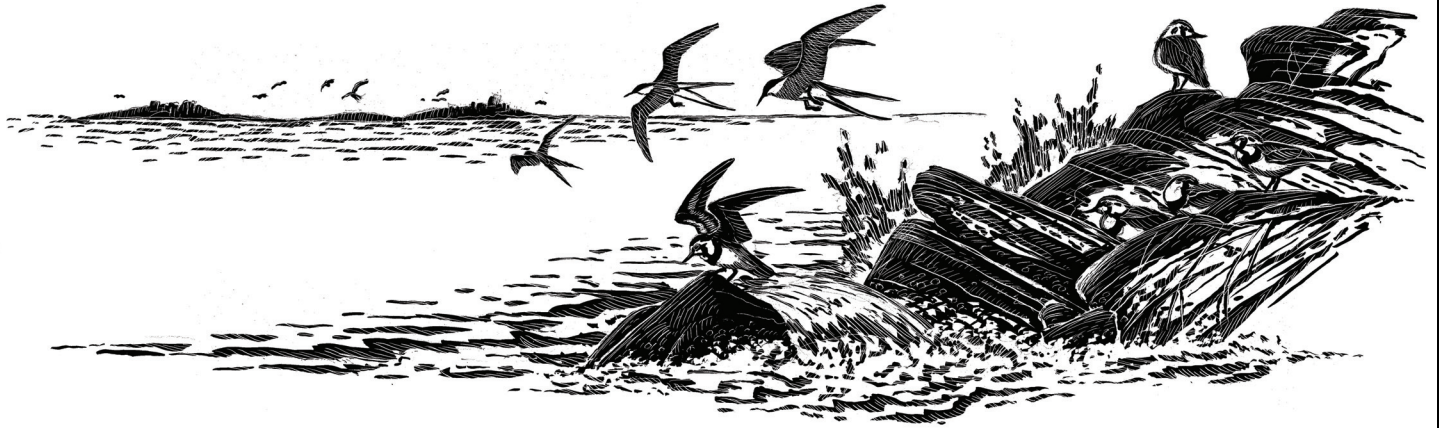


New Hampshire Bird Records



“The Missing Seasons”

Spring 1986	(Vol. 5, No. 1)
Summer 1986	(Vol. 5, No. 2)
Fall 1986	(Vol. 5, No. 3)
Winter 1986–87	(Vol. 5, No. 4)
Spring 1987	(Vol. 6, No. 1)
Summer 1987	(Vol. 6, No. 2)



Thank You

Many volunteers worked on this publication over the years and helped make it possible. Bob Quinn took this project on himself and has been the heart of the effort to publish these seasons. Thanks to his commitment we are able to fill this gap in the published record of New Hampshire's bird reports. A very special thank you goes to Jill Simmons, who entered all of the data into the computer, and to the others who worked on the publication: Jeannine Ayer, Dorothy Fitch, Margot Johnson, Susan MacLeod, Kathie Palfy, Jean Tasker, Dot Soule, and Bob Vernon. We are also indebted to the observers who continued to send in their bird reports despite the absence of a publication. These sightings provide the basis for this publication and a continuing record of the bird life in the state. All of us at *New Hampshire Bird Records* appreciate the time and effort of everyone who contributed to this issue.

Rebecca Suomala

Managing Editor, *New Hampshire Bird Records*
July, 2006

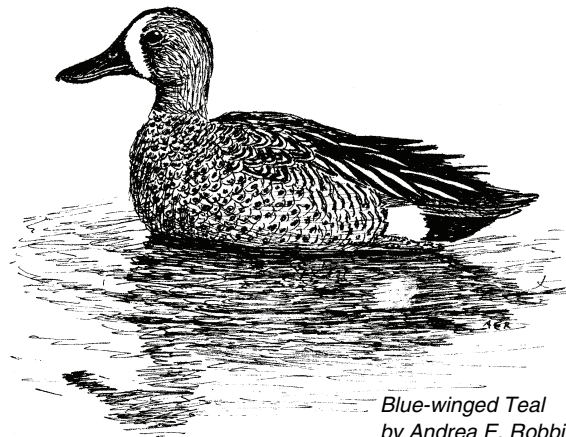
List of Abbreviations

BBA – New Hampshire Breeding Bird Atlas

BBS – Breeding Bird Survey

CBC – Christmas Bird Count

NHRBC – New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee



Blue-winged Teal
by Andrea E. Robbins

New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR) is published quarterly by New Hampshire Audubon. Bird sightings are submitted by volunteer observers and edited for publication. All rarity records are subject to review by the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee and publication of reports here does not imply future acceptance by the committee. A computerized printout of all sightings in a season is available for a fee. To order a printout, purchase back issues, or submit your sightings, contact the Managing Editor, or visit our Web site at www.nhbirdrecords.org.

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“The Missing Seasons” — Spring 1986 through Summer 1987

by Robert A. Quinn

What are the “missing seasons”?

There were six issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* that, for a variety of reasons, were never published. A number of years ago, I undertook the task to serve as the Editor for these six seasons and to prepare them for publication so that they would become part of the published record.

Why is it important to publish them?

New Hampshire has a history of high quality, systematic, published bird reports going back to the early 1950s, and this fills in one of the few gaps in that history. Aside from the pure enjoyment of having this information in print, we now know that it is very important to have this data for the protection and conservation of our local bird life. It also demonstrates how far the publication has come in the last two decades as well as how much the birding community has grown and progressed. We all have a lot of which we can be proud.

Some significant cultural changes in the last 20 years and what they mean for birds and birding

The trite saying, “That was then and this is now,” sums up the changes in the birds and bird records of the 1980s and those of today. And what startling changes they have been! As you will see from reading this document there are some remarkable differences in the bird life. But before we get to the birds, take a moment to think about the cultural changes and their relationship to birds and birding. For example, these phrases, acronyms, and initials were unknown then: list serve, iPod, IBA, FAQs, digiscoping, MP3, and NHRBC. And some that are virtually unknown today were common then: BBA (see below), VHH (Vera Hebert), and KCE (Kimball Elkins). Vera and Kimball are some of the giants on whose shoulders we stand today.

Now let’s look at some specific examples of these changes.

The number of birders, their abilities, and the communication revolution

As far as *New Hampshire Bird Records* is concerned we have much more information now than we did in the 1980s. The most important reason is that we have a lot more birders who know a lot more about the bird life in New Hampshire and who also realize how important it is to submit their records. The changing technology has revolutionized how we find out about birds, how we see them, and how we record them. The Internet, list serves, and cell phones have transformed how we hear about them. The improvement in optics, especially scopes, has dramatically improved how well we see them. Digital photography has made a huge difference in documentation, proper identification, the ability to share, plus the pure enjoyment of birding. Additionally, submission of records and documentation can now be handled electronically.

Where are the loons? The changing taxonomy and checklist.

