New Hampshire Bird Records

Summer 1988
Fall 1988
Winter 1988-1989

Published by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire
**Bird Records Status Update**

We are continuing our quest to publish the *New Hampshire Bird Records* on a timely schedule of four issues per year. With the publication of the three enclosed 1988 seasons we are making good strides toward this goal. The computerization of all four 1989 seasons is complete and we hope to have these published as a packet before long.

Production changes continue at Audubon House as we attempt to create a more efficient system within which to publish the Records. Rebecca Suomala has taken over as managing editor while I moved into the role of general editor. Information on the details of the current system can be found on the back page of this issue.

We have implemented a more rigorous editing format in response to the quantity of reports received and the subsequent length of each issue. This means that not every record received will be published. Each record will, however, be entered into the computer and archived in the files. All records are still of great historical value and help to create a continuing picture of our avian population—statewide coverage is extremely important to maintain. A full computer printout of each season’s records may be obtained for a small fee. Please contact myself or Becky Suomala at ASNH if you are interested in this service.

Thanks for all your support as we work towards an efficient and timely system. Any donations to help defray the growing costs of producing the *Bird Records* would be much appreciated. Contributions may be sent to my attention at ASNH or enclosed with your bird report slips.

Good birding to all, and let us know what you come across.

Diane De Luca
General Editor

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**Volume 7, Numbers 2, 3 & 4**
**Summer, Fall, & Winter 1988**
*New Hampshire Bird Records* is published quarterly by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire as a member service. Bird sightings submitted to ASNH are edited for publication. A computerized printout of all sightings in a season is available for a small fee. To be included on the *Bird Records* mailing list, to order a printout, or to volunteer your observations for the Records, contact general editor Diane De Luca or managing editor Rebecca Suomala at ASNH, PO Box 528-B, Concord, NH 03302-0516; 603/224-9909.
The above is a copy of our newly designed bird report slips. You will notice there is room for only one sighting per slip. This format change was made in order to solve some of the computer data entry problems and eliminate the need for a separate form for endangered species reports. If you still have old slips, please continue to use them until they run out. If you are in need of slips, you can request them from Becky Suomalainen or myself at ASNH.

We highly encourage any bird reporting to be done through the above slip system. Please keep in mind that records not submitted on slips must be transcribed onto these slips for data entry and archival purposes. We now have an excellent core of trained volunteers who do an incredible amount of invaluable work including the majority of computer data entry and proofreading (both slips and printouts). In light of the number of people involved in the production of the Records, it is increasingly critical to receive slips in good order.

Once the slips have been computerized, a printout goes to the seasonal editor who reads it for the final stages of publication. Monthly submission of bird report slips greatly facilitates this process. The seasons are as follows: Spring (March 1 – May 31), Summer (June 1 – July 31), Fall (August 1 – November 30), and Winter (December 1 – February 28). If you have not reported and are interested in receiving this information, please contact me at ASNH.

Diane De Luca
In Memoriam

This is the last season Vera Hebert reported on before her death. It was also her favorite season as well as the one she considered the most important. Ten years ago, it was her enthusiasm and guidance which prompted me to become this season’s editor. Few individuals have done as much as she did to encourage good record keeping and reporting, ultimately resulting in large amounts of increasingly valuable data on New Hampshire birds.

Both the Audubon Society and the birding community have benefited from, and been enriched by, her decades of hard work and the generosity of her spirit. It is with a mixture of sadness and appreciation that I dedicate this issue to a remarkable woman—“Veery”.

Bob Quinn
Introduction

Topsy-turvy is the only way to describe the weather during the summer of 1988, but overall conditions seemed conducive to a successful nesting season. June 1988 was one of the ten driest Junes since 1895 and the temperature extremes ranged from abnormally cold to abnormally hot. Some of the extremes included temperatures in the 30's during one week and almost 100 degrees the very next week, with very high winds. Perhaps these extremes caused some disruption in nesting as Vera Hebert noted that, "first nesting failed for sparrows, phoebes and robins."

The moderate drought conditions that had begun in June worsened in the first half of July but then the winds shifted and the second half of July was so wet that the entire month was the fourth wettest since 1895! It was also the warmest July since 1975. Concord had 11 consecutive days over 85 degrees. Most of southern New Hampshire received about six inches of rain for the month.

The bulk of this nesting season report comes from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data. However, because the data was not available on the same computer as the general records, only significant BBS totals are mentioned. The 25 year medians are put in parenthesis after this year’s results, if those medians are significant. If anyone wants the actual BBS results, they are available on a separate printout. Twenty-one of the 22 routes submitted data. In general, the southern routes seemed to produce better results than the northern ones, which is the opposite of the norm. But data from the BBS routes is notoriously hard to analyze—especially on a yearly basis. Some striking long-term trends are noticeable and they are commented on in the body of the report. For example, pay particular attention to the drastic declines in Brown Thrashers, Rufous-sided Towhees and Field Sparrows, and the increase in Indigo Buntings, Tufted Titmice, House Finches, corvids and parids.

One of the interesting features of this season, noted in American Birds, was the drought displacement of mid-western and prairie species that moved into the northeast. This displacement was apparently not reflected in New Hampshire sightings. But a week’s stay on Star Island in late June did result in some unusual sightings (for that time and place) by two observers.

The Endangered Species Program tallied some good numbers for the species it is monitoring, but this editor would like to see more regular reports of waterfowl, hawks, rails, owls, terns, Common Nighthawks, Whip-poor-wills, Eastern Bluebirds, Purple Martins, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and northern finches.

As during any season, there were some rarities and oddities such as the sightings of a Common Moorhen and Caspian Tern, the possible nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons in Exeter, a male Palm Warbler singing on territory at Lake Umbagog, and a family of Red-headed Woodpeckers in Contoocook.

Robert A. Quinn
Summer Editor
## Loons through Herons

The Common Loon continues its slow but steady increase in numbers plus an expansion of nesting areas according to the Loon Preservation Committee. A record high 41 lakes produced 71 chicks (average for recent years, the record is 83) in 1988. A total of 472 loons were counted in the state which is quite favorable compared with ten years ago when 254 were noted during the nesting season.

