

New Hampshire BIRD RECORDS



New Hampshire's Grosbeaks!

Five species of grosbeaks were reported in New Hampshire this fall. Here are three of them, another is on the inside back cover. Read Jim Sparrell's account of seeing all five in the Field Notes.



Blue Grosbeak by Jim Sparrell, 10-2-20, South Street Cemetery, Portsmouth, NH.



Black-headed Grosbeak by Benjamin Griffith, 10-16-20, Deerfield, NH.



Evening Grosbeaks by Len Medlock, 10-31-20, Exeter, NH.

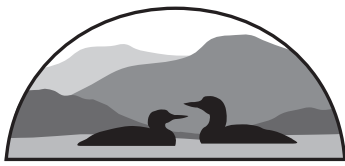
Photo Quiz

Can You Identify These Birds?

Photo by Leo McKillop, 9-25-20.
Answer on page 47.



IN MEMORY OF
Ralph Andrews



NH AUDUBON

Protecting our environment since 1914

NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS

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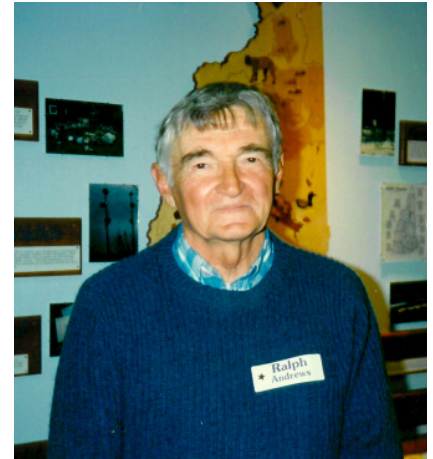
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This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of Ralph Andrews with deep appreciation for his commitment to bird conservation and his warm and friendly personality. He encouraged many a new birder and welcomed all participants to whatever birding activity he was involved with, from the Breeding Bird Atlas to field trips to the Christmas Bird Count. See more on page 2.



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Cover Photos: Swallow-tailed Kite (top) by Susan Wrisley, 8-12-20, Deer Meadow Rd., Webster, NH; A hatch-year Anna's Hummingbird (bottom left), captured, banded, and photographed by Scott Weidensaul, New London, NH (according to Scott this is a first record for all of New England!); Chestnut-collared Longspur (bottom right) by Susan Wrisley, 10-20-20, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH.

From the Editor

FALL 2020

by Rebecca Suomala

New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund Reaches \$50,000

Thanks to generous donors, we've surpassed the \$50,000 mark in contributions to the Endowment Fund! This Fund provides annual support to *New Hampshire Bird Records* and builds a long term base of support for providing information about birds and birding in New Hampshire.

The Fund was approved by the NH Audubon Board of Trustees to provide long-term support for the collection, organization, quality control, distribution, dissemination, publication, promotion, preservation and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information. *New Hampshire Bird Records* is the current vehicle and umbrella for these functions and the initial focus of the fund is to support all facets of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (both the publication and data aspects, including eBird).

We make one annual request for donations in the fall issue. You'll find a form enclosed with this issue. If you would like to include the Endowment Fund in your estate planning, please contact me (see page 1).

Thank you for donating to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund.



Young Barred Owl contemplating a dip in the backyard pool! Photo by Kyle Wilmarth, 8-14-20, Salem, NH.

Ralph Andrews

In December of 2020 the birding community lost one of its longest-standing members in New Hampshire. Ralph Andrews received the Goodhue-Elkins Award in 2006 for his life-long commitment and his outstanding contributions to the study of New Hampshire birds. Ralph was intensively involved in the production of the New Hampshire Breeding Bird Atlas and coordinated the local Christmas Bird Count for many years. He worked for the US Fish & Wildlife Service for 40 years including managing the Roseate Tern Recovery Project. He was the backbone of the Nashaway Chapter, serving in many leadership roles, coordinating and leading field trips, and bringing conservation issues to the members.

Ralph served as a NH Audubon trustee and Dick Henry (former President) remembers him as having "a real New Hampshire sense of humor and deep insights to what an organization like NH Audubon needed. He was such a gentleman and always had such a nice laugh." He was a friendly mentor to new birders and at 94, he was still hoping to join his birding buddy, David Deifik, on the next Christmas Bird Count. David shared the following:

Ralph was the first birder I met in Nashua when we moved here in 1983. He invited me to come down to



Nuttall as a guest starting in the early 90s and then proposed me for membership. We also had a chance to do some birding trips together including Texas and the Netherlands. He will be greatly missed.

Jim Kegley remembered Ralph with these words which seem so fitting: "He was a great birder, but an equally great ambassador and champion, and a kind, welcoming friend who I'll always remember."

August 1 through November 30, 2020

by Benjamin Griffith



Two of the big stories of the season both centered around drought. The state experienced severe drought for much of the fall season. Although there was an increase in rain during the latter part of the season, it was not

enough to overcome the summer rainfall deficit. This was most evident in low water levels at lakes resulting in habitat for inland shorebirds. Additionally, severe drought and wildfires in the western part of the country are thought to have contributed to a nationwide push of birds eastward. Although it's impossible to know for sure, several of the rarest birds from the season, such as **Anna's Hummingbird**, **White-winged Dove**, **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, **Black-headed Grosbeak**, and **Townsend's Solitaire** come from regions that were affected by these conditions.

The third major story of the season was the massive irruption of northern birds southward. The most conspicuous of these were the finches (i.e. redpolls, siskins, crossbills), as well as **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Blue Jay** and **Black-capped Chickadee**. An outstanding White Pine cone crop in New Hampshire and southern parts of the northeastern states provided an attractive food source for species such as Red Crossbills and Red-breasted Nuthatches.



Swallow-tailed Kite chased by American Crow by Len Medlock, 8-15-20, Webster, NH.

Other notables for the season included a **Barnacle Goose**, a **Sabine's Gull**, a **Sooty Tern**, and multiple **Swallow-tailed Kites**. Additional phenomena for the season included a mind-boggling count of **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons**,

many and early **Lapland Longspurs**, and an exceptional season for **Tennessee Warblers**.

Waterfowl

There were only five reports of **Snow Geese** in fall 2020, all single birds except for seven in Dublin. This is fewer reports than is typical for fall. Dylan Jackson was lucky enough to see the "Blue Goose" form in Cornish. Dave Govatski described the following remarkable Snow Goose experience from Pondicherry NWR in his October 4 eBird report:

Saw it for five seconds being pursued by two mature Bald Eagles. It was killed in flight by the lead eagle. The Snow Goose dropped into the brush at the edge of Cherry Pond. One eagle tried for over an hour to lift the heavy goose without luck. They then took turns feeding on the goose in the brush.

(<https://ebird.org/nh/checklist/S74408131>)

A **Barnacle Goose** photographed in Hudson was only the sixth record for the state. Not as rare, but still notable, was a single **Cackling Goose** well documented in Orford. This species is a rare migrant that is reported nearly every season, but is challenging to identify due to its similarity to Canada Goose. Two **Tundra Swans** were photographed in Salem on November 28. Although historically very rare in the state, this species has occurred annually since 2017. Another swan photographed two days later was likely a Tundra, but was not photographed well enough to conclusively eliminate the much rarer Trumpeter Swan. A free-flying **Whooper Swan** seen by many in Rye for much of the season was documented to be an escaped captive bird (see the article on Whooper Swans by Steve Mirick).



Tundra Swans by Kyle Wilmarth, 11-28-20, Salem, NH.

Blue-winged Teal are one of the earliest migrant waterfowl and are often confused with Green-winged Teal later in the season. At least one Blue-winged Teal was present in a group of ducks in Concord in late October, but several reports of multiple birds almost certainly were the result

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of misidentification of Green-winged Teal. The high count for the season was 29 at Meadow Pond on August 31. Five **Northern Shovelers** in New London was a remarkable record for this inland location. There are very few reports of shovelers in the highlands between the Merrimack and the Connecticut River Valleys. A count of four **Gadwall** in Chesterfield was unusually high for this scarce species, especially away from the coast, where the species occurs most frequently. The only **Redhead** sighting was of a single bird seen at the most reliable location in the state – Great Bay. Two **Harlequin Ducks** were seen on the coast for one day only. A **King Eider** on a whalewatch in October was only the fourth fall record in the past ten years. Unlike most other wintering diving ducks, **Barrow's Goldeneyes** are most expected along larger rivers rather than the coast; this fall's birds appeared in early November along the Merrimack and Androscoggin Rivers. Six **Ruddy Ducks** at Lake Umbagog is one of only a handful of reports for the northernmost area of the state.



Yellow-billed Teal hybrids by Steve Mirick, September 2020, Rye, NH.

Two **Yellow-billed Teal** hybrids were found in Rye, interestingly with separate parents. I contacted a European expert on these hybrids who provided the identification and wrote an article about them in this issue.

Inclement weather in October can result in inland fallouts of scoters and other waterbirds on their way to winter at the coast. This fall, Bob Quinn documented one such event

centered in Grafton County on October 30. See his article for the details. The same event brought 19 **Long-tailed Ducks** to Concord, the highest count for that area in eBird. Early migrating **Red-necked Grebes** occurred on Lake Umbagog and in Piermont in August.

Grouse through Cranes

Spruce Grouse were well-reported compared with recent years. The high number of reports may be the result of increased hiking activity in the White Mountains as people recreated during the ongoing pandemic. Most notable were multiple reports from Baldface Mountain, a relatively low elevation site at the southern edge of their range.



White-winged Dove by Susan Wisley, 11-7-20, Concord, NH.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos exhibited an early northward movement, highlighted by three records in Coos County in August. A **White-winged Dove** spent a week in Concord, the third record for the state. Although some rarities have a most likely season, each of the three records has occurred during a different season (and in different counties!). This fall's individual was found during the annual Concord November Challenge (coordinated by Pam Hunt) to find as many species as possible on the first weekend of November. This was certainly not an expected species, but you never know what you can find when a lot of people are out looking.

Common Nighthawk migration peaked slightly later than is typical and extended well into September. A count of 364 in Wentworth on September 10 was quite high for the date; by that time, numbers are usually below ten. The peak day for the Concord watch was 2,202 nighthawks on August 31 (see the summary in this issue). A large flight was also reported in Keene on September 3 with over 700 birds. There were even a few late nighthawks in the last few

days of September with the latest report on September 30 in Brookline. An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** on October 1 was somewhat late, although the species' departure is often difficult to detect.

Several **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** lingered well into October, with the latest one on October 19 in Warren. Perhaps most remarkable was an adult male on October 12. Adult males are typically the first to migrate and are rare after early September.

Care should always be taken to identify late hummingbirds, as it is a likely time for rare species to be found. A hummingbird on October 31 was thought to be a Ruby-throated, but the observer could not get a clear enough view to confirm the species. A first-year female **Anna's Hummingbird** appeared at a feeding station in New London



A hatch-year Anna's Hummingbird, captured, banded, and photographed by Scott Weidensaul, New London, NH.

and was initially identified as a Ruby-throated. Luckily, a friend noticed photos of the bird and it was banded and photographed, *the first record for New England*.

A **Common Gallinule** was found on the coast at Eel Pond in Rye, the most reliable location for the species in recent years. An **American Coot** on September 21 was on the early side for this typically late migrant species (peak counts are mid-October through November). In addition to the three now-regular summer locations (Monroe, Umbagog, and Nottingham), **Sandhill Cranes** were observed from five locations as migrants (presumably) – Weare, Hancock, Concord, Rochester, and Epping.

Shorebirds

American Oystercatchers were observed on the Isles of Shoals during two pelagic trips in September, consistent with recent years. **Black-bellied Plovers** are less common inland than coastally; a count of ten from Rochester was exceptional. **American Golden-Plovers**, in contrast, are just as likely to occur inland as on the coast and this fall sixteen were reported from inland locations compared with

only eight from the coast. A **Semipalmated Plover** lingered through the end of the season for the second year in a row (and ever), with two reported as late as November 25. Temperate breeding shorebirds (as opposed to those that nest in the arctic) are some of the earliest to migrate south in the fall; a juvenile **Piping Plover** on August 19 was on the late side for this temperate species.



American Oystercatcher by Leo McKillop, 9-17-20, Isles of Shoals, NH.

Drought may have overall created more shorebird habitat inland, but these conditions are often mimicked by the drawdown of lakes in wetter years. Nevertheless, there were a number of unusual shorebird sightings that may be partially attributable to drought. An **Upland Sandpiper** at Meadow Pond was a rare sighting away from their breeding grounds at Pease and may be the direct result of the aforementioned low water levels. Surrey Lane Marsh in Durham had some shorebird highlights this fall thanks to a combination of drought and lowered water levels as reported by Kurk Dorsey to the NHBirds email list (10-1-20):

In 2019, they installed a beaver deceiver at the dam, so last summer [2019] there were mudflats for the first time in my memory. Then of course this year's drought really lowered the water. Since August 2019, 10 new species of shorebirds have been added to the site list, as well as Little Blue Heron and Glossy Ibis, and now the pipits (also Merlin, which was pretty clearly related to the shorebirds, as the shorebirds will attest if they ever settle down).

Two species that have suffered from declines in the mussel beds in Hampton had good years. Eight **Whimbrels** was one of the highest counts in recent years and **Hudsonian Godwits** from two locations (including two individuals at Hampton Harbor) was also unusually high for recent years. **Stilt Sandpipers** were well reported with a total of 11 for the season. Birds at Surrey Lane Marsh and Lake Massabesic

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were away from more expected sites such as coastal locations or sewage lagoons. **Sanderlings** were reported from four inland locations which is noteworthy, as this species occurs less than annually at inland sites. Seven photographed in Wolfeboro were particularly remarkable. This is likely a result of the drought. **Dunlin** are also largely coastal, but somewhat more expected inland, but a count of 10 at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant was particularly exceptional. The other inland reports were single birds from Lancaster, Newport, Charlestown, and Auburn. Our latest shorebird, **Purple Sandpiper**, is scarce before November. Although singles the last few days of October aren't exceptional, a count of 26 on October 30 was likely the highest October count ever for the state (and only the sixth time more than nine individuals have been reported from a site in the past 10 years).



Whimbrel by Len Medlock, 9-6-20, Hampton, NH.

It was a modest year for **Baird's Sandpipers** on the coast, with only one well documented bird there. Three Baird's Sandpipers at inland locations (two in Charlestown and one in Rochester), on the other hand, was above average. **Least Sandpipers** are rarely found in high numbers, especially coastally, and a count of 250 from South Mill Pond in Portsmouth was exceptional. This species has also been staying later into October in recent years; birds were present almost throughout the month both in the Hampton Saltmarshes and in Rochester. In recent years, an increase in late-season hiking has resulted in a number of interesting records of shorebirds above tree line. This year two **White-rumped Sandpipers** photographed on Mount Washington were the latest addition (see the article in this issue). Three **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were reported this year, with one at Pease which is an expected location. Others at Hampton Harbor and the Bellamy Reservoir are less expected, with the latter a direct result of low water levels.



Pectoral Sandpiper by Iain MacLeod, 10-15-20, Meredith, NH.

Pectoral Sandpipers, often a beneficiary of low water levels inland, were widespread with sightings in nine of the 10 counties, but numbers were not especially high, with most counts of fewer than five birds. The sighting details show records from locations with four or more individuals. **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were widespread inland, although the only sites recording concentrations were Surrey Lane Marsh (40) and the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant (80). At the coast, the high count from a single location was a flock of 1,000 at South Mill Pond on September 8, the same day as the peak flock of **Least Sandpipers**. **Western Sandpipers** are never common, but are slightly easier to find in some years. This was not one such year. A total of six birds were reported at four locations throughout the fall. For comparison, more were reported in a single day last year!



Red-necked Phalarope by Dan Prima, 9-1-20, Stuart Farm, Stratham, NH.

Short-billed Dowitchers are rarely seen away from the direct coast so two at Surrey Lane Marsh was yet another unusual shorebird at this location. **Red-necked Phalaropes** are most commonly seen offshore in the fall, with a high of

79 on September 25 on one of the few pelagic trips (see the Field Trips article). Two seen inland in Sandwich (August 23) and Stratham (September 1) were much more uncommon.

Solitary Sandpipers were well reported, with 11 being the highest fall count since 2014. Concentrations of yellowlegs in Meadow Pond (Hampton) can be very impressive. This year's count of 55 **Lesser Yellowlegs** was the highest since 2015. A **Willet** in Conway was an extraordinary find and represents the only inland sighting of this species in eBird for New Hampshire. They are primarily restricted to salt marshes.

Jaegers, Alcids, Gulls and Terns

Pomarine Jaegers were reported from three offshore trips during the season, while only a single **Parasitic Jaeger** was reported. Historically, Parasitic has been the more common species, but recent pelagic trips in September and October along with regular November fishing trips have increased sightings of Pomarine in recent years and it has been the more commonly reported species since 2016.

A single **Common Murre** was reported from offshore waters, only the third "fall" record of this species in the past 10 years. Although they have increased in regularity, they typically don't appear until December. **Razorbills** were also slightly early, with an October 18 bird the earliest since 2017. In stark contrast to last year's banner year, no Dovekies were reported offshore this fall, while **Atlantic Puffins** occurred on two separate fall offshore trips.



Black-headed Gull (top right) by Susan Wrisley, 10-17-20, Rye, NH.

Black-legged Kittiwake numbers were possibly somewhat limited by the lack of an October pelagic trip, but 20 on November 22 was the second highest fall count since 2014. A very rare sighting of a **Sabine's Gull** during an August storm would be only the fourth record of the species if accepted

by the NH Rare Birds Committee. There were two **Black-headed Gulls** photographed in Rye in October, the first records since 2017, and only the third and fourth records in a decade. There were also two reports of **Little Gulls** for the season, a species which has been scarce in recent years (although two were also reported last year). A count of nine **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** during a storm on September 2 was unusually high, but pales in comparison to last years' count of 20. A sign of continuing declines in gull numbers at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant, there were only 1 **Iceland Gull**, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and no **Glaucous Gulls** – a ghost of expected numbers 10 years ago.



Caspian Tern by Leo McKillop, 8-29-20, Rye, NH.

Tropical Storm Isaias impacted New England in early August and distributed **Sooty Terns** throughout much of the region, including one seen at Pleasant Lake in Deerfield, the first live sighting of the species in the state since 2000. See the Species Spotlight by Steve Mirick for more on Sooty Terns. The season's high count of 12 **Caspian Terns** on August 29 was notable for the early date (most higher counts are later in September). A Black Tern described from the Connecticut River was a rare inland sighting of a scarce species and one of only three for the season (the other two were at the coast). A total of 10 Forster's Terns were tallied migrating off Rye Harbor State Park during a seawatch on August 29, the first double-digit totals for the state since 2012.

Loons through Herons

Red-throated Loons typically arrive in the first days of October, but four were reported from September of this year. The species is not reported inland every fall, but this fall at least four birds were reported, mostly from larger rivers and lakes, but also including a bird on a small lake at high elevation in Dixville.

Higher numbers of **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** were reported than in recent years, with 725 on August 7, the highest total for the state since 2009! Three **Leach's Storm-Petrels** were found this fall, one each on two September pelagics and a third

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during an October storm, the first records for the state since 2013.



Great Shearwater by Jim Sparrell, 11-8-20, offshore waters NH.

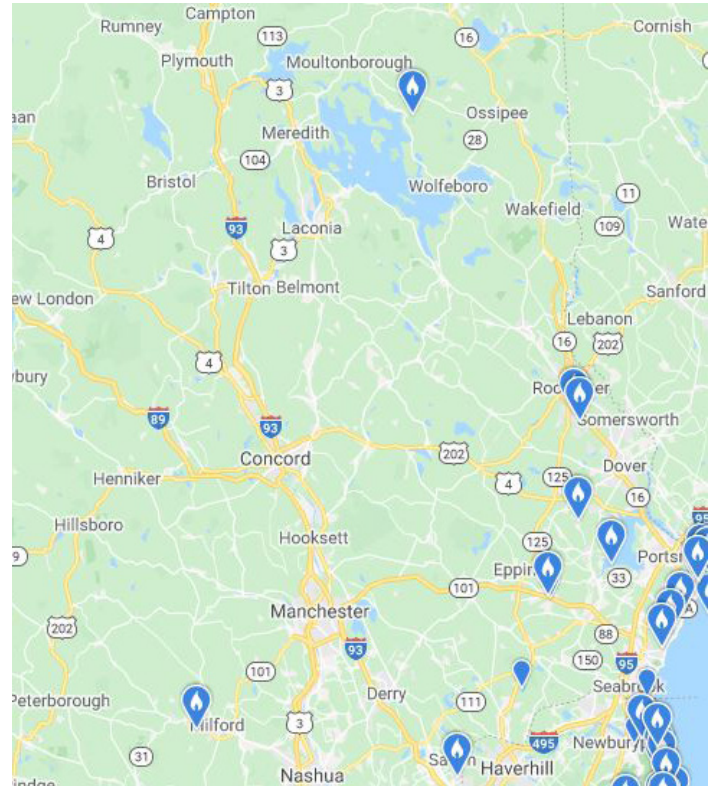
A total of 36 **Northern Fulmars** on the September 25 pelagic was high, but pales in comparison to a total of 135 from the previous year which may be the result of greater coverage during their peak migratory period. **Cory's Shearwaters** were present through early October, but not particularly abundant. Meanwhile, **Great Shearwaters** had their best fall since 2009, with two counts in the hundreds and a count of 272 the highest in that same time period. **Sooty Shearwaters** don't linger into August in all years, but were regularly reported offshore through August 19. Small numbers of **Manx Shearwaters** were seen on the offshore trips in August and September as is typical. **Great Cormorants** are uncommon but regular inland throughout the fall. This year four were reported from inland sites – in Concord, Benton, Warren, and Manchester.

