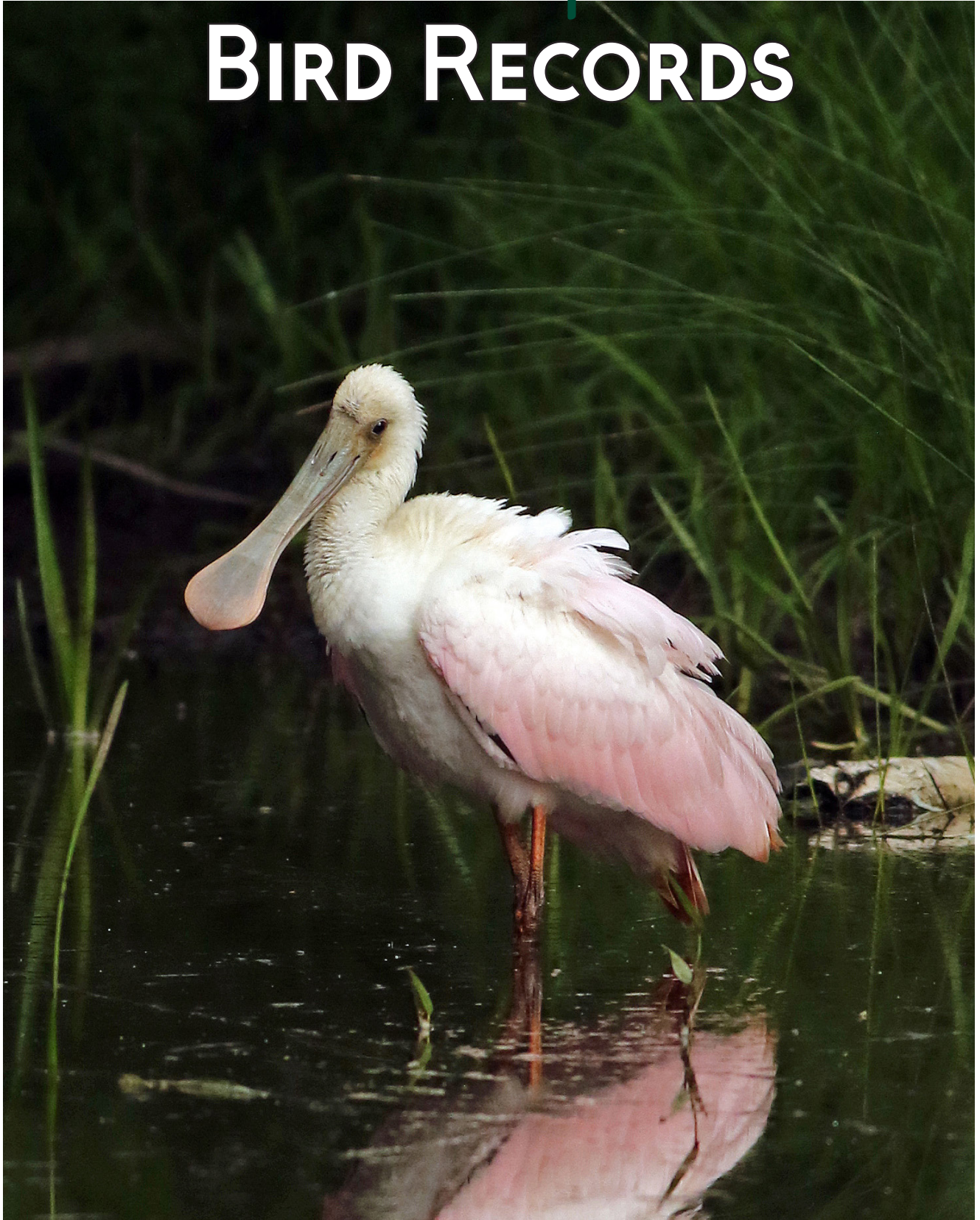


New Hampshire

BIRD RECORDS



SUMMER 2021

Vol. 40, No. 2

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks

New Hampshire's second record of this species but the first reported in time for birders to see. All photos taken at the Exeter WTP.

Zeke Cornell, 6-2-21.



Jim Sparrell, 6-5-21.



Len Medlock, 6-2-21.



Birders at the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck by Steve Mirick, 6-2-21.



NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS

VOLUME 40 NUMBER 2
SUMMER 2021

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IN MEMORY OF

Mary Wright

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* with its color cover is sponsored by friends of Mary Wright in recognition and appreciation of all that she did for bird conservation and the bird banding community. We will miss her kindness, support, energy, and enthusiasm.



Mary Wright holding a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird at the Appledore Island Migration Station at the Isles of Shoals, ME. Photo by Sara Morris.

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From the Editor

SUMMER 2021

by Rebecca Suomala

Thank you Greg!

Special thanks to Greg Tillman for continuing as Summer Editor for one more year. Thanks also to Susan Wrisley for

helping Greg, especially with eBird review. We're still looking for someone to fill Greg's shoes so if you're interested, please contact me.

Catching Up!

Volunteers are back in the office and we are almost caught up with tasks that fell behind during COVID. That has also helped get the issues out sooner and hit our target of getting each issue into your hands before that season comes around again. So this issue should be in your hands by June 1. Thanks to all the volunteers who help and to the subscribers and donors who support the publication.

Mary Wright

by Rebecca Suomala

Mary Wright was a birder, a conservationist, and a volunteer for many bird projects. She died on July 19, 2021, at her home in Gilsun, NH, and will be greatly missed. Keene Christmas Bird Count participants will remember the compilations she hosted at her house. As a bird bander at the Appledore Island Migration Station at the Isles of Shoals, she helped train many new "bandaids," including me back in 1994. I remember how fast she could get birds out of the net and I kept getting frustrated because all the birds would be out of the nets by the time I finished my first one.

Thanks to that training I was able to run a banding station on Star Island (NH), right next to Appledore Island, for my master's thesis on songbird migration. My research depended on Appledore's banding station running concurrently with my station on Star and when Mary broke her arm while she was the bander on Appledore, I thought I was sunk. But no, Mary went to the hospital, got it set, and went right back to the island to continue banding.

Mary was interested in all kinds of bird research, helping to fund several NH Audubon projects. She loved Common Nighthawks and supplied the initial funding to get Project Nighthawk started. That was back in 2007 and I am still managing the project. On my last visit with her in the summer of 2021, I had just been on a rooftop checking a nighthawk nest with Brett Thelen of the Harris Center. Mary was delighted to see my photos of the nighthawk chick and the unhatched egg I had collected.



Mary Wright (left) with Becky Suomala, sharing photos of a nighthawk chick at a Keene nest on 6-23-21.

Mary brought energy, curiosity, and enthusiasm to all that she did. If something was needed for the banding station, she figured out how to get it. We are grateful for all that she made possible. As Bill Clark said, "There are few who can ever match Mary!"

Sponsors of this Summer 2021 issue in Mary's Memory:

Peg Ackerson
Liz Burton
Bill Clark
David Holmes
Jan Lathrop
Rebecca Suomala
Brett Thelen
Andy Thiede

2021 Goodhue-Elkins Award

Presented by Francie Von Mertens at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 18, 2021.

The Goodhue-Elkins Award is given annually by New Hampshire Audubon to honor an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the study of New Hampshire birds. The award is named for Charles Goodhue, one of the state's first great birders, and Kimball Elkins, who remains the model for critical observation and insightful record-keeping.

NH Audubon is very pleased to present this year's award to Eric Masterson. Eric arrived in New Hampshire from Ireland in 1999 as a skilled birder who kept a birding journal and sketchbook from an early age. He immediately set about exploring the state and its birdlife and was soon making contributions to its study.

He took on a Breeding Bird Survey route in 2002 and became a regular participant in the local Christmas Bird Count. Reporting sightings to the *New Hampshire Bird Records* quarterly, he has served on its editorial board, written articles for it and is now Spring Season Editor, making sense of some 200,000 bird sightings.

In short order, Eric joined the ranks of respected, long-term birders in the state, notable especially in the area of waterfowl migration and pelagic birds. He renewed interest and participation in off-season pelagic birding through his trips on fishing boat charters. As another mark of respect for his deep knowledge of the state's birds, he was invited to join the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee.

Eric's 2013 book, *Birdwatching in New Hampshire*, was a monumental synthesis of data that resulted

in a user-friendly guide to where to find birds in the state—by location, habitat, and season. He also introduced a lot of people to the world of birds through his birdwatching column in *Monadnock Shopper News*, a regional weekly newspaper.

Eric leads field trips, sharing his enthusiasm and knowledge generously. As Judy Davidson wrote:

Most birders know Eric. He's a role model for me. I've been on numerous trips to Star Island with his groups. He loves to teach people and never was disappointed or made me feel stupid if I didn't know a bird. He's very passionate about all things birds.

Eric was instrumental in developing NH Audubon's Carter Hill Hawkwatch in Concord. His fascination with

the Broad-winged Hawk's dramatic migration to South America inspired his "Kettle of One" journey by bike along their route, peddling off with the Broad-wingeds in September, 2016. Six months later, he had travelled 5,000 miles from New Hampshire to Panama and it was time to return home as the Broad-wingeds headed back north.

Infused with the lure of birds soaring overhead, he also took on another adventure, hang-gliding. The birding community held its collective breath upon hearing of Eric's serious, high-impact hang-gliding crash in August of 2020. Miraculously, he recovered, and is back in action, synthesizing data, working professionally in land conservation, leading field trips, sharing his knowledge and welcoming good company with others.

NH Audubon is honored to present the 2021 Goodhue-Elkins Award to Eric Masterson.



*Eric Masterson receiving NH Audubon's 2021 Goodhue-Elkins Award.
Photo by Rebecca Suomala.*

SUMMER SEASON

June 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021

by Greg Tillman



A quick note on the structure of the summer summary: In an effort to make the always lengthy season summary a little more readable, we've divided the 2021 summary into essentially three different sections

(instead of using the usual taxonomic sequencing). The first section focuses on the summer's highlights of vagrants and rarities; the second section is the heart of the summer season, our breeding and summering birds; and finally, the last section discusses the edges of spring and fall migration that summer encompasses.

As an aid to finding sightings in eBird, we have also experimented with embedding checklist numbers. To quickly find the checklists in eBird, enter the following in your browser, followed by the checklist number:

Example: <https://ebird.org/nh/checklist/S94028362>

As always, suggestions and feedback on either of these changes is welcome!

In the following summary, Keith and Fox refers to:

Keith, A. and R. Fox. 2013. *The Birds of New Hampshire*. Nuttall Ornithological Club, Cambridge, MA.

A special thank you to Susan Wisley for reviewing the summer eBird reports.

Vagrants and Top Rarities



Black-bellied Whistling Duck by Jim Sparrell, 6-5-21, Exeter, NH.

The summer season summary is about nesting birds – until it isn't! Summer of 2021 gave us quite a couple of months for vagrants, kicked off by the arrival of six **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** at the Exeter wastewater

treatment plant (WTP). Billy Weber found the birds the morning of June 2. Visiting from Pennsylvania, he had no way to get word to local birders except to rapidly submit an eBird checklist (S89471211). Fortunately, the checklist was promptly noticed, and word spread quickly! To the delight of birders and photographers, the whistling-ducks stayed a full week and were last seen in Exeter by several people on June 9. It seems likely that this is the same group of six ducks reported in Litchfield, CT on June 1, about 140 miles away. Two days after they disappeared from Exeter, a flock of six appeared roughly 500 miles north in Atholville, New Brunswick on June 11 (S90008213). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks are notorious vagrants and are slowly pushing their range northward, but this is still just New Hampshire's second record, the first being a one-time photograph in 2011 of five birds at a golf course in Salem.



Roseate Spoonbill by Lori Charron, 7-31-21, Gorham, NH.

The summer season closed with another major vagrant, a state first **Roseate Spoonbill**, found on July 30 by Dianne and Maurice Doherty (S94028362), and reported for the next two days near the Androscoggin River dam in Gorham. There were quite a number of vagrant Roseate Spoonbills reported elsewhere in 2021; see the separate article by Steve Mirick in this issue. Unfortunately, whatever the long-term evolutionary benefits of vagrancy, there are also substantial individual risks. This spoonbill was found dead on August 4 and was recovered by NH Fish and Game. A necropsy indicated the presence of an old chronic wound that likely contributed to the animal's demise, according to Michael Marchand, Wildlife Diversity Program Administrator.

Those two sightings bookended the season, but the weeks between had more highlights. Area residents Richard Fairweather and Jane Riegel found an **Eared Grebe** on Long Pond in Lempster on July 6, beautiful in its full breeding

plumage, and reported it to New Hampshire Audubon (S94027985). It was a rainy week, but Ken Faucher relocated the bird on the lake on July 10 (S91542694) and word went out to the birding community. During the winter, Eared Grebes are unusual but almost annual in New England waters, although our small coastline makes them rare in New Hampshire. Keith and Fox report only three New Hampshire records of Eared Grebe, all of which are in the last 25 years. But summer vagrancy, when the Eared Grebes should be nesting on the western prairie, is considerably rarer. eBird has only two other summer records for all of New England: one over-summering bird in Maine in 2010, and one early June bird seen for several days in Massachusetts in 1972. The Lempster bird was last reported on Long Pond on July 15.



