, our casual banter turned into hyper focus. With bins in-place we reached for every possible field mark. Susan had her ever present camera quickly ripping off shots. The bird made one low pass behind the boat, then circled up and headed out to the north. Gone, as quickly and mysteriously as it had appeared.

The discussion began. The pink body made an impression on me. Zeke remarked on the unusual dark under-wings and the big black eye. Jeanne-Marie seemed struck by its graceful flight. We poured over Susan's pictures and the field guides but nothing was quite adding up. Little Gull, Black-headed Gull, Sabine's Gull, a tern? Hmmm.

On our way back in, we picked up cell service so we sent a screen-shot text from Susan's camera to our birding guru Steve Mirick, asking for help with identifying our mystery bird. Steve got back to us. It's a Unicorn! Actually it was a Ross's Gull. The legendary bird of the high Arctic, the Holy Grail, here, in New Hampshire. Steve and Jane Mirick were waiting for us back on the dock. His joy was obvious, but it was justifiably tempered, he wanted to have been there on that boat.

Over the next few days, the calls, texts and emails started pouring in. Facebook and the birding blogs exploded. It was then that the true impact of this remarkable sighting started to sink in.

In 1975, the first Ross's Gull documented in North America away from Arctic waters was found in Newburyport Harbor by New Hampshire birder Paul Miliotis, and others. It made national news and was deemed the "bird of the century." There have been a few other sightings in the 40+ years since that encounter. Thank goodness Susan got some good diagnostic photos because, in the past, possible sightings were simply written off as "clearly absurd".

The next Eastman's boat out after our encounter was packed with hopeful birders, but unfortunately, this Ross's Gull was not to be seen again this season. While the five of us have a wonderful story to tell, I regret that we could not have shared it with more people, especially those who have put us on so many great birds over the years.

Oh, yes, we did get our puffins on the way back in. Yeah!

# A Comparison of Three Winter Pelagics

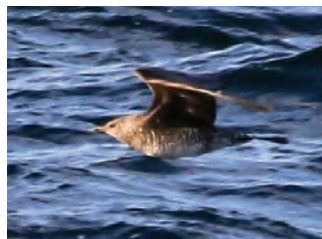
compiled by Rebecca Suomala

It can be a challenge to look for pelagic birds during the winter because there are few boats running at that time of year. In December of 2018 an informal collection of birders went on two fishing trips with Eastman's out of Seabrook, NH, the first of which resulted in the Ross's Gull featured elsewhere in this issue. Two months later in February Steve Mirick reported from a private trip on the Gulf Challenger. Below is a comparison of the pelagic species found on these three trips according to the eBird reports. Only totals from New Hampshire waters beyond the Isles of Shoals are listed below and if there were differing numbers in individual checklists, the highest count is listed.

Species	12-01-18	12-09-18	02-23-19
Pomarine Jaeger		2	
Dovekie	38	211	2
Common Murre	7	39	39
Razorbill	6	9	2
Atlantic Puffin	4		
alcid sp.	13	29	5
Black-legged Kittiwake	29	15	9
<b>Ross's Gull</b>	1		
Iceland Gull		5	3
Glaucous Gull		1	
Northern Fulmar	8	13	22
Northern Gannet	10	25	4



Northern Fulmar by Susan Wrisley, 12-9-18.



Pomarine Jaeger by Susan Wrisley, 12-9-18.



Black-legged Kittiwake by Susan Wrisley, 12-9-18.

## Participants

12/1/18 – Steve Bennett, Zeke Cornell, Jeanne-Marie Maher, Michael Pahl, Susan Wrisley

12/9/18 – Steve Bennett, Phil Brown, Zeke Cornell, Kathryn Frieden, Ben Griffith, Jason Lambert, Jenna Pettipas, Jim Sparrell, Rebecca Suomala, Katie Towler, Chad Witko, Susan Wrisley.

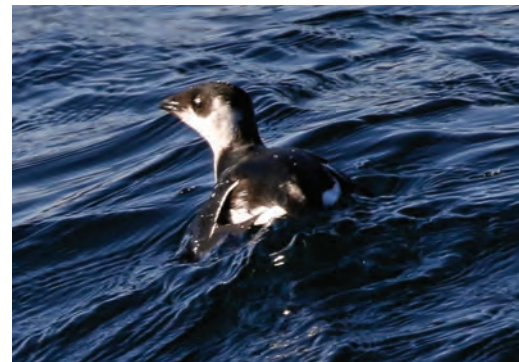
2/23/19 – Steve and Jane Mirick



The longest string of Dovekies (18) on the 12-1-18 trip. Photo by Susan Wrisley.



Seven of the 39 Common Murres tallied on 2-23-19. This was Steve Mirick's personal high count for the state. Photo by Steve Mirick.



Dovekie by Susan Wrisley, 12-9-18.

# Christmas Bird Count Summary 2018-2019

by David Deifk



*Canada Jay photographed in the Pittsburg CBC by Jason Lambert, 12-20-18, Pittsburg, NH.*

This year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were held between December 15, 2018 and January 1, 2019. There are 19 counts whose center is within New Hampshire borders. Only 18 counts were run this year as the Isles of Shoals Count was cancelled for the fourth year in a row because of sea conditions. Although centered in Vermont, the Barnet and Saxton's River CBCs overlap into New Hampshire as well. Two of the New Hampshire counts have substantial overlap into neighboring states. The Hanover-Norwich CBC extends into Vermont and the Isles of Shoals CBC extends substantially into Maine. Three other counts have minor overlap into neighboring states as well, those being Errol-Umbagog and North Conway into Maine and a tiny bit of Nashua into Massachusetts.

The species total across all counts was 137 versus 152 last year. Weather conditions were decidedly more benign than the frigid conditions many counts experienced last year. Sandwich was the only count that failed to make it above freezing during the day. Only four counts experienced any precipitation as well. The good weather conditions, however, didn't translate into high species diversity. There were no new species added to the state list this year versus two last year. A remarkable American White Pelican seen on the Coastal Count provided a second state record. The first was in 2004 on the Manchester Count. The total ever seen count remains at 251. There were only three state high counts this year, about half the usual number. Peterborough set the new record for Wild Turkey with 468 seen. Coastal NH had two new state highs with 56 Turkey Vultures, beating its own

record of 53 from last year, and 10 Barred Owls. There were 28 individual count high records this year which would be about half the yearly average. There were four species new to their respective counts versus 17 last year.

For waterfowl, American Black Ducks and Mallards were both only 60% of their recent yearly averages. Notable waterfowl included two Snow Geese and single Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler and Redhead on the Coastal Count. Inland, there was a single Northern Pintail and four Wood Ducks on the Concord Count. A Cackling Goose found on the Manchester Count provided only the third record statewide.



*American White Pelican by Len Medlock, 12-15-18, New Castle, NH.*

Wild Turkey had a remarkably good year with a total of over 3,200 across the state. This is almost double the statewide average. They were seen on every count as has been the trend since 2015. Peterborough set a new high mark of 468 with Hanover seeing a close 452, now the second highest record. In addition, five other counts set their individual count's record as well.

Bald Eagles did well this year with 70 seen, plus one on the New Hampshire portion of the Barnet Count. Remarkably, Bald Eagle was recorded on 16 of the 18 counts this year. The total is only 10 percent below the record high from two years ago. Keene reported the lone American Kestrel this year for the state. None were reported last year. Five Merlins and six Peregrine Falcons were seen.

After a record number of 16 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were found on 10 counts last year, the results were more modest this year. A total of six birds were found on five counts including an individual on the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River Count. It has only been in the last few years that more than one or two have been found.

It was widely reported that there was a general lack of Blue Jays this season. The CBC totals support this observation in that the count was down by almost a factor of four. This was likely due to New Hampshire's poor acorn crop which is a prime winter food source for this species. Black-capped



Chickadee numbers, which were down last year, made a modest recovery this season. They were up by about 20% over last year, however the overall trend has been a decline since the 2015 season.

Carolina Wren seemed to react to the cold weather last season with only 11 across the state on the 2017-18 CBC. This year, 97 were found which represented a nice recovery. Coastal NH set a new high count for the species with 35. Bohemian Waxwing is an irruptive species and this has been well demonstrated these last two seasons. It was totally unreported last year. This year almost 700 birds were seen on seven counts. Three of those were individual count high counts.

For warblers, a Common Yellowthroat seen on the New Hampshire portion of the Saxton's River count was outstanding. There are only two previous records on any western New Hampshire count. The only other warblers were all seen on the Coastal NH count. This included another Common Yellowthroat, a Pine Warbler, nine Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a Yellow-breasted Chat.

The Littleton Count produced an outstanding record of a Baltimore Oriole. Notably, this was the second record for the count, the first being in 2005. Outside of the counts close to the coast, there are only seven other records.

Dark eyed Juncos saw a dramatic decline on this year's CBC with only 1,734 versus 18,239 last year. The species tends to be somewhat irruptive but this was quite a dramatic swing in only one year. The huge mast crop in the fall of 2017 which brought the remarkably high junco total was followed by a very poor mast crop in fall 2018 which likely accounts for this year's low count.

For irruptive finches, only 27 Purple Finch were seen compared to 629 last year. Common Redpolls were reported in modest though widespread numbers, being seen on nine counts. The last major irruption was in 2015 (see the article on redpolls elsewhere in this issue). Pine Siskins were seen in very small numbers with 27 statewide. The last major incursion was on the 2015-16 CBC. Although not reported in huge numbers, Red Crossbill was minimally present. White-winged Crossbill went unreported. Evening Grosbeaks have been on a downward slide over the last 25 years including none found on count day last year. The results were more encouraging this year with a total of 375 seen across 11 counts. This includes a new count high for the AMC-Crawford Count.

Note: The CBC Table does not include sightings from the two Vermont CBCs that overlap into New Hampshire: Barnet VT and Saxton's River. New Hampshire highlights from those counts were mentioned above except for a Northern Shrike on the Saxton's River CBC (Walpole, NH area).

## Individual Count Highlights

### Nashua-Hollis

- Count High: Turkey Vulture
- Gray Catbird was seen for the third time.

### Peterborough-Hancock

- State High: Wild Turkey
- Count High: Ring-necked Pheasant, Bald Eagle, Barred Owl, Tufted Titmouse

### Keene

- New to Count: Northern Saw-whet Owl
- Count High: Great Blue Heron, Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Common Raven, European Starling, Bohemian Waxwing



*Barred Owl by Len Medlock, 12-15-18 (Coastal CBC), Exeter, NH.*

### Coastal NH

- New to Count: American White Pelican (second state record)
- State High: Turkey Vulture, Barred Owl
- Count High: Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Raven, Carolina Wren

### Lee-Durham

- Count high: Common Raven, Winter Wren, Savannah Sparrow

### Concord

- New to Count: American Woodcock
- Count high: Mallard, Wild Turkey, Rock Pigeon, Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal
- Tufted Titmouse tied the previous high count.



*Northern Shrike by Jason Lambert, 12-29-18, Laconia-New Hampton CBC, NH.*

### Laconia-New Hampton

- Third record for White-crowned Sparrow.

### Hanover-Norwich

- New to Count: Barrow's Goldeneye
- Count High: Wild Turkey (also second highest for the state)

### Baker Valley

- No new species or count highs

### Littleton

- New to Count: Fox Sparrow
- Baltimore Oriole was seen for the second time.

### Grafton-Bristol

- No new species or count highs.

### Errol-Umbagog

- No new species or count highs.

### Pittsburg

- Barred Owl tied previous count high. Second record for Rough-legged Hawk and third record for Red-winged Blackbird.

### Sunapee

- New to Count: Great Cormorant
- Count High: Wild Turkey, Common Raven, Bohemian Waxwing, Tufted Titmouse
- Pileated Woodpecker tied its previous high count.