Least Bitterns were only reported from their two breeding sites at World End Pond in Salem and Cranberry wetlands in Lebanon, disappearing by the end of August. The last reports were of juveniles. Richard Garrigus noted in his eBird report from Lebanon that they had been hearing odd noises

...when suddenly there was a burst of activity and all three young appeared in one place tussling with each other then separating and going to separate corners of the pond again. Two remained in sight long enough to enable photos. No sign of adult birds, visually or audibly.

Little Blue Herons are typically scarce and reported primarily from the coast, but this season at least 10 different birds were reported from scattered locations inland! One location in Milford had three Little Blues and Deer Hill Wildlife Management Area in Brentwood had two. Interestingly, the seven reports from the coast was only slightly higher than normal. **Tricolored Heron** is rare at any season,

but especially in fall. A young bird was the first fall record since 2014. It was present from August 20 through September 18 at Meadow Pond in Hampton, where it was first discovered, except for a brief foray to Philbrick Marsh in North Hampton. The season's only **Cattle Egret** was a "one day wonder" on November 1 in Durham.



Little Blue Heron reports in eBird for fall 2020. Image provided by eBird (www.ebird.org) and created 6-16-21.

As **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** have increased in numbers in New Hampshire in recent years, it was not spectacularly surprising to record a new high count for the species. What *was* surprising was the new high count of 22 in view at once which was nearly *triple* the previous high count (eight birds from three locations in 2016). The reporter found one more individual at a different location for a total of 23 Yellow-crowns in the area! In fact, more Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were reported than the far more expected **Black-crowned Night-Heron** (high count 15)! Two inland **Glossy Ibis** were reported, from Hollis and Rochester. This species is historically quite rare away from the coast, but has been reported in small numbers inland in fall in recent years.

Raptors

Only two **Black Vultures** were reported for the season, one from Concord and the other from Nashua, which is one of the more regular locations for the species. Two **Swallow-tailed Kites** in the state this fall overlapped in date and were certainly different birds. Prior to this year, there were only



Yellow-crowned Night-Herons by Steve Mirick, 9-5-20, Hampton, NH.

three accepted records of the species. These were part of a larger movement, with other Swallow-tailed Kites being reported during the same time period in New York (2), Ontario (3), Pennsylvania (3), and New Jersey (1). The first reports in New Hampshire were at the very end of July in Webster and Claremont. The Claremont bird wasn't seen again, but a kite turned up in Lebanon on August 8 and 9. The Webster bird was reported again on August 9 in the same area where it stayed until August 16 to the delight of many birders.

Golden Eagles were scarce this fall, with only five reported from Pack Monadnock and only four other records for the season. **Broad-winged Hawk** totals peaked on September 17-18, with totals over 2,000 both days at Pack Monadnock. See the raptor migration report in this issue for the full details on hawk migration. Broad-winged Hawks have overwhelmingly left by mid-October. Reports of multiple Broad-winged Hawks in late October are notable; this fall, birds continued trickling through at Pack Monadnock with two reported as late as October 25. Likewise, one on November 5 was especially late. Seven **Rough-legged Hawks** reported was above average and a harbinger of a good winter for the species.



Snowy Owl by Zeke Cornell, 11-27, Great Bay, Greenland, NH.

Although observers have become accustomed to regular **Snowy Owls**, it appears the species is on the downturn of its cyclical occurrence in the state. Only four were reported this season, although interestingly three were away from expected coastal habitats: one was at Great Bay, one was at the Portsmouth Traffic Circle, and one was in Westmoreland. Watch the video of the Westmoreland Snowy Owl on NH Audubon's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/hcCUVuv8eVM>. Two **Short-eared Owls** were reported for the season, an average total for the species, although a record from Surry was away from more expected locations for the species.

Woodpeckers through Shrikes

The pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** that nested in Bear Brook State Park had a successful second brood. The two young fledged on August 24-25 and Susan Wisley reported that they were both immediately hawking insects on their own while still being fed by the parents. Four other Red-headed were reported from scattered locations in the state including an individual that flew by the summit of Mt. Monadnock.



Western Kingbird by Bob Crowley, 10-19-20, Sherman's Farm, Conway, NH.

An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** that lingered until October 12 was on the late side for the species. *Empidonax*

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flycatchers are notoriously difficult to identify in fall, but three **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** in late September were all well documented. An **Acadian Flycatcher** continued from the summer until August 1 in Durham. A **Western Kingbird** was seen for one day in Conway. This species is approximately annual in the state, with most records on the coast.



Philadelphia Vireo by Steve Mirick, 9-20-20, New Castle, NH.

Three **White-eyed Vireos** were reported for the fall season, an above average total for the season. One in Laconia was unusually far north for this southern species. It was a good fall for **Philadelphia Vireos**, with birds widely reported through September and early October and a high count of three from two locations. Towards the end of this time period, Philadelphia is much more expected than the earlier-migrating **Warbling Vireo**, but two Warbling Vireos were reported in October. At least 24 **Northern Shrikes** were seen during the fall season, a high total for this irruptive species.

Jays through Thrushes

Large numbers of migrating Blue Jays began to be reported on September 12. The peak one-day count for the state was 312 on Little Round Top in Bristol on September 19. Ken Klapper tallied daily counts of migrating Blue Jays at his home in Sandwich from September 12 through October 4, with a grand total of 2,244 and a peak one day tally of 295 (see his article in the Field Notes). Other one-day tallies over 100 occurred in September and early October from Mt. Washington, Tuftonboro, Freedom, and Concord. The latest flight was at the coast on October 18.

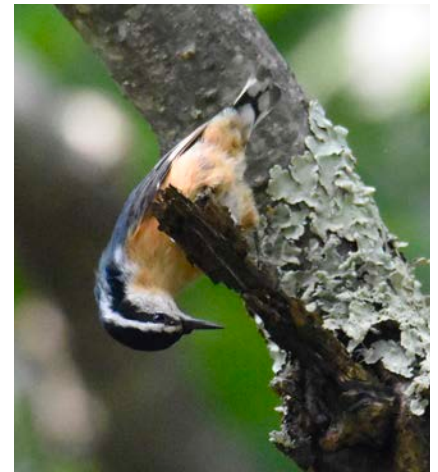
Many observers noted an influx of **Black-capped Chickadees** in the fall. Although this is hard to see in the data, Dylan Jackson did tally at least 200 chickadees migrating on October 3 that was part of a remarkable passerine fallout. In a post to NHBirds that day he described the event:

I went to the Charlestown WTP this afternoon and was treated to an amazing autumn fallout of passerines. The most impressive part was the vast number of chickadees moving through at once. They were flying in from the north, some landing briefly and then taking off in groups of 10-20 continuing south. I also had 11 species of warblers which is excellent for this area at this time of year, the best being a late Blackburnian. Also, Yellow-rumped were everywhere.

A corresponding influx of **Boreal Chickadees** was more obvious, with four reports from the far southern part of the state.

Bank Swallows are one of the earliest migrants, typically gone by the end of August; four on September 16 were a bit on the late side. A **Barn Swallow** on November 13 was likewise quite late for a species that typically departs mid-October.

Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a large-scale irruption beginning in August. High numbers were reported from all parts of the state, highlighted by incredible counts of 86 and 105 from Nottingham and Bear Brook State Park respectively.



Red-breasted Nuthatch by Diana Stephens, 09-15-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** on November 7 was one of the latest dates for this species on record, with most birds departing by early October. A **Marsh Wren** on November 11 was unusually late for the species. Three **Carolina Wrens** in Coos County were exceptional, with a bird in Errol especially far north. This species continues to extend its range northward in the state.

Although **Gray Catbirds** are now a regular occurrence in November, one on November 28 in Gorham was notable for its northerly location. Similarly, a **Brown Thrasher** on November 18 in Lancaster was quite late for the species in the northern third of the state.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** reported in Nottingham was only seen for one day and would be the fourth fall record if accepted, although two of the prior records have been in the past four years. There were four reports of seen-only **Gray-checked Thrushes** from the fall season, none of them with documentation. This species is extremely similar to

Bicknell's Thrush in appearance and therefore, the NH Rare Birds Committee (RBC) reviews all reports. The seasonal distribution is not well known for either species except on the breeding grounds. Gray-cheeked is doubtlessly somewhat regular in fall (as evidenced by three reports of 11 birds as nocturnal migrants, when they're more readily identified). Bicknell's Thrush reports away from the breeding grounds also require good documentation and are reviewed by the NH RBC. Most records for these two species in migration are best reported as Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush. A **Swainson's Thrush** on November 3 was certainly late for the species, but they have occurred nearly annually in November in recent years. A **Northern Wheatear** in Concord was the first fall record since 2014, and only the fifth in a decade.



Northern Wheatear by Steve Mirick, 9-19-20, Concord, NH.

The Irruptives

Irruptives were nearly unanimously irrupting by the end of the season, with almost all species present in good numbers throughout the state. **Bohemian Waxwings** staged an early but moderate sized irruption, with the first bird appearing on October 20 and a high count for the season of 30. **Cedar Waxwings**, which sometimes depart the state in winter, were present in large flocks in November, including 200 in Keene and 150 in Amherst.

Evening Grosbeaks staged the start of one of their largest irruptions in the past three decades, the second large irruption in four years. A count of 81 from Twin Mountain was impressive, but counts of 34 (Keene) and 50 (Sullivan) from the southwest and 25 from Exeter are notable for their size this far south. This species abundance in the east is closely tied to spruce budworms and the previous period of abundance during the 1980s also corresponds to a budworm outbreak. **Pine Grosbeaks** began appearing in low numbers in late October and became widespread but not abundant by the end of November, with the exception of a flock of up to 35 at the Colony Mill in Keene.



Pine Grosbeak by Len Medlock, 11-29-20, Exeter, NH.

Purple Finches were widespread with counts of more than 30 birds noted from Weare, Albany, Windsor, Peterborough, Auburn, Eaton, and Salem. **Common Redpolls** began appearing in early October, with totals of over 60 by the end of the month and birds occurring in all corners of the state including Rockingham County by the end of October. These were the highest October counts of the species since 2001! **Red Crossbills** continued to occur throughout the state after first appearing in the summer. They were more widespread than White-winged Crossbills, but were present in smaller flocks, as is typical for the species. Counts of over 30 individuals in Deerfield, Hancock, Eaton, Hinsdale and Dublin were the highest fall counts since 2014 and five of the seven highest counts in the past ten years. For more on Red Crossbills see the article by Lillian Stokes in this issue. **White-winged Crossbills** did not become widespread until November, but birds first began to be recorded on September 1 at the Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory in southwestern New Hampshire. They were recorded every few days until the end of October when they became daily. A count of 140 White-winged Crossbills on nearby Mount Monadnock was the highest fall total since 1997 and the third highest total in the past 30 years. **Pine Siskins** had their highest numbers in late October with the highest counts of 330 on the coast and 250 in Hancock.

Longspurs through Blackbirds

A total of eight **Lapland Longspurs** reported from four sites in September was an unusually high number for so early. Slightly higher than usual numbers occurred throughout the season with a high count of eight in Hampton, the highest fall count since 2014. A **Chestnut-collared Longspur** was seen and photographed at

Woodmont Orchard in Hollis on October 23. Fortunately, it stayed around for dozens of people to see it the next day. A **Snow Bunting** on October 11 was quite early for the species, while a flock of at least 400 in Hampton was more expected for the species.



Chestnut-collared Longspur photos by Susan Wrisley showing the tail pattern of the bird in flight (10-23-20, left) and the veiled black breast feathers (10-24-20, below).



Grasshopper Sparrows were reported from three locations during fall migration in October, relatively late for this species. Birds at known breeding locations were last reported in mid-August. Five **Clay-colored Sparrows** was a below average total for the species in the fall. One individual stayed from September 17 through October 24 at Goss Farm in Rye providing many opportunities for birders, although it was not always easy to find. Only one **Lark Sparrow** was reported for the fall season, in East Kingston for just a single day in mid-October.

An **American Tree Sparrow** on October 6 was on the early side for the species, but was at a more expected location in the northern edge of the state. A **Fox Sparrow** on September 22 was also early, but in the northern part of the state. **Dark-eyed Juncos** showed substantial movements in early November, with several counts of over 100 birds. A rarity at any season, an “**Oregon**” Dark-eyed Junco was photographed in Gilsom on November 14. **White-crowned Sparrows** had an average season, with standout counts of 41

from Hollis and 35 from Belknap. Thirty **Vesper Sparrows** reported for the season was a high total for this scarce species.



Nelson's Sparrow by Steve Mirick, 10-5-20, Great Boars Head, Hampton, NH.

An incredible 50 **Nelson's Sparrows** were reported from Hampton on October 5 during a 45 minute walk through the salt marsh. Single birds reported in Hinsdale in late September and Concord in mid-October were rare inland records. In contrast, a high count of only four **Saltmarsh Sparrows** is low for the species, which has experienced range wide declines due to climate change (specifically sea level rise) and may disappear from the state in the next ten years. An “**Ipswich**” **Savannah Sparrow** in Hollis was a rare inland record of a subspecies almost entirely confined to the coast. Twelve **Lincoln's Sparrows** in Hopkinton on September 20 was a high count for this uncommon fall migrant and one in New Castle on November 28 was quite late for the species.



Rusty Blackbird by Leo McKillop, 9-20-20, Auburn, NH.

Six **Yellow-breasted Chats** for the season was about average, with all occurring at coastal locations except for one in Chichester. None were seen more than once. Although common earlier in the season, most **Baltimore Orioles** are gone by the end of September; three in November was about average for recent years. **Rusty Blackbird** is a species of conservation concern, so reports of larger flocks from Keene (60), Troy (80), and Haverhill (70) were heartening to see.

Warblers through Dickcissel



Orange-crowned Warbler by Jim Sparrell, 10-18-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

Approximately 26 **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported for the fall, an above average number for the season. Remarkably, these were nearly all single birds with only one report of two, from Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. Nine **Connecticut Warblers** was an impressive total for a species that is not recorded in all years (although in recent years there have been at least a few reported each year). A **Hooded Warbler** was a statewide rarity, although the species has been annual in recent years. A **Golden-winged Warbler** was an exciting yard bird in Amherst, but the species is now rare enough in the state to be reviewed by the NH RBC.



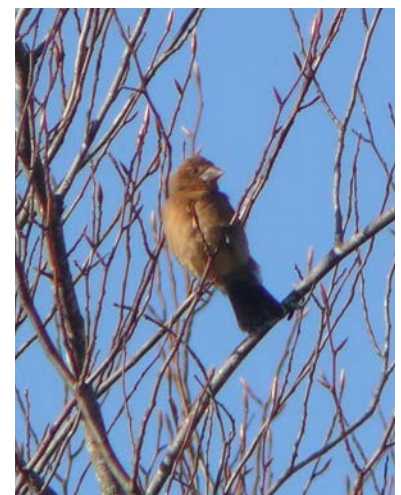
Mourning Warbler by Steve Mirick, 10-1-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

Some warbler species migrate early and are gone by the end of August (i.e. Louisiana Waterthrush), but most depart

by the end of September or early October. Two counts of 9 and 15 **Bay-breasted Warblers** were high for the species, although both were in August in an area where they may breed; this is one of the earliest migrant warblers and these likely represent migrant flocks. A **Blue-winged Warbler** on October 1 was quite late for this early migrant. Likewise, a **Mourning Warbler** on October 22 was quite late for the species.

November is not a typical month for high warbler diversity, but warm temperatures in the early part of the month may have contributed to a variety of lingering warblers. Species that are known to linger and expected to occur in November are Yellow-rumped, Palm, Blackpoll, Orange-crowned, Common Yellowthroat, and Pine Warblers. Also, each year several other species are found in November. The highlight in 2020 was the large number of **Tennessee Warblers** (following an exceptional fall for the species overall), with 11 separate birds reported during the month. **Black-throated Blue**, **Black-throated Green**, **Nashville**, and **Black-and-white Warbler** were all reported from multiple locations in November and are somewhat regular later into the fall. An **American Redstart** in Rye, a **Cape May Warbler** in Hampton, a **Prairie Warbler** in Greenland, **Magnolia Warblers** in Wolfboro and Hinsdale, and a **Yellow Warbler** in Durham were all much more unusual for November. An **Ovenbird** on November 23 would not have been too unusual early in the month, but this record was quite late for the species.

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on November 10 was quite late for the species. The most surprising grosbeak of the season was a **Black-headed Grosbeak** that appeared at a feeder in Deerfield on October 12, only the fourth record for the state. It stayed for a week and was last reported on October 19. Earlier in October, two **Blue Grosbeaks** were



Blue Grosbeak by Ken Klapper, 10-2-20, Sandwich, NH.

photographed, one in Portsmouth on October 1-2 and the other in Sandwich on October 2-3. This species is rare but regular in fall, although in many years there are none reported. In an interesting convergence, all five “grosbeaks” (these birds aren’t all closely related) that have occurred in the state occurred for the first time ever in a single season, as chronicled by Jim Sparrell in

FALL SEASON

the Field Notes (there have been reports of all five species over the entire year in both 1976 and 2003).

More closely related to Blue Grosbeak, an **Indigo Bunting** on November 14 was quite late for the species. Sixteen **Dickcissels** were distributed uniformly throughout the season in both space and time and were roughly average for this scarce but regular migrant.

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. The species with an asterisk indicate the high counts as mentioned in the summaries (waterfowl and grouse).

Date # Location Observer

Snow Goose

10-23 7 Dublin School P. Marr
11-28 1 Saint-Gaudens NHP, Cornish D. Jackson

Barnacle Goose

11-27 1 Benson Park, Hudson R. Lacasse

Cackling Goose

10-24 1 Connecticut R. at Jacob's Brook outflow, Orford
E. Faletta, W. Scott

Tundra Swan

11-28 2 Highland Ave., Salem K.& A. Wilmarth

Trumpeter/Tundra Swan

11-30 1 Front Park, Lake Massabesic, Auburn L. McKillop

Whooper Swan

10-14 1 Eel Pond, Rye D. Ressler

Wood Duck

08-20 192 Groveton WTP P. Brown

Blue-winged Teal

08-31 29 Meadow Pond, Hampton H. Bauer

Northern Shoveler

08-28 5 Pleasant L., New London D. Jackson, J. Esten

Gadwall

10-30 4 Spofford L., Chesterfield S. Lamonde

Redhead

11-15 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham R. Prieto

King Eider

10-02 1 inland of Isles of Shoals S. Mirick

Date # Location Observer



King Eider by Steve Mirick, 10-2-20, Isles of Shoals, NH.

Harlequin Duck

11-20 2 Rt. 1A, second pullout s. of Odiorne Pt., Rye
P.& T. Herwood

Long-tailed Duck

10-30 19 Turtle Pond, Concord P. Hunt

Ruddy Duck

09-15 6 Umbagog NWR Headquarters,
Wentworths Location J. Maher

Duck sp. (hybrid)

09-01 1 Marsh Road Pond, Rye S. Varney
09-03 1 Marsh Road Pond, Rye S. Varney, S. Mirick
09-12 1 Eel Pond, Rye S. Varney
10-12 1 Eel Pond, Rye S. Varney

Red-necked Grebe

08-07 1 Lake Umbagog, Errol K. Fenton
08-31 3 Lake Tarleton, Piermont E. Faletta

White-winged Dove

11-07 1 Industrial Park Dr., Concord M. Suomala, et al.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

08-12 1 Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain N. Mitiguy
08-31 1 Panorama Golf Course, Colebrook L. Charron

Common Nighthawk

09-03 764 Roxbury St. parking garage, Keene S. Lamonde
09-10 364 Rt. 25, Wentworth E. Faletta
09-30 1 Oak Hill Rd., Brookline C. McPherson

Eastern Whip-poor-will

10-01 1 Federal Hill Rd., Milford M. Nickerson

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

10-12 1 Mason Rd., Wilton G. Coffey
10-19 1 Mt. Meadow Rd., Warren E. Faletta

Anna's Hummingbird

11-06 1 New London S. Weidensaul

Common Gallinule

09-10 1 Eel Pond, Rye S. Mirick, et al.