Eared Grebe by Ken Faucher, 7-10-21, Long Pond, Lempster, NH.

Two other quite rare western vagrants graced New Hampshire during the summer. Kyle Wilmarth found and photographed a **Green-tailed Towhee** in Salem, New Hampshire on July 10 (S91559238). The bird was not relocated. Homeowner Joseph Apperson photographed a **Lark Bunting** in Hudson, New Hampshire on July 17 (S91915061). Apperson graciously allowed several viewing opportunities to birders and the bunting was last reported on July 21. As with Eared Grebes, the vagrancy pattern for Green-tailed Towhee and Lark Bunting (to the extent there is such a thing) suggests that they would be “expected” more in the fall than in the summer. All three, interestingly, have similar nesting ranges in the western prairie states. eBird data does not seem to have recorded any other significant vagrancy for any of these species in the summer of 2021, but it is still intriguing to have all three show up in New Hampshire in one summer.

A late-July **Snowy Owl** wraps up the “blockbusters” for the summer season. Ossipee resident Jessica Cole reported the owl to NH Audubon on July 20, and Wendy Rigazio submitted photographs to eBird on July 22 (S92157659). Lingering Snowy Owls are not totally unknown, but Keith



Lark Bunting by Susan Wrisley, 7-18-21, Hudson, NH.



Waiting for the Lark Bunting to appear on 7-24-21 by Rebecca Suomala. Special thanks to Joe Apperson and Challa Lewis for allowing group visits to view the bird.



Snowy Owl by Dan Oh, 7-26-21, Ossipee, NH.

and Fox only mention three other summer records of New Hampshire Snowy Owls: one in 1877, living in an ice house

SUMMER SEASON

in Concord well into July; one relocated from the Isles of Shoals tern colony on June 25, 2009 to Stratford, where it was still seen on July 9; and one in Plymouth on July 8 1990, “possibly the bird that lingered into summer at Logan Airport, Boston.” As mentioned, though, vagrancy has its perils and the fate of the Ossipee Snowy Owl is discussed in the Summer Field Notes.

Not quite as charismatic as a summer Snowy Owl, but almost as rare during the summer, Jeff Peters reported a **Pine Grosbeak** on Mount Washington on June 17 (S90523960). Interestingly, there were several other very southerly reports this summer: two from Maine, and one south of Montreal in Quebec. Although possibly a former breeding bird in the White Mountains in small numbers, Keith and Fox note only five other summer reports since 1900.

Gary and Ken Rosenberg sighted a **Caspian Tern** flying past Rye Harbor State Park (SP) on July 12 (S91680240). Keith and Fox calls Caspian Terns “occasional spring and regular fall transient,” and notes an increase in the number of reports since 2000. Summer reports like this one (as opposed to spring and fall migration reports) are still quite rare, but perhaps those will be increasing as well.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron by Edward Larrabee, 7-18-21, Little River, North Hampton, NH.

Here are a few other unusual non-breeding records from the summer:

- **Common Gallinule** – continuing from the spring season, in the marshes southeast of Odiorne Point SP in Rye, last reported on June 10 (S90187643, Stuart Varney).
- **Little Blue Heron**, and **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** – Several reports of each. Although both

are still “good birds” in New Hampshire, the term “vagrant” might be a stretch. They are seen most summers and have small breeding populations nearby in Maine and Massachusetts.

- **Lesser Black-backed Gull** – Several July reports (S91691266, July 13, Ken and Gary Rosenberg; S92530493, July 30, Dan Hubbard). More common in the fall, but as Keith and Fox notes this as an “increasingly common summer visitor.”
- **Atlantic Puffin** – Probably regular during the summer near the Isles of Shoals tern colony, but especially well-documented this summer by eBird reports from the Shoals Marine Laboratory Tern Conservation Program, with a high of 12 noted on July 8 (S91463964).
- **Common Murre** – Reported by Gemma Clucas near White Island on July 5 (S91279837) and July 9 (S9150339). Common Murres are also probably regular summer visitors in the southern part of the Gulf of Maine, based on Andrews Point records from Massachusetts. Although possibly increasing since 2005 (Keith and Fox), they are not often recorded in the summer from New Hampshire waters.
- **Leach’s Storm Petrel** – Wilson’s Storm-Petrels are actually “wintering” in New England over the summer, since they nest in the southern hemisphere during our actual winter. Leach’s, on the other hand, nest off the coast of Maine and within 60 miles or so of New Hampshire. They are seen much less often than Wilson’s Storm Petrel, whether because they forage farther out at sea, are nocturnal near nesting sites, or are less abundant overall. Nevertheless, Robert Quinn found one on Jeffreys Ledge during a July 23 whalewatching trip (S92329072).
- **Yellow-throated Warbler** – June 26, appeared at a feeder in Derry (S90835001, Mickayla Johnston).
- **Blue Grosbeak** – reported by Martha Harbison on Fremont Conservation Land in Peterborough, July 4 (S91228232).

Nesting and Summering Species

The high variety of New Hampshire’s breeding birds is contingent on a goodly number of species that have only a fragile nesting presence in the state. Let’s run through a few of those species.

Ring-necked Ducks nest regularly but in small numbers in the north country, especially around Lake Umbagog and the Connecticut Lakes. But for the second year in a row, Ring-necked Ducks successfully fledged broods in Sandwich,

just north of Lake Winnepesaukee (S90155421, 6-13, Ken Klapper), about 60 miles south of the next nearest New Hampshire breeding site.



Summer is the season for nesting and Alan Murray led a nest walk at Pickering Ponds in early June to look for evidence of breeding, such as this Wood Thrush nest he photographed there on 6-1-21.

Common Goldeneye have not been recorded breeding in New Hampshire for several years, at least in eBird. Per Keith and Fox, Tudor Richards wrote in 1952 that north of the White Mountains “one or two or more broods can be found on many of the small to medium-sized ponds,” but that no longer seems to be the case. There were only a few reports for the summer, all in the Lake Umbagog area.

Pied-billed Grebes were documented breeding at Airport Marsh in Whitefield (see the Photo Gallery), possibly for the first time at that site, when Nancy Mitiguy saw three juveniles with two adults on July 10 (S91529026), but the species remains a very localized nester in the state. The other known nesting locations in 2021 were Brentwood in Rockingham County (S92224487, 7-24, Chris Duffy) and Tuftonboro in Carroll County (S91595780, 7-11, Pam Hunt). One other northern record worth mentioning this year is the one (possibly two) **Green Heron** that Levi Burford reported from Errol (S91322004, 7-5), quite far north for that bird in New Hampshire.

A **Sandhill Crane** with a chick was seen in Nottingham on May 15, officially a spring season record, and Roger and Kathryn Frieden reported three cranes in the same area on July 5 (S91322004). Wayne Scott eBirded two adults with a colt in Monroe on June 8 (S89856541). Both locations have had similar chick sightings over the past few years. Statewide, no other cranes were seen over the summer. See a review of breeding Sandhill Cranes in New Hampshire elsewhere in this issue.

American Oystercatchers continue to be seen regularly on the Isles of Shoals. They were confirmed nesting in New

Hampshire last year for the first time, and this year are still presumably nesting on one of the Shoals islands in either New Hampshire or Maine, or both. **Least Bitterns** were reported at three sites in 2021: Cranberry Pond in Lebanon; World End Pond in Salem; and new this year, Beaver Brook Great Meadow in Hollis, found by Stuart Varney in May (S88257088, 5-16) with sightings during the summer that included two calling birds (S90071001, 6-12, Susan Wrisley). In Lebanon, the birds seemed to have moved to a less generally visible location this year. Nesting is likely at the first two sites, and certainly possible in Hollis as well.



Least Bittern by Lori Charron, 7-20-21, West Lebanon, NH.

Mississippi Kites maintained their magical foothold in New Hampshire, with three clusters of sightings: around Durham, Newmarket, and Stratham/Greenland. The nest in Newmarket was not found this year, but incubation was reported in Durham and Stratham. Stephen Mirick reported a chick still in the nest in late July in Stratham (S92432701, 7-28). New Hampshire is likely at the northern edge of viability for large aerial insectivores like these kites and, in good years, the nesting season may be just barely long enough to fledge chicks. In 2021, fledgling success may have been hindered by frequent July rains.

A pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** reprised their 2020 success and successfully hatched at least two broods in Bear Brook State Park during 2021, well documented by Stephen Mirick and Susan Wrisley (see the update by Steve Mirick in this issue). Individual Red-headed Woodpeckers were also seen at feeders in both Cheshire and Belknap counties (S90889015, 6-24, Jon Atwood; S90240746, 7-24, Russell Brummer).

Also repeating in 2021, but not confirmed as nesting, individual **Acadian Flycatchers** were reported for the second straight year at both Gile Road Marsh in Lee and Oyster River Forest in Durham. The last eBird date for Acadian at Gile Road was June 5 (S89673623, Sophia

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Wong), but Scott Spangenberg and Dylan Jackson reported an Acadian Flycatcher as late as July 17 at Oyster River Forest (S91898909). One additional bird was reported in Milton, Strafford County, on June 4, by Steven Lamonde (S89618156). The Acadian Flycatcher has been slowly pushing its range northward, but there is still no confirmed breeding of this species in New Hampshire, so these records of singing birds are intriguing. Of course, should a possible breeding pair be found, identifying both the male and female down to species could be a challenge!



Grasshopper Sparrow by Susan Whisley, 6-23-21, Cemetery Fields, Amherst, NH.

Like some of our marsh birds, many grassland birds are very local nesters in New Hampshire. **Grasshopper Sparrows** were recorded at the same six sites as last year, but in 2021 they were also reported from the Manchester landfill, the Hinsdale raceway, and the Lebanon airport. Pam Hunt recorded a very impressive high of 26 Grasshopper Sparrows on July 6 as she circumnavigated the entire Concord Airport (S91352916). **Upland Sandpipers** continue to be reported solely from Portsmouth International Airport at Pease and **Eastern Meadowlarks** were reported sparsely, as usual, in the southern half of the state.

We have the expected eBird reports for a few other localized nesting species:

- **Purple Martin** nests continue in the two recently built gourd colonies on the seacoast in Seabrook and Rye.
- **American Pipits** were reported on Mount Washington, with checklist highs of four to seven birds, but no overall survey was done this year.
- Three **Horned Larks** were seen at Concord Airport (S91352916, 7-6, Pam Hunt). This is a “known” site, with nesting confirmed just outside the airport in spring of 2021. There were also individual sightings at the Portsmouth International Airport (S91873359, 7-17, Dylan Jackson) and Woodmont Orchard in Hollis (S92040626, 7-20, Chris McPherson).

- **Least Terns** and **Piping Plovers** continue to nest in monitored locations on the Hampton and Seabrook beaches. According to NH Fish and Game, there were record numbers of Piping Plover nests with six nests in Seabrook and seven in Hampton. Unfortunately, only 13 chicks fledged out of the 47 hatched due to multiple issues including weather, predation, dogs and human interference. Least Terns had nine nests in Hampton fledging 10 chicks.
- The **Common Tern** colony on White Island hosted a record number of 3,412 Common Tern pairs and a record 115 **Roseate Terns** pairs. See the report from the Tern Conservation Program in this issue.
- Other coastal nesters, such as **Willet**, **Nelson’s Sparrow**, and **Saltmarsh Sparrow**, were reported in expected numbers and locations.
- **Shearwaters** (which don’t actually nest in New Hampshire) seemed to have generally low counts reported from most boat trips this summer, but all four expected species were reported at least once.



Least Tern by Len Medlock, 6-20-21, Hampton, NH.

Several scattered locations in the White Mountains had reports of **Fox Sparrow**, with most coming from the Caps Ridge Trail throughout June and July (S89671135, 7-5, Kathy Seymour; S91873834, 7-17, Simon Kiacz). Sightings of Fox Sparrows in the Whites have been increasing over the last four or five years. Given the numbers, nesting seems likely, but Keith and Fox report only one possible breeding record for the state. Birders should watch for fledglings and breeding behavior.

A few birds that are clearly not nesters nevertheless spent all or part of the 2021 summer in New Hampshire. For example, Gemma Clucas reported an immature **Great Cormorant** on the Isles of Shoals on July 7 (S91404807) and

Rebecca Suomala saw a similar bird on July 30 at White and Seavey Islands (S92529894). There were multiple summer reports of **Black-bellied Plover**, which occurs every year, but an over-summering **Semipalmated Plover** at the Rochester WTP (S89623861, 6-4, Dan Hubbard; S9233555, 7-26, Alan Murray) is noteworthy.

Finally, the startling irruptions of several species in 2020 seem to be fading. **Red Crossbills** were still reported throughout the state, but in much lower numbers than last year. They may be a subset of the 2020 birds, or perhaps even offspring. Anecdotally, **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** also lacked the abundance they had in 2020.

Migration



Ruddy Duck by Steve Bennett, 6-3-21, Exeter WTP, NH.

The summer season of June and July catches the tail end of the spring migration in early June, and the start of the fall migration, especially for shorebirds, in late July. Sure enough, Steve Mirick's migration watch at Odiorne Point SP on June 1 recorded three **Caspian Terns** headed northward, along with an impressive 541 **Cedar Waxwings** (S89415789).