### Manchester

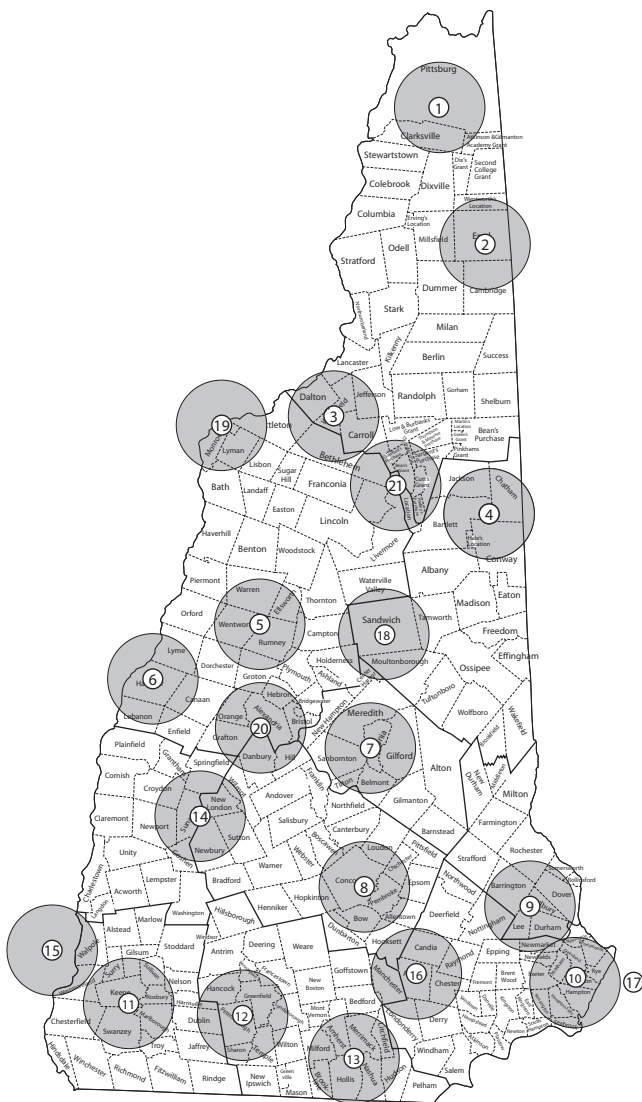
- New to Count: Cackling Goose (third state record overall)
- Count High: Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird
- Second record for Eastern Screech-Owl.

### Sandwich

- Count High: Northern Goshawk
- Barred Owl tied count high.

### AMC-Crawford

- New to Count: Gray Catbird, Red Crossbill
- Count High: Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-winged Crossbill.



## Christmas Bird Count Compilers

1	Pittsburg	Phil Brown
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 and Nancy Martin
7	Laconia-New Hampton	Pam Hunt
8	Concord	Robert Quinn
9	Lee-Durham	Kurk Dorsey
10	Coastal	Len Medlock
11	Keene	Phil Brown
12	Peterborough-Hancock	John Ranta
13	Nashua-Hollis	Richard Bielawski
14	Lake Sunapee	Gary Stansfield
15	Saxton's River, VT	Donald Clark
16	Manchester	Richard Bielawski
17	Isles of Shoals	Ben Griffith
18	Sandwich	Tony Vazzano
19	Barnet, VT	Charlie Browne
20	Grafton-Bristol	Bill Belanger
21	AMC Crawford Notch	Craig Repasz

# 119th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2018 - Jan. 5, 2019

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Snow Goose	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Cackling Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	1
Canada Goose	390	2	10	3644	1371	216	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	186	-	-	5820
Mute Swan	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Wood Duck	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Gadwall	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
American Wigeon	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
American Black Duck	42	11	10	679	95	11	15	2	2	-	-	-	2	-	9	11	3	-	892
Mallard	234	23	129	1316	255	<b>654</b>	631	204	1	-	23	-	53	-	286	11	CW	<b>50</b>	3870
Northern Shoveler	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Northern Pintail	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Redhead	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	1465	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1467
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Common Eider	-	-	-	141	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	141
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	187	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	187
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	411	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	411
Black Scoter	-	-	-	236	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	236
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	173	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	173
Bufflehead	1	-	-	123	15	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	142
Common Goldeneye	17	-	1	373	10	10	272	10	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	76	-	-	777
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Hooded Merganser	1	-	6	59	2	1	46	22	-	1	5	-	-	1	5	4	1	-	154
Common Merganser	10	2	32	68	4	21	35	2	-	-	8	7	-	-	-	5	12	-	206
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	1	192	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	219
Northern Bobwhite	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	<b>22</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	23
Ruffed Grouse	-	5	2	-	1	3	1	1	1	5	-	12	5	1	CW	-	2	-	39
Wild Turkey	88	**468	<b>362</b>	<b>260</b>	196	<b>245</b>	253	<b>452</b>	53	24	37	31	59	128	<b>287</b>	<b>116</b>	157	22	3238
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Common Loon	-	-	2	91	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	93
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49
Northern Gannet	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Double-cr. Cormorant	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Great Cormorant	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	6
American White Pelican	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 137

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/29/2018)

Pet = Peterborough-Hancock (12/15/2018)

Kee = Keene (12/16/2018)

Cst = Coastal NH (12/15/2018)

Lee = Lee-Durham (12/22/2018)

Con = Concord (12/16/2018)

Lac = Laconia-New Hampton (12/29/2018)

Han = Hanover-Norwich (1/1/2019)

Bak = Baker Valley (12/16/2018)

Lit = Littleton (12/23/2018)

Grf = Grafton-Bristol (12/22/2018)

Erl = Errol-Umbagog (12/21/2018)

Pit = Pittsburg (12/20/2018)

Cnw = North Conway (12/15/2018)

Sun = Lake Sunapee (12/15/2018)

Man = Manchester (12/15/2018)

San = Sandwich (12/30/2018)

Amc = AMC-Crawford Notch (12/15/2018)

\* = New Species to a Count

\*\* = New high species count for the state

***Bold italic=new individual count high***

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Great Blue Heron	4	1	<b>2</b>	20	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>31</b>
Turkey Vulture	<del>4</del>	-	-	<b>**56</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>60</b>
Northern Harrier	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	1	3	7	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	CW	1	1	CW	<b>18</b>
Cooper's Hawk	12	-	4	13	2	3	1	4	CW	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	<b>44</b>
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	1	-	-	-	<b>2</b>	-	<b>3</b>
Bald Eagle	6	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	6	4	-	8	7	1	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	3	-	<b>70</b>
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	-	-	1	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Red-tailed Hawk	45	8	20	75	30	20	8	13	1	1	3	-	-	2	3	15	2	-	<b>246</b>
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Hawk sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Sanderling	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>32</b>
Dunlin	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>63</b>
American Woodcock	-	-	-	-	-	<b>*1</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Thick-billed Murre	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Razorbill	-	-	-	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>47</b>
Black Guillemot	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>5</b>
Bla.-leg. Kittiwake	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>46</b>
Ring-billed Gull	24	-	-	301	250	49	182	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	65	1	-	<b>872</b>
Herring Gull	89	-	1	705	1296	6	12	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	5	CW	-	<b>2118</b>
Iceland Gull	1	-	-	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>11</b>
Lesser Bla.-bac. Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Great Bla.-bac. Gull	66	-	-	150	486	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	<b>710</b>
Rock Pigeon	651	89	299	907	471	<b>1036</b>	267	457	1	83	135	-	8	38	88	410	12	<b>41</b>	<b>4993</b>
Mourning Dove	217	215	230	286	201	300	232	220	39	38	30	6	8	136	131	159	117	11	<b>2576</b>
Eastern Screech-owl	2	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>11</b>
Great Horned Owl	3	1	1	2	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>7</b>
Barred Owl	1	<b>9</b>	7	<b>**10</b>	1	<b>4</b>	-	1	1	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	6	-	<b>45</b>
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	<b>*1</b>	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>7</b>
Belted Kingfisher	5	-	-	9	3	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>21</b>
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Red-bellied Woodpecker	11	10	14	61	26	18	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	15	1	-	<b>166</b>
Ylw.-bel. Sapsucker	2	1	-	1	1	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>5</b>
Downy Woodpecker	47	77	78	150	93	95	58	46	3	14	2	4	21	30	30	64	52	12	<b>876</b>
Hairy Woodpecker	12	58	35	36	31	54	28	28	4	26	2	7	16	23	25	23	53	4	<b>465</b>

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 137

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Amc = AMC-Crawford Notch (12/15/2018)

\* = New Species to a Count

\*\* = New high species count for the state

***Bold italic=new individual count high***

# 119th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2018 - Jan. 5, 2019 — continued

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Northern Flicker	5	2	1	25	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	52
Pileated Woodpecker	4	19	8	<b>13</b>	6	<b>15</b>	7	4	1	2	CW	3	7	7	10	7	19	4	136
American Kestrel	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Merlin	1	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Peregrine Falcon	2	-	<b>2</b>	-	1	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	1	-	-	6
Northern Shrike	1	1	-	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	11
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	18	-	-	-	-	3	26
Blue Jay	102	26	47	258	85	65	55	118	23	44	CW	14	63	60	73	71	47	10	1161
American Crow	119	49	96	326	203	481	189	3500	30	31	23	19	24	75	134	67	20	8	5394
Common Raven	4	19	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	17	16	20	9	45	9	22	42	14	<b>19</b>	5	14	6	335
Horned Lark	13	-	61	25	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	116
Black-capped Chickadee	297	838	587	591	625	565	741	600	128	317	115	247	572	442	443	240	620	149	8117
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	12	-	-	-	9	8	30
Tufted Titmouse	74	<b>254</b>	146	230	271	212	208	117	21	6	5	-	-	56	<b>95</b>	73	91	1	1860
Red-br. Nuthatch	3	64	13	14	6	3	6	12	8	43	4	39	144	32	13	3	27	18	452
White-br. Nuthatch	46	163	88	148	168	145	91	82	11	17	6	4	1	55	66	65	94	4	1254
Brown Creeper	11	16	20	19	12	11	9	3	-	9	-	8	4	4	3	7	6	2	144
Winter Wren	1	-	1	6	<b>8</b>	1	1	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Marsh Wren	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Carolina Wren	12	-	4	<b>35</b>	27	9	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	97
Golden-cr. Kinglet	4	7	3	21	4	4	1	-	1	1	-	8	13	2	2	3	3	4	81
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastern Bluebird	121	17	46	161	184	38	29	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>79</b>	1	-	685
Hermit Thrush	-	-	CW	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
American Robin	331	51	59	408	378	328	190	7	4	13	-	-	-	7	2	178	-	-	1956
Gray Catbird	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
N. Mockingbird	26	-	7	48	18	23	9	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	147
European Starling	1115	322	<b>1397</b>	1896	1330	1613	452	356	20	12	75	-	20	112	252	722	9	-	9703
Bohemian Waxwing	-	-	<b>27</b>	-	-	CW	57	270	-	-	-	-	1	<b>100</b>	<b>218</b>	-	26	-	699
Cedar Waxwing	107	3	806	152	379	83	133	84	-	20	-	-	-	11	63	166	-	-	2007
Snow Bunting	-	-	2	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	17
Common Yellowthroat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pine Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Am. Tree Sparrow	51	33	47	81	34	86	26	37	1	7	CW	-	-	16	8	1	7	-	435
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Fox Sparrow	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 137

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/29/2018)

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San = Sandwich (12/30/2018)

Amc = AMC-Crawford Notch (12/15/2018)

\* = New Species to a Count

\*\* = New high species count for the state

***Bold italic=new individual count high***

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Dark-eyed Junco	231	26	214	308	215	206	97	165	21	21	1	5	3	49	20	136	14	2	<b>1734</b>
White-cr. Sparrow	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
White-thr. Sparrow	29	21	28	131	86	37	28	28	-	6	-	-	-	<b>9</b>	7	17	3	-	<b>430</b>
Savannah Sparrow	3	-	-	2	<b>3</b>	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>10</b>
Song Sparrow	52	-	5	131	43	28	5	5	-	3	-	-	-	2	1	10	-	-	<b>285</b>
Swamp Sparrow	2	-	-	15	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>22</b>
Northern Cardinal	100	46	105	281	196	<b>177</b>	64	111	4	6	CW	5	-	39	29	45	22	1	<b>1231</b>
Dickcissel	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Red-winged Blackbird	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>7</b>
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>4</b>
Common Grackle	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
Br.-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>CW</b>
Baltimore Oriole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Pine Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	7	3	18	10	51	-	-	72	13	5	-	1	11	<b>191</b>
House Finch	173	9	83	177	107	88	60	28	-	-	-	-	-	15	5	58	CW	-	<b>803</b>
Purple Finch	-	1	1	12	3	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	<b>27</b>
Red Crossbill	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	<b>15</b>
Common Redpoll	-	-	138	34	2	5	1	CW	-	2	-	-	6	2	15	-	-	-	<b>205</b>
Pine Siskin	2	3	3	10	-	1	-	13	-	30	-	-	1	13	-	-	-	CW	<b>76</b>
American Goldfinch	236	107	98	637	355	225	122	79	21	22	CW	-	2	33	12	169	11	-	<b>2129</b>
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	71	3	1	-	77	65	CW	84	-	19	9	18	-	7	-	<b>21</b>	<b>375</b>
House Sparrow	584	153	321	968	881	256	326	268	12	30	15	-	-	<b>201</b>	92	271	24	-	<b>4402</b>
Number of Species	65	46	61	117	63	60	52	44	30	41	20	22	34	40	43	51	38	22	<b>137</b>
Number of Participants	33	37	28	33	26	22	27	25	7	10	3	8	14	42	16	11	19	16	<b>377</b>

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 137

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Bob Quinn leading the wrap-up for the Concord CBC, 12-16-18. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.