**Pied-billed Grebe** numbers remain frighteningly low. The only tubenoses reported were Wilson’s Storm-Petrels. At least one adult Great Cormorant lingered at the Isles of Shoals but gave no sign of nesting. Even though Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase, no significant reports were received.

Ten American Bitterns is a good number reported and hopefully bodes well for this secretive species. The possibility of nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons in Exeter brought some excitement to that area.

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### Waterfowl through Hawks

**Canada Geese** seem to be continuing their increase as a nesting species but the groups of apparent migrants in June is perplexing. All waterfowl were thinly reported which makes the occurrence of a single **Blue-winged Teal** in Alton and on the Fitzwilliam BBS route all the more interesting. The very out of season **Red-breasted Merganser** did not have any descriptive details and must be considered questionable.

Hawks were under reported (hopefully) and provided only modest interest. The Endangered Species Program (ESP) reports that **Ospreys** nested in record high numbers with 18 nests producing 17 or 18 young. Ten **Bald Eagle** sightings were primarily of an undetermined number of birds wandering around the state during June and July. **Northern Harriers** were seen in 18 north country locations and nesting was confirmed in eight of these spots. The ESP also noted that three **Peregrine Falcons** fledged in our state, which is good considering the poor weather these birds had to endure early in their nesting cycle.

These figures from the Endangered Species Program are encouraging and hopefully reflect the trend for all species of raptors.

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Cooper's Hawk
06-30 1 Henniker

Northern Goshawk
07-17 1 Exeter

Red-shouldered Hawk
06-05 2 Henniker
06-20 1 Milford
06-22 1 Hancock
06-27 2 Henniker
06-29 1 Webster

Broad-winged Hawk
06-01 2 Henniker
07-04 1 Hillsboro

Red-tailed Hawk
06-12 1 Warner
06-14 1 Henniker
06-20 1 New London

American Kestrel
06-02 2 New Boston

Peregrine Falcon
06-20 4 Lyme
06-21 1 Livermore

Grouse through Shorebirds

The only Spruce Grouse reported was in typical mountain habitat (and reported by a conscientious out-of-state birder!). A Common Moorhen at the Pontook Reservoir in late June was a rarity for the north country and gave some hope of nesting as it was actively calling. Few rails were reported, although the sighting at Amey Brook in Henniker was an adult with five young chicks.

The resident “shorebirds” were so poorly reported that it is impossible to say whether they had a good or a bad year. However, Killdeer hit their BBS median (35) right on the nose and Common Snipe were slightly above theirs at 17 (16), so perhaps it is safe to assume that the other species did as well.

The first bona fide fall migrants noted were the mid-July shorebird sightings (Solitary Sandpipers inland and Whimbrels, Sanderlings, Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitcher on the coast) but I am not sure if the Short-billed Dowitcher at Star Island on June 28 was coming or going (or neither).

Spruce Grouse
06-19 1 Livermore

Ruffed Grouse
06-14 6 Henniker
06-22 8 Tamworth
06-25 1 New London
07-09 10 Success
07-16 5 Sugar Hill

I. MacLeod
A. Ames
B. Janeway
I. MacLeod
B. Janeway

Amey Brook residence
Mt. Kearsarge Liberty Hill old meadow

Holts Ledge Frankenstein Cliff

J. Berry
R.C. Vernon

Mizpah Cutoff

J. Berry

N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988
Wild Turkey
07-05 1 Concord

Northern Bobwhite
07-20 2 Hopkinton

Virginia Rail
07-09 1 New Durham
07-24 6 Henniker

Common Moorhen
06-28 1 Dummer

Killdeer
06-04 5 New London
06-26 3 Sutton

Solitary Sandpiper
07-16 1 Bethlehem
07-22 1 Danbury

Willet
07-20 4 Seabrook

Spotted Sandpiper
06-25 1

Whimbrel
07-20 6 Seabrook

Sanderling
07-22 9 Rye

Semipalmated Sandpiper
07-22 475 Rye

Short-billed Dowitcher
06-28 1 Rye
07-22 14 Rye

Common Snipe
07-02 1 Sandwich

American Woodcock
06-18 1 New London

Beaver Meadows Village
Gould Hill & Rt. 103
Merrymeeting Marsh
Arney Brook
Pontook Reservoir
Cascade Marsh
Trudeau Rd. Bog
Smith R. meadows
Star Is., Isles of Shoals
Star Is., Isles of Shoals
N. Sandwich
Webb Loop

M. & B. Hill
D. Soule
L. Harper
I. & S. MacLeod
B. Janeway
R.C. & A.H. Vernon
R.C. Vernon
J. McIlwaine
K.C. Elkins
B. Bradley
B. Bradley
B. Bradley
B. Bradley
T. Arter, et al.
B. Bradley
E. Wyman
R.C. Vernon

Gulls through Owls

The only interesting gull report was of three Ring-billed Gulls on the BBS. This is the first time the species has ever been recorded on a route and undoubtedly reflects the widespread increase in this bird. A Caspian Tern on July 2 at Star Island is a rare find and a most unusual date. It seems to have been a fair year for Black-billed Cuckoos but nothing compared to the years of the great gypsy moth infestations (may they only be a distant memory). Owls were overlooked (under heard?).

N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988
### Bird Observations

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### Nighthawk through Woodpeckers

The ESP received reports of **Common Nighthawks** from 15 towns and had negative results from 12 other communities. Only one **Whip-poor-will** was reported. We still are not sure why the goatsuckers have declined but suspect moth-killing pesticides and house cats to be contributing factors. After relatively good years in 1986 and 1987, **Chimney Swifts** had their third lowest total ever on the BBS (132 vs. a median of 200). One sighting of interest was a lone swift over Star Island for a one day visit on June 30.

**Northern Flickers** came in at their third lowest total ever on the BBS routes (49 vs. a median of 89) but the rest of the woodpeckers met or exceeded their medians. A family of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** in Contoocook was a nice find.