The spring list of lingering inland waterfowl is fairly complete this year and includes:

- **Northern Shoveler** – Two at the Lancaster WTP in Coos on June 3 from Ann Griffin (S89545726) and a pair at Bear Pond in Canaan on June 12, reported by Dylan Jackson (S90074526).
- **Blue-winged Teal** – Reported at the Exeter WTP on June 3 and June 5 (at the same time as the Black-bellied Whistling Ducks).
- **Gadwall** – Kyle Wilmarth found one at World End Pond in Salem on June 1 (S89445814).
- **Green-winged Teal** – reported by Stephen Mirick from Meadow Pond in Hampton on June 9 (S89886563).
- **Ruddy Duck** – Continuing from spring season at the Exeter WTP, along with the teal and whistling-ducks, during the first week of June.

Despite the many lingering dabbling ducks, there was a different story on the coast, with a complete absence of **Black**

Scoter and **Surf Scoter** reports during June. Reports were few last summer as well (speculatively attributed to COVID birding problems). Two years and less than twenty miles of coastline does not make a trend, but it's worth noting.

The status of inland migration for "coastal" birds like gulls, plovers, and sandpipers is probably worth a long discussion, which we can't quite manage in the season summary.

Inland spring migration reports this summer included a **Semipalmated Plover** in Orford, along the Connecticut River Valley, by Wayne Scott on June 4 (S89560116); and a **Bonaparte's Gull** reported by Hector Galbraith, also on June 4, at the Hinsdale setbacks (S89591631). For both species, this is one of only a small handful of early June records in the Connecticut River Valley over the last ten years.

Black Terns are also usually coastal migrants. One found at Odiorne Point State Park on June 9 by Chris Michaud seems a bit late (S89912934). Bob Fox's report of one adult in breeding plumage on June 2 at Pontook Reservoir in Coos County (S93129899) is also a surprise, although the birds do nest on some large inland lakes in Maine.

Rounding out the spring migration reports, a **Great Egret** was seen near Lake Winnepesaukee in Carroll County on June 4 by Steve Lamonde (S89605353) – perhaps a spring overshoot? Holly Bauer found a **Yellow-breasted Chat** near Meadow Pond in Hampton on June 2 (S89473264) and Nora Hanke reported three late-ish **Rusty Blackbirds** on June 1 in Peterborough (S89418352).

As fall migration started, shorebirds began gathering along



Yellow-breasted Chat by Holly Bauer, 6-2-21, Meadow Pond, Hampton, NH.

the coast in roughly the usual numbers in late July. Perhaps the most interesting sighting of the fall migration was Alan Murray's photograph of a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Rochester WTP on July 19 (S91999159). Because they are a high Arctic nester (from northern Alaska through

Nunavut and the Northwest Territories of Canada), Pectorals are typically a later migrant than some of our other shorebirds, and this marks only the sixth New Hampshire record before the last week of July. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** on July 31 in the Oyster River Forest in Durham (S92684176, David Hof) also seems a bit early and is perhaps a failed breeder starting south.

Regional Report, Summer 2021

Sullivan County and Lake Sunapee

by Dylan Jackson



Eared Grebe by Jane Riegel, 7-6-21, Lempster, NH.

Birders know that the onset of summer normally begins a quiet lull. The birds have finished their migration, established territories, and begun their breeding duties. By now, most species are typically right where they should be, so exciting or rare finds are tough to come by. Summer is best spent observing what species are breeding and where, and it's a great time to get out of your spring and fall hotspots to maybe find species breeding in places you didn't know of before. There are many species around the state that are in different levels of decline so monitoring the breeding efforts of these species can be a fulfilling way to bird in the summer months.

While I generally dedicate most of my time birding in Sullivan County, I came to realize that I find myself concentrating my efforts between where I live and the county's hottest spots along the Connecticut River Valley, which happen to be in the most populous areas in the county. Unfortunately, it was later in the season when I realized I had been neglecting many more uncharted regions in the county for far too long. I did some research and found a great spot tucked in the town of Unity. It's called Marshall Pond Forest off Mica Mine Road, a really interesting habitat with expansive hayfields near the entrance and mature pine forest bordering a tucked away pond. The forest is also at the head of the Unity Mountain Trail which goes on much farther through the town of Unity. From what I can see, neither spot is represented very well in eBird and with the diversity of habitat, these could be promising areas.

We went from the spring into this summer with promising evidence of breeding Eastern Meadowlarks. Strong evidence of active nests was found at the Morningside Flight Park in

Charlestown and in hay fields along Old Newport Road in Claremont. Both sites had pairs of birds carrying food to nests, but despite these positive signs, it looks as if human disturbance may have undermined these efforts. Mowing at Morningside seemed to have destroyed the nests there, which were under close watch at the time. Haying had begun at the Claremont site when nesting evidence was found there, so I have fears that that nest suffered the same fate. It's unfortunate to see, but it has to be taken into consideration that the few grassland habitats available in these mountainous areas of New Hampshire are bound for human exploitation. It's worth continuing to monitor these areas for any future, hopefully successful efforts going forward.

Rare birds are often infrequent in summer and when they do show up they usually make their appearance in other parts of the state; however, this summer Sullivan County got to host a rarity that brought birders from all over. On July 6, Roger Fairweather and Jane Riegel discovered an Eared Grebe, clad in breeding plumage on Long Pond in Lempster. The grebe hung around for about a week and a half bringing many birders to get a glimpse of it. It was the first summer record for New Hampshire and the first record away from the Seacoast Region. It was probably the first major attraction in the area since the infamous Great Gray Owl of Newport in 2017.

Observing breeding birds and exploring new spots are the best ways to spend the summers to satisfy that birding itch and, you never know, you might just find something amazing in the process.



Green Heron on Trask Brook Road in Sunapee by Dylan Jackson.

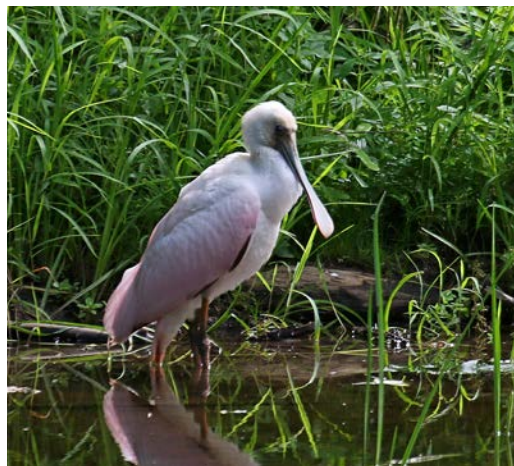
Vagrancy and the Roseate Spoonbill

by Stephen Mirick

The distinctive and charismatic Roseate Spoonbill is a large wading bird that is found locally throughout the “New World” with a patchy range that extends from the southern United States southward through Mexico as well as Central and South America. It is generally uncommon in the United States where it breeds locally in areas of southern Florida as well as coastal Louisiana and the Gulf Coast of Texas. Along with other species of herons, the Roseate Spoonbill became an iconic symbol of bird conservation during the 20th century as the species was nearly extirpated from the United States during the early 1900s as a result of market hunting and the demand for bird feathers in hats.

Similar to several species of southern herons and egrets, the Roseate Spoonbill is known for irregularly dispersing northward following the breeding season. This northward dispersal peaks in the mid-summer months when spoonbills are regularly seen as far north as coastal areas of South Carolina and north along the Mississippi River to Arkansas. Rarely, birds will wander as far north as Illinois, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Most often, these northernmost wanderers are juvenile birds.

The extent of these wandering birds varies from year to year, but major northward movements were seen recently during the summer of 2017, and especially in 2018, when first State and Provincial records were recorded for Connecticut, Maine, and Minnesota as well as Quebec. During the summer of 2021, another major northward dispersal of Roseate Spoonbills brought birds far to the north of normal. Large numbers of individuals were recorded from the Mid-Atlantic States and first state records for this species were recorded in Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Hampshire. The first signs of the major 2021 dispersal event occurred during the last week of June with a remarkable



Roseate Spoonbill
by Steve Mirick,
7-31-21,
Gorham, NH.



Roseate Spoonbill sightings reported in eBird (June-August 2021).
Image provided by eBird (www.ebird.org) and created 2-17-22.

flock of five seen in the mountains of West Virginia which was only the second record ever for the State. Soon after this report, there were multiple reports from many eastern States, notably Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

The bird in Gorham was the first ever for New Hampshire. It was first found on July 30 and was the northernmost of the 2021 event. It was found in a location that is rarely birded and not a normal wetland habitat associated with herons. Perhaps even more remarkable is that the location is *precisely* the spot where the first State record of Neotropical Cormorant was recorded during August of 2018! Sadly, the bird did not survive as a prior injury appears to have contributed to its demise.

The reason behind the “irruption” of 2021 is not completely understood, nor is it clear whether the northern sightings represent birds that had dispersed from Texas coastal populations or from the southern Florida breeding population, or both. However, almost all of these vagrant birds during 2021 were young birds. According to *The Birds of the World*, “postbreeding dispersal is often related to drying and flooding cycles, as well as subsequent food availability.” It’s likely that a very successful breeding season in early 2021, possibly followed by a sudden decrease in food availability, brought on this northward irruption of young birds.

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Isles of Shoals Tern Report 2021

The following is excerpted from the August 2021 report to the Gulf of Maine Seabird Working Group (GOMSWG) by the Tern Conservation Program at the Isles of Shoals, NH.

A note on tern numbers: a tern census is conducted in June and then corrections are made to the numbers using a Lincoln Index to statistically account for nests that were missed, resulting in an adjusted total.

White and Seavey Islands

Liz Craig, Program Manager/co-Principal Investigator, Shoals Marine Laboratory (SML)

Jenn Seavey, Program co-Principal Investigator/SML Executive Director

Beckley Stearns & Olivia Smith, Seabird Technicians, SML



Liz Craig counting tern nests on Seavey Island during the tern census. Photo by Rebecca Suomala (2016).

Tern Census

Common Terns (COTE)

- COTE census was conducted on June 16-18, 2021
- Adjusted census:
 - 777.3 nests on White Island
 - 2635.1 nests on Seavey Island
 - Total estimated population was 3,412. Highest census count for COTE since program began in 1997 (up from 3,280 in 2020, the previous max).

Roseate Terns (ROST)

- 112 ROST nests were established on Seavey Island within the census window (before June 20, 2021) Highest census count for ROST since program began in 1997 (up from 96 in 2020).

- B-wave ROST nests [late nesting after the census] brought season total to 115 (up from 108 in 2020).

Arctic Terns (ARTE)

- 1 ARTE nest was established by June 20, 2021 on White Island.

Table 1. Number of tern nests found during the census on White and Seavey Islands from 2016-2021.

Year	COTE	ROST	ARTE
2016	2,985	83	3
2017	3,210	92	2
2018	2,175	55	1
2019	2,900	61	1
2020	3,280	96	1
2021	3,412	112	1

Productivity



A Common Tern nest with one egg, one chick hatching (still in half the shell), and one fully hatched and dry. Photo by Rebecca Suomala during the 2016 census.

Common Terns

- Productivity was low in comparison to previous years likely due to frequent storms, high diversity of fish provisioned (indicating poor availability of high-quality prey items) and stress due to regular Peregrine Falcon predation events.
- Diet items included herring, hake, sand lance, butterfish, cunner, mummichog, lumpfish, goosefish, Acadian redfish, mackerel, stickleback, silverside, Atlantic moonfish, pollock, pufferfish, squid, shrimp, euphausiid, amphipod, flying ant, grasshopper, dragonfly, beetle and moth.

Roseate and Arctic Terns

- ROST and ARTE nests were monitored individually until chicks reached “fledge” age (5 days for ROST and 15 for ARTE).

Table 2. Breeding parameters for Common, Arctic, and Roseate Terns on White and Seavey Islands from 2016-2021. Only nests with known outcomes were used for ROST and ARTE calculations. [Clutch size is the average number of eggs in a nest, hatching success is the average number of eggs that hatched, and fledging success is the average number of chicks that survive to 15 days of age.]

Species	Year	Clutch Size	Hatching Success	Fledging Success	# Nests Monitored
COTE	2016	2.25	1.56	0.80	247
	2017	2.00	1.81	0.35	62
	2018	1.84	1.38	0.45	45
	2019	2.11	1.61	0.85	66
	2020	2.19	1.86	0.57	70
	2021	2.16	1.01	0.33	116
ROST	2016	1.69	1.23	0.94	83
	2017	1.60	1.23	0.91	87
	2018	1.18	0.86	0.82	64
	2019	1.72	1.36	1.02	61
	2020	1.64	1.43	0.91	94
	2021	1.78	1.05	0.65	82
ARTE	2016	2.00	1.00	0.50	2
	2017	2.00	1.50	1.00	2
	2018	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
	2019	1.00	1.00	0.00	1
	2020	1.00	0.00	0.00	1
	2021	1.00	0.00	0.00	1

Predator Activities and Control Efforts

Peregrine Falcon (PEFA)

- Regular visits from 1-year-old PEFA starting in early May and ending in late June. Estimated to have consumed 2-4 adult terns per day.
- Predation events stopped after observing an adult PEFA on the island, assumed to have displaced the younger falcon. Adult PEFA seen infrequently through July, but no predation events were observed.