Becky Suomala and Pam Hunt trying out a fun and unique birding technique for a mild day on the Coastal CBC! Photo by Dyanna Smith, 12-15-18.

# Winter 2018-19 Field Notes

Compiled by Diana Stephens

## Peregrine Falcon Dive Bombs Photographer

Photos and article by Deb Powers

On the last day of January, I encountered a Peregrine Falcon near Great Bay in Newington. I did not see it until it flew. I was standing in the trees near the river's edge. Starting out at about 100-150 yards, it flew very close to me. I was shooting with a 600 mm lens to fit the bird in the picture, but then went too far out. The bird flew past me another 100 yards or so and then it turned around and flew low, straight for me. As it was getting closer, I took cover (looking like an idiot I'm sure) kneeling down and standing my camera on my head with the lens pointing up. That, of course, blew the fly-by shot ... lol.

When looking at my series of pictures, in every one of them the bird was looking at me (with the exception of just one side shot). I have taken photos of Peregrines before and never experienced this. It was not in an area where I believe it would be nesting and there were no others in the area either, that I could see. The bird went back and landed on the tree in the area it started from. I got the hint and left.

*Editor's Note: A jess is a thin strap used to tether a hawk or falcon in Falconry, which allows a Falconer to keep control of a bird while it is on the glove or in training. We asked Deb if she saw any jesses on the bird, but she did not, meaning that it was probably not an escaped Falconer's bird.*

## Winter Wrens at Locke Road

by Pam Hunt

On Christmas Eve morning, with a day off from work and no holiday obligations, I wandered outside my immediate Penacook stomping grounds for a change of pace. I headed to West Locke Road in East Concord. This area is a great birding spot in spring and boasts a nice mix of wetland, forest, open field, and frontage on the Merrimack River, but is rarely birded in winter. As I walked down the "Canal Trail," it wasn't long before I heard the distinctive chattering of a Winter Wren. Then it was joined by a second! Winter Wrens, as their name implies, are not unexpected in parts of New Hampshire during the colder months and a couple had even been seen nearby earlier in the month. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant surprise to find two in the same place. I continued down the trail only to find a *third* bird near the end, where it was hopping among the roots of an upturned tree. Also noteworthy in the same location was a Swamp Sparrow – a much less likely bird in late December in Concord. After the "Canal Trail," I continued west toward



*This Peregrine Falcon flew over photographer Deb Powers on 1-31-19 in Newington, NH. It looked like it had blood from some sort of prey on its underparts.*



*It could have been defending its territory.*



*The falcon gets ready to dive bomb the photographer.*



*Could it be this raptor thinks that humans also eat rodents and small birds?*

the river, and soon encountered a fourth wren near a stream that drains out of one of the wetlands. All in all, this little trip was proof that exploring popular sites in the off-season can yield great rewards!

The story's not over however. A month later, I revisited West Locke Road and was quite happy to find at least one of December's Winter Wrens, plus a bonus Rusty Blackbird. Two days later, another birder followed up on my sighting and might have had two wrens. Subsequent visits into mid-February continued to find a wren and, on February 8, a friend and I actually heard the bird singing. After I committed to writing this article, I paid another visit on March 15 and, lo and behold, "the wren" was still there and this time the "bonus bird" was my first flicker of the spring. Thus we come to the moral of this little tale – visiting places at odd times of year can yield great rewards. Not only were there four Winter Wrens in one spot in late December, but at least one of them spent the winter and even felt the need to sing near the actual mid-point of a relatively cold winter. There were also *other* birds to be found; other people searching for the wren also found a variable number of redpolls. Who knows what I'll find as I continue to explore this area of Concord.

## Razorbill Seen Inland at Adam's Point in Durham

by Steve Mirick

*Taken from a post to the NHBirds email list, February 18, 2019.*

A Razorbill was first found by Dan Prima (2-8-19) working the inner areas of the Great Bay estuary near Adam's Point. It looked like a full adult based on Alan Murray's photo. Sightings were near the causeway at Adam's Point, in the middle of the channel at the south end of Little Bay, near the entrance to Furber Straits and the mouth of Great Bay.

In my 37 years of birding the estuary, this is my first, and the first that I've heard of in this area. In fact, I don't believe there are any other previous records of Razorbill sightings for the estuary west of Rt. 95. Ned Dearborn in the *Birds of Durham and Vicinity* (1902) stated "I have not learned that it visits Great Bay, though I presume that it does so." His presumption may be overstated as I can't find any other records from the estuary or anywhere else inland. This is certainly the first eBird record of Razorbill for Strafford County.

Razorbills don't seem to be carried by strong coastal storms like some other alcids, so this bird probably did not fly here, but likely swam the 11+ miles up the Piscataqua River underneath four huge bridges! No doubt this bird is part of the incursion of birds that had been feeding in eastern



*Alan Murray captured this photo of a Razorbill at Adam's Point in Durham, 2-15-19. This species of alcid is a sea bird that is typically seen out in the Atlantic. It is the closest living relative of the extinct Great Auk.*

areas of the river in December. You may recall I had 54 in the river on December 9, 2018.

## Snowy Owl Dies on Star Island

by Alexandra de Steiguer

*Excerpt from Alex's Facebook post in January, 2019.*

In sad news from this past month, I found one of the Snowy Owls had died during one of the very cold nights. I knew the spot where it had been spending much of its time, up by the chapel. Some of these owls are creatures of habit and have preferred perches that they often return to. I found the sad sight the very next morning and, because I could find no visual reason for its death, I thought it might be worthwhile, in the name of science, to find out why it had died. Should it be from unnatural causes, it might be something we could prevent. Reassuringly, the pathology report this week showed that it had died of natural causes. The detailed report and the specimens, including an owl pellet from the site, will be made available for future research on these magnificent beings. A big thank you to Jenn



Seavey of the Shoals Marine Laboratory and Inga Sidor, Senior Veterinary Pathologist of UNH, and also to the kind folks who helped deliver the owl to the lab. Her peaceful and sublime presence will be missed, but the sight of the other owl this morning, as usual in her preferred perch by the Kiddy Barn, is reassuring and endearing.



## Red-shouldered Hawk Seen on Same Branch Five Years Later

In February of 2019, Kyle Wilmarth took a photo of a Red-shouldered Hawk that was in the exact same tree and on the same branch where Amanda Altena had photographed a Red-shouldered Hawk in 2014! Both photos were taken on almost the same date in February on Geremonty Drive in Salem, NH. Kyle compiled these photos of the Red-shouldered Hawk on this same branch. Is it the same bird?

## Bald Eagle versus Bald Eagle

by Kris Hakoun and Chris Martin

*This event occurred in the Winter of 2017-18 but we thought readers would be interested in this amazing video.*

On 2-19-18, Kristin Hakoun of Auburn, NH witnessed an unusual scene, a battle between two Bald Eagles. Here is her description of the event, which she also videoed:

*We first saw the two Bald Eagles spiraling over the house with their talons locked. They ended up slamming to the ground in the backyard and it was then that they let go of each other. They were already bloody and fought for a few seconds in the yard, then managed to fly up and over our tree line. We saw them go down again, so we went out in the woods to see where they landed. We located them and saw that one was on top of the other pecking at it relentlessly. I then called the animal control officer thinking that the one that was on top (the aggressor) was also hurt and could possibly be saved. I was pretty sure that the one getting attacked would be dead by the time she got here and that the injured aggressor would be the one to need help. When they got here, we saw that the injured one was in fact barely still alive and the aggressor was able to fly off. The officers were able to get the injured eagle into a crate, but realized that it would not survive and ended up shooting it at the scene. The other eagle hung around in a tree for a while, but then must have left because we never saw it again.*

Watch the video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/6yja5FhZ8-g>

Chris Martin, Senior Biologist at NH Audubon explains further:

*One cause of eagle mortality that we don't often document is death by another eagle. The loser in this encounter was an almost 5-year-old color-banded eagle (silver 0709-02151, orange 7/P). When Town of Auburn Animal Control arrived on scene, the injured bird was alive, but had a massive skull/head wound, while the other eagle was still standing on the ground near it. The wounded bird was euthanized on the spot by the Animal Control officer due to severity of its wounds.*

*Orange 7/P was banded on 5-16-13 as a chick at its nest on Webster Lake in Worcester Co., MA. Post-fledging sightings include just two other reports: 5-9-15 on Bow Lake, NH (19 mi from the Auburn location), and 2-10-19 (nine days before the incident) at the New Croton Reservoir Dam, Westchester Co., NY. From the sighting data, one might assume that Orange 7/P was not a territory-holding bird and may have been trying to acquire a territory at the time of the fatal encounter.*

## Black-throated Blue Warbler in Raymond



*This female Black-throated Blue Warbler was photographed by Dan Prima in Raymond where it visited his feeder from November 19 until December 19, 2018. The female is vastly different in appearance from the male of the species. Females are plain brownish-olive with buffy underparts, subtle face pattern and small white patch on the wing, as opposed to the breeding male, which has striking deep blue above with black throat and sides plus a white belly.*

## Return of the Ospreys



*In February, Richard Bickford and the crew from JR Construction Company of Raymond installed a new nesting platform for the Ospreys in Dover, NH. See the upcoming Summer 2019 Issue for the Return of the Ospreys to the Strafford County Complex in Dover! Photo by Sue Bickford, 2-26-19.*

## Field Trip Report

*Compiled by Gail Coffey*

### Coos County Winter Finch Count 2019-Trip Report

*by Lori Charron*

The Coos County winter finch count, sponsored by NH Audubon's Seacoast Chapter, was held on February 9, 2019 from 8:30 am-3:00 pm. A group of thirteen hardy birders started in Gorham, NH and finished in Errol, NH. The temperature was a frigid 11 degrees when we began the count and warmed to 18 degrees. Unfortunately, gusts of winds up to 50 mph made it quite challenging.

Despite the severe cold, we still had a good day with a total of 25 species! For one couple, it was a four-lifer day! We had lunch and a warm up at the Charron residence and

got to enjoy the leucistic chickadee that had been visiting our feeder throughout the winter. Highlights of the trip were Pine Grosbeaks, Bohemian Waxwings, Snow Buntings, Common Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Barrow's Goldeneye, and five Bald Eagles. We had a great group of birders join us for the count which made it fun and exciting.

## New Hampshire Teams in The Superbowl of Birding

Every January, seasoned teams come together for a much-anticipated sporting event called the Superbowl. This is not the heavily-commercialized, multi-billion-dollar affair of the National Football League. Rather, this is the far more grueling Superbowl of Birding. Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center hosts this annual event which attracts birding teams from around New England to gather in Essex County, MA and Rockingham County, NH to find as many bird species as possible. This was the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary for this competitive event. Rather than competing for a mere 60 minutes, Superbowl of Birding teams race the clock for 12-hours straight. There are no penalties, timeouts, commercials, or lengthy half-time shows when competitors can take a break. No substitutes, no handouts, and no stadium of fans to cheer you on. The goal is to find as many species as possible between 5:00 am and 5:00 pm, with points assigned to each species from one to five depending on its rarity. It's a fun event that generates friendly competition and many stories! Here are a few of them.