The names and checklist order of the birds have changed several times...if you have not bought a bird book in recent years you are way behind the times! If you love your old book, keep it, but at least get the latest version of *A Checklist of the Birds of New Hampshire*, produced by New Hampshire Audubon. That way you will be able to tell a Long-tailed Duck from an Oldsquaw when you see one.

The changing weather. Stay tuned!

Any doubt seems to be fading, the weather *is* changing. For just a sample of how that might be affecting our birds, see the sections below on pelagic birds and the increasing species. Then think about the weather again. It is likely to become a more and more significant issue in the years ahead.

The logistics of this issue — much more interesting than you might imagine!

These seasons are presented in the older style format of *New Hampshire Bird Records* that was used prior to the Fall of 1987 (vol. 6, no. 3). This allows it to fit into an existing collection of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, both in size and style. Some bird names have changed since these reports were originally submitted, but in order to maintain consistency with the other issues from that time period, ***we have used the old name followed by the new name in parentheses***. We have also used the older taxonomic order for the bird groupings. For each season there is an introduction followed by written summaries for each group of birds detailing the highlights. There are no listings of individual sightings, but we have included the initials of the observer(s) in [brackets] after selected sightings. At the end of each season is a list of reporters and their initials, as well as the initials for any additional observers mentioned in the text (as needed). Although not all sightings are listed, each record has been entered into the computer and is part of the historical record of bird sightings in the state.

This time period coincided with the end of the New Hampshire Breeding Bird Atlas field work (BBA). The Atlas was a systematic survey of breeding birds in the state that took place for six years during the early 1980s. It created distributional information and occurrence maps for each documented breeding species. These maps and data were published in the *Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire*. Sightings from field observers, referred to as “atlases,” are included in the publication. This is different from the Breeding Bird Survey routes, which are part of a continent-wide survey that is ongoing to this day.

These old seasons are based on much fewer data than the current seasons. For example, there were 438 sightings submitted for Summer 1986 versus 1,645 for Summer 2005. Therefore, the quality of current data is better than that of the seasons presented here and the fewer number of birds discussed below should be looked at in the context of the number of reports.

Not all rarities from these six seasons have the type of documentation that might be expected of current rarities. The level of documentation for rarities is noted in the text and many will require review by the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee, which did not exist at that time. We now have a much more standardized process for requesting and reviewing documentation on rarities.

It is clear we have come a long way with much more data and a higher quality and more sophisticated publication itself. It is all because of your enthusiasm and contributions—keep up the good work!

Some of the most obvious changes in the number and variety of birds in the last 20 years

This topic really deserves a more in depth article and all of these species have an interesting story, but for now I will simply list them below.

Increases: all geese have increased, with breeding Canada Geese and more frequent sightings of Greater White-fronted Geese as examples (but see the Spring 1986 comment regarding the suspect nature of the latter); Gadwall and Northern Shoveler are now expected annually in small numbers; Ring-necked Duck numbers have grown tremendously; Turkey and Black Vultures, Wild Turkey, both cormorants, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Cooper’s Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon; almost all gulls species with a change inland from Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls to

Ring-billed Gull; Common, Arctic and Roseate Terns, because of the incredible success of the White and Seavey Islands tern colony; Atlantic Puffin, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Fish Crow, Common Raven, Carolina Wren, American Robin in winter, both waxwings in winter, nesting American Pipits, nesting Fox Sparrows, Orchard Oriole, and the rise and fall of the House Finch! Whew!

Decreases: American Black Duck, maybe also Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Bittern, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Upland Sandpiper, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls inland, Dovekie, Whip-poor-will, Common Nighthawk, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Purple Martin, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, House Finch, and Evening Grosbeak

Pelagic Birds, a Special Case: the numbers of these species fluctuate widely from year to year based on the food supply, but with the apparent changes in food supplies, the increase in severe storms, and the more diligent efforts of local birders during these storms, we have a much better idea of what passes our shoreline every year. Just take a few minutes to think about the increases in what has been reported *from shore* for these species recently: Northern Fulmar, Greater, Sooty, and Manx Shearwaters, Northern Gannet, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Red-necked and Red Phalaropes, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Black-legged Kittiwake, and almost all of the alcid, which get a big boost from the biologists on White and Seavey Islands who now think Atlantic Puffin and Common Murre are routine in the summer!

Summary

This has been a true exercise in humility as I realize how little we still know about the birds in NH, especially about the ongoing changes. All bird populations are dynamic—the bird you are watching today is part of a population that is either increasing or declining and many of those changes are occurring rapidly. You can help document those changes

Enough! Now on to the birds and the records that you have been missing all these years, such as the Hudsonian Godwit in Hanover....

Robert A. Quinn
July, 2006

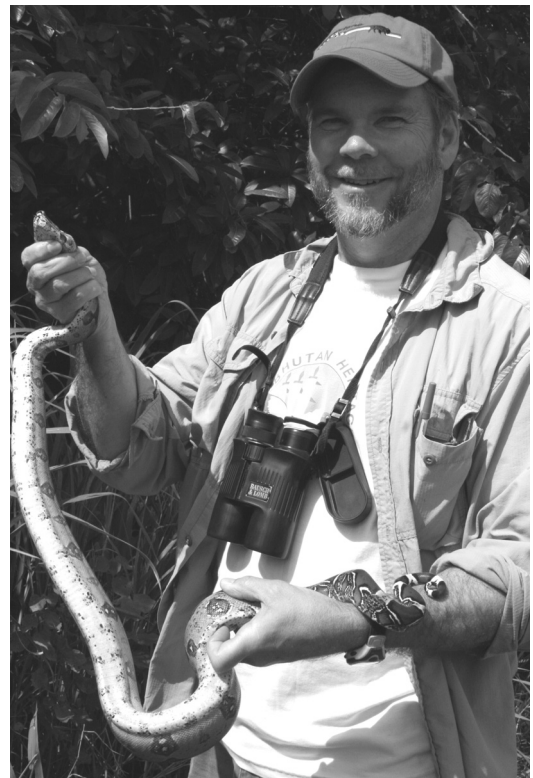


Photo by Mary Boulanger

*Author, Bob Quinn, and boa, at work,
Venezuela, 2006.*

Spring 1986

March 1 through May 31, 1986

Volume 5, Number 1



Red-headed Woodpecker
by Andrea E. Robbins

The weather this spring was moderate overall but there were several periods of cold rainy weather that held migrants back. From the records it is hard to tell if there were any real waves. The only day that really seems to stand out is May 18. While this was obviously an excellent day the significance of it might be colored by the fact that it was this editor who experienced it.

Rarities this season included a **Western Grebe**, two different **Greater White-fronted Geese**, three drake Northern Shovelers, a pair of **Barrow's Goldeneye**, some amazing shorebirds in Franconia Notch (without details), two Black-headed Gulls, two Red-headed Woodpeckers, a male Red-bellied Woodpecker, a male Black-backed Woodpecker in Chesterfield, and a male **Black-headed Grosbeak**.