American Coot

09-21 1 Airport Rd., Swanzeby R. Burnett

Date # Location Observer

Sandhill Crane

08-17 3 Plains Rd., Monroe J. Sparrell, K. Towler
 08-20 3 Harpers Meadow, Umbagog NWR, Errol L. Burford
 08-26 3 downtown Errol D. Dionne, L. Charron, P. Christi
 09-10 2 Rt. 156 at Ledge Farm Rd., Nottingham
 R.& K. Frieden
 10-24 8 Ten Rod Rd., Rochester D. Hubbard
 10-25 1 Cross Rd., Weare P. Hunt, U. Dienes
 11-02 2 West Portsmouth St., Concord P. Hunt, U. Dienes
 11-04 1 Red Oak Hill Rd., Epping L. Johnson
 11-22 3 Antrim Rd., Hancock P. Brown

Black-bellied Plover

09-16 10 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard

Semipalmated Plover

11-25 2 Meadow Pond, Hampton S. Mirick

Piping Plover

08-19 1 Hampton Harbor S. Heron

Upland Sandpiper

08-14 1 Meadow Pond, Hampton R. Suomala, Z. Cornell

Whimbrel

08-27 8 Blackwater R. mud flats, Seabrook P. Hunt, U. Dienes

Hudsonian Godwit

10-18 2 Hampton River Marina J. Maher, et al.
 10-21 1 Sawyers Beach, Rye L. McKillop, et al.



Hudsonian Godwit by Leo McKillop, 10-21-20, Sawyers Beach, Rye, NH.

Stilt Sandpiper

09-30 1 Claire's Landing, Lake Massabesic, Auburn L. McKillop

Sanderling

08-30 1 Elm Brook Pk., Hopkinton M.& R. Suomala, et al.
 08-31 7 L. Winnepesaukee, Wolfeboro J. Shannon
 08-31 1 Leavitt Park beach, Meredith E. Plummer
 09-08 1 Pleasant L., New London D.& C. Aube

Dunlin

10-04 1 Charlestown WTP K. Endersen
 10-09 1 Claire's Landing, Lake Massabesic, Auburn
 P. Hunt, A. Krysiak
 10-23 1 Lancaster WTP C. Nims
 10-28 10 Rochester WTP H. Bauer
 11-01 1 Sunapee St. by Sugar R., Newport D. Jackson

Date # Location Observer

Purple Sandpiper

10-30 26 Rye Harbor SP L. McKillop

Baird's Sandpiper

08-22 2 Charlestown WTP D. Jackson,
 B. Hopkins, R. Garrigus
 08-25 1 Rochester WTP L. McKillop
 09-10 1 N. Hampton State Beach R. Stephenson

Least Sandpiper

09-08 250 South Mill Pond, Portsmouth K. Towler, J. Sparrell

White-rumped Sandpiper

10-02 2 Crawford Path near Mt. Washington summit D. Cowan

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

09-03 1 Portsmouth Int'l. Airport at Pease S. Mirick, et al.
 09-03 1 Hampton Harbor K.& A. Wilmarth
 09-07 1 Bellamy Reservoir, Madbury M. Ward, J. Lambert



Buff-breasted Sandpiper by Kyle Wilmarth, 9-3-20, Hampton, NH.

Pectoral Sandpiper

09-07 4 Bellamy Reservoir, Madbury M. Ward, J. Lambert
 09-09 8 World End Pond, Salem K. Wilmarth
 09-24 5 Cops Pond WMA, Tuftonboro A. Robbins
 10-09 4 Hampton Salt Marsh CA P. Hunt
 10-13 16 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard
 10-14 4 Laverack Accessible Nature Trail, Meredith
 R. Woodward, D. Mullarkey

Semipalmated Sandpiper

08-30 40 Surrey Lane marsh, Durham K. Dorsey
 09-08 1000 South Mill Pond, Portsmouth K. Towler, J. Sparrell
 09-29 80 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard



Western Sandpiper (left) and Semipalmated Sandpiper by Leo McKillop, 8-27-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

FALL SEASON

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
Western Sandpiper				Black Tern			
08-16	1	Hampton Salt Marsh CA	S. Mirick	08-16	1	Plaice Cove, Hampton	S. Mirick, R. Aaronian
08-19	1	Plaice Cove, Hampton	P. Hunt	08-29	1	Rye Harbor SP	S.& J. Mirick, J. Sparrell
08-27	1	Henry's Pool, Rt. 101E, Hampton	S. Mirick, U. Dienes, P. Hunt	09-23	1	Connecticut R. by Ledyard Free Bridge, Hanover	S. Mroz
08-27	2	Odiorne Pt. SP	J. Sparrell	Forster's Tern			
09-07	2	Plaice Cove, Hampton	S.& J. Mirick	08-29	10	Cross Beach Rd., Seabrook	K. Rosenberg, L. McKillop
Short-billed Dowitcher				Red-throated Loon			
08-19	2	Surrey Lane marsh, Durham	S.& D. Stoddard	09-26	2	Odiorne Pt. SP	S. Mirick
Red-necked Phalarope				09-29	1	Plaice Cove, Hampton	S. Mirick
08-23	1	Squam Lake, Sandwich	K. Klapper	09-30	1	Rye Harbor SP	S. Mirick
09-01	1	Stuart Farm Rd., Stratham	L. Merrill, et al.	10-08	1	The Balsams & trails, Colebrook	L. Charron
09-25	79	Jeffreys Ledge	R. Suomala, J. Sparrell, Z. Cornell, L. McKillop, C. Duffy, C. Nims, S. Wrisley	10-30	1	Wilder Dam Reservoir, Lebanon	J. MacQueen, K. Britton, W. Scott
Solitary Sandpiper				11-09	1	Veterans Dr., Hooksett	A.& G. Robbins
08-22	11	Bear Brook SP, Allenstown	S. Wrisley	11-11	1	Daniel Webster Hwy., Meredith	S. Francesco, I. MacLeod
Willet				11-27	1	Ellacoya SP, Gilford	S. Lauermann
08-29	1	beaver bog near Greely Rd., Conway	C. Neville	Wilson's Storm-Petrel			
Lesser Yellowlegs				08-07	725	offshore waters, NH	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala, C. Duffy
08-15	55	Meadow Pond, Hampton	J. Crawford	Leach's Storm-Petrel			
Parasitic Jaeger				09-17	1	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Mirick, et al.
09-17	1	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Mirick, et al.	09-25	1	Jeffreys Ledge	R. Suomala, J. Sparrell, Z. Cornell, L. McKillop, C. Duffy, C. Nims, S. Wrisley
Common Murre				Northern Fulmar			
11-05	1	offshore waters, NH	J. Maher	09-25	5	offshore waters, NH	R. Suomala, J. Sparrell, Z. Cornell, L. McKillop, C. Duffy, C. Nims, S. Wrisley
Razorbill				Great Shearwater			
10-18	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	S. Mirick	10-02	272	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Mirick
Atlantic Puffin				Great Cormorant			
11-05	2	offshore waters, NH	J. Maher	09-26	1	Horseshoe Pond, Concord	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
11-22	1	offshore waters, NH	S. Wrisley, L. McKillop	09-30	1	Oliverian Dam, Benton	E. Faletta
Black-legged Kittiwake				10-07	1	Baker Floodwater Reservoir, Warren	E. Faletta
11-22	20	offshore waters, NH	S. Wrisley, L. McKillop	10-09	1	W. Massabesic Rockingham Trail, Manchester	P. Hunt, A. Krysiak
Sabine's Gull				Least Bittern			
08-29	1	Rye Harbor SP	S.& J. Mirick, J. Sparrell, R. Suomala	08-11	3	Cranberry Pond wetlands, W. Lebanon	R. Garrigus
Black-headed Gull				08-23	1	World End Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
10-17	1	Rye/N. Hampton town line cove	S.& J. Mirick, et al.	Little Blue Heron			
10-31	1	Concord Pt., Rye	S. Mirick	08-13	2	Deer Hill WMA, Brentwood	D. Prima
Little Gull				08-15	3	Heron Pond, Milford	S. Harvell
08-19	1	Jeffreys Ledge	S. Bennett, S. Wrisley	Tricolored Heron			
08-26	1	Odiorne Pt. SP	L. McKillop	08-20	1	Meadow Pond, Hampton	H. Bauer
Iceland Gull				Cattle Egret			
11-09	1	Rochester WTP	A. Murray	11-01	1	Rt. 155A farm fields, Durham	R. Prieto
Lesser Black-backed Gull				Black-crowned Night-Heron			
08-25	2	Rochester WTP	L. McKillop	08-28	15	NH coast	S. Mirick
09-02	9	Sawyers Beach, Rye	L. McKillop				
Sooty Tern							
08-06	1	Pleasant Lake, Deerfield	I. Cumming, et al.				
Caspian Tern							
08-29	12	NH coast	L. McKillop				

Date # Location Observer



Little Blue Herons by Sharon Harvell, 8-15-20, Heron Pond, Milford, NH.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

08-29 22 Glade Path, Hampton S. Mirick
 08-29 1 Cross Beach Rd., Seabrook S. Mirick, K. Rosenberg

Glossy Ibis

10-06 1 Pickering Ponds, Rochester K. Bedard
 10-07 1 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis C. McPherson,
 C. Wennerth

Black Vulture

09-13 1 Fort Eddy Rd., Concord R. Prieto
 11-09 1 Brittany Way, Nashua J. Gray

Swallow-tailed Kite

08-08 1 Connecticut R. near Rt. 12A, W. Lebanon C. Jacobson
 08-09 1 Deer Meadow Rd., Webster M. King
 08-16 1 Deer Meadow Rd., Webster M. Foster, et al.



Swallow-tailed Kite by Jim Sparrell, 8-13-20, Webster, NH.

Broad-winged Hawk

11-05 1 Acrebrook Rd., Keene C. Hoffman

Rough-legged Hawk

10-09 1 Lake Umbagog, Errol R. Quinn
 11-06 1 Rt. 16 by Wentworth Is., Dummer R. Suomala
 11-12 1 Lily Pond, Piermont W. Scott
 11-17 1 Second Crown Point Rd., Strafford R. Prieto
 11-19 1 Five Corners Reserve, Lee K. Dorsey
 11-22 1 Tucker and French Family Forest, Kingston S.& B. Heron
 11-24 1 Mountain View Rd., Deerfield R. Prieto

Date # Location Observer

Snowy Owl

11-08 1 Hampton Harbor S. Mirick, et al.
 11-09 1 Portsmouth Traffic Circle J. Pottle
 11-15 1 Goodrum Cross Rd., Westmoreland F.& K. Bewersdorff
 11-27 1 Osprey Cove, Great Bay, Greenland R. Suomala,
 Z. Cornell

Short-eared Owl

10-29 1 Joslin Rd. gravel pit, Surry S. Lamonde
 11-22 1 Rye Harbor SP S. Mirick

Red-headed Woodpecker

08-25 5 Bear Brook SP, Allenstown S. Wrisley
 10-05 1 Benson Park, Hudson R. Lacasse
 10-12 1 Carriage Ln., Hooksett K. Dwyer
 10-31 1 Mt. Monadnock summit S. Lamonde
 11-01 1 Hampton River Marina D. Hubbard

Eastern Wood-Pewee

10-12 1 Odiorne Pt. SP J. Maher

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

09-20 1 Church St. water tower parking lot, Hampton S. Mirick
 09-20 1 Odiorne Pt. SP J. Maher, R. Stephenson
 09-24 1 West Village Open Space, Penacook P. Hunt

Acadian Flycatcher

08-01 1 Oyster River Forest, Durham K. Dorsey

Western Kingbird

10-19 1 Sherman Farm, Conway R. Steber, C. Nims, et al.

White-eyed Vireo

09-23 1 Hinsdale Setbacks C. Witko, K. Lauer,
 H. Galbraith
 09-26 1 Odiorne Pt. SP R. Prieto, et al.
 10-09 1 former state school, Laconia R. Woodward,
 F. Schneider

Philadelphia Vireo

09-11 3 Freedom Town Forest A.& G. Robbins
 10-01 3 Helen Woodruff Smith Bird Sanctuary, Plainfield B. Becker
 10-01 1 Range Rd., Sandwich K. Klapper

Warbling Vireo

10-01 1 Pickering Ponds, Rochester A. Murray
 10-11 1 Autumn Ln., E. Kingston K. Elwell

Blue Jay

09-12 172 over gap between Mt. Jefferson & Mt. Clay M.& J. Eckerson
 09-19 312 Little Round Top, Bristol S. Mirick
 09-22 143 Copps Pond WMA, Tuftonboro A. Robbins
 09-23 130 Old W. Ossipee Rd., Freedom A. Robbins
 09-25 238 Freedom Town Forest A. Robbins
 10-03 192 Freedom Town Forest A.& G. Robbins
 10-05 115 Sycamore Field Cmty Gardens, Concord R. Suomala
 10-18 258 NH coast S. Mirick

FALL SEASON

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
Black-capped Chickadee							
10-03	200	Charlestown WTP	D. Jackson	11-30	200	Colony Mill Complex, Keene	J. Garrison
Boreal Chickadee				Evening Grosbeak			
09-29	2	Pack Monadnock RO	P. Brown	11-03	25	Haven Ln., Exeter	L.& L. Medlock
10-17	1	Skatutakee & Thumb Mtns. trail, Hancock	P. Brown	11-28	81	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain	N. Mitiguy
10-25	1	Penacook survey route, Concord	P. Hunt	11-29	50	George Hill Rd., Springfield	H.& P. Keene
11-09	1	Heads Pond, Hooksett	P. Hunt	11-30	34	YMCA, Summit Rd., Keene	E. Synnott
				Pine Grosbeak			
<i>Boreal Chickadee by Levi Burford, 10-4-20, Pack Monadnock, NH.</i>				11-25	35	Colony Mill Complex, Keene	A. Lamoreaux, L. DiBiccari
Bank Swallow				Purple Finch			
09-16	1	Plaice Cove, Hampton	S. Mirick	09-17	32	NHA Massabesic Ctr., Auburn	T. Young
09-16	3	Eel Pond, Rye	S. Varney	09-27	40	Everett Dam conservation lands, Weare	P. Hunt, U. Dienes
Barn Swallow				10-02	37	World Way, Windsor	J. Thompson
11-13	1	Oyster River Forest, Durham	K. Dorsey	10-06	50	Tin Mt. Conservation Ctr., Albany	B. Stokes
Red-breasted Nuthatch				10-10	31	Brownfield Rd., Eaton	A.& G. Robbins
11-28	86	Steven's Hill Rd., Nottingham	S. Mirick	10-11	42	Pack Monadnock RO	K. Fenton, L. Burford
11-29	105	Bear Brook SP, Allenstown	R. Prieto	10-11	37	Highland Ave., Salem	K. Wilmarth
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				Common Redpoll			
11-07	1	Odiorne Pt. SP	N. Strycker	10-14	1	Echo Lake, Franconia	R. Quinn, T. McShane
Marsh Wren				10-26	14	Nimble Hill Rd., Newington	B. Griffith
11-11	1	Hinsdale Setbacks	C. Witko	10-28	65	Umbagog NWR Headquarters, Wentworths Location	K. Fenton
Carolina Wren				11-04	200	Ambrose Gravel Pit, Sandwich	K. Klapper
09-03	1	Summer St., Lancaster	A. Griffin	Red Crossbill			
10-22	1	Main St., Errol	K. Fenton	08-16	33	Great Brook Trail, Deerfield	L.& L. Medlock
10-31	1	Grove St., Lancaster	D. Haas	08-17	33	Harris Center, Hancock	L. Stokes
Gray Catbird				10-10	31	Brownfield Rd., Eaton	A.& G. Robbins
11-28	1	Main St., Gorham	L. Charron, P. Christi	11-12	32	Hinsdale Setbacks	C. Witko
Brown Thrasher				11-15	33	Beech Hill trails, Dublin	P. Brown
11-18	1	Richardson St., Lancaster	R. Fitzgerald	White-winged Crossbill			
Townsend's Solitaire				09-01	3	Pack Monadnock RO	L. Burford
10-28	1	Autumn Ln., Nottingham	R. Prieto	11-27	140	Mt. Monadnock	P. Brown
Swainson's Thrush				Pine Siskin			
11-03	1	downtown Moultonborough	K. Klapper	10-18	330	NH coast	S. Mirick
Northern Wheatear				10-29	250	downtown Hancock	P. Brown
09-19	1	Loudon Rd. fields behind PO, Concord	R. Suomala, et al.	Lapland Longspur			
Bohemian Waxwing				09-22	1	Birch St. Community Garden, Concord	R. Suomala, et al.
10-20	1	Grassy Pond, Rindge	P. Brown	09-25	5	Ellacoya SP, Gilford	M. Coskren
11-20	30	Mechanic St., Gorham	S. Hardy	09-25	1	Hampton Beach SP	R.& K. Frieden
Cedar Waxwing				11-03	8	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
11-24	150	Rt. 101, Amherst	S. Spangenberg	Chestnut-collared Longspur			
				10-23	1	Woodmont Orchard, Hollis	S. Wrisley
				Snow Bunting			
				10-11	1	Copps Pond WMA, Tuftonboro	A.& G. Robbins
				11-04	400	Hampton Beach SP	P. Laipis
				Grasshopper Sparrow			
				10-24	1	Birch St. Community Garden, Concord	R.& J. Lessard
				10-25	1	Penacook survey route, Concord	P. Hunt
				10-31	1	Bicentennial Park, Hampton	S.& J. Mirick, et al.

Date # Location Observer



Grasshopper Sparrow by Steve Mirick, 10-31-20, Bicentennial Park, Rye, NH.

Clay-colored Sparrow

09-17 1 Goss Farm, Rye D. Hubbard, et al.

Lark Sparrow

10-18 1 Autumn Ln., E. Kingston K. Elwell

American Tree Sparrow

10-06 1 Akers Pond, Errol L. Charron

Fox Sparrow

09-22 1 Groveton WTP Anonymous

Dark-eyed Junco

11-01 126 Melissa Dr., Pembroke A. Robbins
 11-01 210 Penacook survey route, Concord P. Hunt, U. Dienes
 11-05 100 Sherman Farm, Conway B. Crowley
 11-14 1 Pinnacle Rd., Gilsum J. Wing

White-crowned Sparrow

10-10 35 former state school, Laconia R.& M. Suomala
 10-11 41 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis C. McPherson

Nelson's Sparrow

09-25 1 Hinsdale Setbacks D. Keller, et al.
 10-05 50 Hampton Salt Marsh CA S. Mirick
 10-18 1 Horseshoe Pond, Concord P. Hunt

Saltmarsh Sparrow

10-05 4 Hampton Salt Marsh CA S. Mirick

Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.

11-01 1 Woodmont Orchard, Hollis C. McPherson

Lincoln's Sparrow

09-20 12 Bohanan Farm, Hopkinton L. Pagano

Yellow-breasted Chat

09-06 1 Lens Ave., Portsmouth S. Varney
 10-04 1 Church St. water tower parking lot, Hampton S. Mirick
 10-04 1 Barberry Ln. power cut, Portsmouth D. Nickerson
 10-06 1 Great Bay Farm, Greenland S. Mirick
 10-23 1 Chichester J. Lambert
 11-21 1 Odiorne Pt. SP B. Hillman

Baltimore Oriole

11-14 1 Fort Stark, New Castle S. Mirick

Date # Location Observer

11-15 1 Upper City Rd., Pittsfield A. Borrer
 11-26 1 High Rd., Lee M. Malby, P. Farr

Rusty Blackbird

10-09 60 Wheelock Park, Keene J. Smith
 10-11 80 Quarry Rd., Troy J. Kolk
 10-17 70 Bedell Bridge SP, Haverhill E. Faletta

Ovenbird

11-23 1 Tidewatch Condominium, Portsmouth R. Schweikart

Golden-winged Warbler

09-09 1 Horace Greeley Rd., Amherst S. Spangenberg

Blue-winged Warbler

10-01 1 Odiorne Pt. SP S. Mirick



Blue-winged Warbler by Steve Mirick, 10-1-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

Orange-crowned Warbler

10-31 2 Odiorne Pt. SP R. Suomala

Connecticut Warbler

09-03 1 Thorne Pond CA, Bartlett C. Nims
 09-05 1 Forest Rd., Greenfield P. Hunt, U. Dienes
 09-16 1 Charles St., Concord J. Schulz
 09-21 1 Jamie Welch Field, Boscawen R. Quinn
 09-27 1 Udall Rd., Frankestown T. Gotsick
 10-03 1 Odiorne Pt. SP S. Mirick
 10-05 1 Beaver Brook Assoc., Hollis K. Fenton

Mourning Warbler

10-22 1 Ragged Mt., Danbury J. Gamble

Hooded Warbler

09-04 1 John Hay NWR, Newbury K. Springer

American Redstart

11-14 1 Odiorne Pt. SP S. Mirick

Cape May Warbler

11-04 1 Bicentennial Park, Hampton S. Mirick

Magnolia Warbler

11-01 1 Sewell Rd., Wolfeboro J. Shannon
 11-12 1 Hinsdale Setbacks C. Witko

Bay-breasted Warbler

08-27 9 Mollidgewock Rd., Errol B. Griffith
 08-28 15 Wentworths Location nocturnal count K. Fenton, L. Burford

FALL SEASON

Date # Location Observer



Cape May Warbler by Steve Mirick, 11-4-20, Hampton, NH.