### Zone-tailed Blitzers Win Superbowl of Birding XVI

*by Steven Lamonde*



A year after our inaugural Superbowl of Birding event at the Antioch University Walloping Woodcocks, when we faced tough competition from Steve Mirick's 4<sup>th</sup> and Longspurs in 2018, we decided to compete again in 2019. This time, we drafted Superbowl veteran Katrina Fenton, and changed our name to the Zone-tailed Blitzers. With Chad

Witko (captain), Phil Brown, Ken Klapper, and me rounding out our team of five, we began playoff-season by remotely scouting Rockingham County via eBird. Our digital data search was complemented with nearly a half-dozen physical scouting trips during the week leading up to the Superbowl. By late Friday night, with just eight hours before the 5:00 am kick-off, we strategized our game plan over food and a few drinks. I took over as team captain when Chad had an unexpected obligation come up. He was promoted to team manager, continuing to help the team, but everyone shared in decision-making duties and it was a true team effort.

Our Superbowl started at a slow pace, with an Eastern Screech-Owl our only pre-dawn owl. We still had our hopes up as we met the 4<sup>th</sup> and Longspurs at Seabrook Greyhound Park to look for four 5-point birds on the property (Yellow-breasted Chat, Chipping Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Orange-crowned Warbler). Despite additional help from the Western Strays team and Steve Mirick's generous leadership, only the Vesper Sparrow could be located. After spending over 90 minutes at the park in pursuit of 5-pointers, far more time than we had planned, we decided to cut our losses and look for a nearby Chipping Sparrow that had been seen the previous day. This bird proved to be another time sink, but we came away from the empty Chipping Sparrow search with a pair of flyover Pileated Woodpeckers.

Heading north to Kensington and East Kingston, we picked up a Yellow-rumped Warbler at a feeder and a few more songbirds. Still well-behind our desired species count by mid-morning, we continued to Exeter with waterfowl on our mind. Green-winged Teal, Tufted Duck, and Lesser Scaup followed in quick succession. The Route 85 Barred Owl was next, then Chapman's Landing presented us with Common Merganser and Great Blue Heron, and a quick stop along Squamscott Road in Stratham yielded Winter Wren and Brown Creeper. A 10-second stop on Laurel Lane in Stratham turned up a scouted Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (vocalizing, then seen), and just eight minutes later we had the Redhead at Great Bay in our scopes!

Feeling particularly energized by our string of 5-point birds (see the list below) and hurried along by increasing cloud cover, we flew through several stops around Great Bay and up to Odiorne Point State Park for the Brown Thrasher. After a short walk along the bike trail and a second coordinated effort with the 4<sup>th</sup> and Longspurs, we were rewarded with a successful find and shared the 3-point bonus (for finding a 5-point bird first) with the 4<sup>th</sup> and Longspurs.

Still behind schedule, we raced to Great Island Common in New Castle to finally begin looking for seabirds. Picking up the usual suspects, we began our southward offensive along Route 1A. A Black Scoter took some time to find, and we got lucky with a near-shore Razorbill at low tide.

Things were finally looking up! Then, in a typical twist of New England fate, a driving snow arrived on a cold north wind, bringing with it an early darkness. Doggedly pushing onward, like linebackers inching the opposing team backward, we scored on the 4-point Snow Goose at Fuller Gardens in Hampton and the nearby 5-point Chipping Sparrows along Ancient Highway. Our luck seemed to run out in Hampton, as we failed to locate Horned Larks or Snow Buntings at Hampton Beach State Park, the often easy-to-locate Glaucous Gull at Hampton Harbor bath house, and Ken's scouted Ring-necked Duck off Route 1. We ended our final drive after 11 hours 45 minutes of play, seeking warmth and food at the compilation dinner rather than searching for Northern Harrier and Short-eared Owl in inclement weather.

Tallying our results in the car, we were pleased with our 74 species, totaling 161 points. Despite a slow first quarter of time sinks and missed birds, we gained momentum going into the second half. A string of 5-point birds (six species on the day) during the third quarter and a dogged effort to pick up missing seabirds in the fourth quarter solidified our place as winners of the "Rockingham County Rocks" Award. Being an "away" team, we wouldn't have done nearly as well if it weren't for all the shared birds by the 4<sup>th</sup> and Longspurs and others, as well as Rockingham County eBird reports. Thanks to all the Rockingham County teams for participating in this fun and friendly competition!

Species highlight list (4- and 5- point bird in bold):

<b>Snow Goose</b>	Belted Kingfisher
American Wigeon	<b>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</b>
Green-winged Teal	Pileated Woodpecker
<b>Redhead</b>	Common Raven
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	Brown Creeper
Lesser Scaup	<b>Winter Wren</b>
Common Merganser	Carolina Wren
Great Cormorant	<b>Brown Thrasher</b>
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Turkey Vulture	<b>Chipping Sparrow</b>
Bald Eagle	Field Sparrow
Iceland Gull	<b>Vesper Sparrow</b>
Razorbill	Swamp Sparrow
Eastern Screech-Owl	White-crowned Sparrow
Barred Owl	Red-winged Blackbird

Misses:

Northern Pintail – found by Katrina and Ken at Gilman park in Exeter during scouting

Ring-necked Duck – scouted by Ken in a tidal creek off Rt. 1 in Hampton

Red-throated Loon – Phil scoped one at Great Island Common in New Castle, but it dove before two other teammates could see it.

Northern Harrier – scouted at Hampton Beach SP  
Sharp-shinned Hawk – seen by Phil and Ken while driving  
just south of Rye Harbor as it flew in front of the car.  
Unfortunately, neither Katrina nor I spotted it.

Purple Sandpiper

Glaucous Gull – we thought this would be an easy bird at the  
Hampton Harbor bath house, but it must have gone to  
roost by the time we arrived to look.

Fish Crow – Phil was confident of one in Seabrook.

Horned Lark – scouted at Hampton Beach SP

Red-breasted Nuthatch – scouted at a couple of locations

Hermit Thrush – scouted by Phil on Squamscott Rd. in  
Stratham

Snow Bunting – seen at Hampton Beach SP by other teams

Orange-crowned Warbler – big 5-point miss for all teams at  
Seabrook Greyhound Park

Yellow-breasted Chat – Neither the chat at Seabrook

Greyhound Park nor Odiorne Point SP could be found.

Brown-headed Cowbird – scouted by Ken at Bodwell Farm  
in Kensington



*Iceland Gull by Steven Lamonde, found by the Zone-tailed Blitzer's on the 2019 Superbowl of Birding.*

### **Wedding Interrupts the Superbowl!**

*by Steve Mirick*

On January 19, 2019, Jane and I joined up with Paul Lacourse, Jim Sparrell and Katie Towler for the “Superbowl of Birding.” This event is a fun way to beat the winter cold and get out and find birds. Our team name is the “New Hampshire 4th and Longspurs”. As we have done in past years, we participated in the category of “Rockingham County, NH only”. We started with three other powerhouse New Hampshire teams in Seabrook where we joined forces in search of rarities at the Seabrook Greyhound Park.

Moving north to Great Bay, we were greeted at the Great Bay Discovery Center boat launch by a sharply dressed young

man who was soon joined by a beautiful young woman... in a white gown! A wedding at the boat launch overlooking the bay!! We quickly ticked off Greater Scaup and American Wigeon, but pulled up our scopes and got out of there as the whole wedding party descended from the parking lot! Sadly, this cost us the Redhead! We scoured the parking lot and hooted a few Barred Owl calls for the sapsucker (and the wedding video), but no luck. As we pulled out of the parking area, I distinctly heard the words “I Do”!

### **Twitchers out of the Rye 2019**

*by Kathryn Frieden and Rebecca Suomala*



*The Twitchers ending the day at Hampton Beach in the cold, blowing snow.*

Having won the debut “Townie Award” in 2018 for the most points in one town (Rye), it was time for the Twitchers to strike out into new territory. So, after ten years of voluntarily restricting our Superbowl birding to the township of Rye, the “Twitchers in the Rye” became the “Twitchers out of the Rye” and made Hampton their competition township. It was a whole new ball game!

The team members were Captain Becky Suomala, navigator Andrea Robbins (a returning veteran), owl scout Susan Wrisley and driver Kathryn Frieden, both second-year returnees. This year, it was especially important to do some advance scouting. The best routes and most productive spots for Rye had long been well-established, but we needed a brand new game plan for Hampton. Andrea poured through eBird reports, checked with other birders and examined maps, while Susan did some driving around Hampton and even scouted for owls.

Our plan turned out to involve going to twice as many spots as we had time for. By the end of owling, we were already behind by nearly an hour with only one Great Horned Owl on the list (!), but some of our planning and scouting really did pay off. We were especially pleased with our carefully planned strategy to get the Glaucous

Gull which frequents the roof of the restroom just south of the Hampton town line. Since its most reliable spot is in Seabrook, we needed a special maneuver to add it to our list. The rules state that you can count a bird if you are within your territory when you hear or see it, even if the bird is not. Luckily, there is a small strip of land on the south end of the Route 1A Hampton Harbor bridge that is part of the town of Hampton. We drove over the bridge into Seabrook, backtracked up a small side road to that little bit of Hampton, and clambered up to the top of the roadside bank. Sure enough, we could just see the Glaucous Gull in the distance on its favorite roof. Success! It was a new species for the Twitchers and three points.

On Tide Mill Road, while scanning the marsh, we added a four-pointer Fish Crow! The crow was spotted by Susan in a nearby tree, close enough and still enough that she could identify it by the small



*"The" Glaucous Gull viewed from Hampton by the Twitchers. Photo by Susan Wisley.*

hook at the end of the bill, a subtle field mark that we had only recently learned about; another new species for the Twitchers! At Landing Road, we had three Bald Eagles, two Great Blue Herons and a Belted Kingfisher, none of which are guarantees for the Twitchers. We were further encouraged by some good feeder activity in a nice residential area and a Wild Turkey we had found during scouting.

Our scouting paid off again when we not only relocated a Golden-crowned Kinglet that we had scouted, but also found a Brown Creeper, both species that are never easy on the coast in winter. A four-point Common Raven made this location a great stop. Shortly after, we finally stopped for lunch and coffee – whew!

After lunch, we went back to the Ancient Highway area to look again for a Chipping Sparrow we had missed in the morning. This is a common bird during breeding season, but they rarely overwinter in New Hampshire, so it is a five-pointer for the Superbowl. All five-pointers have to be called in to Superbowl headquarters so the other teams have a chance at seeing them. Sure enough, as we drove down a side road, Becky spotted a Chipping Sparrow. Not only that; there were three of them! She called it in and we were surprised to learn that we were the first ones to find a Chipping Sparrow that day and, therefore, gained three bonus points and another new species for the Twitchers. It was our only five point species for the day.

The weather had been great until around 3:30 when it started to snow – just the time we arrived at Bicentennial Park to look for seabirds. Despite the difficult conditions, Andrea picked out three Thick-billed Murres flying low over the water. At the last minute they landed, but Becky was in the bathroom (a common place for her to be when an unusual bird is seen)! Fortunately, the birds stayed just long enough for her to come out and we all managed to see them floating amidst the increasing waves before they took off and headed south. It was the fourth new species for the Twitchers and another four-pointer. As a bonus, Susan spotted a V-shaped flock of Canada Geese flying overhead. This may not sound very exciting, but we had not seen any geese all day.

Our last few stops at Hampton Beach and Hampton Harbor were in the cold, blowing snow, which decreased visibility and made it seem like sunset came early. There was no chance for gannets, kittiwakes, or other ocean birds. We abandoned plans to do some final watching for a lucky sighting of a Short-eared Owl and headed to the compilation a little early.

All day, we felt like we were struggling and missing species, but when we tallied the results, we were totally surprised. We had 63 species, which tied the record number of species in Rye, and 118 points, the highest we had ever done! Given some of our misses (Great Cormorant, Barred Owl, Carolina Wren), we thought there was good future potential to break the Twitchers species record.