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**N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988**
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*N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988*
Flycatchers through Brown Creeper

Flycatchers had an up and down year based upon their BBS medians. **Eastern Kingbirds** fell to their lowest total ever with only 97 recorded (median 129). **Least Flycatchers** continued an eight year downward trend and also hit bottom with a record low total of 90 (175). **Great Crested Flycatchers** and **Eastern Wood-Pewees** came out right on their medians while **Eastern Phoebes** (second highest since 1976) and **Alder Flycatchers** (second highest ever) demonstrated upward trends. An Eastern Wood-Pewee put in a one day appearance at Star Island on the odd date of June 26.

The more widespread swallow species all showed declines on their BBS numbers: **Tree Swallow** (seventh lowest ever), **Barn Swallow** (third lowest ever), and **Cliff Swallow** (second lowest ever). Only one **Purple Martin** was seen.

**Blue Jays** totalled their fifth lowest numbers ever but the other corvids were up, with the total for **American Crows** being the fifth highest and that for **Common Ravens** the second highest ever. Parids seem to be doing well also with **Black-capped Chickadees** reaching their third highest total ever and **Tufted Titmice**, which first reached double figures as recently as 1980, had a record high of 46 (versus a 25 year median of one!). Both nuthatches were above their medians.

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*N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988*
Wrens through Thrushes

Winter Wrens have rebounded after almost a decade of low numbers to the highest BBS total since 1976. They were also well reported elsewhere. Marsh Wren reports were more numerous than usual. The BBS total for Golden-crowned Kinglets (19) was a record high and they out-numbered Ruby-crowned Kinglets for the first time ever! They were also reported from several areas in the southern part of the state.

Only three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were reported. The BBS recorded Hermit Thrushes in higher numbers than any year since 1976 but that was contrary to the generally low thrush totals. Veery (fourth lowest ever), Swainson’s Thrush (second lowest ever), and Wood Thrush (lowest ever) all showed a worrisome downward slide. Eastern Bluebirds were reported in lower numbers than in recent summers but I suspect they are continuing a steady increase.
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<td>B. Janeway</td>
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N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988
American Robin

06-01  2  Wolfeboro  Wolfeboro  E. Wolfeboro  D.L. & C.H. Raddin
06-01  5  Milford   Beechboro    A. Ames
06-04 27  New London Auto Survey Route  R.C. Vernon
06-12  4  New London  low plains  R.C. Vernon
06-13  3  Nottingham  
06-18  6  New London  Webb Loop  R.C. Vernon
06-25  3  New London  Bunker Loop  R.C. Vernon
06-26  1  Sutton    Cascade Marsh  R.C. Vernon
06-27  1  Wilmot   Mt. Kearseage  R.C. Vernon
07-01  1  Wolfeboro   E. Wolfeboro  D.L. & C.H. Raddin

Mimids through Vireos

The perplexing dynamics of bird populations are well reflected in the mimids:
Northern Mockingbird numbers show a slow but steady increase since 1967, the
Gray Catbird population seems to be relatively stable, and the Brown Thrasher
continues its pronounced decline with only three seen on the BBS routes this year
(median of 46). At this rate, the thrasher will become a noteworthy rarity in a few
years.

The only significant vireo numbers on the BBS show a modest downward trend in
Red-eyed Vireos since the highs of the early 1980’s.

Gray Catbird

06-04  4  New London  Auto Survey Route  R.C. Vernon
06-08  1  Milford   
06-10  2  Wolfeboro   E. Wolfeboro  D.L. & C.H. Raddin
06-12  3  New London  low plains  R.C. Vernon
06-25  2  New London  Bunker Loop  R.C. Vernon
06-26  1  Sutton    Mt. Kearseage  R.C. Vernon
06-27  1  Wilmot   Pawtuckaway St. Pk.  M.J. Murray
07-29  4  Nottingham  

Northern Mockingbird

06-08  1  Milford   Adams St.  A. Ames
06-30  5  Littleton  Cilleyville  J. McIlwaine
07-02  1  Andover    Andover Village  K.C. Elkins
07-04  1  Andover    

Cedar Waxwing

06-04  1  New London  Auto Survey Route  R.C. Vernon
06-04  1  Wolfeboro   E. Wolfeboro  D.L. & C.H. Raddin
06-12  1  New London  low plains  R.C. Vernon
06-12  1  Milford   Jennison Rd.  A. Ames
06-15  5  Tamworth  Great Hill Rd.  B. Steele
06-20  3  New London  old meadow  R.C. Vernon

N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988
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**Solitary Vireo**

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<td>I. MacLeod</td>
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**Yellow-throated Vireo**

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**Red-eyed Vireo**

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**Warblers**

Most of the warblers came in just about on their BBS medians but as always, there were a few exceptions. Species that were noticeably low included Chestnut-sided Warbler (third lowest ever), Northern Waterthrush (third lowest ever), and especially Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler and American Redstart which all fell to their lowest totals ever. On the high side were Blackburnian Warbler (third highest ever), Northern Parula (fourth highest ever), and Pine Warbler (highest total ever–19). Other notes of interest were the lack of Tennessee Warblers, the apparent nesting Palm Warblers at the only “regular” place known for them, Mourning and Bay-breasted Warblers in the south (Henniker and New London respectively) and Louisiana Waterthrushes to the north (E. Madison and Rumney).

**date  | #  | town   | location                        | observer(s)         **
**Nashville Warbler**

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*N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988*
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*N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988*
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**Canada Warbler**

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### Tanagers through Sparrows

After several good years, **Scarlet Tanagers** fell to their fifth lowest total on the BBS. **Indigo Buntings**, however, did quite well and came in at their second highest total ever and were also more noticeable in the north country than usual. **Rufous-sided Towhee** is another species that is declining at a precipitous rate. In 1977, 306 were recorded on the BBS but they have dropped steadily and this year fell to another record low (35 vs. a median of 297). In addition, there were only eight other reports from the entire state.