Prairie Warbler

11-01 1 Great Bay Farm, Greenland S. Mirick

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

11-10 1 Tilton Hill Rd. by Suncook R., Pittsfield A. Robbins

Black-headed Grosbeak

10-12 1 Mountain Rd., Deerfield M. Berry
 10-19 1 Mountain Rd., Deerfield D.& B. Crowley,
 T. Abrahams

Blue Grosbeak

10-01 1 South St. Cemetery, Portsmouth S. Varney, et al.
 10-02 1 Range Rd., Sandwich K. Klapper, T. Vazzano

Indigo Bunting

11-14 1 Odiorne Pt. SP B. Hillman

Nighthawk Migration, Concord

compiled by Rebecca Suomala

Zeke Cornell continued to lead the volunteer Nighthawk Migration Watch in Concord, NH in the fall of 2020. The watch began on August 17 and tallied a total of 3,903 nighthawks through September 13. That is nearly identical to the 2019 count of 3,930 but far short of the record 6,794 in 2016 (Figure 1).

The winds early in the season were not conducive to high counts with many days of low numbers and rain on one of the traditional peak dates (Aug. 24). The log jam broke on August 31 with 2,202 nighthawks, the third highest daily count for this watch site. The second highest count for the 2020 migration was 381 on the late date of September 6 (Figure 2).



Nighthawk watchers during COVID-19 on the roof of the Capital Commons Garage, in Concord, NH on 9-3-20 by Rebecca Suomala.

Figure 1. Total number of migrating Common Nighthawks by year from mid-August through early September in Concord, NH (exact start and end dates can vary by a few days).

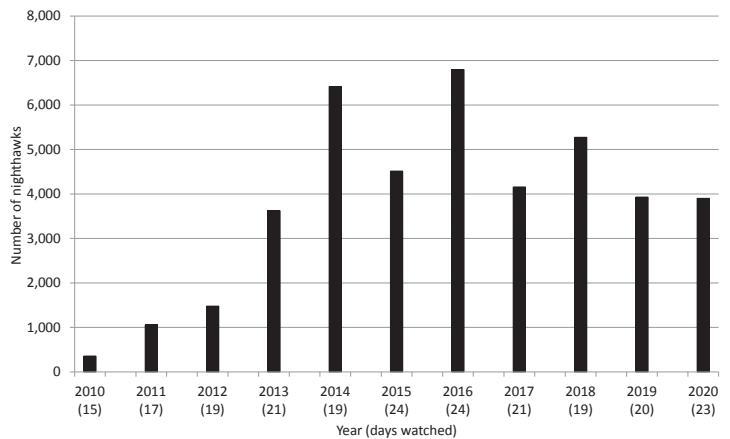
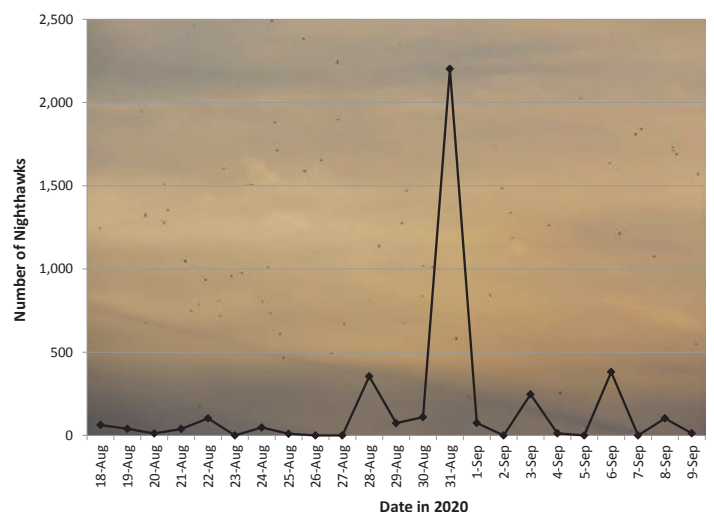


Figure 2. Migrating Common Nighthawks by date in 2020 from Concord, NH. Data compiled by Zeke Cornell. Background photo by Rebecca Suomala, a sky full of nighthawks (the little black dots!) on the big night, 8-31-20.



White-rumped Sandpipers on Mt. Washington

by Dave Cowan

Thanks to Diana Stephens for sourcing this article.

I love hiking, especially the strenuous, uphill kind in the mountains. I always have. I also love birding, but birding while hiking presents a dilemma – how to balance the need to move forward with the need to pause? Also, what about the heavy binoculars and camera? The general rule is the more ambitious the hike, the lower the tolerance for extra weight and down time. There is also a maxim in birding akin to the umbrellas vs. rain rule. No binos? There will be birds. No camera? There will be *rare* birds.

On this day, however, it hardly seemed likely. No bird in their right mind was going to be out above tree line in this weather. (Novices and others, take note.)

We had scheduled our date to climb Mt. Washington several weeks prior and had already had one cancellation due to weather. As we sat by the campfire the night before, the sky was clear, but there was a ring around the moon. A weather system was approaching from the south and the summit forecast for the next day, Friday, October 2, 2020, was for wind, cold, rain, ice pellets and snow.

We wondered whether to cancel again. There was no real rush. My friend Tom was looking to add Washington to his 4,000 footers and I was just happy for an outing above tree line. But life was busy and there was a good chance we wouldn't find another day this fall. Postponing by one day was possible, but that would land us on a Saturday during peak season, not great. We preferred to avoid the conga line of hikers typical of weekends in the Whites, especially during the pandemic. For us, it was either go and deal with the conditions or no-go and await some future date.

Technically, we were capable and we had the right gear, essentials, and provisions. It wouldn't be a picnic, but it was doable. As for birding, the binos and camera could stay in the car (cue ominous music...).

The weather system arrived overnight as predicted and it was no surprise to find the parking lot empty at the Ammonoosuc trailhead. Score one for our crowd avoidance strategy. As we climbed, the drizzle alternated with rain showers, then became ice pellets and wet snow. At Lakes of the Clouds Hut, we ducked into the hut cellar to dry out and have a snack. Despite the 30 degree weather, the hike felt invigorating and we knew that once we got to the summit, we could warm up indoors (at the Mt. Washington Observatory) and enjoy a hot chocolate. Worst case, we could bail and descend via the cog railway. We felt warm and strong, so off we went.

From this point on it was all alpine zone, following a trail demarcated by rocks and punctuated with cairns, each one just visible ahead of us through the fog. The everything-weather eased up at times, but wasn't showing any signs of breaking. We passed just one or two pairs of hikers; otherwise, the bleak landscape and wetness were ours. For me, these moments are part of what I love about hiking above tree line, making way by leg power, immersed in the harsh elements, yet feeling comfortable and sure. Full immersion.

We were well onto the upper flank of Washington when something caught my attention, a movement. Two shapes on a boulder, maybe 50 feet to the left of the trail. Could they really be ... sandpipers? Here? Then it hit me, fall migration + overnight weather system = fallout, of course! Here I was, utterly unprepared, optically speaking.

We spotted the birds at about 1:00 pm. Within seconds, one flushed and disappeared behind the boulder ... gone. The other lingered a bit, allowing me time to retrieve my phone and grab a few snaps and a video. I was even able to zoom in a bit.

Although the images are not sharp, the size, body shape, slightly downturned bill, and bill length all indicate the genus *Calidris*. Also when the bird flushed, I glimpsed a white rump, a good indication it was *C. fuscicollis*, a White-rumped Sandpiper, aka WRSA. Later at home, I was able to go through the video frame-by-frame and confirm the white rump. I socialized the photos to the Maine Birds list-serve (my home state) and NH Audubon helped confirm the identification.

I wondered how unusual the sighting might be. WRSA breed in the Nearctic tundra and migrate to South America in the fall, primarily via the North American central flyway (e.g., see the eBird animation here: <https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends/whrsan/abundance-map-weekly>). However, the species is a regular if somewhat uncommon fall migrant in the northeastern US as well. According to eBird records for Vermont, New Hampshire and western Maine, the species is regularly seen at lower elevations near coastal and inland wetlands (eBird 2020).

This appears to be the first documented sighting in an alpine setting, so it certainly is unusual, record-wise. As for whether the species' occurrence in this setting is uncommon is harder to assess. Do the alpine areas of New England receive much attention by birders, especially in this kind of weather? By my tally, there were six people who might have seen the WRSAs that day and I'm guessing I was the only one that noticed or cared. An uncommon species to begin with, perhaps its occurrence in our alpine zones is under-represented. It might be an interesting area of study, fallout of fall migrants above tree line, say, for someone who likes



Photos by the author of one of the White-rumped Sandpipers he saw on top of Mt. Washington, the highest peak in New Hampshire, on 10-2-20. The in-flight shots show the distinctive white rump. The WRSA is a long distance migrant and in fall, they fly from the Canadian Arctic to southern South America in a few non-stop flights. The weather on Mt. Washington can be notoriously rough any time of the year with fog, cold temperatures, and strong winds even in August.

alpine zones, in the rain. Wait, have I just volunteered?

So, what were they doing here? My best guess is that the southbound migrating birds were grounded in the early morning hours when they encountered the advancing weather system, perhaps between 2:00 and 4:00 am. The composite NEXRAD image at 02:11 shows active migration occurring over stations in northern New England, with precipitation approaching from the south (Figure 1). By 04:41, the system had advanced into northern New Hampshire (Figure 2). Pretty ordinary weather really, which

bolsters the argument for other similar occurrences for this and other fall migrants.

Figure 1. NEXRAD image at 02:11 am showing bird migration over northern New England, and precipitation approaching from the south.

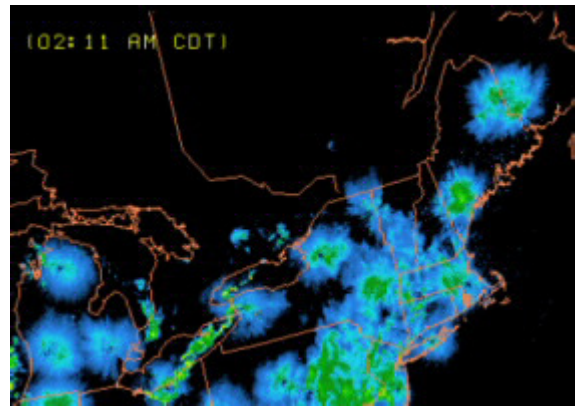
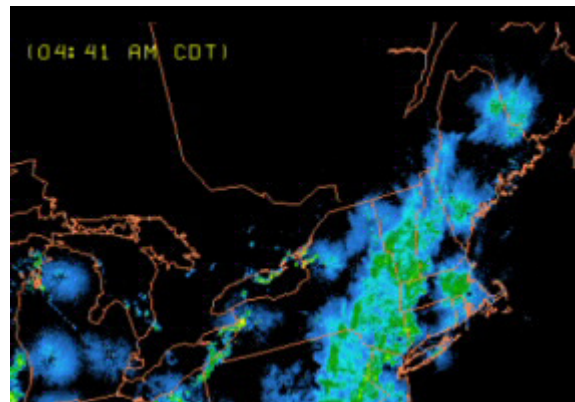


Figure 2. NEXRAD image from 4:41 am showing the weather system now over northern New Hampshire.



NEXRAD stands for Next Generation Radar (commonly called Doppler weather radar) and its primary purpose is to track precipitation and weather systems in the United States. NEXRAD can also be used to track other objects in the atmosphere, including smog, pollen, insects, bats and yes, birds. NEXRAD images from:

https://www.pauljhurtado.com/US_Composite_Radar/2020-10-1/

I wondered too how it might seem to the birds, having flown for days, possibly weeks since departing their arctic breeding grounds, only to be right back on the tundra. Would it be like, “I had a bad feeling about that star we were following” or did they feel at home? The summit of Mt. Washington hardly seems like a welcoming place to be grounded and hungry in the middle of a 2,500 mile migration and yet here they were, just doing their thing, despite the harsh conditions.

Come to think of it, I could relate to that.

Waterbird Fallout in Grafton County

With thoughts on Fall Inland Waterbird Migration

by Robert A. Quinn

I prefer to bird “the road less traveled,” therefore, many of my favorite birding patches are inland rather than coastal. The ponds and lakes of Grafton County fittingly rewarded me for this approach on October 30, 2020 when I was treated to one of the best autumn inland waterbird (IW) fallouts I have ever seen.

My mentor, and IW mastermind, Tudor Richards, called October “scoter month,” referring to the interior of the State. The passage of strong cold fronts can be conducive to IW fallouts, therefore, a forecast for the passage of a cold front on October 28-29 captured my attention and accordingly, I tried to keep Friday, October 30 open. Success with that plan saw me in Franconia Notch about 9:30 am. The Notch (one of my chosen patches) is a narrow mountain pass that includes two small “lakes” which are excellent sites for migrating IW to be downed by inclement weather.

On this morning, however, there were only three Buffleheads on Echo Lake, plus a flock of 22 Canada Geese migrating south. It is always fun to witness visible migration like this, but what was particularly interesting was that this flock of geese turned west once they reached the Notch, passing just north of Cannon Mountain. Presumably, they were heading for a nearby pond/lake or the Connecticut River (about 20 miles west of Franconia Notch).

This trickle of waterfowl soon turned into a torrent and thus began a fabulous day of IW watching in northern Grafton County. I continued north and west of the Notch where I hit the first jackpot with a flock of over 90 Black Scoters at Streeter Pond in Sugar Hill. That was exciting enough to spur me onward and ultimately, I recorded over 700 ducks scattered across Grafton County including 300+ scoters, almost 70 Long-tailed Ducks, 120+ Buffleheads, along with smaller numbers of other species, plus a solitary Bonaparte’s Gull.

Highlights

Streeter Pond in Sugar Hill – 90+ Black Scoters with a few Ring-necked Ducks and some Buffleheads.

Moore Reservoir in Littleton – No birds. Were they too far out on the water to see?

Comerford Reservoir in Monroe – another 90+ Black Scoters with 34 (!) Long-tailed Ducks, plus six Greater Scaup, three Common Goldeneyes and a few more Buffleheads. One female Black Scoter acted like a scaup, not a scoter, and associated with the scaup rather than her own species.

Lakes Katherine and **Tarleton** in Piermont – 110 Black Scoters, 25 White-winged Scoters, more goldeneyes and buffleheads, plus a solitary Bonaparte’s Gull.

Upper and Lower Baker Ponds in Orford and Wentworth – 31 *more* Long-tailed Ducks plus additional Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and goldeneyes.

Newfound Lake, Wellington State Park in Bristol – What appeared to be another tight flock of scoters turned out to be 90+ American Black Ducks in the middle of the lake, along with 34 Buffleheads. Nearby were six Snow Buntings plus some Canada Geese and Common Mergansers.

Newfound Lake, south end in Bristol – I almost did not check here but decided to do so as dusk settled in and I found another jackpot, a tight flock of 80+ **Buffleheads** close to the beach!

Notes

About this same time, David Govatski recorded a large flock of Black Scoters at Cherry Pond in Jefferson (Coos County) that were almost all adult males. Yet, 90-95% of the Black Scoters I saw on Streeter Pond, Comerford Reservoir, and Lake Tarleton were *females*. Among the Long-tailed Ducks, the males outnumbered the hens by about 4:1 and they were all in winter plumage. The Buffleheads were mostly



Black Scoters on Streeter Pond, Sugar Hill, NH during the fallout in Grafton County on October 30, 2020. Photo by Robert A. Quinn.

paired up, even within the large flocks. Another key point: since most of these migrants *do not feed* while they are in New Hampshire, they usually continue their migration the next day. This means that it is entirely possible to be an active field birder yet still *miss* the inland flights entirely.

Luckily, other birders were in the field on October 30, 2020 and experienced some of this fallout too. Imagine what might have been on the Connecticut Lakes or at Lake Umbagog!

Fall Migration Thoughts

I have some specific thoughts on the autumn migration of scoters and other IW based on decades of experience in the field as well as data and literature research. There is *strong* evidence that most of these birds are coming from points north and west of New Hampshire and are heading south and east. Therefore, their ultimate destination is the coast of Maine and that is why most of these autumn fallouts are not seen in the eastern Lakes Region. They are *not* flying straight south from points directly north in Quebec. In fact, there is now a lot of evidence proving that these scoters might have originated as far away as Alaska and come to us by way of Hudson and James Bays. Space does not allow for a detailed discussion of their breeding range and their known migration routes, but we have decades of scoter data showing that the Black Scoter is, by far, much more common in autumn in the interior of the state than the other scoters. Furthermore, species such as Buffleheads and Long-tailed Ducks are regular as both spring and fall migrants but typically in much smaller numbers than I saw on October 30, 2020.

Consequently, it is unusual in autumn to have IW “fallouts” *south* of Concord. This is true not because of a lack of suitable ponds/lakes nor is it because the birds are so close to the coast that they can “sense” it and therefore do not stop. Field experience and the data indicate that these birds are following a *northwest to southeast track* which usually by-passes southern New Hampshire and leads them into Maine and on to the coast where they spend the winter. So, in a year without inclement weather/fallouts, most of these birds would fly non-stop through northern and central New Hampshire to the coast of Maine. This concept certainly is not as simple as this since many of these species are seen during autumn in the Connecticut River valley and sometimes at Lake Massabesic east of Manchester. Most records do indicate that areas south of a line running from Lebanon to Concord and over to Rochester rarely see substantial numbers of scoters, etc. in the fall.

Other notable fall scoter fallouts have occurred, especially in 1995 when, quoting from Steve Mirick, the Fall Editor of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, “...the state’s largest fallout of Black Scoters occurred; close to 2,000 birds were counted

on 17 different inland lakes and ponds across the central and northern parts of the state.” This 1995 fallout was especially well documented by Bob Bradley in Littleton and Pam Hunt with Mark Suomala in southern Grafton County. In more recent years, Eric Masterson and others have shown that Lake Massabesic in southeastern New Hampshire can occasionally be a significant resting stop for scoters and other waterbirds on their way to the coast in the fall.

I will wrap up with a wonderful quote from an article written years ago by Tudor Richards about the fall scoter migration titled “*The Enjoyment of Watching Migrant Scoters on New Hampshire’s Inland Waters.*” In this article, he includes a marvelous excerpt from William Brewster’s account of the Black Scoter migration from his book on the birds of the Lake Umbagog region (Brewster 1938). Brewster wrote:

Coming invariably from the northward or northwestward...oftenest about sunrise or a little later—they would appear over the Lake [Umbagog] at an elevation apparently equaling that of the surrounding mountain crests, and so great that they looked no bigger than swallows. If American [Black] Scoters... they were sure to make... a continuous musical clamor, silvery in tone and suggesting that of multitudinous, distant sleighbells. Because of it they are called ‘Sleigh-bell Ducks’ by native hunters and farmers...after circling or doubling for two or three minutes without perceptibly lowering their flight, the birds were accustomed to descend neither spirally nor on long inclines, but almost vertically, and with such velocity that the eye could scarce follow them, making a rushing sound not unlike that of strong wind blowing through pine tops ...they checked the frightful impetus resulting from the downward plunge and resumed level flight.

Now that is the way to report bird sightings! Brewster was the first observer to promote the idea of these birds coming to Lake Umbagog from the northwest via Hudson and James Bays. Unfortunately, Tudor’s detailed and engaging article was never published.

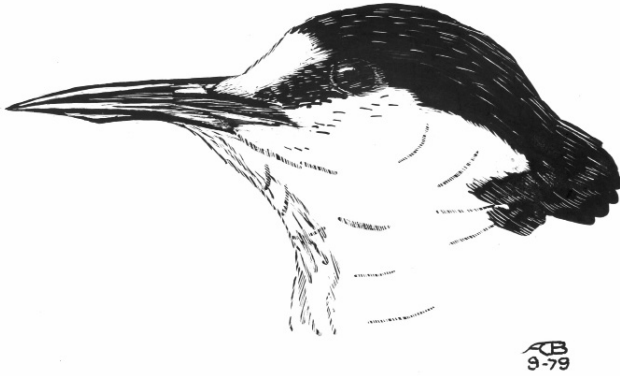
Fun with birds!

References

- Brewster, W. 1938. *The Birds of the Lake Umbagog Region of Maine*. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard College, Cambridge, MA.
- Mirick, S. 1995. Fall Season. *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Volume 14(3).
- Richards, T. *The Enjoyment of Watching Migrant Scoters on New Hampshire’s Inland Waters* (unpublished article).

Spotlight on Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*)

by Stephen Mirick



Sooty Tern by Art Borrer.

Background and Breeding

Perhaps no other bird species better exemplifies tropical oceans than does the Sooty Tern. The Sooty Tern is found in warm, tropical and sub-tropical oceans throughout the world. They are abundant in these oceans and are considered one of the most abundant seabirds in the tropics. Total population estimates range from 60 to 80 million birds worldwide. Sooty Terns nest in small to huge colonies on remote tropical islands where they lay a single egg on sparsely vegetated coral atolls and cays.