We were thrilled to win the Townie Award again, but we hope some other teams will be inspired to compete in this fun category! As always, it was a very fun day for the Twitchers and we raised a record total of \$3,244 for *New Hampshire Bird Records* and NHeBird. A big thank you to all our sponsors (listed in the front of this issue). Read the full summary and our past history on the *New Hampshire Bird Records* web site.



*The 2019 Twitchers with their prize, from left to right, Susan Wisley, Kathryn Frieden, Andrea Robbins, Becky Suomala.*

# Where Have All The Redpolls Gone?

by Diana Stephens



Common Redpoll by Jim Sparrell, 2-17-19, Bicentennial Park, Hampton, NH.

The Common Redpoll is a small songbird in the finch family. It is a species that typically invades New Hampshire every other year. The last time we had a peak was during the winter of 2014-2015, when a very high number of Common Redpolls visited the Granite State. In subsequent winters, however, the redpolls did not appear as predicted and local bird enthusiasts and avian scientists have been curious as to why.

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, the redpolls' primary food source is birch seeds. They feed on catkins of birch trees and visit feeders in the winter. "These small finches of the arctic tundra and boreal forest migrate erratically, and they *occasionally* show up in large numbers as far south as the Central US." During such "irruption years," redpolls often congregate at bird feeders that contain thistle (or nyjer) seed allowing for delightfully close looks.

NH Audubon's Backyard Winter Bird Survey shows a pattern of Common Redpoll irruption every other winter (Figure 1). Here is a look at their Survey numbers from the past few winters augmented by information from eBird range maps ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)).

Feb 2013 – Big invasion into New England. All over the Granite State! Over 6,000 birds on the Survey.

Feb 2014 – Numbers of Common Redpolls were very low as expected (22 on the Survey).

Feb 2015 – Lots of redpoll reports in New Hampshire (Survey total 3,412).

Feb 2016 – Very low numbers as expected (56 on the Survey).

Feb 2017 – Redpolls were expected back in high numbers, but did not materialize (Survey total of 3!). Instead, they seemed to have been concentrated mostly in the mid-western part of southern Canada.

Feb 2018 – Again, they did not move to the Northeast (29 on the Survey). Large numbers in Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas.

Feb 2019 – Small flocks were widespread but numbers were not as high as expected, although the Survey total was the highest since 2015 (519 preliminary total). Reports more numerous in southern Canada.

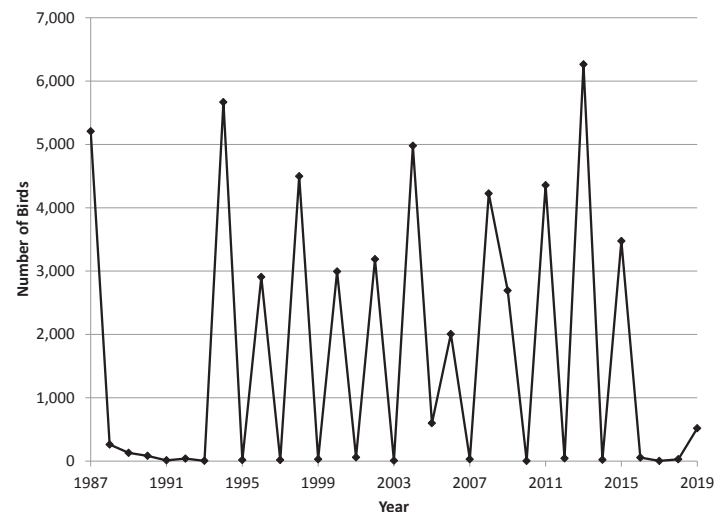


Figure 1. Number of Common Redpolls on NH Audubon's annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey, 1987-2019.

Common Redpolls breed in the summertime in northern Canada and the Arctic. When the supply of birch seed is sufficiently abundant in these areas, they do not need to migrate south in search of winter food the way they did during the winter of 2014-15. That year, there was a massive flight south into southern Canada and the northeastern United States due to the poor birch seed crops in the northern boreal forest.

Dr. Pamela Hunt, a Senior Biologist with NH Audubon, explained that during the winter of 2018-19, the redpolls just didn't get as far south as they sometimes go. "If they didn't get down here, it means they had enough food up north. We expect them to be biennial but, yes, they move with the food," said Dr. Hunt. "They are completely nomadic. We can pretend to predict them, but we don't always know exactly what happens."

In the winter of 2018-19, the redpolls remained in southern Canada for the most part. New England, in fact, turned out to be the southern edge of where they spent the winter, except for a few birds which wandered farther south. One redpoll flew all the way to Bermuda, but this was either a particularly enterprising individual, or he or she was simply blown off course. Many spent the winter just north of our border in Canada to southern Ontario, with significant reports all along the St. Lawrence River valley. Vermont and New Hampshire had their share of reports, but the number of birds was low for a typical irruption year.

Common Redpolls do not breed in the US, except for Alaska. Redpolls prefer to nest in shrubs on the northern tundra and typically build their nests low in small trees or bushes. Across the globe, this species is normally found in high numbers in Finland, Sweden, Greenland, northern Canada and Alaska. Worldwide, their numbers are estimated in the tens of millions ([www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)). The National Audubon Society lists its conservation status as widespread and abundant yet also threatened by climate change. Its winter range is shifting slightly northward, according to The Climate Report: <https://climate.audubon.org/birds/comred/common-redpoll>

So, when will we see as many redpolls as we did in 2014-15? That will depend upon how abundant the birch seed crops are in Canada in the future, which could also depend upon climate change.

You can help track New Hampshire's winter birds by taking part in NH Audubon's annual Winter Bird Survey in February. Check the web site for more information:

<http://nhbirdrecords.org/bird-conservation/bwbs/backyard-winter-bird-survey/>

To receive a participation packet, email your *mailing* address to [bwbs@nhaudubon.org](mailto:bwbs@nhaudubon.org). You can also report your results online. <http://www.nhaudubon.org/get-outside/birding/data-form-instructions/>

Read the past summaries at: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/prior-years-bwbs-survey-results/>

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## Barred Owl Phenomenon

by Kathryn Frieden

The winter of 2018-19 was remarkable for the high number of Barred Owl sightings in New Hampshire, as well as other New England states. Barred Owl reports in eBird for New Hampshire were up 34% from the previous winter season and 71% from the average of the previous three winters. There were an unusual number of daytime sightings and sightings in atypical locations. Wildlife clinics noted many more injured Barred Owls being brought in, and

more road-killed owls were found than usual. This was all caused by a food chain starting in 2017 that involved seeds, rodents, and subsequently owls. Do you remember getting hit on the head by acorns, and endlessly sweeping them up a few years ago? Who can forget the "squirrelmageddon" of 2018? What does that have to do with Barred Owls?

Steve Mirick discussed the Barred Owl phenomenon in his post to the NHBirds email list on February 13, 2019. "I rarely see live Barred Owls during the day.... This winter, I've seen several with at least four different daytime sightings, all from non-breeding areas." He also noted his first Barred Owl "yard bird" in sixteen years in Haverhill, MA, and his first ever sighting from the trails at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye.



*Barred Owl by Kyle Wilmarth, 2-15-19, Atkinson, NH.*

Due to increased competition for scarce food, owls were forced to forage more often during the day than usual, and venture to new hunting grounds. There were more sightings in unusual places, and even reports of Barred Owls being seen on bird-feeders! The difficulty in finding enough food may also have been complicated by icy conditions, at least in the Monadnock region, as suggested by Rich Frechette in his NHBirds post of February 14, 2019, "Most years the owls are able to hunt rodents through fluffy snow quite easily but this year the mammals are locked under the ice."

Owls often hunt near roads where crossing rodents are more visible. Unfortunately, with more owls, there were also more road-killed and injured birds. The Tufts Wildlife Clinic in North Grafton, Massachusetts reported that from August to mid-December they had treated more Barred Owls than they usually see in an entire year. Closer to home, NH Audubon's Jane Koliias, Becky Suomala, and Stephanie Parkinson rescued an injured owl from a Concord roadside and took it to Wings of Dawn (wildlife rehabilitation center) in Henniker. Maria Colby, the owner, told Jane it was the sixth owl brought in that day and there had been five the day before!

How did this all start? The first step was a biological event called mast seeding. Trees and shrubs produce seeds and nuts (fruit) that are consumed by wildlife species. The botanical term for this fruit is mast. Mast seeding is the cyclical increased

production of mast by a whole population of trees in a region in a given year. This can result in thousands more acorns and other seeds than usual, and the bumper crop of the fall of 2017 was such an event. Scientists are still debating what triggers a mast seeding, but it is probably a combination of available resources, weather, and predation.

With abundant food available, more small rodents survived the winter of 2017-2018. This led to increased reproduction and survival of rodent species throughout 2018, leading to the multitudes of swimming squirrels and road-crossing squirrels that we experienced in the fall. Over 50% of the diet of the Barred Owl consists of small mammals, including the white-footed mouse, one of the rodents that benefits significantly from mast seeding. More rodents means greater food supply and consequently, increased survival of the 2018 cohort of young Barred Owls. As often happens, the mast seeding event of 2017 was followed by a dramatic decrease in mast production in the fall of 2018. There were few acorns, nuts and other seeds and there wasn't enough food to support a large rodent population. The previously abundant rodents became harder to find during the winter of 2018-2019, and the still abundant owls became easier to find as their hunting patterns were forced to change.

Barred Owls are not a migratory species, but the numbers here in New Hampshire could not have all been local birds. As Steve Mirick commented, "I suspect that most or all of these sightings and road-kills are first winter birds dispersing south and east from breeding areas." According to Andrew Vitz, Massachusetts State Ornithologist, many may have come south from the boreal forests of Canada. The last large Barred Owl influx was 2007-2008, and although it is a cyclic event, the cycle is not a set length. So if you want to predict the next big Barred Owl winter, watch the acorn crop, and then check for mice in your attic the following spring.

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## Who is Ross?

by Kathryn Frieden

Five intrepid birders joined forces on December 1, 2018 and despite the cold and wind braved a pelagic outing in search of puffins that had recently been seen in New Hampshire waters. They came up with a sensational sighting near Jeffrey's Ledge—a Ross's Gull! This small, beautiful gull with the rosy blush on its breast breeds in the Arctic region north of Alaska and Siberia, and is rarely seen out of the Arctic. It was the first ever New Hampshire record, bringing an exciting and memorable start to the winter season.



Ross's Goose by Kyle Wilmarth, 12-20-18, Rochester WTP, NH.

A mere nineteen days later, a Ross's Goose was identified at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant. This was only the third sighting in New Hampshire! Ross's Goose is similar to a Snow Goose, but smaller, with a tiny bill as its most distinguishing characteristic. It breeds in the northern Hudson's Bay area and winters largely on the Gulf Coast as well as a few places in the western states.

The timing of these exceptional sightings raised the question, "Who is Ross?" As it turns out, there are two Rosses! Their stories extend to the ends of the earth; intertwined with ships, birds, explorers, and geography.

## Ross's Gull: James Clark Ross (1800-1862)

Anyone who has read about polar exploration knows that the history of these icy regions is fraught with danger and death. James Ross was one of the explorers who actually survived his many expeditions to both the Arctic and the Antarctic. He was born in London and at the age of twelve he joined the Navy. After many trips to the Arctic as a naval officer, he commanded his own expedition to Antarctica from 1839 to 1843, charting much of the continent's coastline. His ships were the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, which is significant for several reasons. If you look at a map



of Antarctica, you will find the Ross Sea, the Ross Ice Shelf, James Ross Island, and the volcanoes Mt. Erebus and Mt. Terror, all named after this expedition.

A few years later, in 1845, these same two ships were commissioned for an attempt to find the infamous Northwest Passage and to reach the North Pole. James Ross turned down a request to lead this expedition, which was ultimately commanded by Sir John Franklin, another British naval officer with multiple attempts at finding the Northwest Passage already behind him. The name Franklin may sound familiar, because the Franklin's Gull is named for him. He had been the commander of the 1823 Arctic expedition during which the gull was first collected and then identified as a new species.