Gulls

- Destroyed one Great Black-backed Gull (GBBG) gull nest found on Seavey (first nesting attempt observed in the last six years when Shoals Marine Lab began monitoring).
- Used human presence as well as pyrotechnics and lasers to dissuade gulls from lingering and predating.
- Lethal control: removed 1 GBBG (injured from

fishing gear and loafing on colony)

- Found remains of approximately 21 COTE chicks on Little Seavey that had been predated by gulls.

Other

- Ruddy Turnstone from the end of May through early June and again in late July and early August.
- Due to predation issues in previous years, muskrats were trapped near their den on Seavey using Havahart traps. One successfully trapped in 2021.

Other Nesting Species

- Common Eider: at least 35 nests (2 on White and 33 on Seavey, up from 34 in 2020).
- Spotted Sandpiper: at least 10 nests (3 on White and 7 on Seavey, up from 5 in 2020).
- Song Sparrow.
- Black Guillemot: 6 nests confirmed on Appledore Island (ME) and 8 nests confirmed on Smuttynose Island (ME).
- Used eBird for daily bird list to share bird diversity data from White and Seavey.

Research

- Collected GPS locations for all censused nests in the ArcCollector app. Evaluating spatial distribution of birds and nest site selection with regard to habitat characteristics.
- Continued application and evaluation of hypersaline spray for habitat management.
- Tern fecal collection (for DNA metabarcoding) and visual diet observations conducted to determine diet.
- Exploration of historic tern diet data and reproductive success/growth with regard to fisheries data.
- Exploration of butterflyfish implications for growth/survival of chicks with undergraduate student/technician Olivia Smith.
- Exploration of microplastic ingestion by terns via fecal and forage fish analysis.
- Deployed 20 GPS tags to pair provisioning data with foraging. Data to be applied to boat-based fish sampling with graduate student Aliya Caldwell.



Banded Roseate Tern at the colony on White & Seavey Islands. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

Summer 2021 Field Notes

Diana Stephens and Kathryn Frieden, Editors

Kayaking Cormorant



This Double-crested Cormorant hopped a ride with a local kayaker on Hopkinton Lake, pleasantly surprising the Wolfe family. Photo by Susan Matthews Wolfe, first posted on the Birdwatchers of NH Facebook group.

Migration in Summer

by Robert A. Quinn

The following records demonstrate how short the period can be between late spring northbound migrants and early fall southbound migrants and they do not even cover the true extreme data as reported by others this year.

June 4, 2021 – Olive-sided Flycatchers arrive in Coos County

I arrived in Errol on June 1 in anticipation of leading two field trips with members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club from June 2-6, 2021. The first group of Club members birded their way northward on June 2. Then on June 3 and 4 we had several bird walks in the Errol/Umbagog region including a boat trip on Lake Umbagog. During all these field excursions we did *not* record any Olive-sided Flycatchers.

The first group of Club members departed midday on June 4 and a second group arrived. All the new birders reported hearing or seeing Olive-sided Flycatchers as they

birded their way to Errol. On June 5 and 6, we saw and heard the species in its typical haunts during our forays. It is clear to me that there was an influx of *northbound migrant* Olive-sided Flycatchers during the night of June 3 in the Berlin to Errol region. The lack of flycatchers in that region before June 4 should be noted in eBird checklists from me, Ken Klapper, and Phil Brown. There was only one other Olive-sided Flycatcher sighting in Coos County before June 4 (6-2-21 on the turbine access road in Dixville/Millsfield).



Southbound Greater Yellowlegs by Bob Quinn, 7-3-21, Elm Brook Park, Hopkinton, NH.

July 3, 2021– Southbound Greater Yellowlegs

At the other end of the summer migration spectrum for me was an adult Greater Yellowlegs seen at Elm Brook Park in West Hopkinton on July 3. The combination of a major rainstorm that day and knowing that it was the onset of fall shorebird migration lured me out to Elm Brook in the rain in the hope of finding some birds downed by the storm. Voila! Within a few minutes I found an adult Greater Yellowlegs foraging in a flooded grassy area near the beach. The rain had driven people and dogs under cover away from the beach and this provided a peaceful and soggy foraging spot for the bird. While July 3 is early for an inland fall migrant it is not unprecedented. There is at least one record for July 1, 1979 in North Haverhill, as mentioned in *The Birds of New Hampshire* by Keith & Fox. They also mention a few late June records that could not be clearly labeled as lingering summer non-breeders or fall migrants. My sighting seems to clearly be of an early southbound migrant based on its adult plumage plus the fact that it was not seen before or after that date.

Peregrine Falcon Returns to Boscawen, NH

by Chris Martin



This female Peregrine Falcon (known as black/green A/G) was originally captured and outfitted with a 12-gram solar-powered satellite transmitter with the help of Wildlife Biologist Adam Gravel in May of 2014. Photo by Rick Gray.



The female Peregrine Falcon, black/green A/G, bred at Bear Mountain in Hebron from 2014-2017. Seen here with chicks in 2015. Photo by Todd Quinn.

A transmitted female Peregrine Falcon (black/green A/G) returned to Highway View Farm (Crete's Farm) in Boscawen after an unsuccessful 2021 breeding season at Holts Ledge in Lyme. On 7-20-21, photographer Todd Quinn took two photos that confirm this individual falcon's identification by her leg band code. Todd is familiar with this bird, having also photographed her at Crete's farm in both September and October of 2020.

Black/green A/G was captured and fitted with the 12-gram transmitter in May 2014 (see photo) as part of studies associated with the Groton Wind Farm. She bred at Bear Mountain in Hebron from 2014-2017, then shifted about 20 miles west to nest at Holts Ledge in Lyme for the 2018-2021 breeding seasons. At this point the transmitter only rarely sends out location data; the last "ping" we got was from Lyme in mid-May 2021.

Todd Quinn reported that she was hunting pigeons in the Crete's Farm area for at least two weeks before he finally got good photos of her. Typically, she heads off to eastern



Black/green A/G returned to Highway View Farm in Boscawen in July 2021. She is seen here with her black-over-green band and backpack transmitter. Photo by Todd Quinn, 7-20-21.

Pennsylvania by mid-October to spend each winter in a fairly discrete area, which you might call a winter territory. It is interesting that this bird seems to have well-defined breeding, wintering, and post-breeding layover areas that she utilizes year after year.

Flight of the Glossy Ibis

by Dylan Jackson

This is excerpted from a post to the NHBirds e-mail list, on July 17, 2021.

I took a short trip to the seacoast today to nab some birds I hadn't seen yet this year before the breeding season ended. I had a good turnout of species, but didn't come up with anything remarkable; however, at my first stop at Hampton Beach State Park, I was treated to an incredible southbound flight of Glossy Ibis. A large skein of dark birds passed overhead and I almost dismissed them as Double-crested Cormorants, the expected flocking dark birds. Upon closer inspection, their long, extended legs and long curved bills instantly showed these were indeed Glossy Ibis. I snapped a quick photo with my phone with no magnification. While the picture doesn't show much detail, it allowed me to count 46(!) birds – *far more than I've ever seen at once in my life!*



Flight of Glossy Ibis by Dylan Jackson 7-17-21 Hampton NH.

Brown Thrasher Feeding an Eastern Kingbird

by Kathryn Frieden



On July 15, 2021, Mary Hoffheimer took these unusual photos of a Brown Thrasher feeding an Eastern Kingbird in her yard in Amherst, NH. A second young kingbird was also present.



Songbirds are known to feed the young of other species when nest parasitism has occurred, most commonly in the United States due to Brown-headed Cowbirds. However, that is not the case in this photo. There are thought to be several other reasons why “interspecies feeding” might be occurring. In a review in the *Journal of Field Ornithology*, Marilyn Shy discusses possible causes. Of the situations that she identifies, there are two that most likely explain what is occurring in this photo. One is that the Brown Thrasher’s own nest was destroyed, and the bird is just following its instincts to feed nearby young. Another is that hearing the calls for food by the young Eastern Kingbirds triggers that same instinct. If you have ever heard the incessant calls of fledglings soliciting food, this is certainly a plausible explanation!

Reference

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Snowy Owl in Ossipee

by Kathryn Frieden



Dan Oh took these photos of a noticeably thin Snowy Owl in Ossipee on 7-26-21.

Snowy Owls are known to show up along the coast of New England in the winter and are even occasionally found on the coast in summer, but an inland Snowy Owl in the summer is very rare. On July 22, 2021, a Snowy Owl was spotted near Route 16 in Ossipee and then seen in the area by many people over the next several days. It appeared to be thin and listless and was noted to have crusty eyes. Its presence was quickly reported to Cathie Gregg, the director of the Elaine Conners Center for Wildlife in Madison. She was not able to capture it until several days later, on July 27. The owl was immediately transferred to the care of Maria Colby from Wings of the Dawn Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, but unfortunately died the following day. A necropsy showed that the owl had died from the effects of a combination of parasitic infections, including *Capillaria* sp., a type of intestinal worm.

Leucistic Red-winged Blackbird Continues



Leucistic Red-winged Blackbird by Elaine Faetra, 6-15-21, Quincy Bog, Rumney, NH.

The distinctive, leucistic Red-winged Blackbird at Quincy Bog in Rumney, NH continued throughout the breeding season. Elaine Faetra photographed it in April (see the Spring 2021 issue) and again in June. Iain MacLeod provided this note:

It became a local celebrity and was very obvious when you looked for it. Maybe worth noting that there was a leucistic Red-winged Blackbird photographed at the same spot in Quincy Bog in 2020. It was first seen in April and seen throughout the breeding season.

Swallow Nests in Downtown Errol

by Rebecca Suomala

On a visit to Errol, I was surprised to find swallows nesting at the entrance to not one, but two establishments. The businesses were right on Main Street and were very busy with people coming and going. I'm puzzled why these sites in particular were so attractive, but maybe the people keep predators away?



A Barn Swallow nested (below) right under the entry to the big LL Cote store in Errol, NH. Photos by Rebecca Suomala.



A Cliff Swallow nested (left) at the peak of the Northern Exposure Restaurant right next to Main St. in Errol, NH. Photos by Rebecca Suomala.

The Black Guillemots of East Rock

Photos by Rebecca Suomala



Do these Black Guillemots look real to you? They certainly did to me (Rebecca Suomala) when I took this photo on 7-30-21 on White Island at the Isles of Shoals.

On July 30, 2021 Zeke Cornell, Dave Hursh, and I took the “Uncle Oscar” out of Rye Harbor for a tour around the Isles of Shoals and a short stop on Star Island. The boat goes close to several of the islands and we were hoping to see an American Oystercatcher (which we did) and get a good view of the tern colony on White and Seavey Islands. The southeastern edge of White Island has a huge vertical face called East Rock, with the lighthouse above. As we approached White Island, I was excited to see two Black Guillemots sitting next to each other on a ledge of rock. Could they be thinking of nesting? I tried to take documentation photos of this promising sight.

On the way across to Star Island, the leader of the Tern Restoration Project, Liz Craig happened to come by in her zodiac and pulled alongside when she saw me waving. I excitedly informed her of the Black Guillemot sighting. She laughed and told me they were decoys! They put them out in hopes of attracting them to nest on the island. Of course! Pretty impressive decoys if you ask me.

Two days later Zeke and I joined Chris Duffy on a boat tour to Seal Island, Maine to view the puffins and other nesting birds of this offshore island. Wouldn't you know, I excitedly pointed out a single Common Murre by itself on the rocks. You guessed it, another decoy! I am not sure I'll be able to live this down.

A word to the wise if you spot a guillemot on White Island (or a murre on Seal Island) – take a second look to be sure it's alive!

Red-tailed Hawk Chick Raised by Female Bald Eagle

by Diana Stephens and Chris Martin



A baby Red-tailed Hawk seen here on right, sitting in a Bald Eagle's aerie, with its young eagle “sibling” on the left. Photo by Cheryl Mrozienski, 6-3-21, Bow Lake, Strafford, NH.



In this image taken the same day, the Red-tailed Hawk chick has moved to the left and the larger, juvenile eagle is in the middle of the nest. Photo by Cheryl Mrozienski.

New Hampshire Audubon volunteer observer Cheryl Mrozienski found what appeared to be a 4-week-old Red-tailed Hawk chick in the nest with an 8-week-old Bald Eagle chick at Bow Lake in early June. The size difference between these two chicks was truly astonishing and it's hard to explain how these two youngsters of different ages ended up together in the nest. It's quite unlikely the eagles incubated this egg to hatching weeks after the eagle chick hatched, so it seems most likely that the hawk chick was brought into the nest alive (either accidentally or on purpose) by an adult eagle and somehow survived.

The hawk chick was observed in the Bow Lake eagle nest

for the first time on June 3 *almost cuddling with the larger eaglet*. It is possible that it was brought in along with prey (or nest material) that an adult eagle swiped from an active Red-tailed nest, but it is also possible that the hawk chick was prey.