Several other species of sparrows were recorded in low numbers. The **Field Sparrow** is following the trend of the thrasher and towhee with the seven seen on the BBS routes being the lowest ever and the first time the total has dipped into single digits (median of 55). The **Swamp Sparrow** also hit its lowest total ever and the **Song Sparrow** its third lowest ever. **Chipping Sparrows**, on the other hand, were found in higher than usual numbers and came in with their fifth highest total ever.

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Icterids through Finches

All the icterids were low with Brown-headed Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds falling to their lowest BBS totals ever. Pine Siskin reports were few but, true to their erratic form, there were flocks in Wolfeboro and Hancock. The totals for Purple Finches and American Goldfinches were the lowest ever but for these somewhat nomadic species that probably does not mean too much. Evening Grosbeaks were thinly but widely reported from the southern part of the state as has become the norm.
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*N.H. Bird Records • Summer 1988*
Fall Season
August 1 through November 30, 1988
Volume 7, Number 3

Unremarkable is the word for the Fall of 1988. The most notable feature of the weather was the above normal precipitation which started in mid-July and changed moderate drought conditions to moderate wet conditions. A strong front the third week in August grounded some early migrants (swallows) in the Littleton area. September and October were colder and drier than normal with an interesting movement of a few birds on September 18 (including a Northern Wheatear) that was connected with the passage of a front. The Nor'easter on October 22 did not create any reports of note.

November was a warm and stormy month. One probable storm-related grounding was a Black-legged Kittiwake in Marlow. Otherwise there were very few reports during a month that has great potential for an interesting mixture of late fall and early winter birds.

Many species were under-reported and several common species went completely unreported (such as Snow Goose and Northern Pintail). This clearly seems to be from a lack of reporters rather than from a lack of birds. Reports from the coast were meager and reports from some inland areas were noticeably absent. Add to this the fact that this editor missed the entire field season and you can see it is hard to come up with a meaningful analysis. However, let me try to sort it all out.

Pelagics went unreported. Waterfowl sightings, although low in numbers, included some excellent quality and unusual locations. The coordinated hawkwatch demonstrates what a concentrated effort can show. For example, in 1970 the fall season was extremely well reported (265 species with two dozen rarities) but the total number of Broad-winged Hawks that year was only 4350 compared with about 9500 in 1988 (our species total this year was less than 200).

Night-flying migrants and “last” dates for particular species were seldom noted so the land bird migration appears very thin. The reports of warblers and sparrows are particularly ordinary and there was virtually no winter finch flight.

The highlights of a poor season do shine brightly though and this year’s luminaries include Tundra Swan, Marbled Godwit, Long-eared Owl, Northern Wheatear, Blue Grosbeak, Brewer’s Blackbird, the Black-legged Kittiwake in Marlow and a Jaeger in Seabrook Harbor.

Robert A. Quinn
Fall 1988 Editor

P.S. Here is a challenge for you. If you get out into the field one extra day this season, and report your sightings from that day directly to Audubon House with a note directed to me, I will buy you your favorite ice cream cone on the hottest day of next summer!

RAQ
Loons through Herons

The only Red-throated Loon reported was at an inland location. In fact there were no coastal reports of loons or grebes. Twenty-two Pied-billed Grebes is a good total for this threatened species when you consider how few water bird reports were received. Two Great Cormorants seen inland were interesting and Double-crested Cormorants were seen at a dozen inland spots with two good coastal flights noted.

The 12 American Bitterns and two Great Egrets were a good showing, relatively speaking. A very late Snowy Egret was seen on November 13 in Rye. Black-crowned Night Herons went unreported.

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Reporters obviously put more of an effort into searching for waterfowl inland than along the coast and came up with excellent quality but low quantities. The star of the season was a sighting, only the third on record, of two well-documented Tundra Swans seen on Spofford Lake, a migrant water-bird haven. Three Brant in New Hampton were most unusual for date and place. No details accompanied the report but there is historical precedence at that location. Other noteworthy inland reports included a Barrow’s Goldeneye, three Canvasbacks, a flock of 56 Hooded Mergansers, and a Surf Scoter on Lonesome Lake (2750 feet elevation in Franconia Notch).

There were no reports from Great Bay and few from the coast, areas that usually get the bulk of the waterfowl migration. A single Ruddy Duck lingered on Eel Pond in Rye on November 26.

Tundra Swan

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Brant

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Canada Goose

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| **Green-winged Teal** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 11-01    | 1     | Spofford          | Lake Spofford                     | J. Coleman                  |

| **American Black Duck** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 08-09    | 6     | Sugar Hill        | Pearl Lake Rd.                    | J. McIlwaine                |
| 10-26    | 62    | Hinsdale          | Connecticut R.                    | J. McIlwaine                |
| 10-29    | 60    | Columbia          |                                   | D. & B. Killam              |
| 11-03    | 49    | Columbia          | meadow                            | D. & B. Killam              |
| 11-14    | 72    | Columbia          | Connecticut R.                    | D. Killam                   |

| **Mallard** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 11-01    | 36    | Spofford          | Lake Spofford                     | J. Coleman                  |
| 11-20    | 31    | Columbia          | meadow                            | D. Killam                   |

| **Blue-winged Teal** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 08-31    | 10    | Wentworths Location | Leonard Pond                  | D. & B. Killam              |

| **American Wigeon** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 10-10    | 1     | Hinsdale          | Connecticut R.                    | J. Coleman                  |
| 10-27    | 8     | Hinsdale          | Connecticut R.                    | J. Coleman                  |

| **Canvasback** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 11-27    | 2     | Hinsdale          | Connecticut R.                    | J. Coleman                  |
| 11-30    | 1     | Franklin          | Webster Lake                      | K.C. Elkins                 |

