

# New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS



# Fall 2019 Highlights



Record numbers of Red Phalaropes (left) and a few Red-necked Phalaropes were seen on NH Audubon's Seacoast Chapter pelagic trip, 10-14-19. See the Field Trip Report inside for more. Photos by Steve Mirick.



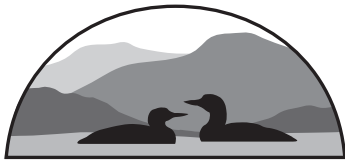
Western Sandpiper by Steve Mirick, 9-19-19, Rye, NH.

Canvasback by Christopher McPherson, 11-16-19, Lake Massabesic, Auburn, NH.



Left : Long-billed Dowitcher adult with Short-billed Dowitchers. Right: Juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher showing the dark tail and the lack of patterning on the tertial feathers. Photos by Leo McKillop, 8-10-19 (left) and 10-29-19 (right), Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area, NH.

## IN APPRECIATION



**NH AUDUBON**

Protecting our environment since 1914

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS**  
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This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by Diana Stephens in loving appreciation of her mother and father, Dolores and Mallory Stephens, and her brother and sister-in-law, Mal and Claudia LaBrie Stephens. From learning to love nature to hiking and cross country skiing to learning to appreciate the wildlife that surrounds us, I would like to honor my family with this issue.



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# From the Editor

FALL 2019

by Rebecca Suomala

## Volunteer News

**Thank You Jeannine!** After 27 years volunteering for *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Jeannine Ayer has decided it's time to retire. When she started volunteering in 1993 (the year of this photo), bird sightings came in on 3x5 slips which Jeannine entered into a DOS-based database. I think we had progressed beyond the dual floppy drives, one to run the



program and one for the data, but not by much. (Remember the days before hard drives?). Windows didn't exist, there was no computer mouse and you typed in commands such as C:\QA to start the program. Through the years she adapted to changing technology, even when we switched to eBird. She continued to enter sightings in the new online eBird format (and I think she liked it!) for those who still sent in paper reports. She also backed up the database every week and took it home with her so we would have a copy offsite. Despite absences during especially challenging times, she always returned to volunteer. Her cheerful smile and ready laugh were always a welcome presence in the office. I am so grateful to Jeannine for her long term volunteering. She provided not only invaluable

practical help, but also friendship and support to me and others she worked with. She will be missed.

**Welcome Betsy.** We welcome a new volunteer to the *New Hampshire Bird Records* team, Betsy Robinson. She will be providing a variety of help "in the office" and with eBird, but we're still working out what that will be during this Covid-19 time.

## COVID-19 Update

After falling behind in production during the initial chaos of COVID-19, we're making progress "catching up," even though the NH Audubon offices are still closed. Staff is working from home and I am constantly grateful for the volunteers who

continue their work from home. Unfortunately, not all volunteer work can be done from home. We are doing our best to ensure all subscriptions are up to date and non-subscribing contributors receive a copy of the appropriate issue, but please have patience. If you are missing a copy, please let me know and I will look into it as soon as I can (contact information on page 1, email is best). Thank you!

## Archives Still Open

During COVID-19 we are providing free access to the *New Hampshire Bird Records* archives. We hope this access to the wealth of information in the publication is helpful for those doing more local birding or just getting started learning the birds of New Hampshire.

## Photo Quiz

A special thank you to Leo McKillop for the answer to last issue's Photo Quiz. The regular Photo Quiz will be back next issue.

## August 1 through November 30, 2019

by Benjamin Griffith



### Introduction

The fall started out mild and remained largely mild for most of the season, but rapidly turned bitterly cold in mid-November. The mild fall may have precipitated a slower than average coastal migration and possibly explains the

excellent migration at inland sites. It also likely facilitated a number of unusually late reports in October and November prior to the cold setting in. Notable weather events included the aforementioned cold snap on November 15 resulting in an influx of waterfowl (and the departure of a long-staying Trumpeter Swan) and Hurricane Dorian which didn't make landfall in New Hampshire, but deposited several rarities farther north that were detected along the coast on their way back south.

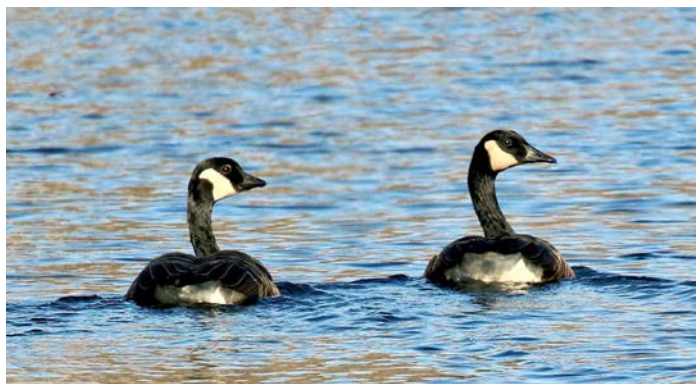


*Tundra Swan by Jeanne-Marie Maher, 11-17-19, Connecticut River, Plainfield, NH.*

Red-letter rarities for the fall season included the **Trumpeter Swan** in Candia, an unseasonable **Tufted Duck** in Exeter, a **Gull-billed Tern** in Rye, a first state record of **Cassin's Sparrow** on Star Island, a **LeConte's Sparrow** in Hollis, and a **Lazuli Bunting** in Bow. Less notable but still rare were multiple reports of **Cackling Geese** and **Tundra Swans**, inland Common Eider, multiple **American Avocets**, many **Black Skimmers**, four **White-eyed Vireos**, a **Hooded Warbler**, and two **Blue Grosbeaks**. Other fall highlights

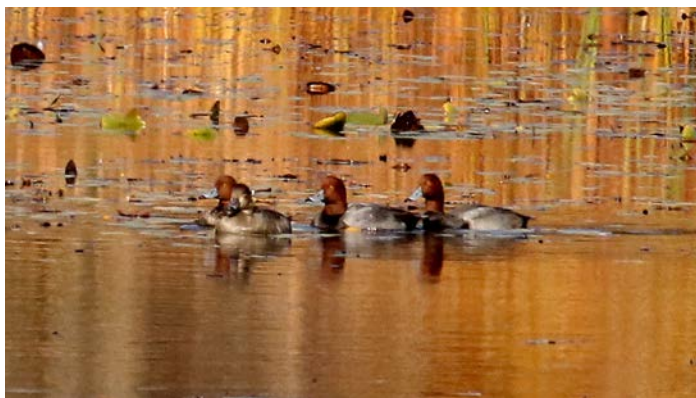
include record high counts of Surf Scoter and Red Phalarope as well as seasonal record counts of Black Vulture, Dovekie, Atlantic Puffin, and Northern Fulmar.

### Waterfowl



*Cackling Goose by Lori Charron, 10-19-19, Umbagog NWR.*

**Cackling Geese** are a rare migrant averaging less than one report each fall and frequently they are either poorly documented or misidentified. This fall, single birds were reported from three different locations (Wentworth's Location, Seabrook, and Greenland) with diagnostic photos of two of the birds. New Hampshire's first modern record of **Trumpeter Swan** continued (since April!) finally disappearing after November 14, a marathon seven month stay for this rarity that entertained hundreds of birders. At least four different **Tundra Swans** were reported following the November cold snap, with two birds in Barnstead on November 15 and reports of up to two from Plainfield and two from Orford, which may have been the same birds. These are the first fall records of Tundra Swan for the state since 2017, and the first time the species has been reported at multiple locations since 1998. Additionally, six swans were reported on Great Bay around this time that may have been Tundra Swans.



*Redheads by Steve Bennett, 10-26-19, Eel Pond, Rye, NH.*

Although Wood Ducks often congregate in fall, a count of 28 on November 17 in Brookline was the fifth highest November count, with all higher counts occurring during the

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first week of the month. A Canvasback on Lake Massabesic in Auburn on November 15 followed the same cold front as the Tundra Swans and was the first fall record of this species since 2000. Four Redheads on Eel Pond on October 26 was the highest individual fall count since 2014 and possibly the highest fall count away from Great Bay since 1955! There was an additional Redhead sighting from Lyme on October 25, creating the highest fall total for the state since 2015. Ring-necked Ducks are a fairly common fall migrant but a high count of 211 from October 20 at Bear Brook Pond in the Umbagog NWR was the highest fall count since 2008. Another unusually large flock of this species was first noted on the same day in Tamworth and had a peak count of 146 on October 25. The 39 Blue-winged Teal on August 31 at Eel Pond was the highest total since 2014 of a normally scarce migrant. The peak count for American Wigeon was 217 on November 2 at Great Bay where they typically gather.



*Tufted Duck by Len Medlock, 8-10-19, Exeter WTP, NH.*

An immature male **Tufted Duck** in August in Exeter is the third record for the state, all in the past seven years. This

bird was first found at the end of July by Leo McKillop and continued through August 11. Although the species regularly occurs in October and November in the Northeast it may be the first August record for the eastern United States! Given the unseasonal occurrence and the popularity of waterfowl as pets, there could be some concern about provenance; however, the age would be consistent with an individual of this species that was present at the same location in late winter and may have spent the intermediate time undetected locally.

Although Common Eider is abundant coastally (i.e., 3,500 at Star Island on 9-29-19), it is exceptionally rare inland. Twelve photographed in Jefferson were the first fall inland records since 2016. Interestingly, the species seems to be more regular in the Connecticut River Valley than it is in the inland coastal plain, possibly a result of recently established wintering populations on the Great Lakes.

A remarkable 1,695 Surf Scoters were tallied on October 27 easily topping the previous high count of 787 almost exactly 13 years earlier on October 28, 2006; however, several higher fall counts of unidentified scoters exist which likely pertain primarily to this species. A storm brought down a few White-winged and Surf Scoters on Cherry Pond in Jefferson on October 13, but there was a large fallout of inland scoters on October 18-19 following another storm (Table 1). These events are expected in fall, and nearly always are predominantly Black Scoters.

Two Harlequin Ducks were reported during the fall season, an average total for this species in recent years. Barrow's Goldeneyes are a late migrant and aren't necessarily recorded every fall, but three were seen in 2019: a female on Eel Pond starting on November 10, and males on the Connecticut River in Plainfield on November 17 and the Merrimack River in Manchester starting on November 23.

*Table 1. Inland scoter reports in eBird from October 18-19, 2019.*

| <b>10/18/2019</b>   |    |                         |                      |
|---------------------|----|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Surf Scoter         | 1  | Lake Massabesic, Auburn | L. McKillop          |
| Surf Scoter         | 3  | The Balsams, Colebrook  | L. Charron           |
| White-winged Scoter | 21 | The Balsams, Colebrook  | L. Charron           |
| White-winged Scoter | 2  | Echo Lake, Franconia    | T. McShane           |
| <b>10/19/2019</b>   |    |                         |                      |
| Surf Scoter         | 3  | Echo Lake, Franconia    | T. McShane, R. Quinn |
| Black Scoter        | 34 | Echo Lake, Franconia    | T. McShane, R. Quinn |
| Surf Scoter         | 1  | Cherry Pond, Jefferson  | T. McShane, R. Quinn |
| White-winged Scoter | 21 | Cherry Pond, Jefferson  | D. Govatski          |
| Black Scoter        | 57 | Cherry Pond, Jefferson  | D. Govatski          |
| Black Scoter        |    | Antrim Rd., Hancock     | E. Masterson         |
| Black Scoter        | 14 | Mink Brook, Hanover     | W. Johnson           |

## Grebes through Sandhill Crane

Five Pied-billed Grebes from Colebrook in early August were the result of a rare nesting record for the state; however, they have been nesting at this site for several years (see recent Summer issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records*). Normally fairly common during the last half of the season, Horned Grebes were scarce with a high count of just three individuals and a total of only 28 reports this fall. In the previous five years, there was an average of 42 reports of the species during the fall season.

A Black-billed Cuckoo at Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge in October is one of only a few October records in Coos County. Common Nighthawks create quite the spectacle as they migrate through the Merrimack River Valley. As in past years, daily totals of migrating nighthawks were recorded from Concord. This year's daily high count of 806 paled in comparison with regularly occurring high counts of over 1,000 individuals; however, there seemed to be a late pulse of the species, with 14 reports after September 15 (Table 2) and a high count of 21 on September 23. This may be the largest number of late September reports ever for the state and the highest count for this time period since 1988.

Table 2. All Common Nighthawk reports in eBird after September 15, 2019.

| Date  | #  | Location                       | Observer             |
|-------|----|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 09/17 | 2  | Hawthorne Dr., Bedford         | M. Horowitz          |
| 09/18 | 1  | Rt. 202, Peterborough          | E. Masterson         |
| 09/19 | 1  | Deer Hill WMA                  | S. Mirick            |
| 09/20 | 2  | Hanover HS, Lebanon St.        | R. Lovejoy           |
| 09/21 | 1  | Star Island, Isles of Shoals   | E. Masterson, et al. |
| 09/22 | 2  | Haven Ln., Exeter              | L. Medlock           |
| 09/22 | 1  | Rt. 9, Hillsborough            | S. Lamonde           |
| 09/22 | 1  | Rt. 95, Hampton                | S. Mirick            |
| 09/23 | 21 | Silk Farm WS, Concord          | P. Brown             |
| 09/23 | 2  | O'Kane Rd., Durham             | E. Johnson           |
| 09/23 | 1  | Keene Transfer Station, Rt. 12 | W. Ward              |
| 09/23 | 4  | St Mary's Cemetery, Portsmouth | D. Smith             |
| 09/26 | 1  | Northwood Lake                 | P. Hunt              |
| 09/27 | 1  | Garland Rd., Nottingham        | C. Duffy             |

The latest Ruby-throated Hummingbird report was on October 8 in Coos County where few October records exist. Those in eBird are from only two locations, Lyman and Bretton Woods, the site of this year's report. A Virginia Rail on November 3, found during the annual Concord November Challenge (organized by Pam Hunt to find as many species as possible in Concord, NH during the first weekend of November), is one of only a handful of November records. A single **Common Gallinule** was reported for three days in mid-October, the third consecutive fall in which this species has been recorded, although on average the species is recorded in fewer than half of all years.



Sandhill Cranes by Steve Bennett, 10-18-19, Ledge Farm Rd., Nottingham, NH.

Sandhill Cranes were reported from areas in Nottingham and Monroe where breeding has been recorded in the past, but apparently no young were present this year. Prior to 2014, the highest count of Sandhill Cranes in fall was two, but since then five or more have been reported every year in late October or November. This year 22 were seen in Holderness on November 2, the third highest count for the state.

### Shorebirds



American Avocet by Len Medlock, 8-17-19, Rye, NH.

An **American Avocet** in Rye Harbor was a well documented ninth record for the state and seen by many on August 17-18. Additionally, two avocets were reported by an experienced observer on August 22. These birds appear to have been part of a regional influx with at least five birds reported in Maine and three in Massachusetts during the latter half of August.

American Oystercatchers lingered on the Isles of Shoals well into September as has been typical since 2013; the last report this season was September 28. Prior to this phenomenon, the species was unrecorded in fall in the state and their late occurrence (as well as regular observations of juveniles) suggests breeding somewhere on the Isles of Shoals.

American Golden-Plovers are uncommon fall migrants in the state, and rarely occur in high numbers. Four on Star Island on September 29 was the highest total since 2013.

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One on Mt. Moosilauke is the second time this species has been photographed at the summit; the other record was from October 11, 2011. Other inland reports were from Tuftonboro and Charlestown. Six Semipalmated Plovers in Surry on August 16 is the highest count of this species in inland New Hampshire in eBird. A single Semipalmated remained at Rye Harbor State Park through November, which is a very late date (see the upcoming Winter season). An Upland Sandpiper on September 22 is the latest fall date in the modern eBird era.



*American Golden-Plover by Len Medlock, 11-19-19, Exeter, NH.*

A Marbled Godwit in Seabrook from August 10-14 was only the second fall record since 2012. A single Hudsonian Godwit was also observed on September 14. Both godwit species used to be much more regular in the Hampton Harbor complex but have dramatically declined in the past 10 years. These declines (along with declines in Whimbrel) may be due to degradation of the mudflats as a result of the disappearance of intertidal blue mussels, which has been widely noted throughout the Northeast.



*Marbled Godwit by Susan Wrisley, 8-10-19, Hampton Harbor, NH. See her article about finding the bird in this issue.*

A Stilt Sandpiper on November 2 and 4 appears to be only the third November record for the state. A remarkable sighting of a Sanderling in Swanzev on November 13 (photographed) is the only inland record of the species in November, although

they are readily found at the coast. Similarly, a Dunlin in Orford on November 10 was a notably late date for inland where there are few November reports, although they are common at the coast.

In many years, *juvenile* White-rumped Sandpipers are numerous coastally in October and early November, but this year they were nearly completely absent. Conversely, a count of 16 *adults* on August 24 in Hampton was unusually high for the species. Western Sandpipers are typically rare in late August through September, with occasional observations of single birds; however, this year a total of nine were reported on September 1 and the species was reported widely along the coast through the early fall.



*Long-billed Dowitcher adult with Short-billed Dowitchers. Photo by Leo McKillop, 8-10-19, Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area, NH.*

Three Long-billed Dowitchers were reported this season, the first fall records since 2013. Nearly all fall records of this species are juveniles, but the first record of the fall from August 10-31 was an adult in the Hampton salt marshes. The remaining two birds were juveniles that were first found on October 23 in the same location as the earlier adult but they stayed through November 7 at nearby Meadow Pond in Hampton. Dowitchers identified in the field as Short-billed were present at the same location in the days prior to the sighting. After mid-October, dowitchers should be carefully scrutinized, as Short-billed is nearly as rare as Long-billed.

Red Phalaropes are rarely observed in New Hampshire with a total of 12 individuals reported from four seasons between 2009 and 2018. Most individuals migrate offshore in early May and October when pelagic trip opportunities are limited. The October 14 pelagic trip must have been perfectly timed, as they recorded an incredible 268 Red Phalaropes, the highest count ever for the state (see the Field Trip reports in this issue).

A Willet photographed in Rye Harbor on October 26 was the rarer Western form, which has been nearly annual in recent years. Much like the dowitcher, as the fall progresses the more common Eastern form becomes scarce and by late October,



any Willet should be carefully scrutinized for subspecific identity.