Chris received an update from Cheryl Mrozienski on Sun 7-11-21. She wrote:

Both [the eaglet and hawk] fledglings have been back in the nest screeching for food. Pat Sims reported they were there yesterday (Sat 7-10) at 4:00 pm (the same time the adult was screeching from my yard). I also saw the fledglings on a branch just to the left of the nest this morning (Sun 7-11) around 9:30 am. They were both screeching, so now I know I might be able to locate the hawk by sound, too.

Raptor expert Iain MacLeod, Executive Director at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, says a hawk chick surviving in an eagle's nest is a very rare occurrence. He speculated that this baby hawk likely came into the nest as a food item in the talons of the adult male eagle, but that having somehow survived that adventure, began food-begging which triggered the adult female eagle's maternal drive to feed young.

The video from June 2021 provided by Cheryl Mrozienski shows the then-huge eaglet and the much smaller Red-tailed Hawk chick sitting side-by-side in the nest seemingly getting along quite well together. Red-tailed Hawks take much less time to reach fledging age, so in a sense the hawk is catching up. We will have to see whether this young Red-tailed develops a taste for fish!

See a video of the nest, courtesy of Cheryl Mrozienski who monitors eagles for NH Audubon and loons for the Loon Preservation Committee on Bow Lake:

<https://bit.ly/3pkf8JM>



Amazingly the Red-tailed Hawk chick survived. Here it is on 7-10-21 in a photo by Pat Sims.

Red-headed Woodpeckers Nesting at Bear Brook State Park – 2021 update

by Stephen R. Mirick



Red-headed Woodpecker adult (left) and youngster in nest hole. Photo by Steve Mirick, 6-26-21, Bear Brook SP, Allentown, NH.

During 2020, Red-headed Woodpeckers were confirmed nesting in New Hampshire for the first time since 1995! The pair chose a remote section of Bear Brook State Park (mostly in Allentown, NH) and nested in an oak tree left standing in a clear-cut area of the park. Incredibly, the pair raised two broods and fledged a total of four young. Red-headed Woodpeckers are known to show strong site fidelity and it was a treat to have them return for another year during 2021. Interestingly, both nest holes (located one above the other) from 2020 were used again in 2021! Reuse of old nest holes is known to occur with this species; however, it apparently can vary within different populations.

Below is a very rough nest chronology based on eBird observations submitted by a variety of birders.

First Brood

March 21 – First sighting of a single bird. Acting territorially and chasing birds near 2020 nest holes.

April 4 – First sighting of two birds at last year's nest location. Investigating lower nest hole used in 2020.

May 17 – Incubation is estimated to have started based on hatching date of May 31 and a 14-day incubation period.

May 31 – Fecal sac seen being removed confirming hatch!

In addition, adult observed removing egg from hole. See discussion below.

June 26 – Young birds still being fed in **lower** hole, but adult seen investigating **upper** hole!

June 29 – Two young birds fledged from lower hole! This likely occurred over the last couple of days. In 2020, the fledged date for the first brood was on or near July 8, so this year the birds were seven or eight days ahead of last year.



Red-headed Woodpecker juvenile from second brood in nest hole. Photo by Susan Wisley, 8-17-21, Bear Brook SP, Allenstown, NH.

Second Brood (very few nest site visits)

June 30 – Copulation observed while fledged young from first brood were being fed.

July 17 – Incubation suspected taking place in upper nest hole.

August 17 – At least one chick seen at hole and being fed in **upper** nest hole.

August 28 – One chick observed being fed in **lower** nest hole. How did chick get into lower hole? Had it fledged and then flew back into lower hole? Last year, chicks fledged on August 24 and 25.

September 3 – No birds observed, but could have been missed. Last visit of season.

Egg Removal

On May 31, I photographed an adult removing a whole egg from the nest hole. The timing was near the hatch date of at least one egg. Often birds will remove eggshells after hatching; however, this was not a shell, but appeared to be a whole egg and the egg was consistent with that of a Red-headed Woodpecker (as opposed to a Brown-headed Cowbird for instance). The reason for this egg removal is not known and I couldn't find any references to this behavior in the literature. The adult seemed to fly off to a nearby tree and possibly ate the egg.

The nesting in 2021 confirms Red-headed Woodpeckers using this clear-cut area for at least two years in a row, and it's possible they used it prior to 2020. Let's hope for their return in 2022!

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Red-headed Woodpecker removing an egg from the nest hole. Photo by Steve Mirick, 5-31-21, Bear Brook SP, Allenstown, NH.

Managing Locations in the eBird Mobile App

by Kathryn Frieden

Birding with a small notebook and pen to keep track of your sightings isn't a thing of the past, but smart phones are certainly making it seem that way. It is increasingly common for birders to use "eBird Mobile" to record their sightings and then enter their checklists into eBird. Using the app changes the way locations are chosen and named, so we would like to help clarify how to do this, why the location name matters, and what constitutes a good location name.

There are two ways to enter a sighting in eBird; on the website www.ebird.org, or in the eBird Mobile app. Your eBird account is shared between these platforms, but not all information flows both ways. The checklists that are entered in the app are accessible in the app on your device, but the checklists you have entered using the website do not show up in the app. Some edits to an app checklist, such as location name changes, can only be made on the website, not using the app.

Figure 1. The arrow points to the “Auto Selected” location where you tap to select the location.

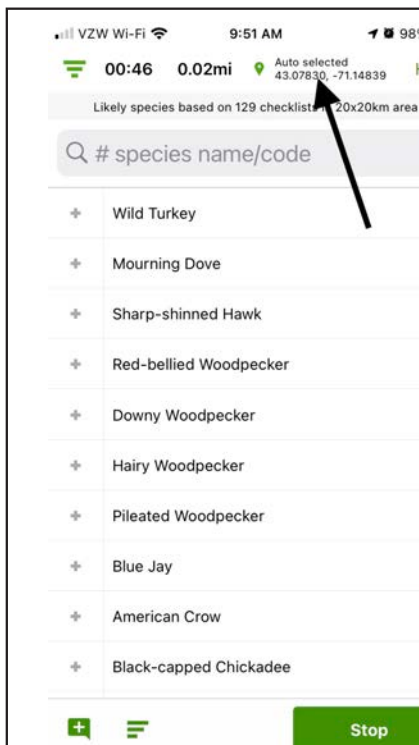


Figure 2. The large tear-drop shaped pin (in green) shows your location. The arrow points to the location name generated automatically by the cellular data.

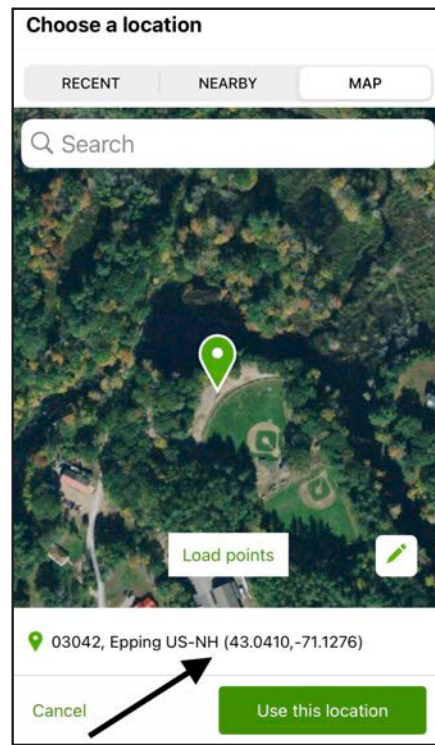
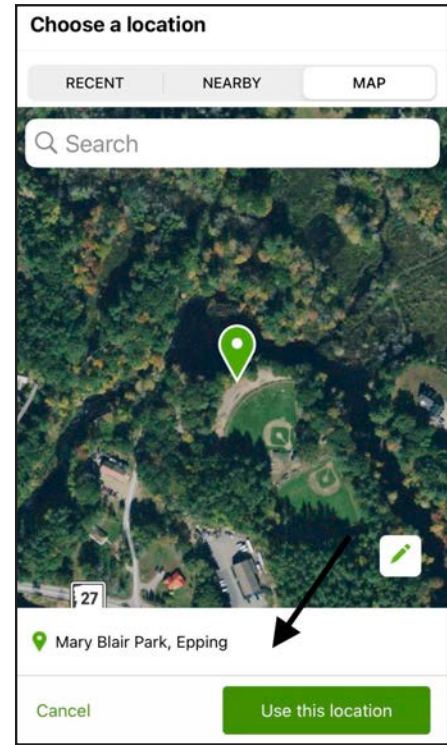


Figure 3. The arrow points to the new, preferred location name and when you click on the box that says “Use this location” it will bring your checklist back up to the screen, ready for data entry!



Entering a location in the app

To begin, start the checklist, then tap the top right of the screen where it says “Auto selected” (Figure 1) next to the green pin in order to choose a location. If you do not do this at the start of the checklist, you will be asked to do it when you submit the checklist. The two types of locations that are most used in eBird are “Personal Location,” and “Hotspot,” which is a publicly shared birding site. Whenever you are birding within a “Hotspot” area, please choose the eBird Hotspot as your location.

How do you enter a new personal location while using the eBird Mobile app? After you tap the “Auto Selected” spot (Figure 1), the “Choose a Location” screen pops up with options of “Recent, Nearby, or Map.” For a new “Personal Location,” choose “Map.” When there is cellular data available, the large green pin (tear-drop shaped) will show your location. If you want to move the pin, you can tap the screen at a better location on the map. As the eBird instructions state, the best spot for your location pin is the one that most accurately represents where you are birding. The location name that now automatically appears below the map (Figure 2) will depend on the amount of cellular data that is available. It may include a zip code, town name, or even street name in addition to the latitude/longitude numbers. You can now rename the location to something more informative or accurate. Tap the location name to bring

up the keyboard and then type in the new and improved name. When you tap “Done,” a green box that says “Use this location” will pop up (Figure 3). Touch this box, and your checklist will reappear with its new name at the top right.

Once your common birding locations have more informative names, you will be able to find them quickly and easily under the “Recent” or “Nearby” tabs. The “Recent” list contains your previous 50 locations, which are stored on your device and can therefore be accessed without the need for a data connection. Your “Personal Locations” will show up as blue pins on both of these lists as well as on the “Map.” “Hotspots” will be red pins.

Why is the location name important?

It may not seem like the location name is important when it is also on a map, but it is! Researchers who download data will find a good location description helpful, especially when reviewing it in an Excel spreadsheet. Birders who follow the eBird alerts appreciate a descriptive name in the list of reports and people using eBird to research where a particular species can be found will get more information from a good descriptive name than from just latitude/longitude numbers. Lat/longs may be the most accurate from a strict data standpoint but are not as effective when perusing the various eBird lists. This is also true when reviewing one’s own eBird records to see where you have been birding, or where you were when you saw a certain species.

You can read more about why location names are helpful to birders and researchers in the Winter 2016-17 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, also online at:

https://nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/Vol35_No4_TechArticle.pdf

What constitutes a good location name?

In the eBird “Help” section, it states that when entering a new location in the app, one should “consider changing the location name so that it is more informative than the default name.” We would like to expand on that guidance. A good location name uses a geographic descriptor and includes the town name whenever applicable. Street addresses, parks, trails, or landmarks are all possibilities. An example for one’s own yard is “Home, Silk Farm Rd., Concord.” If you are driving on a highway and spot a raptor overhead, you might use “Rt. 93, Concord.” If you want to further pinpoint the location, leave in the lat/longs, as in “Rt. 93, Concord (43.2463,-71.5442).” Other examples are “Rockingham Recreational Trail, Raymond,” or “Connecticut River, Walpole.” (I must be thinking about that delicious hot chocolate at L.A. Burdick.) It is often helpful to further describe the location in the checklist comments. For example, if I used a “**Hotspot**” such as “Pawtuckaway SP, Nottingham/Deerfield,” I could add “hiked Round Pond Trail” in the comments.

If you need to rename the location and it isn’t convenient at the time you are entering the checklist, it can always be done later using the website. Here are instructions:

To change the name of a location:

1. Click on “My eBird” at the top of any page of the website <https://ebird.org/nh/home>.
2. Select “Manage My Locations” on the left side of the page.
3. Find the name of the location to be changed and click “edit” on the right.
4. A box containing the current name will appear saying “Enter new name” on the left. Type in the new name and click “Rename” to the right of the box.
5. The new name will immediately appear at the top next to the blue pin, and your location is renamed!

And, if you forget to change that original “uninformative” location name, you just may get a friendly email from one of the New Hampshire Audubon volunteers asking you to do that!

For further information about locations in eBird Mobile as well on the web, here is the link to the “Help” section:

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000850891-choosing-and-managing-locations-in-ebird#anchorMergeLocation>.

Volunteers Needed to Ensure Continued Success of Purple Martins on the NH Seacoast

by *Dennis Skillman*

Back in 2014, a small group of birders met with Pam Hunt to see how we could support the return of Purple Martins to the NH seacoast. The previous year, martins had been found nesting in a bird house meant for Tree Swallows amidst a large group of nest boxes adjacent to Cross Beach Road in Seabrook. In a short time, some possible sites were scouted out and Pam secured approval from the town as well as funding for a gourd rack.

