

# New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS



SPRING 2019

Vol. 38, No. 1

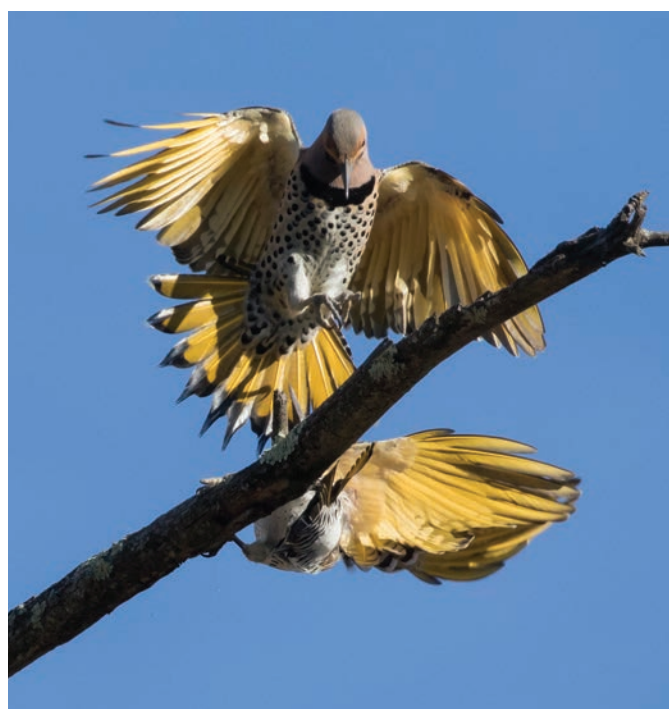


# Spring 2019 Highlights



Top: Scarlet Tanagers are not usually seen at feeders but this spring's weather resulted in many reports. Meade Cadot photographed this one at his feeder in Hancock, NH where it fed on multiple food sources. See the Field Notes and the Spring Summary for more.

Right: Long-time readers will remember this photo from the Back Cover of the Spring 2005 issue of New Hampshire Bird Records (Vol. 24, No. 1). Tim Markle photographed this Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Ovenbird as they perched outside the window of the weather room on Mt. Washington during spring migration, 5-15-05. For more on birding Mt. Washington, see the article in this issue. Photo courtesy of the Mount Washington Observatory.



Far Left: A puzzling bird photographed by Lori Charron on April 27, 2019 in Errol, NH. To find out what it is, go to the Field Notes.

Left: Our Northern Flicker sub-species goes by the name Yellow-shafted Flicker. This photo by Kyle Wilmarth shows why. Taken on 4-7-19, Plaistow, NH.

## Photo Quiz



### Can You Identify This Bird?

Photo by Len Medlock.  
Answer at the end of the issue.



# From the Editor

## SPRING 2019

by Rebecca Suomala

### A New Look for New Hampshire Bird Records

New Hampshire birders have embraced eBird as the place to record their bird sightings and the volume of reports keeps growing. In Spring 2019 (March 1 – May 31), there were 196,881 sightings in eBird! That's a far cry from the years when birders sent their reports to NH Audubon on paper slips and we used to think that 2,000 reports was a lot for spring. The huge amount of data is incredibly valuable for research and it allows eBird to provide maps, graphs, and all kinds of tools for birders. It also presents a challenge for our volunteer Season Editors, who review and choose which sightings to publish, and for the production volunteers, who format them for publication. It is not only time consuming to present the listings in the publication, but the volume of reports makes the publication of a small percentage of the more regular species less informative. Before eBird, *New Hampshire Bird Records* was the only way for birders to view bird sightings, but now all reports are available in eBird for anyone to view. Instead, people turn to *New Hampshire Bird Records* for a breakdown of the season's happenings, informative analysis, summarization and context.

We have decided to try a new format that includes increased commentary from the Season Editor and minimal listings. Those listings which do appear will provide the detail



*Bank Swallows by Raymonde Garant Lacasse, 5-18-19, Pickering Ponds, Rochester, NH.*

on the sightings highlighted by the Season Editor in the write-ups, such as rarities and other noteworthy or illustrative sightings.

The change in format will also allow additional space for articles. The number of articles has increased so much that in the past few issues I have had to postpone one or more articles for a future issue because there was not enough space.

We hope you notice another change with this issue – the cover is color on the inside as well as the outside! There was only a minimal cost increase to do this and it allows us to feature more of the many, wonderful color photos from the season. We rely on sponsors to bring you a color cover and are grateful for the donors who have helped provide these covers. If you are interested in sponsoring an issue, please contact me.

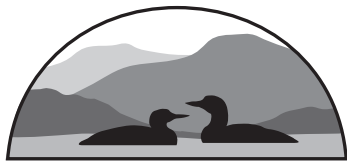
For the first time, we also experimented with an online sneak preview of an article from this issue that was ready before the rest of the publication – the Trumpeter Swan in New Hampshire. The online version is a web format that includes two additional figures that were in color and did not translate to black-and-white. Check the Current Issue Contents on the *New Hampshire Bird Records* web page for a link.



We want to know what you think! Do you like the new format or not? Is something missing that you want back? Do you have suggestions for improving the new format? We look forward to your feedback! This will be an evolving process so please let us know what you think (my email and phone number is on page 2.)

*Sora by Kyle Wilmarth, 4-29-19, Salem, NH.*





**NH AUDUBON**

Protecting our environment since 1914

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS**  
VOLUME 38 NUMBER 1  
SPRING 2019

**MANAGING EDITOR**

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

**TEXT EDITOR**

Dan Hubbard

**SEASON EDITORS**

Eric Masterson, Spring  
Chad Witko, Summer  
Ben Griffith, Fall  
Jim Sparrell/Katherine Towler, Winter

**LAYOUT**

Dyanna Smith

**PUBLICATION ASSISTANT**

Kathryn Frieden

**ASSISTANTS**

Zeke Cornell,  
David Deifik, Elizabeth Levy,  
Susan MacLeod, Gray Medynski,  
Marie Nickerson

**FIELD NOTES**

Diana Stephens

**FIELD TRIP REPORTS**

Gail Coffey

**PHOTO QUIZ**

David Donsker

**PHOTO EDITOR**

Wendy Chatel

**WEB MASTER**

Kathy Barnes

**WHERE TO BIRD**

Scott Heron, Phil Brown

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

Phil Brown, Wendy Chatel, Hank Chary,  
David Deifik, David Donsker, Ben Griffith,  
Dan Hubbard, Pam Hunt, Iain MacLeod,  
Eric Masterson, Robert A. Quinn,  
Rebecca Suomala, Jon Woolf

[www.nhbirdrecords.org](http://www.nhbirdrecords.org)

**IN APPRECIATION**

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by Kathryn Frieden in loving appreciation of her four sisters. From little girls helping to take care of each other, to grown women with a wide variety of accomplishments, they are a great group of friends as well as sisters.



**In This Issue**

From the Editor ..... 1  
 Photo Quiz..... Inside Front Cover  
 Spring Season: March 1 through May 31, 2019 *by Eric Masterson* ..... 3  
 Field Notes, Spring 2019 compiled *by Diana Stephens*..... 17  
     A Yellow-throated Warbler in Sunapee *by Dylan Jackson* ..... 17  
     A (Yellow) Purple Finch!..... 18  
     Scarlet Tanager Eats a Balanced Meal..... 18  
     Bald Eagle vs. Great Blue Heron *by Diana Stephens* ..... 19  
     A Fearless Great Blue *by Jon Woolf* ..... 20  
     Blue-winged Warbler Hybrid Seen in Durham ..... 20  
     White-winged Scoter Found in Downtown Manchester ..... 21  
     The Hawk and the Wren *by Catherine Fisher*..... 21  
     Woodcock with Babies ..... 21  
 Field Trip Report, Spring 2019..... 22  
     A “Big Day” of Spring Birding in New Hampshire *by Steve Mirick* ..... 22  
     My Mid-May “Medium” Morning *by Kurk Dorsey*..... 22  
     Brown Thrashers Raptorthon Summary *by Julie Brown*..... 24  
     A Five-Mile Radius Big Day *by Pamela Hunt*..... 25  
     Epping “Medium” Day *by Greg Tillman* ..... 26  
     North Country Field Trip During a Remarkable Season *by Bob Quinn & Doug Bechtel* .... 26  
 Photo Gallery – Bay-breasted Warbler Visits Pelagic Trip *by Rebecca Suomala* ..... 28  
 Find Birds with eBird *by Kathryn Frieden* ..... 29  
 Birding at the Top of New England *by Will Broussard*..... 30  
 Loon Rescue at Rye Harbor *by Jon Woolf*..... 32  
 Songbird Saver: Website to Help Prevent Birds from Colliding into Towers *by Steve Holmer*. ..... 33  
 Birders Encounter a Satellite-tagged Merlin on Star Island *by Chris DeSorbo* ..... 34  
 Volunteers and Research – Bahama Piping Plovers Nest in NH *by Meryl Friedrich* ..... 36  
 A Trumpeter Swan in New Hampshire! A Historical Perspective *by Diana Stephens* ..... 38  
 Answer to the Photo Quiz *by David B. Donsker*..... 42

Cover Photo: Top: Trumpeter Swan by Steve Mirick, 4-14-19, Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia, NH. Bottom: A Franklin’s Gull with a Laughing Gull to the right and a Herring Gull behind, by Leo McKillop, 5-14-19, Rye, NH.

**March 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019**

by Eric Masterson

**Note on Format**

*This is the first issue in our new format and it is a work in progress. Your feedback is welcome. In this issue, the detailed information on sightings mentioned in the written summaries appears in the listings, now located at the end of the season summary. The intent was to make the written portion more streamlined, but still provide full sighting details for those interested. Note that all sightings are viewable in eBird and we will continue to provide information on how to do that. In this issue, see "Find Birds with eBird" on page 29.* — Ed.



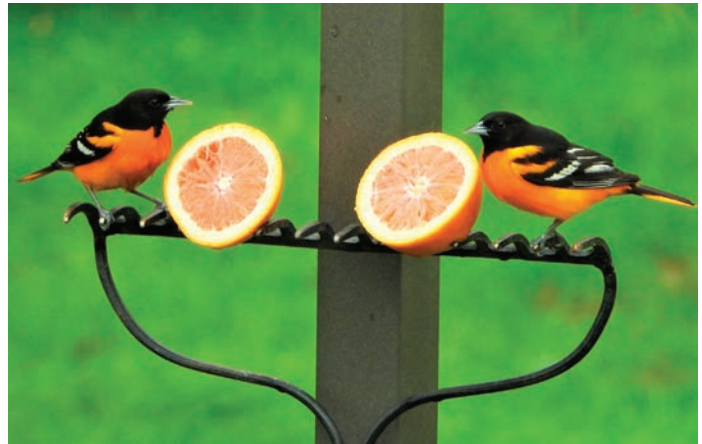
**Introduction**

**W**intery, cold weather continued until mid-March, with a record low of minus eight degrees Fahrenheit in Concord on March 7. The monthly average was a couple of degrees below normal, with

snowpack also a couple of inches below normal. By the end of the month, only trace evidence of snow remained and the trend toward reduced snowpack seems to be having a negative effect on the ability of the major river valleys to hold waterfowl for any length of time. It may be that low snow cover allows waterfowl to move more quickly to breeding grounds or to more northerly staging grounds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. For more, see the Waterfowl Summary in the Spring 2016 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. In Spring 2019, multiple observers reported that waterfowl migration was later than normal, although the reasons for this are unclear.

The weather significantly warmed toward mid-April, with a high of 80 degrees on April 19. A series of low-pressure cells moved across the continent and brought unsettled weather toward the end of the month and marked April as the wettest since 2007. With the exception of occasional clear spells which promoted some migration on the nights of May 4, May 6, and especially May 10, the cold, wet, and cloudy weather continued through early May, considerably slowing songbird migration. Observers on a field trip to Pittsburg in Coos County on May 28 noted that spring growth was about two weeks behind schedule, with consequently fewer migrants to be found (see the Field Trip Report). Although the arrival dates of expected late April and early May migrants didn't seem to be unduly affected, the weather

depressed production of insect biomass upon which many early May arrivals depend. Thus, some unusual visitors were driven to bird feeders, including high numbers of Baltimore Orioles, a few Orchard Orioles, and most remarkably, numerous Scarlet Tanagers. High pressure began to dominate in the latter half of May, ushering in periods of weather more favorable for migration.



*Baltimore Orioles at the feeder by Cathy Wennerth, 5-5-19, Merrimack, NH.*

Somewhat counter intuitively, it was the best spring in living memory for southern overshoots, with at least 14 individuals and multiple species involved, including a **Prothonotary Warbler**, five **Yellow-throated Warblers**, five **Summer Tanagers**, a **Blue Grosbeak** and two **Painted Buntings**. Many of these occurred between April 26 and May 6, the period when New England was dominated by cold fronts and associated low pressure, perhaps creating a disorienting environment for northbound migrants.

A **Trumpeter Swan**, which stayed late into the fall, was a first-state record in the modern era. By contrast, a **Gull-billed Tern**, which only lingered for minutes, represented the first documented record for the state. Additional rarities included **Ross's Goose**, **Tufted Duck**, **Franklin's**



*Gull-billed Tern by Andrea Robbins, 5-2-19, Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.*

**Gull**, and **Tricolored Heron**, pushing the season tally to a remarkable 280 species, the second highest total in 20 years. Warbler diversity was especially impressive, with 31 species recorded, the highest in 20 years.



## Waterfowl to Grebes



*Trumpeter Swan by Jason Lambert, 4-14-19, Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia, NH.*

Initially identified as a Tundra Swan, New Hampshire's first **Trumpeter Swan** of the modern era was found at New Hampshire Audubon's Abe Emerson Marsh in Candia. Reports from early colonial times suggest the species occurred in New Hampshire before being hunted to the brink of extinction. There is now an established population breeding in southern Ontario, from which this individual may plausibly have originated. See the article elsewhere in this issue for the Trumpeter Swan's recovery story.

Finding rarities often involves a measure of predictive analysis. Successful practitioners of the art utilize a combination of weather, geography, time of year, and effort to increase their odds of success. Other times, it requires no more than an internet connection and patience. A **Ross's Goose** frequented the Connecticut River Valley in late March, commuting 6 miles back and forth between goose fields in Westmoreland and Walpole. The bird was likely the same individual seen a few days previously in Northampton, Massachusetts. New Hampshire and Vermont birders just had to sit and wait. The Ross's Goose was the fourth state record, all of which have occurred in the twelve years since the first occurrence in Durham in 2008. There has been a

general eastward movement and expansion of Ross's Goose breeding and wintering grounds over the past 20-30 years. Their primary nesting area in the Central Arctic south of Queen Maud Gulf has shifted to include the western shores of Hudson Bay, joining the lesser Snow Geese already nesting there, and their wintering range has shifted eastwards from the Pacific flyway to include the Central and Mississippi flyways (pers. comm. Ray Alisauskas). Additionally, their population has rebounded from a low of 2,000-3,000 birds in the 1950s to a current estimated 2 million plus birds. Taken together, these factors help explain the uptick of occurrences in New England.



*Cackling Goose by Eric Masterson, 3-20-19, Hinsdale, NH.*

At least one **Cackling Goose** was observed along the Connecticut River south of Charlestown in late March. Snow Goose and Brant migration was modest, with a high count of 155 Brant moving north past Pulpit Rocks in Rye in late May.

Wood Duck numbers peaked in the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys in early April, with 120 birds in Concord and 80 birds in Charlestown. Scarce dabblers appeared in modest numbers, though it bears repeating that Northern Shoveler has increased to the point that the species is now as regular in the state as Gadwall and Northern Pintail. Green-winged Teal migration peaked with 180 birds in Charlestown in mid-April, with lesser numbers in the Merrimack River Valley and on the coast. Large flocks of Green-winged Teal are the likeliest refuge for **Common**

**Teal**, our bird's Eurasian cousin. A drake was found amongst the teal flock in Charlestown on April 21. Variable numbers of



*Brant by Jason Lambert, 5-18-19, Rye, NH.*

**Canvasback** and **Redhead** were present in the Great Bay area from early March, with a maximum of three Canvasbacks at the Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant and four Redheads on Great Bay. Ring-necked Ducks also peaked in March with 324 birds at World End Pond in Salem.



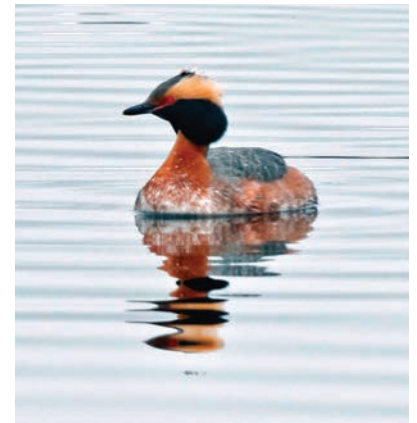
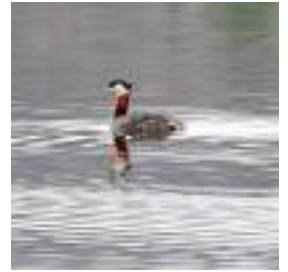
*Canvasback by Leo McKillop, 3-16-19, Exeter WTP, NH.*

As with Common Teal, vagrant **Tufted Ducks** seek out the company of close relatives. A bird on Great Bay in mid-March was

the fourth state record. It seems intuitive that all four New Hampshire birds have been recorded from Rockingham County, given that the bulk of New England records hail from eastern Massachusetts or Rhode Island. It is a straight shot north in spring, and the vast majority of New Hampshire's *Aythya* species are found here. A northbound migrant might see the 2,000 Greater Scaup on Great Bay as evidence of a welcoming environment. However, western New Hampshire birders should remain alert, as the lower Connecticut River Valley can host impressive numbers of Ring-necked Ducks, for example, 185 birds were there in early April. Tufted Duck routinely winters in the general region of Long Island Sound, and it seems reasonable that a spring migrant might pass north along the Connecticut River.

A female **Harlequin Duck** off Great Boars Head in early May was the only record of this scarce migrant and winter visitor. Of the sea ducks, White-winged Scoter and Long-tailed Duck are the most likely species to occur inland in spring. White-winged Scoter migration was noted in early May, with a peak of 38 birds on the Connecticut River at

Hinsdale. Another inland peak occurred later in the month when coastal migration also peaked. The inland high count was 84 in New London while on the coast 672 birds were noted from Pulpit Rocks in Rye and 840 birds moved past Rye Harbor State Park. There were scattered reports elsewhere, including seven White-winged Scoters on Akers Pond in Errol, and 17 Long-tailed Ducks on Spofford Lake in Chesterfield. A lone Black Scoter on Nubanusit Lake in Hancock was noteworthy, with this species far more likely to occur inland in fall.



*A single Horned Grebe (above) and Red-necked Grebe (top) were found inland on 5-4-19 at Pontook Reservoir in Dummer, NH. Photos by Lori Charron.*

Common Goldeneye peaked in mid-March, with 300 birds on Great Bay a relatively high count for the state.

At least a half dozen Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported from Hinsdale to Errol to the seacoast, and the hybrid drake Barrow's

x Common Goldeneye returned to Errol for the fourth consecutive year. Ruddy Ducks were reported regularly from mid-April to early May in Hinsdale (maximum of seven), but were found at only two other locations elsewhere in the state: Lebanon (two), and Turtle Pond in Concord (one). In comparison to the spectacular grebe fallout last year, migration through the interior of the state was muted, with a high count of four Horned Grebes at Wilder Dam in early April and four in Nashua in early May, and 34 Red-necked Grebes on Spofford Lake in early May.



*Some of the 672 White-winged Scoters tallied between 6:00 and 8:00 pm migrating north on the NH coast, 5-18-19. Photo by Steve Mirick. He and Jason Lambert also tallied 96 Brant and 212 Long-tailed Ducks moving by from their observation point at Pulpit Rocks in Rye.*



# SPRING SEASON

## Nightjars and Swifts to Shorebirds

Large flocks of migrating Common Nighthawks are almost exclusively a feature of late August and early September, but this spring, several noteworthy counts were tallied, including 80 birds on May 22 and 115 birds on May 23, both from Amherst, and 200 birds on May 27 from Hooksett. Peak spring movement usually occurs during the second half of the month, so it is hard to know whether the adverse weather in early May affected their migration through New Hampshire. Prior to 2019, the largest spring count was of 101 birds in 2013, also during a period of unsettled weather. By contrast, Chimney Swifts move north through the state earlier in the month and were directly affected by the conditions, with flocks of stalled migrants congregating at multiple locations, including 80 birds above World End Pond in Salem, 115 birds flying north over Hampton Beach State Park, and 250 birds in Manchester.