## Jaegers through Shearwaters

On August 17, numbers of jaegers, most of which appeared to be Parasitic were observed migrating on the coast, with a high count by one observer of 12. Observers on a whalewatch boat incidentally reported large numbers of jaegers

as well. Otherwise, Parasitic Jaegers were relatively scarce on the coast, perhaps correlating with lower than usual numbers of Common Terns offshore. Pomarine Jaegers were also relatively scarce, with only three reports of four birds during the fall season. By comparison, both September pelagic trips last year (2018) recorded more of this species than Parasitic!



*Pomarine Jaeger by Leo McKillop, 10-25-19, New Hampshire waters between the Isles of Shoals and Jeffreys Ledge.*



*Top: One of ten Dovekies seen in offshore waters, 10-20-19 by Sophia Wong.  
Bottom: Leo McKillop photographed some of the 270 he tallied more than a month later, 11-30-19.*

NH Audubon's Seacoast Chapter pelagic trip on October 14 tallied a fall high count (and third overall high count) of seven **Atlantic Puffins**, as well as an exceptionally early

**Dovekie**. This Dovekie, plus 10 that were reported on October 20, were a harbinger of things to come as a trip on November 30 had a staggering 270, the highest fall total for the state since at least 1990.



*Bonaparte's and Little Gull by Jim Sparrell, 9-28-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

Although small numbers of Laughing Gulls are expected throughout the early fall, a count of 61 Laughing Gulls on August 20 was the sixth highest total for the state. On September 14, 20 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were counted along the coast during a day of intermittent rain, the highest fall total and second highest count for the state. **Little Gulls** have been largely absent from New Hampshire in recent years, with only two records between 2015 and 2018. Remarkably, there were three different birds reported in the fall of 2019, including an adult on August 5 and a juvenile on September 28 seen from Odiorne Point and a juvenile on the October 14 pelagic trip (see the Field Trip Report). A Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Massabesic on October 18 was a rare inland sighting of a pelagic bird.

Least Terns lingered until August 29, the latest sighting of the species since 2014. A juvenile Arctic Tern was well photographed in Hampton Harbor and was the first fall record of this hard-to-identify species since 2015. The only Black Tern reports were of two birds at Akers Pond in Errol in August, and a single bird on the NH Audubon pelagic trip on September 3.

Hurricane Dorian followed a nearly identical path to Hurricane Earl nine years earlier and deposited hundreds of Black Skimmers and dozens of Gull-billed and Royal Terns (as well as other rare seabirds) in the Canadian Maritime Provinces. (See the article by Steve Mirick in this issue.) Almost like clockwork, the weeks following the storm echoed Earl, with these same species slowly trickling south along the coast. New Hampshire was a beneficiary of this with records of two of these species and a likely record of the third. While observers were looking for one of the previously-mentioned Little Gulls, they happened to photograph a molting adult **Gull-billed Tern** on September 28, the third record of the

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species for the state. The first **Black Skimmers** appeared on September 14, seven days after the storm made landfall in Newfoundland. For comparison, Hurricane Earl made landfall in the Maritimes on September 5, and the first Black Skimmer report in New Hampshire was on September 12 – exactly seven days later! Skimmers continued to be seen almost daily until September 21, with three late birds on September 29 (see the listings for all reports). These skimmers were the first reported in the state since 2013 and nearly all records of the species are associated with Hurricanes.



*Black Skimmers “skimming” for food. Photo by Len Medlock, 9-15-19, Hampton Harbor, NH.*

Two Wilson’s Storm-Petrels on September 30 were late for a species that typically departs by mid-September. The October 14 pelagic also tallied 135 Northern Fulmar, the highest fall count and second highest overall count for the state. Meanwhile, a count of 10 Manx Shearwaters from September 16 was the highest total since 2011. Cory’s and Great Shearwaters were also present in average numbers throughout the season, while Sooty was expectedly absent.



*One of the many Northern Fulmars on the NH Audubon Seacoast Chapter pelagic trip (see the Field Trip Report). Photo by Benjamin Griffith, 10-14-19.*

### Herons, Raptors, Owls and Woodpeckers

**Least Bitterns** were only observed at their known nesting sites in West Lebanon and Salem with no observations after August 10. The majority of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron reports came from a roost in Seabrook (maximum three individuals), but sightings came in from four other locations on the coast. A Glossy Ibis was photographed at the Mt.



*Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at a roost in Seabrook, NH. Photo by Steve Mirick, 8-18-19.*

Washington Auto Road as the observer was waiting in line at the toll booth – an unusual location for this normally coastal species and the only inland record this fall.

Once very rare in the state, Black Vultures were reported from their now usual locations in Nashua and the lower

Connecticut River Valley, but four reported on November 5 from Hinsdale was notably the highest fall count for the state. A huge flock of 250 Turkey Vultures soaring slowly over a shopping center parking lot in Lebanon is a record high count in eBird and likely also for daily hawkwatch totals as well, according to counts from recent years which have been entered in eBird. Only two Rough-legged Hawks were reported, both in November at the coast. A count of 12 Peregrine Falcons at Pack Monadnock tied the record high count inland and was the highest fall count since 2014. Peregrines are more regular migrants on the coast. See the hawkwatch report by Iain MacLeod for details on the fall raptor migration.

In recent years Snowy Owls have been a regular feature on the coast by the end of November, but this year there was only a single report on November 30 in Hampton. Eastern Screech-Owls are typically restricted to the far southern part of the state, so one in Pittsfield on September 7 was noteworthy.



*Immature Red-headed Woodpecker by Len Medlock, 10-20-19, Epping, NH.*

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are regular in low numbers in fall, but there was a surge of the species in late September, with three counts above five, the first since 2012. Most remarkable were 10 reported from Sandwich on September 26, tying the previous fall high count for the state. **Red-headed Woodpecker** is less than annual in the fall, but three were reported this season, including a bird in Epping that was first reported on October 5 and stayed beyond the end of the season, as well as birds in Hampstead from October 24 through November 1, and Seabrook on November 9.

## Flycatchers through Thrushes



*White-eyed Vireo by Jim Sparrell, 10-1-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

Alder and Willow Flycatchers are challenging to detect as fall migrants, largely because the species are frequently silent and not reliably distinguishable as migrants, but this year there were birds singing into early September, suggesting a slow start to fall migration.

**White-eyed Vireos** are typically rare, but regular fall visitors to the Seacoast Region, but the four reported during the fall season was the highest total since 2011. Most notable was one reported in Sandwich on October 2, far away from the more expected coastal records. Warbling Vireos are remarkably consistent with their disappearance from the state, with the species nearly always departing the last week of September. This year the latest individual was on September 30. A count of 18 Blue-headed Vireos in Sandwich on October 1 was the highest fall count since 2002. Northern Shrike numbers fluctuate from year to year; the six individuals reported this year constitutes a below-average fall for the species.



*Tree Swallows by Steve Mirick, 9-8-19, New Castle, NH.*

A Northern Rough-winged Swallow in Exeter on September 28 is the second latest date on record in eBird although there are several November dates from the 1950s and 1960s (*The Birds of New Hampshire* by Keith and Fox). This species typically leaves the state by early September. Larger flocks of Tree Swallows typically depart the state in mid-September, with occasional single birds reported into November, so 100 reported on the coast on November 22 was truly exceptional.

This flock dwindled by the end of the month, but the 21 reported on November 29 still established a new late date!



*Ruby-crowned Kinglet by Jim Sparrell, 10-25-19, Portsmouth City Park, NH.*

Although a common fall migrant with regular reports of 30 or more birds, a count of 46 Ruby-crowned Kinglet was the highest count since 2006. A Carolina Wren in Errol is the northern-most record for this species in the state. Brown Thrashers typically leave the state by the end of October and the occasional November report is usually from the coast. A single bird in Concord on November 3 was a rare late inland sighting.

Gray-cheeked Thrush is extremely challenging to document in New Hampshire on account of its similarity to the locally-breeding Bicknell's Thrush. This is especially true in fall when birds are less likely to sing than in spring. One in Antrim on September 17 was the first since 2011 and was identified by nocturnal flight call. A late Swainson's Thrush in Concord on November 2 was also identified by its flight call. Wood Thrushes primarily depart the state in early September, but several were reported this fall well into October. At this date, caution is certainly warranted and observers should try their best to get a photo as Hermit Thrush would be the expected species.

## Finches, Sparrows and Chat

Common Redpolls were reported from two locations in mid-November, especially notable for a year not expected to have an irruption of this northern finch. Both Red and White-winged Crossbills experienced a modest invasion in the fall of 2019, with widespread reports from the White Mountains northward. High counts for the species were 18 for Red Crossbill from Lake Umbagog NWR and 24 for White-winged Crossbill from Pittsburg. Red Crossbills were also detected in the southwestern part of the state with the most notable being four in Brookline on September 6.

A **Cassin's Sparrow** photographed on September 21 on Star Island was an exceptional *first state record*. This species has been previously documented only twice in New England

## FALL SEASON

– once in Massachusetts and once in Maine. The species seems to have dispersed more than usual from its southwestern breeding range during the fall of 2019, with several out-of-range birds reported from California and a record from Minnesota as well.



*Grasshopper Sparrow by Jim Sparrell, 11-16-19, Rye Harbor SP, NH.*

A Grasshopper Sparrow lingering until November 21 was the second latest record and the first November record since 2016. Clay-colored Sparrows and Lark Sparrows are rare enough to be noteworthy, but they are recorded in small numbers annually. This fall, seven Clay-colored Sparrows was about average for the species, but three Lark Sparrows was slightly above average. Most noteworthy was a Lark Sparrow photographed well offshore on the October 14 pelagic trip. A **LeConte's Sparrow** from September 24-26 was one of only five records for the state. This bird was in a challenging juvenile plumage, but luckily was identified quickly enough that many observers were able to see it (see the article by Chris McPherson in this issue). Although this species is rarely reported in New Hampshire, it breeds in eastern Quebec and observers in nearby states have had some success locating the species with concerted efforts.



*Yellow-breasted Chat by Leo McKillop, 11-25-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

Yellow-breasted Chats are regular in fall along the coast (and quite rare elsewhere) and this fall they were reported from four different locations there. Birds were present to the end of

November at two sites, Odiorne Point State Park in Rye, and South Mill Pond in Portsmouth. More notable was a single bird reported from Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary in Conway on September 20, the second year in a row the species has been reported from this location!

## Blackbirds and Warblers through Dickcissel

A total of 225 Bobolinks were counted in Hollis, the highest count since 2013. Orchard Oriole is not recorded into August in many years so one reported in Meredith on September 14 was the third latest record for the state. A Baltimore Oriole on October 29 was the latest report for this fall, a month after the main bulk of reports finished. The two largest flocks of Rusty Blackbirds were 90 in Salem and 45 in Penacook, which are both locations where they are known to congregate in the fall.



*Connecticut Warbler by Pam Hunt, 9-17-19, Horseshoe Pond, Concord, NH.*

Although observers coastally noted a slow migration season, warblers were reported in large numbers during migration at several inland sites particularly in the eastern lakes region and southern White Mountains. **Connecticut Warblers** are not reported every fall and frequently only as glimpses when they are. This season five were reported and remarkably three were well photographed! A **Hooded Warbler**, a southern overshoot reported approximately annually in the state, was reported for the third consecutive fall. In contrast, none were reported during the five previous fall seasons!

Louisiana Waterthrush migrates south primarily in July although small numbers have been detected in early August in recent years. One on August 19 and another on August 22 were the latest reports since 2015. An American Redstart on November 10 in Rye is one of only a handful of November reports, most of them in the Portsmouth-Rye area. A Northern Parula on November 21 in Concord was very late especially for an inland location. Most November reports are from the coast

where there were also two sightings this fall. October is late for Bay-breasted Warblers, but four of the ten eBird reports in October are from 2019. This is likely a reflection of the recent increase in this species due to the spruce-budworm outbreak in Canada. A Blackburnian Warbler in Hanover on October 6 was also late since most are gone by the end of September.



Blackpoll Warbler by Susan Wrisley, 10-20-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

Tennessee Warblers seem to be more common in fall at the Freedom Town Forest than everywhere else in the state combined and this year's high count of 31 on September 18 was the highest count since 1976! Magnolia Warblers are fairly common, but two counts of 24, in Freedom on September 6 and in Sandwich on September 26, were the highest totals since 2013. Likewise, Black-throated Green Warbler turned up in high numbers at several inland sites. Counts of 25 on September 5 in Chatham and 23 on September 26 in Sandwich were the highest counts since 2012. There are few inland November reports of this species but there were two on November 5 this season, one in Tilton and one in Gilsum. Breaking the mold of high counts inland, a count of 122 Blackpoll Warblers in Brentwood on September 30 was the highest count since 1962! One on November 6 in Rochester was very late, especially away from the immediate coast where most late records occur.

Two **Blue Grosbeaks** were photographed, one in Conway from October 30-November 1 and the other in Barrington on November 25. This southern species was nearly annual in fall until 2014, but has since been unrecorded until this year. New Hampshire's second



Blue Grosbeak by Rick Steber, 10-31-19, 1785 Trails and Fields, North Conway, NH.

record of **Lazuli Bunting** was photographed coming to a feeder at a private yard in Bow on October 22. The bird was present only briefly. An Indigo Bunting on November 6 in Rye was unusually late. There are fewer than ten November records in eBird. Dickcissels were only reported from 12 locations, the lowest total in at least three years for this scarce but regular fall migrant.

*Reminder*

You can view all the Dickcissel reports in eBird by going to the Explore tab and selecting Species Maps. Once the Dickcissel map appears, you can view just the Fall 2019 reports by selecting the Date tab, clicking the "Aug-Nov" button and selecting "2019." Zoom in to see the New Hampshire reports until you see blue pins, or check off "Show Points Sooner." Click on any pin to see the sighting details

**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.

| Date  | # | Location                            | Observer    |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 10/19 | 1 | Rt. 16, Umbagog NWR                 | L. Charron  |
| 11/09 | 1 | Seabrook Back Dunes                 | K. Wilmarth |
| 11/15 | 1 | Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland | S. Wrisley  |

**Trumpeter Swan**

|       |   |                              |                          |
|-------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 08/05 | 1 | Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia | L. McKillop, J. Pietrzak |
| 11/14 | 1 | Abe Emerson Marsh WS, Candia | C. Duffy                 |



Trumpeter Swan by Diana Stephens, 11-2-19, Candia, NH.

**Tundra Swan**

|       |   |                                    |                              |
|-------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 11/15 | 2 | Upper Suncook Rec. Area, Barnstead | J. Lambert                   |
| 11/16 | 1 | River Rd., Plainfield              | J. MacQueen                  |
| 11/21 | 2 | River Rd., Plainfield              | P. Moynahan                  |
| 11/29 | 2 | Trinity Farms, Orford              | J. MacQueen, J. Hill, et al. |

# FALL SEASON

| <i>Date</i>                      | <i>#</i> | <i>Location</i>                     | <i>Observer</i>        |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Swan sp.</b>                  |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/15                            | 6        | Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland | S. Wrisley             |
| <b>Wood Duck</b>                 |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/17                            | 28       | Potanipo Pond, Brookline            | C. McPherson           |
| <b>Blue-winged Teal</b>          |          |                                     |                        |
| 08/31                            | 39       | Eel Pond, Rye                       | J. Mullen, H. Bauer    |
| <b>American Wigeon</b>           |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/02                            | 217      | Newington Rd., Greenland            | M. Ward, J. Lambert    |
| <b>Canvasback</b>                |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/15                            | 1        | Lake Massabesic, Auburn             | J. Woolf, K. Murphy    |
| <b>Redhead</b>                   |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/25                            | 1        | Post Pond, Lyme                     | W. Scott, P. Sylla     |
| 10/26                            | 4        | Eel Pond, Rye                       | S. & J. Mirick, et al. |
| <b>Ring-necked Duck</b>          |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/20                            | 211      | Bear Brook Pond, Umbagog NWR, Errol | L. Charron             |
| 10/25                            | 146      | Jackman Pond, Tamworth              | T. Vazzano             |
| <b>Tufted Duck</b>               |          |                                     |                        |
| 08/03                            | 1        | Exeter WTP                          | C. Duffy, et al.       |
| <b>Common Eider</b>              |          |                                     |                        |
| 09/29                            | 3500     | Star Is., Isles of Shoals           | E. Masterson, et al.   |
| 10/13                            | 12       | Cherry Pond, Jefferson              | D. Govatski            |
| <b>Harlequin Duck</b>            |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/16                            | 1        | Bicentennial Park, Hampton          | Z. Cornell, S. Mirick  |
| 11/26                            | 1        | Great Is. Common, New Castle        | D. Hubbard             |
| <b>Surf Scoter</b>               |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/13                            | 2        | Cherry Pond, Jefferson              | D. Forsyth             |
| 10/27                            | 1695     | NH coast                            | S. Mirick              |
| <b>White-winged Scoter</b>       |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/13                            | 2        | Cherry Pond, Jefferson              | D. Govatski, et al.    |
| <b>Barrow's Goldeneye</b>        |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/10                            | 1        | Eel Pond, Rye                       | S. Mirick              |
| 11/17                            | 1        | River Rd., Plainfield               | D. Jackson, et al.     |
| 11/23                            | 1        | Notre Dame Bridge, Manchester       | L. McKillop            |
| <b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>         |          |                                     |                        |
| 08/02                            | 5        | Panorama Golf Course, Colebrook     | L. Charron             |
| <b>Horned Grebe</b>              |          |                                     |                        |
| 09/19                            | 3        | Sweat Meadow, Umbagog NWR, Errol    | B. Bolnick             |
| <b>Black-billed Cuckoo</b>       |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/15                            | 1        | Cherry Pond, Jefferson              | A. Kallenbach          |
| <b>Common Nighthawk</b>          |          |                                     |                        |
| 08/27                            | 806      | Capital Commons Garage, Concord     | C. Duffy, C. Guindon   |
| <b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b> |          |                                     |                        |
| 10/08                            | 1        | Bretton Woods, Carroll              | L. Bergum              |
| <b>Virginia Rail</b>             |          |                                     |                        |
| 11/03                            | 1        | Turtle Pond, Concord                | Z. Cornell, R. Suomala |

| <i>Date</i>             | <i>#</i> | <i>Location</i>                             | <i>Observer</i>        |
|-------------------------|----------|---|------------------------|
| <b>Common Gallinule</b> |          |   |                        |
| 10/10                   | 1        | World End Pond, Salem                       | K. Wilmarth            |
| <b>Sandhill Crane</b>   |          |   |                        |
| 08/03                   | 2        | Plains Rd., Monroe                          | K. Towler, J. Sparrell |
| 09/01                   | 2        | Rt. 156, Nottingham                         | K. Prazar              |
| 11/02                   | 22       | Rt. 13, Holderness                          | G. & M. Meeh           |
| <b>American Avocet</b>  |          |   |                        |
| 08/17                   | 1        | Rye Harbor                                  | C. Duffy, et al.       |
| 08/22                   | 2        | Church St. water tower parking lot, Hampton | L. Beckman, P. Benham  |



