

New Hampshire

BIRD RECORDS



Crossbills



A fully adult Red Crossbill photographed by David Govatski on the Errol-Umbagog Christmas Bird Count, 12-20-19.



Male and female White-winged Crossbills by Donna Ellis, 2-9-20, Galehead Hut, Lincoln, NH.



A Red Crossbill molting from its immature green plumage into the adult red plumage. You can see its tongue reaching into the slush for a drink. Photo by Steve Mirick, 2-9-20, Albany, NH.

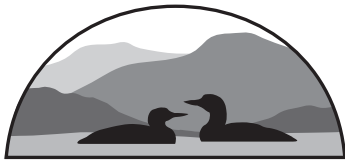
Photo Quiz



Can You Identify These Birds?

Photo by Susan Wrisley.
Answer on page 42.

IN APPRECIATION



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This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by Susan and Peter Wrisley in appreciation of all the great people in the New Hampshire birding community. That community is part of Susan's recipe for success during her big year which she writes about in this issue. Please see the accompanying message from Susan on page 2.



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Cover Photos: Painted Bunting (top) by Steve Mirick, 2-9-20, Tin Mountain Conservation Center, Albany, NH. Brambling (bottom) by Scott Young, 12-4-19, Strafford, NH.

From the Editor

WINTER 2019-2020

by Rebecca Suomala

Welcome Susan!

We are delighted to welcome Susan Wrisley as the new Photo Quiz author. As a birder and photographer, she brings a wealth of images to this feature as you will see. We hope you enjoy her first quiz in this issue. We also congratulate her on her 300 birds in 2019 and thank her and Peter for sponsoring this issue in honor of New Hampshire's birding community. Please see her message below.

COVID-19 Update

As we approach another winter, I know I will miss outdoor gatherings with friends. Thank goodness for birding even though it means bundling up with many layers and

A Recipe for Success

by Susan Wrisley

If a year of birding was a recipe, I imagine it would look something like this. Start with all the skill and knowledge you can find in your cabinets, seeking knowledge from others as needed. Stir in large amounts of persistence and determination, then add liberal dollops of luck and obsession, with just a pinch of insanity for good measure. Combine thoroughly with a great New Hampshire birding community and bird for 365 days. Enjoy!

All the ingredients in this recipe are important, but the New Hampshire birding community is the magic ingredient that pulls the whole thing together. Sure,

Susan (right) on one of her many 2019 boat trips, this one with Kathryn Frieden, Zeke Cornell, and Becky Suomala (photographer) on an Eastman's fishing boat, 12-4-19.

Time to Renew!

This is the last issue of this subscription year and your renewal notice is enclosed with this issue. (If your subscription is up to date you will have a different notice stating that you do not need to renew.) All subscriptions renew at the same time and encompass the four issues of a given year (i.e. Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Winter 2020-21). Thank you for your subscription and support of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.

hand warmers to not only bird, but also meet up with other birders safely outside. I am so grateful for the wonderful world of birding. NH Audubon staff and volunteers continue to work from home which is making it challenging to get out mailings, but we're getting there. Thank you all for your patience with the timing of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. We hope that you will be safe and enjoy birding in 2021!

it's possible to bird without it, just as it's possible to make a cake without sugar, but the end result wouldn't be nearly as good. It's not just the incredible birds that are shared, but the camaraderie, the knowledge and the humor. When I look back at my final list for 2019, my best memories are of the birds seen in the company of friends in this great birding community. It's not about the numbers, it's about the experience.



Thank You to Donors

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

The following list acknowledges donations received from September 20, 2019 to October 31, 2020. We apologize if we inadvertently omitted you or misspelled your name – please let us know.

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Superbowl of Birding (Twitchers out of the Rye)

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Zeke Cornell	Marion Jackson	Marie Nickerson	Scott Young



Peregrine Falcon by Kyle Wilmarth.

WINTER SEASON

December 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020

by Katherine Towler and Jim Sparrell



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

The variable weather that has characterized New Hampshire winters in recent years, with rapidly changing extremes of cold and heat, was a factor again in the winter of 2019-20. After an unseasonably cold November that brought two weeks of temperatures 10-15 degrees below normal, December

followed the pattern and ushered in the winter season with snow and temperatures below zero in much of the state. By mid-month, however, a warming trend saw temperatures in the forties and fifties south of the White Mountains and rain that washed away the snow cover. This pattern continued throughout the season, with warmer than normal temperatures overall broken by short periods of Arctic cold.

December, with a series of snow and rainstorms, ended as the wettest December since 1996. Record high temperatures were recorded in Concord on January 11 (61 degrees F.) and January 12 (67 degrees F.), breaking records set in 1980 and 1885 respectively. January ended as the ninth warmest January on record in New Hampshire. Overall, the Northeast saw its tenth warmest January with an average temperature of



This Semipalmated Plover is the first to overwinter in New Hampshire. Photo by Steve Mirick, 2-12-20, Rye Harbor, NH.

29.9 degrees F., 6.7 degrees F. warmer than normal. Although February brought repeated brief periods of Arctic air, the average temperature in Concord was 27.5 degrees F., 3.2 degrees F. above normal.

The early cold in November and December meant that lingering warblers were not prevalent this year. Abundant spruce cone crops across the boreal forests in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland meant that this was not a major irruption year for finch species either. Half-hardy species were the story of this winter. These are species of birds that can tough out some spells of cold winter weather, but can't handle long stretches of extreme cold and snow. They need to be able to obtain food, which may involve frequenting feeders and/or shifting their diet to include more seeds, fruits, and berries they can still scavenge. More typical half-hardies in New Hampshire include Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Towhee, and Brown Thrasher. All of these species were seen this winter.

This winter season included exciting finds by birders throughout the state of species that would typically be found in Europe, the southern or western United States, or, after migration, in Central and South America. Two **Bullock's Orioles** and two **Western Tanagers** visited Rockingham County, with one of the orioles staying through the winter season. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** that lingered on the Seacoast was the first February record for this species, and a **Semipalmated Plover** that spent all three winter months at Rye Harbor represented another first February record and the first individual of this species known to over-winter in New Hampshire. A group of **Tree Swallows** that frequented the back dunes in Seabrook, with a few individuals persisting into January, established the latest record for this species. A **Painted Bunting** found in Conway in February made the second state winter record for this species. The most notable birds of the season and exciting finds were the third state record of a **Green-tailed Towhee** and the first confirmed state record of a **Brambling**.

Species are presented in mostly taxonomic sequence with the exception of loons and Horned Larks which are discussed with their winter affiliates.

Waterfowl to Grebes

Despite the snowy onset of the winter season at the beginning of December, the overall season was temperate and allowed waterfowl to linger on waterways around the state. Of the various ponds and lakes in the state that keep track of "ice-in" and "ice-out," Powwow Pond, Wilson Pond, Lake Winnepesaukee, Lake Winnisquam, and Newfound Lake did not report ice-in until the middle or end of January, according to the NH Division of Environmental Services.

Other waterways, such as rivers and tidal bays like Great Bay, remained open and productive winter habitat for waterfowl.

Although there are often large flocks of Snow Geese, e.g., in the thousands, in neighboring Vermont, they are relatively scarce in New Hampshire in the winter season. The reports bookended the state with one out west in Sullivan County on the banks of the Connecticut River in December and one lingering bird on the Seacoast, likely a single individual observed from mid-December to mid-February. Brant are also relatively scarce in winter; there were only four reports this season, all along the coast. Brant breed in the high Arctic and in some areas the number of nests has been increasing, possibly related to global warming. Their wintering grounds along the Atlantic coast have also shown a shift farther north, but apparently not into New Hampshire (Lewis, et al, 2020).



Snow Goose with Canada Geese by Len Medlock, 2-9-20, Rye, NH.

Two **Cackling Geese** were reported on the Seacoast: one resting on the water on Great Bay and the other migrating, both with a flock of Canada Geese. Although the Cackling Goose is smaller, there is overlap in size with smaller Canada Geese, making it difficult to successfully identify a Cackling Goose by size alone.

In addition to a smattering of Wood Ducks in southern regions of New Hampshire, Ken Klapper found a drake in Moultonborough in the Bean Road wetland area on January 1 that was observed periodically until February 1. In Salem, at the end of February, Kyle Wilmarth observed a pair arriving “pretty much right on time.”

Great Bay provided substantial open water for most of the winter and hosted Gadwall and American Wigeon (peak of 87), as well as two drake **Redhead** first reported by Steve Mirick on December 11. The Redhead were seen periodically until mid-February. Large numbers of Greater Scaup were also able to winter on the bay with a flock of 2,200 counted in mid-February. Missing from Great Bay were any Eurasian Wigeon, often found as one or two mixed in with the American Wigeon flock. In mid-December, Steve Mirick

counted a flock of 292 Common Goldeneye on Great Bay and noted that it was one of his highest counts there in years.

Barrow’s Goldeneye were reported from familiar winter hangouts on Great Bay, the Merrimack River in Manchester, and the Androscoggin River in Errol. Two drakes were counted in Sanbornton on the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), and one was observed in Laconia about a month later.

At the Mechanic Street Bridge in Gorham, a flock of Mallards lingered throughout the winter season along with a few American Black Ducks, thanks to the relatively moderate temperatures.

Small numbers of Northern Pintail were seen around the state with a drake on Horseshoe Pond in Concord, several at Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, and another drake at Reed’s Marsh Wildlife Management Area in Orford in early February, where there was also a Green-winged Teal in the group. Green-winged Teal were also seen in Newport by Dylan Jackson on January 3, and there were a few expected sightings in southern areas where they are more typically found in winter.



Ring-necked Duck by Kyle Wilmarth, 1-27-20, Salem, NH.

Most Ring-necked Ducks are usually gone by mid-December, but a few have overwintered or remained as stragglers on inland lakes and ponds. This winter, the only overwintering one was in the Spicket River along Hawkin’s Farm in Salem, found on December 23. This individual continued to be observed until mid-February. Ring-necked Ducks started to return with predictable north-bound migration on “leap day” just sneaking into the winter season. Two Lesser Scaup were observed on the CBC in Sanbornton by Ben Griffith and Jason Lambert on December 28. Len Medlock counted 66 at the Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant at the end of February, a more expected location, but it was a good-sized flock.

Hooded Mergansers were able to remain in many locations with open water around the state. The high count was 103 at Spofford Lake in December. A large flock of 400 Common Mergansers was observed in Sandwich at Town Beach and then in Laconia a short time later. A couple of Common Mergansers also lingered in Errol through mid-January. One

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Red-breasted Merganser was seen and photographed by Kyle Jones on February 4 at an unexpected location away from the coast, near Johnson Island in the Connecticut River, and continued to be seen until February 24.

A single Spruce Grouse was seen on the Errol CBC in December and Stephen Hale found another one near the top of Victor Head at the end of February. These are not unexpected sightings, but it is a relatively scarce bird in New Hampshire.

There were a few lingering grebes that were noted around the state with one Pied-billed Grebe seen on Spofford Lake for the Keene CBC in mid-December and another in Lebanon on January 5. A likely latish migrant Horned Grebe was found inland in Meredith from Leavitt Beach on December 9 and three Red-necked Grebes were seen in Nelson relatively close to shore on Granite Lake. The slow freeze allowed one or two Common Loons to linger in Belknap County through mid-January and, as expected, they were seen in large numbers along the coast.

Shorebirds

This winter a **Semipalmated Plover** stole the show as a record-setting shorebird in New Hampshire. In the fall, Semipalmated Plover arrive in large numbers, hundreds and sometimes several thousand, but they usually depart by mid-November (Keith & Fox, 2013). Previously the late record for this species in New Hampshire was December 9. This diminutive but stalwart bird began setting records with a sighting on December 12 and every day after that it set a new record, eventually overwintering successfully for a first state record. It generally favored the Rye Harbor area, sometimes on the mudflats, sometimes on the lawn at the state park, sometimes on the wrack, and sometimes it was nowhere to be found when people went to look for it. This intrepid individual was seen near thundering surf, weathering high winds and frigid temperatures. It managed to evade Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Cooper's Hawks as it quietly foraged on the flats alone. Generally, Semipalmated Plovers are medium to long-distance migrants breeding in Arctic and sub-Arctic areas and wintering from



Black-bellied Plover by Steve Mirick, 12-10-19, Seabrook Beach, NH.

southern North America through South America. We hope this bird found its flock for the spring trip north.

A Black-bellied Plover also lingered in the Hampton Harbor area. It was seen off and on in December and then reported again on January 7 and was last seen on February 1. This species has occurred a handful of times in winter since 1950 with the latest record being one at New Castle on February 22, 1967.

Expected winter shorebirds for the New Hampshire coast include Sanderlings, Dunlin, and Purple Sandpipers. This winter season Sanderlings were present in good numbers (high of 80) through the end of February, in contrast to the prior winter when there were no reports after December 20. Dunlin were seen infrequently and in small numbers. Purple Sandpipers were present in moderate numbers throughout the season, as expected.

Insuring a bit more shorebird excitement for the winter season, two American Woodcock were found near the



American Woodcock by Steve Mirick, 1-11-20, Dover, NH.

Liberty Mutual parking area in Dover in early January and several observers were able to locate one that lingered a few days. There are several previous January records from Littleton (1960), Hampton (1998), Nashua (1976), and Chichester (1974).

Reflecting a predictable end to the winter shorebird season, three Killdeer were found foraging in a wet field on February 29, the beginnings of spring migration.

Jaegers, Alcids, and Gulls to Tubenoses and Gannets

The winter season provided another excellent year for observing seabirds. Alcids were reasonably plentiful and in some cases present in record-setting numbers offshore, with a few observable from shore. Eastman's fishing boat out of Hampton Harbor kept running past the end of December, which does not happen every year and provided opportunities for pelagic birding, both in New Hampshire and Massachusetts waters, through early to mid-February. Additionally, the Gulf Challenger went out for a research trip with a hardy band of birders aboard in early January, for a total of a dozen pelagic trips made by birders (Table 1, p. 8).

Pomarine Jaegers were observed on six of the trips. They



Dovekies by Leo McKillop, 12-29-19, offshore waters, NH.

are the largest and least graceful of the jaegers, genetically more closely related to skuas than the others, and are only able to breed successfully in the Arctic every three or four years when the lemming population is sufficient to support them. Their breeding territory overlaps with Snowy Owls because of their common interest in lemmings. Pomarines are reported to harass Snowy Owls frequently (Wiley & Lee, 2020). Although they generally are slightly smaller than a Herring Gull, they may kill birds as large as a Black-legged Kittiwake, driving them to the surface of the water (Olsen & Larsson, 1997). Past New Hampshire winter records suffer from limited opportunity for observation due to fewer trips, but Pomarines have been reported as late as December 10, 2013, when Eric Masterson found eight offshore, and December 19, 2015 when Ben Griffith, Lauren Kras, Jason Lambert, and Robbie Prieto observed one from Pulpit Rocks in Rye. Thus, Charlie Nims' observation of one on January 13, 2020 appears to be a new late winter record for New Hampshire.



Pomarine Jaeger chasing a Black-legged Kittiwake by Leo McKillop, 1-4-20, offshore waters, NH.

For alcid species, the abundance of **Dovekie** was a highlight of the winter season. The report of 1,980 on the Gulf Challenger trip represents a new high count for the state. Dovekie are the only seabird in the Atlantic to feed almost exclusively on copepods, a subclass including many different small aquatic crustaceans (Montevicchi & Stenhouse, 2020). Curiously, Right Whales are also largely dependent on copepods in their diet and a group of Right Whales was observed feeding off Jeffrey's Ledge in Massachusetts waters this winter. The high numbers of Dovekie in New Hampshire offshore waters suggests that copepods were readily available this year. Dovekie were observed as far south as North Carolina during this winter season.

Razorbill and Common Murre were seen in moderate numbers on each of the pelagic trips, with some Common Murre coming into breeding plumage. Thick-billed Murre were a less common sighting this winter, reported on four of the trips. Atlantic Puffin were observed on six of the trips, with a few coming into their colorful breeding plumage toward the end of the season. Black Guillemot, which are likely breeders at the Isles of Shoals, were noted on many of the trips, as well as seen frequently from shore. We should add that many small and large alcid species may go unidentified on pelagic trips because of difficulties with viewing conditions. The February 9 trip was on a clear day with dead calm waters even out on Jeffrey's Ledge, making it easier to identify the many alcids



Common Murre (bridled form) by Len Medlock, 1-14-20, offshore waters, NH.

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Table 1. Totals for selected species on pelagic boat trips during the Winter of 2019-20. Data from eBird. All trips were with Eastman's Docks Fishing Fleet except as noted by Challenger which refers to the UNH R/V Gulf Challenger (private). See below for observers.

Trip Date	Dovekie	Thick-billed Murre	Common Murre	Razorbill	Atlantic Puffin	Pomarine Jaeger	Northern Fulmar	Black-legged Kittiwake
12/4	63	1	2	13	1	1	60	120
12/7	550	0	5	12	0	0	0	6
12/13	50	0	9	10	0	1	1	3
12/21	175	0	22	5	2	0	0	155
12/27	620	1	44	30	1	1	46	39
12/29	577	1	6	22	0	0	2	9
1/4 (Eastman's)	895	0	47	24	2	2	0	107
1/4 (Challenger)	1,980	0	27	11	0	2	0	15
1/13	250	0	3	3	0	1	2	8
1/14	9	0	0	1	3	0	0	0
1/23	2	0	12	9	0	0	0	3
2/9	274	6	6	36	3	0	0	6

Observers:

12/04/19 – Kathryn Frieden, Susan Wisley, Becky Suomala, and Zeke Cornell
 12/07/19 – Jim Sparrell, Leo McKillop, and Chris Duffy
 12/13/19 – Leo McKillop and Jeanne-Marie Maher
 12/21/19 – Chris Duffy, Rebecca Suomala, Zeke Cornell, Leo McKillop, and Rob Woodward
 12/27/19 – Michael Harvey
 12/29/19 – Leo McKillop and Jim Sparrell

01/04/20 – Becky Suomala, Chris Duffy, Liz & Maurice Southworth, and Zeke Cornell (Eastman's)
 01/04/20 – Steve & Jane Mirick, Ben Griffith, and Leo McKillop (Challenger)
 01/13/20 – Charlie Nims
 01/14/20 – Dan Prima, Greg Tillman, Susan Wisley, Len Medlock, Eric Masterson, Scott Heron, Leo McKillop, and Zeke Cornell
 01/23/20 – Leo McKillop
 02/02/10 – Jim Sparrell and Chris Duffy

all around the boat. Digital photography has also helped to confirm and document sightings more thoroughly.