*Common Gallinule by Scott Wesley, 4-29-19, N. Swansey, NH.*

Following the passage of a cold front, 25 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were counted flying north past Hampton Beach State Park on May 18. A **Common Gallinule** was found in a marsh at Dillant Hopkins Airport in Keene in late April, where it remained for about a week. Sandhill Cranes continue to trend in a positive direction, with more than 30 individuals reported from multiple locations across eight counties, highlighted by 16 birds in Jackson in mid-April.

Good weather for birding is often bad weather for birds, and vice versa. Had the weather of early May persisted later into the month, we could have expected a good showing of grounded shorebirds throughout the state, but fortune prevailed, at least for the birds, and there were few inland reports of note. **American Oystercatchers** continue to be an expected feature on the Isles of Shoals in May, with a maximum of three birds on May 18. Another bird was spotted along the coast in Rye.

## Photo Challenge



*American Oystercatcher by Leo McKillop, 5-14-19, Rye, NH. Can you identify the other three species in the photo? All of them are great birds to see on the NH coast. Answer below.*

A Black-bellied Plover in Seabrook on April 20 was on the early side. There was only a single record of Whimbrel in May from the coast. There were two Red Knot reports, both in May, from the coast and Seavey Island. Ruddy Turnstones were well represented with multiple reports from the coast and islands throughout the second half of May, highlighted by nine birds in Hampton Harbor on May 15. A single Dunlin was observed in Charlestown on April 21, with a high count of 100 along the coast in late May.



*Red-necked Phalaropes in breeding plumage were one of the highlights of the NH Audubon annual spring pelagic trip on 5-27-19. Photo by Leo McKillop.*

Other high counts included 264 Purple Sandpipers on the coast on May 4, and 450 Least Sandpipers in the Hampton saltmarshes on May 15, with scattered reports elsewhere including 12 Least Sandpipers at the Ambrose gravel pits in Sandwich on May 20. White-rumped Sandpipers were

## Answer to the American Oystercatcher Photo Challenge

The bird to the left of the oystercatcher is a Laughing Gull. Immediately above the back of the oystercatcher is a Ruddy Turnstone. The other birds are Purple Sandpipers, nine of them in all, well camouflaged, although two of them are only partly visible on the right side of the photo.



present in small numbers along the coast with a high count of four birds on May 30 from the Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area. There were two coastal reports of Pectoral Sandpiper, with a third bird seen at the Dillant Hopkins Airport in Keene on May 11, an uncommon inland spring sighting. A group of birders on a NH Audubon organized pelagic trip on May 27 recorded 17 Red-necked Phalaropes on Jeffreys Ledge. Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were present along the coast in normal numbers, with high inland counts of 11 Greater Yellowlegs at Hinsdale Setbacks and 14 Lesser Yellowlegs at Dillant Hopkins Airport.

### Alcids and Gulls to Loons

You are now as likely to encounter Common Murre as Razorbill on Jeffreys Ledge during winter or early spring, a consequence of the species resurgence on breeding grounds to our north. A group of birders on an offshore trip on March 29 recorded 12 Common Murre and eight Razorbill. Less commonly, the species is seen from land. This spring, at least five birds were recorded, all in early May: two from Star Island and three from points along the coast. One of the birds seen on Star Island was observed hauled out on the rocks and perished shortly thereafter. Although the cause of death is unknown, alcids are susceptible to starvation caused by fluctuating fish stocks, which in turn are susceptible to the effects of climate change on ocean temperature.



*Common Murre by Eric Masterson, 5-8-19, Star Island, Isles of Shoals, NH.*

Only one Thick-billed Murre was recorded, an individual in late March inland of the Isles of Shoals. High counts of Black Guillemot are not uncommon in spring at the Isles of Shoals, with 39 at Star Island on May 12, but 31 birds from the coast on May 5 was remarkable. On the same day, Common Murre, **Atlantic Puffin**, and Razorbill were recorded from the mainland – a remarkable diversity of alcids in May. Atlantic Puffin in particular is extremely rare inshore, and is the least likely alcid to be seen from the coast.

Steve Mirick made the following comment in his eBird

report about the alcids on May 5, starting with his total of 31 Black Guillemot:

*Mind blowing total with 20 from Little Boar's Head!! My previous high count from shore at any date is 15. My previous high May count from shore is 4! I don't think we double counted any. All very far out near limit of visibility. Several in flight heading north and south. Some obviously in breeding plumage. Are these late migrants? The number and diversity of alcids today was astounding.*



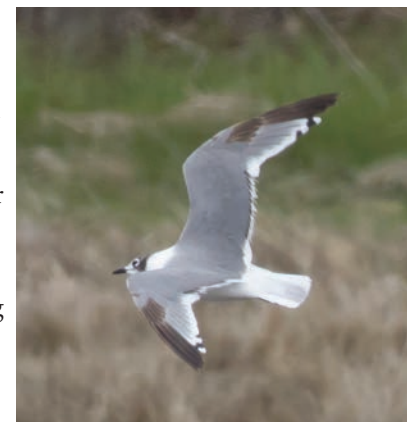
*Bonaparte's Gulls by Jason Lambert, 5-5-19, Durham, NH.*

Continuing the theme of pelagic birds seen inshore, a Black-legged Kittiwake was reported from the coast of Rye on May 10. By contrast, spring Bonaparte's Gulls can be as prominent inland as on the coast when appropriate weather conditions collide with their passage north. Scattered individuals were recorded, especially across Cheshire and Grafton Counties, including these counts, all in early May:

- Hinsdale (11)
- Peterborough (13)
- Berlin (6)
- Center Harbor (16)
- Charlestown (8)
- Mascoma Lake (22)
- Lake Sunapee (25)

A wayward immature **Franklin's Gull** in Rye on May 14 was only the 8th record for New Hampshire.

Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were present in low single digits at the usual locations at the Rochester and Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plants, in the Great Bay area, and along the coast; essentially where gulls are known to congregate. There were additional records



*Franklin's Gull by Kyle Wilmarth, 5-2019, Rye, NH.*

# SPRING SEASON

of Iceland Gulls from Nashua, Plaistow, and Salem. A Lesser Black-backed Gull in Barnstead was the only record away from the coast or the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant.



*Gull-billed Tern, missing a few primary feathers, by Andrea Robbins, 5-2-19, Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.*

A **Gull-billed Tern** photographed in Rye on May 2 was the first documented record for the state. There is one prior hypothetical record, of a bird seen at Hampton Saltmarsh in 1998 which did not meet the Rare Birds Committee's requirements for a first state record (photo or documentation from three observers). Unlike the Franklin's Gull, which was seen by many, the tern did not linger and was not relocated. In addition to small numbers of migrant Caspian Terns seen migrating offshore, three inland reports included two birds at Wilson Pond in Swanzey, one at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant and a bird in Dover. There were two **Black Terns**, one on the coast and only one inland at Lake Umbagog. By contrast, there were multiple inland reports of Common Terns, with one individual found on May 1 in Hinsdale before there were any coastal reports. Birds grounded in early May included those in Hinsdale (2), Charlestown (3), and a large flock of eleven birds on Spofford Lake on May 10. This discrepancy can be at least partially explained by the later migration window for Black Terns. This spring, any Black Terns migrating north through New Hampshire presumably hit the state when the weather was clear and kept going north while the earlier Common Terns were grounded by bad weather. An Arctic Tern on May 29 and a breeding plumaged **Pacific Loon** on May 5, both in Rye, were the only reports of the season.

## Tubenoses, Hawks and Falcons



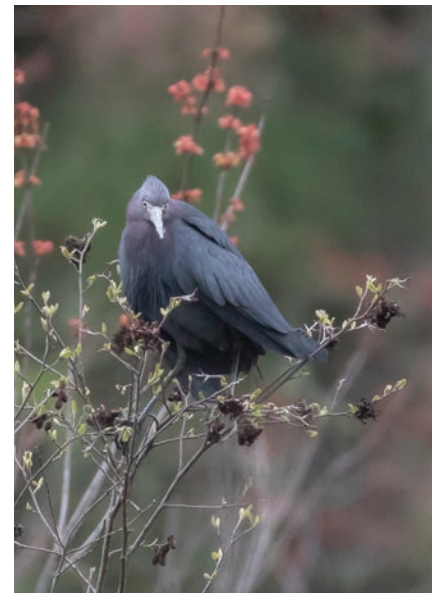
*Tricolored Heron by Steve Mirick, 5-4-19, Durham, NH.*

**B**irders on an all-day pelagic trip to Jeffreys Ledge on May 27 recorded 16 Wilson's Storm-Petrels and one Northern Fulmar. A Sooty Shearwater was seen from Rye on May 29. Of the four shearwaters that occur regularly in New Hampshire waters, Sooty and

Manx Shearwater are the earliest arrivals and the only species likely to be seen in spring.

In contrast to fall, Great Egrets are largely a coastal phenomenon in spring, with inland records generally scarce and usually south of the Lakes Region. This spring, individuals were sighted in Windham, Laconia, Pondicherry NWR, and Stratford. Even rarer, a **Little Blue Heron** in Sandwich was found in mid-April and remained for several days. A second bird was found later in the month in the more likely setting of Salem. A **Tricolored**

**Heron** in Durham on April 27 continued in the Great Bay area for about a week. **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** are most likely seen in fall, and are not a bird that you would expect to see in the yard, so an adult photographed on a New Ipswich lawn on April 20 turned heads. Reports of Black-crowned Night-Herons and Glossy Ibis were mostly



*Little Blue Heron by Kyle Wilmarth, 4-26-19, Salem, NH.*

restricted to the coast and Great Bay area, with just two of the former (Swanzey and Holderness) and two of the latter (E. Kingston, Hinsdale) sighted inland.

Not so long ago Black Vulture was a New Hampshire



rarity. Now, the discussion in spring is of high counts. Birds were noted throughout the lower Connecticut River Valley, with a maximum of seven birds seen in Westmoreland on several days in late March and early April. Additional individuals were reported from Brookline, Exeter, Litchfield, Londonderry, Lee, Hancock, and Nashua. Surely the species is breeding somewhere in the Connecticut River Valley, which also hosted 67 Turkey Vultures at a roost in Lebanon on May 16.

For birders at least, migrating raptors conjure images of fall as much as any panoramic vista of foliage. Birders go hawkwatching in September and October because that is when they expect to see migrants, and though true, the logic is somewhat circular. Eight **Golden Eagles** were reported for the season and 195 Broad-winged Hawks was the highlight of a late April hawkwatch at Pitcher Mountain. Individual Rough-legged Hawks were seen at Portsmouth International Airport



Golden Eagle by Debra Powers, 3-6-19, Dover, NH.

at Pease (Pease Airport) and Exeter in March, with a latish bird on the coast on April 19. Mississippi Kites returned to the Great Bay area with a maximum of two birds first reported in Durham on May 22.



Long-eared Owl by Scott Parker, 3-12-19, Keene, NH.

Only one report of a Snowy Owl was reflective of their scarcity this winter. By contrast, a **Long-eared Owl**

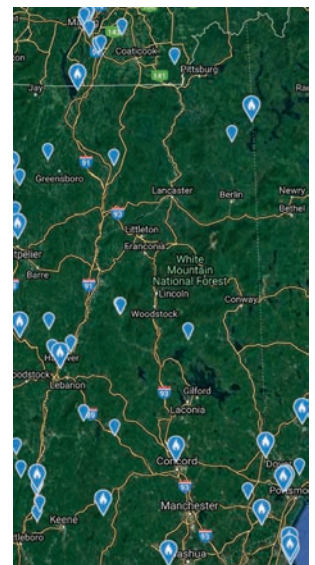
photographed in Keene was a remarkable record of this rarely seen and secretive bird. A **Short-eared Owl** in Concord was a nice find, especially inland, and may be a record late date for the modern era.

Individual Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported from Milan and Errol in Coos County, where they remain rare. A high count of 20 American Kestrels was noted migrating north along the coast on April 20.

## Flycatchers, Crows, Swallows, and Thrushes

A Willow Flycatcher was reported on May 27 from Dixville in Coos County, where Alder Flycatcher is the default “Trails” flycatcher. By contrast, Brentwood Mitigation Area is an excellent spot to find Willow Flycatcher, with 7 birds on May 25. There was a thoroughly excellent showing of Northern Shrike this spring, with approximately 14 birds reported across the state; the latest report was from Grafton on April 16. A state high count 25 Warbling Vireos was documented from the Hinsdale Setbacks at the end of May.

One of the more remarkable aspects of spring was the return of the Blue Jays, as if they were some distant migrant that disappeared to South America for the winter. They may as well have. Thanks to a non-existent acorn crop, most birds moved out of state during the 2018-19 winter. The returning birds represented an increase of approximately 200% over winter numbers, as measured by eBird reports. This compares with roughly even numbers from the prior year when the food shortage was not as acute.



Map of Northern Shrike reports for Spring 2019 (March 1 through May 31) in eBird. Image provided by eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)) and created 12-24-19.

Table 1. eBird Blue Jay reports in the state of New Hampshire.

	Winter 2017/2018	Spring 2018	Percent Change
# reports	3,245	3,669	+13%
# individuals	11,593	10,462	-10%
	Winter 2018/2019	Spring 2019	Percent Change
# reports	1,720	4,734	+175%
# individuals	4,443	17,163	+286%

## SPRING SEASON

Fish Crows were again present in Cheshire County, with multiple reports from Hinsdale and Swanzey and up to five birds seen in Keene. Elsewhere, they were reported from all counties except Coos and Sullivan, with a maximum of 24 birds in Rochester on April 7.



*Fish Crow by Warren Trested, 3-29-19, Rye Harbor SP, NH.*

Purple Martins returned to the Seabrook colony, with 16 birds reported on May 15, and just one solitary record away from the coast; a single bird seen in Nashua on May 16. A total of 30 Cliff Swallows at the Charlestown Wastewater Treatment Plant on May 18 was an excellent point count of this declining breeder.

Either birders or Tufted Titmice (or both) continue to expand their range northward into Coos County where both the birds and birders are still rare. Reports (of Tufted Titmice) were received from Lancaster, Gorham, Carroll, Dummer and Shelburne. (These reports are not in the listings at the end. The details are in eBird and the instructions for locating them are in the article "Find Birds with eBird.") Assuming that they were not winter holdovers, Marsh Wrens reported on April 20 from Odiorne Point State Park in Rye and the Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant were record early dates for the state.

Though Gray-cheeked Thrush is rarely seen in New Hampshire, it must be a fairly common migrant through our airspace based on the simple fact that it winters to our south and breeds to our north. This hypothesis is borne out by the relative ease with which one can hear presumptive Gray-cheeked Thrushes migrating at night in late May or September, however, the similar sounding and closely related Bicknell's Thrush is a complicating factor. Based on simple probability, most sound records likely pertain to the much more common Gray-cheeked Thrush. There were two separate reports this spring of individuals heard during nocturnal migration over Nashua and Plaistow on May 26 and 27. A terrific flight of migrants during the night of May 10 left Star Island awash in Swainson's Thrushes. They

seemed to be everywhere, with 12 recorded in eBird. Likely many more were present, and certainly it was the most I have ever witnessed in dozens of trips to the island. Individual Gray Catbirds on March 2 and March 3 in Keene and Hollis were likely winter holdovers. The main push began in late April as expected. Bohemian Waxwings remained to April 27, but mostly north of Hanover and the Lakes Region, with a maximum of 300 birds seen on March 12 in Lebanon.

### Finches and Sparrows to Icterids



*Common Redpoll by Kyle Wilmarth, 3-5-19, Salem, NH.*

Several of the boreal finches and allies persisted into spring, especially in southwest New Hampshire. The remarkable irruption of Evening Grosbeaks remained in evidence throughout the state, with reports from all ten counties, including large flocks at bird feeders in Marlow (118) and Marlborough (150) in Cheshire County. Small numbers of Pine Grosbeaks persisted to mid-March in the western and northern regions of New Hampshire. Common Redpolls were more abundant, but like the Pine Grosbeaks, were absent from the southeast. Peak counts were:

- 88 – Walpole (March 1)
- 88 – Jefferson (April 8)
- 150 – Campton (April 14)

The latest reports came from Chatham and Northumberland on May 1. Pine Siskins, sparsely distributed and concentrated in southern New Hampshire in early March, became progressively more widespread throughout the season, when they pushed into Coos County in small numbers. Their early absence from the North Country was consistent with the 2018-19 winter finch forecast, which reported a poor spruce seed crop, implying limited food resources from the White Mountains north. There was a single report of a White-winged Crossbill from Dummer in Coos County.





*A Lapland Longspur in breeding plumage by Susan Whisley, 4-7-19, Hampton Beach SP, NH.*

A female Lapland Longspur was seen at Hampton Beach State Park on March 28. Rarely seen in New Hampshire, a stunning male close to full breeding plumage was



*Grasshopper Sparrow by Kyle Wilmarth, 5-11-19, Hinsdale Raceway, NH.*

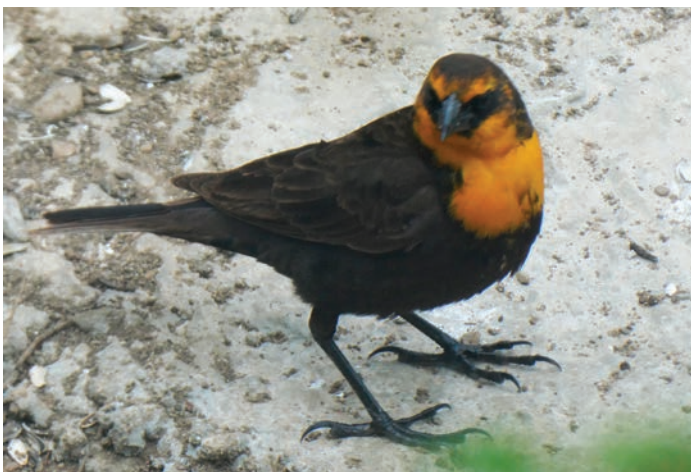
photographed at the same location on April 7. Snow Buntings were well distributed across the state, with 90 birds in Haverhill on March 10.

Grasshopper Sparrows were documented in

Hinsdale for the third year running, with a maximum of four birds on May 25. Elsewhere, birds were reported from:

- Concord Airport (max 6)
- Dillant Hopkins Airport (max 2)
- Amherst Cemetery (max 2)
- Pease Airport (max 1)

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Antioch University in Keene on April 24 and a Lark Sparrow in Nottingham on April



*Yellow-headed Blackbird by Janet Butler, 5-28-19, Rye, NH.*

25 were the only records of the season for these uncommon sparrows. An extremely late American Tree Sparrow was seen on May 13 in Brookline.

A **Yellow-breasted Chat** in Milford on May 7 and a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in Rye on May 28 were the only records of the season. Eastern Meadowlarks were widely reported, with submissions from every county except Belknap and Coos, with a maximum of five birds at Pease Airport. Rusty Blackbirds were recorded in single digits from across the state.

### Warblers, Tanagers, and Buntings

Despite the weather conditions in late April and early May, arrival dates for many species of warbler didn't seem to be materially delayed, with a couple of record early dates established. Multiple Ovenbirds arrived across southern New Hampshire in late April, including a record early bird on April 25 in Rochester. A single report of **Golden-winged Warbler** at Old Monson Village in Milford on May 20 was especially noteworthy as this location also hosted the species last year. A **Lawrence's Warbler** – a Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler hybrid – was seen in Durham on May 25.

**Prothonotary Warbler** is a major rarity in New Hampshire, most often recorded as a spring overshoot. A stunning bird in Exeter on May 18 was approximately the 10th state record since 1950, all but two of which have occurred in spring.



*Prothonotary Warbler by Kyle Wilmarth, 5-18-19, Exeter, NH.*

By contrast, Orange-crowned Warbler is more expected in fall. The subspecies *Oreothlypis c. celata*, which breeds in Alaska and Western Canada, takes a southeasterly migratory path, bringing individuals to the New England region in small numbers from late September onward. Their spring migratory path hews westward, making them much scarcer at this time of year. An obliging bird at Keene State College on April 23-24 was the sole record of the season.