Robert A. Quinn

Loons through Hawks

Fifty Red-necked Grebes off Little Boar's Head on March 23 is a very respectable total. Sixteen Horned Grebes on Spofford Lake in Chesterfield on April 16 is another good spring total. But the highlight of the grebe clan was a **Western Grebe** seen at Odiorne Point State Park on March 28 [RAQ, et al.], which constitutes one of only a handful of sightings for the state. There were two sizable flocks of Double-crested Cormorants inland with 16 in Manchester and 34 in Concord in April. Were they brought down by bad weather? Was the Great Egret seen inland at Merrymeeting Marsh on April 27 also grounded by the weather?

Only six Green-winged Teal were reported. There were two sightings of **Greater White-fronted Geese**—one from Charlestown on May 6 [WGE] with very good details, and a second from Grantham on May 1 [LH] with little to no description. The origin of species like this is always hard to ascertain but when the identification leaves no doubt, I think it is worth publishing the record. Future students can debate whence they came. Other interesting waterfowl included 11 Northern Pintail in Hinsdale on April 20, three drake Northern

Shovelers in Whitefield on May 6, five Canvasbacks on Great Bay on March 22 and four in Hinsdale on March 30, 75 Ring-necked Ducks in Gilford on April 13, and a pair of **Barrow's Goldeneye** on Great Bay on March 22 [DE, CFS]. The only reported hawk migration was noted on the extremely early date of March 16 when 120 hawks (mostly unidentified) were seen in Mont Vernon [R&MS].

Turkeys through Shorebirds

A group of 31 Wild Turkeys in Walpole on March 14 must have been a spectacular sight! Eighteen species of shorebirds is a fair spring tally. American Woodcock and Killdeer were noted by mid-March but the most unusual sightings were the 14 Short-billed Dowitchers and a single Red Knot in Franconia Notch [PZ, PP] on May 30 (no details were submitted for these sightings but it would be hard to mistake a Red Knot at that time of year). Two Common Black-headed Gulls (now Black-headed Gull) were seen in Portsmouth March 23 [LP] as well as two Iceland Gulls and one Glaucous Gull.



Owls through Thrushes

Twelve Northern Saw-whet Owls is an unusually high number of reports and all but one were in March. Some of the typically early migrants such as Northern Flicker, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Phoebe were all noted before the end of March. The two Red-headed Woodpeckers (both adults), one seen on April 29 in Derry [RAQ] and the other on May 23 in Jackson [PB]), the Black-backed Woodpecker (male) in Chesterfield [JH] on March 3, and the male Red-bellied Woodpecker in Concord [HM] on May 15 were all well described.

A fledgling Horned Lark was seen in the saltmarshes at Seabrook on May 18. The only Carolina Wren was a bird seen and heard at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye on March 28. The first Eastern Bluebird was noted on March 12 after which the species was well reported with over 55 noted.

Catbird through House Sparrow



A lot of first warbler arrivals were noted on May 1 and May 6. Most of the early warblers seemed to be “on time.” On a clear and sunny May 18 this editor [RAQ] was at the Seabrook sand dunes at dawn, then at Odiorne Point, and had a most remarkable morning with easily

hundreds, perhaps thousands of birds, including 16 species of warblers (with 24 each of Yellow Warbler and American Redstart, 36 Magnolia Warbler, and at least 100 Common Yellowthroat), over 100 Gray Catbirds, seven Brown Thrashers, 12 or more Swamp Sparrows, three Lincoln’s Sparrows, and about 300 Bobolinks migrating overhead. Later in the day, at Odiorne Point State Park, there seemed to be even more birds (but less song, of course). Obviously it was a great day at the coast, but the only other observer who reported anything of note that day was Vera Hebert in New Hampton, who had 18 Scarlet Tanagers, four Tennessee Warblers, four Canada Warblers, two Olive-sided Flycatchers, seven Wood Thrushes, and seven Northern (Baltimore) Orioles.

A male **Black-headed Grosbeak** in New Ipswich on May 13 was well described but unfortunately only one observer had the privilege of watching it [SO]. The first blackbirds were seen early in March. The only finch of note was the Common Redpoll, which was widespread and abundantly reported through March. Lesser numbers of Pine Siskin were noted and only four Pine Grosbeaks and one each of Red and White-winged Crossbills were seen.

Spring 1986 Reporters

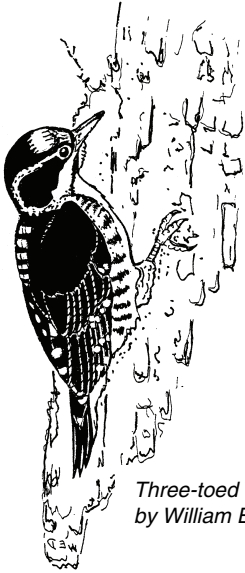
Alice E. Ames [AEA], Meade Cadot [MC], Jeremy Coleman [JC], Carol Daugherty [CD], Anne Drinon [AD], Kimball C. Elkins [KCE], Diane Evans [DE], Susan Fogelman [SF], Kenneth E. Folsom [KEF], Sharon Francis [SFr], Zoe French [ZF], Nola Frost [NF], Dave Govatski [DG], Jane Grant [JG], Vincent Hayden [VH], Vera H. Hebert [VHH], Barbara Johnson [BJ], Barbara Koivula [BK], Jody Longnecker [JL], Sandra Mallet [SM], Marie T. Martin [MTM], Cindy Matthewson [CM], Hazel Miller [HM], Mary Jo Murray [MJM], Leon Phinney [LP], Priscilla Phipps [PP], Carrie Mauhs-Pugh [CMP], Robert A. Quinn [RAQ], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Robert Rathbone [RR], Mary Reihard [MR], Beverly Ridgely [BR], Robert E. Ritz [RER], Andrea E. Robbins [AER], Carol F. Smith [CFS], Rebecca & Mark Suomala [R&MS], Jeff Toffic [JT], Robert C. Vernon [RCV], Bette Verville [BV], Penny Verville [PV], Jesse H. Ward [JHW], Gertrude B. Weir [GBW], Jane White [JW].

Additional observer initials listed in this season: Priscilla Bissell [PB], Walter G. Ellison [WGE], Jackie Howard [JH], Lib Holden [LH], Steve Oden [SO], P. Zandi [PZ].

Summer 1986

June 1 through July 31, 1986

Volume 5, Number 2



Three-toed Woodpecker
by William E. Davis

The summer season is often lightly reported, but this year was exceptionally poor with a total of only 438 sightings. A few nice birds were noted, including a **Common Moorhen** in Hebron, a Red-headed Woodpecker, a female **Three-toed Woodpecker**, an **Acadian Flycatcher** on eggs, and a **Blue Grosbeak**. In the exotic category there was a Monk Parakeet in Durham and one or two Brazilian Cardinals in the Great Bay area. The latter were undoubtedly released caged birds and, although Monk Parakeets have a small breeding population in Connecticut, they do not breed in New Hampshire and are likely escapees.