The pelagic trips also noted good numbers of Northern Fulmar on several of the trips earlier in the season, and three of the trips counted over 100 Black-legged Kittiwake, but these are not historical records. Both of these bird species disperse from breeding colonies during the winter. Northern Gannets were observed consistently on the trips with a high count of 42 on December 27. They spend their first three years at sea until they are old enough to start breeding (Mowbray, 2020).

Away from the coast, Iceland Gulls were reported consistently in the southeastern part of the state, including Hollis and Salem, and one was reported as far north as Berlin. It wasn't until the first of the year that the faithful Glaucous Gull, which has been returning to Seabrook every winter since December of 2008, was observed back in its regular spot, dominating the parking lot by Hampton Harbor.

Herons, Eagles and Hawks to Owls

There was a single report of a lingering Great Egret on the coast at the start of the season. On December 21 an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron was photographed on South Mill Pond in Portsmouth, but was not seen again on the pond. A puzzling report came in of two bitterns seen from the Chamber of Commerce Building in Portsmouth. Further investigation revealed two immature Black-crowned Night-Herons hanging around the channel that flows in and out of North Mill Pond. At least one continued to be seen until February 3, so it isn't clear that they were able to successfully overwinter. There have been at least four previous winter records from 1993 to 2013, but the observation in February is a first for that month and a record late date.

A few **Black Vultures** were seen across the southern part of the state with four at Chickering Farm in Westmoreland, four in Hinsdale, two in Kingston, one in Windham, three in Nashua, and two in Exeter. Black Vultures are the most numerous vultures in the Western Hemisphere. Their



Black-crowned Night-Heron by Jim Sparrell, 1-16-20, North Mill Pond, Portsmouth, NH.



Black Vultures by Len Medlock, 2-17-20, Exeter, NH.

sense of smell is not as well developed, so they frequently monitor Turkey Vultures and follow them to locate food. Communal roosts may also serve as an opportunity to obtain information about food sources (Buckley 2020). Turkey Vultures are now regular across the southern part of the state in winter with the highest count being 53 at the roost in Exeter in February, when increasing numbers were pushing north back into the state. One made it as far north as Sandwich on February 24.

There were three winter sightings of **Golden Eagles** in early January from New Ipswich, Warren, and Pittsfield. Nine Bald Eagles were seen at a meat pile in Dummer in early December, and some continued to be reported throughout the winter in the north country and throughout the state.

NH Audubon's 40th annual Winter Eagle Survey surpassed 100 Bald Eagles for the first time, tallying 101 Bald Eagles and two Golden Eagles! Here's part of Chris Martin's report:

We finally did it! This year, for the first time in four decades of counting, we surpassed 100 Bald Eagles seen on New Hampshire's Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey! The weather on January 9 for the Lakes Region count was windy and bone-chilling cold, but visibility was good, and the eagles certainly weren't dissuaded from flying by the wind. Just two days later, on Saturday January 11 our Statewide count featured Spring-like record warmth that had some surveyors outside in just tee shirts! A total of 100 volunteer observers participated in this year's survey, and they found a record-high 101 Bald Eagles on Count Day, 6% higher than 2017's previous record-high total of 95 birds seen. Top regional honors for most eagles seen on Count Day 2020 go to the Lakes Region, where 31 Bald Eagles and 1 Golden Eagle were tallied on a single day. The Connecticut River watershed was close behind with 29 Balds, followed by the Great Bay/Seacoast area with 15 Balds, and the Merrimack River watershed with 14 Balds and one additional Golden Eagle. The other regions had lower numbers.

Red-shouldered Hawks were scattered around Merrimack County and all three southern counties throughout the winter. Just a few years ago, Keith and Fox (2013) described this species as a "Rare winter resident, principally in the coastal region, rarely inland" (p. 132). Keith and Fox also note that their numbers have increased significantly since 2000, with the northernmost winter bird in Tamworth in December of 2002 reported by Davis Finch. Red-shouldered Hawks have a varied diet and can be flexible in food sources that range from small mammals like mice, voles, and chipmunks to birds, and, in season, frogs, crayfish, snakes, and insects. There were six reports of Rough-legged Hawks, again scattered around the southern part of the state. Lack of snow cover for much of the winter in the southern part of the state may have made it easier for them to locate small mammals as they hunt on the wing over fields.

Eastern Screech-Owls were present in the southeastern parts of New Hampshire with one as far north as Gilford in January, making it one of three winter records ever for Belknap County. Snowy Owls were uncommon this winter, with reports on only three days, all in the vicinity of Hampton Beach State Park; this individual, presumably the same bird, was almost pure white. Likewise, Short-eared Owls were rarely seen in New Hampshire with two reports from Hampton and one from East Kingston. Northern Saw-whet Owls were noted from northern areas, including Wentworth's Location in Coos County and Grafton and

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Carroll Counties, and in the south, all the way to Brookline, Rye, and Newfields.

Woodpeckers to Waxwings

One of the birding highlights of the winter season was a continuing **Red-headed Woodpecker** at Burley Farm in Epping that many birders enjoyed. It was seen caching food, such as acorns, in the dead trees in the swampy wetland it frequented. Observers enjoyed watching this immature bird get an increasingly red head as the season progressed. A second bird, also an immature, was seen periodically through most of the winter in Lee frequenting a suet feeder there. A third immature was found in Durham during the Lee-Durham CBC on December 21, resulting in two Red-headed on that count.



Red-headed Woodpecker by Len Medlock, 1-12-20, Epping, NH.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker by Keith Chamberlin, 2-11-20, Ashland, NH.

A few Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported in the northern and north-central regions of New Hampshire, including Center Sandwich and Pinkham Notch, in addition to scattered reports from the southern counties. In their northern winter range, they rely on insects in bark on trees, fruit, and sap, when available. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, which are not considered migratory, continue to appear to be expanding their range northward. They were observed in Moultonborough, Holderness, Hanover, Plymouth, Canaan, and as far north as Berlin and Gorham. A northern

boreal specialist, the Black-backed Woodpecker was seen on Trudeau Road in Bethlehem and in Errol at several different locations, including in a back yard, and on the Errol CBC.

There were no reports of American Kestrel from December to mid-January and then there were reports of individual birds from East Kingston, Great Bay, and Pease International Tradeport. Likewise, there were relatively few Merlin reported in this winter season compared to other years. Less snow cover may have made prey more widely available which may have resulted in easier hunting and birds being more widely dispersed. Migrating Merlins on the East Coast may fly over open water for great distances and tend not to winter farther south than Florida and the Greater Antilles, where they can find concentrations of other migrants to feed on. At least one pair of Peregrine Falcons was observed together in the Concord area. Pairs generally remain together until the young have dispersed, and attachment to a preferred nest site may be stronger than a pair bond in terms of a pair remaining together (White, Clume, Cade & Hunt 2020).

A late **Eastern Phoebe** was discovered at Stonewall Farm in West Keene in December. Northern Shrike were widely scattered from most counties in the state during the winter season. Due to their pattern of caching food in tens of thousands of locations for winter feeding (and being able to remember most of them!), Canada Jays remain in localized family groups and were seen this winter in typical north country habitat in Errol, Pittsburg, Bethlehem, and nearby locations. There is some thinking that resin production of boreal conifers may have antibacterial qualities and help to preserve their food. Since breeding for Canada Jays can start in mid-February, a reliable food supply is critically important. Habitat change, with more deciduous trees, appears to cause them to shift their home range (Strickland, Kielstra & Norris, 2011).

Fish Crows now appear established in small numbers as year-round residents in New Hampshire with consistent winter sightings along the seacoast and a high count of at least 20 in Salem. Good numbers of Boreal Chickadees were encountered in the Pittsburg area and on some winter hikes in the White Mountains. A few Tufted Titmouse were reported from Coos County during winter, primarily coming to feeders.

Establishing many amazing New Hampshire records, a group of **Tree Swallows** were found in the Seabrook Back Dunes well into the winter. In early December, flocks of 30 to 60 were observed, sometimes flying north. This group dwindled to 10 birds feeding on the bayberry. As late as January 18, two birds were still seen feeding in the bushes. Typically, the migrating flocks of Tree Swallows peak along the coast between the end of August and mid-September.

Previous late records from Keith and Fox (2013) were in Rye, from November 22 and 28, **1968(!)**. There were late Tree Swallows reported in Maine also (see the article by Steve Mirick in this issue); a flock of 25 in Cape Elizabeth was feeding on bayberries and was last seen on January 25, 2020.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet by Christopher McPherson, 2-9-20, Nashua, NH.

As in recent years, lingering Ruby-crowned Kinglets were present during this winter season and remained later in the winter, a trend evident in the last two decades and certainly allowed by warmer winters. Although their diet leans toward insects and spiders and their eggs, they can incorporate some seeds and fruit in winter. The northern extent of their range does appear to be influenced by winter temperature (Swanson, Ingold, & Wallace, 2020). Just slightly south of New Hampshire, in Rhode Island and Connecticut, they are much more prevalent in winter.

Winter Wrens are increasingly found into February now, whereas this species was less common a few decades ago. Their regional winter distribution is similar to the Ruby-crowned Kinglets, being much more prevalent just south of New Hampshire, although they are frequently found near swamps and wetlands during the winter.

Gray Catbird, another half-hardy species, can linger into the winter season, and one at Pickering Ponds in Rochester successfully overwintered this year. There were approximately nine reported from different locations this winter. Another member of the *mimidae* family, a Brown Thrasher, turned up for two days under a feeder in Sanbornton.

A western vagrant, **Varied Thrush**, was seen and photographed once in Newmarket, feeding with a large group of robins in February. The last winter this species was reported in the state was the Winter of 2016-17 when two were present. Hermit Thrush is a half-hardy that is not unexpected in winter, but one was found during the Errol-Umbagog Christmas Bird Count, quite far north, that continued to early January. A surprise sighting of a Wood Thrush, photographed under a feeder during NH Audubon's



Varied Thrush by Dan McCoy, 2-11-20, Newmarket, NH.

Backyard Winter Bird Survey in February, came in from Hampstead. This is the third winter record for this species, following reports in 1993 and 2001. Due to the abundance of the native mountain-ash berry crop to the north, Bohemian Waxwings were notably absent even in northern New Hampshire, with only a couple of sightings.

Pipits, Finches, Sparrows and Orioles to Blackbirds

A nice flock of 25 American Pipits was seen at Woodmont Orchard in Nashua in early December, and a few scattered reports came in from southern parts of the state, with all of them gone by the end of the month.



Brambling by Scott Young, 12-4-19, Strafford, NH.

In terms of very rare (and exciting) vagrants, a **Brambling** appeared briefly under a feeder in Strafford, staying long enough for a few photos. This species breeds in northern Europe, including Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia. While a few overwinter in the north, their typical migration takes the Scandinavian birds primarily to the British Isles (Clement & Arhipov 2020). The bird in New Hampshire represents a first documented state record, although there was one prior report in Plymouth in October of 1987, considered hypothetical because of the lack of three observers or a photo

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as required for a first state record.

Abundant spruce cone crops across the boreal forests in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland meant that this was not a major irruption year for finch species. Common Redpolls and Pine Grosbeaks did not move south as they do in irruptive seasons. After a near record year for Evening Grosbeaks last winter, there were only a couple of reports of this species; however, Red and White-winged Crossbills were present across New Hampshire with some winter sightings of Red in every county except for Strafford County, and White-winged more heavily skewed to northern counties. Pine Siskins were seen in decent numbers in the north, but were unusual in the southern and central parts of the state.



Horned Lark and Lapland Longspur by Susan Wisley, 1-22-20, Hampton Beach SP, NH.

Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were present in expected numbers, associating with flocks of Horned Larks in their typical locations at Hampton Beach State Park and in Walpole, where they have been seen regularly in recent years. A few smaller flocks of Snow Buntings and/or Horned Larks were

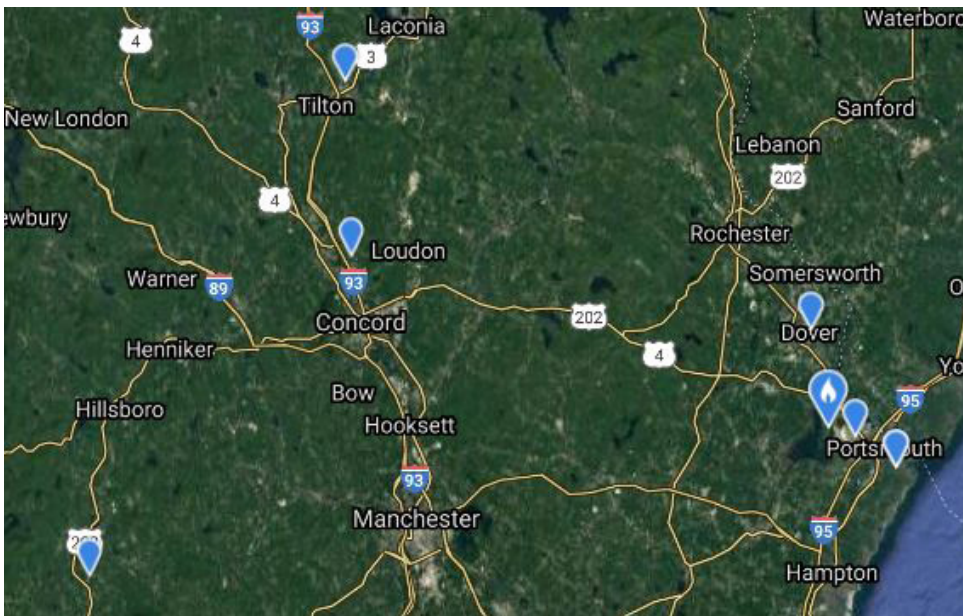


Figure 1. The locations of Field Sparrow sightings in eBird during the Winter of 2019-20. Image provided by eBird (www.ebird.org) and created 11-13-20.

reported around the southern and central parts of the state.

Most Chipping Sparrows move to the southern US during the winter, but there were more lingering birds in New Hampshire than in previous winters as far north as Errol, Wolfeboro, and Concord. Six were seen at a single feeder in Derry and the one in Errol is a first winter record in eBird for Coos County. Likewise, more Field Sparrows, a total of seven (Figure 1), were observed during this winter, with one being seen as late as mid-February. Last winter there was only one reported and only two the winter before that. A few Fox Sparrows camped out under feeders, with one of the most faithful being at Dan Hubbard's home in Rochester, first seen on January 3 and still coming at the end of February (see the Field Notes for more on Dan's Fox Sparrow). One was seen in Milan, joining only one previous winter record in eBird for Coos County.

In early January an Oregon subspecies of Dark-eyed Junco in Errol, the only one found in the state this winter, could be identified through some good photographs. Four White-crowned Sparrows were seen in winter, all in Rockingham County. A pale, Ipswich subspecies of Savannah Sparrow was seen at Hampton Beach State Park, where there are occasionally several during the winter. Savannahs were less evident than previous years at some of the farms where they tend to hang out in colder weather. A few Swamp Sparrows were observed settling in mostly southern locations in the state.

A western vagrant, **Green-tailed Towhee**, was found by Jason Lambert in Chichester in early December near a private plant nursery. This bird is the third record for New Hampshire. Jason graciously made arrangements when possible for several groups of birders to try to view it. On one of the colder days of the winter, December 8, with a temperature of -3 F, the bird was seen foraging on nearby land, flying into trees, and being quite active. It was last reported in winter on February 21, after which it disappeared until March 14 when Jason saw it one last time.

A record-setting 14 Eastern Towhees were reported this winter, compared to no reports last winter and five in the winter of 2017-18. Towhees are a relatively recent addition to our winter birds and didn't become annual on the Christmas Bird Count until 2011. Several were faithful to feeders in Concord, Durham, Milford, Nottingham, and Warner during the entire season. An interesting towhee



Green-tailed Towhee by Jim Sparrell, 12-8-19, Chichester, NH.

photographed in Hillsborough, foraging with White-throated Sparrows, appears to be a potential hybrid Spotted x Eastern Towhee, given some spotting on the wings.

In mid-February, an Eastern Meadowlark appeared under a feeder in Lyndeborough. It was not feeding and was not seen again. A Yellow-breasted Chat frequented our feeder in Portsmouth through much of the winter (see the article in this issue). It was originally thought by Linnaeus (18th century founder of the classification system used in modern botany and zoology) to be related to mockingbirds and thrashers, then it spent a number of years as a near-warbler, before being most recently classified more closely to blackbirds but in its own family. Some birds appear to have an odd tendency to disperse in a northerly direction primarily along the Eastern seacoast from their breeding areas in the south. This winter there were reports of Yellow-breasted Chats from Maine in Portland and on Monhegan Island, up into Canada in Moncton, New Brunswick, with multiple reports from Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island, and even several reports from Newfoundland.