The HMS Erebus and HMS Terror never returned. The entire crew of 129 men perished, including Franklin. Over the following decades many expeditions were sent to try to find the lost ships and crew, including one famously made by none other than James Clark Ross. Ultimately, they were all unsuccessful. Remains of crew members were eventually found on both Beechey Island and King William Island in the Canadian Arctic, just southwest of what is now the James Ross Strait! The wreck of the HMS Erebus wasn't found for more than a century and a half in 2014, followed by the HMS Terror in 2016.

How is James Clark Ross associated with our gull? In 1820, on his third Arctic trip as a Naval officer, which was commanded by William Parry, he collected a small, unknown gull distinguished from nearby terns "by its beak and tail, as well as by a beautiful tint of the most delicate rose-colour on its breast" (from Captain Parry's journal). This bird was eventually named Ross's Gull.

## Ross's Goose: Bernard Rogan Ross (1827-1874)

Bernard Ross was a lifelong naturalist. He was born in Ireland and emigrated to Canada at the age of sixteen, taking a job as assistant clerk at the Hudson's Bay Company. He settled in what is now Manitoba and worked his way up to be a chief trader. This position afforded him much opportunity for scientific exploration. He developed valuable collections of mammals and insects, as well as birds, sending specimens to many important institutions. He collected the previously unknown goose in question near Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories, and the specimen ended up at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. This is where curator and well-known taxonomist John Cassin was working, and he named the goose after Bernard Ross in 1861. If the name Cassin sounds familiar, it is because included in the almost two hundred birds he named were the ones he named after himself. Most of these were western species, such as Cassin's Vireo, Cassin's Kingbird, and Cassin's

Finch, among others.

After learning that Ross's Gull and Ross's Goose are named after two different men, it might be interesting to ask "Who is Clark?", "Who is LeConte?", and perhaps even, "Who is Virginia?"

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# Backyard Birder

## Preening

by Brenda Sens



*This Purple Sandpiper is reaching back with its bill and getting some oil from its oil gland at the base of its tail. For this species, which spends the winter feeding on wave-splashed rocks, the oil is critical for water-proofing its feathers so they can provide good insulation from the winter cold. Photo by Leo McKillop, 2-16-18, Rye Harbor SP, NH.*

**B**irds lead busy lives. In addition to major events like nesting and migration, there are the daily tasks of sustenance and maintaining good health. For the latter, preening, the process by which a bird uses its beak and feet to go over each feather, looms large. Birds can have up to 25,000 feathers and keeping each one in prime condition demands that birds preen numerous times a day.

The uropygial or preen gland located at the base of a bird's tail is essential for the process, producing an oily, waxy substance that the bird uses to coat each feather. Doing so accomplishes a number of important purposes. The oil

moisturizes feathers so that they stay flexible and strong and are not easily broken by the stress of flying. The process also aligns them, which assists in providing insulation and protection against extreme temperatures, and also assures that they are shaped aerodynamically for efficient flying. Parasites and lice are removed, which makes the entire flock healthier and protects nestlings as well. Newly molted feathers have tough sheaths that are removed by preening and this helps the feathers get into their proper position more quickly.

All of this effort also creates a healthier and more attractive looking bird which is essential for attracting a mate. Birds engage in numerous courtship rituals and often mutual preening, or allopreening, is one of them. It is a means of communication and helps the mating pair to bond and maintain a strong connection. We benefit from all this work on the part of birds by having the privilege of often observing this behavior.

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## River Valley Birding in Westmoreland and Walpole

by Adam Burnett

### Overview

In the towns of Westmoreland and Walpole, situated along the Connecticut River in the southwestern corner of the state, the river and its adjacent farmland interrupt the surrounding forest, providing a regionally exceptional variety of bird habitats. Late winter and early spring make for particularly enjoyable birding here, with winter raptors and open-field passerines frequenting the agricultural land while waterfowl migrate along the river. Most geese and dabbling ducks have passed through by mid-April, but the usual rush of migration continues all spring. In summer, the riverside cornfields are relatively unproductive bird habitat, but all the typical forest birds of southern New Hampshire can still be found in the surrounding woodlands, and a special suite of riverside birds dwells along the banks. Fall migration in the region becomes most exciting once the cornfields are harvested, making the riparian agricultural lands available to migrant birds once more.

### My local patch

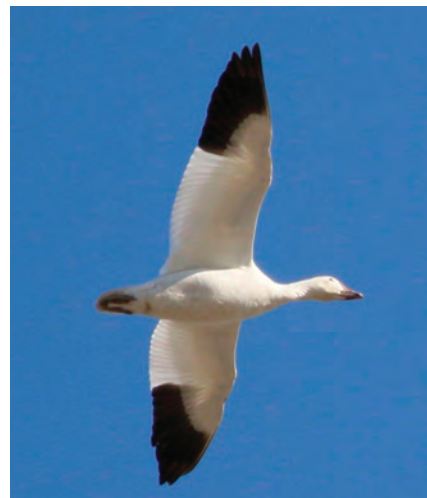
I am fortunate to have grown up in the middle of all this. My family's yard, surrounded by woods and fields, is located less than a mile from the Connecticut River, and looks out over the river valley to the hills of Vermont. Our excellent birding yard no doubt helped get me interested in birds in the first place. My regular three-mile walking route passes through the fields north of Goodrums Crossroad along

Route 63 in Westmoreland, as well as the Westmoreland Boat Launch, a publicly accessible boat ramp on the Connecticut River just to the west. In this small area of about half a square mile, centered around our yard, I have found 173 bird species over eight years of detailed eBird record keeping, plus a few more species that I saw in earlier years or that were seen by my parents or other birders. Our yard, I imagine, is one of very few places in the state to have hosted Black Vulture, Golden Eagle, Snowy Owl, and Rough-legged Hawk. Our view over the river valley is good for spotting migrating raptors, waterfowl, nighthawks, and other large birds. Nesting American Kestrels, Savannah Sparrows, and Bobolinks complement the usual wide variety of forest birds breeding nearby, although many nests of the latter two species are surely destroyed each year by haying operations.

For visiting birders, the most accessible part of my walking route, and one of the best for birding, is the Westmoreland Boat Launch, described in the following section. Most of the rest of the route is through privately owned farmland and forest. Driving along Depot Road, Goodrums Crossroad, and the adjacent stretch of Route 63 can yield good roadside sightings, including American Kestrel and other raptors as well as songbirds, such as Bobolink, Eastern Bluebird, and Snow Bunting, that are typical of this open habitat at various times of year. Visiting birders should respect private property and avoid blocking roads and driveways.

### Westmoreland Boat Launch

The riverside agricultural land of Westmoreland and Walpole is among the best places in the state to observe my favorite birding phenomenon, the spring migration of geese and dabbling ducks. One of my primary waterfowl spots is



*Snow Goose by Bob Crowley.*

the Westmoreland Boat Launch. Waterfowl here often alternate between resting in the river and feeding in the Putney Great Meadows, which are located just across the river and constitute one of the largest agricultural fields in the region. The birds' exact habits vary from year to year, partly depending on ground

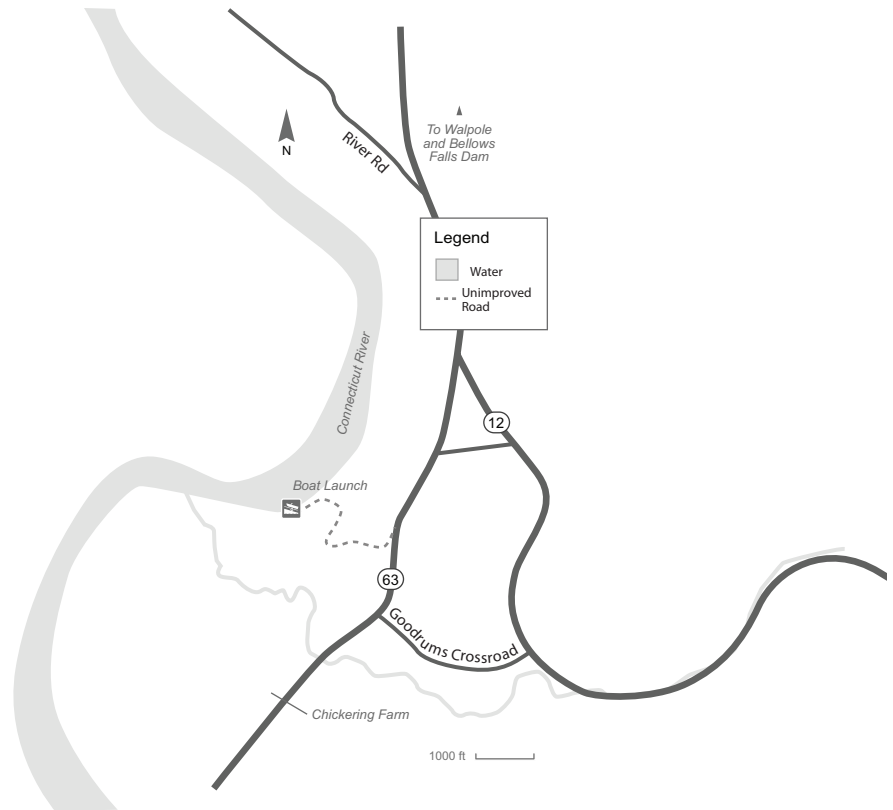
conditions in the fields and ice conditions in the river, but this site normally hosts a flock of more than a thousand geese for at least a couple days each spring. Snow Geese are

an annual occurrence, often in good numbers, and it seems likely that many of the rarer geese that migrate through the river valley also stop here regularly. I finally saw a rare goose at the Westmoreland Boat Launch this past March, when a Ross's Goose showed up among a large flock of Canada Geese. It is unclear whether this goose was the same one seen mostly on the Vermont side during subsequent days, but two simultaneous photo-documented Ross's Goose sightings in different locations confirm that two were present in the area. A Eurasian Wigeon also seen at the Putney Great Meadows is another of the rarer birds I have seen at the Westmoreland Boat Launch, along with out-of-place diving birds such as Red-necked Grebe and Red-breasted Merganser. Uncommon but regular dabbling ducks that occur here include American Wigeon, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. Other sites along the river have better habitat for migrant shorebirds, but I have found a few species here, including Wilson's Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, and Least Sandpiper. Killdeer and Spotted Sandpiper, often with fledglings in tow, are regular sights here in summer, as are other classic riparian birds including Belted Kingfisher, Warbling Vireo, Bank and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Yellow Warbler, and Orchard Oriole.

The boat launch is usually accessible to vehicles during the warmer months, but the season when birding here is best is also the season when access is most difficult, as the snow and mud of early spring often make the road impassable. The unpaved access road is located off the west side of Route 63, about 0.6 miles south of the junction with Route 12 and about 0.3 miles north of the intersection with Gooddrums Crossroad. Little parking is available at the top of the access road, but one or two cars can fit there without blocking the road for farm vehicles and snowmobiles. I am lucky to be able to walk to this beautiful spot.

## Chickering Farm

Just south of the Westmoreland Boat Launch and Gooddrums Crossroad is the Chickering Farm, a better-known birding hotspot. Like many others along the river, this area of farmland attracts raptors and open-field songbirds, particularly in winter, when this is one of the best places in the region to find Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and occasionally Lapland Longspurs. This is also a good spot to see raptors, including wintering Peregrine Falcons and the Black Vultures that frequent this area. After a Golden Eagle appeared over our yard in January 2019, we followed



it to the Chickering Farm, where it was seen regularly for the next several weeks, often in the back field visible from the far end of Chickering Road. The far end of Chickering Road, however, is best avoided, out of respect for the privacy of the farmhouse at the road's end. I have had decent luck over the years just by scanning the fields from the eastern portion of Chickering Road, and this approach should be sufficient for finding most of the birds in the main field along Route 63 while also staying out of the way of the farmers. As always, visiting birders should be respectful and use their best judgment.