| **Ring-necked Duck** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 08-02    | 22    | Errol             | Lake Umbagog                      | J. McIlwaine, T. Richards  |
| 08-02    | 3     | Errol             | Androscoggin R.                   | J. McIlwaine, T. Richards  |
| 09-27    | 8     | Whitefield        | Little Cherry Pond                | J. McIlwaine                |
| 09-29    | 5     | Littleton         |                                   | R. Bradley                  |
| 09-29    | 3     | Lincoln           | Lonesome Lake                     | T. Richards                 |
| 10-10    | 24    | Errol             | N. side of Androscoggin R.        | T. Richards                 |
| 10-15    | 22    | Whitefield        |                                   | R. Bradley                  |
| 10-16    | 8     | Wilmot            | Chase Pond                        | K.C. Elkins                 |
| 10-23    | 58    | Whitefield        | The Bay                           | R. Bradley                  |
| 10-25    | 12    | Salisbury         |                                   | K.C. Elkins                 |

| **Greater Scaup** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 10-31    | 2     | New London        | Pleasant Lake                     | K.C. Elkins                 |

| **Lesser Scaup** |       |                   |                                   |                             |
| 11-13    | 1     | Rye               | Eel Pond                          | S. Mirick, C. Barber        |
| 11-29    | 2     | Hinsdale          | Connecticut R.                    | J. Coleman                  |
| 11-26    | 1     | Rye               |                                   | S. Mirick, B. Butler        |

*N.H. Bird Records • Fall 1988*
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Red-breasted Merganser

Ruddy Duck

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Hawks

The concentrated and coordinated hawkwatching makes raptors the best reported group of birds for the entire season. Turkey Vulture reports show a continued increase in their New Hampshire numbers. Mid-September brought good Osprey movement with a high of 33 in Durham on September 14. The excellent coverage allows us to clearly see peaks in Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and American Kestrel migration from September 9 through September 19. A high of 1754 Broad-winged Hawks was seen on September 14 at Small Hill in Nashua. A total of 13 Merlin were also seen during the migration period, a species that is seldom seen within the confines of our state. The number of eyes watching hawks this fall was impressive and many thanks to Steve Mirick for compiling the data.
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**Osprey**

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**Bald Eagle**

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N.H. Bird Records • Fall 1988
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**Sharp-shinned Hawk**

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**Cooper's Hawk**

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**Northern Goshawk**

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**Rough-legged Hawk**

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**American Kestrel**

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**Peregrine Falcon**

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*NH Bird Records • Fall 1988*
# Grouse through Shorebirds

Sixteen Wild Turkeys in W. Chesterfield must have been a spectacular sight of these increasingly common but rarely seen birds. No rails were reported. The highlights of a very thinly reported shore bird migration were a Greater Yellowlegs at Lonesome Lake (2750 feet), a Marbled Godwit, a Western Sandpiper, and three Wilson’s Phalaropes.

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N.H. Bird Records • Fall 1988
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**Greater Yellowlegs**

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**Lesser Yellowlegs**

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**Solitary Sandpiper**

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**Spotted Sandpiper**

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**Whimbrel**

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**Hudsonian Godwit**

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**Marbled Godwit**

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**Ruddy Turnstone**

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**Red Knot**

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**Sanderling**

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**Semipalmated Sandpiper**

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**Western Sandpiper**

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**Pectoral Sandpiper**

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Jaegers through Alcids

A probable Parasitic Jaeger was watched for more than 30 minutes in Seabrook Harbor, where it was actively harassing the gulls. The lengthy observation at relatively close range resulted in a good description of this immature bird and a tentative identification as to the species. A Black-legged Kittiwake found its way to the safety of a shrub in Marlow on November 20, was kept by a rehabilitator and successfully released at Plum Island on November 24. The only other interesting sightings for this group were significant numbers of Ring-billed Gulls and single Forster’s Terns reports on two different occasions at Seabrook. No alcids were noted.
Black-legged Kittiwake
11-20 1 Marlow

Common Tern
08-07 46 Portsmouth
08-28 40 Seabrook
09-03 24 Portsmouth
09-05 8 Portsmouth
10-10 1 Rye

Forster’s Tern
08-28 1 Seabrook
09-03 1 Seabrook

Doves through Kingfisher

A Long-eared Owl was heard off and on over a period of three weeks by an observer familiar with the species. Only one Snowy Owl was noted. The Common Nighthawk migration was scattered over time and place and one nighthawk was seen on the extraordinarily late date of October 10.
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**Woodpeckers through Swallows**

The only interesting report was of a Red-headed Woodpecker in Andover. Only four species of flycatchers were mentioned with no special sightings. One of the few obvious weather-related “waves” occurred on August 24 and 25 when Bob Bradley had hundreds of migrant swallows that were grounded by fog. This was an unprecedented experience in his thirty years in the area.

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N.H. Bird Records • Fall 1998
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*N.H. Bird Records • Fall 1988*
### Bank Swallow
- 08-07: 400, Littleton
- 08-24: 1000, Littleton

### Barn Swallow
- 08-02: 260, Dalton
- 08-21: 46, Haverhill
- 08-21: 50, Monroe
- 08-24: 45, Littleton
- 08-25: 160, Monroe

### Jays through Vireos

The only Carolina Wren reported is most noteworthy for the August date rather than the location.

The "Bird of the Season—Part I" honors go to the Northern Wheatear seen by several people at Eastern Mountain Sports in Peterborough. A seemingly odd place for this species, but so few are seen in New Hampshire that who is to know what should be the norm? The Eastern Bluebird report totalled 158 birds but there were no large flocks.

### Gray Jay
- 08-17: 3, Cambridge
- 09-07: 1, Errol

### Blue Jay
- 09-01: 16, Hillsboro
- 09-01: 5, Wentworth
- 10-01: 2, Milford
- 11-25: 4, Columbia

### American Crow
- 10-10: 5, Milford
- 10-20: 75, New London
- 10-24: 53, Hillsboro
- 10-25: 143, Concord
- 10-29: 26, Hillsboro

### Common Raven
- 08-01: 8, Bethlehem
- 08-09: 1, Concord
- 09-09: 2, Wentworth
- 10-04: 2, Concord
- 11-15: 7, Walpole

### Black-capped Chickadee
- 10-01: 3, Milford
- 11-01: 6, Wolfeboro

### Tufted Titmouse
- 10-01: 4, Milford
- 10-24: 4, Bristol
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**Swainson’s Thrush**

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**Hermit Thrush**

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**American Robin**

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### Warblers through House Sparrow

The only warbler sightings of note were that of a late **Pine Warbler** on November 27 and a “heavy migration” of at least 10 **Wilson’s Warblers** on September 18. The description of a bird reported as a **Blue Grosbeak** left this editor unconvincing but the late date does lend credence to this sighting. The 10 **Lincoln’s Sparrows** seen along with the aforementioned Wilson’s Warblers must have been an enjoyable sight. A few late sparrows were seen as far north as Columbia in early November, but overall the sparrow migration was either dull or under-reported.