The Stratham Bullock's Oriole by Steve Mirick, 1-3-20, NH.

Two species of oriole demonstrated their hardiness in the relatively mild winter frequenting feeders that were stocked with appropriate food options. On December 22, a female type **Bullock's Oriole** was observed coming to a feeder in New Castle until February 4. On December 25, a colorful

immature male Bullock's was reported coming to feeders in Stratham. This individual was subsequently seen at this location throughout the winter, often feeding on mealworms and coming to the heated birdbath (see the article by Mary Weismann about this bird). Later, in mid-January, a Baltimore Oriole frequented a feeder on Landing Road in Hampton and was seen for another month. In each case, the homeowners consistently fed the birds and graciously allowed birders to observe the feeders. A Baltimore Oriole that was reported in Seabrook on December 3 stayed for an unknown length of time and almost went unnoticed because it was entered as a passerine sp. in eBird.

Even in the northern regions some of the half-hardy species held on during the winter. A Red-winged Blackbird was observed in Errol and seen periodically until the eighth of February. A small group of four Brown-headed Cowbirds settled on a horse farm in Milan for the winter and were reported in January and February. Both species were reported elsewhere in the state throughout the winter. There were only two reports of Rusty Blackbirds, both on the first day of December.

Warblers, Tanagers and Buntings

The cold weather in November and early December sent most lingering warblers south and meant that there were no sightings of the less common warbler species this season, as there have been in some recent winters. Nonetheless, there were reports of warblers in each of the winter months, in line with a continuing trend of winter sightings for these intrepid birds.



Ovenbird by Rebecca Cowser, 1-21-20, Barnstead, NH.

The most notable of the warbler sightings goes to an Ovenbird photographed in January in the snow beneath a feeder in Barnstead. This is the sixth winter report of this species in New Hampshire and the northernmost report for January. Orange-crowned Warblers were found on the Lee-Durham CBC on December 21 and in Hampton Falls on January 12. A Common Yellowthroat was reported from Sandwich on December 4 and 5 and one was reported from Concord on January 19. There are only a handful of inland winter reports of this species (most are on the coast) and

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Sandwich is the northern-most town in New Hampshire with an eBird winter report.

Pine Warblers were observed coming to a feeder for mealworms in Brentwood, and in Manchester, both in December. This species was found in Kingston on January 17 and two were reported at a feeder in Exeter on January 20. This is an increase from the single Pine Warbler reported last winter, but is probably about average for recent years. Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in every month of the season, with a notable number of reports occurring in February. Two were seen at Adams Point in Durham on February 9 and subsequently reported by a number of birders. Steve Mirick reported four from Eel Pond in Rye on February 15, which were also seen for the next couple of weeks. One was seen associating with a bluebird flock at Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary in North Conway on February 16, and one was seen in the Seabrook back dunes on February 23.



The North Hampton Western Tanager feeding on berries. Photo by Jim Sparrell, 12-20-19, NH.

This winter two **Western Tanagers** were reported from separate locations. A homeowner in Plaistow reported one coming to his feeder on December 6, a male seen off and on through January 20. A female found by Paul LaCourse in North Hampton during the CBC on December 14 was seen by many birders into the new year, with the last sighting on January 5.

The most remarkable find among this group of birds



Painted Bunting by Len Medlock, 2-8-20, Conway, NH.

was the **Painted Bunting** discovered by James Longo and colleagues at Tin Mountain Conservation Center in Conway on February 6. Drawing birders from around the state, this bird was seen and photographed by many through March 13, as it came to feeders at the Center and survived nights with temperatures close to zero. See the article about the bunting by James Longo in this issue.

Dickcissels were also present around the state, with single birds reported in Chichester and in Raymond in December, and at least one individual seen in the Concord area by a number of people in January over a period of a couple of weeks.

Sighting Details

The following listings provide details for the specific sightings mentioned in the summaries. Note that all sightings from the season are viewable in eBird. To view the reports of a species, go to the Explore tab and select Species Maps. Fill in the species and when the map appears, you can choose which season you want to see by selecting the Date tab and clicking the appropriate month button and selecting the year. 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.

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
Snow Goose			
12/15	1	Connecticut R., Charlestown	B. Hunton, M. Walsh
12/20	1	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	S. Santino, et al.
02/16	1	Parsons Creek saltmarsh, Rye	K. Wilmarth
Brant			
12/24	3	Plaice Cove, Hampton	C. McPherson
01/06	3	Great Boars Head, Hampton	S. Spangenberg
01/23	3	Seabrook Beach	S. Mirick
02/16	6	Hampton Beach SP	C. Ehlinger
Cackling Goose			
12/04	1	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
12/29	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	S. Wrisley
Wood Duck			
01/01	1	Bean Rd. wetland, Moultonborough	K. Klapper
02/25	2	Pine Grove Cemetery, Salem	K. Wilmarth
American Wigeon			
01/02	87	Great Bay, Greenland	Z. Cornell
Mallard			
02/29	48	Androscoggin R., Gorham	W. O'Brien
Northern Pintail			
12/09	1	Saint-Gaudens NHP, Cornish	T. McLane, K. Jones
01/27	1	Horseshoe Pond, Concord	R. Simmons
02/02	1	Reed's Marsh WMA, Orford	E. Marie, A. Cooley
Green-winged Teal			
01/03	1	Putnam Rd., Newport	D. Jackson
02/05	1	Reed's Marsh WMA, Orford	D. Gildersleeve

Date # Location Observer

Redhead

12/11 2 Waters Edge, Greenland S. Mirick
02/16 1 Osprey Cove trail, Greenland S. Wisley

Ring-necked Duck

12/23 1 Spicket R., Salem K. Wilmarth
02/29 3 Exeter WTP L. McKillop

Greater Scaup

02/15 2200 Osprey Cove trail, Greenland K. Fenton, C. Witko,
L. Burford, K. Klapper, P. Brown

Lesser Scaup

12/28 2 Lake Winnisquam J. Lambert, B. Griffith
02/29 66 Exeter WTP L. Medlock



Barrow's and Common Goldeneye by Iain MacLeod, 1-27-20, Opechee Lake, Laconia, NH.

Common Goldeneye

12/13 292 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland S. Mirick

Barrow's Goldeneye

12/13 1 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland S. Mirick
12/14 1 Stark Landing, Manchester R. & K. Frieden
12/26 1 Great Bay, Greenland S. Wisley
12/28 2 Lake Winnisquam J. Lambert, B. Griffith
01/26 1 Opechee Bay, Laconia K. Klapper
02/22 2 Amoskeag Fishways, Manchester T. Martin
02/24 1 Errol Dam outflow pool A. Griffin

Hooded Merganser

12/15 103 Spofford L., Chesterfield P. Brown,
M. Einermann, D. Edwards

Common Merganser

12/05 400 Sandwich Town Beach K. Klapper
12/08 400 Paugus Bay, Laconia V. Zollo
01/20 2 Errol C. Nims, J. Scott

Red-breasted Merganser

02/04 1 Johnson Is., Lebanon K. Jones
02/24 1 Johnson Is., Lebanon K. Jones

Spruce Grouse

12/19 1 Back Lake Sector, Pittsburg CBC B. Griffith, L. Kras
02/24 1 Victor Head, Stark S. Hale

Pied-billed Grebe

12/15 1 Spofford L., Chesterfield P. Brown,
M. Einermann, D. Edwards

Date # Location Observer

01/05 1 Blacksmith St., Lebanon W. Scott

Horned Grebe

12/09 1 Lake Winnepesaukee, Meredith K. Klapper

Red-necked Grebe

12/05 3 Granite Lake Rd., Nelson J. Palmer

Black-bellied Plover

01/07 1 Rt. 1A restroom, Seabrook N. Tepper
02/01 1 Hampton Harbor Inlet S. Mirick



Semipalmated Plover with an American Pipit by Steve Mirick, 12-1-19, Rye, NH.

Semipalmated Plover

12/12 1 Rye Harbor SP S. Mirick

Killdeer

02/29 3 Merrill Ln. at Depot Rd., Hollis C. McPherson

Sanderling

02/16 80 Hampton Beach SP J. Sparrell, K. Towler

American Woodcock

01/06 2 Liberty Way, Dover R. Ditman
01/11 1 Liberty Way, Dover P. Hunt, U. Dienes, et al.

Iceland Gull

12/15 1 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis C. McPherson
01/07 1 downtown Berlin L. Charron
01/09 1 Icenter, Stiles Rd., Salem K. Wilmarth




"The" Glaucous Gull that has been returning each winter since 2008. Photo by Steve Mirick, 1-19-20, Seabrook, NH

Glaucous Gull

01/01 1 Hampton Harbor S. Mirick, et al.

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<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
Common Loon							
01/01	2	Lower Bay Rd., Sanbornton	D. Perry	01/25	1	Love Ln., Rye	S.& J. Mirick, K. Dorsey, P. Lacourse
01/11	1	Lake Winnisquam at Rt. 3/11 bridge, Belmont	J. Landry	02/22	2	Ash Swamp Rd., Newmarket	C. Duffy
01/19	1	Lake Winnepesaukee, Alton	M. Robinson	02/23	1	Coventry Ridge Rd., Franconia	S. Varney
02/24	1			02/24	1	Little Chatham Rd., Chatham	J. Scott
Great Egret							
12/01	1	Hampton Marsh, Rt. 101	H. Bauer, S. Mirick	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			
12/06 1 AMC Pinkham Notch Visitor Ctr., Rt. 16 W. O'Brien							
12/21 1 Main St., Sandwich K. Klapper							
02/03 1 AMC Pinkham Notch Visitor Ctr., Rt. 16 J. Carlson							
Black-crowned Night-Heron							
12/21	1	South Mill Pond, Portsmouth	S. Varney	Red-headed Woodpecker			
01/15	2	Market St., Portsmouth	M. Gittleson	12/01	1	Burley Farm, Epping	E. Norton
02/03	1	Market St., Portsmouth	M. Wilson	12/20	1	Wednesday Hill Rd., Durham/Lee	M. Whisnant
12/21 1 Wednesday Hill Rd., Durham/Lee D. Blezard,							
12/21 1 Wednesday Hill Rd., Durham/Lee M. Jacobson, S. Stoddard							
Black Vulture							
12/12	3	Northeastern Blvd., Nashua	T. Rocha	12/21	1	Durham Pt. Rd., Durham	S.& J. Mirick
02/10	1	Rt. 93, Windham	R.& K. Frieden	02/16	1	Wednesday Hill Rd., Durham/Lee	M. Whisnant
02/17	2	Carroll St., Exeter	L. Medlock, B. White, D. Finch	02/29	1	Burley Farm, Epping	J. Sparrell, K. Towler
02/17	4	Wantastiquet Mt., Hinsdale	C. Stanistreet	Red-bellied Woodpecker			
02/20	2	Exeter Rd., Kingston	H. Bauer	12/05	1	Bennett Cove Ln., Holderness	S. Francesco
02/24	4	Rt. 63, Westmoreland	R. Burnett	12/09	1	Sibley Rd. flowage, Moultonborough	K. Klapper
Turkey Vulture							
02/17	53	Carroll St., Exeter	L. Medlock, B. White, D. Finch	12/20	1	Cates Hill Rd., Berlin	W. O'Brien
02/24	1	downtown Sandwich	K. Klapper	01/01	1	Penn Rd., Hanover	P.& J. Norton
Golden Eagle							
01/01	1	Suncook Valley Rd., Pittsfield	J. Lambert	01/03	1	Bennett Cove Ln., Holderness	S. Francesco
01/09	1	Rt. 25, Warren	D. Lipsy	01/16	1	Green St., Plymouth	A. Cooley
01/11	1	Rt. 124, New Ipswich	N. Moreau	02/13	3	Grafton Tpk., Canaan	R. Capo
Bald Eagle							
12/02	9	Hill Rd. at Ferry Rd., Dummer	L. Charron	02/25	1	Mechanic St., Gorham	L. Charron
Rough-legged Hawk							
12/25	1	Main St., Raymond	K. Regan	Black-backed Woodpecker			
12/28	1	Rt.12, Charlestown	M. Foster	12/20	1	Errol-Umbagog CBC, east sector	K. Fenton,
01/11	1	Scamman Farm, Rt. 108, Stratham	D. Ressler, H. Otto				L. Burford, K. Klapper, P. Brown
01/11	1	Edwards Ln. at Rt. 12, Walpole	P. Brown	12/20	1	Errol-Umbagog CBC, northwest sector	B. Griffith,
01/12	1	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	R. Burnett				L. Kras
02/22	1	Wantastiquet Mt., Hinsdale	A. Van Dyck	01/01	1	Trudeau Rd., Bethlehem	L. Burford
Eastern Screech-Owl							
01/25	1	Stone Rd., Gilford	J. Paquette	01/15	1	Tracy Dr., Errol	L. Charron
Snowy Owl							
12/11	1	Cross Beach Rd., Seabrook	S. Bennett, S. Wisley	American Kestrel			
01/22	1	Hampton Beach SP	S. Heron	01/15	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	K. Elwell
01/25	1	Hampton Beach SP	C. Duffy, et al.	01/20	1	Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease, Short St., Newington	J. Sparrell, K. Towler
02/04 1 Grafton Rd. at Aviation Ave., Portsmouth S. Bennett							
02/10 1 Jackson's Landing, Durham M. Watson							
02/26 1 Great Bay, Greenland C. Duffy							
Short-eared Owl							
12/18	1	Mooring Dr., Hampton	S. Bennett, S. Wisley	Peregrine Falcon			
12/26	1	Autumn Ln., E. Kingston	K. Elwell	01/10	2	Basin St., Concord	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
01/03	1	Hampton Beach SP	S. Bennett,	01/24	2	South End Marsh, Concord	P. Brown
S. Wisley, J. O'Shaughnessy							
Northern Saw-whet Owl							
12/11	1	Lancy Brook wetlands, Brookline	J. Maher	Eastern Phoebe			
12/14	1	NH coast	H. Stevens	12/15	1	Stonewall Farm, Chesterfield Rd., Keene	K. Klapper
12/30	1	Rt. 16, Wentworths Location	L. Charron	Fish Crow			
01/01	1	Melanie Ln., Bow	Z. Cornell	01/06	20	Rockingham Park racetrack, Salem	K. Wilmarth
01/01	1	River Trail, Mink Brook, Hanover	A. Wagner, S. Hardy	Tree Swallow			
01/25	1	Brackett Rd., Rye	J. Sparrell, K. Towler	12/01	60	Seabrook Back Dunes	S. Mirick
12/24 10 Seabrook Back Dunes J. Lambert							
01/18 2 Seabrook Back Dunes K. Wilmarth, S. Mirick							
Gray Catbird							
01/03	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	A. Murray				

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
02/28	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	A. Murray	Eastern Towhee			
Brown Thrasher				12/14	1	Durham	E. Johnson
02/18	1	Ashram Rd., Sanbornton	R. Schongalla	01/02	1	Silk Farm Rd., Concord	R. Suomala
Varied Thrush				01/19	1	Howe Ln., Warner	M. Wiggins
02/11	1	Mockingbird Ln., Newmarket	D. McCoy	02/08	1	Ball Hill Rd., Milford	K. Hurd
Hermit Thrush				02/16	1	Autumn Ln., Nottingham	R. Prieto
12/20	1	Errol-Umbagog CBC, north sector	L. Charron, R. Quinn, M. Bove	Spotted x Eastern Towhee (hybrid)			
01/08	1	Mollidgewalk SP, Errol	L. Charron	02/16	1	Shaw's, W. Main St., Hillsborough	L. Burford
Wood Thrush				Yellow-breasted Chat			
02/08	1	Kimberly Rd., Hampstead	K. Cozzens	12/01	1	South Mill Pond, Portsmouth	J. Sparrell, K. Towler
American Pipit				01/18	1	South Mill Pond, Portsmouth	J. Sparrell
12/01	25	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	S. Spangenberg	Eastern Meadowlark			
12/04	2	Rye Harbor SP	C. Nims, J. Scott	02/14	1	Bullard Dr., Lyndeborough	D. Kolesar
12/21	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	B. Griffith, L. Kras, R. Prieto	Bullock's Oriole			
12/28	1	Elm St. fields, Milford	M.& R. Suomala	12/22	1	Walton Rd., New Castle	B. Rowland
Brambling				12/25	1	Butterfield Ln., Stratham	M. Weisman
12/04	1	Strafford	S. Young	02/02	1	Walton Rd., New Castle	S. Mirick
Lapland Longspur							
01/25	2	Hampton Beach SP	E. Norton				
02/15	6	Pinnacle Ln., Walpole	S. Lamonde				
Snow Bunting				<i>Baltimore Oriole by Steve Mirick, 2-15-20, Hampton, NH.</i>			
12/01	85	Hampton Beach SP	J. Lambert	Baltimore Oriole			
02/12	120	Sawyer Farm, River Rd., Walpole	E. Synnott	12/03	1	1A St., Seabrook	P. Wood
Chipping Sparrow				01/14	1	Landing Rd., Hampton	P. Tilton
12/01	1	Tracy Dr., Errol	L. Charron	02/18	1	Landing Rd., Hampton	M. Halsey, M. Watson
12/23	1	Sewall Rd., Wolfeboro	M. Harvey	Red-winged Blackbird			
01/15	1	Merrill Park, Concord	R. Suomala, Z. Cornell	12/20	1	Errol Public Library, Main St.	K. Fenton, L. Burford, K. Klapper, P. Brown
02/07	6	Aiken St., Derry	D. Stephens	02/08	1	Errol Public Library, Main St.	D. Hubbard
Field Sparrow				Brown-headed Cowbird			
02/12	1	Great Bay NWR, Newington	S. Wisley	01/23	4	Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	J. Maher
Fox Sparrow				02/29	4	horse farm, E. Side River Rd., Milan	L. Charron, Seacoast CFT
12/16	1	Milan	W. O'Brien	Rusty Blackbird			
01/03	1	Ten Rod Rd., Rochester	D. Hubbard	12/01	1	Cusack Rd., Hampton	S. Mirick
02/29	1	Ten Rod Rd., Rochester	D. Hubbard	12/01	1	Old Drewsville Rd., Walpole	H. Washer
Dark-eyed Junco - Oregon subsp.				Ovenbird			
12/03	1	Tracy Dr., Errol	L. Charron	01/21	1	Damsite Rd., Barnstead	R. Cowser
White-crowned Sparrow							
12/14	2	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	S.& J. Mirick				
12/18	1	Mildred Ave., Raymond	N. Houlihan, P. Moynahan				
12/31	1	Maple Rd., N. Hampton	C. Duffy				
Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.							
01/20	1	Hampton Beach SP	A.& D. McDermott, R. Suomala, Z. Cornell				
Green-tailed Towhee							
12/04	1	Millican Nurseries, Chichester	J. Lambert				
02/21	1	Millican Nurseries, Chichester	J. Lambert				

WINTER SEASON

Date # Location Observer

Orange-crowned Warbler

12/21 1 Brickyard Dr., Rochester B. Griffith,
L. Kras, R. Prieto
01/12 1 Brown Rd. at Old Stage Rd., Hampton Falls S. Mirick

Common Yellowthroat

12/04 1 Thompson WS, Sandwich K. Klapper
01/19 1 West Locke Rd., Concord P. Hunt

Pine Warbler

12/08 2 Pickpocket Rd., Brentwood E. Shipley
12/15 2 Gay St., Manchester R.& K. Frieden
01/17 1 Great Pond, Kingston S. Heron
01/20 2 Hayes Park Rd., Exeter S. Mirick

Yellow-rumped Warbler

02/09 2 Adams Pt. WMA, Durham E. Johnson
02/15 4 Eel Pond, Rye S. Mirick
02/16 1 Dahl WS, Conway W. Broussard
02/23 1 Seabrook Back Dunes C. Duffy, J. Sparrell,
K. Towler, C. Guindon



The Plaistow Western Tanager feeding on holly berries, by Zeke Cornell, 1-20-20.