*American Avocet by Kyle Wilmarth, 8-18-19, Rye Harbor, NH.*

|                               |    |                                    |   |
|-------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>American Oystercatcher</b> |    |                                    |   |
| 09/28                         | 1  | Star Is., Isles of Shoals          | E. Masterson, et al.                          |
| <b>American Golden-Plover</b> |    |                                    |   |
| 09/22                         | 1  | Mt. Moosilauke, Benton             | E. Marie, J. MacQueen                         |
| 09/29                         | 4  | Star Is., Isles of Shoals          | E. Masterson, et al.                          |
| 10/01                         | 1  | Copps Pond WMA, Tuftonboro         | G. & A. Robbins                               |
| 10/12                         | 1  | Charlestown WTP                    | D. Jackson                                    |
| <b>Semipalmated Plover</b>    |    |                                    |   |
| 08/16                         | 6  | Surry Mountain L., Surry           | S. Lamonde                                    |
| 11/30                         | 1  | Rye Harbor SP                      | S. Bennett, B. Carlson, S. Wrisley, M. Watson |
| <b>Upland Sandpiper</b>       |    |                                    |   |
| 09/22                         | 1  | Pease Golf Course, Portsmouth      | S. Mirick                                     |
| <b>Hudsonian Godwit</b>       |    |                                    |   |
| 09/14                         | 1  | Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook | S. & J. Mirick, et al.                        |
| <b>Marbled Godwit</b>         |    |                                    |   |
| 08/10                         | 1  | Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook | S. Wrisley, et al.                            |
| <b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>        |    |                                    |   |
| 11/02                         | 1  | Meadow Pond, Hampton               | S. Mirick, H. Bauer                           |
| 11/04                         | 1  | Meadow Pond, Hampton               | H. Bauer                                      |
| <b>Sanderling</b>             |    |                                    |   |
| 11/13                         | 1  | Wilson Pond, Swanzey               | S. Lamonde, S. Jaffe                          |
| <b>Dunlin</b>                 |    |                                    |   |
| 11/10                         | 1  | Richmond Conservation Land, Orford | W. Scott                                      |
| <b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b> |    |                                    |   |
| 08/24                         | 16 | NH coast                           | S. Mirick                                     |
| <b>Western Sandpiper</b>      |    |                                    |   |
| 09/01                         | 9  | NH coast                           | S. Mirick                                     |

| Date                         | # | Location              | Observer  |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Long-billed Dowitcher</b> |   |                       |   |
| 08/10                        | 1 | Hampton Salt Marsh CA | S. Mirick, R. Suomala,<br>Z. Cornell, L. McKillop, et al. |
| 08/31                        | 1 | Hampton Salt Marsh CA | C. Duffy  |
| 10/23                        | 2 | Hampton Salt Marsh CA | L. McKillop   |
| 10/26                        | 2 | Meadow Pond, Hampton  | S. Mirick,<br>H. Bauer, J. Maher                          |
| 11/07                        | 1 | Meadow Pond, Hampton  | S.& D. Stoddard   |



Long-billed Dowitcher adult (right) with Short-billed Dowitcher. Photo by Steve Mirick, 8-10-19, Hampton, NH.

**Red Phalarope**

|       |     |                     |   |
|-------|-----|---------------------|---|
| 10/14 | 268 | offshore waters, NH | S. Mirick,<br>B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT |
|-------|-----|---------------------|---|

**Willet - Western subsp.**

|       |   |                                  |                        |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 10/26 | 1 | saltmarsh s. of Odiorne Pt., Rye | L. McKillop, S. Mirick |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|

**Pomarine Jaeger**

|       |   |                     |  |
|-------|---|---------------------|--|
| 08/30 | 1 | Jeffreys Ledge, NH  | L. McKillop,<br>J. Sparrell, D. Jackson            |
| 10/14 | 2 | offshore waters, NH | S. Mirick,<br>B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT            |
| 10/25 | 1 | offshore waters, NH | Z. Cornell, S. Wrisley,<br>L. McKillop, S. Bennett |

**Jaeger sp.**

|       |    |          |           |
|-------|----|----------|-----------|
| 08/17 | 12 | NH coast | S. Mirick |
|-------|----|----------|-----------|

**Dovekie**

|       |     |                     |                         |
|-------|-----|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 10/14 | 1   | offshore waters, NH | J. Lambert, B. Griffith |
| 10/20 | 10  | offshore waters, NH | S. Wong                 |
| 11/30 | 270 | Jeffreys Ledge, NH  | L. McKillop             |

**Atlantic Puffin**

|       |   |                     |   |
|-------|---|---------------------|---|
| 10/14 | 7 | offshore waters, NH | S. Mirick,<br>B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT |
|-------|---|---------------------|---|

**Black-legged Kittiwake**

|       |   |                                     |             |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 10/18 | 1 | Front Park, Lake Massabesic, Auburn | L. McKillop |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|

**Little Gull**

|       |   |                     |   |
|-------|---|---------------------|---|
| 09/28 | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye | S. Mirick, et al.                       |
| 10/05 | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye | S.& J. Mirick, Seacoast CFT             |
| 10/14 | 1 | offshore waters, NH | S. Mirick,<br>B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT |

**Laughing Gull**

|       |    |                      |           |
|-------|----|----------------------|-----------|
| 08/20 | 61 | Plaice Cove, Hampton | S. Mirick |
|-------|----|----------------------|-----------|

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

|       |    |          |                        |
|-------|----|----------|------------------------|
| 09/14 | 20 | NH coast | B. Griffith, R. Prieto |
|-------|----|----------|------------------------|

| Date                    | #  | Location             | Observer   |
|-------------------------|----|----------------------|--|
| <b>Least Tern</b>       |    |                      |  |
| 08/29                   | 2  | Meadow Pond, Hampton | H. Bauer   |
| <b>Gull-billed Tern</b> |    |                      |  |
| 09/28                   | 1  | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye  | J.& P. Low, J. Parrot-Willis,<br>S. Wong, J. Barcus, S.& D. Stoddard |
| <b>Caspian Tern</b>     |    |                      |  |
| 09/14                   | 16 | NH coast             | S. Mirick  |

**Black Tern**

|       |   |                   |                   |
|-------|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| 08/19 | 2 | Akers Pond, Errol | G.& D. Dionne     |
| 09/03 | 1 | Jeffreys Ledge    | S. Mirick, et al. |



Black Tern by Leo McKillop, 9-3-19, offshore waters, NH.

**Arctic Tern**

|       |   |                |                     |
|-------|---|----------------|---------------------|
| 08/18 | 1 | Hampton Harbor | J. Lambert, M. Ward |
|-------|---|----------------|---------------------|

**Forster's Tern**

|       |   |          |           |
|-------|---|----------|-----------|
| 09/14 | 8 | NH coast | S. Mirick |
|-------|---|----------|-----------|

**Black Skimmer**

|       |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|
| 09/14 | 2 | Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook          | S.& J. Mirick, Z. Cornell, R. Suomala, et al. |
| 09/15 | 3 | Hampton Harbor                              | L.& L. Medlock, S.& J. Mirick                 |
| 09/15 | 2 | Rye Harbor SP                               | J. Sparrell, K. Towler, L. McKillop           |
| 09/17 | 1 | Rye Harbor SP                               | L. McKillop                                   |
| 09/18 | 1 | Little Boars Head, N. Hampton               | M. Harvey                                     |
| 09/19 | 1 | Church St. water tower parking lot, Hampton | C. Duffy                                      |
| 09/19 | 1 | Hampton Salt Marsh CA                       | J. Maher                                      |
| 09/19 | 1 | Sawyers Beach, Rye                          | A. Parsons                                    |
| 09/20 | 1 | Jeness Beach, Rye                           | J. Butler                                     |
| 09/21 | 3 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye                         | L. Medlock, et al.                            |
| 09/29 | 3 | Rye Harbor SP                               | L. McKillop, J. Mirick,                       |

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel**

|       |   |                     |          |
|-------|---|---------------------|----------|
| 09/30 | 2 | offshore waters, NH | J. Maher |
|-------|---|---------------------|----------|

**Northern Fulmar**

|       |     |                     |             |
|-------|-----|---------------------|-------------|
| 10/14 | 135 | offshore waters, NH | B. Griffith |
|-------|-----|---------------------|-------------|

**Manx Shearwater**

|       |    |                     |           |
|-------|----|---------------------|-----------|
| 09/16 | 10 | offshore waters, NH | M. Harvey |
|-------|----|---------------------|-----------|

**Least Bittern**

|       |   |  |                    |
|-------|---|--|--------------------|
| 08/11 | 2 | Cranberry Pond wetlands, Rt. 12A, W. Lebanon | J. Sparrell        |
| 08/12 | 1 | World End Pond, Salem                        | P. Hunt, U. Dienes |

# FALL SEASON

*Date # Location Observer*

## Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

08/09 2 salt marshes s. of Rye Harbor S. Bennett, et al.  
 08/13 1 North Mill Pond, Portsmouth L. Grimes  
 08/17 1 Little River saltmarsh, N. Hampton M. Padfield  
 08/19 3 Rt. 1A across from Chelmsford St., Seabrook L. Clarfeld  
 08/31 1 Wentworth By The Sea Marina, New Castle  
 K. Monahan

## Glossy Ibis

08/08 1 Mt. Washington Auto Road A. Winters, J. Pietrzak

## Black Vulture

08/24 2 Woodward Rd., Westmoreland R. Burnett  
 09/25 3 Alder Dr., Nashua T. Murray  
 11/05 4 Hinsdale C. Letendre

## Turkey Vulture

08/16 250 Upper Valley Plaza, N. Plainfield Rd., Lebanon S. Reed

## Rough-legged Hawk

11/13 1 Rt. 286 pools, Seabrook S. Wrisley, S. Bennett  
 11/16 1 Portsmouth Int'l. Airport, Short St. J. Maher

## Eastern Screech-Owl

09/07 1 Tilton Hill Rd., Pittsfield G. Perkins

## Snowy Owl

11/30 1 Rt. 1A, Hampton B. Isaacs

## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

08/26 6 The Glen on First Connecticut Lake, Pittsburg  
 R. Quinn  
 09/26 10 Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich T. Vazzano  
 10/05 7 Odiorne Point SP, Rye M. Wilson

## Red-headed Woodpecker

10/05 1 Dimond Hill Rd., Epping G. Tillman, et al.  
 10/24 1 Sawmill Swamp, Hampstead A. Abraham  
 11/09 1 Seabrook Back Dunes K. Wilmarth

## Peregrine Falcon

09/25 12 Pack Monadnock RO PMRO

## White-eyed Vireo

09/28 1 Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye S. & J. Mirick, et al.  
 10/02 1 Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich T. Vazzano  
 11/02 1 Island Path CA, Hampton M. Ward, J. Lambert  
 11/07 1 Little R. saltmarsh, N. Hampton J. Maher

## Blue-headed Vireo

10/01 18 Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich  
 T. Vazzano, R. Ridgely

## Warbling Vireo

09/30 1 Deer Hill WMA, Brentwood S. & J. Mirick

## Northern Shrike

11/07 1 Warren Rd., Barrington W. Ward  
 11/10 1 Great Bay NWR, Newington K. Towler, J. Sparrell  
 11/17 1 Errol L. Charron  
 11/23 1 Styles Bridges Hgw., Sanbornton E. Johnson  
 11/24 1 Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye K. Wilmarth  
 11/26 1 Rt. 93, Exit 16, Concord P. Hunt



*Warbling Vireo by Steve Mirick, 9-30-19, Brentwood, NH.*

*Date # Location Observer*

## Northern Rough-winged Swallow

09/28 1 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis S. Wrisley, S. Lemire

## Tree Swallow

11/22 100 Seabrook Back Dunes S. Mirick  
 11/29 21 Seabrook Back Dunes S. Mirick

## Ruby-crowned Kinglet

10/21 46 Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich T. Vazzano

## Carolina Wren

11/24 1 Tracy Dr., Errol L. Charron

## Brown Thrasher

11/03 1 USFWS Karner Blue easement, Concord P. Hunt

## Gray-cheeked Thrush

09/17 1 Antrim Rd., Antrim E. Masterson

## Swainson's Thrush

11/02 1 Murray Farms, Penacook P. Hunt, U. Dienes

## Wood Thrush

10/03 2 Autumn Ln., Nottingham R. Prieto  
 10/10 3 Tin Mountain Conservation Ctr., Conway J. Longo  
 10/24 2 Ashuelot River Park, Keene J. Palmer, K. Snyder, et al.

## Common Redpoll

11/17 3 Tracy Dr., Errol L. Charron  
 11/18 5 Smoky Camp Brook, Errol L. Charron

## Red Crossbill

09/06 4 Oak Hill Rd., Brookline C. McPherson  
 11/07 18 Umbagog NWR, Rt. 16 D. & G. Dionne

## White-winged Crossbill

09/03 24 East Inlet, Pittsburg J. Lafley

## Cassin's Sparrow

09/21 1 Star Is., Isles of Shoals E. Masterson, et al.

## Grasshopper Sparrow

11/21 1 Rye Harbor SP S. Wrisley, S. Bennett

## Clay-colored Sparrow

09/12 1 Great Bay Farm, Greenland S. Mirick  
 09/20 1 Star Is., Isles of Shoals E. Masterson, et al.



| Date  | # | Location                            | Observer   |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 09/21 | 1 | Odiorne Point SP, Rye               | J. Maher   |
| 09/22 | 1 | Woodridge Park, Durham              | K. Dorsey  |
| 10/08 | 1 | Birch St. Community Garden, Concord | D. Jackson |
| 10/19 | 1 | Spinney Ln., Durham                 | R. Prieto  |
| 11/23 | 1 | Haven Ln., Exeter                   | L. Medlock |

| Date                     | # | Location               | Observer              |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 09/28                    | 1 | Woodridge Park, Durham | K. Dorsey             |
| <b>Hooded Warbler</b>    |   |                        |                       |
| 08/25                    | 1 | Penacook survey route  | P. Hunt               |
| <b>American Redstart</b> |   |                        |                       |
| 11/10                    | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye    | J. Lambert, S. Mirick |



Lark Sparrow by Ben Griffith, 10-14-19, offshore waters, NH.

**Lark Sparrow**

|       |   |                       |                                      |
|-------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 09/14 | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye   | P. Hunt, et al.                      |
| 09/25 | 1 | Tullando Farm, Orford | W. Scott                             |
| 10/14 | 1 | Offshore waters, NH   | S. Mirick, B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT |

**LeConte's Sparrow**

|       |   |                          |              |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--------------|
| 09/24 | 1 | Woodmont Orchard, Hollis | C. McPherson |
|-------|---|--------------------------|--------------|

**Yellow-breasted Chat**

|       |   |                             |                          |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 09/20 | 1 | Dahl WS, Conway             | W. Broussard             |
| 09/22 | 1 | Odiorne Point SP, Rye       | R. Suomala, Z. Cornell   |
| 09/29 | 1 | Star Is., Isles of Shoals   | R. Suomala, C. McPherson |
| 10/03 | 1 | South Mill Pond, Portsmouth | J. Sparrell              |
| 11/23 | 1 | Fort Stark, New Castle      | S.& J. Mirick            |

**Bobolink**

|       |     |                          |              |
|-------|-----|--------------------------|--------------|
| 08/23 | 225 | Woodmont Orchard, Hollis | C. McPherson |
|-------|-----|--------------------------|--------------|

**Orchard Oriole**

|       |   |  |            |
|-------|---|--|------------|
| 09/14 | 1 | Squam Lakes Natural Science Ctr., Holderness | M. Jarrett |
|-------|---|--|------------|

**Baltimore Oriole**

|       |   |                    |             |
|-------|---|--------------------|-------------|
| 10/29 | 1 | Karen Rd., Windham | D. Durocher |
|-------|---|--------------------|-------------|

**Rusty Blackbird**

|       |    |                         |             |
|-------|----|-------------------------|-------------|
| 10/10 | 90 | World End Pond, Salem   | K. Wilmarth |
| 10/19 | 45 | Morrills Farm, Penacook | P. Hunt     |

**Louisiana Waterthrush**

|       |   |                            |            |
|-------|---|----------------------------|------------|
| 08/19 | 1 | Woodward Rd., Westmoreland | R. Burnett |
| 08/22 | 1 | Wilton Rd., Peterborough   | H. Siener  |

**Tennessee Warbler**

|       |    |                     |                |
|-------|----|---------------------|----------------|
| 09/18 | 31 | Freedom Town Forest | G.& A. Robbins |
|-------|----|---------------------|----------------|

**Connecticut Warbler**

|       |   |                           |                        |
|-------|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 09/17 | 1 | Horseshoe Pond, Concord   | P. Hunt                |
| 09/21 | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye       | J. Lambert             |
| 09/23 | 1 | Freedom Town Forest       | G.& A. Robbins         |
| 09/27 | 1 | Great Bay Farm, Greenland | J. Sparrell, S. Mirick |



Northern Parula by Leo McKillop, 11-2-19, Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye, NH.