Robert A. Quinn

Loons through Waterfowl

Pied-billed Grebes at Grant's Pond in Grafton and Ballard Pond in Derry were new breeding locations for this threatened species. Herons were thinly reported with no egrets at all noted. A Ring-necked Duck seen once in New London on June 16 was apparently just passing through, although there are nesting records for that part of the state. Two Northern Shovelers were reported, but without any details, on June 24 in Stratham. This species is rare in June and more likely to be seen during migration.

Hawks through Shorebirds

A wandering Osprey was seen in Lebanon on July 3. The Endangered Species Program tallied 14 pairs of Osprey, which is a typical number for the state. A **Common Moorhen** in Hebron on June 5 [EF] was an especially good find. Seven Upland Sandpipers were discovered in Haverhill [CFS, DE, DS, et al.], which seems to be the only reliable place for this species in the state. Migrant shorebirds went unreported.



Cuckoos through Woodpeckers

Nine Black-billed Cuckoos is an excellent count considering the rather meager reporting and the fact that it was not an infestation year for gypsy moth caterpillars. One cuckoo was as far north as Columbia. The only Common Nighthawk report came from Northumberland on July 7. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen in Waterville Valley, apparently on one day only, July 13 [JU]. A female **Three-toed Woodpecker** was a pleasant surprise to some Breeding Bird Atlas participants in a northern bog in Success [CFS].

Flycatchers through Thrushes

An **Acadian Flycatcher** on eggs was discovered in Sandwich [CFS, B&RR]. It was believed to be an unmated female. This is the first known nesting attempt in New Hampshire. Nine Willow Flycatchers (and no Alders) were something of a surprise to an Atlas worker in Derry and eight Marsh Wrens were rattling away in the same wetland in early June. American Crows were noted in record high

numbers (636) on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). Eastern Bluebirds were well reported with 23 individuals on the BBS and 23 pairs tallied in Rumney. Two Swainson's Thrush in New London seemed unusual. This species usually breeds in spruce-fir forests farther to the north. One of the very few public roads that can bring a birder within earshot of the Gray-cheeked Thrush (Bicknell's Thrush) must be the Jefferson Notch Road, where this summer's only report came from. Wood Thrush are of concern as they fell to their lowest total ever on the BBS (223).



Evening Grosbeak
by Andrea E. Robbins

Warblers through House Sparrow



The description of a male **Blue Grosbeak** on July 14 in North Conway [GiG] left this editor a believer and at least one has been seen in the mountains in the past. The 25 Eastern Meadowlarks on the BBS was the highest number in quite a few years and one diligent observer found six different Eastern Meadowlarks in Manchester alone [MTM]. A Rusty Blackbird from Dixville came from an area that does not get much coverage and holds great potential. Both the BBS and the regular reports suggest that it was a very good year for Purple Finches. A flock of 15 Evening Grosbeaks in New Hampton in late July was probably made up of several families.

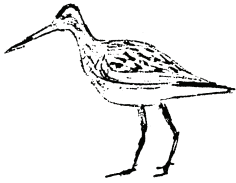
Summer 1986 Reporters

Dick Ethier [DE], Diane Evans [DEv], Zoe French [ZF], Ginger Gilley [GiG], Jane Grant [JG], Dave Govatski [DG], Lynn Harper [LH], Vera H. Hebert [VHH], Betsy Janeway [BJ], Ron Jarvis [RJ], Barbara Johnson [BJo], David Killam [DK], Sandra Mallett [SM], Marie T. Martin [MTM], Cindy Mathewson [CM], Annette Morrill [AM], Mary Jo Murray [MJM], Priscilla Phipps [PP], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Robert E. Ritz [RER], Carol F. Smith [CFS], Dawn Stavros [DS], Elizabeth F. Swift [EFS], Jean Upton [JU], Bette Verville [BV], Robert C. Vernon [RCV], Stephen G. Walker [SGW], Doris Watkins [DW].

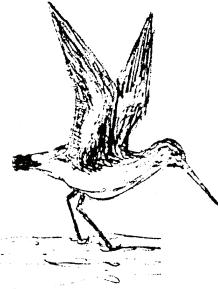
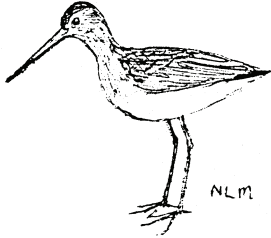
Additional observer initials listed in this season: Edith Finkle [EF], Beverly & Robert Ridgely [B&RR]

Fall 1986

August 1 through November 30, 1986
Volume 5, Number 3



Hudsonian Godwit
field sketches
by Nancy L. Martin



The weather in August was close to “normal” until the very end of the month when there was an early freeze. A “major warbler movement” was noted in Columbia (just south of Colebrook) [DK] in conjunction with this freeze. On September 7 a “massive warbler movement” was again noted in Columbia. Another cold spell occurred during the middle of September, but the only migration-connected result might have been the largest hawk flight of the season, which normally happens at that time anyway. The hawkwatch totals in general were modest

compared to recent standards but after a storm on September 15 one coastal observer [EWP] had “a spectacular day” that included a **Swainson’s Hawk**; there were good details with this sighting, but unfortunately it was a single observer report and as such would have to remain hypothetical, according to the state Rare Birds Committee’s criteria, which require three observers or a photo for a first state record.

The waterfowl and shorebird migrations were unremarkable except for an extraordinarily well described and reported **Hudsonian Godwit** along the Connecticut River in Hanover. This unprecedented inland sighting was actually made from the Vermont side and this editor considers the Vermont birders [WGE, NM] extremely considerate in sending the report to us.

Other rarities for the season included a Carolina Wren, an **Orange-crowned Warbler**, two **Dickcissels**, and a **Clay-colored Sparrow**.

Robert A. Quinn

Loons through Waterfowl

Twenty-eight Common Loons on Lake Umbagog on September 26 was the highest tally. Four Horned Grebes on Webster Lake in Franklin on October 21 and two Red-necked Grebes at Lake Umbagog on September 26 were the only inland reports of note. A Great Egret in Winchester was a singular event for this species. Two adult Little Blue Herons were seen together in Rye on August 12.

Flocks of 20 and 55 Snow Geese were reported from Hopkinton and Northwood respectively (the Northwood flock had one “Blue” Goose). Ten Red-breasted Mergansers on Mascoma Lake is a good inland total.



Hawks

Almost all hawk species totals were lower than in 1985 with the notable exception of Broad-winged Hawks (6,570 vs. 3,428) but this year’s total is not historically high. A Turkey Vulture in Concord on November 24 was rather late as was an Osprey in Nelson on November 25. Somewhat unusual (considering the low numbers of hawks reported) were four Rough-legged Hawks. There was a report of two adult Golden Eagles [TP] flying together over Mt. Kearsarge on September 27, and an undocumented sighting of another individual in Pittsburg.

Turkey through Sandpipers

Walpole was the Wild Turkey capital of New Hampshire this fall with up to 11 being seen at once. A Virginia Rail at the Gavutis residence in Kensington on November 30 was rather late.