Western Tanager

12/06 1 Palmer Ave., Plaistow S. Mirick
12/15 1 Chapel Rd., N. Hampton S. Mirick
01/05 1 Chapel Rd., N. Hampton C. Nims
01/20 1 Palmer Ave. at Hale Spring Rd., Plaistow R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

Painted Bunting

02/06 1 Tin Mt. Conservation Ctr., Albany J. Longo, et al.

Dickcissel

12/02 1 Millican Nurseries, Chichester J. Lambert
12/17 1 Evelyn Ave., Raymond D. Prima
01/11 1 Hall St. business plaza, Concord R. Suomala, Z. Cornell
01/16 1 Longmeadow Dr., Concord J. Pettipas,
S. Wrisley, D. Hubbard

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Dickcissel by Rebecca Suomala, 1-12-20, Concord, NH.

Christmas Bird Count Summary 2019-2020

by David Deifk

This year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were held between December 14, 2019 and January 1, 2020. There are 19 counts whose center is within New Hampshire borders. Only 18 counts were run this year as the Isles of Shoals Count was cancelled for the fifth year in a row because of sea conditions. It is unfortunate that the count has been completed only three times in the last ten years. Although centered in Vermont, the Barnet and Saxton's River CBCs overlap into New Hampshire as well. Two of the New Hampshire counts have substantial overlap into neighboring states. The Hanover-Norwich CBC extends into Vermont and the Isles of Shoals CBC substantially extends into Maine. Three other counts have minor overlap into neighboring states as well, those being Errol-Umbagog and North Conway into Maine and a tiny bit of Nashua-Hollis into Massachusetts.

Total species across all counts was 135 versus 137 last year and 152 two years ago. Weather conditions were generally satisfactory with significant precipitation only interfering with the three counts held on December 14. Given the mild temperature that day, the precipitation fell in the form of heavy rain. Pittsburg was the only count that failed to break zero degrees Fahrenheit with a **high** temperature of minus one. The other far northern count of Errol fared little better, making it to a high of 13 degrees.



One of the Tree Swallows at the Seabrook Back Dunes that persisted into January. Photo by Stephen Mirick, 1-7-20.

For the first time in two years, a new species was added to the state list. A small lingering flock of Tree Swallows was seen in the Seabrook Dunes on the Coastal Count. Up to ten persisted until January 8, 2020. A Semipalmated Plover also made a first state CBC appearance on the Coastal Count. This brings the total number of species ever seen on the New Hampshire CBCs to 253.

There were seven new state high counts this year. This is about average. What is quite notable is that six of the seven new high counts all came from the Lee-Durham Count.

The last came from the Coastal Count, which is usually the leader in this regard. Lee-Durham set the state highs for three woodpeckers, Red-bellied, Downy and Pileated. There must have been particularly good conditions for woodpeckers this year on the Lee-Durham Count. Besides these state highs, Red-headed Woodpecker was seen for the first time and a count high was recorded for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The other state highs for Lee-Durham were Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, and Northern Cardinal. Coastal New Hampshire's lone state high was for White-throated Sparrow with 291. If not for that, Lee-Durham would have set the record this year with their second place 266. This capped off a trend for this year in that, statewide, the White-throated Sparrow count was more than double last year's (although only a few more than two years ago). There were 30 individual count high records this year which, like last year, is still below average. There were six species new to their respective counts versus four last year.

As for waterfowl, American Black Duck were only 60% of the recent yearly average last year, but bounced back to a little bit above that average this year. Mallard, however, did not increase this year from last. Notable waterfowl included a Wood Duck, three Gadwall, two Redheads and a Ring-necked Duck on the Coastal Count. Inland, Keene had a count high of four Wood Ducks and picked up its first Green-winged Teal. Notable for Laconia were a single Northern Pintail, two Lesser Scaup and a Long-tailed Duck.

After a remarkably good last year, Wild Turkey had a more modest result. Despite being reported on all counts save one, the number was less than half of last year. No count set a new count high this year compared with seven counts last year, including a new state high.

Bald Eagles did very well this year with a new statewide record of 80 being seen in 14 of the 18 counts. As has often been the case in recent years, there were no American Kestrels reported on count day; however, there was a total of two Merlins and three Peregrine Falcons, a modest total.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was again in evidence with 13 birds seen on eight counts.

Carolina Wren seemed to be affected by the cold weather two years ago with only 11 across the state. Last year, 97 were found which represented a nice recovery. This has continued with 121 found this year across eight counts with Hanover recording a count high. Coastal New Hampshire set a new high count for the species with 35. Bohemian Waxwing is an irruptive species which has been well demonstrated these last two seasons. After a strong showing last year, it went unreported this year as it did two years ago.

In terms of warblers, Lee-Durham reported its first Orange-crowned Warbler. The only other warblers all came from the Coastal Count. A Cape May Warbler provided the

second record for the count and the state. Other warblers from the Coastal Count included a Pine, and 4 Yellow-rumped. A former warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, was also recorded. (This is the chat that visited the yard of Jim Sparrell and Katie Towler, see their article in this issue.)

Three counts produced a total of seven Eastern Towhee. Even rarer was a Western Tanager reported on the Coastal Count.

As for irruptive finches, 129 Purple Finch represent a modest recovery from a low count of 27 last year. Common Redpoll were virtually

absent this year with only two reported. The last major irruption was now five years ago. Pine Siskin were seen in slightly higher numbers than last year, being present on five counts. The last major incursion was four years ago. Though not reported in huge numbers, Red Crossbill was minimally present on seven counts. White-winged Crossbill went unreported last year, but were seen on five counts this year. After an encouraging showing of 375 last year, Evening Grosbeaks have resumed their downward slide of the last 25 years, including none found on count day two years ago. Though not entirely absent, a total of only four birds was seen on two counts.



Eastern Towhee by Rebecca Suomala, 12-15-19, Concord CBC.

Individual Count Highlights

Nashua-Hollis

- New to Count: American Pipit
- Count High: Common Goldeneye

Peterborough-Hancock

- Count High: Northern Cardinal

Keene

- New to Count: Green-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe
- Count High: Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, Common Raven, Eastern Bluebird

Coastal NH

- New to State: Semipalmated Plover, Tree Swallow
- New to Count: Fish Crow
- State High: White-throated Sparrow
- Count High: Turkey Vulture, Snow Bunting

Lee-Durham

- State High: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse,



American Pipit by Rebecca Suomala, 12-28-19, Milford, NH, Nashua-Hollis CBC.

Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal

- New to Count: Orange-crowned Warbler
- Count High: Rock Pigeon, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow

Concord

- Count High: Bald Eagle

Laconia-New Hampton

- New to count: Peregrine Falcon
- Count High: Bald Eagle

Hanover-Norwich

- Count High: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird

Baker Valley

- Count High: Eastern Bluebird

Littleton

- Count High: Cooper's Hawk

Grafton-Bristol

- New to Count: Gray Catbird
- Count High: Hooded Merganser, Song Sparrow



Pine Siskins by Lori Charron, 12-20-19, Errol-Umbagog CBC.

Errol-Umbagog

- New to Count: Hermit Thrush
- Count High: Golden-crowned Kinglet

Pittsburg

- No new species or count highs

Conway

- Count High: Canada Goose, American Crow, American Robin

Sunapee

- New to Count: Chipping Sparrow
- Count High: Eastern Bluebird

Manchester

- Count High: White-throated Sparrow

Sandwich

- Count High: Boreal Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Song Sparrow

AMC-Crawford

- New to Count: European Starling, White-throated Sparrow
- Count High: Rock Pigeon, Blue Jay, White-winged Crossbill

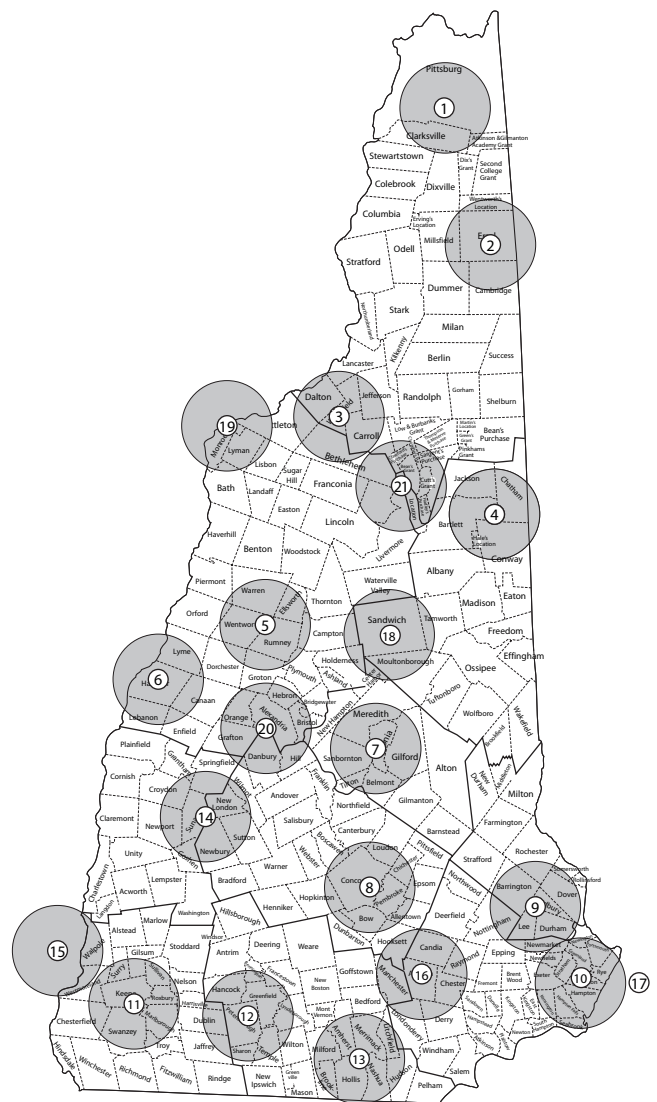
Christmas Bird Count Compilers

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Pittsburg | Phil Brown |
| 2 | Errol-Umbagog | Chris Martin |
| 3 | Littleton | David Govatski |
| 4 | North Conway | Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr. |
| 5 | Baker Valley | Steve Rounds |
| 6 | Hanover-Norwich | Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin |
| 7 | Laconia-New Hampton | Pam Hunt |
| 8 | Concord | Robert Quinn |
| 9 | Lee-Durham | Kurk Dorsey |
| 10 | Coastal | Len Medlock |
| 11 | Keene | Phil Brown |
| 12 | Peterborough-Hancock | John Ranta |
| 13 | Nashua-Hollis | Richard Bielawski |
| 14 | Lake Sunapee | Dylan Jackson |
| 15 | Saxton's River, VT | Donald Clark |
| 16 | Manchester | Richard Bielawski |
| 17 | Isles of Shoals | Ben Griffith |
| 18 | Sandwich | Tony Vazzano |
| 19 | Barnet, VT | Charlie Browne |
| 20 | Grafton-Bristol | Bill Belanger |
| 21 | AMC Crawford Notch | Craig Repasz |

CBC Birds in the Woods

Iain MacLeod sent this observation:

On the Sandwich Christmas Bird Count on December 29, 2019, Sue Francesco and I noticed that unlike in recent years, very few birds were at feeders. Throughout the day we would come across pockets of birds feeding on seeds and berries in the woods. There was much open ground and trees were heavy with catkins and cones and obviously the birds were taking advantage of the natural bounty. Our two feeder watchers came up empty. They later reported that the following day, after a major snowstorm hit, their feeders were hopping.



120th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2019 - Jan. 5, 2020

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Canada Goose	498	-	81	1258	267	227	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	-	351	-	-	2742
Mute Swan	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Wood Duck	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	5
Gadwall	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
American Wigeon	-	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
American Black Duck	33	-	2	1499	66	11	7	1	-	-	4	-	2	-	3	1	6	-	1635
Mallard	457	-	133	734	273	306	549	72	-	-	38	-	50	16	76	223	41	20	2988
Northern Pintail	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Green-winged Teal	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Redhead	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	370
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Common Eider	-	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Black Scoter	-	-	-	89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	26	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Bufflehead	-	-	-	43	70	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	124
Common Goldeneye	44	-	1	190	10	15	218	4	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	82	-	-	574
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Hooded Merganser	1	-	107	15	10	21	135	25	-	-	7	-	3	-	17	-	7	-	348
Common Merganser	40	1	20	10	-	18	45	25	-	-	15	10	-	1	2	12	-	-	199
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	-	145	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	186
Ruddy Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	CW	-	4
Ruffed Grouse	-	8	-	-	-	1	1	-	CW	6	2	9	3	2	2	-	3	1	38
Spruce Grouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	3
Wild Turkey	59	162	94	226	270	88	98	157	3	27	11	20	7	3	111	4	1	CW	1341
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Common Loon	-	1	4	53	1	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	72
Pied-billed Grebe	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Northern Gannet	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Double-crested Cormorant	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Great Cormorant	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Blue Heron	1	-	1	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Turkey Vulture	2	-	-	44	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 135

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/28/2019)

Pet = Peterborough-Hancock (12/14/2019)

Kee = Keene (12/15/2019)

Cst = Coastal NH (12/14/2019)

Lee = Lee-Durham (12/21/2019)

Con = Concord (12/15/2019)

Lac = Laconia-New Hampton (12/28/2019)

Han = Hanover-Norwich (1/1/2020)

Bak = Baker Valley (12/15/2019)

Lit = Littleton (12/22/2019)

Grf = Grafton-Bristol (12/28/2019)

Erl = Errol-Umbagog (12/20/2019)

Pit = Pittsburg (12/19/2019)

Cnw = North Conway (12/15/2019)

Sun = Lake Sunapee (12/14/2019)

Man = Manchester (12/15/2019)

San = Sandwich (12/29/2019)

Amc = AMC-Crawford Notch (12/21/2019)

* = New Species to a Count

** = New high species count for the state

Bold italic=new individual count high

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Northern Harrier	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	-	1	1	1	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	13
Cooper's Hawk	4	-	4	7	11	5	2	-	-	3	1	-	1	-	-	3	1	-	42
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	3
Bald Eagle	2	5	14	5	10	11	11	5	CW	2	-	6	-	1	2	4	2	-	80
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	CW	-	1	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Red-tailed Hawk	43	4	16	27	41	18	6	16	CW	-	1	1	1	1	3	10	1	-	189
Black-bellied Plover	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Semipalmated Plover	-	-	-	+1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Razorbill	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Ring-billed Gull	24	-	1	498	71	51	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	1	-	813
Herring Gull	21	-	4	1156	711	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-	1906
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Lesser Bla.-bac. Gull	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Bla.-bac. Gull	41	-	-	407	107	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	560
Rock Pigeon	596	32	143	921	1171	451	161	494	-	80	23	-	-	29	39	135	13	46	4334
Mourning Dove	184	195	138	-	272	129	118	173	16	51	6	13	14	64	64	92	70	5	1604
Eastern Screech-owl	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Great Horned Owl	1	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Barred Owl	-	3	1	3	5	1	-	1	-	2	CW	1	-	-	CW	-	1	-	18
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Belted Kingfisher	2	1	1	5	3	-	2	2	CW	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	18
Red-hea. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	*2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Red-bel. Woodpecker	42	13	21	33	**114	19	12	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	5	-	276
Ylw.-bel. Sapsucker	1	1	-	2	4	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	13
Downy Woodpecker	95	71	63	103	**213	58	88	56	1	17	4	19	5	12	16	23	53	10	907
Hairy Woodpecker	24	31	18	19	53	29	47	40	5	15	1	14	13	7	11	10	42	3	382
Bla.-bac. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Northern Flicker	14	1	1	21	14	1	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	64
Pileated Woodpecker	13	6	9	5	**26	4	7	4	1	3	2	7	1	1	CW	-	12	-	101
American Kestrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW
Merlin	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	1	1	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 135