**Northern Parula**

|       |   |                            |             |
|-------|---|----------------------------|-------------|
| 11/02 | 1 | Bicentennial Park, Hampton | S. Mirick   |
| 11/02 | 1 | Odiorne Pt. SP, Rye        | L. McKillop |
| 11/21 | 1 | Noyes St., Concord         | R. Suomala  |

**Magnolia Warbler**

|       |    |                             |                |
|-------|----|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 09/06 | 24 | Freedom Town Forest         | G.& A. Robbins |
| 09/26 | 24 | Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich | T. Vazzano     |

**Bay-breasted Warbler**

|       |   |                              |                    |
|-------|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 10/01 | 1 | Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich  | T. Vazzano         |
| 10/04 | 1 | Dahl WS, Conway              | R. Steber, C. Nims |
| 10/06 | 1 | Temple Mt. State Reservation | C. Caron           |
| 10/08 | 1 | Dahl WS, Conway              | J. Maher           |

**Blackburnian Warbler**

|       |   |                            |            |
|-------|---|----------------------------|------------|
| 10/06 | 1 | Dartmouth College, Hanover | W. Johnson |
|-------|---|----------------------------|------------|

**Blackpoll Warbler**

|       |     |                          |               |
|-------|-----|--------------------------|---------------|
| 09/30 | 122 | Deer Hill WMA, Brentwood | S.& J. Mirick |
| 11/06 | 1   | Broad St., Rochester     | S. Laueremann |

**Black-throated Green Warbler**

|       |    |                                      |            |
|-------|----|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 09/05 | 25 | Cold River Camp, AMC Rd., Chatham N. | Houlihan   |
| 09/26 | 23 | Diamond Ledge Rd., Sandwich          | T. Vazzano |
| 11/05 | 1  | Hammond Hollow Rd., Gilsum           | M. Wright  |
| 11/05 | 1  | Calef Hill Rd., Tilton               | J. Landry  |

**Blue Grosbeak**

|       |   |                                     |                         |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 10/30 | 1 | 1785 Inn trails & fields, N. Conway | W. Broussard, R. Steber |
| 11/25 | 1 | Ramsdell Rd., Barrington            | C. Turner               |

**Lazuli Bunting**

|       |   |                  |               |
|-------|---|------------------|---------------|
| 10/22 | 1 | Shaw Divide, Bow | S. Oosterveen |
|-------|---|------------------|---------------|

**Indigo Bunting**

|       |   |                |            |
|-------|---|----------------|------------|
| 11/06 | 1 | Goss Farm, Rye | D. Hubbard |
|-------|---|----------------|------------|

# Hurricane Dorian

by Stephen R. Mirick

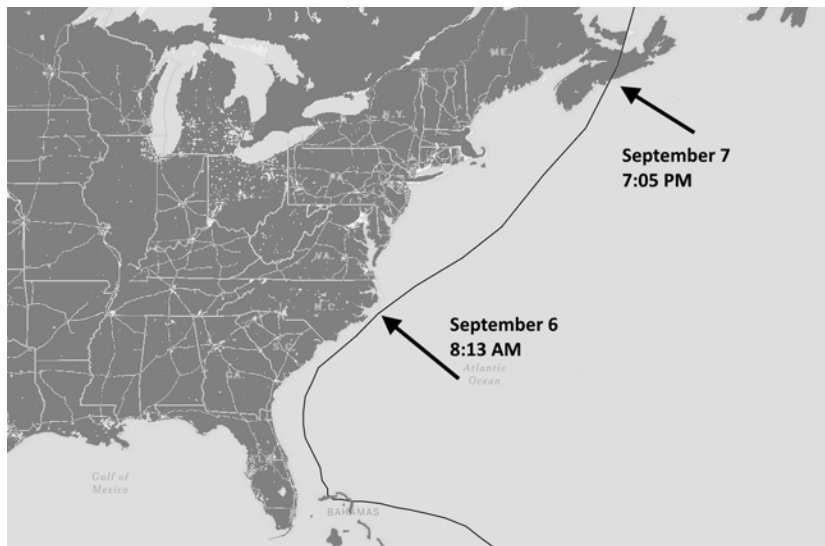


Figure 1. The track of Hurricane Dorian, 2019. Created by Steve Mirick.

Hurricanes can have a major impact on birds as strong storms can destroy breeding habitat and kill tremendous numbers of birds. Some of New Hampshire's most notable bird rarities are also the direct result of hurricanes. The State's only record of Black-capped Petrel, a rare bird of tropical oceans, came from Chichester, 40 miles from the ocean. The bird was carried northward and inland by an unnamed hurricane in August 1893 when it was found alive, but ultimately died. More recently, the state's only record for White-tailed Tropicbird came from Claremont, 85 miles from the coast, following a hurricane in 2011. This tropical ocean bird was carried northward and inland by Hurricane Irene and, like the petrel, was found alive, but ultimately perished. One of the major modes of transport for these birds appears to come from being carried along within the eye of the hurricane. Birds somehow get picked up and become entrapped by the eye where the winds are relatively calm. They can't land, or escape the eye, so they get carried along within the eye as the hurricane moves. Sometimes traveling for several days, birds just fly around within the eye until the hurricane makes landfall where the eye "breaks apart" and frees the birds. These birds are often exhausted and weak from flying for days without food. Many likely die.

During September 2019, Hurricane Dorian was a major Category 5 hurricane that had a devastating impact on humans, but it also had a huge impact on birds. Although it passed well east of New Hampshire, it also resulted in bird sightings along our coastline.

Dorian first formed in the western Atlantic as a tropical storm on August 24; however, it worked its way northwestward and was upgraded to a hurricane on August

28. It approached the Bahamas and exploded into a Category 5 hurricane in just four days. It made landfall on the Abaco Islands of the Bahamas on September 1 with sustained winds of 185 mph, making it the strongest hurricane to ever hit these islands and one of the strongest on record for the Atlantic Ocean. It stalled over the islands for a day or two without losing much intensity, killing 70 people and causing an estimated \$3.4 billion in damages. The storm also had devastating impacts on the endemic species of birds native to this area including the Abaco Parrot and the Bahama Swallow. It may also have been the "final straw" leading to extinction of the critically endangered Bahama Nuthatch.

After hitting the Bahamas, Hurricane Dorian lost some strength and then worked its way northward and then northeastward following the southeastern US coastline. The storm started accelerating very quickly as it started to head offshore, **but not before grazing the Outer Banks of North Carolina on September 6** (Figure 1). This is significant because, when it hit the shoreline of North Carolina, it appears the eye of the Hurricane "picked up" and transported a tremendous number of coastal birds. These birds were then carried northward very quickly over the next day or two until the eye broke apart when it made landfall near Halifax, Nova Scotia, roughly 1,000 miles to the north! As if using some sort of futuristic transporter, these birds of the southeastern US coastline found themselves in Nova Scotia in just over 24 hours!

Fortunately, the event transported them so fast, that a lot of the birds were still relatively healthy, and since they had genetic "GPS" in their brains, they gradually found their way southward, following the coastline back to where they were before the storm. And that's where it got interesting for New Hampshire birders!

The hurricane made landfall in Nova Scotia on September 7 as an extratropical cyclone. Nova Scotia birders were out in force over the next few days to see what arrived and they found the coastline "covered" with southern birds. The area most impacted was a 20 to 30 mile strip of southern shoreline near and east of Halifax. Several species of coastal gulls and terns were carried north by the storm. Over the next few weeks, high counts were recorded from many locations near Halifax. High reports recorded in eBird included 325 Laughing Gulls, 250 Black Skimmers, 30 Black Terns, 25 Forster's Terns, nine Gull-billed Terns, and four Royal Terns. No doubt the rarest report from Nova Scotia came with the finding of two dead White-faced Storm-Petrels, inland, on Cape Breton Island on September 12.

Many birds probably perished during the storm; however,

many also survived and it's likely that most of these birds eventually flew southward, offshore and unseen to birders as they returned to their normal home ranges. Fortunately, however, many also flew south along the immediate shoreline and large numbers of southern birds were seen by birders from a variety of New England locations in the following weeks.



*The first Black Skimmers to appear in New Hampshire, 9-14-19. Photo by Christopher McPherson, Hampton Harbor, NH.*

The impact to New Hampshire sightings involved mostly Black Skimmers. The first birds occurred on September 14 with at least two skimmers noted along the coast. For seven of the next eight days, Black Skimmers were a daily occurrence on the seacoast and the last skimmers were reported on September 29. All of the reports were of one to three birds; however, at least five skimmers were estimated to be along the coast on September 15. Massachusetts also had numerous sightings including 65 Black Skimmers on September 23 at Crane Beach in Ipswich.

Although Black Skimmers were the most numerous species found by New Hampshire birders, the rarest sighting occurred when a Gull-billed Tern, only the third record for New Hampshire, decided to roost in the rocks for an afternoon on September 28 at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. Additional sightings which may be the result of Hurricane Dorian include 16 Caspian Terns and eight Forster's Terns moving south on September 14. Details on these sightings are in the Fall 2019 listing of sighting details at the end of the season summary.

Interestingly, a similar hurricane impacted New Hampshire's bird sightings in a very similar way following Hurricane Earl in 2010. That hurricane passed 85 miles off the coast of North Carolina on September 3, 2010 and made landfall near Halifax, Nova Scotia on September 4, 2010. Although the eye didn't pass over the Outer Banks, it still managed to quickly transport large numbers of sea birds, especially Black Skimmers. As with Hurricane Dorian, many of these Black Skimmers were recorded working their way

south along the New Hampshire coast line during the next month.

### **Data Sources and References**

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## **Along Came a Sparrow...**

*by Chris McPherson*



*Le Conte's Sparrow by Christopher McPherson, 9-24-19, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH.*

Like most birders, I live for spring and fall migration, especially at my favorite local patch. The fall migration at Woodmont Orchard in Hollis, NH is a great opportunity to see lots of sparrows, so it's a location I bird frequently starting in late August and continuing through October. Over the eight weeks I focus on the orchard, I see the results of the sparrow migration unfold; some species increase while others wane. I'm motivated by the prospect of encountering something special like a late Grasshopper Sparrow or Clay-colored Sparrow. The orchard is a big place, so it allows me to get my exercise and collect myself from everything else in life.

On one September day, I set out again, as I always do, trying to figure out where in the orchard to go. While standing in the middle of the main farm road, a small

sparrow flew right in front of me and landed thirty feet away, remaining in view long enough for pictures. That's odd I thought. This sparrow kind of looks like a LeConte's, but it's a mess. Looks like worn juvenile plumage? I sent a text with a picture to another New Hampshire birder "*LeConte's, Grasshopper or other...*" and then checked my birding apps. Yah, sure seems like LeConte's, then I get a text, "*I'm thinking molting juvenile Grasshopper...*". Darn, just doesn't add up. The bill seems too small and this bird has a forehead! I finally got around to really studying the photographs and looking through my field guides, when I found a tidbit indicating that LeConte's Sparrows occasionally migrate in juvenile plumage (*A Guide to the Identification and Natural History of The Sparrows of the United States and Canada* by J. Rising).

At this point, I was fairly certain of the identification, but I needed consensus, so my strategy was to enter the sighting in eBird and add a bunch of pictures and let the eBird community confirm the identification. I shut off my phone and went to bed early that night. I knew the sparrow identification would eventually work itself out. When I turned my phone back on the next morning, there were multiple text messages and emails. The consensus was growing that this was indeed a LeConte's Sparrow in juvenile plumage. By mid-morning, the sighting had been confirmed and the LeConte's Sparrow had been relocated near where it had found me the day before. Over the next few days, the sparrow was found by those few who wandered out to the orchard to search. The LeConte's Sparrow was the seventeenth member of the *Emberizidae* (sparrow) Family I've seen at Woodmont Orchard!

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## Cassin's Sparrow on Star Island

by Eric Masterson

At approximately 9:00 am Saturday morning, I flushed an adult Horned Lark from the rocks on the southern tip of Star Island, a new bird for the weekend. I was leading a group of birders on a morning walk during the first 2019 weekend (9/20-22) of the now annual Star Island fall birding weekends. Thanks to persistent high pressure, slack winds, and clear skies, the island had been fairly quiet, not dead, but fairly quiet. I was relaxing into the acceptance of an uneventful weekend, but as this day would confirm, complacency doesn't work on Star Island.

Within a couple of seconds of flushing the lark, I spied a second bird scratching amongst the weeds about 50 yards distant. I was intrigued enough to move closer, as I could barely discern basic details, but it quickly disappeared

into the vegetation. Had I been on my own, I would have given chase, but I figured that the group probably wasn't interested in spending the next hour clambering over rocks and thrashing through poison ivy to try and nail down an unspecified little brown job.



*Cassin's Sparrow* by Eric Masterson, 9-21-19, Star Island, Isles of Shoals, NH.

Serious birders live in fear of the ones that get away, especially on vagrant traps like Star Island. Absent a conclusive identification, these festering creatures linger like the undead, trapped for eternity in the subconscious, ready to be recycled with each triggering memory. I needed a narrative that eliminated the possibility and I had the ingredients to construct a logical argument that would spare me a weekend of "what ifs." At half the distance of a football field, the bird seemed to have the scalloped mantle of a young lark and also the right posture and behavior. Having just seen a Horned Lark moments earlier and never immune to a bit of circular logic, I surmised that the earlier bird was mom or dad. Using this reasoning, I tried to put the bird out of my mind, but I never quite did. I ran into New Hampshire birder Will Broussard later that afternoon while en route to prepare for a slideshow during the afternoon lull and hollered over.

"Hey Will, if you are birding anyway, why not cruise the western shoreline of the island at the edge of the scrub line. I've had some good birds there before, rare sparrows and so forth, plus, it's too risky to bring the group clambering over those boulders and rocks."

Later that afternoon, I ran into Will on his return, and he thanked me for the suggestion. He had run the shoreline route and found a Vesper Sparrow on the southwest corner. Glad for Will's help and grateful that he had resolved the "Horned Lark," I added it to the list and we both went off in pursuit. Uncommon anywhere in New Hampshire, there is only a single record of Vesper Sparrow for the island. As we approached the location, a small bird flushed from the

scrub and flew about a dozen yards before disappearing back into the brush. It was the bird and clearly not a Horned Lark. This pattern would repeat for the next two hours, during which time, it became apparent that the bird was uncommonly furtive for a Vesper Sparrow, with behavior that would make the secretive Saltmarsh Sparrow proud. It is an article of faith that the more furtive and obscure a bird, the more likely that it is a rarity. There might not be much truth to this, but it feels true in places like Star Island and is the reason that birders will chase dingy little brown jobs past the point of reason. It is why I missed dinner to pursue this bird through thickets of poison ivy until dark.

Restricted to flight views, I was intent on seeing the white outer tail feathers to get some measure of satisfaction that it was a Vesper Sparrow. Then, we caught a break and flushed the bird onto the rocks, where it posed for about a minute. I spent the time documenting it with photographs rather than actually looking at it, as I felt that this would be the only opportunity I would get. Then, it disappeared and the pattern resumed. Having glimpsed white on the outer tail feathers several times as it darted into cover, I returned to a cold dinner somewhat reassured that it was a Vesper, until I went back to my room to upload the day's sightings. The photos, enlarged on my computer screen, quickly determined that we had an issue.

Until that day on Star Island, I had never seen Cassin's Sparrow. I have a working knowledge of most rarities that might be expected to show up on the East Coast, but Cassin's Sparrow never made it onto my list of hypotheticals, despite a recent report from Cape Cod, MA. There are just too few records east of the Mississippi. I vaguely knew it existed on the pages of my field guides, but that was about it. The beauty of birding, however, is that you only need to know when a bird is not common to know that it is rare. I knew this was not common and, after some research, I came to the conclusion that it was a Cassin's Sparrow, new to New Hampshire and one of only a handful of records on the East Coast.

I reached out to experts with experience in birds of the southwestern US, and then tried to get some sleep. Six fitful hours later, I got up and checked my emails, no messages. I got dressed and headed out at dawn to determine whether the bird had remained overnight. En route, I saw a Dickcissel under the bird feeders, a holdover from the day before. Good news! If the Dickcissel remained, maybe the sparrow did too! But I couldn't find it, in the morning or anytime throughout the rest of the day. It had departed and its fate would rest on a few lousy pictures. I returned and communicated my suspicions to Will and set about my day, anxious for word. Shortly after 10:00 am, I received an email from Louis Bevier, a well-known birder with expertise in the birds of Cassin's country and to whom I had sent pictures. I had the

corroboration I was hoping for, New Hampshire's first-state record of Cassin's Sparrow, the 20th species of Nearctic sparrow sighted on Star Island and a bird that almost got away. The wait for my first island Vesper Sparrow continues.

### Postscript

Cassin's Sparrow is prone to dispersal events, which take the species outside its core range to settle in areas with episodically suitable conditions. Desert rains created suitably lush growth in 2019 and Louis reported that there was a major incursion of the species into California. These events are often associated with vagrancy on a wider scale, so the New Hampshire occurrence has context.

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## Finding a Marbled Godwit

by Susan Wrisley



*Marbled Godwit by Susan Wrisley, 8-10-19, Hampton Harbor, NH*

While scoping for birds, I was excited to find a Marbled Godwit on the mudflats near Eastman's (August 10, 2019). I got word out that the bird was there, then decided to try kayaking out to the mudflats in the hopes of getting something better than a blurry documentation photo; however, the bird had other ideas and flew off while I was carrying my kayak to the water. Despite gusty winds and gathering rain clouds, I decided to search for it anyway, but once I was on the water I realized I couldn't see past the tall marsh grass and even the slightest rise of a sandbar was enough to block my view.

Meanwhile, Becky Suomala and Zeke Cornell had arrived at the Yankee Fisherman's Coop and they could see both me and the godwit. Apparently, I was nowhere near the bird, so Becky called me on my cell phone and she and Zeke started giving me directions while I paddled. Her directions went something like this:

"You're far away from the godwit, you need to keep going."

Keep paddling.”

“No, not there, you need to keep going.”

“You’re getting closer. Almost there.”

“You should see a little rivulet on your left. Yes! Stop there and get out.”

I beached my kayak where Becky told me to, then walked up a slight rise. “It’s between you and the guy in the white shirt” said Becky. I couldn’t see anyone in a white shirt or otherwise. “The bird should be right in front of you!”

“Right in front of me?” Where? Our perspectives were entirely different. The bird was nowhere near me! I plodded forward until I could finally see it. Success!!! I got a few shots of the godwit, then paddled back to shore as fast as I could while rain started coming down. It was a great combined effort, and GPS can’t beat Becky and Zeke when it comes to navigating to a bird!