The only **Bobolinks** reported were gone by late August but there were several other species of Icterids that lingered in large flocks, most notably **Brown-headed Cowbirds**. The “Bird of the Season – Part II” honors go to the **Brewer’s Blackbird** seen in early October. This is one of few reports ever for the state and coincides with some seen in Maine at about the same time. There was absolutely no sign of a winter finch flight and the modest numbers of **Evening Grosbeaks** seemed to reflect the season as reported.

---

### Tennessee Warbler

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**Evening Grosbeak**

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**House Sparrow**

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Winter Season
December 1, 1988 through February 28, 1989
Volume 7, Number 4

In New Hampshire, this December was the driest since 1955. It began warmer than usual, but changed rapidly on the fourth when a strong cold front crossed New England. The weather remained cold with light snow into mid-month when an outbreak of frigid arctic air drove temperatures below zero. Most of the Christmas Bird Counts occurred before temperatures moderated on December 19. Warmer airflows circulated into our area on this date and again on December 23, leaving icy glazes. A cold front with gusty winds and moderate snowfalls finished out the month.

January was a very warm month in northern New England—our warmest since 1967—and precipitation was well below normal. The first half of the month was unsettled and cold with little or no snow. On January 21, we suffered from bitterly cold windchills of 30 to 50 degrees below zero. Three days later, however, a high pressure system pumped in warm and dry air with temperatures more indicative of spring. A Western Grebe appeared in Rye shortly thereafter. Species such as the Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird, and Eastern Meadowlark were encouraged by the warm conditions to return prematurely. After a brief cold spell, the month ended on a warm note.

February began with record-setting weather and temperatures nearing 60 degrees. A female King Eider was first discovered in Rye at this time. Several more robins, a Varied Thrush, Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers, two Fox Sparrows, and a Northern Oriole made appearances as well. The weather changed dramatically soon after when very cold, windy weather blasted the state with gusts over 40 mph. Mid-month saw intermittent light snows, ice, and fog. The cold weather relaxed its grip by the third week of the month but winter returned when a nor’easter hit the state with significant snowfall on February 24. The month ended on a wintry note.

Overall, high numbers of waterfowl, robins, chickadees, titmice, and White-breasted Nuthatches were reported. Lows were noted for several species including Red-throated Loons, Rough-legged Hawks (none!), Snowy Owls (one), Red-breasted Nuthatches, Northern Shrikes, White-throated Sparrows and northern finches. An excellent cone crop up north and the lack of snow throughout most of the winter season may have made it unnecessary for Snowy Owls, shrikes, and the northern finches to make their usual migration into our area.

Most of this season’s sightings come from Christmas Bird Counts and coastal area reporters. Some highlights from inland include a Townsend’s Solitaire discovered in Errol, three Red-bellied Woodpeckers at various southern feeders, and a Red-headed Woodpecker present at a feeder in Conway during the latter half of February.

Andrea Robbins
Seasonal Editor

N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1988
Loons and Grebes

Red-throated Loons went virtually unreported for December and January. They were missed on the Coastal CBC for the first time in nine years. Common Loons, however, were present in average numbers throughout the period, with a handful remaining inland until late December.

A single Pied-billed Grebe was seen on the Salmon Falls River in late December. Horned and Red-necked Grebe numbers were low during December but increased to typical proportions during the following months. First discovered off the coast of Odiorne Point in late January, the Western Grebe was seen consistently near this area of Rye by many observers until mid-February. It was often in the company of a large raft of Red-necked Grebes.

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N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1988
Gannets through Herons

The 12 Northern Gannets seen off Rye on January 22 were probably blown landward by a deep offshore storm center the previous day which spiralled in sub-zero blustery winds with gusts over 40 mph.

Great Cormorants wintered offshore in average numbers. A single late-lingering Double-crested Cormorant was discovered by Coastal CBC participants.

The report of an American Bittern in Portsmouth marked the first time in ten years that this species was seen during a New Hampshire winter season. Seven Great Blue Herons were still around in December.
Waterfowl

Although ponds were frozen during the CBC period, enough open water was present in flowing streams and rivers to allow count participants to locate an exceptional variety of waterfowl—20 species. Other additional sightings boosted that number to an outstanding total of 24 different species of waterfowl present during the winter season. Notable dabblers included Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, and American Wigeon.

Canvasback was a new species for the Lee-Durham CBC and they had a record high for Common Goldeneyes as well. Common Goldeneye numbers overall, however, were below average as were those for the majority of the diving ducks. Only Ring-necked Ducks and Hooded Mergansers could be described as above average this winter. A lone female King Eider was present off the Rye coast February 4-26.

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**American Black Duck–Mallard Hybrid**

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**Barrow’s Goldeneye**

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## Hawks

The **Turkey Vulture** sightings from Walpole in late January and early February are highly unusual. However, they do coincide with the occurrence of spring-like temperatures during which the mercury rose as high as 58 degrees in a few areas of southern New Hampshire. (Turkey Vulture was a new species for the Saxton's River CBC on December 17 but that sighting occurred on the Vermont side of the river, across from Walpole.)

According to Diane Evans of ASNH, there were an estimated 47 or 48 **Bald Eagles** identified in the state during the wintering period (33 adults, 13-14 subadults, 1 unidentified). The major areas supporting wintering individuals were the Merrimack River (11), Connecticut River (9), Lakes Region (6), and Great Bay (11-12). There was also a possible immature **Golden Eagle** on Silver Lake in Tilton for one or two days in mid-winter.