The volunteers took it from there, constructing a support structure and handling the monitoring of nesting progress. In 2016, a sister gourd rack was put in Hampton off Island Path. Along the way, landowners in Rye became ardent martin enthusiasts, putting up a gourd rack on their land on Awcomin Marsh in Rye, and the Portsmouth Country Club restored and added to the nest boxes lying dormant on their property. Most recently, another gourd rack was installed at The Nature Conservancy’s Lubberland Creek property in Newmarket. During this time period, martin nesting in central New Hampshire slowly flickered out of existence. To the best of our knowledge, the only remaining breeding colonies of Purple Martins are at three or four sites along the seacoast.

The seacoast sites have been very successful, fledging birds continuously since the first gourds were opened. Initially, it was just Seabrook, then the Awcomin Marsh site flourished, and in 2021 the Island Path site had its best year ever. There have been highs and lows, mixed results, including (in 2021) a terrible stretch of extreme heat followed by record rainy weather that resulted in the highest nestling mortality we have encountered. The biggest cause of martin mortality has been weather. The martins get the great majority of their food as aerial feeders. This makes the adults, eggs and newly hatched birds vulnerable to prolonged periods of rain. Over the past three years, we have begun providing supplemental feeding in the form of dried meal worms placed in the nests when a cool northeast storm sets up. The owner of the Awcomin Marsh site is doing the same. It seems to have helped them get through some difficult stretches of weather, but 2021’s July and early August weather was just too much stress.

The Hampton site was moved from dry land, where it had limited success and was getting overgrown, out onto the marsh in 2019. There was martin interest but no success that year. During the COVID lockdowns of 2020, we were not able to maintain both Seabrook and Hampton, so the



The author raising gourds and checking nests at the Purple Martin colony in Seabrook, NH. Photos by Pam Hunt.

Hampton gourds remained in storage. This year's success in Hampton is likely due to late-arriving martins finding Seabrook already occupied. The later they nested, the better they fared this year.

Despite this year's losses, the overall picture is a good one, with hopes for a much better year in 2022 running high! An expansion in Hampton from 12 to 18 gourds is being discussed. Most of all, what the martins need are additional volunteers to step in and lead the efforts in the two NH Audubon supported sites in Seabrook and Hampton. Since its inception, this project has relied on a dedicated team of volunteers to keep it going, but that team has been getting smaller (and older) and is seeking help to keep this species thriving on the New Hampshire coast. We are seeking new and enthusiastic teammates to take on primary responsibility for managing these two colonies. Duties include setting up and taking down the gourds at the start and end of each season, regular monitoring to determine nest success, and when possible, a little extra help in the form of supplemental feedings. Of the two sites, Seabrook is more of a logistical challenge because it can only be accessed at low tides. Anyone interested in learning more, and helping keep this success story going, should contact Pam Hunt at NH Audubon: phunt@nhaudubon.org.



Purple Martin hatchlings (above) on 6-24-19, and nestlings (below) on 7-24-19 in a gourd at the Seabrook colony. Photos by Dennis Skillman



Northern Goshawk Nest in Center Harbor

by Iain MacLeod



Northern Goshawk adult, near a nest in Center Harbor, NH. Photo by Ben Wymer 3-21-21.

On March 21, 2021, Ben Wymer, Land Protection Associate for the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, was walking off trail near the NH Audubon Proctor Sanctuary in Center Harbor when he had an encounter with a very vocal adult Northern Goshawk. Ben is an outstanding wildlife photographer and snapped a superb photo of the goshawk. The next day, he contacted Bob Ridgely and me to report his sighting. Bob and I were intrigued. Northern Goshawks seem to be declining in the state and would best be described as very localized nesters in the Squam region. We have had no recent records of nests.

On April 3, Ken Klapper and I, along with noted wildlife photographer Mark Wilson, met Ben along Center Harbor Neck and bushwhacked into the area where Ben had seen the goshawk. We reached the location and waited. After a while, we started exploring outwardly from that location in search of signs of nesting and soon all converged on a large stick nest, 50 feet up a white pine, perhaps a quarter mile from Ben's initial sighting. As Ben was getting a pinpoint GPS

location on the tree, I noticed a tail sticking over the edge. We quietly retreated and confirmed through scopes that the tail belonged to an incubating Northern Goshawk. Not once did she budge from the nest. From farther back, we could see the top of her head and her red eye and white supercilium. What a bird! We retreated.

On May 20, Ben, Mark and I returned and brought along Rob Woodward. When we arrived at the tree, the female goshawk was standing motionless on the nest. She knew we were there, but never left. Goshawks are well known for aggressiveness around their nests, so we approached with caution. From her behavior, we were sure that she had at least one chick in the nest. After a few photographs, we retreated, leaving her on guard at the nest.

On June 20, Ben returned to check on the nest and photographed a well-grown youngster in the nest. In his email to me, Ben stated, "I only had about two minutes viewing the youngster before mum showed up! She ran me off pretty well!"

Because of the sensitivity of the nest and because it was on private land, we used the Proctor Sanctuary eBird hotspot to "report" our sightings, but the nest was not actually located within the sanctuary boundary.



A Northern Goshawk chick in the Center Harbor nest, 6-20-21 by Ben Wymer.

The Sandhill Cranes of New Hampshire

by Kathryn Frieden

There are now three confirmed breeding sites for Sandhill Cranes in New Hampshire: Monroe and Lake Umbagog in the north and Nottingham/Deerfield in the southeast. (This compares with one in Vermont and three in Maine.)

Monroe

- July **1999**: First sighting of one adult roosting on a sandbar in the Connecticut River followed by yearly sightings.
- July **2013**: Two adults seen together in a field—*14 years later*.
- June **2014**: Adult pair seen with colt—*first state breeding record*.
- Breeding confirmed six of eight years since 2014, including **2021**.

Nottingham/Deerfield

- June **2017**: Two adults were first spotted in corn fields near Deerfield and Ledge Farm Roads in Nottingham.
- May **2018**: Two adults were seen in the same area, and then a pair with a chick was seen in the Stevens Hill Road area of Nottingham—*second state breeding record!*
- June-September **2018**: One week after the chick was seen, a pair of adults, but no chick, was spotted at two different locations in the northwest area of Pawtuckaway State Park, and then again in September in the Deerfield/Ledge Farm Rd. area, casting doubt upon the survival of the chick.
- **2019-2020**: Throughout the seasons there were several sightings of a pair in various ponds, marshes, and fields in the Nottingham/Deerfield area.
- May **2021**: A pair was seen with a chick on the nest in the same area of Nottingham, confirming repeated breeding. A pair with a young chick also visited a yard in Deerfield north of Pawtuckaway State Park around that same time.
- July **2021**: Three Sandhill Cranes, one of which was a large colt, were seen at the edge of Dead Pond in the northwest corner of Pawtuckaway State Park, confirming the chick's survival!

Lake Umbagog

- May **2019**: Two adults seen in north end.
- July **2020**: Adult pair seen with colt in Sweat Meadow area—*third state breeding record!*

- **2021**: Not seen, despite good coverage of area during at least two boat trips.

Sandhill Crane Family Photo Album

Photos by David Nelson



Dave Nelson took these photos when the Sandhill Crane family visited his backyard in Deerfield, NH on May 15, 2021. He had seen cranes in previous years, commenting, "I've had crane solo flights over my house heading for Dead Pond to the south of me, probably leaving Back Creek. I had witnessed this several times over a course of two or three weeks last year, but a yard visit was certainly new and unexpected. They spent the afternoon there, before eventually wandering off into the woods to the south."



Adorable Sandhill Crane chick playing in the yard.



A Wild Turkey is a little bemused by the crane's presence.

Backyard Birder

Do Turkeys Sleep in Trees?

Text and photos by Diana Stephens



One day in early May, the author's neighbor finds a turkey "stuck" way up high in a very tall pine tree, wondering if it needed rescuing.



According to the *Miriam Webster Dictionary*, "roost" actually means to rest or sleep. Apparently, birds sleep in many different locations, including trees.

One day on my daily walk in my southern New Hampshire neighborhood, I passed by a couple of neighbors, who were staring up at a very tall pine tree. They told me there was a single Wild Turkey *very high* up in the tree and they thought it might need help. Maybe it was chased up there by a hawk, they thought, and needed rescuing? "Hmm", I said, "I don't know." I looked at the turkey and grabbed my camera to take some pictures. My neighbor Fran was worried and now I was worried about this turkey that was "stuck" very high up in the pine tree. Could

it fall out if it was left up there overnight?

I had never witnessed a Wild Turkey that high up in a pine tree before and so I called the local Fire Department to inquire (you know, in case we needed a really tall ladder to bring it down). The young man at the other end of the line was very gracious and explained to me that they could not, in fact, do anything to help because, well, "Wild Turkeys *do* roost in trees..."

"Oh ... really?" I answered. I then called a Wildlife Rehabilitator to confirm this. The rehabilitator also kindly returned my call and told me that, yes, Wild Turkeys do, in fact, roost (*and yes, sleep*) high up in trees. Hmm. Well, this was news to me, because all the displaying Wild Turkeys I have ever seen simply strut their stuff around the neighborhood, showing off to females who seem oblivious and are sometimes non-existent.

So, I ran across the street to tell Fran and her husband Bob the good news. I saw them in the window and waved. My neighbors opened their front door and greeted me. "I wanted to let you know that turkeys actually *roost* high up in trees, so the turkey doesn't need any help."

"Oh, good!" they responded. As it turned out, all we were actually doing was interrupting the turkey's bedtime ritual. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (allaboutbirds.org), "At sundown, turkeys fly into the lower limbs of trees and move upward from limb to limb to a high roost spot. They usually roost in flocks, but sometimes individually."

The things we learn when we live in the country never cease to amaze.

Discovering the Birds of the Ossipee Mountains

by Rob Woodward

The Ossipee Mountains are in fact one mountain, the eroded remains of an ancient volcano situated north and east of Lake Winnepesaukee in Carroll County. Once towering as high as Mt. Fuji, its highest point is now 2,990 feet at Mt. Shaw in the towns of Moultonborough and Tuftonboro. The obviousness of its volcanic past is best revealed by consulting a topographical map, where a nearly perfect circle is formed 10 miles across and 40 miles in circumference. Just imagine if we still had a giant cone-shaped mountain snow-covered year-round! When you look at it from afar, you see a vast unbroken forest. What birds live at its highest elevations? Is it close enough to the White Mountains to share some of those northern high elevation species?

An article in the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire* written by Tudor Richards called "A Proposed Division of



The summit of Mt. Shaw by Rob Woodward

New Hampshire into Avifaunal Regions Based Largely on the Altitudinal Distribution of Breeding Birds” asks this very question. He describes the Ossipees as ornithologically unexplored and, he postulates, if enough spruce/fir forest remains,

It is quite likely that such ‘northern birds’ as the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked (Bicknell’s) Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Philadelphia Vireo, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Mourning Warblers, and both crossbills nest there....

He concedes that it is unlikely that Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Boreal Chickadee would be found there.

This struck me as an open invitation to undertake an expedition of ornithological discovery to see if I could confirm Tudor’s proposal. Yes, there are unexplored areas even in well-covered New Hampshire. What if I hiked the upper altitudes and observed and recorded the species found there. To my surprise, apparently almost nobody has ever looked. I can find only one breeding season record in eBird for Mt. Shaw.

Unexplored areas are usually unexplored because there is no way to get there. Fortunately, there is an extensive trail network throughout this property thanks to Castle in the Clouds and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust. The trust holds a conservation easement on 135 acres surrounding the grounds of Castle in the Clouds and owns 5,246 adjacent acres where 30 miles of trails open to the public wind their way to the highest points in the Ossipees.

For several years, this project had been on my to do list. On June 16, 2021, at the height of the breeding season, I set out on the trails to Mt. Shaw. But first, let’s take a closer look at New Hampshire’s largest volcano. The Ossipee Mountains are known as a ring dike, the molten remains of a collapsed

volcano. Geologists from far and wide have come here to study it. Three eruptions took place ten million years apart starting 100 million years ago. On the second eruption, the mountain collapsed, forcing lava up the perimeter of the volcano. Upon solidification, it created a ring dike. Direct evidence of this vulcanism can be found on the Bald Knob Cutoff Trail where there is a small field of hexagonal columnar basalt formations. There are only a few places in eastern North America where these can be found. Perhaps the best known site for this geological oddity is Devil’s Postpile in California.



Hexagonal columnar basalt joints in the Ossipee Mountains by Rob Woodward.

You can easily find pieces of basalt on the ground throughout the Ossipees that, when you break them open, produce exceptionally sharp edges. These stones once made for good tools for the native peoples in this area, who traded them widely. The arrowhead I found in my backyard in Concord 30 years ago was identified by the state geologist as fashioned from stone originating in the Ossipee Mountains.

Mt. Shaw is only 15 miles as the Boreal Chickadee flies from the nearest 4,000 foot mountain in the White Mountains, Mt. Whiteface, so there is reason to hope that it harbors at least some of the bird species found at these higher elevations. The hike to the top of Mt. Shaw is long and winding as it follows a series of carriage trails developed largely by Thomas Plant, the shoe manufacturing tycoon who built Castle in the Clouds in 1914. As I labored up the trails, I could picture Mr. Plant seated in the back of his gilded horse-drawn carriage, a basket of fine wine and cheese beside him, as he comfortably rolled across his vast estate.