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/28/2019)

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120th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2019 - Jan. 5, 2020 — continued

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Northern Shrike	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	CW	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	4
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	6	17
Blue Jay	377	285	171	244	588	162	377	346	CW	222	55	111	46	43	105	62	275	55	3524
American Crow	100	85	326	200	135	477	634	4625	50	69	84	20	19	402	113	71	124	18	7552
Fish Crow	1	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Common Raven	5	10	52	9	22	20	36	48	10	31	7	26	52	7	5	11	25	3	379
Horned Lark	-	-	12	38	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
Tree Swallow	-	-	-	+11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Black-cap. Chickadee	411	752	693	662	1030	494	1148	754	-	308	312	521	307	385	381	134	867	132	9291
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	19	-	-	-	23	6	50
Tufted Titmouse	155	206	159	222	**535	133	262	150	10	3	17	-	-	18	68	60	75	-	2073
Red-br. Nuthatch	1	19	11	2	3	2	27	16	2	73	5	184	64	34	9	-	76	46	574
White-br. Nuthatch	121	115	80	117	300	117	181	85	10	23	21	7	-	40	37	22	183	2	1461
Brown Creeper	8	7	9	6	15	7	18	7	1	12	5	9	2	6	5	2	15	1	135
Winter Wren	1	-	4	2	5	4	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	24
Carolina Wren	20	1	11	20	32	9	5	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	121
Golden-cr. Kinglet	28	24	49	49	81	33	31	13	-	22	10	202	72	4	23	6	55	33	735
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	-	-	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	CW	-	5
Eastern Bluebird	145	38	88	114	**297	38	47	16	10	-	3	-	-	-	2	61	38	-	897
Hermit Thrush	1	2	2	8	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	21
Hermit Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
American Robin	176	423	165	823	369	207	93	40	4	5	4	5	-	219	45	44	132	26	2780
Gray Catbird	-	1	1	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
N. Mockingbird	17	1	5	26	15	15	10	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	96
European Starling	737	170	748	3174	4156	705	420	718	13	12	41	-	3	13	90	867	72	*6	11945
American Pipit	*1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Cedar Waxwing	138	546	737	243	460	45	284	133	-	-	6	-	-	-	160	75	16	5	2848
Snow Bunting	-	-	-	254	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	255
Orange-cr. Warbler	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cape May Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pine Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ylw.-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Yellow-breasted Chat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Am. Tree Sparrow	28	9	18	82	56	37	21	31	5	7	2	4	-	3	1	-	17	-	321
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	1	1	3	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	10
Field Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Fox Sparrow	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Dark-eyed Junco	289	388	842	350	863	210	607	545	31	34	21	55	52	93	125	165	507	13	5190

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Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Black-headed Gull	0	-	1899	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
White-thr. Sparrow	62	23	60	**291	266	49	44	34	CW	3	2	-	-	2	6	29	-	*5	876
Savannah Sparrow	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Song Sparrow	39	11	15	146	98	26	14	12	-	-	4	-	-	-	3	6	4	-	378
Swamp Sparrow	1	-	-	12	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Eastern Towhee	-	-	-	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Western Tanager	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Northern Cardinal	120	121	111	219	**428	107	103	124	9	9	12	-	-	7	26	31	14	1	1442
Red-winged Blackbird	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Common Grackle	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Br.-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	1	41	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	48
House Finch	211	11	119	238	222	79	96	118	-	-	8	-	-	-	26	36	33	-	1197
Purple Finch	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	1	-	1	58	49	-	-	-	7	8	129
Red Crossbill	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	1	8	1	-	11	2	46
Whi.-wing. Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	24	7	-	-	-	13	38	88
Common Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pine Siskin	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	150	-	-	-	-	19	202
American Goldfinch	158	190	361	339	374	268	443	270	70	234	31	201	32	110	26	86	404	17	3614
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	4
House Sparrow	631	2	214	581	1082	298	255	312	-	20	60	-	-	28	30	117	17	-	3647
Number of Species	58	42	59	107	73	51	57	46	19	28	37	36	31	32	42	41	45	30	135
Number of Participants	37	30	33	23	35	29	29	25	7	9	7	15	18	42	15	14	19	18	

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Mt. Washington by David Govatski, 12-21-19, Crawford Notch CBC, NH.

Winter 2019-20 Field Notes

Compiled by Diana Stephens

Brief Encounter with a Rarity

by Scott Young

See the photo on the front cover.

December 4, 2019, I was making phone calls from the sunroom of my residence in Strafford, NH when I saw a warm orangey-brown breasted bird in my yard that I thought, with my unaided eye, might be an immature crossbill. Between calls, I grabbed my nearest optics, which was the camera, and was surprised to see something that I didn't recognize. Fortunately, I took a few shots before it disappeared forever! Then, I started flipping through bird guides until, eventually, I came across a resemblance, a Brambling!

The Brambling is found in Europe and Asia, occasionally straying to Alaska. Scott had documented the first state record of this species! – Ed.

A Fox Sparrow Sings in Winter

by Dan Hubbard

A Fox Sparrow appeared in my yard on January 3, 2020 and stayed until March 9, which was the first day that the eBird filter accepted it without justification. Perhaps, it was not up for its usual migration distance to the southeastern US. The surprising occurrence of its stay was that it was heard singing as early as January 19. For songbirds, looking for love in New Hampshire in winter is not a high percentage pursuit.

An Eastern Towhee in Warner

by Mimi Wiggins

I have a morning ritual of sipping tea and watching the bird feeder outside of my window in Warner. On November 30, 2019, Mr.

Towhee appeared by the leaf mulch under the forsythia bush. He was a regular every day, through rain, sleet, snow and bitterly cold and windy weather. I made sure I had seed on



Eastern Towhee by Mimi Wiggin, 2-8-20.

hand to get him through the snowy part. He kept appearing thru April 24, 2020. On April 25, Ms. Towhee showed up, but after that, I did not see them again. My constant winter companion left without even saying to me, "Drink Your Tea."

One-Legged Towhee in Kensington

by Karen Hendrickx

Photos by Steven Hamblen

This lovely female Eastern Towhee enjoyed eating cast-off seed from the feeder on our porch. We first noticed her on December 14 and we saw her daily. Because we viewed her from the kitchen window above her and because there was no snow on the ground when we first saw her, it wasn't until Steve photographed her on New Year's Eve that we realized she had only one leg. Steve immediately named her "Margaret" (Peg).

Her lack of appendage didn't seem to faze Margaret in the least. She wobbled a bit, but we weren't sure if this was simply an attempt to scratch with the left leg, as she pretty much just picked up seed with her beak. Margaret did take frequent pauses from feeding to chase off any sparrow or junco who got too close. She was definitely queen of the ground-feeders here!

The authors never observed the bird in flight, and wondered if she was living under the porch of their house. – Ed.

This one-legged Eastern Towhee, nicknamed "Margaret," spent at least three months, from December 14 through the end of March, in Kensington, NH.



According to the homeowners, "Margaret" had no trouble standing her ground with both the Dark-eyed Juncos and the White-throated Sparrows.



Snow Buntings at 3:00 am

by David Starrett

Taken from a post by David Starrett to the NHBirds email list on 12-5-19.

I have only been in New Hampshire three months, so maybe this is not new to the rest of you. I retrieved my car from long term parking at Manchester airport at 3:00 am this past Monday/Tuesday night. After getting my car out of two feet of snow, I was surprised to see in my headlights a half dozen Snow Buntings foraging in the snow plow tracks. At 3:00 am, the lot is fairly well lit and I could see them easily, even after my lights were no longer on them, so obviously, there was enough light for them to forage by. What an unexpected, but nice sighting.

Breeding Plumage American Goldfinch in mid-winter . . . again

by Iain MacLeod

On February 6, 2020, I observed a male American Goldfinch in full breeding plumage at my feeders in Ashland mixed with a big flock of non-breeding plumage finches. This is the second time in recent winters that I've had such an out-of-season oddity. On January 23, 2018, I had a breeding plumage male turn up (see the Field Notes in the Winter 2017-18 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, including a photo). Could it be the same bird? In both cases, it was seen on and off for a week or so.

Why did the Red-tailed Hawk Cross the Water?

by Eric Masterson

Star Island in the Isles of Shoals is usually inhabited by Snowy Owls in the winter, but not the winter of 2019-20. Buteos are renowned for avoiding water crossings. They prefer to conserve energy by utilizing updrafts and thermals, atmospheric dynamics not found over water. Their distaste for ocean crossings is perhaps best illustrated by the circuitous route that Broad-winged Hawks take around the Gulf of Mexico during migration. Even shorter water crossings fall into disfavor.

Falcons, Accipiters, harriers, and Ospreys are all reasonably regular migrants at the Isles of Shoals, but not Buteos. There are two eBird records of Red-tailed Hawk from the islands, a bird on Star Island on December 31, 1983 and a bird on Appledore Island on September 13, 2017. There are only a couple of records for Machias Seal Island, which is located the same distance off the northern coast of Maine (pers. comm. Ralph Eldridge). Thus I was somewhat surprised when a first

year Red-tailed Hawk arrived on the island in October 2019. That it was a young bird made sense. Immature birds often make the mistakes that adults have learned to avoid; however, even for a species that dislikes water crossings, a six-mile return journey to the mainland didn't seem like too much of an obstacle for a healthy individual. I expected it would find its way back in short order.

Although initially surprising, what actually happened made a lot of sense in hindsight. Alex de Steiguer is the winter caretaker on Star Island. She arrived on October 28 and soon after began reporting a Red-tailed Hawk. It too was a young bird. Given the absence of records for the islands and the short time span between sightings, I felt confident that it was the same bird. It remained on the island throughout the winter. Two factors are noteworthy in this regard. Firstly, 2019-20 was the poorest winter in recent memory for Snowy Owls. There were only two records in New Hampshire during the winter, possibly involving the same bird. None were reported from Star Island despite a resident caretaker providing constant coverage. This is especially unusual because Star Island has hosted up to three Snowy Owls in recent winters. It is quite likely the most dependable location in the state for the species. Snowy Owls and Red-tailed Hawks are both apex predators and would be unlikely to tolerate each other's presence on a small 46-acre island. Furthermore, it is a fair bet that Snowy Owl would be the victor in any contest. They weigh almost twice as much as a Red-tailed Hawk and would very likely banish a young bird back to the mainland.

Secondly, Star Island boasts an abundance of food for a raptor, with Norway rat, muskrat, and an abundance of waterfowl, enough to sustain several Snowy Owls during most winters. With none present, the Red-tailed Hawk found itself all alone in the cookie jar. Alex observed the hawk eating Norway rat on six different occasions, though interestingly no predation of muskrats or birds was documented. In conclusion, I suspect the Red-tailed Hawk crossed the water completely by accident, but once it got to the other side, it found itself all alone in a promised land.



This Red-tailed Hawk, photographed on October 15, 2019 by Eric Masterson on Star Island, spent the winter on the island.

Painted Bunting in Albany!

by James Longo



Painted Bunting by Christopher McPherson, 2-8-20, Tin Mountain Conservation Center, Albany, NH.

It all started when the Tin Mountain Conservation Center's staff got word of a "weird looking green bird" outside the library window that looked unfamiliar and out of place. Its plumage was a vibrant green and yellow. Everyone in the office gathered with their binoculars to try to identify the feathered friend, but it took a text from Will Broussard to identify it as a Painted Bunting, a species usually only seen in the southern US and Central America. It was thought to be a female (or young male, but we called it "she") and later was given the name "Pabu" (a combination of the first two letters of the words PAinted and BUnting).

Once word of the bird got out, dozens of birders flocked from far and wide, some traveling over an hour in treacherous conditions to catch a glimpse of this lost traveler. At first, Pabu seemed lost, spending most of her time shivering on the ground waiting for her turn for bird seed. She would occasionally gather the courage to take her spot at a feeder before being pushed off by a more aggressive bird. As time went on, however, she learned to stand her ground and on multiple occasions, I witnessed her fight off chickadees, juncos and goldfinches for her spot.

After a few nights of choosing different sleeping spots, she discovered that overnighting under Tin Mountain's barn provided enough warmth to survive the sometimes sub-zero nights. She may have learned this from a flock of about a dozen Dark-eyed Juncos who amicably accepted her into their flock. She eventually was allowed to travel with these juncos throughout the day, eating when they ate and hiding when they hid.

After a week or so, she settled into a routine. About 30 minutes before sunrise, she would take her spot at the feeder and eat for as long as she could before larger, more aggressive

birds took her place. As the day went on, photographers and birders would come to observe her activity, sometimes traveling many hours or through treacherous conditions to be able to say they'd seen the bird. As the day ended, she would sit at the top of the tree above the feeder, seemingly to watch the sun set.

How it ended up in northern New Hampshire during the winter is anybody's guess, but it's possible that it got caught in a weather system that forced the bird from its regular route. It's also possible that the bird was young and just did not have the knack for navigation.

She was first seen February 6, 2020 and last seen March 13, 2020 for a total of 37 days on the property. We hope she found her way south and is telling all of her friends about the adventure she had at Tin Mountain Conservation Center.

James Longo was the Resident Bird Intern for Tin Mountain Conservation Center in 2019 and the Lakes Region Field Biologist for the Loon Preservation Committee during the summer of 2020.

A Bullock's Oriole in My Yard

by Mary Weismann

All photos by the author.



This young male Bullock's Oriole arrived just before Christmas and stayed all winter.

Here are some memories of "my" Bullock's Oriole. I feel that after four months of feeding, spoiling, protecting and, at times being his sentinel, I have earned that privilege!

My husband and I are novice birders, but have over 15 birdfeeders and numerous birdhouses and water sources which attract a variety of birds. We live in Stratham, NH on a tidal river and saltmarsh and have a nice variety of birds year round. One of my (pre-Bullock's) favorites are the Eastern Bluebirds. As the bluebirds in our yard are non-

migratory, we put out mealworms during the fall and winter and this past winter went through over 35 pounds! We have a large 12 foot window that overlooks our deck and backyard which provides a wonderful view.

Just before Christmas 2019, through this window, I saw a yellow streak flying through our yard. Being a busy time of year, I did not pay too much attention to it. On Christmas morning, I looked out at the bluebirds at the feeder when a very pretty bird I had never seen before landed with the bluebirds. The bluebirds did not like him at first, but they eventually took turns with him in the mealworm feeder.

Neither my husband nor I knew what this new bird was, but enjoyed seeing him for the next week. Every time the bluebirds arrived to feed, so did he. Curiosity got the best of me and I finally emailed a picture to NH Audubon to ask what type of bird this was. The answering email was copied to Steve Mirick. Naturally, the next morning Steve arrived to see this bird and validate that it was indeed an immature male Bullock's Oriole, very rare for our area, arriving from California or somewhere else in the western US. He had vetted a sighting of a female Bullock's nearby in New Castle as well.

As word spread around the birding community, we had over a hundred birders visit and most of them did get to see him! When I was home, I would go out to talk to the birders and regale them with the Bullock's habits. All the birders who visited were respectful, appreciative and many told me this was a life bird for them. Until then, I hadn't known what a life bird was, but came to appreciate the meaning. I enjoyed talking to, and learned so much from, the intelligent birding community.

Many of the Bullock's habits were consistent for months; I kept a log of what time and where he liked to feed, documented with hundreds of pictures! He continued to arrive in the company of the bluebirds for about a month before he was brave enough to be on his own. At the urging of one of the expert birders, we purchased a heated birdbath for the deck. After a few days, not only the oriole, but all the birds were enjoying it, and we loved seeing them close up! The oriole seemed delighted with his new environment, feeding exclusively on mealworm anywhere from 3-12 times a day, often staying for up to an hour at a time. We put out oranges daily, but rarely would he try one.

Soon, in early January, the European Starlings arrived and bullied all the birds, devouring the mealworm in no time! The oriole did *not* like the starlings, so I would sometimes scare them away, while the oriole patiently waited and was not scared away. We also put mealworm feeders on two of our family room windows from which the bluebirds and Bullock's would feed numerous times a day. They became comfortable with me watching them, literally two feet away!



The Bullock's Oriole fed daily on mealworms.

If the feeders were empty, I would hear tapping or wing-flapping on the glass! (They have me well trained!) The Bullock's usual routine was to feed at daybreak and then hourly most days. His favorite feeder was one of the window feeders and the second favorite was a bluebird feeder. He would land on a wind chime hook

(a view from which many birders got a good look at him) or on the edge of the gutter before descending to the window feeder.

Some of the adventures we shared with him:

- Hawks love our yard for obvious reasons and birds scatter accordingly; however on January 19, a hawk appeared and most birds scattered, but for some reason, the Bullock's did not. He continued to feed as the hawk watched him! I quickly ran outside to shoo the oriole away to safeguard him. The hawk stayed in place for another 50 minutes.
- On February 3, he was at my window feeder as usual. I had opened the casement window a crack to get a little fresh air. I saw his bill open and heard him sing! An absolute delight!
- We had a light ice storm on February 7 and it was so funny watching him discover icicles. He was actually licking them, just a joy to watch!



After the ice storm he actually licked the icicles.