Away from their breeding colonies, Sooty Terns travel the tropical oceans and are rarely seen from land. In addition, the species is known for its amazing capabilities of living on the wing. Sooty Terns do not rest on the ocean surface and only occasionally land on floating debris. Their feathers can get waterlogged easily and it is believed that they fly continuously, night and day, feeding with shallow dips to the ocean surface to capture fish and sleeping on the wing! Sooty Terns are thought to spend most of the first several years of their lives continuously flying until they reach breeding age (4 to 10 years) and then only land when they return to their natal islands to nest.

In the United States, the Sooty Tern is a “prized sighting” for most birders. The only reliable location to find it is on the Dry Tortugas island chain, accessed by boat from Key West, Florida. The species nests here in abundance and is easily seen. Otherwise, records from the United States are mostly from offshore boat trips in the southeastern United States or following hurricanes which carry them northward. Because of their reliance on flight, they are susceptible to being captured by strong winds or the eye of a hurricane and are considered one of the most likely tropical bird species to be carried north by tropical storms and hurricanes.

Historic Records for New Hampshire

The propensity of this bird to get carried northward during tropical storms has resulted in numerous records for the northeastern United States, with some of them carried far inland. Sadly many of these records are of exhausted, moribund or dead birds. According to *The Birds of New Hampshire*, there had previously been seven records for New Hampshire as follows:

- 1878 – September 14. One collected in Newmarket.
- 1955 – August 15. Four birds found in Hinsdale following hurricane. One lingered until August 17.
- 1955 – August 15-16. One bird found at Hancock following hurricane.
- 1979 – September 9. One bird picked up dead in Hampton following Hurricane David.
- 1979 – September 9. One bird picked up dead in Rye following Hurricane David.
- 2000 – August 11. One bird seen flying around tern colony offshore at White and Seavey Islands.
- 2011 – August 30. Remains of bird found in Antrim two days after Hurricane Irene.

Hurricane Isaias and the Sooty Terns of August 2020

Hurricane Isaias started as a tropical storm south of Dominica on July 30, 2020. As it traveled west, it crossed Hispaniola on July 31 and strengthened into a Category 1 hurricane. The storm continued west and made landfall in the Bahamas on August 1 where it weakened back to a tropical storm. The storm then turned northward and paralleled the Florida and Georgia coastlines for a few days and slowly intensified back into a hurricane. The storm made landfall off the southern coast of North Carolina at around 11:00 pm on August 3 and quickly shot up the eastern United States, passing through western New Jersey, eastern New York, central Vermont, and within 24 hours was over southern Quebec, east-southeast of Montreal.

Although the hurricane only reached the strength of Category 1, the path of the storm off the coast of Florida appears to have picked up a large number of Sooty Terns and the rapid speed of the storm carried them far north with many reported from the northeastern United States. Most of the “fall-out” reports of Sooty Terns came from the first day or two following the storm and most reports came from the outer banks of North Carolina, northward to New York City

and coastal Connecticut. A few, however, came from coastal areas of Rhode Island and Massachusetts south of Cape Cod. Somewhat more interesting were the random reports from interior locations. One of these included two birds that appeared on Wachusett Reservoir in central Massachusetts on August 4. One bird survived here for over a week and was seen by many birders before it was last reported on August 12. A report from western Massachusetts included a flock of eight over Lake Onota and Pontoosuc Lake near Pittsfield. All but one were gone the next day. Another inland record came from Bantam Lake in western Connecticut where four were seen on August 4; all were gone the next day. The only Maine report came of a single bird on August 5 at Matinicus Rock, an island well off the coast of Rockland.

The eighth State record for New Hampshire and the northernmost inland record of a bird carried by the hurricane came on the evening of August 6 when the Cumming family was out on their pontoon boat on Pleasant Lake in Deerfield. An exhausted Sooty Tern circled and landed on their boat and remained there as the family returned to the dock. It stayed on the boat as the sun set, but was gone the next morning and was never seen again.

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Sooty Tern found dead off Rt. 123 in Antrim, NH on 8-30-11 after the passage of Hurricane Irene. Photo by Eric Masterson.

Fall 2020 New Hampshire Raptor Migration Report

by Iain MacLeod

Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory



Levi Burford, the fall counter on Pack Monadnock in 2020, ready to work during COVID-19. Photo by Phil Brown.

Fall 2020 marked the sixteenth consecutive fall season of daily coordinated counts conducted at the Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory at Miller State Park in Peterborough, NH. The count was conducted this year under the leadership of the Harris Center for Conservation in partnership with New Hampshire Audubon in a formal agreement with the NH Division of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Seasonal Counter/Interpreter for 2020 was Levi Burford once again. Phil Brown served as the Raptor Observatory Coordinator and a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers rounded out the coverage and helped scan the skies. In particular, we must acknowledge Mark Timmerman, Katrina Fenton, Julie Brown and Phil Brown who each served as official counters at some point during the season.

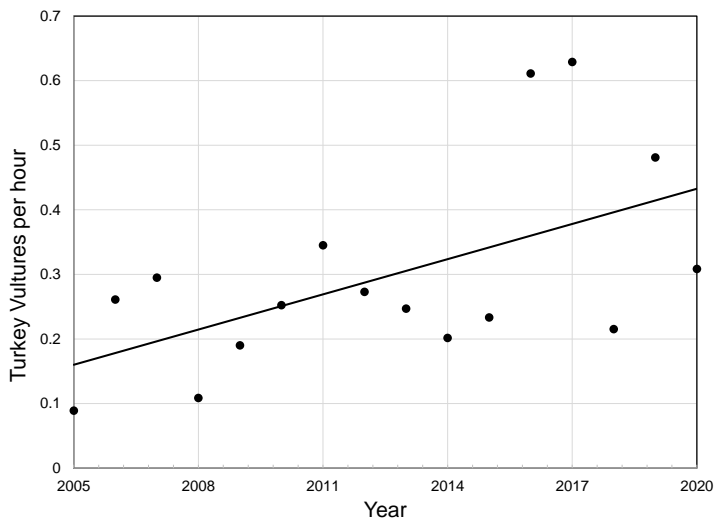
Full site coverage was maintained daily from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm EST (or close to), from September 1 to October 31 and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EST from November 1-20. From September 1 to November 20, a total of 557.67 observation hours were logged (241.58 in September, 198.25 in October, and 117.83 in November). September weather was conducive for counting and hours were logged on all but two days (September 2 and 10). October weather was more changeable resulting in four days when no count was conducted (October 13, 16, 26 and 28). There were also four additional days that operated with reduced hours. Only one day was missed because of weather in November. The total observation hours was above the 10-year average of 525 hours.

A total of 12,642 individual migratory raptors were recorded. That equals 21.58 raptors per hour. The 10-year average is 11,262 raptors (10-year averages in this account refer to data from just the prior 10 years, 2010-2019). The 10-year average for raptors per hour is 24.54.

Seven species (Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon) show positive 16-year linear trends and seven species (Osprey, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel) show negative trends. The 16-year trend line for all raptors combined is flat.

Turkey Vultures are generally mid-season migrants and we usually don't see obvious signs of southbound birds until October. Our first migrating Turkey Vultures were noted on September 17 this year which is early. After some steady increases in the numbers counted at Pack over the last several years, we had a drop this year to 172. The 10-year average is 183. The biggest single day count was 30 on October 4. The trend for the 16 years of counting is very solidly up, but after two back-to-back record years (322 in 2016 and 324 in 2017), we've seen a sudden drop, then a rebound and then a drop again (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Sixteen-year Turkey Vulture trend (2005-2020) at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH.

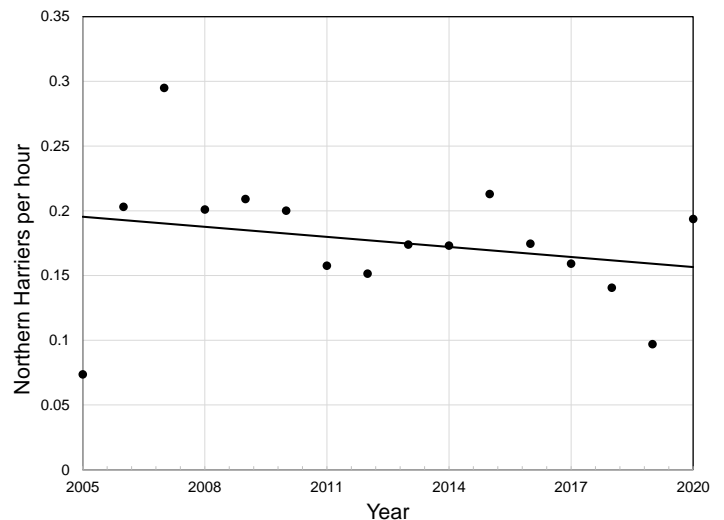


The **Osprey** count at Pack hit an all-time low of just 162! That is an astonishing drop from a peak in 2012 of 314! The 10-year average is 230. This is not just a one-year anomaly, this is now a sustained and steady drop that in my opinion must reflect a decline in the breeding productivity of the Osprey populations to our north. This decline is being seen at almost every fall hawkwatch in the northeast. Competition from the dramatically increasing and expanding Bald Eagle population seems a likely cause. The peak day was September 17 when 16 were counted.

The **Bald Eagle** total (185) set a new season-high count and marks the ninth consecutive season of more than 100 Bald Eagles counted. The Bald Eagle migration is quite spread out but the bulk moved through in September (100) with 66 in October and 19 in November. The peak one-day count was 16 on September 17. The trend continues to soar and surpassed the Osprey total for the second year in a row.

The tally of 108 **Northern Harriers** was a major rebound over last year's record low. In fact, it was exactly double last year's count and well above the 10-year average of 87. Harriers feed extensively on meadow voles throughout their range, and voles go through cyclical changes from year to year. Perhaps, we can assume that vole numbers were at a peak in 2020, resulting in larger broods and productivity. The last "peak" was in 2015 (when we saw a record high of 125 harriers).

Figure 2. Sixteen-year Northern Harrier trend (2005-2020) at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH.

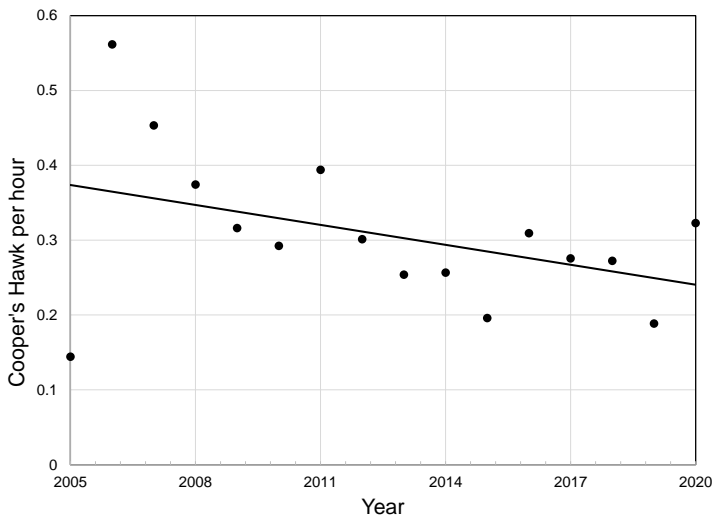


Cooper's Hawks are showing an intriguing cyclical population cycle, with a peak, then a three year decline then a rebound. This year was a high year with 180 tallied compared to 105 last year. Overall, their 16-year trend line is down (the peaks aren't as high and the lows are lower). As I mentioned last year, we are seeing increasing numbers of Cooper's wintering in New Hampshire and this is likely true to our north where our fall migrants originate. So, all other indices show an increasing and expanding population and our "declining" trend line is likely because more are able to successfully winter farther north. The cyclical highs and lows are a mystery to me. Perhaps I'll need another decade of data to see if this pattern persists. It certainly looks real.

Northern Goshawks were very scarce again with just 12 tallied. The 10-year average is 33! The overall 16-year trend is way down. Our counts in previous years have been as high as 68 so the last three years' counts (11, 9 and 12) have been

really low. I went into quite a bit of detail last year about the factors that influence goshawk populations and concluded that something major is going on. The trend we see is constant throughout all the northeastern hawkwatch sites. I don't have the complete regional data available for 2020 but in 2019, only 50 were counted for the entire region and our record low count (for Pack) of nine was the highest of any site in the northeast!

Figure 3. Sixteen-year Cooper's Hawk trend (2005-2020) at Pack Monadnock Raptor Migration Observatory, NH.



The **Sharp-shinned Hawk** had a second rebound year after the record low set in 2018. This year the tally was 1,325 (10-year average = 1,155). The peak count day was October 11 when a spectacular 123 were counted (a new single-day record for the site). Even with these two good years the hawk/hour 16-year trend is still negative.

The **Broad-winged Hawk** count was up a little over last year with 8,815 counted (10-year average = 9,801). The best flight was on September 18 when 2,886 were counted. This fits right into the statistically-proven pattern – more than 25% of the Broad-winged counted over the last 16 years at Pack have been seen on September 17 and 18, and more than 50% between September 15-19. Overall, the 16-year trend line is slightly positive.

The **Red-shouldered Hawk** count of 223 was our highest ever and well above the 10-year average (135). October 25 marked a new single-day high count of 70! The previous single day record was 47. The 16-year trend is up. Clearly the Red-shouldered population is on the rise in the northeast.

The **Red-tailed Hawk** tally of 293 was a little higher than last year's, but well below the 10-year average of 351. The peak flight day this year was October 27 when 41 were counted (which is not a big peak at all). This is right in line with usual peaks. Since 2005, 44% of all the Red-tailed we have counted at Pack have passed by between October 23

Table 1. Broad-winged Hawk fall migration totals and peak counts at Pack Monadnock, NH, 2005-2020. Source: HMANA's HawkCount.org Database.

Year	Total	Highest one-day count	Date
2005	3,978	1,687	18-Sep
2006	7,595	3,044	11-Sep
2007	7,776	2,676	16-Sep
2008	6,835	2,424	18-Sep
2009	4,322	2,042	16-Sep
2010	7,557	3,328	18-Sep
2011	11,831	5,208	18-Sep
2012	8,848	2,556	17-Sep
2013	8,221	2,759	17-Sep
2014	11,043	4,101	15-Sep
2015	16,693	3,959	17-Sep
2016	10,530	3,245	15-Sep
2017	8,744	1,836	21-Sep
2018	6,756	2,239	24-Sep
2019	7,840	2,436	18-Sep
2020	8,815	2,886	18-Sep

and November 4. The 16-year trend at Pack is steadily down which, as I've noted in previous annual summaries does not appear to mean that the population is declining. All other data (Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Survey) indicates an increase in the population. What is likely happening is what is known as "short-stopping" meaning more migrant Red-taileds are wintering farther north than they used to. In the bird world, if you don't need to fly a long way to survive the winter, don't!

No **Rough-legged Hawks** were recorded this year for the second straight year. Only five **Golden Eagles** were tallied this year (10-year average is 8). Overall the

Golden Eagle trend is up, so perhaps we just missed them again this year.

The biggest surprise of the year for me is the rebound of the **American Kestrel**. In 2020, a record 257 were counted at Pack (10 year average is 167). After several years of declines, the species bottomed out in 2014 and is now seeing a steady increase. The 16-year trend is still slightly negative, but the last seven years are strongly positive.

Merlin also made a strong showing. The tally of 143 was just four shy of the all-time record set in 2010. The 10-year average is 94. The peak flight day was October 11 when a new single day count record of 17 was set.

The **Peregrine Falcon** count was down this year (just 30) after a record-tying tally of 64 last year. The 10-year average is 50. The 16-year trend is still positive despite this year's dip.

You can read the Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory Fall 2020 Final Report at:

https://harriscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PMRO_Final_Report_2020.pdf

Table 2. Total Fall raptor migration monitoring data (2005-2020) at Pack Monadnock, NH. Source: HMANA's HawkCount.org Database.

Year	Obs. Hrs.	TV	OS	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PG	UR	SE	Total
2005	326	29	219	52	24	520	47	11	23	3,978	0	122	0	5	78	40	11	62	0	5,221
2006	379	99	257	55	77	1,253	213	68	46	7,595	0	407	0	11	201	48	29	76	0	10,435
2007	410	121	291	53	121	1,288	186	49	112	7,776	0	263	0	5	143	90	44	82	0	10,624
2008	433	47	256	50	87	1,189	162	28	67	6,835	0	254	0	3	183	59	17	37	0	9,274
2009	421	80	182	51	88	1,196	133	25	129	4,322	0	421	0	6	135	56	30	109	0	6,963
2010	575	145	298	85	115	1,248	168	66	109	7,606	0	410	0	10	221	147	53	105	0	10,786
2011	368	127	271	54	58	1,124	145	21	43	11,831	0	202	0	9	170	68	40	93	0	14,256
2012	601	164	314	105	91	1,388	181	63	209	8,848	1	522	1	7	194	108	54	74	0	12,324
2013	575	142	193	101	100	1,254	146	25	118	8,221	0	378	1	11	166	89	48	36	1	11,030
2014	491	99	213	120	85	1,094	126	22	123	11,043	0	348	1	7	112	80	39	53	0	13,565
2015	587	137	201	132	125	1,443	115	48	141	16,593	1	546	1	13	118	120	54	57	0	19,845
2016	527	322	242	136	92	1,126	163	48	117	10,530	0	294	1	5	167	96	49	78	0	13,466
2017	515	324	219	163	82	1,179	142	17	180	8,744	0	341	2	7	166	106	64	67	0	11,803
2018	455	98	181	176	64	668	124	11	126	6,756	0	246	2	22	171	58	31	108	0	8,842
2019	557	268	171	180	54	1,027	105	9	181	7,840	0	223	0	4	185	64	64	128	0	10,503
2020	558	172	162	185	108	1,325	180	12	223	8,815	0	293	0	5	257	143	30	122	0	12,032
Average*	525	183	230	125	87	1,155	142	33	135	9,801	0	351	1	10	167	94	50	80	0	12,642

Key to Table 2.

*previous 10 year average (2010-2019)

- TV Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
- OS Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
- BE Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
- NH Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)
- SS Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)
- CH Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)
- NG Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)
- RS Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)
- BW Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)
- SW Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
- RT Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
- RL Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)
- GE Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
- AK American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
- ML Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)
- PG Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
- UR Unidentified Raptor
- SE Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Carter Hill Raptor Migration Observatory

Counts were conducted at Carter Hill on only six days (five in September and one in October) for a total of 32 hours. A total of 552 raptors were counted. The peak day was September 15 when 336 raptors were counted (320 Broad-winged Hawks). With so few hours this year, comparison to previous years was not valuable.

Data Sources

HawkCount.org. Online raptor migration database of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. CBC Data are provided by National Audubon Society and through the generous efforts of Bird Studies Canada and countless volunteers across the Western Hemisphere.

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

Fall 2020 Field Notes

Diana Stephens, Editor

Owl Love?



Photographer Len Medlock found these adorable Eastern Screech-Owls looking down at him from a tree branch in Exeter, NH in early September (9-10-20).

Blue Jay Migration in Sandwich

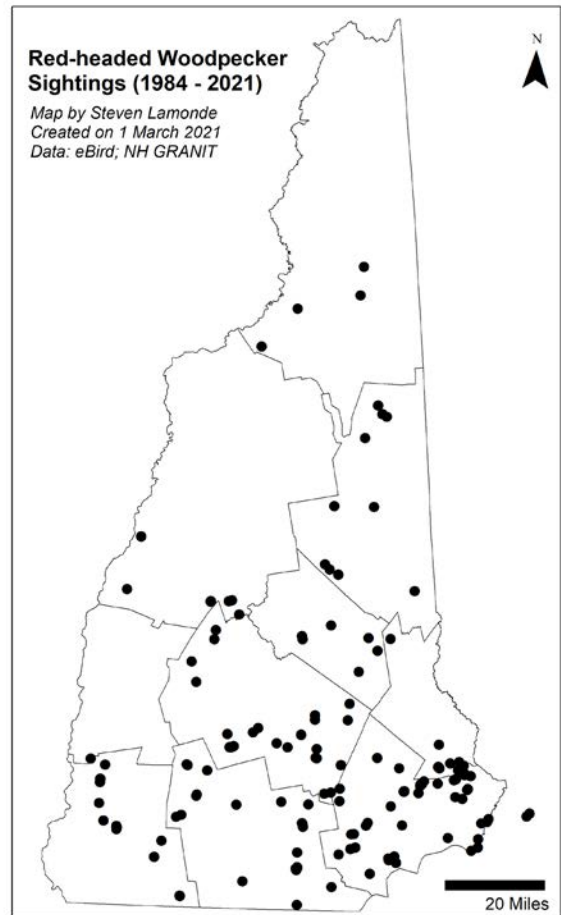
by Ken Klapper

From September 11 through October 4, 2020, I tallied migrating Blue Jays from my yard in Sandwich nearly every morning, missing only two days. I live on the lower slopes of Red Hill with a clear view to the north and northwest and often scan the skies for southbound raptors, waterfowl and other birds. Blue Jays are easy to identify (even in flight) so I counted their flocks whenever possible.