Most birders are aware by now of the outbreak of spruce budworm in Quebec and Maine, and of the positive effect that it is having on populations of birds that prey on the larval moth, most especially Cape May Warbler. Figure 1

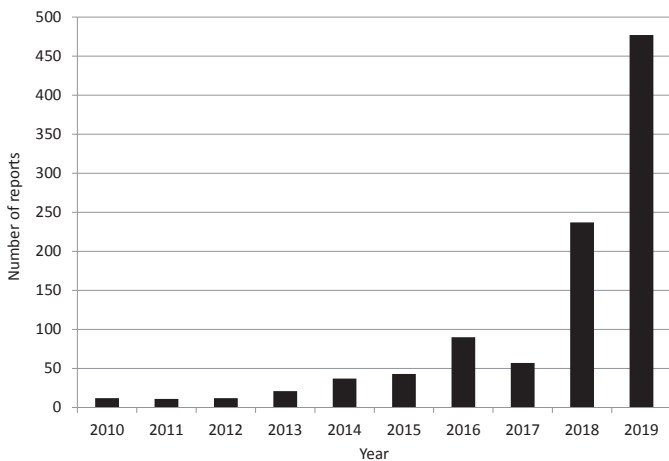
# SPRING SEASON

is a remarkable representation of the phenomenon. The predator/prey relationship is reminiscent of the famous studies of Hudson Bay Company fur trading records that show a similar bond between populations of Canadian Lynx and Snowshoe Hare. Have we hit peak Cape May Warbler yet? Time will tell, but enjoy them while they last. Once the spruce budworm cycle ends, the Cape May Warbler will likely return to its previous status as a scarce migrant. Populations of Tennessee and Bay-breasted Warblers, both of which are also spruce budworm specialists, are showing a similar, though somewhat less pronounced bump, with a high count of ten Tennessee Warblers on May 24 in Hanover and nine Bay-breasted Warblers on May 21 in Errol.



Cape May Warbler by Jason Lambert, 5-19-19, Barnstead, NH.

Figure 1. The cumulative eBird reports of Cape May Warblers in New Hampshire each spring from 2010 to 2019.

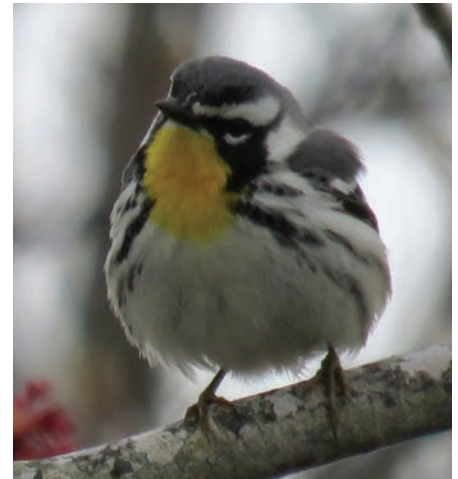


The yellow form of Palm Warbler, *Setophaga p. hypochrysea* is the expected subspecies in spring. It is an early migrant, peaking by mid- to late-April, with a high count this year of 50 birds in Somersworth on April 18 and Rochester on April 25. There were two records of the western form, *Setophaga p. palmarum*, which is more common in the fall: a bird on April 19 in Sandwich and another on April 21 in Concord. Yellow-rumped Warbler is similarly represented by eastern and western forms, although in this case the western form is very rare at any time in the eastern US. A Yellow-rumped Warbler

in Errol on May 3 was described as having the yellow throat of the western form, known as **Audubon's Warbler**. It was a remarkable season for **Yellow-throated Warbler**, with five different individuals reported:

- Sunapee – April 26 (see the Field Notes)
- South Hampton – April 27
- Hampton – May 1
- Salisbury – May 19
- Enfield – May 20

This was an incredible showing for a bird that has averaged only one of every four spring seasons during the last 30 years. Both the South Hampton and Hampton birds showed the white lores typical of the western form. Black-throated Green Warblers in Antrim and Walpole on April 19 were



Yellow-throated Warbler by Holly Bauer, 5-1-19, Hampton, NH.

record early. Never common, a high count of ten Canada Warblers at Pickering Ponds in Rochester on May 25 was also noteworthy. Yet one more species of southern warbler, a female **Hooded Warbler** was in Hollis on May 17. **Cerulean Warbler** is hanging on in New Hampshire by the thinnest of threads. A bird was seen on May 25 at a known site in Hinsdale.

It was an excellent spring for **Summer Tanager**, with five different birds reported:

- Nashua – April 29
- Keene – May 4
- Swanzey – May 6
- Hampton – May 11
- South Hampton – May 26

The species is an expected, although uncommon spring overshoot in New Hampshire, but an incursion on this scale is unprecedented. For context, none were reported in the state between 1976 and 1994, with fourteen reports between 1995 and 2009 (*The Birds of New Hampshire* by Keith and Fox). Since 2009, there have been an additional 12 records (the majority in spring), making the species roughly annual since 1994. At least two of the birds were reported coming to feeders, which is not an uncommon trait for this species when natural food is scarce. By contrast, Scarlet Tanager is practically unknown at bird feeders. One of the more



remarkable and sobering aspects of the spring season was the effect that the weather in early May had on Scarlet Tanagers, with multiple reports of birds visiting feeders across southern New Hampshire, including:

- male visiting a feeder in Kensington on April 22-25 feeding on suet (record early date),
- male visiting a feeder in Rochester on May 12-13 feeding on orange halves,
- pair visiting a feeder in Hopkinton on May 2 and subsequent days feeding on orange halves,
- pair visiting a feeder in Stratham on May 13 feeding on hulled sunflower, suet, and orange halves,
- male visiting a feeder in Hancock May 3-8 feeding on hulled sunflower, suet, orange halves, and foraging for earthworms. See the Field Notes elsewhere in this issue.

Given the season, it seems fitting to end the summary with a couple of additional spring overshoots. A **Blue Grosbeak** was discovered in Brookline, and two **Painted Buntings** were photographed a month apart, both in Strafford County. There are approximately 18 prior records of this colorful bunting, the majority in spring. A male visited a bird feeder in Middleton, while another male was photographed in Dover, the latter the victim of a window collision. Winter is a great time to prepare your windows in anticipation of spring migration. If you are experiencing bird strikes in your home, please read the article by Laura Deming in the Spring 2017 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (Vol. 36, #1), also online at:

[https://nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/Vol36\\_No1\\_Bird-Glass-Collisions.pdf](https://nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/Vol36_No1_Bird-Glass-Collisions.pdf)



*Trumpeter Swan by Leo McKillop, 4-14-19, Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia, NH.*

## Sighting Details

The following listings provide details for the sightings mentioned above. There are no sightings in the listings that are not mentioned in the summaries.

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
<b>Ross's Goose</b>			
03/18	1	Westmoreland Boat Launch	A. Burnett
<b>Brant</b>			
05/25	155	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	S. Mirick
<b>Cackling Goose</b>			
03/20	1	Hinsdale bluffs	E. Masterson
03/30	1	Wetherby Rd., Charlestown	D. Jackson
<b>Trumpeter Swan</b>			
04/13	1	Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia	K. Murphy
04/14	1	Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia	L. McKillop
<b>Wood Duck</b>			
04/09	80	Wetherby Rd., Charlestown	D. Jackson
04/12	120	West Portsmouth St., Concord	P. Hunt
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>			
04/13	180	Wetherby Rd., Charlestown	D. Jackson
<b>Green-winged Teal - Eurasian subsp.</b>			
04/21	1	Charlestown Meadows	C. Lawlor, D. Clark
<b>Canvasback</b>			
03/16	3	Exeter WTP	L. McKillop, et al.
<b>Redhead</b>			
03/09	4	Great Bay, Osprey Cove, Greenland	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell, et al.
<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>			
03/22	324	World End Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
04/02	185	Hinsdale Setbacks	S. Heller, J. Russo
<b>Tufted Duck</b>			
03/15	1	Great Bay, Osprey Cove, Greenland	K. Wilmarth
<b>Harlequin Duck</b>			
05/03	1	Great Boars Head, Hampton	S. Mirick, et al.
<b>White-winged Scoter</b>			
05/04	38	Hinsdale Setbacks	P. Kirkhart, W. Ward
05/18	672	Pulpit Rocks Rd., Rye	S. Mirick, J. Lambert, et al.
05/20	7	Akers Pond, Errol	D. Dionne
05/20	84	Pleasant Lake, New London	D. Jackson, J. Esten
05/22	840	Rye Harbor SP	S. Mirick
<b>Black Scoter</b>			
05/05	1	Nubanusit Lake, Hancock/Nelson	E. Masterson
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>			
05/03	17	Spofford Lake	E. Masterson
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>			
03/15	300	Great Bay Discovery Ctr. Greenland	S. Stoddard
<b>Common x Barrow's Goldeneye (hybrid)</b>			
03/30	1	Androscoggin River at Errol dam	L. Charron, D. Dionne

# SPRING SEASON

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
<b>Ruddy Duck</b>				<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>			
04/27	7	Hinsdale Setbacks	N. Pokras, C. Corey, M. Lea	05/11	1	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	S. Jaffe
04/27	2	Wilder Dam Reservoir, Lebanon	W. Scott, J. Norton, J. MacQueen	05/30	1	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer
04/30	1	Turtle Pond, Concord	R. Quinn	05/31	3	Rye Harbor SP	P. Miliotis
<b>Horned Grebe</b>				<b>Red-necked Phalarope</b>			
04/08	4	Wilder Dam Reservoir, Lebanon	J. MacQueen	05/27	17	Jeffreys Ledge (NH)	S. Mirick, J. Woolf, NHA FT
05/05	4	Mine Falls Park, Nashua	R. Bielawski, C. Sheridan	<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>			
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>				04/30	11	Hinsdale Setbacks	S. Lamonde, E. Glocke
05/05	34	Spofford Lake	E. Masterson	<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>			
<b>Common Nighthawk</b>				05/08	14	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	S. Jaffe, D. Bailey
05/22	80	Schoolhouse Rd., Amherst	S. Spangenberg	<b>Common Murre</b>			
05/23	115	Horace Greeley Rd., Amherst	S. Spangenberg	03/29	12	Offshore waters, NH	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
05/27	200	Bartlett St., Hooksett	S. Bishop	05/04	1	Bicentennial Park, Hampton	G. & A. Robbins
<b>Chimney Swift</b>				05/04	1	Seabrook Beach	G. & A. Robbins
05/10	80	World End Pond, Salem	S. Mirick	05/05	1	Fort Stark, New Castle	S. Mirick
05/13	250	Merrimack River, Manchester	F. Baublitz	05/08	1	Star Island, Isles of Shoals (later deceased)	E. Masterson
05/18	115	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick	05/12	1	Star Island, Isles of Shoals	E. Masterson, et al.
<b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b>				<b>Thick-billed Murre</b>			
05/18	25	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick	03/29	1	Inland of Isles of Shoals on Fishing Charter	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
<b>Common Gallinule</b>				<b>Razorbill</b>			
04/27	1	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	P. Kirkhart	03/29	8	Inland of Isles of Shoals on Fishing Charter	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
<b>Sandhill Crane</b>				05/05	4	NH coast	S. Mirick
04/13	16	Saco River field	D. Boynton	<b>Black Guillemot</b>			
<b>American Oystercatcher</b>				05/05	31	NH coast	S. Mirick
05/14	1	Rt. 1A, second pullout s. of Odiorne Pt., Rye	L. McKillop, et al.	05/12	39	Star Island, Isles of Shoals	E. Masterson, et al.
05/18	3	Star Island, Isles of Shoals	E. Masterson, et al.	<b>Atlantic Puffin</b>			
<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>				05/05	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	S. Mirick, J. Lambert, et al.
04/20	1	Cross Beach Rd., Seabrook	S. Mirick	<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b>			
<b>Whimbrel</b>				05/10	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	G. & A. Robbins
05/03	1	Awcomin Marsh, Rye	S. Mirick	<b>Bonaparte's Gull</b>			
<b>Ruddy Turnstone</b>				05/01	11	Hinsdale Setbacks	G. & A. Robbins
05/15	9	Hampton River Marina mudflats, Hampton	P. Hunt	05/03	13	MacDowell Reservoir, Peterborough	P. Brown
<b>Red Knot</b>				05/04	6	Androscoggin River, Bridge St. area, Berlin	L. & P. Charron
05/26	3	White and Seavey islands, Isles of Shoals	E. Craig	05/04	16	Squam Lake	T. Michel
05/29	1	Seabrook Beach	D. Powers	05/04	8	Patch Park, Charlestown	D. Jackson
<b>Dunlin</b>				05/04	22	Mascoma Lake, Main St. causeway, Enfield	W. Scott
04/21	1	Charlestown Meadows	C. Lawlor, D. Clark, M. Adams	05/04	25	Lake Ave., Sunapee	D. Jackson
05/23	100	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Hampton	P. Hunt, U. Dienes	<b>Franklin's Gull</b>			
<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>				05/14	1	Rt. 1A, second pullout s. of Odiorne Pt., Rye	L. McKillop, et al.
05/04	264	NH coast	G. & A. Robbins	<b>Iceland Gull</b>			
<b>Least Sandpiper</b>				03/18	2	Hedgehog Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
05/15	450	Hampton Salt Marsh CA	P. Hunt	03/24	1	Shaw's, Plaistow	M. Medeiros
05/20	12	Ambrose Gravel Pit, Sandwich	K. Klapper	04/01	1	Nashua R. at Bartemus Brook boat ramp, Nashua	J. Gray
<b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b>				<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>			
05/30	4	Hampton Salt Marsh CA	A. Robbins	04/12	1	Upper Suncook Recreation Area, Barnstead	J. Lambert



# SPRING SEASON

*Date # Location Observer*

## Gull-billed Tern

05/02 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye A.& G. Robbins

## Caspian Tern

04/09 2 Wilson Pond, Swanzey D. Badders  
 05/10 1 Rochester WTP L. McKillop  
 05/14 1 General Sullivan Bridge, Dover R. Prieto



*Black-crowned Night-Heron by Iain MacLeod, 5-9-19, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Holderness, NH.*

## Black Tern

05/21 1 Umbagog NWR M. Hardy  
 05/29 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye A.& G. Robbins

## Common Tern

05/01 1 Hinsdale Setbacks A.& G. Robbins  
 05/04 3 Connecticut R. opposite Herricks Cove, Charlestown D. Jackson  
 05/04 2 Hinsdale Setbacks P. Kirkhart, Z. Coeman  
 05/10 11 Spofford Lake E. Masterson

## Arctic Tern

05/29 1 Seal Rocks, Rye R. Prieto

## Pacific Loon

05/05 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye S. Mirick, et al.

## Wilson's Storm-Petrel

05/27 16 Jeffreys Ledge (NH) S. Mirick, J. Woolf, NHA FT

## Northern Fulmar

05/27 1 Jeffreys Ledge (NH) S. Mirick, J. Woolf, NHA FT

## Sooty Shearwater

05/29 1 Seal Rocks, Rye R. Prieto

## Great Egret

04/14 1 Rt. 93, Windham M. McCarthy, N. Dorian  
 04/18 1 pond between Leigh Ct. and Otterbridge Dr., Laconia H. Ruggieri  
 04/28 1 Little Cherry Pond, Jefferson/Whitefield T. McShane, R. Quinn  
 05/25 1 Fort Hill WMA, Stratford D. Dionne, L. Charron

## Little Blue Heron

04/15 1 Great Rock Rd. wetland, Sandwich K. Klapper, et al.  
 04/26 1 Porcupine Brook, Salem K. Wilmarth

*Date # Location Observer*

## Tricolored Heron

04/27 1 Piscataqua Rd., Durham J. Lambert

## Black-crowned Night-Heron

05/09 1 Squam Lakes Natural Science Ctr., Holderness I. MacLeod  
 05/15 1 Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey D. Badders

## Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

04/20 1 Playground Rd., New Ipswich K. Orosz

## Glossy Ibis

04/21 1 Autumn Ln., E. Kingston K. Elwell  
 04/27 1 Hinsdale Setbacks N. Pokras, C. Corey, M. Lea, C. Lawlor

## Black Vulture

03/22 1 Charles Bancroft Hwy., Litchfield J. McKibben  
 03/25 2 Oak Hill Rd., Brookline C. McPherson  
 03/30 2 Holstein Ave., Londonderry A. Collins  
 03/31 7 Woodward Rd., Westmoreland A.& R. Burnett  
 04/15 1 Mast Rd., Lee R. Prieto  
 05/04 1 Powder Mill Pond, Hancock J. Ranta  
 05/20 1 Donna Dr., Exeter B. Rose  
 05/31 1 Buckmeadow Rd., Nashua C. Sheridan

## Turkey Vulture

05/16 67 Airport Rd., West Lebanon J. MacQueen

## Golden Eagle

03/09 1 Dover D. Powers  
 03/12 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham A. Murray  
 04/14 1 North River Pond, Northwood S. Hale  
 04/25 1 Great Meadow, Hollis C. McPherson  
 04/25 1 Pitcher Mt., Stoddard L. Burford  
 05/01 1 Stevens Hill Rd., Nottingham P. Miliotis  
 05/22 2 Madbury Rd., Durham M. Wilson



*Mississippi Kite by Debra Powers, 5-23-19, Durham, NH.*

## Mississippi Kite

05/22 2 Madbury Rd., Durham M. Wilson

# SPRING SEASON

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>				<b>Common Redpoll</b>			
04/21	195	Pitcher Mt., Stoddard	K. Fenton, L. Burford	03/01	88	Pinnacle View, Walpole	C. Lawlor
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>				04/08	88	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski
03/12	1	Portsmouth Intl. Airport, s. end, Portsmouth	S. Bennett	04/14	150	Campton	W. Fogleman
03/23	1	Exeter WTP	C. Duffy	05/01	1	Green Hill Rd., Chatham	B. Crowley
04/19	1	NH coast	S. Spangenberg	05/01	3	Groveton WTP	M. Centner
<b>Snowy Owl</b>				<b>White-winged Crossbill</b>			
03/09	1	NH coast	R. Prieto	05/05	1	Pontook Reservoir, Dummer	C. Caron
<b>Long-eared Owl</b>				<b>Lapland Longspur</b>			
03/12	1	Cornwell Dr., Keene	S. Parker	03/28	1	Hampton Beach SP	L. McKillop
<b>Short-eared Owl</b>				04/07	1	Hampton Beach SP	J. Pettipas, S. Wrisley
05/03	1	Concord Airport	G.& A. Robbins	<b>Snow Bunting</b>			
<b>Red-bellied Woodpecker</b>				03/10	90	Brown Hill Rd., Haverhill	Half Wild Farm
05/11	1	Akers Pond, Errol	D. Dionne, L. Charron	<b>Grasshopper Sparrow</b>			
05/20		Milan Rd., Milan	S. Blais	05/11	2	Cemetery Fields, Amherst	C. McPherson
<b>American Kestrel</b>				05/19	1	Portsmouth Intl Airport from Short St., Newington	R. Prieto
04/13	20	Rt. 1A, Rye	S. Mirick	05/23	6	Concord Airport	N. Dorian, M. McCarthy
<b>Willow Flycatcher</b>				05/25	4	old Hinsdale racetrack	P. Hunt
05/25	7	Brentwood Mitigation Area	S. Heron	05/25	2	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	P. Hunt
05/27	1	Balsams grounds (closed), Dixville	L.& P. Charron, D. Dionne	<b>Clay-colored Sparrow</b>			
<b>Northern Shrike</b>				04/24	1	Antioch University NE, Keene	S. Lamonde, et al.
04/16	1	formerly Cate's Farm Rte. 25C, Warren	E. Marie	<b>Lark Sparrow</b>			
<b>Warbling Vireo</b>				04/25	1	Autumn Ln., Nottingham	R. Prieto
05/31	25	Hinsdale Setbacks	J. Maher	<b>American Tree Sparrow</b>			
<b>Fish Crow</b>				05/13	1	Lancy Brook wetlands, Brookline	C. McPherson
04/07	24	Ten Rod Rd. residence	D. Hubbard	<b>Yellow-breasted Chat</b>			
04/11	5	Washington St., Keene	R. Burnett	05/07	1	Federal Hill trails, Milford/Hollis	C. Sheridan
<b>Purple Martin</b>				<b>Yellow-headed Blackbird</b>			
05/15	16	Cross Beach Rd., Seabrook	P. Hunt	05/28	1	marsh s. of Rye Harbor	J. Butler
05/16	1	Lovewell Pond, Nashua	C. Sheridan	<b>Eastern Meadowlark</b>			
<b>Cliff Swallow</b>				03/24	5	Portsmouth Intl. Airport from Short St., Newington	J. Sparrell, K. Towler
05/05	24	Bridge St. bridge, Milan	K. Fenton	<b>Rusty Blackbird</b>			
05/18	30	Charlestown WTP	D. Jackson	04/14	17	03055, Milford US-NH (42.7926,-71.6227)	D. Buttemeier
<b>Marsh Wren</b>				<b>Ovenbird</b>			
04/20	2	Exeter WTP	K. Fenton	04/25	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard, S. Richards
04/20	1	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	J. Lambert, M. Ward	<b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>			
<b>Swainson's Thrush</b>				05/20	1	Monson trails, Milford	G. Coffey
05/11	12	Star Island, Isles of Shoals	E. Masterson, et al.	<b>Lawrence's Warbler (hybrid)</b>			
<b>Gray Catbird</b>				05/25	1	Durham Reservoir	R. Prieto
03/02	1	Ashuelot River Park, Keene	R. Chretien	<b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>			
03/03	1	Hollis/Brookline High School	C. McPherson	05/18	1	Green St., Exeter	A. McTammany, et al.
<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>				<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>			
03/12	300	Mechanic St., Lebanon	D. Jackson	05/24	10	Lower Wolfboro Rd., Hanover Ctr.	W. Scott
04/27	5	Main Street, Berlin	R. Lessard	<b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b>			
<b>Evening Grosbeak</b>				04/23	1	Antioch University NE, Keene	J. Dunham
03/15	150	Old Chesham Rd., Marlborough	S. Jaffe	<b>Hooded Warbler</b>			
03/16	118	Honey Rd., Marlow	S. Tickner	05/17	1	Wheeler Rd., Hollis	S. Wrisley



# Spring 2019 Field Notes

Compiled by Diana Stephens

## A Yellow-throated Warbler in Sunapee

by Dylan Jackson

When it comes to finding rare birds throughout the state, it seems that some people have all the luck. In many of these cases, it's about these people living in the right areas and having the time to search; however, on rare occasions, rarities just seem to find us.