The shorebird reports were meager with the inland **Hudsonian Godwit** [WGE] being by far the outstanding sighting. Not only was this a remarkable inland sighting but it was seen on the late dates of November 2 and 3. Other inland records included a Lesser Golden-Plover (American Golden-Plover) in Concord [TA, LH], a Semipalmated Plover in Wilmot [KCE], up to six Greater Yellowlegs in Wilmot [KCE], ten Solitary Sandpipers and a Sanderling in Concord [TA, LH, BHy, VH], five Pectoral Sandpipers in Wilmot on October 15 [KCE] and three White-rumped Sandpipers with the godwit in Hanover on November 2 (a late date as well as being an unusual location).

Along the coast the only reports of interest were four Stilt Sandpipers in Hampton Falls August 12 and 50 Ruddy Turnstones at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye on August 17.

Gulls through Wrens

Two Laughing Gulls passed by Odiorne Point on September 5. Five Snowy Owls were seen inland between October 31 and November 11. A flock of 120 American Crows was noted in East Concord on October 27. A Carolina

Wren heard as well as seen in Northwood on August 14 was apparently just a “one night stand.” A late Winter Wren was observed on November 15 in Sandwich.

Bluebirds through Warblers

The largest flock of Eastern Bluebirds was only 15 birds. A Northern Shrike in Antrim on November 12 was seen carrying a rodent. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was seen in New Hampton on September 29 [VHH], which is perhaps a little earlier than normal for this obscure and rare fall migrant. Otherwise, the warbler report was inconsequential.

Tanager through Evening Grosbeak



Two separate **Dickcissels** (one in October [VHH] and another one in November [JHW]) had significant amounts of yellow on them. The sparrow migration was modest but a well described **Clay-colored Sparrow** in Durham on September 25 added some spice [MLD]. Four Snow Buntings in Springfield on October 22 were a little ahead of the modest peak of 150 at the coast on November 6.

Only one report of Common Redpolls was received (six birds). Crossbills were apparently absent and fewer than 70 Pine Siskins were reported.

Fall 1986 Reporters

Alice E. Ames [AEA], Tom Arter [TA], Vincent Benincasa [VB], Lora Jean Collett [LJC], Jeanette Cloues [JC], Myra L. Davis [MLD], Kimball C. Elkins [KCE], Walter G. Ellison [WGE], Diane Evans [DE], Jeff Fair [JF], Kenneth E. Folsom [KEF], Carol R. Foss [CRF], Zoe French [ZF], George W. Gavutis [GG], Jane Grant [JG], Chuck Gibilisco [CG], Lynn Harper [LH], Vincent Hayden [VH], Vera H. Hebert [VHH], John Hill [JH], Marilyn Jordan [MJ], David Killam [DK], Sandra Mallett [SM], Marie T. Martin [MTM], Cindy Mathewson [CM], Tom Pratt [TP], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Robert E. Ritz [RER], Karen Ruel [KR], Raymond A. Sprague [RAS], Gail Thomas [GT], Jeff Toffic [JT], Stephen G. Walker [SGW], Jesse H. Ward [JHW], Jane White [JW].

Additional observer initials listed in this season: Barbara Hayden [BHy], Nancy Martin [NM], Elisabeth Phinney [EWP].

Winter 1986–87

December 1, 1986 through February 28, 1987

Volume 5, Number 4

The December weather data was unavailable, but January 1987 had close to record breaking snowfall with 45 inches in Concord. Obviously there were quite a few storms, one of which seems to have dropped one of the few **Purple Gallinules** to ever have visited our state. February was sunny, cold and dry. In fact, it was the driest February ever! But with the impressive snow cover remaining from January there was no sign of spring— except for the Turkey Vulture on February 24. In addition to the Purple Gallinule, waterfowl were very well reported. There were some remarkable rarities, including the first photographically documented **Lesser Black-backed Gull** for the state, Red-bellied Woodpecker, one **Varied Thrush**, nine **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, and Bohemian Waxwings.



*Turkey Vulture
by Andrea E. Robbins*

Robert A. Quinn

Loons through Waterfowl

Five Double-crested Cormorants in December and January attest to the recent success of that species. Great Blue Herons were widespread through the period.

Mute Swans were seen in two coastal locations and at Lake Massabesic in Auburn. Good American Black Duck counts included 190 in Hinsdale and two other inland totals of over 100 and 1,200 on the Coastal Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Mallards were seen in even higher numbers with the peak being 1,948 on the Laconia CBC. Laconia also had an American Wigeon (very unusual and unique for the season), two Ring-necked Ducks, and four Greater Scaup.

Other unusual waterfowl included a Mallard on the Pittsburg CBC, a Green-winged Teal [FB] and a Northern Pintail in Bow [FB] on December 29 (but missed on the Concord CBC), four Canvasbacks [DE, DHu, DT] on Great Bay (in late February they were in all likelihood migrants), a Greater Scaup [JC] in Hinsdale, a female King Eider [PL] on the Coastal CBC, 159 Common Goldeneyes in Hinsdale and **nine**



Barrow's Goldeneyes from five different locations (four inland): one at Hinsdale [WGE et al.], one at Hooksett [KD], three at Franklin [NA], one at Rye [EWP], one on the Concord CBC [TA, VH], and two on the Coastal CBC [PL]. Two Buffleheads [JC] on the Connecticut River in Hinsdale are a very uncommon winter occurrence and the 68 Common Mergansers seen there were the highest total reported.

Hawks through Gulls

A Turkey Vulture on February 24 in Hinsdale was surely an early migrant but with the snow cover it must have been a hungry one. An estimated 60 Bald Eagles (30 adults, 26 immatures, and four unidentified) were present in the state during the winter, as reported by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire's winter eagle monitoring program. Other hawk highlights were two Red-shouldered Hawks and seven Rough-legged Hawks.

Eight Northern Bobwhite on the Peterborough-Hancock CBC on December 20 were remarkable even considering their probable origin as released captive-bred birds. A Sora on Locke Rd. in Concord on January 13



[KD, DS] appeared to be in good form, "...picking up first one foot then the other as he stood on the ice...." We will put it down as probably the latest Sora on record. The prize for Bird of the Season (to say nothing about "one-up'rail'ship") goes to the wayward **Purple Gallinule** found in a bush after a snowstorm on January 25 and brought to an aviary in Lee [AB, WS]! This misguided soul expired and now holds a hallowed place in the ornithology of New Hampshire as one of very few specimens of the species (and the only one extant?) for the state.

There were only a handful of the three species of "winter" shorebirds (Dunlin, Sanderling, and Purple Sandpiper), but the Nashua CBC came through with another Common Snipe (Wilson's Snipe) this year. Portsmouth Harbor seems to be the most reliable spot for Common Black-headed Gull (Black-headed Gull) and three to five were noted there this winter. The numbers of Ring-billed Gulls were up with 32 on the Nashua CBC, 41 on the Lee-Durham CBC, 45 on the Laconia CBC, and 171 on the Coastal CBC being the most significant. Only one Glaucous and two Iceland Gulls inland is lower than normal. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** [SRM] photographed in Rye is only the second or third sighting for the state (and the first to be documented).