This was a very active season for migrant Blue Jays. Over the course of 22 mornings, I counted a total of 2,244 individuals. Migrant jays generally flew southwest and flock size varied from a few to 52 (on September 14). Migration peaked on September 24-25, when I counted 275 and 295 individuals, respectively. There were seven other days with totals over 100 in September. Although I continued birding nearly daily through October, jay migration seemed to halt after October 4.

Red-headed Woodpecker Flies over Mt. Monadnock

by Steven Lamonde



It was Halloween, 2020. A day known, if not celebrated, for interesting and unusual appearances and I was not to be disappointed. As part of a project to relocate Henry David Thoreau's 1858 campsite, I was headed up Mount Monadnock to take photos of potential campsite locations. As a birder, I of course had a second motive, find some of the irrupting boreal specialties that were flocking southward. Boreal Chickadee, in particular, had yet to be recorded in eBird at this location despite several known encounters over the past century. The weather was calm, clear, and sunny and the fresh snow on the mountain wasn't yet deep enough to require gaiters. Hiking up the Dublin Trail and over the summit to the Pumpelly Trail, I encountered the usual forest birds, a rather high-elevation Eastern Bluebird at 2,368 ft., a pair of Snow Buntings at the summit and several costumed-hikers.

After nearly two hours of searching the area southeast of the summit and narrowing down a list of potential campsites, I stopped to take in the warmth of the noontime sun and rustle through my pack for a snack. Glancing up for a moment at around 12:15 pm, my gaze turned west and a

dark bird flying south over the ridgeline caught my eye. The bird's undulating flight and dark back and forewings were some of the first characteristics that stood out and, as the bird drew nearer, I picked out a brownish head with hints of red, contrasting white secondaries and an all-black tail. There was no denying what these traits pointed to, an immature Red-headed Woodpecker!

Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) are an unusual species in New Hampshire and birders often flock to an area after one is found. Since 1984, with the exception of six years (1985, 1999, 2000, 2010, and 2011), birders reported to eBird between one and four individual Red-headed Woodpeckers annually in the state. Within Cheshire County, over which Mt. Monadnock presides, only six Red-headed Woodpeckers had been recorded in eBird prior to this observation: Alstead in 2001, Dublin in 2009, Alstead in 2014, Rindge and Keene in 2018 and Surry in 2019. What doubly shocked me about this observation was not just the rarity of this bird, but the elevation at which it was seen! Red-headed Woodpeckers are usually found in lowland forests, often near or in a forested wetland. What was this bird doing flying over Mt. Monadnock's ridgeline at about 3,050 feet above sea level? A quick analysis of eBird data paired with terrain data from the United States Geological Survey indicated that this observation marked the highest-elevation sighting of a Red-headed Woodpecker north of West Virginia's Allegheny Mountains. Talk about a Halloween surprise I never would have predicted. To all bird-wise hikers, keep an eye out for the unexpected!

Foot Quivering in Thrushes

by Rebecca Suomala and Diana Stephens

Bruce Boyer posted this observation to the NHBirds email list on October 4, 2020.

I was watching a group of small birds fluttering around my R. rugosa shrubs and the adjacent lawn this morning in Jaffrey. Most were White-throated Sparrows, but there was also a Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Swainson's Thrush. The thrush was exhibiting a behavior new to me. As it moved over the weedy lawn, it would stop and rapidly shake one foot near the top of the vegetation, apparently to stir up insects. Apparently, this is a known habit of thrushes of the genus Catharus.

Elaine Faletta responded to Boyer's post on October 13, 2020 stating, "A Hermit Thrush showed up on the lawn this morning and it exhibited the 'foot-quivering' behavior described above. They really move that foot!"

Bruce Boyer's post prompted us to revisit an article on foot quivering by Hermit Thrushes in the Winter 2015-16 issue

of *New Hampshire Bird Records* (Vol. 34, #4, p. 32) and do a little more research. It turns out that the first observations of foot-quivering in thrushes described it as a hostile behavior that occurred during encounters with members of the same species or with other thrushes. It wasn't until 1990 that a study by Yong Wang and Frank Moore described foot-quivering as a technique to obtain food (*The Wilson Bulletin*, Vol. 102 #3, Sept. 1990). They documented foot-quivering as a foraging behavior in three species of *Catharus* thrushes (Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrush and Veery) during migration on the coast of Louisiana, but never in Wood Thrush (a non-*Catharus* thrush).

The article provided the following description of foot-quivering:

The distinctive feature of 'foot-quivering' was a rapid movement of the legs and feet against the substrate without forward locomotion. The bird's neck and head were stretched forward while the bill was held parallel to the ground. After a bout of 'foot-quivering,' the bird scanned the substrate, presumably searching for prey that might move. 'Foot-quivering' was often followed by quick pecking motions directed forward and at the ground. We sometimes observed prey flushed and captured by a foraging thrush at this time. After a bout of 'foot-quivering,' a thrush continued to hop or walk forward relative to its previous movement, which moved the bird over unsearched ground.

Hermit Thrush, another *Catharus* thrush, are also known to foot-quiver, as described by Elaine above and the aforementioned article in *New Hampshire Bird Records*. All About Birds reports that they also "quiver their feet as they relax after seeing a flying predator."

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Hermit_Thrush/overview

Halloween Birding in Durham

by Kurk Dorsey

The following was a post to the NHBirds email list on October 31, 2020.

I admit that I don't really know what I saw today, since pretty much anything could be wearing a costume, which would seriously complicate migrating. A morning circuit of Moore Fields (Durham) turned up one Alan Murray and we watched the big flock of Horned Larks (70+) and pipits (10+). There was a really drab Snow Bunting in the group, which I think might have been the bird I called a longspur yesterday, or it was in costume. Other nice finds were a grey harrier, a kinglet showing its ruby crown, a Fox Sparrow and

two Evening Grosbeaks calling across the road.

Having seen the report of the Tennessee Warbler at the Durham Town Landing, I headed over there and found two(!) Tennessee Warblers, twice in the same binocular field of view – in one square meter of each other – and a redpoll, very close in. Three yellowlegs, a Bufflehead and a kingfisher were also there. At Jackson Landing, a Bald Eagle flew overhead.

A few other stops turned up expected birds, until the last of the morning, Surrey Lane Marsh, which was completely frozen over in October! The one bird of note there was a blackbird that I was able to watch in the scope for about 30 seconds. The odds are that it was a Rusty, but I did not see any color to the eye. It was doing an unusual tail-pumping as it walked along the grassy edge of the ice and seemed to be a pretty solid brown over black. I can't rule out that it was a Brewer's, but the bird disappeared into the vegetation before I could think that through. I may have to go back at halftime of the UC/Memphis game.

I tracked down the blackbird at halftime of the Cincy-Memphis game and still got back in time to watch BC blow the chance at a memorable upset over Clemson. Where's Doug Flutie when you need him?

Anyhow, I had to walk through cattails to get out to the middle of the wetland (and scared up two Horned Larks, first records for Surrey Lane) and found the blackbird at the far end of the water. I got some very poor phonescope photos and a worse video. I think it's a male Rusty that's just starting to molt. Eventually, I saw the glimmer of a yellow eye, but the color still seems very strange for a Rusty. And, there's never been a Brewer's accepted in New Hampshire, maybe tomorrow! Still a fun hunt.

The Snow Bunting Flock in Hampton

by Diana Stephens

All photos by Diana Stephens, 11-11-20, Hampton Beach State Park, Hampton, NH.

The first time I saw a flock of Snow Buntings at Hampton Beach State Park, it was quite small, no more than 100. That was in the winter of 2019, just two years ago. There was a much larger flock in 2020, as many birders witnessed and enjoyed.

Steve Mirick was the first to notice in his NHBirds post (11-4-20), "The Snow Bunting flock at Hampton Beach State Park has certainly grown a lot. I photographed/counted a flock of 364 there last Sunday and there were at least that many there today, perhaps over 500." Mirick also spotted some Lapland Longspurs and around two dozen Horned Larks along with them. "The bunting flock is almost impossible to count as they are nearly constantly in flight,

splitting and joining, a remarkable sight!"

As Steve noted, they are constantly moving and thus difficult to count. I did, however, take some photographs of my own so fellow readers may get a sense of how large the flock was in November of 2020.



Waiting for these two birds to stand still long enough to be photographed was a challenge, with their constant movement.



After flying around for a while, these Snow Buntings finally landed on the rocks that look out towards Hampton Harbor.



The large Snow Bunting flock.

Five Grosbeaks in One Fall Season!

by Jim Sparrell



Black-headed Grosbeak taking a bath by Jim Sparrell, 10-15-20, Deerfield, NH.

The Blue Grosbeak can be an elusive, fleeting bird when it shows up in New Hampshire. On the first day of October, Stuart Varney found one chirping away in a weedy corner of South Street Cemetery, only a quarter mile from our house in Portsmouth, NH. Katie and I got there as soon as we could that morning and walked all over with a couple of other birders without success. We returned home and then I got a text from another birder who thought she heard a promising chirp in the woods. I went back over, walked the area extensively, but found no **Blue Grosbeak**. I returned home. While assembling some lunch, there was an email that Susan Wrisley, Jenna Pettipas and Steve Bennett had re-found the grosbeak. Once again, I raced over and this time, they got me on the bird immediately. It was quite active feeding in the weedy grasses only a few feet away, popping up in the sumac and then dropping down, disappearing from view. Fortunately, it continued off and on that day and again briefly early the next morning.

Chasing birds can be a slippery slope. When a **Black-headed Grosbeak** was reported in Deerfield, Katie and I consulted each other. We hadn't seen one in New Hampshire before and the last state record was 17 years earlier, so we decided to take the drive from Portsmouth to try for it. The homeowners and multiple other birders had reported the bird coming to feeders regularly, but there is always the risk that the bird has moved on. We arrived at the house about 9:50 am to find two birders already in the driveway. They told us that the bird had just been seen five minutes earlier. There was some bird activity in the trees around us and we heard a few promising chirps, but saw no likely bird. The neighbors on the street were friendly and seemed to find the birders mildly amusing. Ninety minutes later, there was still no bird. Irritating thoughts began to occur. If we had only showed up five minutes earlier... Where else could it go? Was that the chirp we heard? Should we leave? Should we have packed a lunch? Eventually, the homeowner returned, welcomed us to come up the driveway a bit and refilled the feeders. Just moments later, the Black-headed Grosbeak made the rounds of the feeders, fed on the ground, took a bath and perched in the trees.

A week later, we ran into Steve and Jane Mirick along the coast and shared our excitement at having the Black-headed Grosbeak show up after a long wait. As we were getting back in our car, Jane made the offhand comment, "It could be a good year for grosbeaks. If **Evening Grosbeaks** show up, it would be possible to see four in New Hampshire this year." Just before Halloween, Len Medlock reported a small group of Evening Grosbeaks in his neighborhood in Exeter. Given that our *modus operandi* is not unlike a Cooper's Hawk that shows up when a promising bird is around, we traveled to Exeter on Halloween and had the pleasure of watching the Evening Grosbeaks with Len. They were feeding on the buds of a maple tree and then descended with some enthusiasm on his feeders. He explained to us that he had woken up in the middle of the night and decided that he needed to move the feeders around to make them more welcoming for the grosbeaks. It worked!

I looked back and saw that we had seen a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** in early September. That got us up to four grosbeaks, an amazing species count for New Hampshire for one year. Then, near the end of November, Steve Mirick reported a small group of **Pine Grosbeaks** at the YMCA in Plaistow. We took a ride over and after spending 30 minutes examining many robins and starlings coming to the fruit trees, we were finally rewarded with three Pine Grosbeaks. That made five grosbeak species in New Hampshire for the year (even if they are from different bird families).

Pam Hunt was wrapping up the November County Challenge in early December and noted that Sullivan County

had won that competition. I wrote to the New Hampshire list serve:

Many thanks to Pam for making November a little more exciting with this contest and to the great birders (and birds) of Sullivan County!

In the spirit of the Dodo bird in Alice in Wonderland who declared, 'Everybody has won, and all must have prizes,' I am suggesting that Rockingham County has won the fall season Palme de Grosbec Award. Between September 1 and November 30, it was possible to see all five grosbeak species that have ever been recorded in New Hampshire, in Rockingham County.

Through no fault of our own and depending largely on the kindness of strangers (and friends), Katie and I observed:

Rose-breasted Grosbeak on 9/6

Blue Grosbeak on 10/1

Black-headed Grosbeak on 10/15

Evening Grosbeak on 10/31

Pine Grosbeak on 11/22

I'm sure many other birders were able to do the same, although the Blue Grosbeaks were unfortunately a bit less cooperative.



Pine Grosbeak by Jim Sparrell, 11-22-20, Plaistow, NH.

Two Fall Pelagic Trips

The usual pelagic birding boat trips did not run in the fall of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some birders went out with whalewatch or fishing boats with the usual drawback that the birders don't control where the boat goes. Two birding-focused trips did go out and highlights from each trip follow.

Pelagic Trip on 9-17-20

by Stephen Mirick



Pomarine Jaeger by Leo McKillop, 9-17-20, Jeffreys Ledge, NH.

Excerpts from a post to NHBirds 9-18-20.

I organized an all-day pelagic bird trip aboard the MV Granite State out of Rye Harbor, NH on September 17, 2020. The weather had been very windy over the last few days, but quickly died down for our trip. The residual seas and chop made for an unpleasant morning at times, but by the afternoon conditions improved greatly. Skies were mostly clear, but with smoke/haze from the western fires. We traveled east to the Isles of Shoals where we wandered around the islands looking for odds and ends while we waited for the seas to calm down. We then continued offshore forming a counter-clockwise loop over the "Scantums," dropping into Massachusetts waters before turning north over Jeffreys Ledge through New Hampshire, following it north into Maine waters, and then circling back and eventually heading back home.

Birds were scarce and numbers were low, but we still managed to get a decent list of birds including some tough ones like Leach's Storm-Petrel and Pomarine Jaeger. During a summer like we've been through, it was just wonderful to be offshore and to see a few shearwaters!

Bird highlights are below. The mammal highlight of the trip was 150 Atlantic White-sided Dolphin in two large pods with accompanying shearwaters. We also had a Leatherback

Turtle and at least nine Ocean Sunfish (*Mola mola*) including close views of one and of another that breached!



Cory's Shearwater by Steve Mirick, 9-17-20, offshore pelagic.

Highlights

Isles of Shoals

- American Oystercatcher – two flying back and forth between Appledore, Smuttynose, and Star Islands.
- Northern Gannet – two adults *sitting on* Square Rock at the Isles of Shoals, almost none offshore.
- Great Cormorant – 10 sitting on Square Rock.
- Peregrine Falcon – two at Isles of Shoals, one on Seavey Island, NH and one on Appledore Island, ME.

Offshore waters beyond the Isles of Shoals

- Red-necked Phalarope – 16 in a few small flighty groups.
- Pomarine Jaeger – one offshore in NH waters which flew by the boat and we were able to chase it down for excellent views and photos.
- Parasitic Jaeger – one offshore in NH waters. Difficult views as the bird would not slow down.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull – two offshore in NH waters.
- Leach's Storm-Petrel – two birds: one in NH waters and one in ME waters. Decent views and photos as we gave chase.
- Cory's Shearwater – 6 total in MA and NH waters.
- Great Shearwater – 22 spread out in MA, NH, and ME waters.

Jeffreys Ledge at Sunrise

by Rebecca Suomala

A small group of us found a captain who would take birders out to Jeffreys Ledge for sunrise so we chartered Clandestino Fishing Charters (603-498-7577) and seven of us boarded the Figment in Rye Harbor for a 3:30 am departure on September 25, 2020. It was a bit strange motoring out in the dark but it was well worth it.



Red-necked Phalaropes on the way back in from Jeffreys Ledge, 9-25-20 by Zeke Cornell.

Jeffreys Ledge was busy from sunrise to around 9:00 am, helped by some chumming with Menhaden oil (my raffle winning from the Superbowl of Birding – go Twitchers!). A Leach's Storm-Petrel flew by, Northern Fulmars were numerous and we had a few nice flocks of phalaropes.

We then went to Old Scantum and had lots of shearwaters sitting on the water in groups, including Manx, Cory's and Great in one group along with two jaegers! We had small groups of White-winged Scoters migrating all day.

We finished up with a visit to the Isles of Shoals and a late American Oystercatcher at Lunging Island. We returned to Rye Harbor at 3:00 pm. It was a great trip and we stayed in New Hampshire the entire time, a big bonus for state bird lists.

Highlight totals:

- Leach's Storm-Petrel 1
- Northern Fulmar >40
- Pomarine Jaeger 6
- Manx Shearwater 3
- Cory's Shearwater 7
- Great Shearwater >180 – diving for food
- Red-necked Phalarope 81
- Black-legged Kittiwake 1 immature



Immature Black-legged Kittiwake with a salp (a gelatinous marine invertebrate animal) in its mouth, on the way back in from Jeffreys Ledge, 9-25-20 by Zeke Cornell.

Red Crossbills

by Lillian Stokes

This article first appeared on the website of the Harris Center for Conservation Education (harriscenter.org) in November 2020.

The fall of 2020 was a banner season to see irruptive winter finches and a bonanza of one of those species, Red Crossbills, occurred at the Harris Center (Hancock, NH) in late summer.

Interestingly, Red Crossbills can be grouped by their flight calls as to “call types.” There are ten call types found across North America, each having its own differences in morphology, ecological niche and core areas of occurrence. An analysis of the recordings I made of the calls of the Harris Center Red Crossbills revealed there were four different call types, with some of those birds coming from as far away as the Pacific Northwest.

The intrigue started in early August when Meade Cadot noticed Red Crossbills, large finches with crossed bills that allow them to extract closed or open conifer seeds, coming down into the Harris Center parking lot each morning to pick up grit. Don and I joined Meade (observing the crossbills from our cars) and over the course of the next month witnessed the Red Crossbill numbers grow, peaking mid-to-end of August, reaching as many as 40 birds! The group consisted of reddish males, yellowish females and brownish immatures who would come in bunches, then disperse in different directions by late morning. They would call frequently while flying or sitting in a tree, giving their “jip-jip” call note. Seeing the large number of Red Crossbills was a very special experience and raised many questions such as, why at the Harris Center, why then, where did they come from and where were they going?

Although Red Crossbills were being seen throughout the region, the Harris Center especially checked all the boxes on a Red Crossbill’s wish list. First and foremost, there was a quiet parking lot (little used because of the pandemic) full of plentiful dirt grit, just what crossbills need to help process the conifer seeds they eat. Then there was what Meade and we called the “magic maple,” the low, isolated Red Maple with a top of dead branches at the edge of the parking lot where the crossbills could land, overlook the scene, preen and

clean bills. By the way, that tree was not only magic for the crossbills but we all recorded at least 30 other species using that tree, including Yellow- and Black-billed Cuckoos and Olive-sided Flycatcher!

Red Crossbill feeding habitat also ringed the surrounding area with a bumper crop of White Pine cones as well as some Red Spruce cones. They undoubtedly fed on the plentiful White Pine cone crop and maybe spruces in the region after their morning gitting sessions. By early September, we noticed that the numbers of Red Crossbills coming to the Harris Center dropped off, so by the end of September there were none seen there. Some were being seen in other areas in the region, but not in big numbers. In September, the White Pines began opening and dropping their cones and dispersing seeds.

Of the ten different “call types,” each type of Red Crossbill is distinguished by its flight calls and usually shows an association with certain conifer species in a core zone of occurrence. The call types do not fit well with the usual

concepts of species or subspecies and this is being studied. Recently, one of the call types, Type 9, has been elevated to the status of a new species, the Cassia Crossbill, which is sedentary in the South Hills and Albion Mountains of



From top to bottom: Red Crossbill juvenile, male and immatures, and group eating grit by Lillian Stokes at the Harris Center in Hancock, NH during the fall of 2020.

Idaho. Accurately assigning a call type can be done through audiospectrographic analysis of a recorded Red Crossbill call (not song). The analysis is best done by an expert. The average birder cannot discern it by hearing it in the field.

On twelve occasions, I recorded the calls of the Harris Center Red Crossbills with my iPhone app, ShurePlus MOTIV Audio. I then sent the recordings in with my eBird checklists and had the call types confirmed by Cornell Red Crossbill expert and founder of the Finch Research Network, Matt Young. It turned out that the Harris Center birds were four different call types, Type 1, 2, 3 and 10.

Type 1 is found primarily in the Appalachians from southern New York to Georgia and Alabama and occasionally in the Adirondack Mountains, northern New York, New England, southern Ontario, the Maritimes, and perhaps the Great Lakes. They are rare in the West.

Type 2 is found in the Ponderosa pine forests of the West, but is moderately irruptive and can sometimes be found anywhere.

Type 3 is found mostly in Western Hemlock habitat of northern coastal areas of western North America, but can sometimes be highly irruptive into the Great Lakes, the Northeast, Ontario, and the Maritimes.