*What a pleasant surprise for Dylan Jackson to see this rare Yellow-throated Warbler on Lake Avenue near Sunapee Harbor in Sunapee on 4-26-19. The bird stayed just long enough for Dylan to get a documentation shot on his phone.*

On a miserably cool and rainy day this past April, I was cleaning up a property on Lake Sunapee just outside of Sunapee Harbor. While the area was abuzz with Yellow-rumped Warblers, I hardly had time to enjoy the spring newcomers with a leaf blower blaring on my back. While I blew away mounds of dead leaves from the garden beds, an Eastern Phoebe took the opportunity to gather insects I had exposed in the process. I watched the bird as I worked, enjoying how tame it became as it capitalized on the banquet I had inadvertently provided it. Suddenly, a different bird flew in and perched above the phoebe in a small tree nearby. It was roughly 10 feet away, at eye level. I could tell it was a warbler and I nearly dismissed it as a Yellow-rumped, but something wasn't right about this bird. It clearly showed a yellow throat that extended down to a white belly. I thought to myself, "there's no way," as it flew to a nearby hemlock. I threw down my leaf blower and ran to my truck as fast as I could to grab my binoculars. I went back to the tree and, to my amazement, it was indeed a Yellow-throated Warbler. Amidst the rain, I desperately tried to pull off some documentation shots and it worked!

It hung around for a little while longer. I could hear it calling between sessions on the leaf blower, before it eventually moved on. While not all of us get to bird as much as we would like, sometimes just keeping an eye out during our daily lives can pay off. The excitement of finding a rare bird isn't necessarily reserved for those who put in the time

Date # Location Observer

### Cerulean Warbler

05/25 1 Wantastiquet Mt. Natural Area, Chesterfield/Hinsdale  
P. Hunt

### Bay-breasted Warbler

05/21 9 Rt. 26 at Errol Dam Rd., Errol K. Fenton, L. Burford

### Palm Warbler - Western subsp.

04/19 1 Range Rd., Sandwich K. Klapper  
04/21 1 Penacook Survey Route P. Hunt



*Palm Warbler by Warren Trested, 4-15-19, Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia, NH.*

### Palm Warbler - Yellow subsp.

04/18 50 Willand Pond, Somersworth/Dover D. Hubbard  
04/25 50 Pickering Ponds, Rochester D. Hubbard

### Yellow-rumped Warbler - Audubon's subsp.

05/03 1 Waters Edge Rd., Errol M. Hardy

### Yellow-throated Warbler

04/26 1 Sunapee Lake D. Jackson  
04/27 1 Chase Rd., S. Hampton S. Mirick  
05/01 1 Witch Island, Hampton H. Bauer, et al.  
05/19 1 Peter's Bridge, ACE Lands, Salisbury P. Newbern  
05/20 1 Enfield T. Perkins

### Canada Warbler

05/25 10 Pickering Ponds, Rochester K. Couture, A. Murray

### Summer Tanager

04/29 1 Columbia Ave., Nashua J. Maher, et al.  
05/04 1 Colby St., Keene S. Hooper  
05/06 1 Centerview Dr., Swanzey K. Mitchell  
05/11 1 Witch Island, Hampton H. Bauer  
05/26 1 Powwow River at Hilldale Ave., S. Hampton  
K.& A. Wilmarth

### Scarlet Tanager

04/22 1 South Rd., Kensington G. Gavutis Jr.

### Blue Grosbeak

05/04 1 Palmer/Bartell Conservation Land, Brookline  
C. McPherson

### Painted Bunting

04/29 1 Lakeview Dr., Dover K. Whitesell  
05/24 1 Ridge Rd., Middleton J. Palermo

and effort. It also makes one think about how rare some of these species are during migration. Surely many come through undiscovered, so keep your eyes peeled. I feel very lucky to have even seen this bird. Migration is a beautiful thing!

## A (Yellow) Purple Finch!

*See the inside front cover for the photo referred to in this article.*

A rare yellow-colored Purple Finch was photographed by Lori Charron on April 27, 2019 in Errol, NH. Note the distinct streaking of the finch, but it actually has a yellow head instead of the usual red head and chest. (The bird is also wet so its head feathers are slightly matted down.

According to David Allen Sibley, “yellow color is fairly common in male House Finches, with birds showing a full range of color variation from red, to orange, to yellow, but no obvious differences in plumage pattern, suggesting it involves only carotenoids and is all diet-related. In Purple Finch yellow color is very rare, and often comes along with abnormal streaking, which may mean that it is hormonal.”

<https://www.sibleyguides.com/2012/07/a-yellow-purple-finch-in-ontario/>

## Scarlet Tanager Eats a Balanced Meal

The photos below were all taken by Meade Cadot between May 3 and May 8, 2019 in Hancock, NH. The Scarlet Tanager’s usual diet consists of insects, so this bird must have been very hungry and elated to find such a smorgasbord of items at this feeder in Hancock!

Tanagers extract insects such as caterpillars, moths and beetles from twigs and leaves at the outer tips of leaves and dead branches. Females often skulk about in the understory, while males usually remain in the canopy. During the Gypsy Moth infestation of 1980 to 1983, tanagers seemed to be more abundant and more easily observed than in other



*It then moved on to pluck flower buds from an apple tree in the yard.*



*Next, the Scarlet Tanager pulled a big, juicy earthworm out of the ground.*



*Here, it appears to be sampling bits of suet (or maybe a mealworm on the tray?).*



*The Scarlet Tanager began by eating some freshly cut orange slices.*



*It finally got a taste of sunflower seeds, to round off quite a balanced diet!*



years\*. Scarlet Tanagers normally consume an average of 35 small caterpillars per minute.

\*Foss, C., ed. 1994. *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*. Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Concord, NH.

## Bald Eagle vs. Great Blue Heron

by Diana Stephens

Becky Hopkins, who lives near Knowles Pond in Candia, witnessed and photographed the immediate aftermath of an attack by a Bald Eagle on a Great Blue Heron colony in May of 2019. Her dramatic account raises some interesting questions about cooperative defense among Great Blue Herons. (All photos taken by Becky Hopkins in Candia, NH.)



On May 4, 2019, a Bald Eagle attacked a Great Blue Heron's nest on Knowles Pond in Candia, as shown in this photo by Becky Hopkins. Eagles are known predators of herons, and this heron's right wing was badly damaged as a result of the attack.



This bird, photographed on 5-26-19, appears to be the same heron that was injured on May 4, but its nest was located on the other side of the pond from where the attack occurred.

Becky Hopkins described the attack:

*On Saturday, I was in the yard and heard a terrible screaming sound coming from the direction of the pond. It was the Great Blue Herons in one of the nests nearest this side of the pond. I saw a very large bird in their tree and soon realized it was a Bald Eagle. The herons continued to make loud calls and I assumed they were defending their eggs. I thought they could fend off the eagle, and although I had to leave, I was able to take some photos. When I finally had an opportunity to look more closely at the images, I realized that one heron's wing was badly damaged.*

Becky was away overnight and the nest appeared empty the next day, but she continued to watch and determined that the nest was still active. In addition, neither of the two adults in that nest were injured. In watching the other nests, she discovered the injured adult was at a nest across the pond. It appeared that the injured Great Blue Heron had been defending against the Bald Eagle and been drawn away from its own nest. It may have been a case of cooperative defense, as has been seen among other species.



Despite the attack, the Great Blue Heron colony did well! This photo was taken on 6-05-19.

According to Becky, "All of the young except one fledged in all four nests, with a total of 10 babies being born." One nest was abandoned early in the spring for reasons unknown. "All in all, it was a great year for heron reproduction on Knowles Pond with the final score being: Herons 10, Eagles 0!"

## A Fearless Great Blue

Photos and text by Jon Woolf



Jon Woolf spotted this fearless Great Blue Heron fishing at Front Park on Lake Massabesic in Auburn, NH on May 17, 2019. He described his sighting in a post that evening to the NHBirds email list:

On the way home tonight, I stopped at Front Park in Auburn. There was a Great Blue Heron stalking around in the lake shallows, apparently hunting. I'm guessing it was the same bird I saw and photographed there a couple of weeks ago, but tonight it was even more easily approachable. It came within five feet of the stone bank, and allowed people within ten or fifteen feet before it would move away. It didn't seem injured or ill; it flew a couple of times, for about forty or fifty feet each time. It was the closest I've ever been to a Great Blue Heron.



## Blue-winged Warbler Hybrid Seen in Durham

This is taken from an exchange between Kurk Dorsey and Steve Lamonde on the NH Birds email list, May 12-13, 2019.

### Kurk Dorsey, Durham

A brief walk to the Woodridge playing fields this evening yielded an interesting Blue-winged Warbler. It was singing the alternate song for a Blue-winged, which for some reason always gets my attention. In particular, it had a huge single white wing patch, instead of the two distinct smaller patches. Not sure if that's just random variation or a sign of some Golden-winged in there. When I asked, it told me to buzz off.

### Steve Lamonde, Keene

Chances are the bird has some Golden-winged Warbler DNA mixed in. I've been studying the *Vermivora* complex, which are Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler and their hybrids, in Vermont's Champlain Valley for three years now. The spectrum of plumage variations between genetically pure Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers is amazing! The solid white wing-patch (often with a faint hint of yellow or gold) on an otherwise pure-looking Blue-winged Warbler most likely indicates some Golden-winged Warbler DNA in the bird's lineage. *Vermivora* songs also seem to vary across the genetic spectrum. In the Champlain Valley, where Golden-winged, Blue-winged and their hybrids all overlap, we find that they sing each other's songs (so visual confirmation is key). We're not sure if this is due to each bird's genetic makeup, the close proximity of Blue-winged to Golden-winged, or some other factor. So, is the pure-looking Golden-winged singing a Blue-winged song because he's not actually a pure Golden-winged, or is it because his next-territory neighbor is a Blue-winged? Adding photos and audio recordings to your eBird observations will help us study these questions. If audio recording is not in your wheelhouse, you can pay attention to and count the number of "bzzzz" notes after the introductory "bee" note in the song. These notes can be added to the species comments in eBird, as well as describing any other vocalizations.

To learn more about the hybridization process of Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers, see David Donsker's article in the Spring 2003 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (available to subscribers in the online archives at [www.nhbirdrecords.org](http://www.nhbirdrecords.org)).



## White-winged Scoter Found in Downtown Manchester



*This White-winged Scoter was found by Ross Bennett on the sidewalk in downtown Manchester on May 22, 2019. After photographing the injured bird, he brought it to Wings of the Dawn Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Henniker, NH. Scoters winter on the coast and in spring migrate north to the Arctic to breed.*

## The Hawk and the Wren

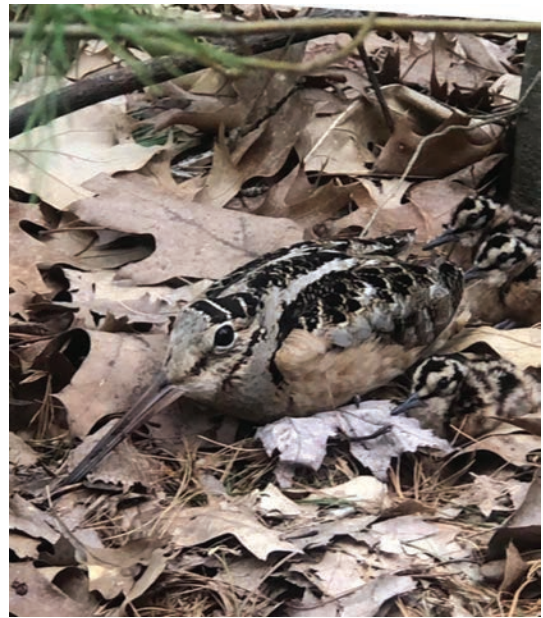
*by Catherine Fisher*

For several, mostly cool and rainy weeks we had a Cooper's Hawk who added the feeding area in our yard to her/his hunting grounds. Our Lee home is located on a small residential street and the property backs onto a wooded ravine with a cold water stream. Both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks are not-infrequently seen in our yard, with Cooper's being less common. A long spell of cold, wet weather resulted in a bigger, more diverse crowd of feeder birds, and this heightened activity likely caught the raptor's attention. The occasional pile of Mourning Dove feathers near the feeding station marked its successes. We saw the Cooper's Hawk several different times, and on May 1 got breathtaking views as it settled in the small apple tree outside our big front window. On May 7, it landed in the same place on the tree and then flew down into a nearby rhododendron.

I'd heard a House Wren singing just a few minutes before, and the hawk evidently caught a glimpse of it in the rhododendron, because in a flash it was chasing the wren from one branch of the bush to another, with the wren making harsh alarm calls as it tried to avoid becoming dinner. Finally, the wren made a break for it, flying very low to the ground, with the hawk right on its tail. Just as it looked like lights out for the wren, it dove into a sizable clump of vinca groundcover growing beneath a stand of small conifers on the edge of our neighbor's property. The hawk spent more than five

minutes thrashing around in the vinca, trying to flush the wren. Hopping up into the air, and then crashing into the vinca, the Cooper's seemed to use its beating wings as well as its feet to scare out its prey. In the end, it was unsuccessful, but I was impressed at its perseverance. The hawk would sometimes rest on the edge of the neighbor's driveway before jumping back in, unfazed by passing vehicles and a jogger (who passed by the hawk at extremely close range). After the hawk flew off, I waited a while to see if I could catch a glimpse of the wren, but it was either staying put, or had skulked off without my catching a glimpse

## Woodcock with Babies



This American Woodcock was spotted with three chicks in Bedford, NH. The typical nest of the woodcock consists of a cup-shaped depression in dead leaves with a few twigs arranged around the rim. They are often seen in wooded areas near the edge of a field or other opening. Breeding woodcock are well distributed and fairly common throughout New Hampshire at elevations below 2,000 feet, although their numbers have declined since the 1960s. They commonly arrive in New Hampshire in mid-March and lay their eggs in April with hatch typically in late April or early May. Photo by Suzanne Provost, 5-6-19.

---

# Field Trip Report

Compiled by Gail Coffey

*May is a terrific time for birding in New Hampshire and the month when big day records are set. Big days come in all shapes and sizes and we present here a variety of accounts that show what fun can be had. – Ed.*

## A “Big Day” of Spring Birding in New Hampshire

by Steve Mirick

On May 24, 2019 Jane and I challenged ourselves with a “Big Day” to see as many species of birds as possible in the state in a single day. I’ve done this almost every year for over 30 years! It’s lots of fun. This year, we did pretty well with expected species (but with some glaring misses!) and ended up with 155 species. My highest counts for the state are 170 on 5-28-97 (with Pam Hunt and Dan and Al Strong, current state record), 164 on 5-23-09, and 163 on 5-24-96.

Our itinerary was similar to a new route we pioneered last year. We started in Salem at about 2:30 am where we quickly got a Virginia Rail and Sora before driving up to Concord where we got a nice chorus of Eastern Whip-poor-wills and a couple of American Woodcock. From there, we drove northward to Hazen/Airport Road in Whitefield where we birded at dawn along the road and the Airport marsh area. We picked up lots of birds in this area, highlighted by Common Merganser and Cape May Warbler. We then headed south to Trudeau Road where the key finds were Dark-eyed Junco and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. From there, we drove directly to the Concord Airport and got lots of new birds including Prairie Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow.

At this point, we detoured from last year’s route and headed to Abe Emerson Marsh where we *failed* to find the Trumpeter Swan despite lots of time walking around the edge of the marsh. Our consolation was a few good forest species and lots of warblers. Since we were behind schedule, we skipped Pawtuckaway State Park and instead headed to Newmarket where we did not find the Mississippi Kites and wasted more time! Arrgh! Then we worked the coast from south to north and finished at Pease Tradeport and Surrey Lane Marsh in Durham.

We ended up with 155 species which is slightly above average. We did well with warblers, finding 24 species, which is near my highest daily count ever. This included lots of “spruce budworm” warblers, with at least five Cape May Warblers around Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge, and scattered, but numerous Bay-breasted Warblers....and it seemed Jane was constantly yelling at me *“another Tennessee singing”* as we drove back roads around Concord and Londonderry.

We did not observe any exceptionally rare species. The weather was nice in the morning with calm winds and cool temperatures, but by the time we got to the coast it was more difficult with a haze and strong south winds offshore. This improved a bit with some cloud cover and a shifting wind. We managed to see most of the lingering sea ducks and a Black Guillemot, Northern Gannet, and Red-necked Grebe.

### Highlights

- Red-necked Grebe – one lingering at Little Boar’s Head
- Black-billed Cuckoo – one at Tuttle Swamp in Newmarket
- Common Nighthawk – three in Durham including two at dusk over Surrey Lane Marsh
- Black Guillemot – one in breeding plumage off Little Boar’s Head
- Roseate Tern – three flying together off Hampton Harbor inlet
- Northern Gannet – Adult or near adult off Seabrook Beach picked out by Jane
- Vesper Sparrow – one on the fence at Concord Airport
- Grasshopper Sparrow – one singing at Concord Airport
- White-crowned Sparrow – one (dark lored) adult at Great Bay Farm
- Tennessee Warbler – *lots*, perhaps six
- Cape May Warbler – five or so in the Pondicherry area
- Bay-breasted Warbler – *lots*, perhaps eight total from several locations

### Birds missed

- Trumpeter Swan – Someone had it yesterday, but we searched everywhere with no luck.
- Mississippi Kite – Had my first in Newmarket the day before, but none today.
- Orchard Oriole
- Carolina Wren
- Brown Creeper
- Green Heron
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – Quiet for this species up north!
- Willow Flycatcher
- Red-breasted Merganser – Had some yesterday, none today.
- Brant

## My Mid-May “Medium” Morning

by Kurk Dorsey

Eleven months out of the year, I really wish that my dogs would sleep in rather than step on my head when the sun comes up, but not in May. Fortunately, Tigger and Victory never sleep past 6:00 am if there are squirrels to be chased and light to see them. So when I found myself with a face full of kibble breath at 5:30 am on May 16, I was actually ok with that.



I have never done a real big day, complete with actual planning and thinking about strategy to see the most species, but on most days in May, I do have a pretty good idea of how much time I can spend in the field and hence where I might go and what I might see. And there is something mesmerizing about zeroes, so a goal of 100 species is always in my mind. On May 16, I set out with three goals: find 100 species, chase Leo McKillop's Franklin's Gull that had been hanging out south of Odiorne Point State Park for the previous two days, and get to the office by noon so I wouldn't get fired. Two out of three is pretty good!