- In early spring, the bluebirds nested and were ready to have their first set of babies in one of the many bird condos we have around the yard. (The bluebirds have several sets of babies in various places every year in our yard.) One day, the Bullock's was feeding from a feeder that he visited infrequently. It was in close proximity to the bluebird nest. All of a sudden when the Bullock's Oriole was inside the feeder, the male bluebird entered the feeder from the rear, flipped the Bullock's on his back and started pecking on his stomach! I was in the yard at the time and rushed over to the feeder scaring the bluebird out of the feeder. The Bullock's was very disoriented, banging against the inside of the feeder and could not let himself out of the feeder. As if he could understand (!), I was calmly talking to him telling him he was OK. I lifted the lid off the feeder and he finally flew away. After that mutual trauma, I thought that would be the last time I would ever see him. Never fear, an hour later he returned to his safer, favorite feeder, none for the worst! I know I should not interfere with nature, but he held such a special place in my heart that it was just instinctual. He spent the rest of the early spring in the company of cowbirds, finches, catbirds, buntings, woodpeckers, bluebirds, herons, egrets and sparrows.

During a lecture at the library in Stratham presented by Steve Hale, I asked about my oriole's migratory habits. He said there may be a fault in the Bullocks' DNA that allowed him to migrate here. I would like to believe that the Bullock's is more evolutionarily advanced and his migration is the advancement of such! He said the bird would probably leave to breed, but could breed with a Baltimore Oriole if he stayed. He also said he *may* return to New Hampshire next winter. Had my Bullock's stayed only another week, the Baltimore Orioles would have been in my yard.

The second week in April, his feeding habits changed. He was loading up on sunflower seeds, which he had never eaten before and loved the suet and stackers. He would feed continuously, making me wonder where he was putting all this food in his little body. Steve Mirick broke the news to me that he must be getting ready to migrate. Sure enough, April 21 was the last day he was in my yard. I say a little prayer and hold out hope that he does return.

My Bullock's Oriole was an enchanting creature to host in our yard and a peaceful distraction early during the COVID-19 pandemic. To have him in our yard daily for four months was miraculously wondrous!

64 Days of The Yellow-breasted Chat

by Jim Sparrell

Portsmouth residents Jim Sparrell and Katie Towler spotted a Yellow-breasted Chat on their backyard feeder in November and it stayed until late January. This species is rarely seen this far north, especially in winter when most of the population is in the tropics. Photos by Jim Sparrell.

On November 16, Katie and I returned from a Saturday along the coast, having happily watched a Grasshopper Sparrow feeding at Rye Harbor State Park. Eating a late lunch and looking out the kitchen windows into the glare of the sun, I stared at the House Sparrows hoping that one would turn into something else. Suddenly, I called out "Chat!" which would turn out to be a frequent cry in the house over the next two months. After a tense conversation that involved dialogue like:

"It's in the tree."

"Which tree?"

"The skinny one?"

"Which skinny one?"

Katie got a good look at it and I was able to take a few pictures. Previously, in October, we had a Yellow-breasted Chat in the yard for a couple of days, but Katie was away at the time.

Over the years, we have had chats in the yard in the fall on multiple occasions and a couple of times they stuck around for a few weeks. On this day, I put some dried mealworms under the rhododendron bush that it seemed to be frequenting and we wondered if it would be there in the morning. The next day, I saw it eating under the bush at about 6:45 am, but it was not seen again for the rest of the day. After that, we had sightings of the bird every day over the next two months, until January 18.

Often, I would see the bird feeding early in the morning with the cardinals and White-throated Sparrows, before the House Sparrows arrived, gobbling up mealworms, some suet pellets and some seed just before dawn. One morning, I watched it feed by the light of the full moon, well before sunrise. On December 2, we had about 10 inches of snow in the yard, so I went out and shoveled a spot under the rhododendron so the chat could feed. It came right in and was successful in scolding and chasing away the House Sparrows. On December 8, the temperature dropped to 9 degrees F overnight, but sure enough the chat was up and eating early the next morning.

After a few weeks of feeding exclusively on the ground, the chat made several trips to the tube feeders, but did not feed, just perched there. By mid-December, it had apparently

learned to feed in our open tray feeder and would make daily trips there, in addition to feeding on the ground. I would often come home for a couple of minutes at lunch and put food out. The chat seemed to learn this pattern as well, popping right out to eat after I put some mealworms out. One day, I noticed a car on our neighbor's property next door, with Maine plates. The occupants had binoculars trained on our barberry bush, where we always have too many House Sparrows. I invited them to look from the deck, but the bird was very rarely seen when people were outside and I had to leave. Fortunately, a few weeks later, the women from Maine were able to come back and come inside the house to get great views of the chat feeding. Eventually, we had visitors from around New Hampshire, Maine, and



This Yellow-breasted Chat first appeared in Portsmouth on November 16, 2019 and stayed well into the winter. Here it is knee-deep in mealworms on the tray feeder, 12-22-19.



A Christmas Day photo op. What a gift!

Massachusetts, with some folks coming multiple times. Pam Hunt and Unity Dienes were able to record the chat for the Christmas Bird Count while we were off covering a different sector.

On Christmas Day, I had planned for a chat photo op. During a lull in opening presents, I snuck outside with a wreath and hung it over the tray feeder. Then, I put some mealworms and suet pellets in the wreath and went back in the house to watch. Sure enough, a couple of minutes later, the chat came right in and started feeding in the wreath, offering some great views for the camera.

Having the chat in the yard was filled with a certain kind of angst, mostly because I worried if it would survive or suddenly be gone. The weather was fairly moderate into January and it seemed to be faring well. We have regular Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks in the yard during the winter and so far the chat had managed to evade them, although a few other birds were not so lucky. One day, I stepped into the kitchen and there was a massive Red-tailed Hawk perched on the tray feeder and in the same view, I could see the chat starting to pop out of a thicket farther back in the yard. Not that the Red-tail would pose a threat, but the two of them made a dramatic juxtaposition in size.

In mid-January, Katie noticed that the chat was fluttering one wing as it fed and seemed to be favoring one leg. We couldn't see anything clearly wrong with the leg, but it didn't seem to have its usual feistiness. On January 18 in the afternoon, I put out some orange slices in addition to the usual fare and the bird came right in to them and fed, whereas it had previously ignored the oranges. That was the last time we saw the bird. I must admit to looking around the yard and under the bushes to see if there was a little pile of yellow feathers anywhere, but I found nothing. Maybe a hawk picked it off, or maybe it got a taste of those oranges and remembered that life is easier in the Caribbean in the winter. I kept looking for the chat for a few weeks and probably felt sadder than I should have, but it was a welcome visitor that brought us both worry and joy through a gray winter.

Tree Swallows in the Snow

by Stephen R. Mirick

It's Sunday, December 8, 2019 and I'm getting ready for another walk out into the "Seabrook Back Dunes" a coastal dune scrub area along the west side of Rt. 1A. A major snow storm had hit New Hampshire a week earlier and snow was still piled deep in the dunes. Inland areas received over two feet of snow and Hampton reported 14 inches. Some snow had melted, but there were still some deep areas and snow boots were required and, it was cold!

An early cold spell had hit the region with some bitter cold weather. Since the beginning of December, the high temperatures along the seacoast had been below freezing on five of the previous seven days. On the morning of December 8, Concord, NH had reported a low temperature of -2F, and Portsmouth, NH had gotten down to 12F!

I'm walking out to see whether a group of Tree Swallows had survived the recent harsh weather pattern. As I walk out through the snow into the dune scrub plants dominated by bayberry, I finally locate six hardy birds clinging to the branches of a low shrub. It's hard to imagine an insect-eating bird like a swallow surviving these weather extremes; however, the Tree Swallow, unlike other swallows is able to change its diet in order to survive. The Tree Swallow, as well as the Yellow-rumped Warbler, are two species of birds that are able to digest the wax-coated fruit of the bayberry plants in the fall and winter. In this way, they are able to survive the cold winters of the southeastern United States (Place & Stiles).



Six Tree Swallows remaining in the Seabrook Back Dunes on 12-8-19. Photo by Stephen Mirick.

Tree Swallows are generally abundant along the New Hampshire seacoast in August, feeding on bayberry and insects alike; however, they generally leave the State in late September and early October with irregular sightings into early November. They winter primarily in coastal areas of the southeastern United States from North Carolina to Texas. Prior to 2019, the latest recorded date for Tree Swallow in New Hampshire was from Rye on 11-28-68 (Keith & Fox).

This strange late-season swallow incursion into the region was first noticed in mid-October with numerous medium sized flocks appearing along the New Hampshire and southern Maine coastline. The largest flock was estimated at 1,000+ birds at the Scarborough Marsh area on November 1 (eBird). New Hampshire birds seemed to be roosting in Seabrook Back Dunes and dispersing northward along the coast during the day. The high count in Seabrook peaked at approximately 100 birds on November 22. It isn't known

what brought these birds to the area at this late date; however, the influx was not wide-spread and seemed to be confined to the New Hampshire seacoast and coastal areas near Scarborough Marsh in Maine.

As the winter progressed, the amount of bayberry fruit in the dunes dropped steadily, likely due to a large group of European Starlings. The flock of 100 Tree Swallows had dropped to 60 birds on December 1 and the snow storm and cold had brought the total down to 10 by mid-December. By January 1, 2020 only two birds remained and these two birds lingered until they were last reported on January 18. By this time, there was very little fruit remaining in the dunes.

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A flock of more than 40 Tree Swallows in Seabrook, 12-1-19 by Stephen Mirick.

299 Birds...Plus One

by Susan Wrisley

At the end of September 2019, two things happened that would define the rest of the year for me. First, I decided to let my boss know that I was retiring from my job. I worked for myself, so it was a short conversation. Me: "I quit." Boss me: "Okay." Admittedly, it was pretty anticlimactic. The second event was realizing I already had 280 birds in New Hampshire for the year and needed "just" 20 more to reach 300. I suddenly had all this time on my hands, so it seemed like as good a time as any to give it a try. I honestly didn't expect to succeed, but thought it would be a fun challenge.

2019 had already been a great birding year, with some amazing birds found by our birding community: Tufted

Duck, Franklin's Gull, Summer Tanager, Trumpeter Swan, Yellow-throated Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Atlantic Puffin, Pacific Loon, Little Egret, Long-billed Dowitcher, Little Gull, Arctic Tern, Cerulean Warbler, American Avocet, LeConte's Sparrow and Black Skimmers, just to name a few.

I made a list of all the birds I still needed, then ranked them by the likelihood of actually seeing them. The list was much shorter than I would have liked, with just 12 likely birds, a few more less likely, and a whole bunch of "not going to happen" long-shots. I was off to a dubious start, but I had three months.



A pair of Sandhill Cranes in Nottingham, one of Susan's "12 likely birds" at the beginning of October. Photo by Susan Wrisley 10-6-19.

A few days later, a pair of Sandhill Cranes were checked off my list, as well as a long-shot Red-headed Woodpecker, and some expected fall arrivals. A trip on the Eastman's Fishing boat with other New Hampshire birders turned up some nice pelagic birds that I had been missing, but Parasitic Jaegers were in short supply and I never did see one. I spent many days at the hawkwatch on Pack Monadnock, even hiking up on a bitterly cold day when the road was closed, but never saw a Golden Eagle. Why didn't I go see the one that had been in Westmoreland all through January? Ummm...errrrr...I dunno. Same question for Black Vulture, why didn't I look earlier in the year? Ummm...I got nothing.

Great Bay held my hopes for ducks and geese, so I spent a great deal of time there. In fact, I was there so much that area residents cheerfully waved at me and probably thought I lived in the neighborhood. Gadwall and Cackling Goose joined my list, but I continued to dip on Eurasian Wigeon. On the coast, King Eider continued to elude me. They were in Maine and Massachusetts, but had apparently decided to skip New Hampshire. Thankfully, a Tundra Swan was found in Plainfield and helped fill the gap.

Thanksgiving came and went. Another Eastman's trip

with birding friends yielded Dovekies by the dozens and a Common Murre. I still had some time, but I was running out of birds. Steve Bennett jokingly asked what I would do if I got to 299 and ended up one bird short. I laughed because I didn't think I'd get that close. Of the five birds I still needed, only two were left on my expected-birds list. All the rest were long-shots and then something amazing happened...

Jason Lambert found a Green-tailed Towhee in Chichester and a homeowner reported a Western Tanager in Plaistow! Those two very unexpected birds had put me back in the running. My goal was suddenly looking doable again, but now I needed to go up north to get my last two expected birds. The weather gave me a small window of opportunity, so I got up early and drove to Milan and Pittsburg on December 12. It was a long drive to do by myself, but I added my last two expected birds, Canada Jay and Evening Grosbeak.

I now needed just one more bird, but there was nothing left on my expected-birds list and Steve's joke about stalling out at 299 had become a reality. I fell into a routine of spending mornings checking spots around Great Bay, still looking for a Eurasian Wigeon, which ended up as a no-show for 2019. After Great Bay, I would cruise the coast from north to south hoping for a King Eider, another 2019 no-show. I ended my days at the Hampton marshes, arriving in time to scan for Short-eared Owls as the sun went down.

As December wore on, Christmas was approaching and time was running out. Steve Bennett joined me at the coast most afternoons to help scan the marshes for Short-eared Owls, perhaps his way of doing penance for jinxing me. We saw a lot of gulls, several hawks, a couple Bald Eagles, even a Snowy Owl. One day we had a promising-maybe, but maybes don't count. It had to be definite. Finally, on December 18, while watching the sun go down over the nuke plant, there it was: number 300! There was no maybe this



Western Tanager by Susan Wrisley, 12-7-19, Plaistow, NH.

time, we both got on the bird and watched as a Short-eared Owl hunted far across the marsh in the last of the fading light.

It would be easy to say "I did it," but this was no singular effort. I had a lot of help from the entire New Hampshire birding community and can't thank everyone enough for being part of this great

experience! I know I still have a lot to learn and I'm excited to continue learning and expanding my knowledge with the help and patience of those around me. Thank you all for a great 2019 birding year!

New Hampshire County Quest 2019

by Pamela Hunt



Pam Hunt in Pittsburg feeding her last state bird for the year. Photo by Unity Dienes.

Quick, can you name all the counties in New Hampshire? Do you even know how many there are? Birders in New England can generally be excused for this bit of minor geographical illiteracy. We Yankees are

usually far more connected to our towns and cities than to counties (New Hampshire has ten, by the way) and view the latter mainly as in charge of a nursing home, sheriff's department, and prison. Elsewhere in the country, however, counties are often all you get and as a result there is a long tradition of "county birding," wherein birders keep track of their county lists, publish their totals in state journals, and play all manner of other birding games.

You may have noticed that eBird goes down to the county level as well and conveniently tracks your lists for you and everyone else. It even provides "top ten" lists of birders in each county, which is no doubt viewed as a godsend by all those county birders in the west. So it was that, early in 2019, I got the idea of trying to stay at number one in Merrimack County for the year. After all, this would tie in nicely with my penchant for local birding (see my article on five-mile radius birding in the Spring 2019 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Vol. 38, #1). I ended January with 42 species, February with 49, and things finally started to break loose in March bringing me to 72. About that time, I decided to play this game in Belknap County as well, largely because my friend Unity and I seemed to be up there a lot. A quarter of the way into the year, I was solidly perched in the number one spot for both, with Unity at number two in Belknap. It didn't hurt any that there aren't a lot of birders in Belknap County and that some active eBirders opted not to have their list totals show up in the lists. No worries, it's just a game!

Thus it continued and Merrimack and Belknap rose to 117 and 74 species by the end of April. Sometime in May, however, a new and radical idea popped into my head; could I make it into the top ten in all New Hampshire's counties? After all, my field work in 2019 was going to take me to all corners of the state. Still not being one to run off after rarities, I added a condition to the game: with few exceptions, my birding outside of Merrimack and Belknap counties needed to be associated with regularly-scheduled field work. This rule started falling apart in September, but by that point any advantage I might have had by targeting my trips in spring and summer was long gone.

It was quite the summer, with bird and damselfly projects for NH Audubon taking me from Pittsburg to Hinsdale to the Seacoast, as well as to the top of Cannon Mountain. Between May and September, I put over 5,000 miles on my car for work. Side trips got tacked on when I was farther from home, but they were still fairly rare and, of course, I still spent a *lot* of time birding in Merrimack County. By August, I was solidly in the top ten in seven or eight counties and after some targeted side trips in September (as I said, the "field work only" rule had started to break down by this point) only Coos remained unconquered.

With one quarter of the year left to go, October found me being a lot more strategic, almost obsessively checking the eBird stats for my "watch list" counties to make sure I wasn't dropping perilously close to number 11. The second half of the month found me on a pelagic trip on October 14, Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge on October 16, taking a Sunday afternoon jaunt into Carroll and Grafton counties on the twentieth, and stopping in Cheshire on my way to a meeting in New Jersey on October 27. This flurry of decidedly non-work birding was all in an attempt to hold on to a position in the top ten for every county except Coos, where I'd resolved myself to being satisfied with a solid #11. Coos was just a little too far away, and relatively birdless in November and December, to make it worth focusing on it any further as the year drew to a close.

November was actually fairly quiet, although I did take a couple of coastward trips mid-month. During this time, I was particularly focused on southern New Hampshire, largely because that part of the state was generally where I was closest to getting bumped down a notch if I didn't remain vigilant. Thankfully, there were still a handful of easy additions that allowed me to keep up and most of these fell during a small flurry of birding in the southern three counties around Thanksgiving. The fact that this game didn't start until May meant that some common winter birds were still missing from my lists. For example, American Tree Sparrow wasn't recorded in Grafton, Strafford, Hillsborough, or Cheshire until November, not in Sullivan until December,

and never in Carroll. Other “misses” were filled in at unexpected times, such as the pair of Pileated Woodpeckers I found while looking (unsuccessfully) for waterfowl on Franklin Pierce Lake (Hillsborough County) on my way to my sister’s house in Keene on November 30. Many of these end-of-year additions were actually the unexpected benefits of a late start. They were species I could still find that my “competitors” had gotten much earlier in the year!