Type 10, which includes most of the Harris Center crossbills I recorded, is thought to be most abundant in northern California to central Oregon, in the Sitka spruce belt found in the outer coastal forest. However, Type 10 also regularly occurs and breeds in the Northeast year after year, and further study might prove these to be different. Matt and his team at the Finch Research Network are studying this topic.

Why do Red Crossbills irrupt and what would make at least some of them come here all the way from the Pacific Northwest? Think of Red Crossbills as nomadic birds who can move if their food source runs out in one area and switch to eating different types of conifers that may be abundant in a new area. Red Crossbills can also breed at any time wherever they find ample food, although they mostly breed in late summer through early fall and late winter through early spring. Birds of a certain call type appear to mate with birds of their own call type, but this needs further study.

A likely scenario as to why crossbills were here in abundance across much of the northeast, according to Red Crossbill expert Matt Young, “is that Red Crossbills in other “sprucy” areas to the north in the Maritimes, Maine, Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario, northern New Hampshire and Vermont and the Adirondacks of New York, had a good breeding season in 2019. By spring of 2020, their spruce cone supply had diminished, so they irrupted

southward to take advantage of areas of the bumper White Pine cone crop found in the more southerly areas of the region. That White Pine crop was getting depleted by fall of 2020, so Red Crossbills were on the move again, shifting southward to Cape Cod, Long Island, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey looking for their next good food source.”

If you want to participate in citizen science or more focused finch research, and you love finches, go to the Finch Research Network, finchnetwork.org, which is a community and network of people that want to be involved in observing and studying finches. There is a wealth of finch information, links to where you can submit your recordings, and includes the flagship project on Red Crossbills. You can also contact Matt Young at info@finchnetwork.org if you have other questions about finches, but also remember to send your finch sightings to eBird.org. Happy finch watching!

Note: For more information on Red Crossbills in New Hampshire see two other articles in *New Hampshire Bird Records* by Matthew Young:

“The 2017-2018 Red Crossbill Irruption in New Hampshire” by Tim Spahr & Matthew A. Young, Winter 2017-18 (Vol. 28 #5)

“The First Documented Occurrence of Red Crossbill Call Types, 1, 2, 3 and 10 in New Hampshire” by Matthew A. Young, Winter 2009-10 (Vol. 36 #4)

Two Yellow-billed Teal (*Anas flavirostris*) hybrids in Rye, NH

by Jörn Lehmhus

In September 2020, two odd hybrid ducks were observed in Rye, NH. The first hybrid was found on Marsh Road Pond on September 1 and the second at Eel Pond on September 12 (see Table 1). The original observers, Steve Mirick and Stuart Varney, realized that the ducks were hybrids, and were probably different individuals.

I was asked by Benjamin Griffith to help in the identification of the hybrids. Seeing the photos, it was obvious that one parent species was the same in both hybrids and that it did not match any North American native duck. Important clues for identifying this exotic species were the bill pattern and coloration as well as the flank and breast pattern. For the Marsh Road Pond bird the speculum, and for the Eel Pond bird the underwing, also added to the identification.

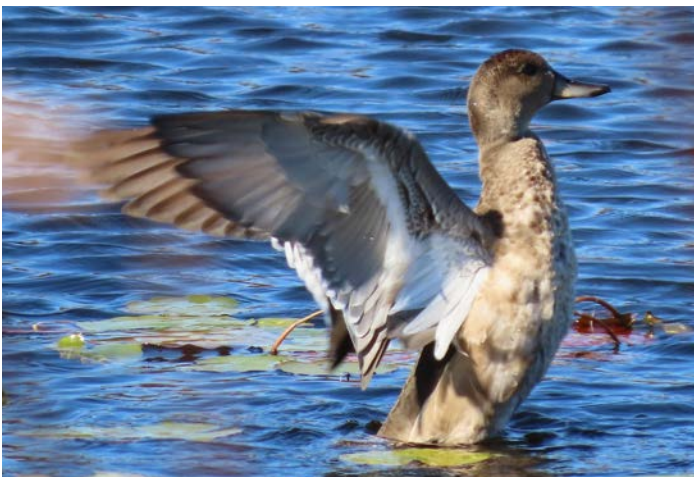
The combination of pale yellow sides and a broad dark culmen of the upper mandible indicated that the exotic parent species had a mainly yellow bill with some dark on the culmen. The rear flank pattern was reduced in both birds, but more so in the Eel Pond bird than in the Marsh Road Pond bird. In the Eel Pond bird, the rear flanks were



The hybrid duck on Marsh Road Pond in Rye, NH by Stuart Varney, 9-3-20.



The hybrid duck at Eel Pond in Rye, NH by Stephen Mirick, 9-28-20.



The underwing of the Marsh Road Pond hybrid showing in this photo is a perfect match for Yellow-billed Teal. Photo by Stuart Varney, 10-12-20, Rye, NH.

rather plain, uniformly colored, while foreflanks and breast were dark spotted. In the Marsh Road Pond bird, breast and flanks were patterned, but in the rear flanks the contrast between light brown and dark brown areas was reduced, producing a washed out look. The speculum of the Marsh Road Pond bird had only a small iridescent green area (the rest was black), a rusty colored line in front and a white line in the rear. This bears some similarity to a Green-winged Teal speculum, but the green is too much reduced for that species.

The parent duck species for which all these traits fit is the South American Yellow-billed Teal (*Anas flavirostris*). It shows a yellow bill with a black culmen, a spotted breast and foreflank pattern and pale uniform rear flanks. Additionally

the speculum of the Marsh Road Pond bird is very close to that of Yellow-billed Teal and the underwing pattern of the Eel Pond bird is very close to the underwing pattern of Yellow-billed Teal.

Another species that at first glance might be a good fit for the yellow billed parent is Yellow-billed Pintail (*Anas georgica*), another South American species. But that would not explain the pattern reduction in the rear flanks of both different hybrids, the pattern and coloration of the Marsh Road Pond bird's speculum and the Eel Pond bird's underwing pattern. Yellow-billed Pintail has fully patterned flanks, a dark speculum bordered by pale beige lines rear and front, and a uniformly dark underwing

The identity of the other parent bird species is slightly more difficult to establish. Both birds seem to be female as there is no sign of any male plumage traits. (A first year plumage can, however, not be fully excluded.) For comparison, see the photo of the adult male hybrid Yellow-billed Teal x Mallard which shows some green in the head, white outer tail feathers and reduced breast spotting.



Free-flying adult male hybrid Yellow-billed Teal x Mallard. Photo by Jörn Lehmbus, March 3, 2012, Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.

For the Marsh Road Pond bird, the other parent should be a bird with patterned flanks in the female sex. That would mean a dabbling duck. The lighter brown edged scapulars and tertials also point to another dabbling duck as second parent. Due to the bill coloration of the hybrid, this dabbler should have a dark grey or black bill in the female sex. Based on the description, Mallard is excluded as there are no orange tones in the leg color. All small species can also be excluded. The photos give the impression that this is not a very small bird and it appears relatively long-necked in some photos. Therefore, the other parent most likely was a Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*).

In contrast, the Eel Pond bird shows a uniform flank and rather uniformly dark scapulars and tertials. Additionally the legs are set slightly towards the rear. This indicates that the second parent here is a diving duck of the genus *Aythya*. For

comparison, see the photos of a captive hybrid Ferruginous Duck x Yellow-billed Teal.



Captive female Yellow-billed Teal (Anas flavirostris) x Ferruginous Duck (Aythya nyroca) hybrid (sleeping) with its male Yellow-billed Teal partner. Upper left inset shows the bill pattern, the inset below the male Yellow-billed Teal shows the hybrid's body shape. Photo by Jörn Lehmhus, October 2010. Oost, Texel, Netherlands.

Clearly, the *Aythya* parent in North America should be something different from the Eurasian *Aythya nyroca* in the above example if a wild bird was involved. The different coloration and head shape indicates that this is probably the case. Lesser Scaup could be a possibility due to the rather round head shape and general structure.

If the hybrids were captive bred, there may be more possible parent species, but at least for the Marsh Road Pond bird, I could not see other possibilities. For the Eel Pond bird, there might be a foreign *Aythya* involved such as Tufted Duck.

As Yellow-billed Teal is South American, we have the situation that either an escaped Yellow-billed Teal mated with two different species of duck or the hybrids were produced in captivity and then escaped or were released. This could have happened when the owner realized they were female type hybrids which would not sell well (there is a market for hybrid duck mounts in the US, even pen raised). Yellow-billed Teal are hardy little birds, a bit larger on average than Green-winged Teal, whose range goes down to the southern tip of South America and would not have much of a problem surviving a winter in New Hampshire. However, Yellow-billed Teal differ from most other dabbling ducks behaviorally in that they have long lasting pair bonds like geese. This is a further aspect making this case interesting.

Possible Origin

In Europe, some escapees have moved considerable distances of several hundred kilometers, so the origin of the Yellow-billed Teal may not be close by. It is more likely, however, that these teal are escapees from a duck farm in Rye, NH. Steve Mirick contacted the owner and learned the following:

He told me he kept 'Sharp-winged' Teal (a subspecies of Yellow-billed Teal, Anas flavirostris oxyptera). He has not (knowingly) had any species of diving ducks other than Bufflehead, so it appears he has never had any Aythya ducks. He has recently had the following duck species in his duck ponds:

Yellow-billed Teal (oxyptera ssp.)

Ringed Teal

Green-winged Teal

Cinnamon Teal

Bufflehead (!) which successfully nested in 2020!

Silver Bahama Pintail (color variation of White-cheeked Pintail)

He tries to keep his ducks apart, especially the teal, since he does not like the results of hybridization.

Note: Full color photos of the hybrid female Yellow-billed Teal (*Anas flavirostris*) x Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) hybrid are online:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/14195020@N08/5436050299/in/album-72157602145597586/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/14195020@N08/6898773155/in/album-72157602145597586/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/14195020@N08/6898770637/in/album-72157602145597586/>

Jörn Lehmhus is a biologist and birder who has been interested in identification of hybrid birds (crosses between two different biological species) since 1994, when he encountered the first wild hybrids in Germany. Since then he has learned quite a lot on the appearance and identification of such hybrids.

Table 1. Timetable of the hybrid duck sightings in Rye, NH. Compiled by Stephen Mirick.

9-01-20	Stuart Varney located and photographed an odd hybrid duck in Marsh Road Pond in Rye. https://ebird.org/checklist/S73075376
9-03-20	Steve Mirick & Stuart Varney both saw and photographed the hybrid duck in Marsh Road Pond. This is the last date this hybrid was seen. https://ebird.org/checklist/S73143913
9-12-20	Stuart Varney located and photographed a different odd hybrid duck in Eel Pond in Rye. https://ebird.org/checklist/S73485390
9-28-20	Steve Mirick relocated and photographed the hybrid duck on Eel Pond. https://ebird.org/nh/checklist/S74181595
10-12-20	The last report of the hybrid on Eel Pond by Stuart Varney.

Whooper Swans in New Hampshire

by Stephen R. Mirick

This article originally appeared as a post to the NHBirds email list on 10-12-20.



Whooper Swan by Debra Powers, 10-16-20, Eel Pond, Rye, NH.

A Whooper Swan appeared on October 12, 2020 on Eel Pond in Rye that was almost certainly an escaped/feral/exotic individual. Whooper Swans have a long and checkered past along the coast and on Great Bay. It is not completely clear where they came from, but it is believed that they may have been from a breeder in Rye who raises Whooper Swans.

A few of you will recall the Whooper Swan, nicknamed “Kujo” (after the Stephen King book!) that was on Great Bay when I lived there in the late 1990s. Here is a summary of Whooper Swan sightings in New Hampshire and some fun, anecdotal emails I sent out during the Kujo years.

Early April, 1997

One adult Whooper Swan appeared in marshes of Hampton, NH. It was very aggressive towards humans. (It attacked me back then!) It stayed for several days or more, but I don't believe it stayed much into May. We assumed it had come up from Massachusetts, but that's not clearly known and this may be “Kujo” that terrorized me two years later.

June, 1997

First sightings on Great Bay of three immature and one adult Whooper Swan. They disappeared in the fall.

February, 1998

One adult male Whooper Swan appeared on Great Bay. It was present off and on for the next year.

November, 1998

Three species of swans from my cottage on the bay including Mute, Whooper and eight Tundra Swans!

January, 1999

An adult male Whooper Swan that apparently had been imprinted on humans started to “pair bond” with my male landlord David at my cottage on Great Bay. He and his wife Daphne “adopt” the bird as their “pet” despite the fact that this bird continuously attacked Daphne and me 24-7, 365 days a year for the next two years. The swan, “Kujo,” stayed and became more and more attracted to my landlord and terrorized me for the next two years.

May 7, 1999 (from an email I sent out more than 21 years ago!!)

A couple of very bizarre events occurred this evening on Great Bay. First of all, I looked out the window this evening and noticed six one-year old Whooper Swans swimming along next to the point where I live. This is the first sighting of more than one Whooper Swan since last summer and the first sighting of this many Whoopers in New Hampshire. Rushing out to see the new swans, Daphne (my landlord) and I protected ourselves from the predicted attacks from “Kujo,” the resident killer swan. I wore my chicken-wire “skirt” and Daphne carried a trash barrel for protection. The new swans were shy, but came in to some pieces of bread thrown in their direction and seemed to notice the strange swan with us on the lawn. Kujo was indifferent. I, of course, panicked. It's bad enough being attacked by one swan, but seven!!!!!!

Judi was in my cottage, and as she came out to investigate, she was attacked by Kujo. I rushed to her rescue and the strangest thing happened. Kujo broke off his attack towards Judi and rushed at me giving his affection calls! I (in my “skirt”) cautiously protected Judi, but slowly advanced towards Kujo. He continued to give his affection calls and I slowly reached my hand out and actually pet the head that has been *terrorizing* me for the last two months! The swan continued to react affectionately, so I removed the protective “skirt” and pet the swan as only David (Daphne's husband) had previously done. We spent the next 45 minutes walking around the property looking for a place to put our nest! Frequently, I bent down and stroked the swan's neck and pet its stomach, just like a puppy dog. David, the swan's other “true love,” has been out of town so much lately, I think it has transferred its affection to me! Judi stormed off in jealousy. Yikes! What do I do now???? Maybe I should write “Dear Abby.”

October 3, 1999 (from an email I sent out to the NHBirds list)

“Kujo,” the male Whooper Swan is still present on Great Bay and terrorizing me 24 hours a day since late February in my cottage on the bay (As I write this I can hear him calling from outside on our front lawn.). There is a fence currently protecting me from the bird! The origin of this bird is unknown, but may have come from a person raising

Whoopers in Rye, NH. The six one-year old Whoopers that showed up on Great Bay in early May were seen off and on for about a month or two but I have not seen them since the summer. In August, an adult female (by relative size and shape of head and neck) Whooper Swan showed up and has shown interest in Kujo. She has been shy, and Kujo has shown very little interest in her, but he seems to tolerate her a lot more than he tolerates the Mutes. She is still present. To the best of my knowledge, Whooper Swans have *not* yet nested in New Hampshire.



Photos from a brief period when Kujo and I were "in love"! (5-8-99).

February 3, 2000 (from an email I sent)

For those of you who may be wondering how he is doing, "Kujo" the killer Whooper Swan is still here and still tormenting me. He is right outside my kitchen window as I am typing this at 10:00 pm. He seems to get excited and starts calling whenever a plane flies over (24 hours a day!). He chases me to my car every morning, then chases my car out the driveway every morning and then chases me when I get home. He was chasing me as I was shoveling after the last snowstorm even.

Thankfully, I still have the fence up to protect me. A few days when it was really cold, he seemed to not chase me as much, but once the temperature got above zero, he was back in form. He was joined this fall by a female Whooper Swan (nicknamed "Giselle" by my landlord). She is interested in Kujo, but Kujo seems to ignore her and sometimes chases her. He is still dreamy-eyed for David (my landlord) and it is quite a scene when David comes home!

February, 2001

The end of an era. Kujo disappeared for no known reason. No remains are found – "fowl" play is suspected! After this date, Whooper Swans seemed to disappear for several years until 2005.

January 28, 2005 through July, 2005

A single Whooper Swan was seen from various locations along the seacoast in the Hampton and North Hampton area.

April, 2015 through April, 2016

A single Whooper Swan was seen from various locations along the seacoast and Great Bay including Exeter Wastewater Treatment Plant, Lubberland Creek in Newmarket, Lamprey Pond in Hampton, Meadow Pond in Hampton and Eel Pond in Rye.

October 12, 2020

One Whooper Swan appears on Eel Pond in Rye with one adult and three juvenile Mute Swans.

November County Challenge

edited by Rebecca Suomala

Compiled by Kathryn Frieden from writings by Pam Hunt and other posts to the NHBirds email list.

Pam Hunt invented a new birding event in fall 2020 – The November County Challenge. It was a perfect COVID-19 event, but would be fun in any year. It was based on the annual "Concord November Challenge:" an attempt to find as many species as possible within the city limits over the first full weekend of November. The expansion to a county challenge was a much more inclusive event, encouraging local birding as fall transitioned into winter, and fostered some friendly competition among birders scattered across the state.

There are ten counties in New Hampshire, and the goal was to have them compete for the "most species" over the course of the entire month. "Most species" is in quotes because in a straight-out competition Rockingham County would have won hands down (see below). Instead, counties were ranked relative to their all-time November totals in eBird. The winner was the county with the highest percentage of that all-time total tallied in November 2020.

This benefited the under-birded counties and penalized heavily-birded ones with long lists of rarities.



This White-winged Dove, found and photographed by Mark Suomala during the Concord November Challenge on 11-6-20, turned out to be the first November record for the state.

Anyone could play, in as many counties as they liked, with the one rule that data had to be entered into eBird to count for the tally. At the beginning of the competition, these were each county's all-time November species totals from eBird (the official denominators for the competition).

Belknap: 127
Carroll: 131
Cheshire: 149
Coos: 129
Grafton: 146
Hillsborough: 152
Merrimack: 172
Rockingham: 260
Strafford: 172
Sullivan: 103

November 1 and “the game was afoot!” Dylan Jackson’s post to NHBirds (11/1/20) with highlights from Sullivan County seemed to reflect the experience of a number of birders:

I set out today to get a head start on the November County Challenge, unsurprisingly in Sullivan County. I was hoping for maybe something special and was rewarded with that and more. A three plus hour effort spanning from Sunapee, Newport, Charlestown and Lempster yielded 46 species. While an underwhelming total, it was filled with many species I didn't think I'd get at all this month. The ultimate prize was Dunlin!

His efforts put Sullivan County in the lead with just over 50% – a lead that it never relinquished. As Pam predicted, counties with limited historic data were at an advantage, and it helped to have a dedicated active birder focused in the county (think Dylan Jackson).

Pam posted frequent updates to NHBirds on the progress of each county, encouraging folks to bird in Belknap which was dead last during the beginning of the month:

Help is needed in the Lakes Region, where poor Belknap County still stands dead last with 41%. More eyes and ears will clearly allow this smallest county to live up to its potential, and while Iain MacLeod has promised to do Belknap proud, he can't do it alone! (11-9-20)

Dylan Jackson provided a “Halftime Pep Talk” in his post to NHBirds (11-15-20):

As predicted, things have slowed down as the month has progressed in Sullivan County, but birds are still trickling in. As it stands now, birders around the county have tallied 81 species (Sullivan has 103 all time for November). So far, three species I've never had in the county have been reported by other birders. While I understand the November contest isn't about beating the all-time total, it seems so delightfully close for Sullivan to beat that number in just one November! A big shout out to those who have come from out of the area and locally to help with this challenge. It's been a really fun collaborative effort, but halftime is over, time to get back to work!

In terms of raw species totals, Rockingham had 136 by November 9, making it unassailable. That total was already higher than the all-time cumulative totals for Belknap, Carroll, Coos, and Sullivan.

On November 19, Pam noted in her post to NHBirds:

*Many have noted that this little game has taken on some similarity with the recent election, what with delayed updates to totals, incomplete lists because of the need to review noteworthy records, and even one case of a record being solicited from a neighboring state. There was even a recent eBird bug that might have prevented some records from even *showing up* in the review list for a week! You'll just have to take my word for it that this contest is free and fair, and that despite delays we have every intent to count Every Single Species.*

For the Thanksgiving weekend, Pam provided lists to birders of the more likely holes that could be filled in each county. “Ladies and Gentlemen – start your optics for this final lap!! Good luck to all in this home stretch – and Happy Thanksgiving as well!”

Below are the final results. A very big **Thank You Pam** for creating such a fun activity, providing fun updates along the way, and making November a little more exciting.

The Final Results

by Pam Hunt

Sullivan County won this little game hands down, ending the month with *93* species – or 90% of the previous cumulative total (103). It started the month already above 50% and never looked back. At any point in the month the nearest county was still at least 7% away, and the average was roughly twice that. Sullivan birders added 15 *new* species to the all-time eBird November list (now at 118, still the lowest of any county). The next highest was Carroll with nine. So, as Dylan Jackson has already said – a big Huzzah to all the folks who birded Sullivan County in November 2020! The good news for the rest of the state is that next November the denominator is that much higher.