Owls through Thrushes

Two Eastern Screech-Owls are better than the average winter. Eight Great Horned Owls were found on the Coastal CBC and one was hooting regularly in Contoocook from February 6 onward. Only four or five Snowy Owls were noted.

Several Belted Kingfishers apparently overwintered. A Red-headed Woodpecker was a nice find on the Baker Valley CBC [WK, NP] (although lacking in details). A Red-bellied Woodpecker [TA, LH, SA] was seen by many



for several weeks in Stratham (good documentation would have been valuable, as the species is still uncommon). A Black-backed Woodpecker on the Pittsburg CBC, while not unexpected, is always a nice find as were the eight Gray Jays there. The Nashua CBC recorded 154 Tufted Titmice and three counts each tallied over 1,000 Black-capped Chickadees (Lee-Durham, Peterborough-Hancock, and Hanover). Three Carolina Wrens survived into January. A Winter Wren was seen on the Lee-Durham CBC. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the Peterborough-Hancock CBC was most unusual. American Robins were noted on five CBCs including 140 on the Coastal and one on the Baker Valley count. One **Varied Thrush** was reported in Sanbornton [JA, SG] in January (with no details).

Waxwings through Evening Grosbeaks

Bohemian Waxwings were seen in seven locations including a flock of 100 in Walpole. Twenty-one Northern Shrikes were reported from around the state. The Pine Warbler on the Concord CBC was a first count record [TA, VH]. American Tree Sparrows were widespread and numerous: 340 on the Coastal CBC, 106 on the Concord CBC, 111 on the Hanover CBC, 132 on the Nashua CBC, and 168 on the Lee-Durham CBC. More unusual sparrows included a Chipping Sparrow in Concord, several Field Sparrows (one in Nashua, four at the Coast, one in Walpole and nine in Lee), plus three Savannah Sparrows and one Fox Sparrow on the Coastal count. Most CBCs, except the northern counts, had Song and White-throated Sparrows.

Snow Buntings were scarce with 25 being the total for the entire period! The only Rusty Blackbird was unusual as to location on the Baker Valley CBC. An oriole in Claremont on December 8 was described as an "immature Northern" [MAW]. Pine Grosbeaks were thinly reported with 21 in Errol and 30 in Hanover being the largest flocks. Only a few Purple Finches were noted, but House Finches were abundant with the highest number being 592 on the Coastal CBC.

Red Crossbill reports came only from the North Country. A few White-winged Crossbills were seen in Concord and Dunbarton. It was a

good year for Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks with dozens of reports and several flocks of over 200 for each species.

Winter 1986–87 Reporters

Denny Abbott [DA], Alice E. Ames [AEA], Ralph Andrews [RA], Tom Arter [TA], Diana Bertin [DB], Robert Bertin [RB], Art Borrer [AB], Frankie Brackley [FB], Bill Bradley [BB], Doris Brainard [DBr], Meade Cadot [MC], Mary Carr [MCr], Jeremy Coleman [JC], John Derby [JD], Kay Dymont [KD], Walter G. Ellison [WGE], Diane Evans [DE], Carol R. Foss [CRF], Zoë French [ZF], Nola Frost [NF], George W. Gavutis [GG], Lynn Harper [LH], Bill Harris [BH], Barbara Hayden [BHy], Dave Hoitt [DH], Rosalind Holt [RH], Cathy Kenny [CK], Barbara Killam [BK], David Killam [DK], Warren King [WK], Debby B. Kirwan [DBK], Paul Lacourse [PL], John McNeish [JM], Cindy Mathewson [CM], John P. Merrill [JPM], Stephen R. Mirick [SRM], Pat Niswander [PN], Northam Parr [NP], Robert A. Quinn [RAQ], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Robert E. Ritz [RER], Nelson Sanborn [NS], Dawn Stavros [DS], Jeff Toffic [JT], Stephen G. Walker [SGW], Sally Welch [SW], Jane White [JW].

Additional observer initials listed in this season: Judy Abbott [JA], Steve Abbott [SA], Nita Aldrich [NA], Sally Gephardt [SG], Vincent Hayden [VH], Dick Hughes [DHu], Elisabeth Phinney [EWP], Walter Sturgeon [WS], Dave Tucker [DT], Mrs. Albert D. Waly [MAW].

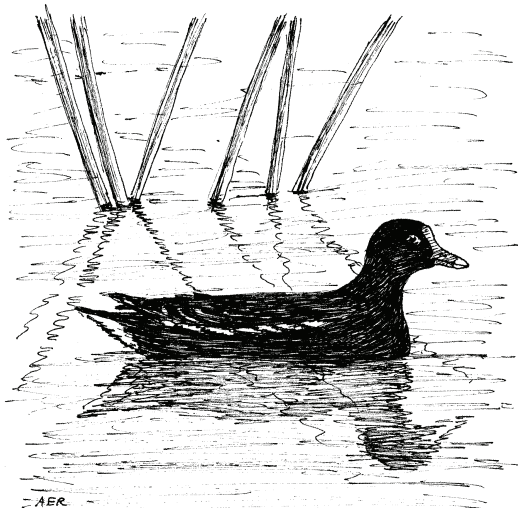


Northern Saw-whet Owl
by John R. Quinn

Spring 1987

March 1 through May 31, 1987

Volume 6, Number 1



Common Moorhen by Andrea E. Robbins

It was a typically topsy-turvy season for both the weather and the birds. A cold and snowy winter yielded to an extreme mixture of spring weather; March was warmer and drier than usual even though it came in like a lion with a moderate snowfall on March 1 and 2. Then a warm-up on March 7 and 8 brought a rush of the usual early migrants such as Horned Lark, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, Killdeer, Red-shouldered Hawk, and even an Eastern Phoebe. After that an arctic blast and inclement weather kept migrants south of us until a warm spell on March 23–25 when the next push of migrants such as American Robin, some waterfowl, and the first Great Blue Heron was

reported.

April was a warm and very wet month (the wettest on record in the southern part of the state) and it ended with a significant snowstorm that dumped 6–18 inches of snow on almost the entire state. This snow was a disaster for the early insectivorous species like swallows and bluebirds and undoubtedly held up some of the late April-early May migrants as there were dozens of record late arrivals. This fact must be tempered by the realization that this was a poorly reported season and that had some effect on the number of late dates as well. However, there were a number of faithful, long-time observers who definitely noted the lateness of many species. Conditions were favorable for migration on April 15–16 and April 19–24 when the temperature reached 80 degrees. A few of the expected species came through at this time (e.g., Winter Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet).

May was drier than any in the last ten years with moderate drought conditions, especially in the north. The temperatures averaged “normal” and this should have been conducive to an average migration, but it did not work out that way, probably due to frequent cold fronts. Plus, the “normal” temperatures were the result of a mostly cooler month that ended with five extremely hot days.

Robert A. Quinn

Note: References to record early and late dates are from a list compiled by Robert Smart from 1952–1969.