A Connecticut Warbler in Concord on September 17 (2019) was a welcome surprise, and proof that if you get out enough you'll find good things!

December started with the first snowstorm of the season, but three days later Unity and I ventured into Sullivan County for a little clean-up. I added fewer species than anticipated, but our total of 25 species was still enough to place Unity at number 44 for the year. She’d never even birded the county and had started catching a minor version of the listing bug. A couple of major rarities showed up a few days later. I went after the Western Tanager in Plaistow on December 8, but after nearly four hours standing at the roadside with other birders, and answering the constant “what are you looking for?” from passers-by (the answer is “Elvis”), we left unfulfilled. Another group was more successful the next morning for the Green-tailed Towhee in Loudon.

By this point, I was starting to focus more on my statewide year list, which I’d added to the game sometime in the fall. The coastal Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on December 14 added only Iceland Gull, but a return trip to the coast on December 22 netted me an Eastern Screech-Owl and a *different* Western Tanager (it had been initially found on the CBC). On the way home, I swung through Durham and added a handful more species for Strafford County and officially put a close to my efforts in coastal New Hampshire for the year. The very next day found Unity and I in Pittsburg, where I added six to my Coos list and one, Canada Jay, to my state list. I briefly contemplated one more trip north after Christmas, but in reality my chances climbing into tenth place were zero and I quickly abandoned that Quixotic quest.

In the final week of the year, Horned Larks in Hollis on Christmas Day were my last add for Hillsborough and the Laconia CBC provided three more for Belknap on the

December 28. The year was closing fast and I contemplated a trip to Carroll County on December 29 to build a buffer and find some easy misses, but in the end I stayed local on that last good birding day of the year. In something of a return to my local birding roots, I stayed within five miles of my house and still managed to find 47 species. Among them were some good lingering birds, but nothing new for the county, and thus a female Northern Pintail in Tilton back on December 28 became my final county add for 2019. Table 1 provides my mid-year and final totals, as well as my statewide and county ranks. Figure 1 shows where I did the most birding.

Table 1. Pam Hunt’s final species tallies for New Hampshire and its ten counties in 2019 and her final ranking in each. As a point of reference, the next closest birders were each only ranked in the Top Ten in three counties. “Checklists” refers to the number of complete checklists Pam submitted to eBird.

County	Mid-May	Year End	Rank	Checklists
Belknap	85	132	2	60
Carroll	0	122	8	21
Cheshire	0	129	9	19
Coos	8	114	11	23
Grafton	12	131	6	35
Hillsborough	53	130	8	33
Merrimack	159	183	1	320
Rockingham	114	234	10	174
Strafford	11	132	9	14
Sullivan	0	104	3	10
Statewide	192	278	9	732

I referred to “competitors” a couple of paragraphs back, but this implies they knew there was a game afoot. Only a handful of New Hampshire birders were even remotely aware of what I was doing and most probably weren’t even paying attention to their county standings. In the end, this was a game I was playing mainly with myself and I consider it a game well-played. I got to see some places I don’t normally go and had a lot of fun doing it.

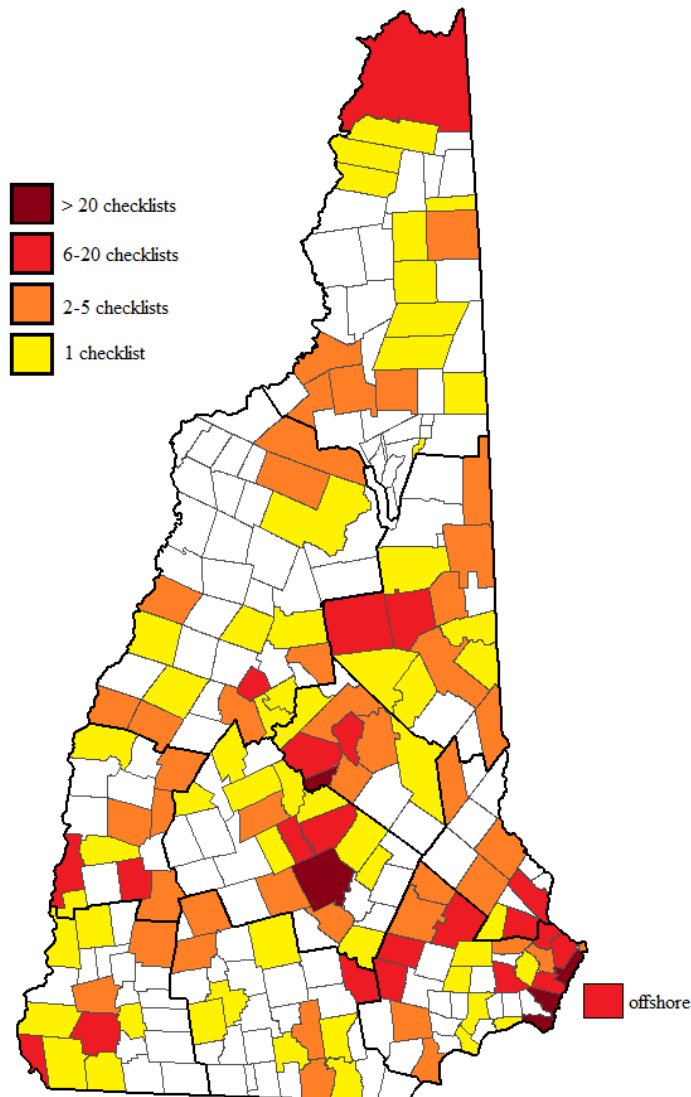
Another fun statistic: Only two other birders made it into the eBird “Top 100” in all ten counties in 2019. Kudos go out to Jeanne-Marie Maher, who in the process of doing her own “New Hampshire Big Year” managed, perhaps without even trying, to have an average county rank of 27.7. Right on her heels was Unity with an average rank of 29, an obvious beneficiary of hanging around with me! There are plenty of other games you can play with all these data, but I’ll leave it at that. Unity and I decided to play the same game in 2020, although perhaps not trying as hard to make the top ten, and by the time you read this, we’ll likely be getting close to wrapping it up. Perhaps, we’ll have convinced a few others to

play along and explore some corners of the state more distant from their usual stomping grounds.

Addendum

Pam and Unity continued the county listing game in 2020, and despite a significant COVID-slowdown in the spring they managed to cover the state quite thoroughly. As of the end of November, Pam surpassed her 2019 “total county ticks” (all ten counties species totals added together) of 1,411, and was in the top 20 in all ten counties. She was one away from reaching 200 species for Merrimack County for the year. She also initiated the “County November Challenge,” which is a story for another time.

Figure 1. The number of eBird checklists for Pam Hunt by town in 2019. Concord was the obvious winner with 284. “Looks as if I need to spend a bit more time in the Monadnock Region!” – Pam.



Winter 2019-20 Field Trip Report

A North American Big Year Comes To New Hampshire – Part 2

by Rob Woodward

In the Summer 2019 issue of New Hampshire Bird Records we read about Rob Woodward’s first trip to New Hampshire in 2019 for his North American Big Year. Here he shares his December return to the State. – Ed.



Rob Woodward (center) celebrating the addition of three species to his Big Year list on an Eastman’s fishing boat, 12-21-19 with Becky Suomala (left), Leo McKillop (center right), Chris Duffy (right), and Zeke Cornell (photographer).

After spending June and July in New Hampshire, I drove across the country, adding more species in Iowa and Colorado. In mid-September in Monterey, California, I found Wrentit, my 500th species of the year. By late October, the Big Year was beginning to take on a life of its own. I took a special trip to California just to see Island Scrub-Jay (535). By now, I wanted to see everything, so naturally I thought about adding more trips to my schedule. Lured by the draw of adding as many as 10 new species, some very easily, I scheduled a winter visit to New Hampshire. When I moved away three years earlier, I swore I would never return in winter, but a Big Year dilutes your power of reasoning and you think only of the list and how to make it bigger.

17 December – I arrive at the Manchester Airport at 5:45 pm and am greeted by a winter wonderland. The cold air slaps my face as I brace myself for five days of winter. Zeke Cornell graciously puts me up at his house in Bow and we immediately convene at the kitchen table to plan the next day’s outing to the coast. I count seven species I should get the first day.

18 December – Bird one is the easiest of all. At first light out the kitchen window at the feeder is American

Tree Sparrow (553), as expected. The rest will be a little bit harder. Our first stop is Seabrook Beach where we see Great Cormorant (554) perched on a channel marker. Finding no Purple Sandpiper, we move up to Rye Harbor. As we turn to leave, a flock of shorebirds lands on the jetty. I want a good close look so I scramble out over the rocks and come face to face with Purple Sandpiper (555).

Hampton Beach State Park is newly snow covered and so, finding no Snow Buntings, we head south to Plum Island. A photographer's camera points us in the direction of a Snowy Owl (556), another bird I don't see much of in the deserts of Arizona. Northern Shrike is the next obvious target, but the road beyond Hellcat is closed, dashing hopes for the shrike. Zeke and I mope around the dikes for a few minutes, mulling our limited options. As we leave the parking lot, to our amazement the gate is now open! "Watch, we'll see a shrike in the first 100 yards," I prophesy. And sure enough, within 100 yards, we find a Northern Shrike (557) perched off the road. Sometimes your Big Year luck changes on a dime!

Farther down the island, we put the scope on Black Scoter (558). With six of seven targets in the bag, we work our way as far north as Odiorne Point State Park (Rye, NH) but cannot find Snow Bunting. Short December days end early and we call it quits for the day.

19 December – To make up for yesterday's miss, I go directly to a park in Gloucester where Snow Bunting is being reported. Within minutes, I am on a flock (559). I search for King Eider at Andrew's Point, white-winged gulls on the Gloucester fishing docks, Black-headed Gull on Niles Pond, and Barrow's Goldeneye in Newbury, all without reward. Surely, I can find the Barrow's on the river in Manchester (NH), but no, even here I am denied. I end up adding just one species for the day, one I should have seen yesterday.

20 December – I start the day with a list of six possible new species to find. First, Zeke accompanies me to Manchester where he finds Barrow's Goldeneye (560). That's one. Then I travel down to Leominster, MA where I could get Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous, and Iceland Gulls. I am only able to add Iceland (561) and must leave to chase the next two birds down in Rhode Island, Cackling and Pink-footed Goose. Two hours later, I am in Middletown searching the expected location but find nothing. I ask for directions, go to that spot, and find a large flock of geese that likely holds my two targets. As I raise my scope, a person and his dog walk straight into the flock and scatter them to the four corners! A Big Year, like any sporting event, can deliver the thrill of victory and inflict the agony of defeat!

21 December – Last birding day of the year in New Hampshire. Zeke, Becky Suomala, and I join two other birders on the Eastman's fishing boat out of Seabrook Harbor. We arrive well before sunrise. Now I remember what

real cold feels like, but the seas aren't too high, the wind is low, and the three species of birds I hope to see all show well and in good numbers. First, Black-legged Kittiwake (562), then hundreds of Dovekies (563) and many Razorbills (564) are counted. I end my visit to New Hampshire with 12 new species added to my Big Year list, exceeding my expectations.

On December 22, I flew from Manchester to San Diego then finished the year in New Mexico. What a thrilling year! I think every birder wants to go the distance and visit the best places and see great birds, and doing it all in one year is a big rush. Probably, many birders don't include New Hampshire in their Big Year plans, but I certainly found it to be exactly the right place for building my Big Year list, both in summer and in winter.

My book, *My Little Big Year*, chronicles my 2019 Big Year in more detail than my blog. It is available at Amazon Books.

Rob Woodward retired from New Hampshire state government in 2016 and moved to Arizona. He keeps up with the birds of New Hampshire by summering in the Lakes Region.

Seacoast Chapter Winter Finch Trip

Take One

by Sam Stoddard

The Seacoast Chapter of NH Audubon's annual winter finch field trip was scheduled to be led by veteran Coos County birder Lori Charron of Errol on February 8, 2020. A couple of days before the trip, Lori announced that a bad winter storm would make the trip hazardous and she postponed the event, however, six intrepid participants were already committed and made the trip anyway. The weather hampered travel and birds were not plentiful.

Traveling north on February 8, part of the group was able to stop at Tin Mountain Conservation Center in Albany to see the Painted Bunting that had been regularly visiting feeders there. Folks at the lodge were very hospitable and invited us in to enjoy feeder watching from the windows. Eventually, we discovered the bunting sitting on the branch of a bush and took many photographs. Then, we noticed the bird tried to fly away, but could not because its foot was frozen to the branch. After several attempts, the bird finally freed itself and was able to fly away. We learned afterwards that Len Medlock and others had observed the bunting after we did and it had one leg deformed by frost injury.

Subsequently, the group met in Gorham and traveled together up the east side of the Androscoggin River stopping at various sites along the way. A key spot was the Chickwolnepy Road just north of the Milan Airport. This is a well-known spot for grosbeaks, crossbills, and other winter

finches. Dan Hubbard managed to get the lone view of a White-winged Crossbill. Other birds seen included Golden-crowned Kinglets and Purple Finches along with eight other species of feeder birds.

The only waterfowl during the trip were six Common Goldeneye in the Androscoggin River near Mollidgewock Campground just south of downtown Errol. In Errol, there was a lone Red-winged Blackbird at the Public Library, but we missed the Canada Jays and a female Ring-necked Pheasant that had been wintering in town. We saw several of the common winter species, including three Red-breasted Nuthatches at the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) headquarters. Although the birding was slower than usual, the group enjoyed the trip.



Barrow's Goldeneye with Common Goldeneye by Lori Charron on the re-scheduled Seacoast Chapter trip on "leap day" 2-29-20.

Take Two

by Rebecca Suomala

Lori Charron led the re-scheduled Seacoast Chapter Finch Count on Saturday, February 29. They also found that northern specialties were scarce but highlights included a Northern Shrike along the Androscoggin River in Errol, a Barrow's Goldeneye with Common Goldeneye in the pool on the Androscoggin River below the dam, 3 Hooded Mergansers, a large flock of Cedar Waxwings and robins in Berlin, four Brown-headed Cowbird in Milan, and both Red and White-winged Crossbills at the Magalloway River Trail on the Umbagog NWR.

Superbowl of Birding XVII with the "Twitchers Out of the Rye" 2020

by Kathryn Frieden



The Twitchers selfie to prove they were standing just over the Hampton town line when viewing the Glaucous Gull. From right to left: Rebecca Suomala, Kathryn Frieden, Andrea Robbins, Susan Wrisley.

The pressure was on for the Twitchers. We were defending our "Townie Award" and it was only our second year of birding exclusively in Hampton. We had a veteran "all-star" team: Captain and Driver Becky Suomala, Navigator Andrea Robbins, Scout Susan Wrisley, and Scribe Kathryn Frieden. We started out in the pre-dawn hours of January 25, 2020 looking for a Great Horned Owl that had recently been seen perched near the Hampton toll booths. This was the "first down" of four scheduled owling locations. Andrea worked out a detailed schedule and we made it to the "starting line" right on time. No owl, so we were off to Stage Road where we got lucky when a Barred Owl flew across the road right in front of the car. It was 5:30 am and we had our first species! Owls were tough to find in Hampton last year and that was the case again this year as our next two "downs" yielded nothing. But there was no time to continue standing around in the dark while hooting; we wanted to make it to North Shore Road for first light.

While listening to the lovely dawn chorus rising over the marshes, we saw our first group of birds, all one-pointers, but then we heard a Carolina Wren, a two-pointer. We were off and running! Our next stop was Huckleberry Lane where Steve Mirick had scouted a Swamp Sparrow, a three-point species, earlier in the week. No sparrows, so we "punted" off to the coast for some early morning ocean-scanning.

At Bicentennial Park, there were four Sanderlings on the beach, a nice three-pointer, and only the second time the

Twitchers had them on their Superbowl list. We found a good variety of waterbirds, but the prize would have been the five-point Dovekie that two of us saw. Alas, two of us “fumbled” it, so no Dovekie (at least three of the team members need to see or hear a bird for it to count). We knew there had recently been Fish Crows calling in the nearby Kings Highway area and sure enough, a slow drive listening with the windows down brought us our first four-point bird!

Our next target was Hampton Beach State Park where we found the reliable flocks of Snow Buntings and Horned Larks that gather there, with a bonus of a beautiful Snowy Owl perched on the fence, the whitest that any of us had ever seen! We were also happy to find the sole Lapland Longspur that had previously been reported at the park. This was the first new Superbowl species “on the day” for the Twitchers. While ocean-scanning into a strong northeast wind with at least three-foot seas, we added Razorbill and Northern Gannet to our list and managed to spot a small flock of Purple Sandpipers flying in to land on the rocks. We were especially hopeful that we could find another Dovekie.

Heading inland, we added Eastern Bluebirds, a Bufflehead, and a Belted Kingfisher, and then Becky spotted a Northern Harrier! We all enjoyed watching it gliding and swooping over the marsh. This is only a one-pointer, but it was the first time the Twitchers had ever “scored” one in the Superbowl, so it would help bring in more pledge money.

The morning was moving along quickly and it was time to check for “Glockenspiel,” the famous Glaucous Gull of Seabrook. As Susan noted, once the tide is lower, he is likely to be off somewhere on the mudflats, so this was our best chance. Sure enough, there he was on his usual rooftop. We drove north up the narrow Seabrook street that parallels Route 1A, clambered up the bank, made sure we crossed back into Hampton, looked at the bird, and then took a selfie to congratulate ourselves. Our timing was good, because a few minutes later he was gone.