With the dogs as my guide, we spent the first hour sniffing around the two-mile road loop of the Woodridge neighborhood in Durham, from Fogg Drive down through Woodridge, Bartlett, and Meserve Roads, including the Fogg Drive playing fields. The houses in the neighborhood were built 50 years ago, so they are surrounded by a mature forest (in fact, one sizable tree had come down overnight and blocked Meserve Road, so I can add a 911 call to my day's tally). The playing fields have shrubby edge habitat that has produced great fall migrants like Yellow-breasted Chat, Lark Sparrow, and Dickcissel. On this particular morning, the dogs and I found 49 species including 14 warblers. There were at least eight Baltimore Orioles, which always reminds me of Aldo Leopold's assessment that the oriole claims "the exclusive right to flash like a burst of fire," and 10 different Wood Thrushes sang throughout the walk. A Canada Warbler and a Blue-winged Warbler were the best of their tribe, but three singing Northern Waterthrushes was also a highlight.

After getting the dogs and kids fed, and fortunately not confusing their breakfasts or putting the wrong ones on the bus (the dogs are home-schooled), I caught a snippet of a Louisiana Waterthrush song from the Oyster River where it crosses Mill Road. Then I bolted like a Peregrine toward the coast. OK, maybe bolted never really describes the Spaulding Turnpike at rush hour; waddled like an overstuffed Turkey might be more apt. Since I am not that patient, I decided to get off the highway and stop at Pease International Tradeport to listen for the Upland Sandpipers that make their annual trip north from farther south than I have ever been (but apparently in less time than it took me to navigate Rt. 4 that morning). Overlooking the runway from the Short Street end, I heard the distinctive wolf whistle of a pair of Uplands, or maybe I just was looking especially fetching. Two Eastern Meadowlarks also strutted around the edge of the runway, so perhaps the whistles were directed their way.

Eventually, I made it to the marshes at the south end of Odiorne Point State Park to find nothing. I admit that the Snowy Egret and Bonaparte's Gulls, and Purple Sandpiper on the rocks, were nice for mid-May, but not quite what I had

been hoping for. At least Laughing Gulls (a Franklin's Gull look-alike) would have given me hope that I had fallen in with the right crowd. After a while of not much happening, I decided to cruise down to Pulpit Rocks where at least some sea ducks (scoters and mergansers) were good additions to the day, and it was close enough to get back quickly if a text came in about the Franklin's Gull.

With the gull eluding even intrepid explorers, I switched to the north end of Odiorne. Watching the salt marsh west of Rt. 1A from the side of the road yielded more than three dozen Black-bellied Plovers working the wet meadow with both yellowlegs, as well as Belted Kingfishers working the water. The sheer volume of plovers in a small area was the second highlight of the day.

I was beginning to conclude that the gull had headed back to Alberta (and in fact it was not reported again), so I figured that I might as well poke around Odiorne. I went in the north end over the footbridge from the parking lot. Along the shore was a nice surprise, with three Long-tailed Ducks swimming in close, but the highlight of the day was tucked in the woods, near the northernmost bunker, which looked like a small knoll. In that region of the park, the warbler show was the best I encountered in the spring. More than a dozen species of warblers flitted through the trees, sometimes right at eye level because of the hill. Two Blackburnians competed with multiple Magnolias and Black-throated Blues for best visual performance, but the pair of Wilson's Warblers might have been the least common. In a morning of many small surprises rather than one or two big ones, the Red-breasted Nuthatch, Orchard Oriole, and pair of White-crowned Sparrows were nice additions to the tally for the day.

A quick drive back to Durham left me with enough time to spend 20 minutes at the NH Fish and Game property on Bennett Road which features both older mixed forest and a field of low shrubs and bushes. While only nine warbler species were present there, they included Prairie, Blue-winged, and Chestnut-sided. Not surprisingly, the habitat yielded Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, and Field Sparrow, as well as a female turkey that might have been on a nest. She allowed me to get within about ten feet before she got up and escaped through the shrubs.

My last stop for the morning, which put me at 102 species, was the Surrey Lane marsh. The Pied-billed Grebes that sometimes nest there had been elusive since early April, but I was rewarded with a surprise – a hen Hooded Merganser and four chicks, which I had not seen before or since. Marsh Wrens and Warbling Vireos were the only marsh birds. Swamp Sparrows were not in yet and rails have been scarce.

All told, it was a successful morning, even without the Franklin's Gull. To my surprise, Ben Franklin apparently had

a pithy line about not finding your goal (or gull). He said “a Bonie saved is a Bonie earned” so he knew his gulls!). In any case, I can’t wait for the next rarity that I’ll miss.

## Brown Thrashers Raptorthon Summary

by Julie Brown

All photos taken 5-11-19 during the event.



The Brown Thrashers Team (left to right): Phil, Laurel, Julie and Alden Brown. Photo by Joslin Bennett.

On Saturday, May 11, 2019, “The Brown Thrashers” team, together with our friends, the Bennett family, headed to Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge in the White Mountains of New Hampshire to celebrate my 10th anniversary of participating in the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) Raptorthon. Raptorthon is an event organized by HMANA with the simple goal of having a fun day of birding while raising funds for raptor monitoring throughout the Americas. Like a Birdathon effort, Raptorthon is a sponsored bird count, but is focused on raptors and aimed at getting the maximum count of raptor species (and optionally, all other bird species as well) in a 24-hour period. Teams collect pledges for the event; half goes to supporting HMANA programs, including their Hawk Watch Fund grant for hawkwatch sites, and the other half directly supports a hawkwatch or conservation organization of the team’s choice.

In addition to our event, it was also World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), so we joined the organized NH Audubon group of birders and co-leader, Dave Govatski, at the trailhead where he shared some history about the refuge and spoke about the importance of reducing plastic waste, this year’s World Migratory Bird Day theme.

Then, we were off on our adventure! A lone **Herring Gull** was our first bird of the day, an unusual sighting for this area, and a sign of good things to come. We picked up lots of warblers right away, such as Black-throated Green Warbler,

Nashville Warbler and Northern Parula. Laurel and Alden and their young friends found Wood Frog egg masses in trailside vernal pools and splashed in every puddle they could find.



Yellow-rumped Warbler by Lori Charron.



Blue-headed Vireo by Lori Charron.

This tiny migrant spends its winter on Caribbean islands and was on its way to the boreal forests of Canada, so catching a rare glimpse of it was pure joy. Laurel and Maggie were excellent warbler and waterfowl finders. Alden and Will were determined to document the first Pondicherry puffin sighting.

We continued on to Little Cherry Pond for some off-trail exploration, beaver stick finding and a picnic lunch. A pair of Merlins dove after each other vocalizing. A gummy



Cape May Warbler by Lori Charron.

bear treasure hunt was initiated for the four year olds during the walk back when morale was getting low. It did the trick and we drove down the road to our last vantage point, Airport Marsh, next to the small regional airport. There we watched an adult male **Northern Harrier** carrying a snake to its nest and picked up a few last species such as Eastern Kingbird, Bank Swallow, and Hooded Merganser.

All in all, The Brown Thrashers and friends walked, skipped and puddle jumped through six miles of spruce-fir forest, railroad tracks, lakeshore and enchanted fairy forest.



We counted a total of 71 species of birds including eight raptors.



*Puffin hunting. Photo by Julie Brown.*



*Future Bird Conservation Crusaders. Photo by Julie Brown.*

## A Five-Mile Radius Big Day

by Pamela Hunt

As many New Hampshire birders are aware, I have a penchant for local birding, often so local that I don't even use a car. In 2019, this interest found an outlet in something called "five mile radius" birding, which as the name implies is restricted to an area within five miles of one's home. There are actually dozens of birders currently engaged in "5MR birding" these days (<http://www.iusedtohavebirds.com/p/the-5mr-2019-challenge.html>). I've also long been a fan of "big days" – birding marathons in which you try to find as many species of birds as possible in a single calendar day. These are usually done at the state level, but really any geography is acceptable. Over the years, I've managed to combine these two aspects of birding and undertake "local big days" in a restrictive geography (often a single town) and I even did several via bicycle. The stage was set for May 19, 2019, when I set out to do a big day within five miles of my house. This is the story of that day.

It started at 04:00, when immediately after my alarm went

off, I heard a robin singing outside my bedroom window. By 04:30, I was at Mast Yard State Forest listening to whip-poor-wills, a Barred Owl, and American Bittern, among other things. By 05:00, I'd found 27 species and was on my way to East Concord, picking up an Eastern Meadowlark (increasingly rare in these parts) along Mountain Road en route. After a stop at Turtle Pond (where Hooded Merganser was a bonus), I made it to the varied habitats along West Locke Road. By the time I reached the Merrimack River at 06:00, the list stood at 67, including a Virginia Rail. Migrants were somewhat scarce, however, and I started to get a little worried about the warbler diversity.

Migrant activity didn't pick up in the next hour, although I did find my first-of-year Blackpoll Warbler, and I left Locke Road just after 07:00 with 80 species under my belt. A detour into the Riverlands Conservation Area in Canterbury yielded Willow Flycatcher and Brown Thrasher (both subsequently found elsewhere), but no sign of the Lesser Yellowlegs seen the day before ("shoulda done this yesterday" is a common theme of big day narratives!). A few other stops on the way toward Bog Road brought the list up to 87 by 08:00. In the next hour, Bog Road delivered and I wrapped up just after 09:00 with 99 species. An intermittent drizzle during this period helped concentrate a few warblers, and my list for this group was now up to 19 species, including Cape May and Bay-breasted. Perhaps the highlight of this segment, however, wasn't a warbler, it was a well-seen (and early) Yellow-bellied Flycatcher.

Barn Swallows at Murray Farms were #100, while #101 and #103 were two more warblers: Tennessee and Wilson's (with a Red-tailed Hawk at #102). At this point, I headed to Horseshoe Pond, where my friend Unity Dienes joined me at 10:30 for a little while. A stop at Long Pond on the way failed to produce the local loons. Another highlight of the day was a flyover Northern Harrier which illustrated a slight problem with Horseshoe Pond; the "main" pond is almost entirely **outside** my five-mile radius (5MR). The harrier was spotted flying in from the north so, even though I was outside the radius at the time, it was clearly in my 5MR airspace. I was not so lucky with the next bird. Once Unity arrived and we headed into the field, we almost immediately found a Least Sandpiper near the causeway and thus, outside my 5MR. I had to be content with getting it on my Merrimack County year list and hoped I'd find another at Morrill's Farm later on. We walked 1.5 miles at Horseshoe, but other than the harrier my only additions in over an hour were Mallard and Canada Goose. There were a few other highlights, however, including 15 Bobolinks, another Wilson's Warbler, and a good look at a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *below eye level*. My tally by 12:00 was 106.

I stopped at Long Pond again on my way back north

and this time the loons were visible. As I scanned the pond, a Yellow-throated Vireo started singing across the street, followed by a Black-throated Blue Warbler (warbler species #22). At Morrill's, I added six species (including two Vesper Sparrows and six Solitary Sandpipers) and left a little after 13:00 with 115 species total.

By this point, things were definitely slowing down (actually, they had slowed by 10:00 given that I had 99 species by 09:00!), so I stopped by my house to take a brief lunch break. Suitably fed, I went in search of a local bluebird (unsuccessfully), but managed to find a pair of Cedar Waxwings (rare in recent weeks) instead. Over the next 1.5 hours, I made a large loop through Boscawen and Webster (even managing to get misdirected a couple of times) and added Blackburnian Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, and – at last – Eastern Bluebird. The latter was species #119, and I headed home again for a more extended break (two hours). I was still doing a big day, however, and Pine Siskins over my yard at 16:45 were species #120.

The day wrapped up with a loop to the north through Canterbury. I started at Brookford Farm (the birding spot formerly known as the “Canterbury Sod Farm”), where I added Greater Yellowlegs and another bittern, then continued east to Morrill Pond WMA (not to be confused with the farm of the same name!) and a bonus find of a singing Winter Wren. The last stop of the day was Hoit Marsh, where the last new species was Common Nighthawk, two of which were migrating overhead in the distance.

All told, I drove 94 miles, spent 13-14 hours actively birding, and found 123 species, 23 of them warblers! I missed three species seen while scouting the day before: Lesser Yellowlegs, Osprey, and Cooper's Hawk, and of course, I missed Least Sandpiper by a couple hundred feet. As a point of reference, my human-powered big days in Concord tallied roughly 110 species, so in a restricted area you might not gain all too much by using a car, and wouldn't get anywhere near as much exercise either!

## Epping “Medium” Day

by Greg Tillman

I didn't do an actual, full-scale Big Day on May 25, 2019, but I did want to get outside and bird at some of the new conservation areas in town. Well, maybe it counts as a might-have-been Big Day, or Medium Day for someone with lots of other time commitments. Whatever the name, it was tons of fun!

My best ever all-day effort in Epping was 91 species, human-powered. On May 25, I managed to bird from 7:00 to 11:00 am, and 4:00 to 6:00 pm, and used the car, and I was surprised and pleased to turn up a solid 80 species. I almost left it at 79 species, because I wasn't going to drive six

miles just to see Rock Pigeons on the Rt. 101 bridge! But an evening American Woodcock, heard from the house, brought the official total up to 80.

It was a beautiful day to be outside and the warbler migration was in full swing! My seventeen species of warblers included Nashville and Canada at Mast Road Conservation Area, along with a slightly late Blue-headed Vireo. I had none of the budworm warblers (Bay-breasted, Tennessee, Cape May) despite having pretty good numbers of Bay-breasted on other trips this spring. I also missed on Blackburnian and Wilson's Warblers, but Magnolia Warbler and Northern Parula were plentiful. The timing to pick up all the possible warbler species is so delicate!

There were no rarities for the day, but I had a flyover Green Heron at Two Rivers Conservation Area, which is not a “gimme” bird in town, and heard both Alder and Least Flycatcher around the Burley Farm Conservation Area. A Carolina Wren feeding young (already!) was also a nice treat.

There were lots of misses, of course; not too surprising since I totally skipped the dawn chorus. I missed House Wren, Northern Mockingbird, both Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, and Barred Owl (no owling). Also, I had no Double-crested Cormorants or Hooded Mergansers on any of the ponds I checked. I probably could have added Yellow-bellied Sapsucker over at Kenard Hill, but I didn't make it that far in the time I had. (Oh, and no Rock Pigeon!)

One of these years, I'll plan it out, get lucky with the timing, and reach 100! A couple of birds I would really like to get in Epping are Merlin, Northern Waterthrush, and Eastern Screech-Owl. If anyone knows any good spots for those, please let me know!

*See Greg Tillman's article on where to bird in Epping in the Spring 2018 issue of New Hampshire Bird Records (Vol. 37 #1).*

## North Country Field Trip During a Remarkable Season

by Bob Quinn and Doug Bechtel

Stop, Moose! – rang out the call, as our van rolled to a safe stop to enjoy our sixth Moose of the trip! In late May 2019, an enthusiastic and hardy group reveled in an outstanding tour to the northern reaches of our state. Pittsburg and Errol/Umbagog, in far northern New Hampshire, are spectacular yet little known and seldom visited destinations, but they are stunningly worthwhile for their scenery and wildlife.

On this trip, the overwhelming experience was of a very “late” spring season with hardly any foliage on the trees in Pittsburg. The trip was from May 27-31, 2019 and, by that time, most of the state had long been fully leafed out. It was a shock to see how much farther behind the trees were in the northern part of the state. In Pittsburg, the early poplars had



leaves, but some of the other species hadn't even started to leaf out. This allowed us wonderful views of warblers in their spring finery, often at pleasingly low levels. Spring flowers, botany lessons, boulders, mammals, waterfalls, and slide shows added to the fun.



*Many trees were only just beginning to leaf out on the late May trip to Pittsburg by Bob Quinn.*

The group was led by NH Audubon President Doug Bechtel and Bob Quinn of Merlin Wildlife Tours, who love to share the natural wonders of New Hampshire. Common Loons were just setting up territories and we heard many Ruffed Grouse. The primary birding roads were still closed, so we couldn't check the best spots for boreal species such as Black-backed Woodpecker. Although we had two Eastern Kingbirds and a couple of Eastern Phoebes, the bulk of flycatchers were still to come. Blue Jays were still migrating with flocks of eight and 15 noted. The Swainson's Thrush were not yet singing; they were still in migration.

After our four days up north, here are some highlights as listed by the participants.

#### **Birds**

Ring-necked Duck and Common Goldeneye. Several dozen of each in the Lake Umbagog area entertained us with their courtship antics and crisp spring feathers. This is one of the few places in the state where these species nest.

Warblers. "Seeing my first Ovenbird...in a road!"; a scope-filling close-up of a singing male Chestnut-sided Warbler; eye level looks at numerous Magnolia Warblers; Cape May Warblers lower than their typical tree top haunts.

"The Cliff Swallows were not only a new bird for me, but getting to see their colors and watch their fascinating nest-building behavior through the scope was fantastic."

A perched Olive-sided Flycatcher at Pondicherry NWR found by the participant who most hoped to see that species.

Our initial struggles to see Palm Warblers at Pondicherry NWR were rewarded when two of them joined us during our picnic lunch at the platform.

A Ruffed Grouse in the road.

The tremendous variety of birds and seeing them in their breeding habitats.

#### **Other Wildlife**

Six Moose, with one right next to our van and another swimming in the shallows of Lake Umbagog.

A very cooperative Snowshoe (Varying) Hare.

A mother Black Bear with her cub munching on roadside grass in Whitefield.



*Normally an early spring wildflower, this Red Trillium was only just coming into bloom at the end of May in Pittsburg. Photo by Bob Quinn, 5-17-19.*

#### **Scenery**

The overall amazing scenery of the grand sweep of the mountains as seen from our cabins; bogs, waterfalls, plus the beauty of the deciduous trees just leafing out.

Witnessing the "dramatic climatic zones" (as a result of the delayed spring foliage).

Bursting out of the dark woods into the surprising splendor at Moose Falls Flowage.

The "early" spring flowers, especially the Red Trilliums and Marsh Marigolds along the roadsides.

The striking scenery and peaceful waters of Lake Umbagog, the Rapid River, Leonard Marsh and Leonard Pond (more ducks and Moose!) and the Magalloway River at "river junction", where the Magalloway flows into the Androscoggin River. This is the origin of the Androscoggin which leaves Lake Umbagog for its 180 mile journey through Berlin, Gorham, and then into Maine, and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean.

There were great opportunities to learn about conservation directly from the people doing the work, such as NH Audubon's Carol Foss with her Rusty Blackbird field research in the North Country and Paul Casey, Manager of the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge who shared the impressive land-acquisition story of this relatively new and growing refuge. All-in-all, this was a remarkable trip with great people that helped to make it so. Northern New Hampshire, with its spectacular scenery and wonderful wildlife, is truly a world apart. You owe it to yourself to join us next time for truly a trip to remember!

---

# Photo Gallery

## Bay-breasted Warbler Visits Pelagic Trip

*Photos and text by Rebecca Suomala*



*Male Bay-breasted Warbler lands on the upper deck of the boat.*



*It was a little too windy on the upper boat antenna.*

Participants on the NH Audubon Pelagic Trip on May 27, 2019 were treated to great views of a Bay-breasted Warbler that landed on the boat. It circled and landed a couple of times, until it zeroed in on a partly eaten apple in Dot Currier's hand. It landed in her lap where she was holding the apple and started eating! After a few beak-fulls, it flew up again, onto her hat, and then landed in the middle of the boat on a covered life raft. There it took advantage of more pieces of apple that we offered while we gathered around and took close-up photos – a rare opportunity with this species which is normally high in tall spruce-fir trees, nearly invisible. Eventually it departed after eating its fill of apple.



*The Bay-breasted Warbler found the apple in Dot Currier's hand and started eating.*



*Not full yet!*



*It landed on Dot's head!*



# Find Birds with eBird

by Kathryn Frieden

Now that *New Hampshire Bird Records* has changed its format and is no longer publishing lengthy listings of bird sightings, eBird will be an even more important resource for finding birds in New Hampshire. eBird has also grown and changed since Steve Mirick wrote about exploring with eBird in the Fall 2010 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (Vol. 29, # 3), so it is time to update our tips for finding birds with eBird.

Start with the eBird website (NH portal: <https://ebird.org/nh>), and click on the “Explore” button. To find out where a specific species has been reported, drop to the lower section on the page and click on “Species Maps” (Figure 1).