## River Road

Another well-known spot in this area, located about a mile to the north, is the complex of farm fields along River Road. The road begins as River Road North off Route 12 in Westmoreland, promptly crosses the Walpole town line, and rejoins Route 12 about four miles farther north. The farms on this road are frequently birded, provide a great mix of habitats for birds of all kinds, and have produced several noteworthy finds over the years, including a Townsend's Warbler in November 2010. When flooded, the cornfields along this road provide excellent habitat for dabbling ducks, including good numbers of Green-winged Teal, and shorebirds, including Wilson's Snipe and Killdeer in early spring and, later in spring, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, and other May migrants. In winter, these same fields are great places to see wintering raptors and open-field

passerines. Eastern Meadowlarks, though now rare in this region, have occurred here several times in recent years. I especially like to bird along River Road in early spring, particularly late March and early April, because this time of year combines the highlights of both winter and spring migration. Fall is also an excellent time here, as the brushy edges of cornfields are productive habitat for sparrows and other migrant songbirds. The two major farms along this road are the Boggy Meadow Farm, which occupies the northern portion of the road, and the Meadowair Farm (often called the “Chickering horse farm”, and labeled in eBird as the “Sawyer Farm”), occupying the southern portion. Both farms are equally productive birding habitat, and both are best birded simply by making stops along River Road. While birding this road, park well off the road and away from houses, and stay out of agricultural fields, for the sake of both the owners and the birds utilizing this habitat.



*Horned Larks by Dylan Jackson at the Agway, 3-3-15, Walpole, NH.*

## Malnati Farm

Located a couple more miles to the north, the Malnati Farm is another large farm whose fields provide productive waterbird habitat when flooded. The site of the state’s first Pink-footed Goose in April 2011, it turns up interesting waterfowl activity most springs, and shorebirds also occasionally visit the flooded fields. This farm is also a good place to watch for Eastern Meadowlarks during spring migration. To view the farm fields, park along the southbound shoulder of Route 12, as far off the road as possible. In some winters, the Agway store opposite Malnati Farm scatters birdseed in its back parking lot, which has attracted massive flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings, along with up to seven Lapland Longspurs at a time. Although Agway has not fed the birds for the past few years, the plowed back lot of Pinnacleview Equipment, just to the north, provides another reliable spot for these species. Here,

as at seemingly all locations in the area, the ease of seeing these birds depends heavily on the presence of snow cover to concentrate the birds at prime, snow-free feeding sites. At the Savings Bank of Walpole across the road, fruit trees provide a prime feeding site for Pine Grosbeaks, making this spot worth checking when the next irruption occurs.

## Bellows Falls Dam and Fall Mountain

Two miles north of Malnati Farm, Route 12 is pinched tightly between the dammed Connecticut River to the west and the steep slopes of Fall Mountain to the east. At the Bellows Falls Dam, viewable from a boat launch off Route 12 on the New Hampshire side or from Mill Street in Bellows Falls on the Vermont side, waterfowl of a different flavor can be found, including Common Goldeneye and Common and Hooded Mergansers through the winter. Overhead, raptors soar above the slopes of the mountain. Vultures seem particularly drawn to this ridge. It is often one of the first places I see Turkey Vultures each spring, sometimes in large numbers, and Black Vultures have been reliable here recently. Peregrine Falcons nest on these cliffs, Bald Eagles are commonly found here along the river, and Golden Eagle has been recorded here in migration. Fall Mountain’s steep terrain and riverside location recall Hinsdale’s Mount Wantastiquet and other mountains along the Connecticut River in Massachusetts, bringing to mind certain southern songbirds such as Cerulean Warbler and Worm-eating Warbler. Although these species have not yet been found at Fall Mountain, they are possibilities worth keeping in mind, especially if climate change allows them to expand their ranges northward. I have yet to hike Fall Mountain myself, but the mountain’s trails, particularly the trail which leaves from Mountain View Road in North Walpole and ascends the mountain’s west slope, seem like worthy destinations for birders hoping to find a new outpost for one of these southern species.

## Farther Afield

Continuing north on Route 12 past North Walpole, views open over wide, marshy sections of river. The birding from these viewpoints improves as one crosses the Sullivan County line into Charlestown and passes Herrick’s Cove, the Charlestown Great Meadows, and other birding hotspots. Interior locations in Westmoreland and Walpole, away from the immediate river valley, afford less specialized birding, but they still offer the birds and natural beauty typical of our state. Particular interior sites to visit include Warwick Preserve and Harvey Pond in Westmoreland and Mill Pond in Walpole. Birding routes along the river are often worth extending south to Spofford Lake and Hinsdale, north through Charlestown and beyond, and east through Surry



## Take Photos

It is extremely helpful to have photos which illustrate the habitat, parking lot, park sign, etc. or to give birders an idea of what to expect when they visit the park. Links to photos on the official website often break when the website is updated. Photos provided by birders are much preferred. In some cases, we have added a “photo tour” of the Hotspot when a birder can provide 4-5 photos with brief descriptions. Sometimes a photo of a bird you observed also shows the habitat at the location.

## Check your favorite locations

Check the links to your favorite local birding locations to see the information we have about it on the website. Report any broken links so they can be updated. If you can provide new information or add to what is there, it will be most appreciated by the birding community.

You can use the contact form (<http://ebird Hotspots.com/how-to-help/>) on the website to send information, corrections, or ask a question. If you have photos to add, please let us know (via the contact form) and we will work with you to add them.

*Ken Ostermiller volunteers with eBird, manages the eBird Hotspots in Ohio where he lives and maintains a website about Ohio birding locations. He has connections to New Hampshire and New England and often visits. His son lives in New Hampshire and his daughter works at the University of Vermont in Burlington.*

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## Volunteers and Research

### Why do I need to clean my feeders? House Finch Eye Disease

by Jon Woolf

Naturalists advise us to clean our bird feeders regularly, because they can be a source of disease, but is this really a serious danger? After all, most diseases can't jump species and most feeders attract a large variety of bird species. Also, cleaning a feeder, getting into all the nooks and crannies where old seed and debris can hide, is hard. So, is cleaning your feeders really that important?

A couple of years ago now, I came across vivid evidence that yes, it is. At the Massabesic Audubon Center one afternoon, I observed the two birds in the accompanying photos. One is a House Finch, the other an American Goldfinch. They're both very obviously suffering from the bacterial infection formally known as “mycoplasmal conjunctivitis,” but commonly called “House Finch Eye Disease.” This disease is caused by a bacterium, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*. The bacteria infects

the respiratory tract and the sinuses and produces sinusitis, conjunctivitis, respiratory distress and swelling around the eyes. In extreme cases, the eye may be swollen completely shut, as with this unfortunate House Finch. The conjunctivitis was first observed in House Finches, hence the name, but it's also known to infect several related species: Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Evening Grosbeak and possibly others. While it looks like just a messy inconvenience, House Finch Eye Disease can be deadly: if it renders both eyes blind, then the bird can't see and can't survive.



*Photos of an American Goldfinch and a House Finch with mycoplasmal conjunctivitis. The House Finch close up shows that the bird is certainly blind in this eye. Photos taken by Jon Woolf, 1-27-18 at the Massabesic Audubon Center, Auburn, NH.*



What does this have to do with bird feeders? Well, as a respiratory disease, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* is transmitted primarily by airborne droplets, but it can also be transmitted by indirect contact. For example, an infected bird rubs its itching head against a hard surface, leaving some debris including live bacteria. Then another bird comes along, rubs in the same place and picks up the bacteria. It's extremely easy for this to happen at a bird feeder where large numbers of birds congregate, especially

a tube-type feeder where birds often touch the top or sides of a feeder porthole while grabbing a seed.

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology has been tracking House Finch Eye Disease since it first appeared in 1994, as part of their “Project Feederwatch.” They have an excellent, informative webpage on the topic, plus a way to report infected birds at: <https://feederwatch.org/learn/house-finch-eye-disease/>.

The page gives a list of recommendations on how to prevent the spread of the disease. At the top of the list is, yes, clean your feeders regularly and thoroughly, using a disinfecting solution such as diluted bleach, or soap and hot water. You can also:

- Take down your feeders for at least a few days to encourage sick birds to disperse.
- Rake underneath the feeders to remove old seed and bird droppings.
- Continue to clean your feeders every week or so.

If sick birds return, avoid using feeders with big ports that the birds can rub their heads against.

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## New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

### Spring 2016 through Winter 2016-17

*Hector Galbraith, Chair*

*Michael Resch, Secretary*

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee for Spring 2016, Summer 2016, Fall 2016, and Winter 2016-17. Additionally, the Committee reviewed and voted on several historical records that were not previously voted on or required further evaluation prior to making final decisions.

The NHRBC reviews unusual sightings in an effort to maintain accuracy and scientific integrity of rare bird records in New Hampshire. It is independent of *New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR)* and NH Audubon. All sightings are evaluated based on details submitted by the observer(s). The Committee requires a vote with not more than one dissension for acceptance of a record except for potential first state records which require a unanimous vote.

A rejection is not necessarily an indication that the identification was incorrect, but that the information received was not sufficient to allow its acceptance as a state record. Adequate documentation is key to whether a report is accepted or not. For information on the Committee and its decision-making process, see the articles in the Summer 1996

and Winter 2005-06 issues of *NHBR*.

These four 2016 seasons included a remarkable five first New Hampshire state records that were accepted by the Committee:

- Tufted Duck – a long-awaited first state record appearing at Captain Pond in Salem, NH during the period of March 4-8, 2016.
- Redwing – seen March 13-16, 2016 in Hollis, NH in and around the Hollis High School fields.
- Mountain Bluebird – seen April 4-15, 2016 at the Pease International Tradeport south end, Portsmouth, NH.
- Eurasian Collared-Dove – seen on May 25, 2016 in East Kingston, NH.
- White Wagtail, *yarrellii* race – an amazing sighting starting on 11-2-16 at Rye Harbor State Park and then making its way south to Great Boars Head in Hampton, NH through 11-4-16. This is the first North American sighting of this race, also known as Pied Wagtail in Europe.

The sightings of the Tufted Duck, Redwing, Mountain Bluebird and Eurasian Collared-Dove were detailed in the Spring 2016 edition of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. The White Wagtail record was detailed in the Fall 2016 edition. With these additions as of February 2017, the official New Hampshire state list totals 414.

The NHRBC also revisited the list of species for which documentation and review are required. Based on an analysis of the frequency of past sightings, especially over the last 10 years, several species were removed from the state’s review list, including Cackling Goose, Red-headed Woodpecker, Varied Thrush and Hoary Redpoll. The complete review list can be found at: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/rare-bird-committee-species-list/>.

A reminder that the best way to ensure your sighting is accepted by the NHRBC is to prepare and submit adequate documentation of the sighting using the “New Hampshire Bird Sighting Documentation” form, available at: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/documentation-forms-for-rarities/>.

Even if you have a photo, a supplemental documentation form can be invaluable in gaining acceptance of the record, especially with poor quality photos. If you don’t have a photograph it doesn’t mean it won’t be accepted by the Committee.

The members of the Committee voting on the Spring, Summer and Fall 2016 records were: David Donsker, Kurk Dorsey, Iain MacLeod, Eric Masterson, Mike Resch and Hector Galbraith (Chair). Two additional members were added to the Committee for Winter 2016-17 and Historical Records, Jason Lambert and Jeanne-Marie Maher. Mike Resch served as the Committee Secretary.

## Spring 2016

### Records accepted by the Committee

Pacific Loon	5/22/16	North Hampton
Pacific Loon	5/30/16	North Hampton
Western Grebe	4/14/16	Hampton Beach
Tufted Duck	3/4/16	Salem
Red-necked Phalarope	5/7/16	Newfound Lake
White-winged Dove	5/20/16	Star Island
Eurasian Collared-Dove	5/25/16	East Kingston
Chuck-will's-widow	5/21/16	Star Island
Red-headed Woodpecker	5/10/16	Merrimack
Red-headed Woodpecker	5/19/16	Chocorua
Red-headed Woodpecker	5/23/16	Londonderry
Red-headed Woodpecker	5/24/16	Alton Bay
Acadian Flycatcher	5/21/16	Weare
Mountain Bluebird	4/9/16	Pease International Tradeport
Redwing	3/13/16	Hollis
Varied Thrush	3/4/16	Merrimack
Cerulean Warbler	5/27/16	Durham
Blue Grosbeak	5/8/16	Manchester

### Records not accepted by the Committee – None

## Summer 2016

### Records accepted by the Committee

Royal Tern	7/9/16	North Hampton
Rufous Hummingbird	7/16/16	Dunbarton
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	7/29/16	Greenland
Gray-cheeked Thrush	6/16/16	Pondicherry NWR
Golden-winged Warbler	6/3/16	Peterborough
Leach's Storm-Petrel	7/6/16	Jeffrey's Ledge

### Records not accepted by the Committee

Worm-eating Warbler	6/26/16	Colebrook
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This bird was only seen briefly with few fieldmarks noted and, although the bird was singing, the song was not described.