*Black-bellied Plover on the Hampton River jetty, a new species for the Twitchers.
Photo by Susan Whisley, 1-25-20.*

Scanning the nearby ocean from the beach, Andrea quickly spotted a Black-bellied Plover, another new species for the Twitcher’s, as well as a four-pointer. A few more stops and then it was time for a quick lunch break in the car. Superbowl birding is a rigorous sport—no “halftime” for relaxing in a restaurant! Soon we were at the Route 1 crossing of Taylor River scanning the marsh. Highlights there were a Hooded Merganser as well as a Greater Scaup in the very same place we had seen one last year.

Our “game plan” included a visit to several residential areas with busy feeders where we added Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and a Swamp Sparrow near the same feeder where we saw one last year. Time was limited so it was a great “play” when Andrea finally spotted a Northern Flicker—a fourth woodpecker species in the “fourth quarter”!

Then it was back to the coast and Hampton Beach State Park. Two murrets flew by and Susan was able to confirm with her camera that they were Thick-billed Murrets, a nice four-point species. The wind was even stronger than in the morning so we headed to the more protected Great Boars Head where we had a beautiful close fly-by of Black-legged Kittiwakes, a Horned Grebe, and finally added a Red-throated Loon just as the clock was “running out”.

So how did the Twitchers do in their second year “out of the Rye”? Our total number of species was 66, topping the previous high of 63. We also set a record for the Twitcher’s highest score at 119 points and added three new species to the Twitcher’s all-time list. There were three species we found during scouting but missed on the big day and we never did find another Dovekie. It was a wonderful day with tolerable weather, good birds, and great company. Also, it never hurts to be a winner! For the second year in a row, we won the Townie Award.

A special thank you to all of our sponsors. We raised a record \$4,252 for *New Hampshire Bird Records* and NHeBird. It’s the first time we have broken \$4,000 and is a thousand dollars more than last year. This support is critical to these two NH Audubon bird conservation programs. The team especially appreciated some of the creative pledges and additional bonuses such as \$5 per owl, alcid, or new species, \$20 per warbler, \$10 for a photo of a hawk with prey (we didn’t get that one), \$1 for every point over 100, or \$50 if we found the donor a state bird (alas for the donor’s state list). Such fun!

To pledge or read the full summary:

<https://nhbirdrecords.org>

Backyard Birder

Six Chipping Sparrows in Winter

by Diana Stephens

Photos taken by the author at her home in Derry, NH.



Three Chipping Sparrows first seen in the middle of December, 2019. Note that these birds are in typical winter plumage, lacking the distinct rusty cap and white eye line. They sometimes show a little reddish coloration mixed in with the brown streaking on the head.



In winter, Chipping Sparrows have usually molted out of their breeding plumage so any sparrow with a rusty cap is most likely an American Tree Sparrow. This individual, however, was still in its breeding plumage with a rusty cap (similar to a tree sparrow) on 2-7-20. Compared to the tree sparrow, which has a rufous-colored eye line, note the distinct, dark eye line that extends to the bill of the Chipping Sparrow and the bright white line just below the cap.

It was the middle of winter in Derry and my plans for at least part of the day included participating in the Backyard Winter Bird Survey run by NH Audubon. The thermometer read 30 degrees outside, but the wind chill made it feel like

20. The sun peeked in and out of the clouds throughout the day and the winds remained around 10 mph. Light snow flurries fell from the sky.

Before the Winter Solstice in December, I had seen a couple of Chipping Sparrows at the feeder, but didn't think much of it. I figured they were just late in leaving the area. I also didn't realize how rare it is to see this species in the winter in New England. I had seen them frequently in my yard from spring through fall since I bought my home back in 2014, but hadn't noticed them during previous winters.

In January, when I told Becky Suomala (*New Hampshire Bird Records* Editor) I had a whole bunch of Chipping Sparrows in my yard, she didn't believe me! :-). She responded, "Are you sure they're not American Tree Sparrows?" Well, to be honest, I can identify several sparrow species, but I had never seen an American Tree Sparrow before, as far as I knew. So when I arrived home, I reached for my *Sibley Guide to Birds* and checked to make sure I hadn't confused these birds with American Tree Sparrows. I hadn't. They were definitely Chipping Sparrows!

When the Backyard Bird Survey rolled around on February 7, (2020) I was surprised and delighted to count four, five, no... **six** Chipping Sparrows in my backyard Forsythia bush! I rushed to get my camera so I could document (and prove to Becky) that I had seen six Chipping Sparrows in my yard in the winter time.

According to David Allen Sibley, the normal winter range of the Chipping Sparrow spans the entire southern United States, from South Carolina to Baja, California. Year-round residents may be found anywhere from San Diego, CA through parts of Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia up to as far north as Virginia and Maryland. In summer, though, Chipping Sparrows can be seen on their breeding grounds all over the US and Canada, extending all the way from Alaska to Nova Scotia.

Winter Birding at Trudeau Road, Bethlehem

by Mark Suomala

Trudeau Road is an excellent birding location year-round, but in winter it can be a good place to look for crossbills, northern finches and the occasional Boreal Chickadee. This site is mainly known for its boggy woodland and wetland areas, which typically host at least one resident pair of Black-backed Woodpeckers. The woodpeckers can be seen year-round, but it is much easier to find them during the breeding season when they are vocalizing and drumming. In winter, listen for their quiet tapping as they chip bark off dead trees



Black-backed Woodpecker by Mark Suomala, June 2007, Trudeau Rd., Bethlehem, NH.

in search of insects.

The mature spruce-fir forest here attracts northern finches. White-winged Crossbill and Red Crossbill are regular but more easily found in irruption years when there are good cone crops. Purple Finch is common and Pine Siskin can be found in most years. In irruption years, Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak may both be found. Recently, Evening Grosbeak has been

seen. It helps to know the flight-calls of all these species as they frequently fly over, calling but landing only occasionally. American Goldfinch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, and Common Raven are regular winter residents. Listen and watch for a Boreal Chickadee with the flocks of Black-capped Chickadees that are common.

The best place to look for these species is along the gated forest roads accessed directly from Trudeau Road. When most birders refer to Trudeau Road, they are typically including these trails. There is a gated forest road on the west side of the road that provides the best access (herein referred to as the west-roadside gate). Be sure to park well off the road as large trucks travel to and from the landfill just north of the gate. There is more room to park on the east side of Trudeau Road and you won't block the gate.

Walk past the west-roadside gate for a short distance (about 800 feet) until you reach a four-way intersection. There is good birding habitat in all directions. Turn right and walk slowly, looking and listening for bird vocalizations and drumming. When you reach an open water wetland (about 1,200 feet) on the west (left) side of the trail, you have reached the end of the main woodpecker area. The wetland provides a good vista for checking tree tops for Purple Finch, Pine Grosbeak, or flocks of feeding crossbills.

Return to the four-way intersection and keep walking south (turn left if you are coming in from the west-roadside gate). Continue to another wetland (about 600 feet) and go as far as the bridge. Check the shrubby wetland bushes for birds feeding on catkins. Scan the standing dead trees for woodpecker activity.

Return to the four-way intersection and take the left (west) trail that is a continuation of the forest road in from

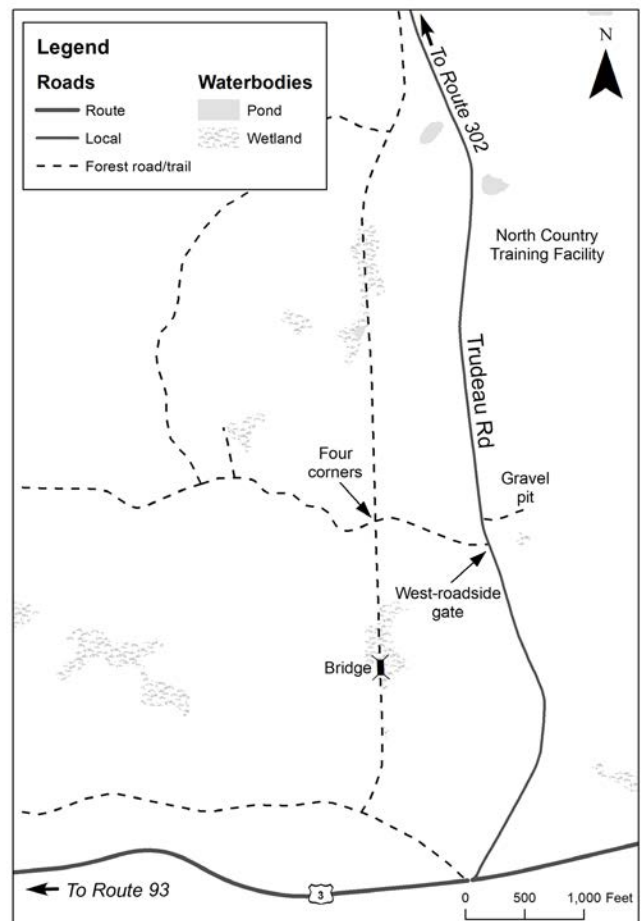
the west-roadside gate. Walk through the initial section that has good spruce-fir habitat (about 800 to 1,000 feet). Watch for an old logging road into a wetland on the right where there are lots of dead trees that may attract woodpeckers. Ruffed Grouse is attracted to Quaking Aspen occurring along the roadsides in this area. This logging road is before you get to a trail into a private cabin (marked by a yellow no-snowmobiles sign).

Another option is to walk Trudeau Road north to the Bureau of Fire Training and Administration: North Country Training Facility. It is on the east side of the road about 0.3 miles north from the west-roadside gate. Black-backed Woodpeckers are sometimes seen along the road. Traffic can be hazardous, so be very careful.

Also, on the east side of Trudeau Road is a very short, gated road into a gravel pit that can attract birds looking for grit, such as Dark-eyed Junco. The gravel pit is nearly opposite the west-roadside gate, about 200 feet north.

The trails extend for many miles, and who knows what you might turn up if you explore!

To get to Trudeau Road from Route 93 northbound, take Exit 35 for Route 3 east. Stay on Route 3 for about 4.5 miles until you see Trudeau Road on your left (north side of Route 3). The west-roadside gate is about one-half mile on Trudeau Road from Route 3 on the left. There are no restrooms.



Map by Steven Lamonde.

Answer to the Photo Quiz

by Susan Wrisley

Photos by Susan Wrisley unless otherwise noted.



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

Under the best of circumstances, birds that look similar can be difficult to tell apart, but in this photo the sleeping ducks and lack of sun have conspired to hide their most commonly known field marks. Fear not, they are still showing distinctive differences that make identification fairly straight forward, but first let's make sure we're all on the same page of our field guides.

We have three small, compact, diving ducks with bold black and white coloring and brilliant yellow-gold eyes. This information alone is probably enough to lead any birder to the conclusion that they are male (drake) goldeneyes. Yes! Congratulations, you did it! But wait, did you really think it was going to be that simple? No, of course not, because there are two types of goldeneyes that regularly overwinter in New Hampshire; Common and Barrow's. The two in front are obviously the same, and the one in back is different, but which is which?

Like so many new birders, when I started birding, I was taught that the easiest way to tell the difference between a Common Goldeneye and a Barrow's Goldeneye was the color of the iridescence on their head and the shape of the white mark between their bill and eye. Commons have a green iridescence on their head and an oval white spot, while Barrow's have a purple-blue iridescence and a crescent shaped white mark, which extends above the height of their eye. This was great information until I realized that some lighting conditions can cause Commons to have a blue sheen and it was often difficult to see if a duck had an oval or crescent when they were far away. This meant it was necessary to learn other field marks, since gray winter days often obliterate color, and ducks are almost always far away, except for Mallards. Fortunately, these attractive ducks have several other telltale field marks beyond the face mark and the color

of their heads.

Let's compare the overall shape of the head, forehead and bill of both ducks. The Common Goldeneye has a peaked crown, with a sloping forehead that leads to a black triangular shaped bill which is noticeably longer than the lore (the space between the bill and eye). The Barrow's Goldeneye has a more rounded head and a sloping crown, with a steep forehead that meets the short triangular shaped bill at an angle, making it appear even stubbier than it actually is. The Barrow's bill is about the same length as the lore. The head, forehead and bill shape for each species carries over to the females (hens) and immatures, which may be the only reliable way to tell them apart since they have little in the way of plumage/coloring cues to go by. Keep in mind, however, that the angle of the duck's head can make the forehead and bill appear differently, so take time to observe carefully if you are unsure.



Common Goldeneye (top),
Barrow's Goldeneye (bottom).



Common Goldeneye (top),
Barrow's Goldeneye (bottom).

Moving down to the body of our ducks, we now get to what I think are the best field marks for male goldeneyes. As you can see in the photo to the left, the scapulars of the two ducks look very different. Scapulars are body feathers that cover the wing when the bird is resting. The Common Goldeneye (top) has mostly white scapulars, with thin black stripes, while the Barrow's (bottom) has mostly black scapulars with white dots. The Barrow's also has a black "spur" on its shoulder that points down toward the water while the Common lacks this mark. These field marks show well on sleeping ducks, at a distance, in poor light and even in black and white photos! With this information, one can now see that the quiz photo shows two male Barrow's (front and right) and one Common (upper left).

Trick Question

Now that we worked all that out, what quiz would be complete without a trick question, covering something not fully discussed in class? Using the information provided, can you tell if this female (next page, top left) is a Common or Barrow's Goldeneye? The answer is at the end.



Trick question photo by Cathy Wennerth, 1-11-19, Manchester, NH.

When to Find Them

Common Goldeneyes typically begin arriving in New Hampshire by mid October, with their heaviest numbers occurring between December and March. They can still be found in April, but in smaller numbers.

Barrow's Goldeneyes start to appear in mid to late November and are present through April, with the largest number of reports in January and February. It's likely that the increase in reports represents birders checking off a nice year-bird, rather than an actual increase in their numbers.

Where to Find Them

As their name implies, Common Goldeneyes are fairly common in New Hampshire during the winter months and can sometimes be seen by the hundreds in places such as

Great Bay. Look for them along the coast, in bays, harbors and rivers. Inland, look for them in larger rivers, near the base of dams where water tends to stay open, and in any body of open water.

Although fairly uncommon in New Hampshire, Barrow's Goldeneyes are still regular winter visitors and can be found wherever Common Goldeneyes occur. Single Barrow's or pairs are sometimes mixed in with flocks of Commons, so always take a moment to scan for the odd duck.

Barrow's Goldeneye Locations

- Stark Landing, Manchester, NH – Located behind Delta Dental Stadium, this small road leads to a steep boat ramp. A scope is helpful. Be diligent of your personal safety and use care during icy conditions.
- Waumbec Mills (weekends recommended), Manchester, NH – Located at 250 Commercial Street, about half a mile north of Stark Landing. The parking lots behind the old mill buildings allow for good views of the Merrimack River. Note: *All* parking spaces behind the mills are assigned to building tenants. This congested area is very busy during the week.
- Arms Park, Manchester, NH – Less than a quarter mile from Waumbec Mills. This area is also busy during weekdays, however, there is a large parking lot and usually ample room but there is a fee for parking.

- Great Bay Discovery Center, Greenland NH – there is a small public boat ramp next to the Discovery Center from which you can view Great Bay. Morning is best for light and a scope is essential.
- Bracket Point, Greenland, NH – This small parcel of wildlife management land is located off Osprey Cove (road), roughly next to 16 Osprey Cove. Look for a small parking area, next to an old cemetery. From there a rough path leads into a field, then goes to the left, into a second field, then into the forest and out to Bracket Point. The path can be difficult to follow. A scope is essential.

Trick Question Answer:
Common Goldeneye



Photo by Leo McKillop, 1-15-17, Manchester, NH.

Barrow's Goldeneye

- More rounded head, sloping crown
- Purple-blue iridescence on head
- Steep forehead
- White crescent between bill and eye, extends above eye
- Bill is about the length of the lores
- Black scapulars with white spots
- Black spur on shoulder



Photo by Susan Wisley, 1-22-20, Hampton, NH.

Common Goldeneye

- Peaked crown
- Green iridescence on head
- Sloping forehead
- White oval spot between bill and eye, does not extend above eye
- Bill longer than lores
- Mostly white scapulars with thin black stripes
- No spur on shoulder

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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

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

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Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Highlights



Orange-crowned Warbler by Benjamin Griffith, 12-21-19, Rochester, NH (Lee-Durham CBC).



Pine Warbler by Benjamin Griffith, 12-14-19, Portsmouth, NH (Coastal CBC).



Boreal Chickadee by Ben Griffith, 12-29-19, Waterville Valley (Sandwich CBC), NH.



Black-backed Woodpecker by Benjamin Griffith, 12-20-19, Errol, NH (Errol-Umbagog CBC).



Hermit Thrush by Lori Charron, 12-20-19, Errol, NH (Errol-Umbagog CBC).

Winter 2019-2020 Rarities



Green-tailed Towhee by Jim Sparrell, 12-8-19, Chichester, NH.



Read about this Yellow-breasted Chat that spent part of the winter in Portsmouth at Katie Towler and Jim Sparrell's feeders. Photo by Jim Sparrell, 1-9-20.



The New Castle Bullock's Oriole by Steve Mirick, 1-1-20, NH.



The Stratham Bullock's Oriole by Terri Fratus, 2-22-20, NH. We were sorry to learn that Terri passed away in July 2020.



The Plaistow Western Tanager by Susan Whisley, 12-7-19, NH.



The North Hampton Western Tanager by Len Medlock, 12-28-19, NH.