Figure 1. eBird’s “Explore Species” map.

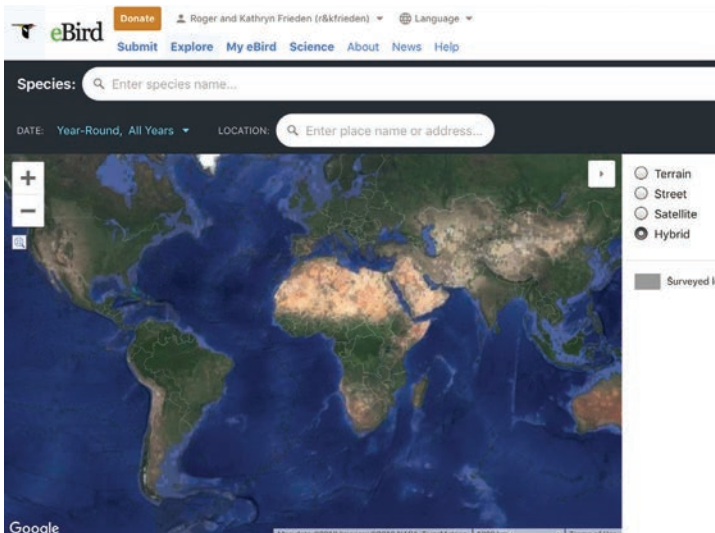
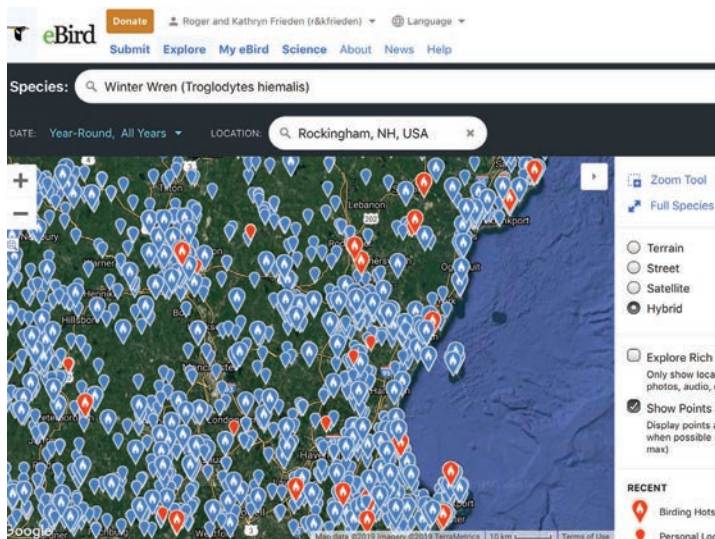
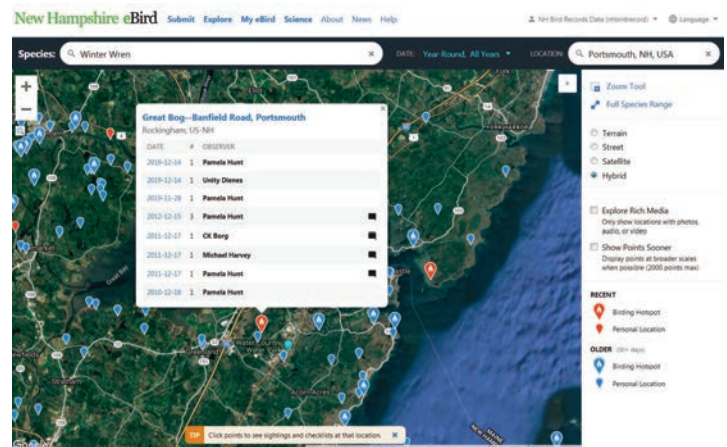


Figure 2. This eBird map shows the locations of Winter Wrens in Rockingham County, NH (as of 12-2-19).



Start typing in the species name and then select the correct species from the dropdown menu as it appears; for example, Winter Wren. Then enter New Hampshire into the location menu to see the sightings for the entire state (or use the zoom features on the top left). You can also enter a county or town name to get a more localized view, and then zoom into the area where you want to see individual locations. Before you zoom in, you will see purple squares, but once you have zoomed in far enough, you will see blue and red pins showing the locations of all the sightings. Figure 2 shows a screen shot of the Winter Wren sightings for Rockingham County. The pins representing recent sightings from the previous thirty days will be in red; all the past sightings are in blue. When you click on one of the pins, you will see all the observations of Winter Wren at that location (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The eBird map showing the observations of Winter Wrens at Great Bog in Portsmouth, NH (as of 12-27-19).



When you are planning a visit somewhere in New Hampshire and want to know if you might find a Winter Wren at a location near you, a good way to research that is by using the “Explore Hotspots” function. After you click on this button, which is in the lower right of the Explore screen, you can enter the Hot Spot name if you know it, such as “Pawtuckaway SP, Nottingham/Deerfield.” You can also enter a general location such as a county or town and then zoom in on the map, clicking on the pins near the area in which you are interested. Once you have selected a Hot Spot, there are many ways to explore, but a quick option is to click on “Bar Charts.” Scroll down to Winter Wren, and the bar chart will indicate when a species has been reported throughout the year, and how commonly it is included in checklists (Figure 4). The thickness of the bar indicates the percentage of checklists that includes that species.

Figure 4. The section of the Pawtuckaway State Park eBird bar chart that shows Winter Wren (November 2019).



There are many adjustments that can be made to these search options to obtain a vast amount of information about New Hampshire's birds. If you don't have a specific species in mind, but just want to explore, try the "Explore Regions" at the top left of the home page. If you type in New Hampshire, you can get to a checklist or bar chart for the entire state.

This just scratches the surface of what you can do with eBird. It's fun and, you can even find out where everyone you know has been birding lately. Give it a try!

*If you can't figure out how to do something in eBird, let us know. We will research it and hopefully present the answer in another article. – Ed.*

## Birding at the Top of New England

by Will Broussard

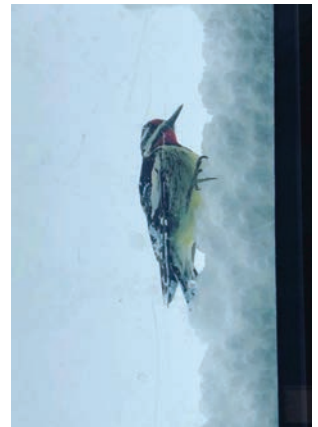
Standing at 6,288 feet, New Hampshire's Mt. Washington is difficult to reach and often obscured by clouds, hidden in plain sight to many of its seasonal visitors. Thus, it is not commonly known as a birding destination, a couple of exceptions notwithstanding. In fact, as of this writing, eBird has just 128 species listed for the hotspot<sup>1</sup>, a relatively paltry total compared to other well-known birding locations; however, Mt. Washington is a "hidden gem." Its three distinct climate zones and associated habitats support numerous passerine species in all seasons and during migration, and its proximity to the Canadian boreal forest provides access to much-desired northern and irruptive species. When birding the mountain and its near surroundings, it is important to consider which climate

zone you wish to bird, along with the time of year. Given Mt. Washington's famously terrible weather, it may also be a good idea to consult the Higher Summits Forecast of the Mount Washington Observatory (<https://www.mountwashington.org/>) prior to heading out.

Although several trails reach the summit, most visitors to Mt. Washington do so via the Mt. Washington Auto Road, which is located off Rt. 16 in Pinkham Notch (11 miles south of the junction with Rt. 2 in Gorham, NH). Please note that while hiking trails

are open year-round, the Auto Road is only open to visitors between mid-May and mid-October. Beginning at "The Glen" at 1,600 feet, you are treated to a mix of forest and field habitats along the Peabody River. A pair of Merlins nest above the summer cottages behind the Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center<sup>2</sup>. Strangely enough, I once saw a Brant in a puddle adjacent to the toll house in October of 2015. In March, look for Horned Lark and Snow Buntings in the fields and along the roadsides. As you begin your ascent up the road, you'll pass through an even-aged stand of Yellow Birch, which still shows damage from the ice storm of 1998. Black-throated Blue Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are common here in spring and summer. At the 2-mile post, you've ascended 2,600 feet, and the forest composition shifts to softwood spruce and fir. Stop at the lot where the Appalachian Trail crosses the road and take a short hike up to Lowe's Bald Spot. This rocky outcropping is great for Swainson's Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Magnolia Warbler and the occasional raptor.

Just above the 4-mile marker is the parking lot for "Signal Corps" at about 4,000 feet<sup>3</sup>. Here the stunted trees give way to broad views of the Great Gulf Wilderness and perfect breeding habitat for the elusive Bicknell's Thrush, which typically makes its presence known by call or song. In early June each year, the Mount Washington Auto Road offers guided tours to tree line specifically to view this species (<https://mtwashingtonautoroad.com/events/bicknells-thrush-tours>) and tours often stop just before the Signal Corps location where the old Halfway House used to stand. This is also a good place to look and listen for Bicknell's Thrush. Please note that while this location is among the most reliable places in New England to reach this species by vehicle, consider limiting the use of playback here as this species



*A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker clinging to an ice encrusted wall at the Mt. Washington Observatory at the mountain summit, 4-8-19. Photo courtesy of the Mount Washington Observatory.*



has a limited distribution overall. This location is also great for Blackpoll Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Fox Sparrow. A July 10, 2017 eBird report has photos of a Spruce Grouse dust bathing just above here at the pullout for the Chandler Brook Trail. Continue onward into the alpine zone and you are firmly in American Pipit territory. Park at the “Cow Pasture” (5,700 feet) and take the Huntington Ravine Trail to the Alpine Garden<sup>4</sup> where you are likely to get more pipits, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco. While heading to work on October 29, 2015, I had dozens of snow buntings here, and on December 3, 2017, Mt. Washington State Park employees witnessed a pair of Snowy Owls here.



*Northern Saw-whet Owl on the top of Mt. Washington, 9-28-14. Photo courtesy of the Mount Washington Observatory.*

Mt. Washington’s summit is frequented by raptors and passerines in migration. In September of 2014, a Northern Saw-whet Owl roosted for several hours on the outside of the visitor center rotunda, giving human visitors ample opportunities for close-ups through the glass. Even the weather observers working in the Observatory are greeted by these wayward visitors and at times have had to release birds after they find their way into the building. April snowstorms see sapsuckers clinging to life on the visitor center walls while rainy May nights bring countless warblers, grosbeaks, and thrushes to the windows, no doubt attracted to the office lighting. Much like the famed fallouts of Maine and New Hampshire’s coastal islands, Mt. Washington’s weather can ground the most dedicated migrants. On Patriot’s Day in 1953, a group of skiers in Tuckerman Ravine were astonished to find countless robins, flickers, finches, Winter Wrens and woodcocks encased in ice on the valley floor, trapped by the previous night’s high winds and snowfall. Many were saved

by the quick actions of the hikers, but others were not so lucky (see the article by John Calhoun, Jr. about this fallout in the Spring 2004 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Vol. 23, #1, “Winged Migrations: A 1953 Version from Tuckerman Ravine”). Late August on the summit is the ideal time to witness the massing of American Pipits ahead of their movement south. Year-round, the most frequently seen species is Common Raven, which takes what visitors leave behind.

Locations along Mt. Washington’s eastern flank are ideal sites for boreal and irruptive species. Pinkham Notch Visitor Center<sup>5</sup> and associated Joe Dodge Lodge keep feeders stocked for winter viewing, and often attract Black-capped Chickadee, Pine Siskin, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. In spring and early summer, take the Old Jackson Road trail north from Pinkham Notch for about two miles to where it intersects the Auto Road. On a July morning in 2017, I counted 15 warbler species in the diverse habitats along the way, including Canada, Blackpoll, and Blackburnian Warbler. Perhaps owing to the high-elevation and boreal nature of the mountain, northern breeders including Wilson’s, Mourning, Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers are fairly common during migration. Boreal Chickadees can be found along the trail to Tuckerman Ravine<sup>6</sup>. Visit the boardwalk and viewing platform along the Square Ledge trail across Rt. 16 from the visitor center and scan the adjacent wetland for Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Olive-sided Flycatcher is uncommon here and a pair of Great Egret were seen foraging here in early August of 2017.

The Base Station Road<sup>7</sup> is located on the western side of Mt. Washington and is ideal for car-based birding. This 6-mile, paved road contains mixed hardwood and spruce forest that attract boreal migrants and irruptive species, including 20 species of warbler at the height of migration and eight species of finches through winter. Alder thickets and dense understory provide cover for Mourning Warblers during the breeding season and roadside spruce bogs offer opportunities for Black-backed Woodpecker and Olive-sided Flycatcher through the summer. The winter of 2018 was a great year for both Red and White-winged Crossbill which could be found foraging on the road. November 2018 through March 2019 saw an influx of both Evening and Pine Grosbeak in the region, and the latter was sighted along the road on numerous occasions. Access to Jefferson Notch Road and the boreal hotspot Caps Ridge Trail<sup>8</sup> is off of the Base Station Road.

Extreme conditions are a hallmark of the Mt. Washington experience. Whether birding or mountaineering, human visitors must prepare for and contend with the possibility of hurricane-force winds and frozen fog year-round. It may be unpleasant for us, but it is this force that shapes the landscape and makes it so appealing to our many avian cohabitants.



*An American Pipit in the alpine area on Mt. Washington. Photo by Johanna Vienneau, 7-20-17, courtesy of the Mount Washington Observatory.*

### eBird Hot Spot Links

1. Mt. Washington (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L295828>)
2. Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2659036>)
3. "Signal Corps" (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3826194>)
4. Alpine Garden (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L603484>)
5. Pinkham Notch Visitor Center (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L428488>)
6. Tuckerman Ravine (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3107308>)
7. Base Station Road (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3348972>)
8. Caps Ridge Trail (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L317294>)

*Will Broussard serves as Outreach Coordinator for the nonprofit Mount Washington Observatory where he leads programs on Mt. Washington's natural, cultural, and scientific history. He also sits on the board of Tin Mountain Conservation Center in Albany where he serves as Programs Chair. He lives in North Conway.*

## Loon Rescue at Rye Harbor

*by Jon Woolf*

On May 11, I went out with Granite State Whale Watch on their first whalewatch of 2019. We found a swarm of Northern Gannets, along with a Humpback Whale, a Sei Whale, and some dolphins, but my most interesting sighting came after we had returned to harbor.

When I left the harbor, I turned north on Rt. 1A, with an idea of looking for shorebirds along the northern coast, or perhaps migrant land birds at Odiorne Point State Park, but

I didn't get very far. As I crossed the bridge just north of the harbor, I happened to look into the marsh to the left and saw a Common Loon. It was not in the water, though. This loon was beached, lying on its belly high and dry on the marsh grass.



*The sight that first grabbed my attention – a Common Loon where a loon should never be, high and dry, several feet from the nearest water. Photo by Jon Woolf; 5-11-19, at Aucomin Marsh near Rye Harbor, NH.*

"That's a strange place for a loon to be," I thought. Loons stick to the water except when nesting, and then they only go from the water to the nest and back. I had never even seen a loon on dry land before. Was this loon on a nest? If so, it was a strange place for a nesting loon to be, nesting loons like lakes and ponds, not salt marshes.

So, I turned around at Rye Harbor State Park and went back. The bird was still there. I hadn't imagined it or misidentified something else. It was definitely a Common Loon in full breeding plumage, perhaps thirty yards from the road, on a large "island" of marsh grass with a tidal channel a few feet away. I parked on the gravel edge next to the bridge, got out my binoculars and took a closer look, then used my scope for an even closer look at the loon. It looked ragged and disheveled, with some dried mud on the head and an odd look to its eye. But its head was up and it was looking around and it had no visible injuries. Was it sick? Lead poisoning is a common problem for loons, or was there something else wrong with it?

After watching the loon for a while, I made a couple of phone calls, trying to find someone more experienced with such things who could come take a look at this loon. The number for NH Fish & Game had only an answering machine; not surprising, late on a Saturday afternoon. Then JoAnn O'Shaughnessy suggested I call the Loon Preservation Center (LPC) in Moultonborough. I didn't think the LPC would be manned either, late on a Saturday afternoon, but to my pleasant surprise, a person answered. I gave her my name and number, described the beached loon, and contrived a way to send her a photograph of it.

A few minutes later, I got a call back from John Cooley, the LPC's Senior Biologist. He thanked me for reporting the loon and asked a few more questions about it. Then he



arranged to have another LPC biologist, Caroline Hughes, come by to have a look and perhaps capture the loon, if it seemed necessary.



*The loon with a small crab it had just caught making me think it might actually be okay, or at least on the mend. Photo by Jon Woolf; 5-11-19, Rye, NH.*

All this time, the loon had stayed in the same place, keeping watch on what was happening around it, and occasionally moving around a little bit, mostly pushing itself with feet and wings, not even trying to stand up. Sometime around 6:00 pm it pushed itself off the grass and into the water in the nearby tidal channel, where it began swimming around and even diving. I could tell it was hunting and having some success because it came up several times with small crabs. I called the LPC back and reported this.

By this time (almost 7:00 pm), it was starting to get dark. The loon seemed to be doing better since it was back in the water and, eventually, it swam around a bend in the channel and I lost sight of it. I talked again to John Cooley and to Caroline Hughes and the general consensus was that since the loon was actively swimming and hunting, perhaps it was okay after all.



*The loon swimming in the channel. Photo by Jon Woolf; 5-11-19, Rye, NH.*

Two weeks later, Mr. Cooley emailed me with a follow-up report. On the evening of Friday May 17, a week after my report of the beached loon, Rye Harbor residents rescued a Common Loon. Apparently, this was the same bird I had watched and reported on May 11. It had beached itself again, which was how the locals managed to capture it. It was taken to wildlife rehabilitator Maria Colby, who runs the Wings of the Dawn Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Henniker, NH. (Maria has been a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and helping birds of all kinds for many years.) The loon was examined at Capitol Area Emergency Veterinary Services in Concord, where an X-ray revealed it had been hit with birdshot. The injuries had probably slowed it down quite a lot and led to it beaching itself repeatedly.

Sadly, the wounded loon could not be saved. Maria Colby treated it for about a week, but it eventually succumbed to its injuries. A necropsy performed at the NH Veterinary Diagnostic Lab found multiple issues: the bird was anemic, moderately emaciated, and had an intestinal inflammation. John Cooley from the LPC believes the shot injury was probably the ultimate cause of the loon's death.

The Loon Preservation Center rescues a number of loons every year, almost all through the actions of local volunteers, as in this case. While this loon's story had a sad ending, some rescues are more successful. If you see a beached or injured-looking loon, like I did on that May afternoon, your first call should always be to the Loon Center (603-476-5666). They'll know what to do.

---

## Songbird Saver

### Website to Help Prevent Birds from Colliding into Towers

*by Steve Holmer*

*Taken from an announcement by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) posted via email Nov. 17, 2017. This is also accessible on the ABC website: <https://abcbirds.org/stop-bird-tower-collisions/> -Ed*

An estimated seven million birds die each year in North America by colliding with broadcast and cell towers. These birds, primarily night-flying songbirds on migration such as Yellow-billed Cuckoos, are either attracted to or disoriented by the lighting systems, especially when night skies are overcast or foggy.

Now, a website developer who loves birds has created a new website (<https://www.songbirdsaver.org/>) to make it easy to help implement a solution. With Songbird Saver, you can enter your zip code or use the map feature to find tall towers near you, and then send a request to the tower's operator to



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo by Steve Mirick.*

turn off the steady-burning red lights that attract birds.

This simple change is known to reduce bird mortality by about seventy percent. Please give it a try, provide your feedback, and be part of a change that will save birds in your community!

Some of the data in the website, including the email addresses of tower owners, may be out of date. If you receive an email bounce-back from a tower operator, or if no email address is available, please print and mail your letter.

A key factor in bird mortality at towers is height, with towers 350 feet or more above ground level posing the greatest threat. Elimination of non-flashing red lights on these towers also provides a substantial benefit to tower operators, who reduce their electricity consumption. Hundreds of tall towers across the US have already updated their lighting to reduce bird collisions and reduce operating costs. The change was urged by the Federal Communications Commission, which launched a policy encouraging tower operators to adopt bird-friendly and energy-saving lighting configurations.

“We are seeing great progress and thank the operators of the 700-plus towers that have updated their lighting to help reduce mortality of birds,” said Christine Sheppard of ABC’s Bird Collisions Program. “But there are still tens of thousands of tall towers across the US with outdated lights. We are asking all tower operators to make this cost-saving and life-saving switch to help save migratory birds.”