## Fall 2016

### Records accepted by the Committee

Western Grebe	11/3/16	Rye
Cackling Goose	10/5/16	Franklin
Common Eider	11/23/16	Hollis
Common Eider	11/24/16	Sandwich
Red-necked Phalarope	10/2/16	Exeter WTP
Long-eared Owl	11/2/16	Hampton
Red-headed Woodpecker	9/16/16	Contoocook
Western Kingbird	10/22/16	Rye
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	9/20/16	Lebanon
White Wagtail, <i>yarellii</i> race	11/2/16	Rye
White-eyed Vireo	10/8/16	Odiorne Point
White-eyed Vireo	10/22/16	Henniker
Prothonotary Warbler	11/8/16	North Hampton
Western Tanager	9/26/16	Freedom Town

### Records not accepted by the Committee

Red-necked Phalarope (3 birds)	10/2/16	Concord
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Red Phalarope could not be eliminated. The sighting was accepted as 3 Red/Red-necked Phalaropes.

Great Gray Owl	11/25/16	Lyman
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Description could not eliminate Barred or Great Horned Owl.

Cave Swallow	11/12/16	Rye
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Photos were of insufficient quality to eliminate Cliff Swallow and observer did not see the bird well enough to definitively identify the bird as a Cave Swallow.

## Winter 2016-17

### Records accepted by the Committee

Thayer's Gull *	12/11/16	Jeffrey's Ledge
Thayer's Gull	12/29/16	Rye
Common Murre *	12/11/16	Jeffrey's Ledge
Common Murre *	12/14/16	Off-shore
Great Gray Owl	2/25/17	Newport
Red-headed Woodpecker	2/4/17	Sanbornton
Red-headed Woodpecker	2/14/17	Epping
Townsend's Solitaire	2/23/17	Orford
Varied Thrush	12/12/16	Swanzey
Varied Thrush	12/28/16	Swanzey
Varied Thrush	2/12/17	New Ipswich

\*Note, these offshore records did not include GPS coordinates, therefore the Committee cannot verify that the sightings occurred in New Hampshire waters.

### Records not accepted by the Committee - none

## Historical Records

### Records accepted by the Committee

Red-necked Phalarope	5/13/06	Mount Sunapee
Red Phalarope	5/15/06	Mount Sunapee
Eared Grebe	8/12/11	Rochester
Wilson's Phalarope	9/13/11	Exeter WTP
Curlew Sandpiper	9/17, 23/11	Plaice Cove, Hampton
Black Vulture	5/23/11	Mirror Lake, White Mtns.
Mississippi Kite	4/16/82	Bristol
Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	12/17/94	Manchester
Leach's Storm-Petrel *	7/6/16	Jeffrey's Ledge
Royal Tern	7/2/15	Hampton Harbor
Louisiana Waterthrush	8/5/12	Westmoreland

\*Note, this offshore record did not include GPS coordinates, therefore the Committee cannot verify that the sighting occurred in New Hampshire waters.

### Records not accepted by the Committee

Red-necked Phalarope	8/26/11	Jaffrey
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Since Red Phalarope could not be eliminated, the bird was accepted as a Red/Red-necked Phalarope.

Mississippi Kite	5/9/82	Durham
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The description was insufficient to accept this species which was exceedingly rare in New Hampshire at the time.

Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	3/14/95	Chester
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	12/15/96	Rochester
Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco	4/14/97	Chester

The Committee felt that female or immature "Slate-colored" Juncos could not be eliminated.



# Answer to the Photo Quiz

by David B. Donsker

Because gulls are frequently diagnostic challenges, this issue's Photo Quiz features yet another member of this group. As we are all so painfully aware, the plumage and structural differences between gull species are often subtle. On top of that, there can be quite striking individual variation within a species that is related to age, sex, feather wear, color of the soft-parts (bill, legs, eyes, orbital ring), stage of molt and even light conditions. Because of these difficulties, gull identification requires patience, careful study and experience.

But don't despair. We can start by learning the more common species and concentrate at first on adult birds. Once these skills are more-or-less mastered, work can begin on learning the variations present in each species in its various stages of sub-adult plumages.

Let's begin looking at our mystery bird. It's clearly an adult gull. We know this because only an adult would have the prominent red spot near the tip of the lower bill (gonys spot). Its head, breast and under parts are white. In contrast to the pure white breast and under parts, its head is rather heavily darkly streaked. This is particularly strong around the eye. Its upper parts are uniformly dark slaty gray, lacking the scaly markings typical of sub-adult birds. The tips of the primary flight feathers are black with several white spots or "mirrors". The wings are fairly long and tapered giving the entire bird an elongated appearance. The head is slightly rounded. The bill is of medium build, but still on the large side. Its lower mandible is essentially straight and it lacks a strong upward angle at the tip (gonydeal angle). In this color photograph, we have the advantage of seeing the soft part coloration. This is often very helpful in gull identification. Its iris is clear, pale yellow. Importantly, its legs and feet are bright yellow.

In general, the gulls in our region fall into two divisions: small to medium sized "black-hooded" gulls and medium sized to large "white-headed" gulls". The "black-hooded" gulls, which include Bonaparte's Gull, Black-headed Gull, Little Gull, Laughing Gull, Franklin's Gull and the pelagic Sabine's Gull have, in their adult summer plumage, dark black to brownish-black heads or hoods and gray upper parts. In the winter, these species either retain the rear portion of the hood or have a dark spot behind the ear. This individual, with its white head can be none of these species.

The "white-headed" gulls that regularly occur in New Hampshire include Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull (including its rare subspecies "Thayer's Gull"), Greater Black-backed Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull. In addition, three rare "white-headed" gulls have also

occurred in our state: Mew (or Common) Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, and Slaty-backed Gull. Since these species have much in common, all features of structure, plumage and soft-part coloration should be carefully examined. In particular, it's important to look at size and body proportions, mantle color, wing-tip pattern, eye color, bill pattern and leg color.

Herring Gull, is our most common and conspicuous species, but it is also, perhaps, our most variable one in subadult plumage. Becoming familiar with it, in all its various appearances, is a key factor in mastering gull identification. Herring Gull has a rather long, heavy bill. Males, in particular, are long-headed, but females may be more round-headed, not unlike this individual. Like this bird, it has dark black wing tips with white windows and pale-yellow eyes. Like this individual, in winter, its head is heavily streaked, but unlike this bird, the Herring Gull's mantle is pale gray, not slaty-gray and also, Herring Gull has pinkish, rather than yellow legs and feet.

The Ring-billed Gull and Mew Gull are both smallish, "white-headed" gulls with rather rounded heads and both species have yellow legs like our featured bird. In winter, both, but particularly Mew Gull, have streaked heads. Both have black wing tips, but the wing spots are smaller than in the quiz bird. Mew Gull has a dark eye but, like this bird, Ring-billed Gull has a yellow eye. Both species have much smaller yellow bills that lack the red gonys spot. Instead, Ring-billed Gull has a prominent black ring on the bill. In Mew Gull, the bill is either completely unmarked or it has a small faint ring. Further, both species have pale gray mantles, much like Herring Gull.

Glaucous Gull and the typical race of Iceland Gull are very pale-mantled gulls with pink feet. These two pale species are quite unlike our dark-mantled quiz bird. "Thayer's Gull," a dark race of Iceland Gull, often has extensive dark streaking on its head in winter. It has a darker gray mantle than the typical Iceland Gull, but its mantle color is similar in tone to Herring Gull, not slate-gray. It also has deep pink legs and feet. The extremely rare

Glaucous-winged Gull, recorded only once in our state, is also a pale-gray mantled species with pink feet.

This leaves the three species of dark mantled, large, white-headed gulls to contend with: Great Black-backed Gull,



*Iceland Gull by Len Medlock, 1-27-19, Exeter, NH.*

Lesser Black-backed Gull and the rare Slaty-backed Gull. In addition to their dark mantles, these three species of gull share other traits in common. All have rather large, yellow bills with red gonys spots. All have black wing tips with white mirrors. All have yellow irises. In Lesser Black-backed Gull, the iris is invariably clear bright yellow. Great Black-backed and Slaty-backed Gulls may also have clear yellow irises, but frequently their eyes look dirty yellow. Of the three, Greater Black-backed Gull has the darkest mantle. Its mantle is nearly black rather than the dark slaty gray of Lesser Black-backed Gull or Slaty-backed Gull. In this species, the mantle is nearly the same intensity of black as the wing tips, whereas in Lesser Black-backed Gull and Slaty-backed Gull, the wing tips are distinctly blacker than the dark gray mantle. The Great Black-backed is the largest of the dark-mantled gulls, being considerably larger and fuller chested than Herring Gull. Slaty-backed Gull is also a robust species, but is smaller than Great Black-backed Gull and lacks the bulbous tipped bill of that species. Of the three, Lesser Black-backed Gull is the smallest species. It is slightly smaller than Herring Gull. It is also the slenderest species, with proportionally longer wings that give it a “tapered” appearance. The tips of the wings in Lesser Black-backed Gull extend further behind the tail than in any of our other large, dark-mantled gulls. It also has the least heavy-appearing bill. The lower mandible in this species is nearly straight in comparison to Great Black-backed Gull which has a noticeable gonydeal angle at the tip giving the bill tip a bulbous appearance. In winter, Great Black-backed Gull has a nearly unstreaked, or very faintly streaked, white head. In contrast, in winter, both Slaty-backed and Lesser Black-backed Gull have heavily streaked heads, especially on the nape and around the eyes. Finally, the three species differ in leg and foot color. In Great Black-backed Gull, they are pale pink. Those of Slaty-backed Gull are generally bright pink. In stark contrast, the legs and feet of Lesser Black-backed Gull are yellow.

This large, white headed gull, with its heavily streaked white head, slaty-gray mantle, long wings, and bright yellow legs and feet can only be an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull in winter plumage. It was photographed by Steve Mirick at Hampton Beach State Park on November 19, 2017.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Laurus fiscus*, is an uncommon, but increasingly regular winter visitor to New Hampshire from northwestern Europe. It is found primarily along the coast, usually in association with Herring, Ring-billed and Greater Black-backed Gulls. Summer sightings are rare, but have become more frequent in recent years, and one individual has even paired with a Herring Gull on the Isles of Shoals (see the Spotlight on Lesser Black-backed Gull in the Winter 2007-08 *New Hampshire Bird Records* issue, Vol. 26, #4). All the sightings of this species in New Hampshire have

been attributed to the subspecies *L. f. graellsii*, the subspecies with the least dark mantle of the three described forms.

Look for this specialty while developing your gull identification skills by poring over gulls along the seacoast, or at the wastewater treatment plants in Rochester or Exeter on a winter day. If you do, finding one can be a source of deep personal satisfaction.

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*Lesser Black-backed Gull* by Len Medlock, 1-19-17, Hampton Beach SP, Hampton, NH.

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*American White Pelican by Jason Lambert, 12-31-18, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

## Abbreviations Used

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

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## Winter 2018-19 Highlights

### Photo Quiz



#### Can You Identify This Bird?

We are once again able to offer a color Photo Quiz, thanks to George Robbins' sponsorship of all four 2018 issues. See inside for the answer. Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.



*Tufted Duck by Jason Lambert, 1-19-19, Exeter WTP, NH.*



*Common Redpolls were present but not in the expected large numbers. See the article inside on the ups and downs of this winter visitor. Photo by Scott Heron, 2-21-19, Kingston, NH.*



*Pine Grosbeaks visited in good numbers this winter. NH Audubon monitors the ups and downs of our winter birds thanks to all the volunteers who take part in the annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey. Photo by Len Medlock, 1-21-19, New London, NH.*

*Orange-crowned Warbler  
by Steve Mirick, 1-12-19,  
Seabrook, NH.*



*Yellow-breasted  
Chat by Jason  
Lambert, 1-7-19,  
Odiorne Point SP,  
Rye, NH.*