*fledgling female (the latter constantly fluttering her wings and continuously making begging sounds while being fed an endless stream of sunflower seeds by her dad). This pair, still sitting side by side (facing different directions), were now, like the Downy, stone cold still. I got up to look for a raptor, and there was a Sharp-shinned Hawk, perched on a nearby pine and looking down at the apple tree where our feeding station is located. I was impressed by the fact that the hitherto relentlessly begging fledgling, somehow knew it was time to be motionless. At such a perilous moment, how is that information conveyed to a young bird?*

*After a minute or two, the Sharpie moved to the outer reaches of its branch, waited and then launched toward the apple tree. Downy and cardinals, as well as a few goldfinches, instantly scattered; this time, the Sharpie came up empty-taloned.*

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## Backyard Birder

### Birds “Frozen” on Feeder

by Diana Stephens and Rebecca Suomala



*A Cooper's Hawk perched just above a feeder, watching for movement. Photo by Rebecca Suomala, Concord, NH.*

Catherine Fisher posted the following observation to the NHBirds email list on 9/10/19:

*On Allen's Ave. this morning, my husband commented on a Downy Woodpecker that looked, as he put it, "glued to the suet." When I looked up, the Downy was, indeed, frozen on the suet feeder; even more interesting were two cardinals I'd been watching a few minutes earlier: an adult male and*

Hawks are often attracted to bird feeders, especially those that feed primarily on small birds. Songbirds make up about 90% of a Sharp-shinned Hawk's diet. They hunt mostly by perching inside foliage and waiting for small birds to approach or by approaching through dense cover, then bursting forth in fast flight. The Cooper's Hawk diet is also primarily small to medium-sized birds. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks are the two hawk species most often seen at feeders. These hawks are attracted by the sight of prey activity.

Birds will give alarm calls when a hawk is spotted. Northern Cardinals have at least 16 different calls including an alarm shriek and a chitter call used when a hawk is overhead. While song is learned by cardinals, call notes are not, so young probably recognize alarm calls innately. Blue Jays are well known for giving alarm calls to bring attention to a predator.

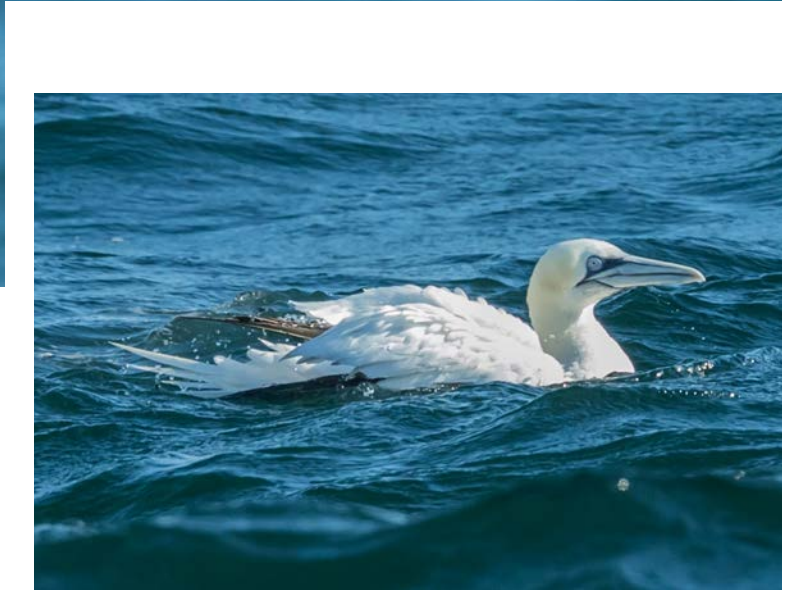
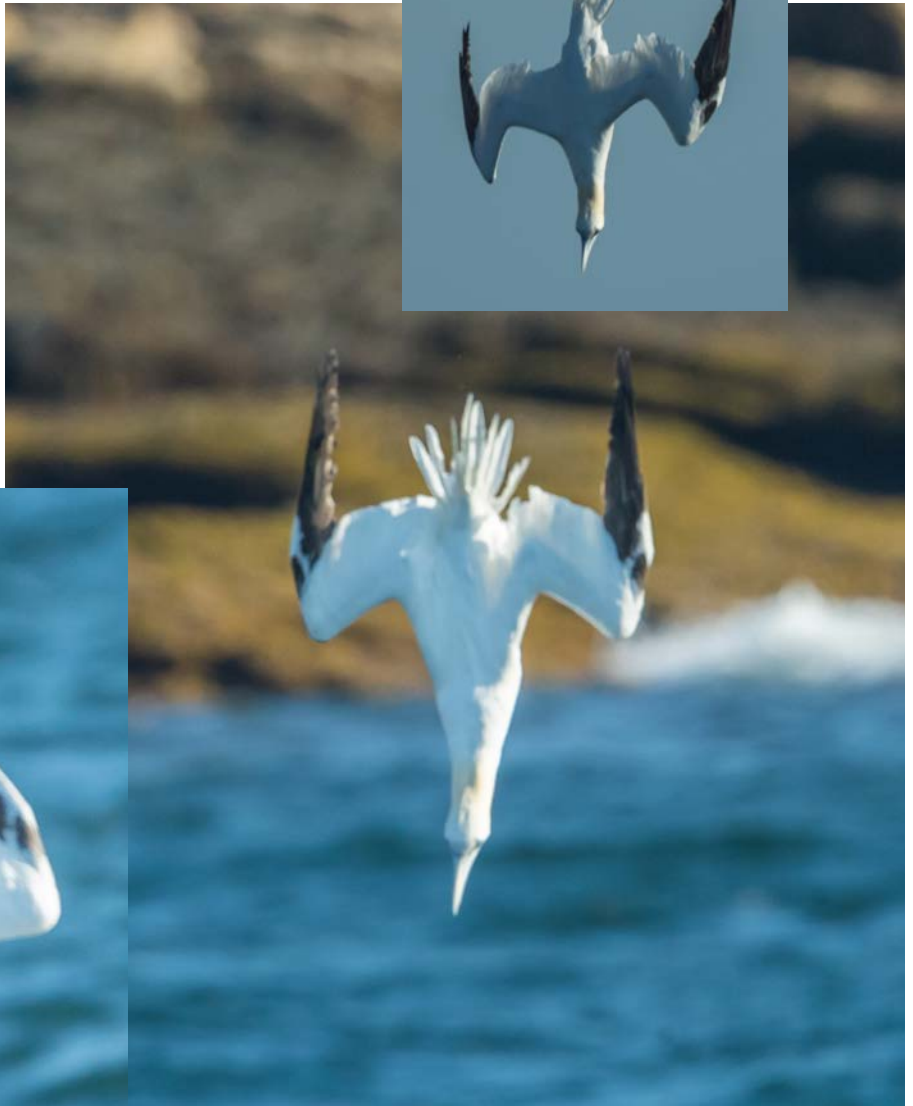
When an alarm call is given, birds often freeze, as Catherine describes, to avoid being detected by a nearby hawk. They will stay perfectly still until an “all clear” signal is given, often imperceptible to humans.

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## Photo Gallery

### Northern Gannet Takes a Dive

Ralph Fletcher took this amazing series of photos of a Northern Gannet taking a dive off Star Island at the Isles of Shoals during a trip led by Eric Masterson over the weekend of September 28-29, 2019. Gannets plunge-dive for fish and can go as deep as 72 feet, but more typically dive 10-16 feet. Note how the bird extends its wings backward, close to its body before entering the water.



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# Fall 2019 Field Notes

Compiled by Diana Stephens

## Late Red-eyed Vireo Nesting

by Ben Griffith

Photos taken by Ben Griffith, 9-14-19, Odiorne Point State Park, Rye, NH.

On September 14, Robbie Prieto and I were walking around Odiorne Point State Park in Rye looking for migrants when we noticed some movement in the trees above us. We stopped and found a small group of birds, including a Red-eyed Vireo. As migrants often forage together, we patiently watched for other species to join the group when we noticed movement in the undergrowth and glimpsed a



A good look at the late Red-eyed Vireo fledgling.



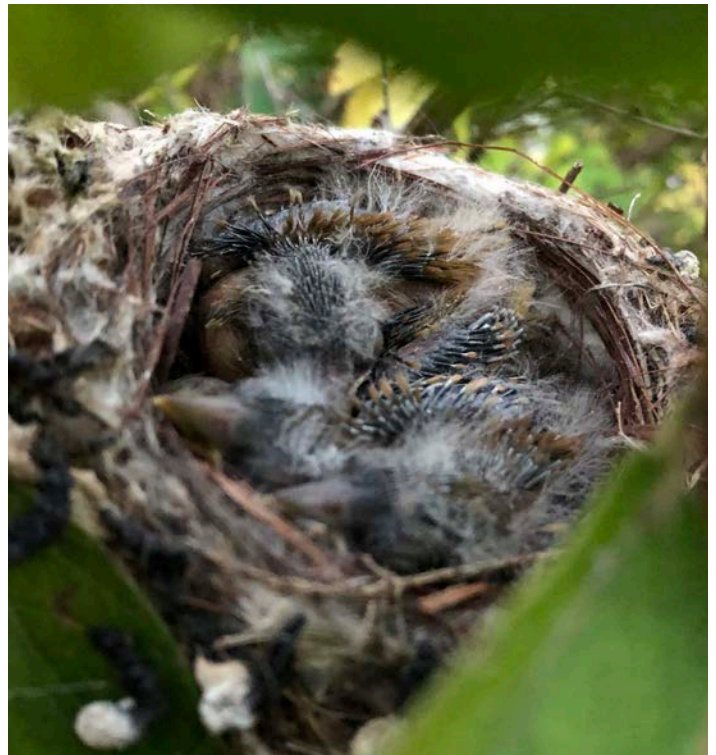
The Red-eyed Vireo parent seen here, carrying food to its youngster. This adult was molting its head feathers.

brownish warbler sized bird. We had a few tantalizingly brief views of an evenly tan-backed bird with uniform off-white underparts. The brief glimpses of shape and pattern as well as the behavior were fitting of Worm-eating Warbler – a quite rare species in New Hampshire! Certainly, this was a bird worth waiting for better views. With a bit of patience, we began to see field marks that eliminated Worm-eating Warbler, including a dull brown crown and a more hooked beak. A search in a field guide might steer you towards Warbling Vireo, but it still didn't look quite right. After a few more glimpses, Robbie suggested fledgling Red-eyed Vireo – the fledgling age consistent with the lack of flight. Eventually, we got good views of the bird and even saw its parent come down and feed it a grasshopper. The parent was also a bit unusual as it was simultaneously molting its head feathers; it was almost bald! I can't help but wonder if this molt pattern was the result of delayed new feather growth from using its energy to feed its nestling rather than make more feathers in August.

## Late October Goldfinch Nest

by Eric Masterson

On Monday, September 30, 2019, I found a note on my desk informing me that someone had called about an active goldfinch nest. I get a lot of calls of this nature and many times it turns out to be a case of mistaken identity. This would be no different, or so I thought. The homeowner



This late American Goldfinch nest was photographed by Melissa Clinkenbeard in her yard in Peterborough on October 1, 2019, which is a late date for goldfinches to be nesting!



in Peterborough asserted that there was an active American Goldfinch nest in their yard and that they would send me a picture. I was stunned to receive the accompanying photograph, taken October 1, depicting a nest with three hatchlings that looked perhaps a week old. Wildlife Rehabilitator Maria Colby at Wings of Dawn suggested that the best course of action was to leave the nest in place. It would be illegal to remove it and the birds still had a chance despite projected temperatures of near freezing on the night of October 4. I set out a feeder with hulled sunflower seed next to the bush and last observed a female feeding the young on the afternoon of October 4. On Monday, October 7, the homeowner called to inform me that the young had fledged and the nest was empty. She had observed several “smaller, different looking goldfinches” at the feeder on Sunday and checked the nest to discover it was empty. I was skeptical that they had survived and returned to find two deceased fledglings under the nest. Maria reports that she has encountered instances of late breeding Mourning Dove, Cedar Waxwing, and American Goldfinch.

## Black Skimmer attacked by a Peregrine Falcon!

by Diana Stephens

Black Skimmers are rarely seen in New Hampshire but one of them, observed by Chris Duffy, had a really bad day. On September 19, 2019, Chris Duffy observed a Peregrine Falcon and one Black Skimmer near the Hampton Water Tower and Route 101. The Peregrine, he explained, **dove on the Black Skimmer over 40 times!** He felt certain the skimmer would weaken and fall prey to the predator bird, but finally the Peregrine flew off. “It was an incredible extended battle with many different attacking and evading techniques,” Duffy explained. He last saw the skimmer from the Hampton water tower area near Route 101. Not only was this poor bird blown off course by a hurricane, but then it was relentlessly attacked by the falcon. Chris still gets a lump in his throat when he thinks about how his first skimmer sighting could have ended with it being eaten. The way those two birds adapted during the chase still amazes him. Luckily, it appeared as though the skimmer won!

The Black Skimmer breeds in South America, along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, and in lesser numbers as far north as Massachusetts. They are rare in New Hampshire, but there were a number of sightings in September; most likely they were blown north by Hurricane Dorian. The Category 5 hurricane formed off the coast of South America and hit the Bahamas by early September. It then meandered its way up the Atlantic along the Carolinas and made landfall in Nova Scotia. For the effect the storm had on Black Skimmers (and other

birds) see the article by Steve Mirick in this issue.

How and why certain storms result in lots of rare bird sightings while others do not is poorly understood, but when conditions are right, New Hampshire has been the sight of some interesting fallouts. Check out this article from the Fall 2011 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (Vol. 30, #3) about birding during Hurricane Irene:

<https://www.nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/V30%20N3-Fall-11.pdf>

## Hampton Harbor Dredging

by Diana Stephens

Dredging took place at Hampton Harbor and may affect the mudflats, as well as the fish and birds in the harbor. The dredging began in early October, 2019 and is scheduled to be completed by March of 2020. The dredging is necessary to remove the accumulating sand shoals that have nearly closed off the deep channels used by large vessels and commercial fishing boats, which have had a difficult time getting in and out of the harbor. The dredging is being performed by a contractor for the US Army Corps of Engineers. The last dredging operation was completed in 2013.

## Feeding Frenzy in the Yard

by Lori Charron

Migration in Coos County! On Tuesday September 23, I came home to a feeding frenzy of about 100 birds! Sparrows, warblers, vireos, kinglets, chickadees, Cedar Waxwings, and nuthatches! I just started clicking with my camera after the first awe of seeing so many birds! I counted 11 Blue-headed Vireos. Most of the birds were sparrows with the bulk being Chipping Sparrows. All the Cedar Waxwings were juveniles. This lasted about 20 minutes and then the yard was silent.

On Wednesday, September 24, on my drive to work up a county road in Dixville Notch, I counted 42 thrushes



One of the many sparrows in Lori Charron's feeding frenzy, this immature Chipping Sparrow is a challenging identification.

during my two mile ride. All birds were in the road. This is a common site on this road in the fall. Most were Hermit Thrushes and a few were Swainson's. I was not able to identify all of them as it was still fairly dark on the road, but I did identify a few. Happy Birding!

## Songbird Frozen in a Pitcher Plant!

by Diana Stephens

Photos by Sue Lichty

Sue Lichty sent an email with these extraordinary photos of a songbird frozen in a pitcher plant, 11-10-19, in Lempster, NH. She describes her encounter:

*While exploring a beautiful bog area on November 10, here in Lempster, my dog was rolling in something near the bog and I went to explore what it was. There was a large pitcher plant smooshed and then I noticed something encased in ice (which smelled quite ripe). As I examined it, it appeared to be a bird inside, so I took it home and thawed it out and it was a whole little bird inside.*

Pitcher plants are carnivorous plants whose large, funnel-shaped leaves trap water inside to lure insects for their nourishment. The plants emit a sweet substance into the water to further attract their prey. Perhaps this songbird was attracted to the sweet water or the insects, fell in and couldn't back out, then drowned before freezing. It could have been a juvenile or an adult that was simply trapped. Our best guess on the identification is Black-capped Chickadee, but there's some question about whether the bill shape is correct for that species.

Her story reminded us of an article by John Calhoun (*New Hampshire Bird Records* Spring 2004, Vol. 23, #1) describing his fascinating experience during a snow storm in April of 1953. As they skied across Tuckerman's Ravine, he and a friend noticed small circles of ice and began to poke holes into the ice. To their surprise, a wide variety of birds had been stuck underneath the ice and their hole-poking released them! The gale force winds howling through the notch may have forced the migrating birds down into the hollow of the ravine and the driving snow had sealed them in. Who knows how many birds perish this way in Tuckerman's Ravine every March and April?

Something similar occurred during the winter of 2016-2017, when two kingfishers were found frozen solid in ice after diving into a lake in Northern Bavaria. The birds were found deceased but in perfectly preserved diving positions,



suggesting they were frozen as they plunged into the pond. This story by Jasmin Jeffery was in the Feb. 9, 2017 issue of *The Sun* on-line:

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2828583/preserved-kingfisher-block-ice-lake/>

## A Great Egret in the Driveway

*Swift Corwin photographed this Great Egret on 8-3-19 in his driveway on Windy Row in Peterborough – an uncommon yard bird for inland residents.*



## Iceland Gull Over the Years

Kyle Wilmarth posted the photo collection below of an Iceland Gull he nicknamed “Rocky” that he photographed from 2013 through 2019. According to Kyle, he was able to identify the bird as the same gull “primarily because of its habits (like frequenting the same spots, arriving and departing around the same time every year),

coupled with a unique wing tip pattern (almost no gray on resting bird, but notable gray in primaries in flight, and a distinct pattern on P8 that can be seen in other photos of mine elsewhere). Additionally, the bill is petite and eye color is pale gray which can both be quite variable in Iceland Gull.” His first sighting was in March 2013 when he estimated the bird to be about three years old.



*Annual photos of “Rocky” the Iceland Gull by Kyle Wilmarth.*



# Field Trip Report

## First Annual Monadnock Region Birding Cup Soars

by Steven Lamonde and Kim Snyder

On Saturday, September 14, the Antioch Bird Club hosted its first competition for bird-enthusiasts in New Hampshire's Monadnock Region. One of the only fall birding competitions in the country, the Monadnock Region Birding Cup was created to highlight birding hotspots in southwestern New Hampshire, inspire a stronger sense of community among birders near Mount Monadnock in Jaffrey, and raise funds to support student-driven bird research, conservation, and education.