Link to the Desktop App:

<https://www.songbirdsaver.org/copy-of-songbirdsaver-app>

Link to the Mobile App:

<https://www.songbirdsaver.org/mobile-app>

*Steve Holmer is the Vice President of Policy at the American Bird Conservancy and the Director of the Bird Conservation Alliance.*

## Birders Encounter a Satellite-tagged Merlin on Star Island

*by Chris DeSorbo*



*A Merlin captured at the Block Island Raptor Research Station in Rhode Island. Photo by Ken Wright.*

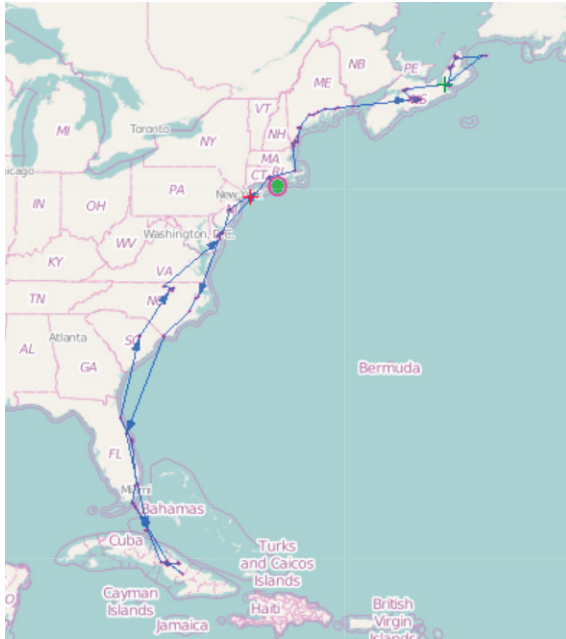
Finding a rare bird is a trip highlight for many birders, and birders are most on the lookout for such birds during migration. On the morning of May 11, 2019, a group of birders at Star Island at the Isles of Shoals off the New Hampshire coast observed a different kind of rarity. The birders were keen enough to notice that a Merlin they observed had a small transmitter on its back. Typically, a transmitter is a sure sign that a bird has a different kind of story to tell, and one that might actually be revealed by contacting the researchers involved.

With a little digging, the trip leader, Eric Masterson, learned that the bird was very likely to be one of only three Merlins fitted with miniature satellite transmitters the previous fall at the Block Island Raptor Research Station on Block Island, Rhode Island by researchers from Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) in Portland, Maine ([www.briloan.org](http://www.briloan.org)). The Merlin observed at the Isles of Shoals belonged to a cohort of only 16 female Merlins fitted with solar powered satellite transmitters from 2014 to 2018 as part of an ongoing migration study funded by The Nature Conservancy, the Bailey Wildlife Foundation, BRI, and others. To the researchers’ knowledge, these are the only Merlins to date that have been tracked using satellite telemetry.

Individual tracking technologies, such as satellite telemetry, have completely changed our understanding of migratory animals. Previous to the development of such technologies, it was incredibly difficult or nearly impossible to link individual birds from a breeding area to those at migration stopover or wintering areas. It was perhaps even more challenging to study bird use of remote habitats such as expansive deserts or offshore settings. Today, transmitters weighing only a few grams can reveal movements of an animal literally anywhere on the globe that it decides to go.



Figure 1. Spring and fall migration routes (blue lines; arrows) of an adult female Merlin (ADF02) between a migration stopover location (Block Island, RI, where she was captured), a wintering area (Cuba) and presumed breeding area (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia). Colored circles represent estimations of the transmitter location fixed by satellites. Straight lines between points do not represent direct flight paths. The larger (green) circle shows the transmitter deployment location. Map delineated using movebank.org.



The Merlin observed on Star Island was most likely “ADF02,” an adult female captured by BRI on October 5, 2018 at the Block Island Raptor Research Station. After release, ADF02 worked its way down the Atlantic coast, stopping at places like Cape May, NJ, coastal North Carolina, Georgia and Florida, before crossing over to Cay Sal Bank (Figure 1). On October 27, ADF02 travelled to Cuba, where she spent the entire winter in an agriculturally-dominated area in central Cuba. Then, on April 23, ADF02 headed decisively northward, following a migration route very similar to that taken during her southward journey. On May 11, 2019, ADF02 stopped at the Isles of Shoals along the New Hampshire coast, fixing location estimates on at least Appledore Island and Duck Island. Two days later, she transmitted from the New Hampshire coast before returning to the Isles of Shoals for just over an hour and then continuing her northward journey up coastal and interior portions of the Maine coast, across the Bay of Fundy and up to Cape Breton Island.

This cohort of Merlins is helping researchers to fill-in several data gaps that exist in our understanding of the ecology of Merlins, which are among the most poorly studied, and the most abundant diurnal raptors using offshore habitats. Data charting migration movements of

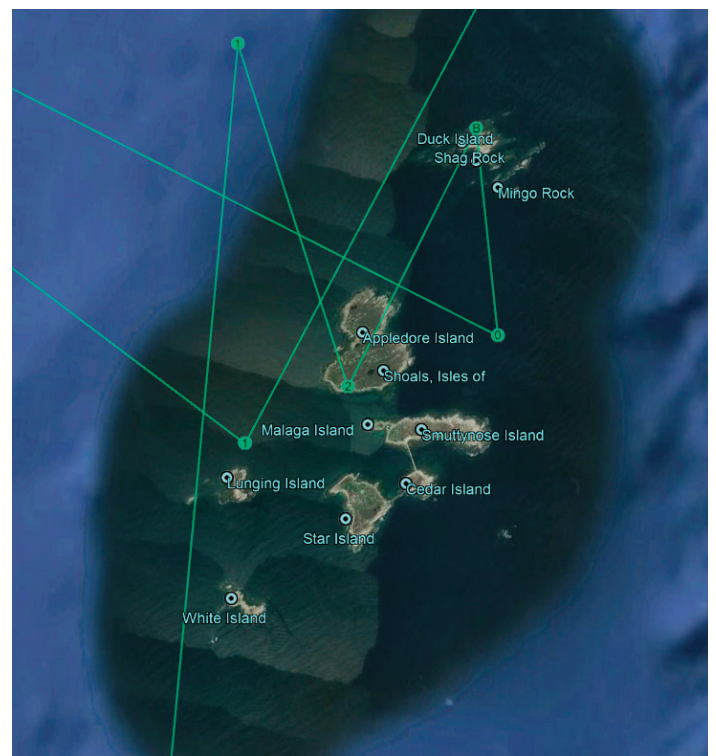
raptors that specifically use habitats offshore, such as Merlins and Peregrine Falcons, have become increasingly important in informing risk assessments for offshore wind energy facilities along the Atlantic coast. More information about raptor research at the Block Island Raptor Research Station can be found at [www.briloon.org/raptors/blockisland](http://www.briloon.org/raptors/blockisland).

Chris DeSorbo is the Raptor Program Director for Biodiversity Research Institute, Portland, Maine.



Merlin by Ken Wright.

Figure 2. Satellite telemetry location estimates for an adult female Merlin (ADF02) stopping at the Isles of Shoals on May 11-13, 2019 during spring migration. Colored circles represent estimations of the transmitter location fixed by satellites. Straight lines between points do not represent direct flight paths.



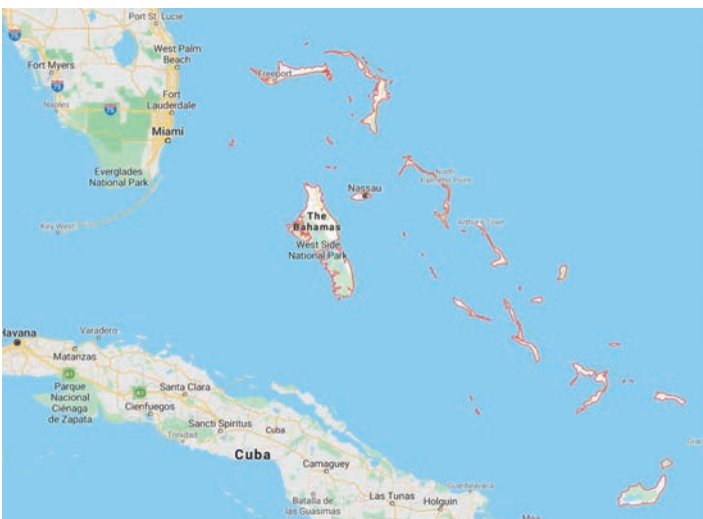
# Volunteers and Research

## Bahama Piping Plovers Nest in New Hampshire

by Meryl Friedrich

In 2017 New Hampshire Bird Records included the photos of two tagged Piping Plovers seen on Seabrook Beach, NH – one by Debra Powers (Flag 5C, 5-6-17, Spring 2017, Vol. 35 #1, p. 10) and one by Steve Mirick (Flag 3T, 7-1-17, Summer 2017, Vol. 36 #2, p. 23). Both had been banded in the Bahamas and the researchers shared the following about their project.

Atlantic coast beaches from Newfoundland to North Carolina provide important breeding habitat for an imperiled shorebird, the Piping Plover. New Hampshire's coastline hosts on average five nesting pairs each year. The Piping Plover's gray and white plumage helps it blend in with the sandy surroundings, and the bird earned its name, *Charadrius melodus*, from its plaintive “peep-lo” call. It weighs about 1.8 oz. (53 g) with a wingspan of about 15 in. (38 cm) and length about 7 in. (17 cm). It nests in a shallow scrape dug into the sand, relying on cryptic coloration to conceal the eggs from predators. Parents take turns incubating a typically four-egg clutch for about a month. The chicks are precocial and forage on invertebrates alongside their parents within hours to days of hatching, until they are able to fly after about three and a half weeks. Come summer's end, Piping Plovers migrate south to warmer shores, from the Carolinas to the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. Adults go first followed by fledglings who need a little extra time to build body mass.



Bahamas map by Google, INEGI, 2020.

Piping Plovers were designated as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1986. They are intensely monitored at many of their breeding sites along the Atlantic Coast, with managers aiming each year to meet productivity

goals to improve the population. Population declines are attributed to predation on nests and chicks, human disturbance, and habitat loss and degradation stemming from an interruption of the natural processes that build and maintain open beaches. Recovery efforts have focused on increasing survival of eggs and chicks through various methods, such as enclosing nests in wire caging to exclude predators, removing vegetation to open up sandy nesting habitat, and managing the activities of beach-goers around active nests and broods. Relatively recently, conservation has also focused on the importance of wintering areas.



Piping Plover Flag 5C by Debra Powers, 5-6-17, Seabrook Beach, NH.



Piping Plover Flag 3T by Steve Mirick, 7-1-17, Seabrook Beach, NH.

If you have ever considered heading to The Bahamas for the winter, you have something in common with Piping Plovers. Recent shorebird surveys have identified The Bahamas as one of the primary wintering areas for the species, supporting up to 50% of the Atlantic Coast population. A collaborative team from the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program, National Audubon Society, Bahamas National Trust, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have endeavored to study in depth the connectivity between wintering sites in The Bahamas and migration and breeding sites in the US and Canada to aid conservation of the species throughout its annual cycle. From 2015–2017 this team



marked 66 Piping Plovers with a small, pink flag with a unique alpha-numeric code on the upper leg. The flags allow an individual bird to be identified by sight by researchers and birders alike throughout the birds' range.



*Piping Plovers, including Flag 5C who nested at Seabrook Beach, roosting at their winter site in the Joulter Cays north of Andros, Bahamas. Photo by David Jones.*



*Group of Piping Plovers wintering at the Joulter Cays north of Andros, Bahamas. Photo by Walker Golder.*

To date, these Bahamas-banded Piping Plovers have been seen in 12 US states from Georgia to Maine, as well as in the Canadian provinces of Quebec, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick. Two of the banded plovers were spotted nesting at Seabrook Beach on the coast of New Hampshire. The two New Hampshire nesters, birds with flag codes 5C and 3T, were both captured and banded at their wintering location on the Joulter Cays, north of the island of Andros, Bahamas. Surprisingly, these birds were part of the same roosting group captured under a large net while they were resting on the morning of November 27, 2015. Flag 3T had excellent nest success, with a three-egg nest from which all chicks hatched in 2016 and a four-egg nest that had all chicks survive to fledgling in 2017. Flag 5C had three chicks hatch in 2017 before succumbing to a suspected feral cat attack. Following the breeding season, Flag 3T rested and fueled up on Cape Hatteras National Seashore, NC during late summer and early fall. Flag 5C was spotted

foraging at Fisherman Island, VA on its way north in the Spring of 2017. Flag 3T has not been located since Summer 2017. The Joulter Cays were heavily affected by Hurricane Irma in Fall 2017 and it is possible the storm directly and indirectly impacted Piping Plover survival that winter.



*A bungee-powered net used to capture roosting Piping Plovers. When the net is triggered, it moves quickly up and over a group of birds resting among the clumps of wrack (the dark spots in the sand). Flag 5C and 3T were captured in the same roost in the Joulter Cays north of Andros, Bahamas. Photo by Walker Golder.*



*Piping Plover marked with pink flag 5C on the Joulter Cays north of Andros, Bahamas. The flag enables researchers to identify individual birds, and understand survival and movement throughout their annual cycle. Photo by David Jones.*

Piping Plover research is greatly enhanced by the generous efforts of birders who find and report banded birds. If you see a pink flag Piping Plover, you can report it to [vt.plover@gmail.com](mailto:vt.plover@gmail.com) or [bahamaspipl@audubon.org](mailto:bahamaspipl@audubon.org) to learn about where and when it was banded while contributing to our understanding of survival and movement throughout the annual cycle. The Virginia Tech Shorebird Program also issues green flags with a three-character code across multiple research sites in the Great Plains, Gulf coast, and US Atlantic coast. Green flag reports can be sent to [vt.plover@gmail.com](mailto:vt.plover@gmail.com) and you can learn more about our projects at [www.vtshorebirds.org](http://www.vtshorebirds.org).

*Meryl Friedrich is a Research Biologist with the Virginia Tech Shorebird Program.*

# A Trumpeter Swan in New Hampshire! A Historical Perspective.

by Diana Stephens

Note: An on-line version of this article, with two additional color figures appears at:

<http://www.nhaudubon.org/a-trumpeter-swan-in-new-hampshire-a-historical-perspective/>

It has been over 200 years since we've seen a Trumpeter Swan here in the Granite State, until last spring, when the excitement at the Audubon headquarters was palpable. The buzz around the office was that there was a Trumpeter Swan being seen at the Abe Emerson Marsh in Candia. Word of the bird's presence was spreading and the NH Birds Google group was blowing up. The reason for this elation was that the last recorded sighting of a Trumpeter Swan in New Hampshire was in 1784.

The sighting of a single *Cygnus buccinator* was first reported on April 13, 2019 by Kevin Murphy on eBird, but the bird was initially identified as a Tundra Swan, a species that looks almost identical to the Trumpeter. It was relocated the next day by Leo McKillop, who photographed the bird and then correctly identified

it as a Trumpeter. This large, elegant waterbird has been spotted on and off in the marsh since then and has been photographed by many interested observers. A number of passionate birders have pulled off the highway, risking their safety to catch a glimpse of this rare swan in the wetland below. Others have bushwhacked their way into the edge of the marsh with their binoculars for a better view and still others were castigated for getting too close and disturbing the bird. This swan has been observed swimming, eating plants below the surface of the water, sitting on a small mound in the marsh and flying from one pond to another. As of this writing, the gender of the swan is unknown. The bird is not banded, so we cannot know for sure from whence it came or where it will go. Many birders have wondered about this lone swan, paddling by itself in the marsh. Hopefully, this article will answer some questions.

Trumpeters and Tundras (formerly called Whistling Swan) are the only two swan species that are native to North America. Mute Swans are non-native. By 1900, the Trumpeters had been hunted almost to extinction on the

continent and had been extirpated entirely from the New England area. Throughout the 1700s and 1800s, Trumpeters were killed for their meat, skins and feathers. Trumpeter skins were, in particular, found to be extremely soft to the touch and were consequently turned into powder puffs. Their long, white feathers adorned a countless number of ladies' hats. It was the fashion of the times. The quills were highly prized for writing and drawing.

Even John James Audubon, America's celebrated ornithologist and illustrator, preferred Trumpeter quills for drawing fine detail, such as the feet and claws of small birds. These products were in great demand throughout Europe and North America during the 1700s and 1800s. It is truly ironic that Mr. Audubon, whose life and love of nature



New Hampshire's Trumpeter Swan seen swimming among the reeds at NH Audubon's Abe Emerson Marsh in Candia, NH. Photo by Diana Stephens, 04-28-19.

inspired the founding of The National Audubon Society, participated in the market slaughter by purchasing Trumpeter quill pens.

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), founded in 1670, traded in Trumpeter Swan and other animal skins and the Native and European trappers hunted the swans throughout their Canadian breeding range. The company held a monopoly on trading of furs and skins there and

also in many American wintering areas to where the birds would migrate. By the end of the 19th Century, after most of the swans were gone, the company's focus shifted towards real estate and the retail sector.

From brief and scattered historical notes and records, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Manager Winston Banko pieced together the historical distribution of Trumpeter Swans. It appears that the Trumpeter was geographically widespread and abundant across most of North America prior to 1700 (Figure 1). The former wintering range of Trumpeter Swans included southeastern Alaska down the Pacific coast to southern California, across the southern United States through Texas and the Gulf coast to central Florida. Banko also states in his exhaustive report that, "At one time or another in the distant past, before man appeared on the North American Continent, Trumpeter Swans must have occurred commonly within nearly every region of what is now the United States."

A New Englander, Thomas Morton, wrote of the native swans in 1632:



*And first of the Swanne, because she is the biggest of all the fowles of that Country. There are of them in the Merrimack River, and other parts of the Country, greate Store at the seasons of the yeare. The flesh is not much desired of the inhabitants, but the skinnes may be accepted a commodity, fitt for divers uses, both for feathers and quills.*

In 1784, Jeremy Belknap wrote, “It is certain that our swan is heard to make a sound resembling that of a trumpet, both when in the water and on the wing.” In 1878, J.A. Allen stated that the Trumpeter “doubtless was common in Massachusetts 200 years earlier.” Historical estimates of the size of the Trumpeter Swan population are lacking, but early accounts from naturalists and records of swan skin sales from trading companies (17,671 swan skins sold between 1853 and 1877) indicate that this species was numerous. In 1709, John Lawson, the Surveyor General of North Carolina, reported that great flocks of Trumpeters arrived in the winter and inhabited the freshwater rivers.

Gary Ivey is the former Director of The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS), based in Plymouth, Minnesota. Mr. Ivey estimates that at least 200,000 Trumpeter Swans existed in North America prior to 1700. An exact number cannot be ascertained, however, because scientific surveys from that time period are lacking. Neither do we know how many Trumpeters existed in New England prior to 1900, when scientists first began tracking birds on a systematic basis. New England may have been a migratory stopover for many of the swans, but certainly some Trumpeters were breeding here during the summer months. Even though the precolonial numbers are brief and scattered, E.H. Forbush, writing in 1925, stated that “The Trumpeter Swan ... formerly nested on islands in many lakes or marshes in the latitude of New England and still farther south.”

By 1933, fewer than 70 Trumpeter Swans were known to exist in the wild in the lower 48 states. All of those were found in Yellowstone National Park and the Centennial Valley of Montana. This area offered refuge to the remnant population because natural hot springs kept the water open and available throughout the year in areas so isolated that hunters and trappers couldn't find them. The Trumpeter population had been reduced to a 60 mile radius encompassing parts of southwestern Montana, eastern Idaho and northwestern Wyoming, including

Yellowstone. This discovery led to the establishment of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana's Centennial Valley in 1935.