Loons through Ducks

A Common Loon on Turkey Pond on April 8 must have arrived very shortly after ice out. However, evidence that the loon migration is a prolonged affair came on May 25 when 16 loons were on Webster Lake in



Franklin and six were on Pleasant Lake in New London after a cold front came through. There were reports of Pied-billed Grebes from five locations, including probable nesting attempts at Cascade Marsh in Sutton, Harper’s Meadow in Errol, and Dodge Pond in Lyman. Rainy

weather on April 5 brought two Red-necked Grebes and two Horned Grebes down on the Merrimack River in Hooksett.

The three American Bitterns reported were in May and probably do not represent first arrivals. The first Great Blue Herons were on time on March 26 in Concord and in Contoocook on March 27. A Great Egret in Durham on April 12 was somewhat early and there was one or possibly two inland at Concord and Hopkinton in late April. A **Tricolored Heron** [SRM, et al.] at Rye on May 16 was rare for any season and I believe only the fifth spring record.

Waterfowl reports were few and far between with the most unusual sightings being an early (perhaps over-wintering) Northern Pintail in Nashua on March 3 [MRu], a rather high count of **28 Canvasbacks** at Great Bay on March 28 [LH, TA], two **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at Great Bay on March 6, three Barrow's Goldeneyes (a single male and a pair) on the Connecticut River in Hinsdale [JC], and a pair of Green-winged Teal in the Hampton saltmarshes on the somewhat late date of May 17.

Hawks through Hummingbird

Turkey Vultures were well reported with over 90 birds from 15 locations, including the first on March 8 in Rumney and the farthest north in Franconia and Harts Location on April 22. The other highlights of a thinly reported hawk migration were early Red-shouldered Hawks on March 7 in Kensington and on March 8 in Lee, an early Northern Harrier on March 22 in Concord, an inland Rough-legged Hawk in Hillsborough on April 27 and a late one at the coast on May 17, and a surprisingly high total (for this season) of nine Northern Goshawks.

A single **Common Moorhen** in Nottingham [BJ] and two in Concord [KD, et al.] were rare finds and all were acting as if they were nesting. A Killdeer on March 8 in Hampton Falls, a Spotted Sandpiper in Stewartstown on April 23, and a Common Snipe (Wilson's Snipe) in Manchester on March 18 were all early. Furthermore, the snipe was in the unusual habitat of a garage! A silent **Long-billed**



Dowitcher at the coast on May 17 [CRF] was seen with Short-billed Dowitchers and was reasonably well, but not definitively, described. If correct, this would be the state's first spring record. Unusual gulls in typical locations in March were a Common Black-headed Gull (Black-headed Gull) in Portsmouth Harbor on March 21 [LH]; Iceland Gulls in Manchester, Seabrook, and Portsmouth; and a Glaucous Gull in Manchester on March 21. A Bonaparte's Gull on the Merrimack River in Concord on March 28 [RAQ] was not an expected sighting, especially for the date. Even rarer, single **Black Terns** were noted in Enfield on May 19 [SWh] and in Hopkinton on May 22 [BH].

On the late side were Whip-poor-wills on May 4 (usual arrival by late April), first Chimney Swifts May 8 (usual arrival by late April), and Ruby-throated Hummingbird on May 11 (usual arrival by early May).

Woodpeckers through Vireos

A well-described, male **Black-backed Woodpecker** was reported from Jaffrey on May 3 [WSc]. An Eastern Phoebe on March 7 was record early by about ten days and was the exception to the rule, as most flycatchers were late and very poorly reported. Only two Alder Flycatchers were reported, and of the six Least Flycatchers, the first was reported on May 12, six days later than the previous "late" arrival record. Horned Larks were noted migrating in March in Columbia, Hampton Falls, Concord, and Alexandria. The only interesting swallow report was of a late migrant Purple Martin at the coast on May 17. On May 17 over 250 migrant Blue Jays were noted coming in off the water during the morning at Odiorne Point State Park.

Eastern Bluebirds were well reported with the first one in Kensington on March 7 and one in Columbia that was the furthest north. Other thrushes as well as Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were all about 7–10 days later than normal. Bohemian Waxwings were holdovers from the winter season with about 70 birds reported from four locations in March including a flock of 60 in Temple on March 17 [MSa]. In



keeping with the season, Solitary (Blue-headed) and Yellow-throated Vireos were record late (May 2 and May 13, respectively), but Red-eyed Vireos came in on schedule in the middle of May.



Warblers through Finches

A few early warblers were a Nashville Warbler on April 18 in Bedford [LK], which was five days earlier than the previous record, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler on April 4, both without any details. Almost **all** other warbler arrivals were either late or record late.

A **Kentucky Warbler** in Durham on May 27 [CAF] was well described and only the eighth spring record. The higher counts for warblers were modest, but included ten Yellow Warblers in Concord on May 10, ten Ovenbirds in New Hampton on May 22, and 14 Common Yellowthroats in New Hampton on May 22.

An Indigo Bunting on April 24 in Exeter was a more expected early arrival as there is some precedence for late April arrivals for this species.

Sparrows in general were not well reported and most arrivals were considered “late”. Exceptions were a higher than usual total of eight Vesper Sparrows, more than ten Sharp-tailed Sparrows (Saltmarsh/Nelson’s) on the record early date of May 17 [CRF, DSc, HPN], and a total of 16 White-crowned Sparrows. An Orchard Oriole in New Hampton on May 10 [VHH] was unusual, as they are typically found only in the extreme southern part of the state. A House Finch was exceptionally far north in Columbia. Common Redpolls lived up to their name in March and early April by being commonly reported, including a flock of “thousands” in Henniker on April 4. The only detail for this remarkable sighting was that there were so many that “the trees looked like they had leaves”. A well-described **Hoary Redpoll** was reported from Lebanon on March 9 [MD]. Scattered small flocks of Pine Siskins were seen in April and May across most of the state, except for the southeast coastal plain.

Spring 1987 Reporters

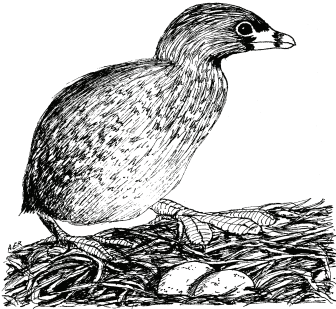
Alice E. Ames [AEA], Tom Arter [TA], Jeanette Bohanon [JB], Doris Brainard [DBr], Tom Chase [TC], Jeremy Coleman [JC], Kay Dymont [KD], Kimball C. Elkins [KCE], Margaret C. Ellis [MCE], Diane Evans [DE], C. Anthony Federer [CAF], Kenneth E. Folsom [KEF], Carol R. Foss [CRF], Liz Freburger LF], Zoe French [ZF], Nola Frost [NF], George W. Gavutis [GG], Jane Grant [JG], Norm Harris [NH], Lynn Harper [LH], Vincent Hayden [VH], Vera H. Hebert [VHH], Thelma Heddemon [TH], Rosalind Holt [RH], Betsy Janeway [BJ], Chris Kallechey [CK], Dave Killam [DK], Ralph Kirshner [RK], Sandra Mallet [SM], Marie T. Martin [MTM], Cindy Mathewson [CM], Stephen R. Mirick [SRM], Pat Niswander [PN], Robert A. Quinn [RAQ], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Shirley Shattuck [SS], Ray A. Sprague [RAS], Dawn Stavros [DS], Mark Suomala [MS], Elizabeth Swift [ES], Stephen G. Walker [SGW], Ted Welch [TW], Jane White [JW].