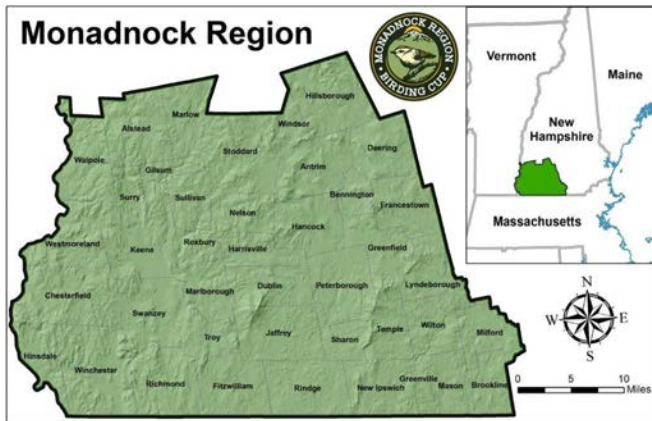


Figure 1. The borders of the Monadnock Region Birding Cup.

Over the course of 12 hours, seven teams scoured the rivers, ridgelines, and everything in-between to count as many species as possible in the Monadnock Region (Figure 1) between 5:00 am and 5:00 pm. Rain dominated the forecast leading up to the event, but only a handful of scattered rain showers greeted participants the day of the competition. While the lack of a deluge lifted spirits, gusting winds drove down bird detections. Cumulatively, teams tallied 85 species, approximately 78% of all species ever found in the Monadnock Region in September.

Once 5:00 pm rolled around, smiling participants gathered at Antioch University New England (Antioch), where they were greeted with salad, pizza, beverages, and goodie bags after a tiring day. Once all the teams had gathered and stomachs were filled, Antioch Bird Club announced the winners and handed out prizes.

The winning team, *The RAVENgers*, counted 46 species, all of which were seen from within a 10-acre area surrounding Antioch. Highlights included Antioch's second campus record of a Northern Harrier and a record flock of 45 Swainson's Thrushes migrating overhead between 5:00 and

6:00 am. Team *Year of the Pink-footed Goose* came in a close second, locating 44 species, including the only Eastern Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl found by any team. This family team traveled from Scituate, MA to compete as part of their 2019 Big Year.

Topping the Monadnock Food Co-op Carbon Footprint Challenge was Team *Green-footed Boobies*, who cycled an impressive 30+ miles from Hinsdale to Keene while tallying 37 species and periodically getting soaked by rain. A team of ornithology students, *Fledglings for Akresh*, took home the Fledglings Award for finding more species than any other team with less than five years combined birding experience. Few teams chose to compete in the Big Sit category, but the win by Team *Paccipiters* was well-deserved after managing seven gusty hours atop Pack Monadnock. The Townie Award was given to Team *MooseWoodpeckers* for tallying 25 species within the town of Stoddard.

Other species highlights included Blue-winged Teal, Great Egret, Solitary Sandpiper, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Fish Crow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and 16 warbler species. Several teams picked up a Golden-crowned Kinglet, the event's mascot!



The Green-Footed Boobies team of (left to right) Nathan Cross, Julie Loosigian, and Kathryn Laue. Photo by Kim Snyder.

Antioch Bird Club raised over \$2,000 from this event, thanks in large part to category and team sponsorships from the Monadnock Food Co-op, Bird Watcher's Supply and Gift, Moosewood Ecological LLC, and Jake's Market and Deli. Prizes were generously donated by Bird Watcher's Supply and Gift, Achille Agway, and Toadstool Bookstores. Check the Cup website for future details ([www.monadnockregionbirdingcup.com](http://www.monadnockregionbirdingcup.com)).



Steven Lamonde and Kim Snyder are MS students at Antioch University New England, where they co-direct the Antioch Bird Club.

## Merrimack River Paddle and a Record Number of Bald Eagles

by Robert A. Quinn



*Kayaking down the Merrimack River during NH Audubon's Capital Area Chapter field trip, 8-23-19. Photo by trip leader, Bob Quinn.*

A group of 14 people in nine boats who hailed from three states (!) paddled/floated down the Merrimack River on August 23, 2019, a marvelous day for a Capital Area Chapter field trip.

Their eyes and ears greatly enhanced our paddle on the beautiful stretch of the river between Boscawen and Canterbury, NH.

The great crowd, very good weather, decent current, and an amazing number of an estimated 18 different Bald Eagles really made for a memorable day. The unusually high water (due to recent rains) meant we saw very few sandpipers, though we did see one migrant Least Sandpiper along with about 20 Spotted Sandpipers (local breeders). Other highlights as we glided along included a group of seven American Kestrels playing “tag, you’re it” with a Merlin or two, and a scattering of other waterbirds such as cormorants and herons. We saw a few landbirds, but only one Eastern Kingbird, an indication that most of the kingbirds had left, since a more typical tally for this canoe route in mid-August is 10-20 birds. The high water made paddling easy and the amazing eagle show made for impressive birding. We were careful to count them, without duplication, which is fairly easy with eagles because it takes up to five years for them to reach their full adult plumage. This means that almost all of the sub-adults are in individually recognizable plumages. By the way, I did a quick check of my records and my previous high count for eagles on this paddle trip is seven! As recently as 2014, we only saw one.

Here is some data that puts the high water effect into perspective. On a typical August paddle with extensive sandbars my average list of sandpipers is four to six species.

On one memorable trip, **August 24, 2013**, with low water and plenty of sandbars, we recorded these eight species of shorebirds (plovers and sandpipers): two Semipalmated Plovers, 25 Killdeer, four Lesser Yellowlegs, 15 Greater Yellowlegs, 18 Solitary Sandpipers, 25 Spotted Sandpipers, one Semipalmated Sandpiper, and at least 84 Least Sandpipers.

The Merrimack River north of Concord is a spectacular and beautiful river that flows through scenic agricultural landscapes, then passes beneath dramatic glacial sand bluffs. It is also a major success story, as it changed from one of the nation’s ten most polluted rivers in the 1960s to a welcoming recreation river that is now clear and inviting enough for swimming, fishing, and camping. This charming section of the river is without much sign of civilization and feels much wilder than it actually is. Try it, you’ll like it!

Note: Threats still continue to the Merrimack River and it has been identified as one of the top endangered rivers by the US Forest Service and American Rivers primarily because of the development of forested lands in the watershed.

## NH Audubon Pelagic

by Steve Mirick from a post to NHBirds on 10-15-19 and adapted by Rebecca Suomala.

*All photos taken in New Hampshire waters during the NH Audubon Seacoast Chapter pelagic trip, 10-14-19.*



*Fog on the pelagic trip quickly gave way to sunny conditions. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.*

The Seacoast Chapter of NH Audubon sponsored an all day pelagic bird trip on October 14, 2019 aboard the MV Granite State out of Rye Harbor, NH. Despite challenging weather predictions of thick fog and four foot seas offshore, the fog quickly lifted for beautiful visibility, and the wave period of the four foot seas was very long, and hardly noticed. The wind was generally light out of the southwest and the seas died down even more in the afternoon. Overall the conditions were excellent for mid-October.

Because of the early fog, we bypassed our usual tour of the Isles of Shoals and headed south toward southern Jeffreys Ledge off Cape Ann where there were lots of whales seen the day before. Before we even got past the Isles of Shoals, about five miles from the dock, we almost ran over (!) our first Atlantic Puffin of the day! Continuing on, we found a group of whales and small numbers of sea birds in the vicinity of Scantum Basin and New Scantum off Cape Ann in the far southwestern portion of Jeffreys Ledge. We then turned northward with the sun and wind at our back and coasted north toward the New Hampshire state line.



*Atlantic Puffin inside the Isles of Shoals by Leo McKillop.*

As we cruised north into New Hampshire, we were planning on following the contours of Jeffreys Ledge to the east, but the sea bird activity increased, and we noticed a distinct current line where converging currents formed a visible line toward the northeast across Jeffreys Basin. Along this line (possibly a result of recent storm?), we saw a fair amount of rock weed as well as salp and krill, which appeared to be a target for Red Phalaropes, small gulls, Northern Fulmar, and whales. The line continued for miles and produced an excellent number of pelagic birds. We worked this line for most of the afternoon and **never even got out** to Jeffreys Ledge (!) as bird activity continued at a steady pace.

It was a fantastic day for Northern Fulmar with the second highest count for New Hampshire (135; high count of 140 offshore on 2/6/09). There were light and dark morph birds generating continuous activity for much of the afternoon. We had a record high of 268 Red Phalaropes in New Hampshire. At first there were single birds here and there, but then a few large groups (10 to 60 birds) feeding along the current-line. There is a record of 200+ off Portsmouth on 11/17/54 in *The Birds of New Hampshire* (by Keith & Fox). Shearwaters were scarce and jaegers were not terribly cooperative, but one jaeger created temporary excitement when it flew by

masquerading as a South Polar Skua. Unfortunately, a review of photos confirmed it as a Pomarine Jaeger.



*Red Phalaropes feeding on salps by Rebecca Suomala.*

The Humpback Whale performance was incredible! Most of the whales were open-mouth feeding near the surface on krill. The whales were constantly surfacing with mouths wide open right next to the boat. Several times three to as many as five whales came up together with mouths open in synchronized feeding.



*Lark Sparrow by Jim Sparrell.*

It was an incredible trip for puffins!! All were juveniles and a couple of the birds stayed on the surface for a long time and allowed for very close views! The total of eight appears to be a high fall count for New Hampshire (seven on Jeffreys Ledge, 11/30/18). There were lots of “Bonus” birds, including a Little Gull and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Remarkably a Lark Sparrow flew around the boat while we were well offshore. This poor bird circled and circled, but just wouldn’t land on the boat. We can only hope it made it back to the mainland. We barely crossed into Maine waters, when we got a Leach’s Storm-Petrel, before heading back through the Isles of Shoals and then back to the dock.

Thanks to Kyle Wilmarth and David Blezard for organizing this trip, to Captain Pete Reynolds for working the birds for the benefit of all on the boat, and to Ben Griffith for keeping count.

## Bird Totals

eBird checklists of birds seen offshore were submitted for each state. Below are the totals for the trip for some of the highlight birds.



*Little Gull by Leo McKillop.*

Red-necked Phalarope 6, offshore in two groups  
Red Phalarope 275 (268 in NH, 7 in MA)  
Pomarine Jaeger 3, identified by photos  
Atlantic Puffin 8, all in NH waters  
Black-legged Kittiwake 16, adults and juveniles  
Bonaparte's Gull 104, high count for offshore  
Little Gull 1, juv./1st winter with Bonaparte's  
Laughing Gull 6  
Leach's Storm-Petrel 1, in Maine waters  
Northern Fulmar 142 (135 in NH, 7 in MA)  
Cory's Shearwater 1, poor views  
Great Shearwater 23, scattered offshore  
Manx Shearwater 1, close views on the water  
Northern Gannet 72, two adults on Square Rock  
Great Cormorant 5, most on Square Rock  
Lark Sparrow 1  
Pine Warbler 1, landed on the boat  
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1, flying with Pine Warbler



*A Pine Warbler landed on the boat! Photo by Benjamin Griffith.*

## Whales

Humpback Whale 26+, counted by boat crew  
Fin Whale 3  
Atlantic White-sided Dolphin 6, with Common Dolphins  
Common Dolphin 8, unusual



*Humpbacks feeding with open mouths and bulging throats by Rebecca Suomala.*



*A light phase (above, by Leo McKillop) and a dark phase (below by Ben Griffith) Northern Fulmar, just some of the many fulmars seen on the trip.*

# Updated History of Hawkwatching in New Hampshire

by Iain MacLeod



Broad-winged Hawk by Levi Burford, 9-22-18, Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory, Peterborough, NH.

The annual south-bound migration of diurnal raptors (hawks, eagles, falcons, etc.) is one of the most tangible, spectacular and easily observed phenomena in the natural world. Stand on a New Hampshire mountain top facing north during the middle of September and you are almost certain to see migrating hawks, sometimes thousands of them.

The annual departure of Broad-winged Hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) from the northern forests of the eastern United States to the rainforests of Central and South America has been taking place since the last ice age retreated and countless generations of human inhabitants have no doubt gazed skyward and marveled at its passing. For native peoples, this would have been a marker of the changing seasons, a harbinger of the coming winter.

Of course, all these raptors migrate north again in the spring and, although there are certainly some spectacular spring counts, the fall counts, bolstered by all the freshly-fledged juveniles making their first south-bound journey, are much larger and impressive.

One of the earliest published accounts of hawk migration in the Granite State was from the *New Hampshire Gazette* of October 11, 1756. An anonymous writer wrote that on September 20 or 21, 1756:

*... There were seen near Fort Dummer the greatest Phenomenon that was ever seen in New England.*

*Two large companies of Pigeon Hawks, judged to be about 4,000 in number, headed by two large Eagles, one Eagle heading one company and the other Eagle the other. They found themselves too many for two companies and so divided into four Battalions. They fought over from Fort Huddell to Fort Dummer, and fighting and fighting over and under one another from one fort to the other for four hours, till one company conquered the other and chased after them.*

The interpretation of the sighting is wonderful...wrong ...but wonderful. No doubt “Pigeon Hawks” refers to Broad-winged Hawks and the “eagles” were no doubt Bald Eagles and what he/she observed was a classic September migration flight of hawks, just as we would see them today. They were not fighting, but climbing on rising thermals, swirling around together in tight “kettles,” and gliding south. I’m sure, over the course of the four hours, the observer was seeing successive groups of hawks streaming out of the north and finding the same thermals as their predecessors.

Over the next 150 years, there is very little written in the literature about hawk migration in New Hampshire. Glover M. Allen (1903) describes the breeding status of 16 species of raptors in the state, but doesn’t specifically mention observations of their migration dynamics. Forbes and Forbes (1927) reported a flock of 30-40 “hawks... turning and soaring upwards in irregular steep spirals... probably *Buteo*” in mid-September from atop Mount Monadnock.

One of the most important modern-day names in New Hampshire hawkwatching is Susan Fogleman. In 2001, she wrote an account of the history of hawkwatching in New Hampshire that was published in *Bird Observer*. One excerpt from her introduction summarizes one of the earliest examples of migration monitoring in the state:

*The first New Hampshire effort was made near New Ipswich in the 1950s (Tudor Richards in an interview with Cole 1972). Peaked Hill in Bristol was discovered by the late Vera Hebert (pers. comm.) to be an excellent site not long after that. By 1960, Hebert and [Robert] Smart had begun monitoring hawk flights there every fall, although not on a daily basis. An item in the fall 1960 bird reports section of the NH Audubon Quarterly (Smart 1961) suggests that the importance of hawk migration monitoring was becoming more and more apparent to them and to New Hampshire Audubon members... By 1969, Smart had become President of NH Audubon. That September, he organized a field trip to the Peaked Hill site to show NH Audubon members the wonders of hawk migration. Over 50 people showed up, and saw over 360 hawks of 9 species (Smart 1969a). The*



*following day, he counted over 2,500 Broadwings and 30 Ospreys (Smart 1969b). That is the same year that he discovered another hill in Bristol to be even better than Peaked Hill for the observation of the autumn flights. One day in early September, he took a short hike to the summit of Little Round Top. On reaching his destination, Smart is reported to have looked skyward and seen a Bald Eagle and several dozen Broad-winged Hawks soaring overhead (V. Wright, pers. comm.). And that was the beginning of possibly the longest-term migration study in northern New England. (Fogleman 2001).*

Susan went on to describe her pioneering efforts at Little Round Top and other New Hampshire sites:

*In 1969, observations began in Little Round Top (ca. 1.5 km SSE of Bristol and also known as “Inspiration Point” or simply “Bristol” in older records), the longest continually staffed site in the state. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, observations were collected in 2-3 autumn sites in the state and submitted records to NH Audubon (Smart 1960, 1969) and later to the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) after its foundation in 1974 (Harwood 1975).*

*The data submitted to HMANA in paper forms, later replaced by electronic submissions, illustrates a dramatic increase in short-term observations of potential sites to monitor migration (a total of 171 different-named locations have been explored according to these records, some of them undoubtedly redundant), with a peak in the early 1980s. As many as 16 different-named sites submitted at least one day of observations per season to HMANA in the spring of 1982 and 33 sites in the autumn of 1983; the majority of these observations, however, were very short in duration, as most of them consist of records submitted over one or two seasons. Many fewer sites continued systematic observations over long-term, and nearly a dozen reached 10 or more years of data with seasonal coverage spanning 20-60 days per season (primarily in the autumn), of which only 3-4 maintain season-long activity today [2001].*

Another long-term school-based site was established in the 1970s by Edwina Czajkowski in the Concord School district. That program continues to this day, although I’m not sure the coverage has been continuous. The Hawk Migration Association of North America’s online database *HawkCount* has data from 2010 to 2017.

In 1980, the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in

Holderness started a hawkwatch program at the Interlakes School in Meredith under the guidance of Naturalist Dave Erler. Each year since, Dave along with other staff and volunteers, visit the school and conduct classes with students and count hawks from the athletic field during one week in September. Fall 2019 marked the 40th consecutive year of annual coverage at that site (and for Dave).

In the 1980s and early 90s, Ken Folsom and Meade Cadot and others were occasionally counting from Pack Monadnock in Miller State Park near Peterborough and at Crotched Mountain in Franconia. Pack had occasional visits since the 1960s and data in *HawkCount* goes back as far as 1975.

By the 1990s, fewer sites were being monitored. Steve Mirick, Paul Lacourse and others were counting from the WWII-era bunkers at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. Steve reports that tree cover has obscured that view and systematic counts were discontinued about 10 years ago (S. Mirick, pers. com.). Incidental sightings along the coast come in every year, but there is not a specific New Hampshire coastal hawkwatch site these days.

Only three of the ten sites monitored in New Hampshire during the autumn of 2000 received coverage for more than a few days: Prospect Mountain at Weeks State Park in Whitefield, Little Round Top, and Blue Job Mountain in Strafford/Farmington. Prospect and Blue Job received occasional fall coverage into the early 2000s (although there is no data in *HawkCount*) while counts at Little Round Top ended in 2014.

During the early 2000s, I started counting occasionally at Pack Monadnock and by 2003, I started to formulate a plan to make Pack an official count site with season-long coverage. At the time, I was working for NH Audubon and I was able to secure grant funding to establish an easily-accessible viewing site and hire a full-time counter in 2005. That site has had continuous coverage every year since, averaging a little shy of 500 hours of coverage each fall (September to mid-November).