A one-hour rain delay postponed my ascent, but three hours later I reached the summit. I spent over an hour listening and searching for my targets. The top of the mountain is a small area with views only to the south and east. I failed to find any of the species Tudor Richards

thought possible up there. The habitat at the top of Mt. Shaw does have some spruce but it is so thin as to be practically non-existent. It just isn't as deep and extensive as necessary to harbor the hoped-for species. If it was at the same latitude as Mt. Whiteface, would the results be any different? Or is altitude the essential factor?

Apparently, a good spruce/fir forest is not the only necessary ingredient. By way of comparison, Belknap Mountain outside Laconia has extensive spruce/fir forest throughout the top third of the mountain. It looks and feels like the White Mountains, but I am confident from having hiked it several times that none of the northern montane species breeds there. At just 2,382 feet high, this mountain is apparently too low in elevation for northern birds.

I did find several species on Mt. Shaw that I did not see on the way up, namely Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and White-throated Sparrow, but the northern species of the nearby White Mountains simply do not occur. If nothing else, I did confirm Tudor's opening hypothesis in his article. "One of the more interesting and basic aspects of the distribution of birds in New Hampshire is the great, if indirect, influence of elevation on the areas where the different species nest." I would like to have extended the breeding range map for one or more species in New Hampshire but Tudor Richards would be satisfied that this exercise left the Ossipee Mountains a little less ornithologically unexplored. How many other areas await investigation and new discoveries?

Directions to Mt. Shaw

To reach Mt. Shaw, start from the parking lot on Rt. 170 just east of the entrance to Castle in the Clouds (Moultonborough). Take the Shannon Brook Trail to the Bald Knob Cutoff and then the Bald Knob Trail. Then follow the Turtleback Mountain Trail to the High Ridge Trail that goes to Mt. Shaw. You should take a picture of the trail map at the kiosk adjacent to the parking lot.

The A-List Birds of the Lakes Region

by Rob Woodward

New Hampshire's Lakes Region, with its multitude of lakes and forested hills and mountains is, in my view, the most beautiful area of the state. It has some pretty good birding too. Perhaps known best for its spring waterfowl migration, over the years it has proven to be more than that. This area has attracted a surprisingly long list of exceptional rare birds. Some of these birds have been drawn to the large lakes found in this area, but these bodies of water



Long-tailed Jaeger by Tudor Richards, June 18, 1968 on Squam Lake, NH.

only account for part of this list. There may not be that many birders in this part of the state, especially compared to Concord or the seacoast but instead, there was one very diligent birder who contributed a disproportionate number of entries to this list.

For purposes of this article, I am limiting the geographic area of the "Lakes Region" to the general area around Lake Winnepesaukee and Squam Lake, including Belknap County (except Barnstead, Belmont, and Gilmanton) and the towns that border these two lakes in Carroll County.

The Lakes

Not surprisingly, Lakes Winnepesaukee and Squam are a magnet for birds, common and rare. Surprisingly, some of these rarities are oceanic in distribution. Here are some of the more interesting and unexpected sightings over the years.

American White Pelican – Two were seen on Lake

Winnepesaukee in Wolfeboro by M. Kott, L. Wilberton, and others on June 11, 1997.

Pomarine Jaeger – The first record was from Lake

Winnepesaukee on June 12, 1974 by J. Fisher, Julie Ridgely, and Robert Ridgely and the second was reported by C. Sutcliffe, Scott Sutcliffe, and Beverly Ridgely on Squam Lake on June 24-27, 1976. To this day, these are the only two inland records for the state.

Parasitic Jaeger – The only inland record cited by *The Birds of New Hampshire* is of two birds over Little Round Top, Bristol, on October 2, 1977 reported by V. Wright, but *Birds of the Squam Lakes Region* lists two records for Squam Lake, one in September of 1965 and one on October 21, 1967, both reported by Hamilton Coolidge. At any rate, these three are the only state inland records.

Long-tailed Jaeger – Tudor Richards found one on Squam Lake on June 18, 1968, for the second state record. The first state record was also found inland, suggesting there wasn't much pelagic birding in those days.

Thick-billed Murre – Two were collected for specimens

on Lake Winnisquam in November 1889 and in late November 1899 several were reported around the state, including Laconia and Meredith, all undoubtedly fallouts from major storms.

Black Guillemot – One picked up “alive and healthy” by G. Quimby in Sanbornton December 21, 1921 was later released. This is the only inland record for the state.

King Eider – A hen and immature drake were found by H. Cook Anderson in Laconia on December 13, 1970. The hen stayed until May 15, 1971 and then, presumably the same bird, returned on November 13, 1971 and stayed until April 15, 1972.

Pacific Loon – Iain MacLeod discovered one at Leavitt Park, Meredith on Lake Winnepesaukee on December 13, 2020 for the first and only inland state record (subject to review by the NH Rare Bird Committee).

Western Grebe – One was documented by J. Cooley on Squam Lake on July 21, 2007, also the only inland state record.

Wilson’s Storm-Petrel – A bird was found by O. Dworkin and Hamilton Coolidge “alive but exhausted” (but later succumbed) on Squam Lake on August 28, 1971 after the passage of Hurricane Doria. Another one found on Dublin Lake the same date ties for the first inland state record.

Leach’s Storm-Petrel – There are two records, the first was from Squam Lake by J. Fisher, Geoffrey LeBaron, and Scott Sutcliffe on August 11, 1976 thanks to Hurricane Belle and the second on Lake Winnepesaukee on November 2, 1997 by K. Mills and W. Rasku, carried in on strong easterly winds.

Northern Gannet – The Lakes Region can boast two records, the first by M. Kendrick in Laconia on January 2, 1954 and the second was found dead by K. Taylor and John Cooley on Roberts Cove, Lake Winnepesaukee in Alton on November 1, 2006.

Little Gull – Not all “hooded” gulls seen in the Lakes Region are Bonaparte’s. A Little Gull reported by H. Cook Anderson, Robert Smart, and Kimball Elkins lingered in Laconia from September 17 to October 5, 1969.

Caspian Tern – One was reported by Hamilton Coolidge from Squam Lake on August 1, 1984 and another was seen on June 20, 2014 by Sam Stuart and Rhys Marsh, who reported another sighting of undoubtedly the same bird the next day on another area of Squam Lake.

Dovekie – There are at least six sightings in the region, starting with one in Wolfeboro in 1932 and the rest recorded between 1966 and 1970.

First State Records

A surprising number of first state records have hailed

from the Lakes Region, thanks to one person, Vera Hebert of New Hampton. Nothing about the town of New Hampton’s geography or topography strikes one as bearing any great ornithological significance – it doesn’t even abut a large lake – yet six first state records arise from here, with five of those found by Hebert. She found two more in other neighboring towns. How? By getting out in the field often.

How does this compare to modern times? I asked one of the most active birders in the state, one who has been birding New Hampshire for 40 years, how many first state records he has. Steve Mirick told me he has four undisputed first state records and possibly seven more, depending on how you count them. When placed in this context, Vera Hebert’s accomplishments must be described as extraordinary. Under the current rules of the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee, a first state record requires a specimen or must be observed by three observers or documented by photograph, video or audio. Some of the following records preceded this requirement, but in probably most cases, it is unknown if pictures were taken or if three observers were present.

Here are the first state records from the Lakes Region:

Western Kingbird – Vera Hebert found one in New Hampton on September 19, 1947. New Hampton also claims the second state record, although not reported by Vera, on November 2, 1950.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher – One discovered by J. Terry tarried in Wolfeboro from September 26 to October 1, 1960.

Varied Thrush – Vera Hebert recorded one in New Hampton on January 18, 1958.

MacGillivray’s Warbler – The one observed by D. and J. Coskren in Gilford at Lake Shore Park on October 1, 2005 is considered hypothetical for lack of a third observer.

Hooded Warbler – One was recorded by H. Rice and H. Hillman in Sandwich on August 22, 1921.

Painted Redstart – G. Wallace, not Vera Hebert, found one in New Hampton on May 22, 1981. The lack of three observers or a photograph renders this record hypothetical, although this male bird would have been unmistakable.

Harris’s Sparrow – Vera Hebert discovered the first state record in Tilton on December 30, 1964. Another was present in Moultonborough at the bird feeder of Isabelle Behr and E. Brown November 10-17, 1975.

Western Tanager – The bird that visited Meredith from March 25-28, 1954 was first reported by Vera Hebert.

Painted Bunting – Robert Smart, Vera Hebert’s birding buddy, found one in New Hampton on August 21, 1960.

Yellow-headed Blackbird – One was located by Vera Hebert in New Hampton on October 28, 1945.

Bullock’s Oriole – Vera Hebert and J. Conway identified one

in Laconia in “late” October 1952 that stayed until April 29, 1953.

Western Meadowlark – Newport hosted the first state record on July 20, 1960, but Vera Hebert found the second state record in New Hampton on October 19, 1964.

The Rest

Other notable records are worth mentioning:

Barn Owl – Three records span the time frame of August 10, 1948 in Belmont to October 16, 1971 in Meredith.

Acadian Flycatcher – The first state nesting record was established by Beverly Ridgely, Robert Ridgely, D.

Robinson, and C. Smith on July 10, 1986 in Sandwich Notch. Three eggs were found in the nest, but no male was ever found and the eggs were collected and found to be infertile.

Black-billed Magpie – A countable bird was reported in New Hampton by S. Moulton and others (including Vera Hebert?) from March 22-23, 1959.

King Rail – One was found by Robert Smart in Moultonborough on May 27, 1970. *Birds of the Squam Lakes Region* accurately predicts “most unlikely ever to appear here again.”

Yellow Rail – A bird was collected in Wolfeboro on October 2, 1952. The specimen was housed in the New Hampshire Fish and Game headquarters in Concord until the building burned down in 1984.

Lists of rare birds, for every location, always grow over time. There are many good birding spots in the Lakes Region that offer us the chance to find the next rarity. Birders with boats who can scour the big lakes after a major storm and those who get out in the field often are the most likely to succeed in finding the next unexpected surprise to add to this outstanding list.

Rob Woodward lives part-time in Laconia and is an avid birder of Belknap County, hoping to add the next new addition to this list.

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New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

Spring 2020 through Winter 2020-21

nbbirdrecords.org/NHRBC

Michael Resch, Chair and Secretary, reschmike1@gmail.com

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee for four seasons: Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Winter 2020-21. These 2020 seasons included two first New Hampshire state records that were accepted by the Committee:

- Anna’s Hummingbird – first appearing at a New London feeder on about 10-28-20. This bird was banded and identified on 11-6 by bander Scott Weidensaul. The bird remained at the feeder through 11-8.
- Sage Thrasher – discovered by Cory Ross on 12-19-20 as part of the Brattleboro Christmas Bird Count at the Hinsdale Setbacks. This most obliging bird was reported in the area at least through 2-6-21.

These additions bring the official New Hampshire state list to 425 fully substantiated species, with an additional five species on the Hypothetical list (as of February 2021).

Other exciting 2020 sightings accepted by the Committee included Pink-footed Goose, Loggerhead Shrike, Swallow-tailed Kite, Barnacle Goose, Sooty Tern, Black-headed Grosbeak, Chestnut-collared Longspur, and Townsend’s Warbler.

The members of the Committee voting on the 2020 records were: Will Broussard, Adam Burnett, Kurk Dorsey, Jason Lambert, Iain MacLeod, Jeanne-Marie Maher, Chris McPherson, and Mike Resch (Chair and Secretary).

NHRBC Background

The NHRBC reviews rare and unusual bird sightings in New Hampshire in an effort to maintain the accuracy and scientific integrity of rare bird records in the state. It is independent of *New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR)* and New Hampshire Audubon. Per the NHRBC Bylaws, the purpose of the Committee includes the following:

- To review reports of unusual occurrences of birds within the state of New Hampshire and adjacent ocean waters.
- To accept or reject such reports based upon the adequacy of documentation.
- To establish and maintain an official state list of the birds of New Hampshire.
- To permanently maintain copies of evaluated

records and their associated documentation and all Committee votes, comments, and pertinent outside expert information regarding those records.

- To respond to a request from the observer of the result of the evaluation of his/her records and to educate the birding community of the results of those deliberations.
- To work closely with the editors and staff of *NHBR* toward our common goals.
- To function as an independent technical advisory committee to *NHBR*.

One of the most important functions of the NHRBC is the evaluation of records of rarities found in New Hampshire. The typical process used to evaluate these records is as follows:

- Species to be reviewed are those listed in the New Hampshire RBC Review List, which can be found here: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/NHRBC/nh-rare-birds-committee-review-list/>
- Records of these Review List species come to the Committee either from eBird checklists, or information submitted directly to *NHBR* or the NHRBC such as through the use of the New Hampshire Bird Sighting Documentation form, available at: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/documentation-forms-for-rarities/>
- The NHRBC will request additional information on those records where key details are not provided or limited.
- Records are compiled once a year, generally in early Spring, by the Committee Secretary, to include four consecutive seasons: Spring (March-May), Summer (June-July), Fall (August-November), and Winter (December-February).
- The members of the Committee review each of the records and submit their votes to the Secretary, who then compiles all the votes.
- The Committee typically meets once per year usually in summer, often by phone, to discuss any vote that is not unanimous, and finalize the votes for all records.
- The Committee requires a vote with not more than one dissension for acceptance of a record, except for potential first state records which require a unanimous vote. A first state record also requires at least one of the following: photograph, specimen, video recording, audio recording, or separate documentation from three or more observers. If none of these criteria is met, but the record is still accepted by the Committee, the species is added to the Hypothetical State List.