Additional observer initials listed in this season: Mrs. Dickey [MD], Bill Harris [BH], Lydia Kennard [LK], H. P. Nevers [HPN], Mr. Ruonala [MRu], Mike Salera [MSa], William Schofield [WSc], Douglas Schwarz [DSc], Steve Wheeler [SWh].

Summer 1987

June 1 through July 31, 1987

Volume 6, Number 2



Pied-billed Grebe
by Andrea F. Rohhins

The weather in June was wet and warm while July was hot, humid and drier. Apparently there were no significant weather effects on the nesting birds. However, a cold front that came through on July 30 set a few birds moving south (see Wilson's Warbler in New Hampton).


Interesting potential breeding species, early/late migrants and rarities included breeders: **Northern Pintail**, Blue-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, **Common Moorhen**, Horned Lark, Swainson's Thrush (south), **Water Pipit** (American Pipit), and Evening Grosbeak; migrants: Brant, Ring-necked Duck, Black Scoter, Red Knot, **Black Tern**, Arctic Tern, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and maybe Bay-breasted Warbler; rarities: **Cerulean Warbler**. For details about all these, and more, read on.

Robert A. Quinn

Grebes through Waterfowl

A Pied-billed Grebe in Lyman and one at Pontook Reservoir in Dummer probably nested and a family group was seen on Cops Pond in Moultonborough. A Great Egret was unusually far north in Berlin on July 17. A single Brant off Odiorne Point State Park on June 20 was a bit tardy [MJM]. Two Green-winged Teal at Lake Umbagog, while not surprising, are rarely reported from one of their few nesting areas. A male Northern Pintail on June 1 [TR], also at Lake Umbagog, and a female on July 12-13 [BJ], apparently with young, indicate breeding—believed to be the only state record. Meanwhile, a female Blue-winged Teal performing a distraction display in Hampton Falls on July 4 [GG] is strong evidence of local nesting. Other unusually late migrant ducks included a Ring-necked Duck on Lake Massabesic on June 10 [MTM] and a female-type (plumage that could be female or immature male) Black Scoter on Lake Umbagog on June 19 [SAb]. A Common Goldeneye family on Little Diamond Pond in Stewartstown was not unexpected, but it is always nice to confirm that they nest in a few places other than the Lake Umbagog region.

Hawks through Terns

A Turkey Vulture in Pittsburg  on June 6 was the farthest north that the species has been reported. Moore Reservoir in Littleton hosted both a Bald Eagle and three Ospreys for a few days without any obvious signs of breeding behavior. The Blue-winged Teal at "the Cove" beaver pond, Hampton Falls, was accompanied by a Sora, a Virginia Rail, and more significantly, a **Common Moorhen** [GG]. Moorhens have become quite rare in New Hampshire, especially during the breeding season. The shorebird migration (sandpipers and plovers) was poorly reported with only one observer submitting records from the coast. Migrant shorebirds seen along the coast during late July included Semipalmated Plover, both yellowlegs, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, plus a rather early Red Knot.

Three **Black Terns** at Lake Umbagog on June 19 [SAb, DE, CRF] and one on July 13 [BJ] were unusual, but not unprecedented. Unfortunately the terns were apparently just migrants rather than breeding birds. Up to four Bonaparte's Gulls were seen on Lake Umbagog on July 18 and 19.

Cuckoos through Vireos

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Haverhill was at the northern edge of its normal breeding range. A healthy number of Whip-poor-will reports (ten) included birds at the northern edge of their range in Lyman and Columbia. A family of Horned Larks found in Seabrook on July 29 was on a date that implies it was a second brood for this early nesting species. Golden-crowned Kinglets were noted as “common” in the New London area this summer, at the southern edge of their breeding range in the highlands of southwest New Hampshire. Even rarer in southwest New Hampshire was a single Swainson’s Thrush found on Mount Kearsarge. A Northern Mockingbird was found nesting in a somewhat unusual location – out in the saltmarsh in Hampton Falls. A **Water Pipit** (American Pipit) seen on Mount Washington on July 1 [MC] was the second breeding season sighting in the last three years and is tantalizing evidence that this species may be extending its range southwestward from Mount Katahdin in Maine. A Warbling Vireo in Pittsburg was another species at the northern edge of its New Hampshire range.

Warblers through Evening Grosbeak

Tennessee Warblers appeared in central and even southern New Hampshire during July. The first few were noted on Mount Kearsarge and Mount Monadnock on July 5. A singing male was noted at a Columbia residence on July 14, an unusual location because it is not their normal summer habitat. The periodic appearance of singing male Tennessee Warblers in mid July, almost anywhere in central and northern NH, is a semi-regular but little understood phenomenon that also occurred in July 1981. Then as now, the birds seemed to be unmated, singing males south of their normal breeding range, on dates bordering on early fall migration. A singing male **Cerulean Warbler** discovered on June 20 on Mount Wantastiquet in Hinsdale (and very well documented) [JC, WGE, NM], was possibly breeding locally, although it was most likely just a spring overshoot. The late July cold front mentioned in the introduction brought a Wilson’s Warbler to a New Hampton yard [VHH] along with a small group of other fall migrant warblers. However, a Bay-breasted Warbler in Bath on July 11 is harder to categorize because it seems early for a migrant yet it was not in suitable breeding habitat. Immature Pine Siskins were noted at a feeder in Wolfeboro and young Evening Grosbeaks were seen in Hancock.



Summer 1987 Reporters

Alice E. Ames [AEA], Cindi Bailey [CB], Alan Brady [AB], B.J. Burney [BJB], Meade Cadot [MC], Laurie Caldwell [LC], Jeremy Coleman [JC], Alan Delorey [AD], Barbara Delorey [BD], Kay Dymant [KD], Diane Evans [DE], Carol R. Foss [CRF], Zoe French [ZF], George W. Gavutis [GG], Vera H. Hebert [VHH], Betsy Janeway [BJ], David Killam [DK], Sandra Mallett [SM], Marie T. Martin [MTM], Cindy Mathewson [CM], Mary Jo Murray [MJM], Linda Nichols [LN], Joseph O’Neill [JO], Dorothea L. Raddin [DLR], Robert C. Vernon [RCV], Jane White [JW].

Additional observer initials listed in this season: Sue Absalom [SAb], Walter Ellison [WGE], Nancy Martin [NM], Tudor Richards [TR].

Old Man of the Mountain
by John R. Quinn



New Hampshire Audubon
3 Silk Farm Road
Concord, NH 03301-8200