Other raptor sightings include: six **Northern Harriers**, 17 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, 10 **Cooper's Hawks**, seven **Northern Goshawks**, two **Red-shouldered Hawks**, 14 **American Kestrels**, and three **Peregrine Falcons**. Rough-legged Hawks went unreported.
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### Peregrine Falcon

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### Pheasants through Shorebirds

A flock of **Wild Turkeys** in Stratham "roosted overnight high up in a stand of red maple". **Purple Sandpipers** were well reported with 118 individuals seen. The only other shorebirds sighted were five **Killdeer**, five **Sanderlings**, and a **Short-billed Dowitcher** (for which verifying details were not supplied).
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**Gulls through Kittiwakes**

As many as three Common Black-headed Gulls wintered in the Portsmouth/Rye area. Bonaparte’s Gulls were observed far more frequently along the shores of Rye and Hampton than they have been in years past, but this may be attributable to a greater effort made by birders to canvas the coastline more regularly. An immature Iceland Gull and an immature Glaucous Gull found in Little Bay, were both new species for the Lee-Durham CBC. Numerous Iceland and Glaucous Gull reports were received throughout the winter.

Rye Harbor was the location for several Black-legged Kittiwake sightings and the coastal CBC picked up this species in Seabrook.
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Great Black-backed Gull
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12-18 18 Sugar Hill CBC
12-18 64 Lee-Durham CBC
12-26 4 Hanover-Norwich CBC
12-31 174 Laconia-New Hampton CBC
12-31 112 Nashua CBC

Black-legged Kittiwake
12-17 1 Coastal CBC
12-28 3 Rye Harbor
01-14 4 Rye
01-17 3 Rye
01-22 17 Rye
01-28 4 Rye
02-26 1 Rye

Doves through Woodpeckers

An Eastern Screech Owl, which responded to a tape recording of its call, was a new species for the Lee-Durham CBC. The lone Saw-whet Owl in Columbia was discovered when it flew into a window where a white mouse was caged. The owl was stunned, but later released unhurt. Seventeen Great Horned Owls and five Barred Owls were reported. One Snowy Owl was discovered perched atop Mt. Monadnock.

Twelve Belted Kingfishers lingered into late December, with one wintering successfully near Portsmouth Harbor.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers do not normally occur in New Hampshire. Remarkably, three of these southern birds were observed at feeders, and all were well verified. An adult female was in Alstead Center from December 13 through January 5; another adult female was in Hollis from December 25 to January 27; and in Eaton, an adult male was present from January 22-29. Another remarkable woodpecker sighting was that of a Red-headed Woodpecker that spent a number of weeks at a feeder in Conway. Black-backed Woodpeckers were seen in Hanover (one) and in the northern wilderness area covered by the Errol CBC circle (two). At least 13 Northern Flickers were still around in late December, and one remained all winter in Hampton.
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**Mourning Dove**

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12-07  2   Warren    Lee-Durham CBC  J. Carreaux
12-17  210  Littleton  Coastal CBC  A.E. Ames
12-17  513  Littleton  Monadnock CBC  L. Phinney
12-17  324  Littleton  Saxton's River CBC  J. Carreaux
12-17  201  Littleton  Sugar Hill CBC  L. Cole
12-18  207  Littleton  Lee-Durham CBC  A.E. Ames
12-18  342  Littleton  Hanover-Norwich CBC  L. Phinney
12-26  276  Littleton  Laconia-New Hampton CBC  J. Carreaux
12-31  100  Rye       Nashua CBC  L. Phinney
12-31  288  Monroe     Beechbrook  J. Carreaux
01-01  18   Monroe     Lee-Durham CBC  L. Cole
02-08  1   Milford    Nashua CBC  A.E. Ames
02-14  16   Rye       Nashua CBC  L. Phinney
02-27  4   Warren     Nashua CBC  J. Carreaux

**Eastern Screech Owl**

12-18  1           Lee-Durham CBC  Z. & M. French

**Great Horned Owl**

12-17  5           Coastal CBC  R. Whitcomb, et al.
12-18  3           Lee-Durham CBC  B. Bradley
12-25  1           Hopkinton  R. Suomalainen, T. McMillan
12-31  2           Littleton  J. Grant
01-10  2           Littleton  Rt. 13 residence
01-31  1           Littleton  residence
02-19  2           Dunbarton  residence

**Snowy Owl**

02-23  1           Jaffrey  G. Kent

**Banded Owl**

12-17  1           Coastal CBC  P. Powers
12-18  1           Lee-Durham CBC  T. Arter
12-18  1           Sugar Hill CBC - CW
01-10  1           Monroe     Blake's Hill Rd.
02-01  1           Northwood  Blake's Hill Rd.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl**

01-29  1           Columbia  E. Columbia  D. & B. Killam

**Belted Kingfisher**

12-06  1           Franklin  Chance Pond Brook  K. Elkins
12-17  3           Coastal CBC  L. Phinney
12-18  2           Lee-Durham CBC  L. Phinney
12-18  1           Newport Ave.  L. Phinney
12-20  1           Portsmouth  T. & W. Kiwan
12-23  1           Portsmouth Harbor
12-26  1           Portsmouth Harbor
12-31  1           Laconia-New Hampton CBC
12-31  2           Nashua CBC
01-15  1           Portsmouth
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Black-backed Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

Pileated Woodpecker

Baker Valley CBC

Monadnock CBC

Saxton's River CBC

N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1988
Flycatchers through Wrens

An Eastern Phoebe discovered in Madbury, was a new species for the Lee-Durham CBC. This common summer flycatcher usually winters from the mid-Atlantic states south.

The Pittsburg and Errol-Umbagog CBCs had the only Gray Jays reported. Blue Jay numbers had returned to normal levels after the previous year's low.

Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch numbers were even higher than last year's record high totals. Brown Creepers wintered in average numbers, however, and Red-breasted Nuthatches, though improved from last year, were still low.