Note that if the Committee does not accept a record it is not necessarily an indication that the identification was incorrect. More likely, the information received was not sufficient to allow its acceptance as a state record. One common issue is that there has not been enough research on how to separate some species in the field: for instance, currently Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's Thrushes are reliably identified only by song, not by visual record or flight calls. Further research may address such challenges and then the committee may re-evaluate such records. In other words, adequate documentation is key to whether a report is accepted. A reminder that the best way to ensure your sighting is accepted by the NHRBC is to prepare and submit adequate documentation of the sighting. Even if you have a photo, a supplemental documentation form can be invaluable in gaining acceptance of the record, especially with photos of limited quality. Don't worry, if you don't have a photograph it doesn't mean the record can't be accepted by the Committee.

Additional details on the NHRBC can be found on the Committee website, nhbirdrecords.org/NHRBC

Spring 2020 Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Loggerhead Shrike	5-24-20	Hillsborough
Cerulean Warbler	5-27-20	Durham
Hooded Warbler	5-14-20	Hinsdale Setbacks
Yellow-headed Blackbird	5-18-20	Manchester
Bullock's x Baltimore Oriole	5-4-20	Epsom

Records not accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Gray-cheeked Thrush	5-25-20	Roxbury
Nocturnal calls could not eliminate Bicknell's Thrush. Accepted as Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush		
Summer Tanager	5-26-20	Newmarket
The photo and details were insufficient to eliminate Scarlet Tanager		
Lazuli x Indigo Bunting	5-21-20	Sandwich
Characteristics of this bird were not inconsistent with a pure Indigo Bunting		

Summer 2020 Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Swallow-tailed Kite	7-24-20	Webster
Swallow-tailed Kite	7-29-20	Claremont
Cerulean Warbler	6-9-20	Sandwich
Yellow-headed Blackbird	6-4-20	Loudon

Records not accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Forster's Tern	7-14-20	Hancock
Other <i>Sterna</i> species could not be eliminated for this distant sighting		
Summer Tanager	7-20-20	Hooksett
Description could not eliminate more common species		

Fall 2020 Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Barnacle Goose	11-27-20	Hudson
Sabine's Gull	8-29-20	Rye
Sooty Tern	8-7-20	Deerfield
White-winged Dove	11-7-20	Concord
Anna's Hummingbird – first NH state record	11-6-20	New London
Swallow-tailed Kite	8-9-20	Webster
Swallow-tailed Kite	8-9-20	Lebanon
Western Kingbird	10-19-20	Conway
Northern Wheatear	9-19-20	Concord
Townsend's Solitaire	10-28-20	Nottingham
Golden-winged Warbler	9-9-20	Amherst
Black-headed Grosbeak	10-12-20	Deerfield
Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco	11-14-20	Gilsum
Chestnut-collared Longspur	10-23-20	Hollis

Records not accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Rufous Hummingbird	8-22-20	Rochester
The description could not eliminate Ruby-throated Hummingbird.		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	9-23-20	Hancock
Nocturnal calls could not eliminate Bicknell's Thrush. Accepted as Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	10-1-20	Hancock
Nocturnal calls could not eliminate Bicknell's Thrush. Accepted as Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	10-5-20	Hancock
Nocturnal calls could not eliminate Bicknell's Thrush. Accepted as Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's Thrush		

Winter 2020-21 Records

Records accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Pacific Loon	1-1-21	Odiorne Point SP
Long-eared Owl	12-6-20	Canobie Lake, Salem
Sage Thrasher – first NH state record	12-19-20	Hinsdale Setbacks
Townsend's Warbler	12-30-20	Derry

Records not accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Pacific Loon	12-13-20	Meredith
Red-throated Loon could not be eliminated for this distant sighting		



Chestnut-collared Longspur by Jim Sparrell, 10-24-20, Woodmont Orchard, Hollis, NH.

Photo Gallery: Airport Marsh Grebes and Bitterns

There was a family of Pied-billed Grebes and a family of American Bitterns at Whitefield Marsh in July of 2021. Neither are rare birds, but both are, as Dave Govatski reported, “uncommon and secretive breeders in New Hampshire. This is the first reported successful breeding at Airport Marsh in Whitefield to the best of my knowledge. Local birders have been monitoring this site because of the presence of a pair of Pied-billed Grebes since spring.” Being able to see youngsters is a real treat.

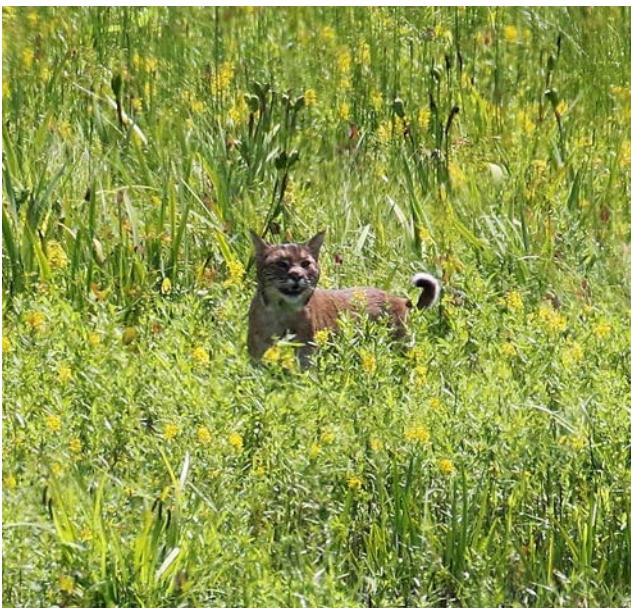
All photos were taken at Airport Marsh in Whitefield in the summer of 2021.



Three juveniles and one adult American Bittern in front of a group of Canada Geese. The second adult is not far away. Photo by David Govatski.



David Govatski took this photo on 7-10-21 as he was watching the Pied-billed Grebe chicks, and commented, “The Great Blue Heron was eyeing those young grebes as a tasty snack.”



David Forsyth sent this photo, taken on July 10, with the following note: “Those juvenile bitterns and grebes have more to worry about than just the Great Blue Heron. At about 2:30 this afternoon, we didn’t see any of the juveniles, just adults, but we did see this fearsome predator which was in the reeds about 30 feet away from the box that the Great Blue Heron was standing on.”



Six Pied-billed Grebelings with an adult, photographed by Ann Griffin on July 12.

Birding During the Gas Crunch

by Jon Woolf

All of us as birders are facing a tough question: how to keep up our birding when gas prices are through the roof? These are a few ideas that I've applied to conserving gasoline on my birding trips. In general, they're similar to "how to save gas" tips for all situations and some should be familiar to anyone who remembers the "energy crisis" of the late 1970s and early 1980s. I think they've helped me and I think they will help you too.

- Don't idle your car engine for long periods of time. The bigger the car, the bigger the engine, the more gas you can waste this way.
- When driving, watch your speed and more importantly, your engine RPMs. Gas consumption is actually a function of engine revolutions, not distance, so lower RPMs = less gas burned. Reduce highway speeds. It takes significantly more engine RPMs, and therefore more gas, to cruise at 70 mph than it does to cruise at 65 mph, and on short trips you really don't get there very much faster.
- Most cars and SUVs sold nowadays come with trip computers that include a real-time MPG monitor. Use them. If yours doesn't, then there are add-on devices you can buy that provide the same functionality.
- If you plan to stop at specific places, then sit down with a map and plan out the route ahead of time to minimize distance and driving time between stops. A stand-alone GPS can be handy when doing this, as some of them allow you to plot a route on your PC, then download the resulting set of navigation points to the GPS.
- Most gas-powered cars achieve their best mileage at between 40 and 65 mph, so following routes that let you cruise at those speeds will also help.
- If you have several vehicles, then take the most fuel-efficient one. An electric car is ideal, but most of us don't have one.
- If you like to "carbird," by which I mean drive along with the windows open listening for birdsong, then turn off the car A/C while you're doing it. Air conditioning is a power hog, and in a car, all the power comes from burning gasoline.
- If you're considering buying a new car, then get the smallest one, with the smallest engine, that will do what you need it to do.
- Of course, carpooling when possible is always a good idea.

There are many other little tricks and tips for reducing gas consumption, some of which work and some of which are old mechanics' tales, such as tire pressure, car weight, and so on. There are plenty of lists on the web. Run a search and see what you find.

It's true that one person won't change the planet this way, but you can certainly change your little corner of it just a little bit, set a good example for others, and perhaps save yourself quite a bit of money in the process. Those of us who remember the gas crunch of the 1970s may also remember that when large numbers of people started switching from full-size gas-guzzlers to compact cars, gas consumption went down so sharply and steeply that it led to an oil oversupply and gas prices dropped significantly. One person won't make a difference by themselves, but one or two million will. And one person can provide the inspiration and spark for change.



Gas prices in April 2022 by Kathryn Frieden.



Carpooling is an excellent way to save on gas, as demonstrated by the Twitchers. Photo thanks to Susan Wrisley, courtesy of Steve Bennett and others.

What to Watch for in Summer

Summer in the bird world is only two months long – June and July. It is the breeding season for most birds in New Hampshire, but the tail end of the northward migration is still going on in early June. By the end of July, southbound adult shorebirds are starting to appear; the young will follow later in the fall. Watch for adult songbirds carrying food to feed their young. Here are some of the birding highlights to watch for.



Some of the 140 Common Eider chicks that Steve Mirick tallied and photographed on 6-12-21 at Rye Harbor State Park. Females will band together with their young forming creches for protection from predators.

June

- Common Eider chicks appear in numbers in late May and early June at the coast. There is still no documented breeding on the New Hampshire mainland, only on the Isles of Shoals.
- Common and Roseate Terns nest at the Isles of Shoals and feed on the coast, especially at Hampton Harbor and the Piscataqua River off of New Castle.
- American Oystercatchers recently began nesting at the Isles of Shoals and can be seen on Star Island. The best way to look for them is to take a boat tour around the islands and/or land on Star Island.
- The first Wilson's Storm-Petrels arrive in northern waters after breeding in the southern hemisphere. Numbers build during the summer and peak in July. They can sometimes be seen from the coast, but are more reliable from a boat, such as on a whalewatch.
- Bicknell's Thrush are back on their breeding territories in the high elevations of the White Mountains and northern Coos County. They are easier to hear rather than see, especially their "veer" call.
- The boreal bird song chorus is in full voice in early June. Birds can be difficult to see in the dense spruce-fir of northern forests in Coos County, but this is the time to look for them, especially in the early morning during peak singing.



Wilson's Storm-Petrel by Susan Wrisley, 7-8-21, Jeffreys Ledge, NH.

July

- Great Shearwaters, and sometimes Manx, Sooty, and Cory's Shearwaters join the Wilson's Storm-Petrels in offshore ocean waters. A whalewatch or fishing boat is the easiest way to see them.
- Tennessee Warblers nest only in northern New Hampshire and Canada but sometimes show up well to the south in early July, such as the one seen by Chris McPherson on July 5, 2021 at Temple Mountain.
- Southbound shorebird migration starts in early July with the first species to arrive being Least Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers, and Lesser Yellowlegs. They are most common on the coast, but Least Sandpipers and Solitary Sandpipers are common inland. Migrants are also sometimes seen from boats, such as this observation from Bob Quinn:
July 23, 2021- On a whalewatch out of Rye, I saw a flock of ten Short-billed Dowitchers migrating south in New Hampshire waters about 15 miles offshore at 2:45 pm. While fun, this sighting was not surprising.
- Watch for an influx of Bonaparte's Gulls at the coast in late July, with adults arriving first. Check coves anywhere along the coast, especially the cove north of the Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye.
- Early landbird migrants such as Yellow Warblers start appearing in late July. Louisiana Waterthrush are gone by the end of the month.
- The first Great Egrets appear inland in late July. This is post-breeding dispersal and birds can show up anywhere.
- Swallows finish nesting early and begin to stage in large flocks at ponds and lakes and especially along the coast.
- Chimney Swifts start to gather in large flocks, often in cities and towns, roosting in large chimneys.

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

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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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Roseate Spoonbill in Gorham, NH



David Forsyth, 8-1-21.



Steve Bennett, 8-1-21.



Lori Charron, 7-31-21.



David Forsyth, 8-1-21.



Unusual poop from the spoonbill? Maybe not. Lori Charron took this on 8-1-21 and there are similar heron photos online. The camera may provide a stop-action view we don't normally see.

Summer 2021 Rarities



Eared Grebe by Ken Faucher, 7-10-21, Long Pond, Lempster, NH.



Lark Bunting by Susan Wrisley, 7-18-21, Hudson, NH.



Green-tailed Towhee by Kyle Wilmarth, 7-10-21, Salem, NH.