Committed conservationists with TTSS, state wildlife agencies and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, intent on bringing the Trumpeter back from the brink of extinction, have worked diligently to restore their numbers over the past 40 years. The first of many reintroduction programs were begun. Because there were so few birds left, inbreeding was a concern. In 1918, a small flock of 78 surviving

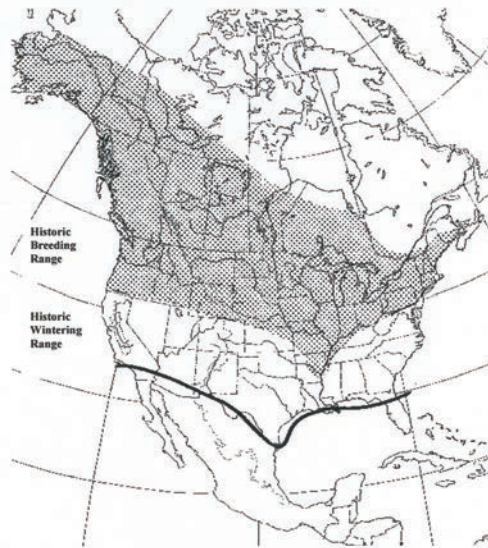
Trumpeters had been found in Alberta, Canada. In 1954, a large group of over 2,000 Trumpeter Swans were discovered in Alaska's Copper River Delta, which led to their removal from the original US endangered species list. More importantly, the eggs of this larger population in Alaska could be used to help the Trumpeters return elsewhere in the Midwest.

Beginning in the 1980s, Alaskan eggs were carefully collected and transported to begin restoration programs in Montana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario. Motivated conservationists, scientists and zoos used ingenuity in helping the eggs to incubate. In Wisconsin, wildlife biologists used decoy “swan parents” to teach the small cygnets how to swim and feed themselves. These efforts and others led to the return and growth of North America's three

Trumpeter Swan populations: the Pacific Coast Population (which includes Alaska), the Rocky Mountain Population and the Interior Population (which includes Ontario).

According to the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey (done every five years) the number of Trumpeter Swans today has rebounded to approximately 63,000 – far from their original numbers – but still a huge accomplishment. The birds that are appearing now in New England and along the Atlantic Flyway are pioneering birds who are exploring and discovering new territories and migration routes and they need all the help they can get from sanctuaries and private landowners. This Trumpeter here in New Hampshire is a direct result of the restoration efforts of many volunteers, biologists and conservationists in the United States. “We are literally watching history happen as it unfolds,” Margaret Smith, current Director of the Trumpeter Swan Society, explained.

The Trumpeter Swan is an “indicator species” of healthy wetlands and waterways. They thrive in clean waters and



*Figure 1. The pre-colonial, breeding and wintering ranges of the Trumpeter Swan before the subsistence and market hunting began (Matteson, et al. 1995). The map was compiled from the studies of Philip Rogers, Don Hammer, Harold Burgess, Harry Lumsden, Frank Bellrose and Ralph Palmer.*

high-quality habitat that supports countless plant and animal species. “Trumpeter Swans are symbols of hope showing that science, partnerships and perseverance can bring a species back from the brink of extinction,” said Ms. Smith.

In recent years, Trumpeters have been seen in all of the New England states, but these are scattered sightings of usually one to two birds at a time. According to eBird, the highest number reported at one time were four birds in Middlesex, CT in 2007. In Pennsylvania, the first successful nesting pair was reported in 2018. The swan parents were originally banded by biologists at the Clifton Institute in Warrenton, Virginia and were later reported nesting in Pennsylvania. In the mid-1990s Trumpeter Swans began breeding in New York and their numbers have slowly increased. It is not a stretch to imagine a bird flying from upstate New York over to New Hampshire or being blown off course in a storm.

Because our New Hampshire swan does not have a collar, wing tag or leg band, we cannot know for sure where the swan originated, when it hatched, or where it spent the winter. It is possible that it was exploring the area on its spring migration and decided to stop. The New Hampshire swan would have originated from (or be descended from) a restoration program or from a private breeder that helped with one of the restoration programs. Ontario has the closest restoration program to New Hampshire, but they are still actively tagging their swans and this swan has no wing tag. The next nearest program is the Piedmont program in Virginia. Other state restoration programs exist in Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. “Descent from these locations would be possible if the swan got lost or managed to fly pretty far east, but again we cannot know for sure,” Margaret Smith explained.

“It sounds like [this swan] is just establishing a territory there [in Candia]. My guess is that it is likely to return there next year if it feels safe,” said Ms. Smith. “It’s exploring the landscape. If it feels safe there, it will imprint there.” After the age of 2, released swans will “imprint” on an area, which means that it will return to the same area the following spring. It remains to be seen whether it will migrate this fall. Ms. Smith explained that some Trumpeter Swans migrate

short distances to a nearby pond or river that remains unfrozen for the winter and others migrate hundreds of miles. Harriman State Park in Idaho, for example, has both wintering and summering swans. The winter flock is just across the parking lot, on the Snake River, a very short distance from the summer nesting site of Silver Lake. (Idaho is at the same latitude on the map as New Hampshire). According to a USDA Forest Service Conservation Assessment from 2002, “the northern populations typically must migrate to the coast or to southern reaches [such as MD, Virginia and NC] in order to find water that is not iced over, while the interior populations and re-established populations tend to be locally migrant or non-migratory, as long as open water is available.”



*Our New Hampshire Trumpeter Swan shaking water off its wings by Diana Stephens, 8-30-19, Candia, NH.*

Although the Trumpeter has had a tragic past, it is encouraging to look at the current species map on eBird. If one compares 70 swans in 1933 with an eBird map of 2018, there is a huge difference in the number of sightings between then and today. In 2018, the Trumpeter Swan was reported (and photographed) from Maine to North Carolina to South Florida. Its breeding and wintering ranges have also vastly expanded since the 20th Century. There is

renewed hope for this elegant creature, even though it may not have fully recovered its pre-colonial numbers.

There are no special designations for the Trumpeter in the Granite State, according to Jessica Carloni, a waterfowl biologist at NH Fish and Game. It is not listed as endangered or threatened in New Hampshire, but Trumpeters are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which has been essential to their survival and continued recovery. They were removed from the US Endangered Species List in 1968, the same year the Trumpeter Swan Society was established. That was five years before the Endangered Species Act of 1973. It is currently illegal to hunt Trumpeter Swans, and if one were to be killed, NH Fish and Game would issue a violation and fine.

As stated earlier, the gender of this New Hampshire swan is unknown. Ms. Carloni is guessing that it’s a male because females, she says, have site fidelity and usually return to their natal breeding grounds. She theorized that this bird may have



gotten pushed out because of high density in its former flock, wherever that was. Males are slightly larger than females, but at this point in time, we have no other swan to compare it to. The author of this article spotted the swan sitting on a beaver lodge in the marsh, possibly scouting out a future nesting site. (Male birds of different species have been known to scout out future nesting sites, including the Trumpeter, which is also known to prefer Beaver lodges for nesting.) Because they were nearly wiped out, the traditional migration routes for the Trumpeter Swan were disrupted if not completely erased. In general, these swans are in the process of carving out new migratory routes for themselves.

Trumpeter Swans typically settle on ponds, marshes, lakes and rivers. A marsh with 2-4 feet of water is an ideal environment for a Trumpeter. A swan will usually find its mate at its wintering grounds. A Trumpeter can live up to 20 years or more in the wild. When it does mate, which is typically between 3 and 6 years of age, it forms a strong pair bond and mates for life. Beginning in late April or early May, female swans lay 3-10 eggs (one clutch) each year and raise up to that many cygnets, depending upon predation. Cygnets remain with their parents through the first year of life, until they are driven away from their natal grounds by their parents who want to raise another brood. They stay with their siblings or other young swans until about the age of 3, when they begin to seek a mate and look for new marshes on which to nest. As adults, their wing spans can measure up to 6 feet. They need a large expanse of open water in which to take off and land, and their diet consists primarily of aquatic plants and the occasional crustacean.

The original threat to the Trumpeters was market hunting, but Trumpeters still face threats to their survival today. Lead sinkers from fishing lines and lead shot from hunters have settled on the bottom of marshes and ponds where they feed. Thus, many swans have died from lead poisoning. Also fatal collisions with power lines near marshes are not unheard of while the swans are flying low. Lack of state funding for restoration programs is another issue, in part because they are no longer considered endangered.

The disappearance of wetlands to agriculture and development has also slowed restoration efforts. Because clean water and pristine wetlands are essential to their survival, the Trumpeter Swan Society recognizes the importance of saving, and even restoring, wetlands across the United States. Take the State of Iowa, for example. By 1930, the state had drained 90% of its original wetlands to make the land suitable for farming. In 1994, Iowa began its Trumpeter Swan restoration program and used "Trumpeting the Cause for Wetlands" as its slogan. Today, Iowa is a great model for wetlands restoration messaging and education about the importance of wetlands to human health and safety

and as home to more than 400 species of plants and animals, Margaret Smith explained.

As for the future of our New Hampshire swan, the vast majority of Trumpeter Swans do migrate to warmer climates by November or December, as the water begins to freeze. Because they feed primarily on aquatic plants while swimming, the species does need open water to survive. Most marshes freeze here in New Hampshire during the winter, so it will be interesting to see if and when the swan migrates this fall, and also if it returns to the Abe Emerson Marsh next spring. Several birders I have spoken to are hopeful that the bird will find a mate this winter and bring it back to Candia. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Either way, we are happy the swan is here, and we are hopeful for its continued well-being wherever it settles in the future.

Many thanks to Margaret Smith and Gary Ivers of The Trumpeter Swan Society and to David Donsker who contributed valuable information for this article.

*Diana Stephens is a freelance writer who lives in New Hampshire. She is the Field Notes Coordinator for New Hampshire Bird Records.*

## References

- Allen, J. 1878. A List of the Birds of Massachusetts, with annotations. *Bulletin of the Essex Institute*. Vol. 10.
- Banko, W. 1960. *The Trumpeter Swan: Its history, habits and population in the United States*. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. North American Fauna No. 63. US Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, DC.
- Belknap, J. 1784. *A History of New Hampshire*. Thomas and Andrews, Boston, MA.
- Forbush, E. 1925. *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*. Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.
- Groves, D. 2017. *The 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey, A Cooperative North American Survey*. US Fish & Wildlife Service, Juneau, AK.
- Hudson's Bay Company website and historical archives. hbc.com accessed June, 2019.
- Matteson, S., S. Craven and D. Compton. *The Trumpeter Swan*, 1995. Publication No. G3647, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service, Madison, WI.
- Mealy, N. 1998. *Herald Swans' Reprise*, California Wild Magazine, California Academy of Sciences, Vol. 51:2, Spring.
- Slater, G. 2006. *Trumpeter Swan (Cygnus buccinator): A Technical Conservation Assessment*, USDA, Rocky Mountain Region Species Conservation Project. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/projects/scp/assessments/trumpeterswan.pdf>.
- Southwell, D. 2002. *Conservation Assessment for Trumpeter Swans*. USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region. Escanaba, MI.
- Trumpeter Swan Society Newsletter, *Trumpetings*, Plymouth, MN. [www.trumpeterswansociety.org](http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org).

# Answer to the Photo Quiz

by David B. Donsker



See Inside Front Cover for a color version of this photo.

Birds can be difficult to identify for any number of reasons. At times, they may be seen only briefly or at a distance, which prevents us from seeing critical field marks. Sometimes, they belong to genuinely difficult groups that are frustratingly similar in plumage, such as sparrows or fall warblers. Females, with their generally duller plumages, are often difficult or unfamiliar to us, even if the males of that species are distinctive and well-marked. But it's a much rarer event when the bird in question is a well-seen male with a distinctive plumage. Such is the case with the mystery bird in this Photo Quiz.

With that in mind, let's carefully look at our featured bird. It is a medium-sized passerine, or perching bird. It is a relatively lanky bird with medium length tail and medium length, sharply pointed, slightly decurved, black bill. In this color photograph, we can appreciate that it has a brilliant yellow breast and grayish olive-green crown, nape and side of the head, and undertail. The wings are dark, but we cannot tell because of the bird's angle, if it has any wing markings. Perhaps, the most striking feature of this bird is its black throat, which extends onto its upper breast, and its black foreface, both of which strikingly contrast with its yellow underparts.

Since the black throat is such a prominent feature of this individual, one approach to its identification is to consider, and begin to eliminate, the various black-throated species that may be seen in our state. They fall into only a few groups: chickadees, sparrows, wood-warblers and icterids (blackbird family).

Both of our chickadees, Black-capped and Boreal, are completely different looking birds from the bird in the photograph. In contrast to this bird, they are small, short-

billed species that have prominent white cheeks and lack any yellow in their plumage.

Several of our sparrows, and their allies, have strikingly prominent black throats. These include Eastern and Spotted Towhees, Dark-eyed Junco, and Harris's Sparrow. Both the towhees and junco have black or blackish heads as well as black throats, which is a plumage pattern unlike the isolated black throat of this bird. Although Harris's Sparrow does have a well-demarcated black throat, it has a black crown, conical yellowish bill, and streaked flanks amongst other differing features. None of these sparrows has brilliantly yellow underparts.



Lawrence's Warbler by Steve Mirick.

Some of our male wood-warblers have isolated black throats somewhat like our quiz bird, but Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler and the ultra rare Black-throated Gray Warbler all have essentially white underparts rather than yellow underparts. The male of the accidental Townsend's Warbler has a prominent black throat and some yellow below, but the yellow on its underparts is limited to the upper breast. In addition, its face is yellow with black auriculars (ear patches). Some male warblers superficially resemble our quiz bird in that they share the black throat with extensive yellow underparts. These include Mourning and MacGillivray's Warblers, Hooded Warbler, and "Lawrence's Warbler" a rare backcross hybrid of Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler. The very similar, and closely related, Mourning and MacGillivray's Warblers have, in addition to blackish-gray throats, completely slaty-gray heads, rather than the grayish olive-green crown and nape of this bird. Male Hooded Warbler has a yellow face framed by a black hood, so it's quite unlike this bird. The most common form of "Lawrence's Warbler," in addition to its black throat,



has a black ear patch surrounded by a yellow or yellowish-white face. These are features lacking in the featured bird. Besides, most of these warblers have smaller, shorter, or thinner bills than the sharply pointed, larger bill of this bird. Both Mourning and MacGillivray's Warblers have larger bills than the other warblers listed here, but their bills are yellowish, not black, as is the bill of this individual.

The only other group of North American perching birds that have prominent black throats are the New World orioles which are members of the icterid, or American blackbird, family. For those of us who live in New England and have limited familiarity with this group of birds which extends throughout the Western Hemisphere, the only orioles we see with any frequency are Baltimore Oriole and the less common Orchard Oriole. Adult males of both of these two species have completely black heads, so we tend to think of male orioles as typically having black heads and backs that contrast with brilliant orange or rich chestnut body-plumage. But in the rest of the range of the many American oriole species, adult males often have isolated black throats that, in pattern, look very similar to this bird. North American species with this plumage feature include Hooded and Bullock's Orioles of the American west, Altamira Oriole of southern Texas, the introduced Streak-backed Oriole of southern Florida and the accidental Spot-backed Oriole of the southwest. All of these are orange birds in adult male plumage, but there are many more black-throated orioles throughout Central and South America, some of which are yellow rather than orange. Of these black-throated species, only Bullock's Oriole has ever appeared in New Hampshire. Unlike our featured bird, adult male Bullock's Oriole has orange rather than yellow underparts. Its black throat and upper breast form a narrower stripe than our featured individual. The face is orange and it is interrupted by a thin black line through the eye. Furthermore, the crown and nape are black, not grayish olive-green. Young male Bullock's Orioles are more similar to this bird in that their bodies are yellowish, rather than orange, and the crown and nape are more olivaceous than black, but in all other features, especially the thin black line through the eye and the lack of an extensively black foreface, young male Bullock's Orioles resemble adult males.

So, what can we make of this black-throated, yellow breasted oriole? The answer is that it's a male Orchard Oriole. It's in a plumage that may be unfamiliar because it is only transiently present in any individual bird and, sometimes, it is not even illustrated in our available references. Rather than an adult, it is a first summer male. This plumage is only held from late spring into the summer of a bird's first year. So, this makes this uncommon bird even trickier to

identify because this particular plumage is so ephemeral and underappreciated.

Orchard Oriole is a fairly uncommon breeding species in the southeast corner of New Hampshire, but its normal breeding range is much more extensive. It breeds from the southern Prairie Provinces of Canada south and east through the Midwest and southern USA to the Atlantic coast from extreme southern Maine to northern Florida. In its breeding range, it favors open park-like deciduous woodlands and riparian woods. In New Hampshire, fairly reliable places to look for this species in spring and early summer are Pickering Ponds in Rochester, the Bellamy River Wildlife Management Area in Dover, and Powderhouse Pond in Exeter.

This first summer male Orchard Oriole was photographed by Len Medlock on May 12, 2018 in Exeter.

Postscript: Ironically, the one wood-warbler that most closely resembles this bird is not even a remote possibility for us to encounter. It's the now (likely) extinct Bachman's Warbler that formerly, and uncommonly, frequented canebrakes in the American south, and never has appeared in New England. Like the bird in the photograph, it had a prominent black lower throat and upper breast, yellow underparts, and olivaceous tones in its rear crown and the back of its head. It also had a longish, slightly decurved, more sharply pointed bill, than most warblers, but quite unlike this bird, Bachman's Warbler was smaller and less lanky. It had a yellow chin, the black patch extending to the upper breast was wider and more extensive, the crown and nape were more grayish than olivaceous, the forecrown was black, not olive, the black foreface was absent, and there were extensive white patches on the undertail. It's only mentioned here because some older bird books and field guides do not illustrate juvenile male Orchard Oriole, but do illustrate Bachman's Warbler, which likely only became extinct in the early 1960s. If this is so, Bachman's Warbler might be the only "wallpaper" match that may remotely resemble this quiz bird in older bird books. Beware!

## References

- Farrand, J. Jr. 1983. *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*. Vol. 3. Alfred A Knopf, New York, NY.
- Foss, C., ed. 1994. *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*. Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Concord, NH.
- Scharf, W. and J. Kren. 2010. Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*), version 2.0. In *The Birds of North America* (A. Poole, ed.). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bna.255>.
- Sibley, D. 2014. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Second Edition. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY.

# New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund


Donations to this fund provide long-term support for all facets of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, from the publication to the collection, organization, quality control, dissemination, preservation, and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information.

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

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

For more information, contact the Managing Editor (see inside front cover).

# Rare Bird ALERT

 224-9909

Available twenty-four hours a day!  
Also online at [www.nhaudubon.org](http://www.nhaudubon.org)

## 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

## NHBR Subscription Form

I would like to subscribe to *NH Bird Records*.

NHA Member \$25.00  Non-member \$35.00

*All renewals take place annually.*

*Mid-year subscribers will receive all issues published in the subscription year.*

I would like to join NH Audubon and receive *NH Bird Records* at the member price.

Family/\$59  Individual/\$45  Senior/\$29

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment is by:

check enclosed— payable to NH Audubon

MC  VISA

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:** Membership Department, NH Audubon,  
84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH 03301

**Subscribe online at [www.nhbirdrecords.org](http://www.nhbirdrecords.org)**

*New Hampshire Bird Records* is published quarterly by NH Audubon's Conservation Department. Thank you to the many observers who submit their sightings to NH eBird ([www.ebird.org/nh](http://www.ebird.org/nh)), the source of data for this publication. The published sightings typically represent the highlights of the season. Not all species reported will appear in the issue. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication here does not imply future acceptance by the RBC.

*New Hampshire Bird Records* © NH Audubon March, 2020

Published by NH Audubon's Conservation Department



Printed on Recycled Paper



# Spring 2019 Highlights



Two highlights from the NH Audubon pelagic trip to Jeffreys Ledge, 5-27-19: Red-necked Phalaropes in breeding plumage, photo by Leo McKillop, and a Bay-breasted Warbler that landed on the boat and ate bits of apple, photo by Steve Mirick. See the Photo Gallery for more on the warbler's visit.



Yellow-throated Warbler by Steve Mirick, 4-27-19, South Hampton, NH.



According to Spring Editor Eric Masterson, it was "the best spring in living memory for southern overshoots," including this Blue Grosbeak by Christopher McPherson, 5-4-19, Brookline, NH.



Red Knot (left) and Sanderling in breeding plumage. Photos by Debra Powers, 5-29-19, Seabrook Beach, NH.



# Spring 2019 Highlights



Two very different looking Summer Tanagers: an immature male (left) by Chris McPherson, 4-29-19, Nashua NH; right in full adult male plumage by Steve Hooper, 5-4-19, Colby St., Keene, NH.



Long-eared Owl by Scott Parker, 3-12-19, Keene, NH.



Yellow-headed Blackbird by Janet Butler, 5-28-19, Rye, NH.



Tricolored Heron by Jason Lambert, 5-4-19, Durham, NH.



Prothonotary Warbler by Steve Mirick, 5-18-19, Exeter, NH.