A Carolina Wren, present since late summer near Oyster River Road in Durham, was heard singing there infrequently throughout the entire winter season. Perhaps the Carolina Wren seen on Mill Rd. in Durham on Christmas Eve was this same bird. Two Winter Wrens were observed early in the season.

---

**Eastern Phoebe**

12-18 1 Lee-Durham CBC

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**Horned Lark**

12-02 6 NH coast, Hampton Park
12-17 100 Coastal CBC
12-17 50 Saxton's River CBC
12-18 15 Lee-Durham CBC
01-08 24 N. Haverhill
01-17 18 Rye
02-12 1 Hampton Beach St.Pk.
02-25 8 N. Haverhill
02-26 17 Rye
02-27 15 Rye

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**Gray Jay**

01-29 4 Pittsburg
01-29 4 Second College Grant

---

**Blue Jay**

12-03 3 Milford
12-17 364 Monadnock CBC
12-17 504 Coastal CBC
12-17 256 Baker Valley CBC
12-17 34 Saxton's River CBC
12-18 430 Lee-Durham CBC
12-18 260 Sugar Hill CBC
12-26 314 Hanover-Norwich CBC
12-31 98 Laconia-New Hampton CBC

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N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1998
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**American Crow**

**Common Raven**

**Black-capped Chickadee**

*NH Bird Records • Winter 1988*
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**Tufted Titmouse**

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**Red-breasted Nuthatch**

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**White-breasted Nuthatch**

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**Brown Creeper**

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*N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1988*
Kinglets through Starlings

This December saw average numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets. The two Eastern Bluebirds (one male, one female), seen in Walpole were discovered in a flock of 240 Cedar Waxwings. As many as four male bluebirds wintered in the Adam’s Point area of Durham. Highly unusual!

The season’s best bird was undoubtedly the Townsend’s Solitaire found along the edge of the Androscoggin River just north of the Rt. 16 and Rt. 26 intersection during the Errol-Umbagog CBC. Several count participants were able to study the bird at close range in the alders for about 25 minutes, enabling them to clearly see the white outer tail feathers, buff wing patches, and bold white eye ring. It appeared to be feeding on highbush cranberries which were abundant nearby. Casual in winter as far east as Newfoundland and New York, the Townsend’s Solitaire was a new species for the Errol CBC and represents only the second record for New Hampshire CBCs (previously recorded on the Coastal CBC in December of 1981).

The occurrence of two warm spells (January 24-25 and February 1-3, both with highs in the fifties) correspond with, and explain, the sightings of large numbers of American Robins shortly after these periods of southerly flow. A well studied and verified Varied Thrush was present for about 10 days in early February at a feeder in Wolfeboro. A Brown Thrasher survived the winter by feeding on suet and seeds at a feeder in New Hampton.

Only four Northern Shrikes were reported this winter—the lowest total since 1980 (ten year average is 12).
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**Townsend's Solitaire**

**American Robin**

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### Warblers through Snow Bunting

The same warm air masses which brought robins northward in mid-winter also carried with them two Yellow-rumped Warblers (January 25 and February 5) and the Palm Warbler seen in Rye (February 4-5). All other warblers sighted were late-lingerers in December: 13 Yellow-rumped, one Pine Warbler, and two Common Yellowthroats.

One of the highlights for the Lee-Durham CBC was a female Dickcissel (their second record) found feeding with House Sparrows near downtown Lee. Notable sparrow sightings for December include: nine Field Sparrows, one Savannah Sparrow, and 10 Swamp Sparrows. On February 8, two Fox Sparrows were discovered in Newcastle. White-throated Sparrows were again half the norm.

Although the Monadnock and Lee-Durham CBCs had their second highest totals ever for Dark-eyed Juncos, overall, juncos were present only in average numbers. New record highs for Snow Bunting were established by the Monadnock and Lee-Durham CBCs; good-sized flocks were located in southern areas during February as well.

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| European Starling |     |            |                   |                 |
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| 12-17 | 230 | Coastal CBC | Saxton's River CBC |                 |
| 12-17 | 14658 | Coastal CBC | Sugar Hill CBC |                 |
| 12-17 | 498 | Lee-Durham CBC | Hanover-Norwich CBC |                 |
| 12-18 | 161 | Laconia-New Hampton CBC | Nashua CBC |                 |
| 12-18 | 1488 |                 |                   |                 |
| 12-26 | 309 |                 |                   |                 |
| 12-31 | 151 |                 |                   |                 |
| 12-31 | 1422 |                 |                   |                 |

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| 02-26 | 1  | Intervale  |                   |                 |
| Palmer Warbler |     |            |                   |                 |
| 02-04 | 1  | Rye        | s. of Otisone Pt.  | D. Abbott       |
| 02-05 | 1  | Rye        | s. of Otisone Pt.  | D.& S. Abbott, L. Harper |

| Common Yellowthroat |     |            |                   |                 |
| 12-17 | 2  | Coastal CBC |                   |                 |

N.H. Bird Records • Winter 1998
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**Dickcissel**

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Blackbirds through House Sparrow

Those blackbirds still present in December included: Red-winged Blackbirds, one Eastern Meadowlark, a lone Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackles, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and one female Northern Oriole. The late January and early February warm weather encouraged the return of a Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and Northern Oriole to the Granite State. Yet during the week of January 5, when another Oriole was seen in Hancock, we were experiencing unseasonably low temperatures and bitter chills.

Common Redpolls went unreported and Pine Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Red Crossbills, and Pine Siskins were nearly as scarce. Numerous small flocks of White-winged Crossbills were reportedly “all over” in the Pittsburg area.

American Goldfinches were also well below average. For the Monadnock CBC this was their second lowest total ever, and the Concord CBC recorded an all time low. Evening Grosbeaks were notably absent this winter, especially at feeders. Most of the Christmas counts reported dramatic lows representing barely 10% of their six year averages. Monadnock had the lowest total since their first count in 1973, and Evening Grosbeaks were missed entirely on the Coastal CBC.

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