Coming in a solid second by mid-month and holding that position to the end was Cheshire County, which ended with 110 species (of 149) for 73.8%. Cheshire added six species to its all-time list, bringing it to 155. Again, this might make November 2021 that much more of a challenge. Cheshire also gets the “most improved” award, rising from 27.5% (and 9th place) on November 1.

A couple of percentage points behind Cheshire was Carroll at 71.7% (94 of 131), which added an impressive *nine* to its master list. Right on Carroll’s heels was Hillsborough, with 70.4% (107 of 152) and four additions.

Then there was a tight pack of four counties, which are listed in percentage order. Each county is followed by its percentage, species ratio, and number of additions. There was quite the battle between Merrimack and Strafford throughout, but Merrimack pulled ahead at the last minute with Becky Suomala’s Clay-colored Sparrow.

5th place: Merrimack (68.6%, 118/172, 6)

6th place: Strafford (68.0%, 117/172, 5)

7th place: Coos (67.4%, 87/129, 7)

8th place: Rockingham (66.9%, 173/260, 0)

Although Belknap County got off to a slow start and lagged behind for most of the month, it found a last reserve of energy in the final weekend to pull ahead of Grafton with 63.8% (81/127). Which leaves, alas, Grafton to bring up the rear at 63.0% (92/146). Although it added two new species to its all-time total, Grafton was the only county that didn’t make any gains in the four days after Thanksgiving.

Statewide, we collectively found 198 of a “possible” 284 species (69.7%). One of these, the Concord White-winged Dove, was actually a first NH eBird record for the month, thus bringing the statewide November total up to 285. At least three notable ones were added by proxy because diagnostic photos were available: Common Eider in Sullivan, Baltimore Oriole in Merrimack, and Barnacle Goose in Hillsborough.

So, what does all this tell us? Mainly that birding in the “shoulder month” (between migration and Christmas Counts) can still be a lot of fun. To close, it seems only fair to throw some good cheer to Rockingham, which had the deck somewhat stacked against it due to my handicapping system, but held on to still record more species over the course of the month than the all-time totals of *all nine* other counties.

From the Winner - So Happy for Sullivan!

by Dylan Jackson

(post to *NHBirds* 12-1-20)

Well here we are to take our unofficial victory lap. I have to say, I was surprised to see Sullivan pull ahead so soon in the challenge and even more surprised it was able to maintain that lead until the end. It was a fun month of birding with a lot of really cool findings and some glaring misses.

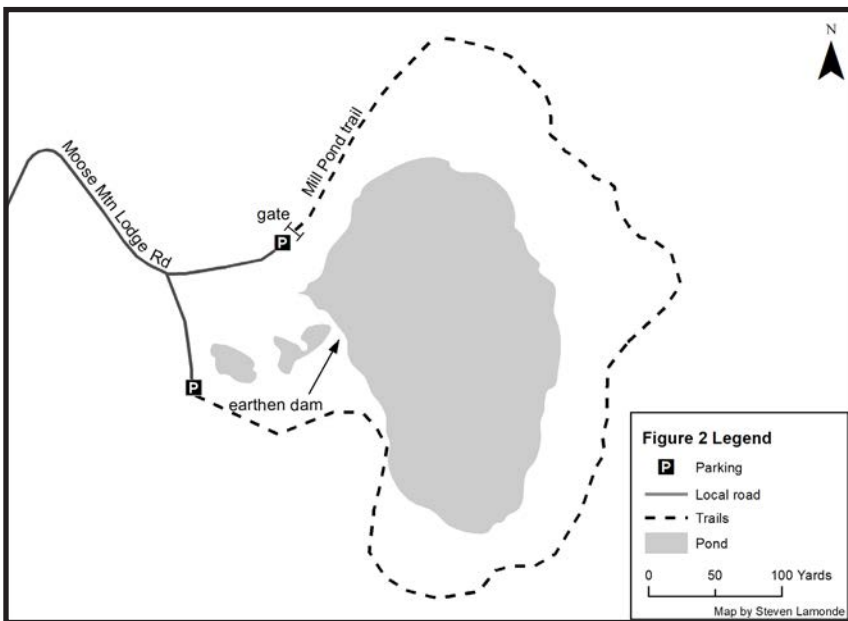
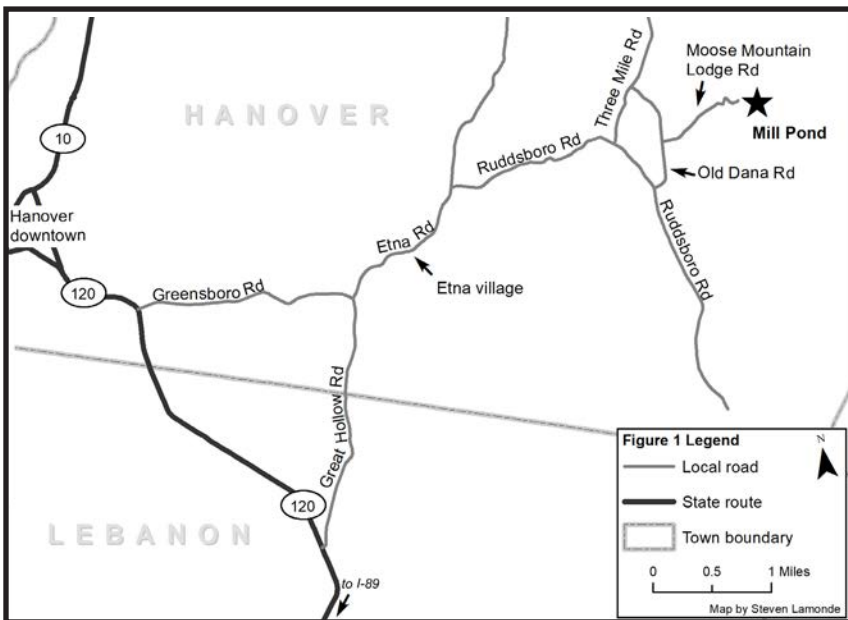
The effort yielded three species that I have never seen in the county, which says a lot about the other birders who collaborated in this effort. Of the 92 species reported over the month, I only contributed 71, and only solely contributed three or four species, so a *huge* tip of the hat for the other birders who helped in the effort. They truly made all the difference. While Pam had to remind me several times it wasn’t about beating the all time total of species reported in November, I still had that goal of beating 103 in mind. It’s crazy to think that we were only 11 species away from tying the all time high.

The highlights of the month included a pretty much clean sweep of finches. Finches started very slowly, but came through in the end. We got a good number of sparrows too; luckily White-crowns and Savannahs hung around into the earlier days of the month and a late Lincoln’s was a nice addition. We had four species of warblers, most likely due to the accommodating weather. Shorebirds were a bit of a surprise as the expected Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe and American Woodcock were all absent, but we got Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper and Black-bellied Plover, the latter being the first record in many years.

The biggest misses came in the waterbird category. We had no dabblers except Mallard and black duck. We had Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Surf and Black Scoter and that was it for diving ducks. There were also no grebes and only Ring-billed Gulls. Otherwise, we got a lot of what would be expected for the month. I would grade the overall effort a great success and a great collaborative effort. Once again, thanks to Pam Hunt for creating this new and fun competition. I’m already looking forward to next year!

Birding Mill Pond on Moose Mountain Lodge Road, Hanover

by Larry Morin



Moose Mountain is the highest place in Hanover and the origin of its major watershed stream, Mink Brook, which feeds into the Connecticut River. The source of Mink Brook is known as Mill Pond which has an earthen dam. The pond varies in size with the season and is largest in spring. The pond, its adjacent trails and Moose Mountain Lodge Road offer a variety of birds and a pleasant birding experience with little to no traffic.

One reason I first went there was because of its altitude and I hoped that the ecosystem in the area might be

sufficiently different to provide a different collection of birds. So far, that is proving to be true. The pond has yielded Mallards, Great Blue Herons, and Solitary Sandpipers. The shore area is broad and easily walkable. The woods around the pond are a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, the latter including spruce and pines and the former with several maple species, beech, birch and a number of other species. In

addition to Mill Pond, there are two other small ponds within the outflow below the dam at the pond. These are 30-50 feet across and surrounded by dense shrubbery.

Migrating warblers in lower branches of the conifers are easy to see from the shore. I do not expect this place to produce huge influxes of species or oddities, but it is sufficiently different that, I believe, it will offer a somewhat different mix of birds than one would find at lower elevations. In mid-October of 2020, I found 150+ Yellow-rumped Warblers and three late Tennessee Warblers there.

There are two routes to take that simplify birding. As you drive up Moose Mt. Lodge Rd. there is a fork to the left that is barred. At that point, there is room to park several cars close to the pond, with more parking available on the other fork. The walk to the pond is only 50-75 feet and viewing of the pond is simple. A walk north affords close views of the trees and their birds from the pond shore. A scope is needed to facilitate observations across the pond or in the farthest reaches of the pond.

A walk south crosses an earthen dam and a lot of brush before re-entering mixed woods. The upper of the two secondary ponds is visible from the dam. There are well established trails from the pond back towards the Moose Mt. Lodge and a complete circle can be made from the dam, around the woods/brush/secondary ponds to the Moose Mt. Lodge Road, then back to the other fork and the barred gate. The area along the road contains mostly deciduous trees.

Detailed Directions

The area can be reached most easily from Enfield, Lebanon or Hanover. From Enfield on Rt. 4 (aka Dartmouth College Highway), Ruddsboro Road departs northward, about a half mile east of the Mascoma Lake dam. From there, drive roughly 3.3 miles to Old Dana Road on the right.

On Old Dana Road, travel about 0.4 miles to Moose Mountain Road on the right. Turn and ascend about 0.8 miles to the fork in the road. The left fork has limited



Late-migrating Yellow-rumped Warblers may be found in numbers at Mill Pond. Photo by Len Medlock.

parking immediately before a barrier across the road. The simplest access to the Mill Pond area is just past the barricade. The right fork goes a bit further where there is much more parking. The pond area is also accessible from that location.

From Rt. 89 in Lebanon, take Rt. 120 toward Hanover, turning right onto Etna Road (aka Great Hollow Rd.) opposite the Wilson Tire Company. Continue about 3.5 miles into and past Etna Village to Ruddsboro Road. Turn right and continue on Ruddsboro Road for 2 miles to the Old Dana Road turnoff on the left. Follow the above instructions for traveling on Old Dana Road and Moose Mountain Road.

From Rt. 120 in Hanover, turn east onto Greensboro Road and continue about 1.9 miles to the junction with Etna Road. Turn left onto Etna Road and travel about 1.4 miles through Etna to Ruddsboro Road. Follow the instructions above for traveling on Ruddsboro Road to Old Dana Road.

Dirt roads are to be expected but Ruddsboro Road is paved. The pond sits within the Hanover trail system. A short way along the barred fork road, there is another fork where a maintained trail departs and eventually joins the Appalachian Trail about a mile further along. There are also birding opportunities along Old Dana Road where ducks can be found in an adjacent farm pond, flycatchers around the pond, and Savannah Sparrows and Bobolinks present in the open farmland before Moose Mountain Road.

For a map of the Hanover trail system in this area:

<https://www.hanovernh.org/conservation-commission/pages/trail-maps>

See the Main Map and the Southeast Sheet

eBird HotSpot

Moose Mt. and Mill Pond, Hanover:

<https://ebird.org/nh/hotspot/L11600102>

Pandemic Birding with the “Bathing Beauties of Webster”

The Epitome of Local Birding

by Robert A. Quinn



The water feature is set up with a garden hose into a bird bath on a rock. The bird bath is tilted so that the water spills out the front onto a curved piece of bark and then cascades down two pieces of wood to a flat rock. There is a depression in the rock that forms a shallow puddle very attractive to small birds. Fill the basin with the hose and then turn the water back to a minimum so it just drips. To see the entire set up, watch the video at the link below. Photo by Bob Quinn.

Migrants! Water! Action! As with a Hollywood Spectacular, the “Bathing Beauties of Webster” were on full display in the fall of 2020. Between August 14 and October 12 my yard hosted 20 species of warblers and I produced video recordings of 19 of those species.

Birding had been a challenge in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but unexpected time at home had a brightly shining silver lining. It provided me with an unprecedented opportunity to observe the daily appearance and behavior of my local migrants. I had worked for over ten years to create a bird friendly yard (with wildlife plantings) and now I added a simple, but effective, running-water feature. The results greatly exceeded my expectations. A steady stream of warblers and other species flowed through my yard and many stopped at the water to frolic and bathe.

As soon as I cobbled together this “temporary” cascading water feature, the response was instantaneous. Black-capped Chickadees, Chipping Sparrows, and Northern Cardinals came into the tumbling water within the first few minutes. Soon, they were joined by migrant warblers and the exceptional “Show” went into full production!

The daily antics and entertainment were priceless. The routine worked this way. I would be doing office work on

my screen porch when the scolding calls of Tufted Titmice and Black-capped Chickadees would alert me to their presence at my feeders. I came to learn that warblers would be close behind them, therefore, I would leap into action and turn on the water. As it began to dribble and then to cascade, numerous birds would come in to drink and bathe. This behavior was consistent. Two-to-four times a day, the ravenous hordes of titmice and friends would arrive, I would turn on the water, and the fun would begin! An amazing variety of warblers, vireos, and other species poured through my yard for two months. Some of the best “aquatic” performances and behaviors included:

Canada Warbler – being an uncommon and early-departing fall migrant, they were one of the initial warblers to appear. The first ones were seen August 18 when *four* graced my yard. I tallied at least 13 for the season.

Prairie Warbler – another early fall migrant that I worried I had missed, but a bright male came into the yard on August 21. I tallied a few more after that with the last one on September 15, making it my latest fall Prairie ever in my yard.

Tennessee Warbler – a wonderful and still uncommon species which allowed for great close-ups, making identification easier. The first Tennessees were four on August 29 followed by at least seven more, with my final yard sighting on September 21.

Other delightful routines included: several Nashville Warblers showing their red crowns as they bathed; a challengingly dull Cape May Warbler to puzzle over; and multiple Bay-breasted Warblers. The best acts had *combinations* of species such as:

- side-by-side Bay-breasted and Blackpoll warblers;
- a Pine Warbler next to the two “Bay-poll” species (Bay-breasts and Blackpolls are sometimes lumped as “Bay-polls” because they are hard to differentiate);
- two Ovenbirds *together*; four species seen

simultaneously twice;

- then, on one memorable day, *six* species of warblers seen bathing at the same time (Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Nashville, Blackpoll, Blackburnian, and Northern Parula).

Other species seen at the water included: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Downy Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, both nuthatches, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, relatively few sparrows (Chipping, White-throated, Lincoln, and Dark-eyed Junco), Baltimore Oriole (a relative rarity in my yard), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, and Purple Finch.

Some species were conspicuous by their absence (so far). That list includes grouse, Mourning Dove, woodpeckers other than Downy, thrushes in general, Scarlet Tanager, and migrant sparrows beyond White-throated and Lincoln’s Sparrow.

There are four secrets to having your own “Bathing Beauties” show/spectacle:

- **Moving water.** Running water is *much* more productive than a still bird bath. Dripping or cascading water is a magnet for these migrant sprites. Furthermore, most of them prefer *very shallow* pools for bathing.
- **Seed Feeders** or some other significant attractant. I have noticed that migrant warblers follow the Tufted Titmice and chickadees around, ergo, feeders attract the seed eaters and the warblers follow them.
- **Cover.** Another key ingredient is some nearby bushes/shrubs/trees for protective cover. Nothing fancy needed.
- **Time.** To get the most out of your efforts it is essential that you devote quality time to watching.

My most enjoyable moments have been witnessing the “hourly” changes, recognizing different flocks, counting each species, identifying individuals, watching their unique

behaviors, and video recording them. *What will be the most fun for you?*

Watch Bob Quinn’s videos of the Webster Bathing Beauties on NH Audubon’s YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/WrgwHb5OcrU>



Several of the “Bathing Beauties of Webster” taking a bath in the fall of 2020, photographed by Bob Quinn.

Answer to the Photo Quiz

by Leo McKillop

See the Inside Front Cover for the quiz photo.

This photo was taken on September 25, 2020 approximately 15 miles east of Rye, NH in an area known as “Old Scantum.” Hopping on a whalewatch or a fishing charter during this time of year gives one a chance to see all three of the featured seabirds in this photo quiz. With every whalewatch/fishing charter/NH Audubon pelagic trip, nothing is ever guaranteed; however, almost anything is possible. If you go on enough trips, your results will inevitably span the gamut of totally skunked to amazing. Either way, a day on the ocean is always a treat and a great way to break up inland or coastal birding. On a whalewatch, if the birds aren’t cooperating, you can always switch gears and appreciate the whales, dolphins, ocean sunfish or even sea turtles. On a fishing charter, you can learn about the local species of fish up close and personal while usually being met with lots of questions about what birds you’re looking for. Any boat trip is an educational opportunity; you’re out there for birds, they’re out there for fish or whales, you’re all looking for a nice day and, if nothing works out, at least you can educate each other while hopefully making new friends.

At first glance, the first distinguishing feature of the birds in the photo is the presence of tubes (nostrils) on top of the base of their hooked bills, which makes them “tubenoses” or members of the order of seabirds known as Procellariiformes. Procellariiformes is made up of four families: albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, and two different families of storm-petrels. Of the birds in those four families, the only ones common to the Gulf of Maine are four shearwaters, two storm-petrels and Northern Fulmar. The two storm-petrels are much smaller in size compared to the birds in the photo and Northern Fulmar, though similar in size, has a much chunkier bill with the head and neck being the same color regardless of color morph. That leaves us with three of the four different shearwaters common to the Gulf of Maine. Given what’s visible in the photo, we’ll use the overall size of the bird, bill length, bill thickness, bill color, cheek pattern, head color, and color of upperparts to identify each bird.

There are four different shearwaters normally found in the Gulf of Maine: Sooty, Manx, Great and Cory’s. The bird on the left is a Cory’s Shearwater as we can see the overall size of the bird is the largest of the three, the bill is the thickest of the three and yellow with a dark sub-terminal band, while the upperparts and head are the lightest of the three with no cheek pattern. The bird in the center is a Manx Shearwater being the smallest in size with the shortest and thinnest black bill, darkest upperparts, and with a pale crescent behind the

cheek. The bird on the right is a Great Shearwater as it is medium in size, with a medium-sized black bill, clear black cap and no crescent on the cheek. A Sooty Shearwater sitting on the water is similar to the Great Shearwater in overall size and bill size, but differs with no cheek pattern or cap, just an overall uniform dark brown plumage.

Taking a look at ebird data, there are some general date ranges unique to each of the four shearwater species common to the Gulf of Maine. Please keep in mind these are general guidelines with plenty of outliers or exceptions. Manx and Sooty Shearwaters are generally seen from the end of May until September. Cory’s Shearwaters show up at the end of June and stick around until October, while Great Shearwaters can be seen from June until November.

References

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Hunters at Exeter WTP

by Diana Stephens

Birders be aware that there was heavy duck hunting in and around the Wastewater Treatment Plant in early October of 2020. On October 6, the plant staff called the police to move a large group of hunters off the dikes, who were shooting over the ponds onto town property. Hunters are not allowed to hunt on WTP property.

Even after the hunters were cleared off the property, birder Chris Duffy reported shooting from across the river toward the plant and buckshot was reaching the back road along the river. Plant workers warned birders to stay clear of the southeast corner. Although the WTP recently posted “No Hunting” signs on the property, birders should be aware of the possibility of hunting from the other side of the river, especially during early morning hours.

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Abbreviations Used

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

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Photo Gallery:

Invasion of the Irruptives



Pine Grosbeak male, 11-28-20.



Pine Grosbeak female/immature, 11-21-20.



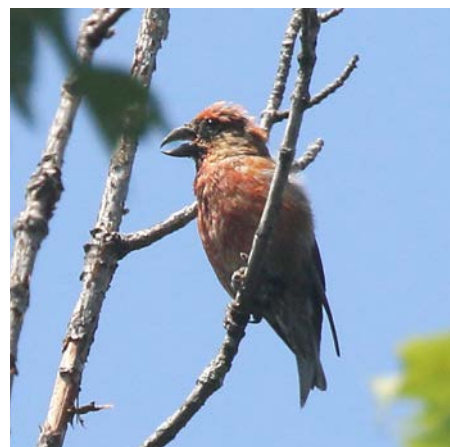
Red-breasted Nuthatch, 9-19-20.



Pine Siskin, 9-29-20.



Purple Finch, 10-19-20.



Red Crossbill, 8-5-20.

Fall 2020 Rarities



Sooty Tern by Ian Cumming, 8-6-20, Pleasant Lake, Deerfield, NH.



Barnacle Goose by Raymonde-Marie Lacasse, 11-27-20, Benson Park, Hudson, NH.



White-winged Dove by Kyle Wilmarth, 11-8-20, Concord, NH.



Tricolored Heron by Debra Powers, 9-17-20, Hampton, NH.



Northern Wheatear by Rebecca Suomala, 9-19-20, Concord, NH.



Connecticut Warbler by Steve Mirick, 10-3-20, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.