In 2008, NH Audubon started systematic coverage at Carter Hill in Concord. Coverage continued there until 2017 (averaging over 420 hours/year). Unfortunately, NH Audubon’s sponsorship ended in 2017 and only three days were counted in 2018, but there were 26 days of coverage in 2019 (over 2,400 hawks counted).

In 2011, Ernesto Ruelas Inzunza wrote “A History of Raptor Migration Research and Hawkwatching in New Hampshire” for *The Birds of New Hampshire* (Keith and Fox 2013). Ernesto summarized a lot of the material referenced above. In this article, I have tried to bring the story up to date.

The value of long-term monitoring of migrating hawks

is now clear through the ongoing analysis of the Raptor Population Index (an analysis tool developed by a partnership of Hawk Migration Association of North America, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, HawkWatch International, and Bird Studies Canada). The key to that analysis is having enough years of data (collected in a consistent manner) to observe and predict long-term trends.

The evolution of hawkwatching in New Hampshire has gone from a scattershot of short-duration counts at many sites to long-duration counts at a few sites. It's now more important than ever to keep those few sites going, especially in light of the apparent recent declines we are seeing in several raptor species (MacLeod, 2018).

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# Fall 2019 New Hampshire Raptor Migration Report

by Iain MacLeod

## Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory



Bald Eagle by Susan Wisley.

Fall 2019 marked the fifteenth consecutive fall season of daily coordinated counts conducted at the Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory at Miller State Park in Peterborough, NH. The count was conducted this year under the leadership of the Harris Center for Conservation in partnership with New Hampshire Audubon in a formal agreement with the NH Division of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Seasonal Counter/Interpreter for 2019 was Levi Burford. I was the official counter on Mondays and Henry Walters was the official counter on Tuesdays. Phil Brown served as the Raptor Observatory Coordinator and a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers rounded out the coverage and helped scan the skies. In particular, we must acknowledge Katrina Fenton, Julie and Phil Brown, and Janet and Tom Delaney, who each served as official counters at some point during the season.

Full site coverage was maintained daily from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm EST (or close to) from September 1 to November 2 and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EST from November 3-21 (with two days also counted in late August). From August 23 to November 21, a total of 557.17 observation hours were logged (six in August, 246.92 in September, 199.5 in October, and 104.75 in November). September weather was conducive to counting and hours were logged on every day of the month. There were only two days when there were reduced hours (September 2 and 12). October weather was more changeable resulting in two days when no count was conducted (October 27 and 31). There were also six days that operated with reduced hours (October 1, 2, 7, 17, 29 and

30). November had three days that no count was conducted (November 18, 19 and 20) and another two days with reduced hours (November 12 and 21). The total observation hours was well above the 10-year average of 511 hours.

A total of 10,503 individual migratory raptors were recorded. That equals 18.85 raptors per hour. The 10-year average is 12,288 raptors (10-year averages in this account refer to data from just the prior 10 years, 2009-2018). The 10-year average for raptors per hour is 24.31.

Trend graphs were created for most species for data for 2005-2019. They are presented as “raptors per count hours.” Overall, seven species (Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon) show positive linear trend lines and seven species (Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel) show negative trends. The trend for all raptors combined is positive.

**Turkey Vultures** (TV) are late season migrants and generally we don’t see obvious signs of southbound birds until well into October. Our first migrating TVs were noted on September 30 this year. After a one-year drop last year, the TV count bounced back this year to 268, the third highest count ever. The 10-year average is 163.8. The biggest single day count was 49 on October 9.

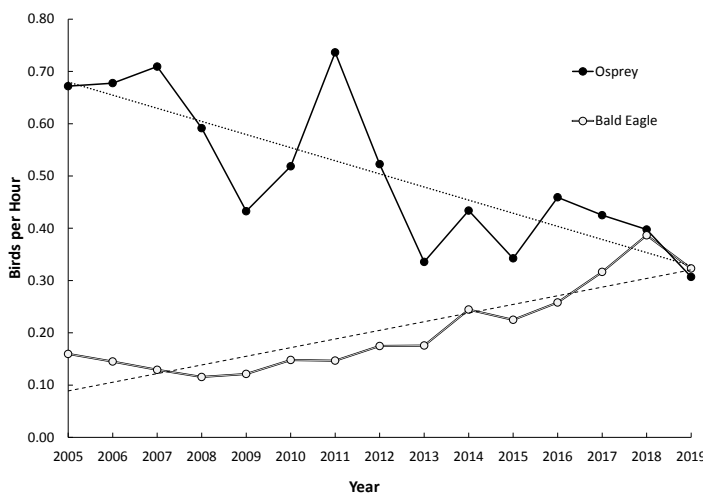


Figure 1. Osprey and Bald Eagle 15-year trends at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH, 2005-2019.

Well it finally happened! As I conjectured last year, the trend lines finally crossed and we counted fewer **Ospreys** than Bald Eagles at Pack in 2019 (Figure 1)! The Osprey count of 171 (10-year average is 231) was the lowest count since we started season-long monitoring at Pack in 2005! As the Bald Eagle population has exploded in eastern North America, the Osprey population is headed down. The trend that we are seeing at Pack is matched throughout the Northeast. It will be interesting to see if the Osprey numbers level off or continue to decline.

The **Bald Eagle** total (180) set a new season-high count and marks the eighth consecutive season of more than 100 Bald Eagles (Figure 1). The count/hour was slightly down compared to last year because of the greater number of hours. The Bald Eagle migration is quite spread out but the bulk moved through in September (96) with 48 in October and 36 in November. The peak one-day count was 12 on September 13. The trend continues to soar and, as mentioned above, surpassed the Osprey total for the first time.

The tally of 54 **Northern Harriers** was our lowest since 2005 and well below the 10-year average of 90. The 15-year trend is negative.

In the accipiter group, the 105 **Cooper’s Hawks** tallied this year was lower than last year and well below the 10-year average (144). A look at the 15-year trend shows a steady decline in our count. Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data indicates a major increase in the number of Cooper’s Hawk wintering in the Northeast which perhaps explains why fewer seem to be migrating south. **Northern Goshawks** hit an all-time low with just nine counted (10-year average is 35)! The overall 15-year trend is way down. Our counts in previous years have been as high as 68 so the last three year’s counts (17, 11 and 9) have been really low. What is happening to the ghost of the boreal forest? Goshawks are traditionally irruptive migrants, moving south some years and not others based on prey availability, primarily Ruffed Grouse and Snowshoe Hares in the boreal forests of Canada. Perhaps warmer winters are allowing them to stay farther north on a more consistent basis. eBird data suggest that there are more wintering in Quebec in recent years (although it’s hard to know if that is a function of actual population change or just the greater use of eBird). CBC data for Quebec, Ontario, New Hampshire and Maine does not show an increasing trend; actually the opposite. So . . . I don’t think that theory holds up. Counts in the Central and Western Flyways are also down, so they are not shifting their range. I think the beautiful Northern Goshawk is in trouble!

The **Sharp-shinned Hawk** count rebounded a bit after last year’s record low. This year the tally was 1,027 (10-year average = 1,172). The peak count day was September 18 when 79 were counted. The 15-year trend indicates a strong negative trajectory.

The raw **Broad-winged Hawk** count was up a little over last year with 7,840 counted (10-year average = 9,449), but birds/hour was down again, continuing a 4-year downward trend. The best flight was on September 18 when 2,435 were counted. The fifteen-year graph shows a lot of annual fluctuation, but the trend is still positive for Pack even with the drop off for the last few years.

The **Red-shouldered Hawk** raw count of 181 was our second highest ever (following 2012) and well above the

10-year average (130). This is normally a late-season migrant for us with the major push happening in November. This year our high daily count was on November 2 when 35 were counted. The 15-year trend is up (Figure 3).

Table 1. Broad-winged Hawk fall migration totals and peak counts at Pack Monadnock, NH, 2005-2019. Source: HMANA's HawkCount.org Database.

| Year | Total  | Highest one-day count | Date   |
|------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| 2005 | 3,978  | 1,687                 | 18-Sep |
| 2006 | 7,595  | 3,044                 | 11-Sep |
| 2007 | 7,776  | 2,676                 | 16-Sep |
| 2008 | 6,835  | 2,424                 | 18-Sep |
| 2009 | 4,322  | 2,042                 | 16-Sep |
| 2010 | 7,557  | 3,328                 | 18-Sep |
| 2011 | 11,831 | 5,208                 | 18-Sep |
| 2012 | 8,848  | 2,556                 | 17-Sep |
| 2013 | 8,221  | 2,759                 | 17-Sep |
| 2014 | 11,043 | 4,101                 | 15-Sep |
| 2015 | 16,693 | 3,959                 | 17-Sep |
| 2016 | 10,530 | 3,245                 | 15-Sep |
| 2017 | 8,744  | 1,836                 | 21-Sep |
| 2018 | 6,756  | 2,239                 | 24-Sep |
| 2019 | 7,840  | 2,436                 | 18-Sep |

The **Red-tailed Hawk** tally of 223 was our lowest since 2011 and below the 10-year average of 371. The peak flight day this year was November 16 when 26 were counted (which is not a big peak at all). The 15-year trend is steadily down (Figure 2). CBC data shows a steady increase in birds wintering in the northeast, perhaps meaning fewer are migrating south through New Hampshire.

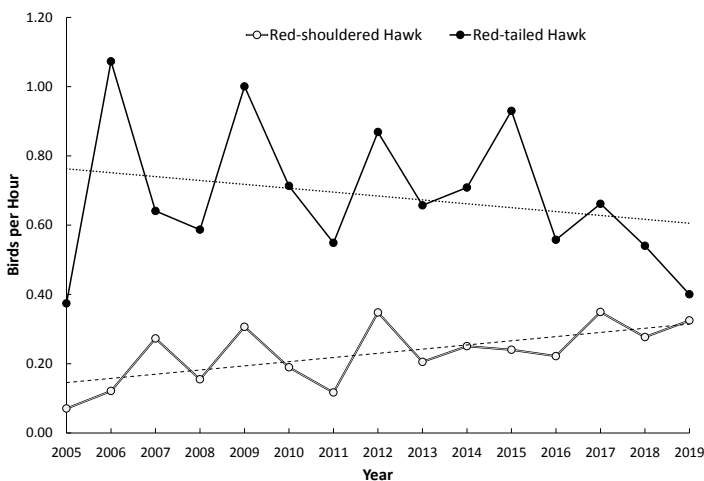


Figure 2. Fifteen-year Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk trend at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH, 2005-2019.

No **Rough-legged Hawks** were recorded this year after seven straight years with at least one seen. Only four **Golden Eagles** were tallied this year after last year's record high of 22 (10-year average = 10). Overall the Golden Eagle trend is up, so perhaps we just missed them this year.

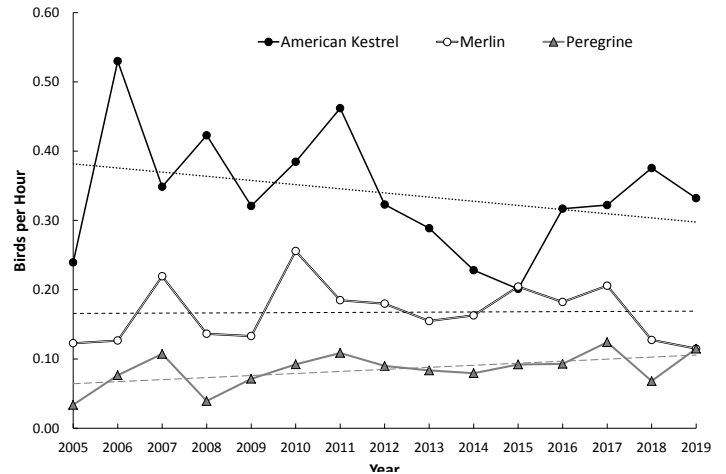


Figure 3. Fifteen-year American Kestrel, Merlin and Peregrine trends at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH, 2005-2019.

The **American Kestrel** raw count was the highest since 2012 with 185 tallied. The ten-year average is 162. Although the trend line for the last ten years is down (Figure 3), we are seeing a little rebound in the last four years after hitting rock-bottom in 2015. Let's hope this continues. The **Merlin** count (just 64) was a little higher than last year, but still well below the 10-year average of 93. Overall the 15-year trend is still slightly positive (Figure 3). The raw **Peregrine Falcon** count jumped up this year, tying the record of 64. The 10-year average is 46. The 15-year trend is positive (Figure 3).

You can read the Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory Fall 2019 Final Report at:

[https://harriscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PackMonadnockRaptorObservatory\\_FinalReport\\_2019.pdf](https://harriscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PackMonadnockRaptorObservatory_FinalReport_2019.pdf)

## Carter Hill Raptor Migration Observatory

After a near-hiatus in 2018 (when only 40 raptors were counted in 6.5 hours of effort), Carter Hill put in 167.67 hours of observation over 26 days in 2019 between September 5 and October 24 and tallied 2,425 raptors. The official counters were Tom McShane and David Lipsy with help from a variety of volunteer observers and support from the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Great job by all these folks who resurrected the count. Their big day was September 13 when 1,082 raptors were tallied. The raptors per hour was respectable (highest since 2015).

Because of the significant variation in observer hours and season length over the twelve years of data gathering at

Carter Hill, it is hard to explore long-term trends or make comparisons to previous year averages. I simply present a table of Broad-winged Hawk count totals (Table 2).

Table 2. Broad-winged Hawk fall migration totals and peak counts at Carter Hill, NH, 2008-2019. Source: HMANA's HawkCount.org Database.

### Data Sources

HawkCount.org. Online raptor migration database of the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

CBC Data are provided by National Audubon Society and through the generous efforts of Bird Studies Canada and countless volunteers across the Western Hemisphere.

*Iain MacLeod is Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in Holderness, NH and is President of the Board of NorthEast Hawk Watch and former board chair of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Iain founded the Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory in 2004 and has studied raptors (particularly Ospreys) for 40+ years. Iain is a member of the New Hampshire Bird Records Editorial Team and NH Rare Birds Committee.*

| Year | Total  | Highest one-day count | Date   |
|------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| 2008 | 1,904  | 568                   | 13-Sep |
| 2009 | 703    | 337                   | 16-Sep |
| 2010 | 2,422  | 891                   | 18-Sep |
| 2011 | 10,763 | 7,212                 | 18-Sep |
| 2012 | 3,671  | 1,130                 | 20-Sep |
| 2013 | 8,915  | 4,899                 | 19-Sep |
| 2014 | 4,237  | 1,085                 | 13-Sep |
| 2015 | 6,274  | 1,413                 | 23-Sep |
| 2016 | 5,045  | 3,026                 | 16-Sep |
| 2017 | 3,842  | 691                   | 15-Sep |
| 2018 | -      | -                     | -      |
| 2019 | 2,051  | 1066                  | 13-Sep |

Table 3. Fall raptor migration monitoring data, 2005-2019, from Pack Monadnock, NH. (HMANA's HawkCount.org Database)

### PACK MONADNOCK RAPTOR MIGRATION DATA, 2005-2019

|          | Obs. Hrs. | TV  | OS  | BE  | NH  | SS   | CH  | NG | RS  | BW    | SW | RT  | RL | GE | AK  | ML  | PG | UR  | SE | TOTAL |
|----------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|----|-----|-------|----|-----|----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-------|
| 2005     | 326       | 29  | 219 | 52  | 24  | 520  | 47  | 11 | 23  | 3978  | 0  | 122 | 0  | 5  | 78  | 40  | 11 | 62  | 0  | 5221  |
| 2006     | 379.25    | 99  | 257 | 55  | 77  | 1253 | 213 | 68 | 46  | 7595  | 0  | 407 | 0  | 11 | 201 | 48  | 29 | 76  | 0  | 10435 |
| 2007     | 410.25    | 121 | 291 | 53  | 121 | 1288 | 186 | 49 | 112 | 7776  | 0  | 263 | 0  | 5  | 143 | 90  | 44 | 82  | 0  | 10624 |
| 2008     | 432.75    | 47  | 256 | 50  | 87  | 1189 | 162 | 28 | 67  | 6835  | 0  | 254 | 0  | 3  | 183 | 59  | 17 | 37  | 0  | 9274  |
| 2009     | 420.75    | 80  | 182 | 51  | 88  | 1196 | 133 | 25 | 129 | 4322  | 0  | 421 | 0  | 6  | 135 | 56  | 30 | 109 | 0  | 6963  |
| 2010     | 574.75    | 145 | 298 | 85  | 115 | 1248 | 168 | 66 | 109 | 7606  | 0  | 410 | 0  | 10 | 221 | 147 | 53 | 105 | 0  | 10786 |
| 2011     | 368       | 127 | 271 | 54  | 58  | 1124 | 145 | 21 | 43  | 11831 | 0  | 202 | 0  | 9  | 170 | 68  | 40 | 93  | 0  | 14256 |
| 2012     | 600.75    | 164 | 314 | 105 | 91  | 1388 | 181 | 63 | 209 | 8848  | 1  | 522 | 1  | 7  | 194 | 108 | 54 | 74  | 0  | 12324 |
| 2013     | 575       | 142 | 193 | 101 | 100 | 1254 | 146 | 25 | 118 | 8221  | 0  | 378 | 1  | 11 | 166 | 89  | 48 | 36  | 1  | 11030 |
| 2014     | 491       | 99  | 213 | 120 | 85  | 1094 | 126 | 22 | 123 | 11043 | 0  | 348 | 1  | 7  | 112 | 80  | 39 | 53  | 0  | 13565 |
| 2015     | 587       | 137 | 201 | 132 | 125 | 1443 | 115 | 48 | 141 | 16593 | 1  | 546 | 1  | 13 | 118 | 120 | 54 | 57  | 0  | 19845 |
| 2016     | 527       | 322 | 242 | 136 | 92  | 1126 | 163 | 48 | 117 | 10530 | 0  | 294 | 1  | 5  | 167 | 96  | 49 | 78  | 0  | 13466 |
| 2017     | 515.25    | 324 | 219 | 163 | 82  | 1179 | 142 | 17 | 180 | 8744  | 0  | 341 | 2  | 7  | 166 | 106 | 64 | 67  | 0  | 11803 |
| 2018     | 455.25    | 98  | 181 | 176 | 64  | 668  | 124 | 11 | 126 | 6756  | 0  | 246 | 2  | 22 | 171 | 58  | 31 | 108 | 0  | 8842  |
| 2019     | 557.17    | 268 | 171 | 180 | 54  | 1027 | 105 | 9  | 181 | 7840  | 0  | 223 | 0  | 4  | 185 | 64  | 64 | 128 | 0  | 10503 |
| Average* | 511       | 164 | 231 | 112 | 90  | 1172 | 144 | 35 | 130 | 9449  | 0  | 371 | 1  | 10 | 162 | 93  | 46 | 78  | 0  | 12288 |

\*previous 10 year average (2009-2018)

### Key to Species Abbreviations in Table 3.

TV Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

OS Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

BE Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

NH Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

SS Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

CH Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

NG Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

RS Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

BW Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)

SW Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

RT Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

RL Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)

GE Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

AK American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

ML Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

PG Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

UR Unidentified Raptor

SE Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

# New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

## Spring 2018 through Winter 2018-19

Hector Galbraith, Chair

Michael Resch, Secretary

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee for four seasons: Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Winter 2018-19.

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

A rejection is not necessarily an indication that the identification was incorrect, but that the information received was not sufficient to allow its acceptance as a state record. Adequate documentation is key to whether a report is accepted or not. For information on the Committee and its decision-making process, see the articles in the Summer 1996 and Winter 2005-06 issues of *NHBR*.

These four 2018 seasons included four first New Hampshire state records that were accepted by the Committee:

- Neotropic Cormorant – discovered on 8-2-18 by F. Izaguirre on the Androscoggin River in Gorham. This was not only a first for New Hampshire, but also likely a first for all of New England. The bird remained through 9-12-18 for many to see.
- South Polar Skua – a bird photographed off-shore on 9-4-18 by several birders. A long-awaited first for New Hampshire, it replaces “Skua, sp.” which was on the official list based on several skua sight records that could not be assigned to species.
- Frigatebird, sp. – observed by S. Lamonde on 9-20-18 in Keene following the passage of Hurricane Florence. A detailed written description and sketch were provided. Accepted for addition to the Hypothetical state list due to lack of multiple observers or photograph required for a first state record. Although this was initially recorded as a Magnificent Frigatebird, the sighting was changed to “Frigatebird, sp.” since Lesser Frigatebird could not be ruled out.
- Ross’s Gull – photographed off-shore on 12-1-18 by multiple observers.

With these additions to the state list, as of February 2019, the official New Hampshire list totals 420 fully substantiated species, with an additional seven species on the Hypothetical list. The updated list can be found on the *New Hampshire Bird Records* web site.

The members of the Committee voting on these records were: David Donsker, Kurk Dorsey, Jason Lambert, Iain MacLeod, Jeanne-Marie Maher, Eric Masterson, Mike Resch, and Hector Galbraith (Chair). Mike Resch served as the Committee Secretary.

## Spring 2018

### Records accepted by the Committee

|                         |         |                                      |
|-------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Tundra Swan             | 4-11-18 | Newfound Lake, Hebron                |
| Common Eider (Northern) | 3-3-18  | Rye Harbor State Park                |
| Common Eider (Northern) | 3-25-18 | Great Boars Head, Hampton            |
| Common Eider            | 5-25-18 | Pickering Ponds, Rochester           |
| Red Phalarope           | 4-17-18 | Mill Pond, Ashland                   |
| Northern Wheatear       | 4-14-18 | Oyster River Forest, Durham          |
| Golden-winged Warbler   | 5-9-18  | Old Monson Village, Hollis/Milford   |
| Kentucky Warbler        | 5-7-18  | Great Bay Discovery Center, Stratham |
| Hooded Warbler          | 5-6-18  | Exeter                               |
| Hooded Warbler          | 5-11-18 | Contoocook                           |
| Summer Tanager          | 5-15-18 | Farmington                           |
| Hooded Warbler          | 5-28-18 | Rhododendron State Park, Fitzwilliam |

### Records not accepted by the Committee – None

## Summer 2018

### Records accepted by the Committee

|                  |        |   |
|------------------|--------|---|
| Common Eider     | 6-3-18 | Long Pond, Lempster                           |
| Royal Tern       | 7-6-18 | Ragged Neck, Rye<br>Great Boars Head, Hampton |
| Cerulean Warbler | 6-9-18 | Chesterfield/Hinsdale                         |

### Records not accepted by the Committee – None

## Fall 2018

### Records accepted by the Committee

|  |          |                                   |
|--|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Neotropic Cormorant (first NH record)                    | 8-2-18   | Androscoggin River, Gorham        |
| Frigatebird, sp. (first NH record for Hypothetical list) | 9-20-18  | Keene                             |
| Wood Stork   | 8-9-18   | Pickering Ponds, Rochester        |
| Barnacle Goose   | 11-12-18 | Odiome Point State Park, Rye      |
| Red-necked Phalarope                                     | 9-5-18   | Newfound Lake                     |
| Red Phalarope  | 10-20-18 | Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant |
| South Polar Skua (first NH record)                       | 9-4-18   | Offshore Waters                   |
| Scissor-tailed Flycatcher                                | 11-8-18  | Hampton Beach State Park, Hampton |
| Ash-throated Flycatcher                                  | 11-4-18  | Odiome Point State Park, Rye      |
| Western Kingbird   | 9-23-18  | Rye                               |

|                         |          |               |
|-------------------------|----------|---------------|
| Townsend's Solitaire    | 11-9-18  | Bow           |
| Hooded Warbler          | 11-4-18  | North Hampton |
| Western Tanager         | 11-11-18 | Pembroke      |
| LeConte's Sparrow       | 10-13-18 | Jackson       |
| Yellow-headed Blackbird | 10-15-18 | Concord       |

### Records not accepted by the Committee

|                     |         |           |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|
| Swallow-tailed Kite | 8-14-18 | Newfields |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|

The video and description of this distant bird could not eliminate more common species.

## Winter 2018-19

### Records accepted by the Committee

|                               |           |                                      |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| American White Pelican        | 12-11-18  | Odiome Point State Park, Rye         |
| Ross's Goose                  | 12-19-18  | Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant |
| Tufted Duck                   | 1-5,19-19 | Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant    |
| Ross's Gull (first NH record) | 12-1-18   | Jeffreys Ledge                       |
| Long-eared Owl                | 1-21-19   | Hampton                              |
| Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco      | 12-29-18  | Hollis                               |

### Records not accepted by the Committee – None

# Answer to the Summer 2019 Photo Quiz

by Leo McKillop

*Note: a new Photo Quiz will return in the next issue. – Ed.*



Photo by Leo McKillop.

Summer on the seacoast brings an abundance of different seabirds that we sorely miss during the winter. In this photo, we have three different species of terns. Terns are generally differentiated from gulls by having more pointy wings, sharper bills, and shorter legs in relation to body size, whereas gulls generally have broader wings, stout hooked bills, and longer legs in relation to body size. As with most things in life, there are exceptions. Bonaparte's and Little

Gulls do not have a hooked bill, while the Gull-billed Tern has a thicker "gull-like" bill, although it is not hooked like a Herring Gull bill. Feeding behavior is also helpful, as terns hover and dive for food, while gulls obtain their food from the surface.

Our quiz photo was taken on June 2 in Rye, NH. Given the date, we can rule out any juvenile plumages as it's much too early for them to be out and about. We'll concentrate on the adult breeding (or adult summer) plumage and ignore first and second summer plumages to keep things as simple as possible.

One way to start is by ruling out other species of terns that can be seen at the seacoast during this time of year. Caspian Terns have a large thick coral-red bill and black legs. They're also the largest tern in the world. Royal Terns are also large and have a big thick orange bill with black legs. Least Terns have a yellow bill, often with black tip, along with a white forehead. Gull-billed Terns have black legs and a thick, shorter black bill. Black Terns have a black head, breast, and belly.

Forster's Tern is much more difficult to rule out as the differences between it and the Common Tern are more subtle when perched. Forster's Tern has a slightly thicker bill with black extending farther back from the tip and its primaries are lighter when compared to a Common Tern. When we look at past confirmed sightings in eBird, there are only four records of Forster's Tern in May or June in New Hampshire, while Common Tern is easily the State's most abundant tern during this time of year. Outside of a few other extremely rare terns for our area, we are left with Common Tern, Roseate Tern, and Arctic Tern.

There are four individual terns in the photo, two of which are the same species, and one each of the two other species. The individuals in the upper center (UC) and upper right (UR) both have a slightly heftier orange-red bill with a black tip, while the middle right (MR) has a more slender solid black bill and the bottom left (BL) has a solid red bill that's a little shorter than those of the others. Comparing the color of the upperparts (the overall back area of the bird including nape, mantle, scapulars, and wing coverts) of the individuals, UC and UR are noticeably darker gray than MR, with BL somewhere in the middle. The legs of UC, UR, and MR look pretty similar in color and size, while the legs of BL are noticeably shorter and darker red. The tail of MR extends noticeably past the wingtips, while the tails of the other individuals look even with the wingtips or maybe just a little past, but nowhere near as long as MR. Also notice the difference between UR and BL regarding the thickness of the white in the lores (region between the eye and the base of the bill). BL has narrower white lores than UR. Keep in mind, there are other differences between these three species that can be seen when in flight or heard when vocalizing, though

obviously not evident in this photo.

UC and UR are both Common Tern, showing an orange-red bill with black tip, orange-red legs and the darkest upperparts of the group. MR is a Roseate Tern, showing a solid black bill, orange-red legs, the palest upperparts of the group and a tail that extends well beyond the wings when at rest. Beware, however, that Roseate Terns don't always have an all-black bill. During the breeding season Roseate Terns develop red at the base of the bill that eventually makes up 1/3 to 1/2 of the bill by the time chicks fledge before going back to all-black in August to September. Since not all Roseate Terns breed at the same time (later breeders tend to be 3-4 year olds), the amount of red at the base can range from none to 1/2 of the bill during the breeding season. BL is an Arctic Tern, showing a shorter blood-red bill, shorter and darker red legs, upperparts in between the other two species, and narrower white lores when compared with the Common Tern in the upper right.

All three species currently nest on White and Seavey Islands at the Isles of Shoals, approximately six miles off the coast of New Hampshire. This tern colony was reestablished through a partnership between NH Audubon and NH Fish and Game in 1997. Common Terns make up the large majority of the colony with roughly 2,500 pairs, followed by 40+ pairs of Roseate Terns and only a few pairs of Arctic Terns. Given the huge disparity in relative numbers, finding all three species on the same rock made it an especially good day for all who were able to observe these lovely terns.

*Quiz photo taken by Leo McKillop on June 2, 2019 at Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.*

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## Birding Page Pond Community Forest, Meredith

*by Rob Woodward*



*Page Pond by Rob Woodward.*

Now that I am a summer resident in the Lakes Region, I am searching for new birding sites to explore within the area. To my delight, I have located several good sites nearby, including state parks and sanctuaries of New Hampshire Audubon, Nature Conservancy, and Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Still more preserves are town conservation commission properties. One of my favorites is Page Pond Community Forest in Meredith. Over 800 acres of woodlands, wetlands, fields, streams and ponds are protected in this special sanctuary at the upper end of Meredith Neck. Surprisingly, it gets little attention from birders with only a handful of reports in eBird.

The creation of this preserve began in 2009 when the Trust for Public Lands bought the property and transferred ownership to the town. Important financial assistance came from New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the town of Meredith and individual contributors. The Sherman conservation easement adds another 53 acres and in 2017, almost 200 additional acres were acquired. The property is conserved by the Meredith Conservation Commission.

The rich natural and human history of this site is evident throughout. The most conspicuous human feature is the large mill dam built in the 1830s. There is also an old family graveyard, some cellar holes and a quarry where a unique rock was mined, but first, let's take a tour of the property trail by trail, starting from the Quarry Road kiosk.

To reach the kiosk for Page Pond, turn east on Route 25 in central Meredith. Drive two miles to Moulton Farm and turn right on Quarry Road. Go 0.4 miles until the road turns to dirt and bear right into the parking lot where you will find the kiosk.

Pick up a trail map here and continue straight ahead for about a hundred yards and bear right on the Page Pond Loop Trail. After a short distance, you will see a spur trail for a

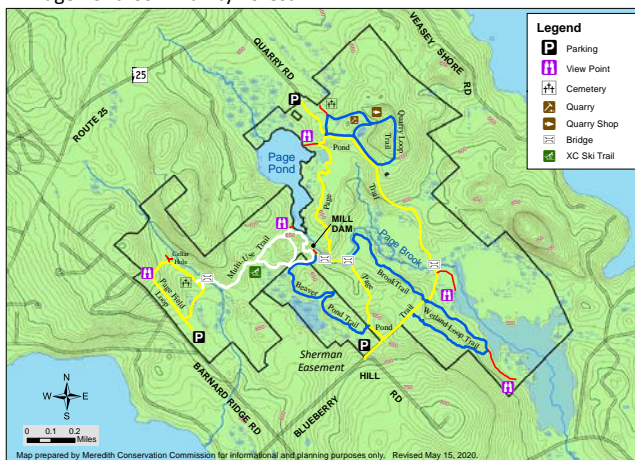


view of Page Pond, sometimes known as Little Pond. This is a must stop as it gives you the best view of this 19 acre undeveloped pond. The shallow north end is a good place to look for waterfowl.

On July 12, 2018, I found five Green-winged Teal, a rare bird anywhere in the state in summer, particularly inland. In August of 2020, at the time of this writing, a major irruption of two species of birds was occurring state-wide. There were many Red-breasted Nuthatches and some Red Crossbills present on some recent visits here. But don't come here to find rare birds. Instead, enjoy the deep forest, the tall trees, the ferns, toadstools and quiet beauty.

Continue on the Page Pond Trail until you come to a stream. Turn right and follow the sign to the mill dam. In 1806, as Lewis and Clark were returning from their famous expedition, Dudley Leavitt and his family settled in Meredith and in 1830, his son Sewall bought the land here and soon after built this huge dam and mill complex. The stone walls are 18 feet high and 16 feet wide, representing untold hours of hard labor in its construction.

Page Pond Community Forest Meredith Conservation Commission - Steward



Follow the white blazes of the Multi-Use Trail toward Page Field. Notice the nice wide bridges over the streams for accommodating cross-country skiers. Prior to reaching Page Field, you will come to a section of young secondary growth that will result in a change in the bird species composition from the deep woodlands you have just passed through. I recently found a Black-billed Cuckoo here. Up a steep section of trail is Page Field Loop, a trail that circumnavigates Page Field, the only open grassy area on the property. The top of the hill on this trail affords views of the nearby Belknap Mountains.

Retrace your steps on the Multi-Use Trail, bear right, and follow the Beaver Pond Trail. This wetland is good for Hooded Merganser and Belted Kingfisher. Unlike Page Pond, there are some small boat docks on the shore. This trail then connects with the Page Pond Trail marked with yellow blazes. Turn right on the Wetlands Loop Trail that takes you out to the largest wetlands complex on the preserve. At 281 acres, it is also the

largest wetland in Meredith. There is, or was, a Great Blue Heron rookery in here. Now is your chance to find herons and waterfowl. Sooner or later, you will hear the haunting cries of Common Loon from nearby Lake Winnepesaukee.

The Wetlands Loop reconnects with the Page Pond Trail or you can go straight on the Brook Trail, where in season you may find Louisiana Waterthrush. If you continue on the Page Pond Loop, you will come to a spur leading to a lookout of the wetlands along the Wetlands Loop. Return to Page Pond Trail. The trail passes a beaver dam where in 2018 I found a Mulberry Wing butterfly, still the only one I have ever seen. Farther down, turn right on the Quarry Loop Trail marked with blue markers.

On the right side of the trail are the ruins of the quarry shop and on the left side are the remains of the quarry. Here they mined "traprock", a special dark form of granite. If you have ever walked down a railroad track, you will have seen this dark igneous rock. Farther down the trail near a dead end, you will come to the Leavitt cemetery, a small, 19th century family graveyard, apparently limited to members of this pioneering family, including some young children. Go back to the loop trail and return to the Page Pond Trail and back to the Quarry Road parking lot.

The ten miles of trails that crisscross the preserve are very well maintained and marked. In fact, on a recent visit, there was a trail maintenance crew mowing and cutting the overgrowth on the trails. One of them told me he was on a guided bird walk last spring when they recorded 75 species of birds, about as many as can be seen anywhere in New Hampshire on a morning in May. I have only recorded about 60 species to date, but a morning walk in May and a waterfowl search in spring and fall will increase this list substantially.

If you are looking for a cool, quiet wood to walk in with a wide diversity of habitat and the potential for a large list of birds, I can highly recommend Page Pond Community Forest. Even if there are other cars in the parking lot, you probably won't see another person on the trails, but you will find evidence of human habitation and industry from long ago. Additional information on the history of this site and a trail map can be found on the Meredith Conservation Commission website.

After your morning bird walk, your day in the Lakes Region isn't over yet. Is there a lovelier town than the lakeside town of Meredith? After birding, return to Meredith to stop in for lunch, an ice cream cone, some shopping, and take a ride on the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad or a cruise on the lake on the M/S Mount Washington.

*After living in New Hampshire for 35 years, Rob Woodward retired and now lives in Fort Myers, Florida. He spends refreshing summers in the Lakes Region, continuing to search for new birding hotspots*

# 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.

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

# Rare Bird ALERT

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## Abbreviations Used

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

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# More Fall 2019 Highlights



*Connecticut Warbler by Steve Mirick, 9-27-19, Newington, NH.*



*Yellow-breasted Chat by Jim Sparrell, 11-27-19, South Mill Pond, Portsmouth, NH.*



*White-eyed Vireo by Jim Sparrell, 10-1-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

# Sparrows of Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH

In addition to the LeConte's Sparrow (see the back cover), Christopher McPherson found and photographed these uncommon sparrows at the orchard in Fall 2019.



*Dickcissel, 9-1-19.*



*Grasshopper Sparrow, 9-23-19.*



*Lincoln's Sparrow, 9-19-19.*

# Fall 2019 Rarities



*A first state record Cassin's Sparrow by Eric Masterson, 9-21-19, Star Island, Isles of Shoals, NH.*



*A second state record Lazuli Bunting by Sheri Oosterveen, 10-22-19, Bow, NH.*



*A Le Conte's Sparrow (fifth state record) found by Chris MacPherson. Photo by Leo McKillop, 9-25-19, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH.*



*A third state record Gull-billed Tern by Sophia Wong, 9-28-19, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*