

# New Hampshire

## BIRD RECORDS





# Colors of Summer



*Bobolink male by Scott Young, 6-29-22, Branch Hill Farm, Strafford, NH.*



*Least Bittern by Susan Wrisley, 6-6-22, Beaver Brook Assn.'s Great Meadow, Hollis, NH.*



*Little Blue Heron by Jim Sparrell, 6-3-22, Rye, NH.*



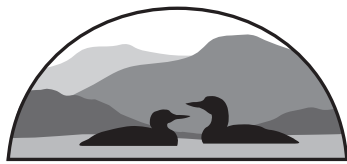
*Red Knot by Steve Mirick, 6-8-22, Rye Harbor, NH.*



*Prairie Warbler by Christopher Gagnon, 7-11-22, Hooksett, NH.*



*Cliff Swallow by Ken Faucher, 6-4-22, River St. bridge, Dover, NH.*



**NH AUDUBON**

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Steve and Jane Mirick.

**IN HONOR OF**  
**Steve and Jane Mirick**

The 2022 issues of *New Hampshire Bird Records* are sponsored in appreciation of Steve and Jane Mirick for all that they do for the birding community. They have been responsible for finding (and re-finding) many rarities, spreading the word, and staying on the bird. Many of us owe life birds to them and we are grateful for all that they do.

**In This Issue**

Colors of Summer .....	Inside Front Cover
From the Editor .....	2
“Share Our Shores” – A Bird-friendly Photography Website.....	2
2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award – Rob Woodward.....	3
Celebrating the <i>Birds of the Squam Lakes Region</i> by Iain MacLeod .....	4
Summer Season: June 1 through July 31, 2022 by Jason Pietrzak .....	5
Regional Report – Coos County by Robert A. Quinn .....	11
Summer 2022 Field Notes, Anita Fernandez, Editor.....	12
Ruby-throated Hummingbird Rescue by Joe Reisert.....	12
Seven Juvenile Sora found in Hollis .....	12
Historic Note: Virginia Rail Chick Reunited in Barrington .....	13
Common Merganser Chick Hitching a Ride by Anita Fernandez .....	13
An Irate House Wren Moves In by Anita Fernandez .....	13
Dive Bombed by a Merlin in Winchester by Joshua Jarvis .....	14
Hairy Woodpecker Feeding Eastern Bluebird Chick by Amy Severino.....	14
Red-shouldered Hawk Nest by Rebecca Suomala .....	14
Late Nesting Orchard Orioles at Pickering Ponds, photos by Alan Murray.....	15
Common Nighthawk 2022 Nesting Season by Rebecca Suomala .....	16
Stories of New Hampshire’s Nesting Kestrels.....	16
American Kestrels Nesting in Concord by Anita Fernandez .....	16
Capital Kestrels by Steve Wheeler .....	17
A Kestrel Surprise at Rockingham County Farm Complex by Steve Wheeler .....	18
Nesting Saw-whet Owl in Dublin, NH by Tom Warren.....	20
Field Trip Report – <i>Birding for All</i> at the Edward MacDowell Lake by Phil Brown .....	22
Two Peterborough Birding Hotspots by Nora Hanke.....	22
The Odd Behavior of Anting and Sunning compiled by Anita Fernandez.....	24
Tufted Titmouse Sunbathing in East Kingston by Dennis Skillman .....	24
Pine Warbler Anting in Portsmouth City Park by Jim Sparrell.....	25
Backpack Birder – Nest-finding on a Father’s Day Hike by Jason Pietrzak.....	26
Report Unique Distance for eBird Traveling Counts by Nora E. Hanke.....	28
Whip-poor-will Habitat Research by Jeffrey T. Larkin.....	29
Help Your Chickadees by Rebecca Suomala.....	31
New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report: Spring 2021 through Winter 2021-22.....	32
What to Watch for in Summer .....	35
Summer Babies.....	Inside Back Cover

Cover Photos: Little Stint, 7-29-22, Hampton, NH. Standing by Steve Mirick (top), in flight by Leo McKillop (bottom). Inset by Jim Sparrell shows the toes that lack the webbing of the Semipalmated Sandpiper.



# From the Editor

## SUMMER 2022

by Rebecca Suomala

### Volunteer News

Welcome Jason Pietrzak as the Summer Season Editor. Jason has been an avid birder for many years and moved back to NH in 2021 after a couple decades in the Southwest. He has done a great job and we are grateful to have his expertise.

Please welcome Anita Fernandez as the new Field Notes Compiler. The purpose of the Field Notes is to share interesting bird experiences or record information from the field that may otherwise be lost. If you see any fascinating bird behavior or have a unique bird experience, send an email to Anita at [birdrecords@nhaudubon.org](mailto:birdrecords@nhaudubon.org).

### Needed – Where to Bird Feature Coordinator

This volunteer compiles and edits articles for the *New Hampshire Bird Records* Where to Bird feature (four issues per year). Responsibilities include contacting authors to write articles, providing guidance and editing, and facilitating the creation of associated maps as needed. The position requires the ability to meet deadlines and good editing skills. Familiarity with birding throughout the state is helpful, although members of the *New Hampshire Bird Records*



Rebecca Suomala birding on Wildcat Mt., 7-22-22, by Mark Suomala.

Editorial Team can provide assistance in creating a list of topics and authors. If you are interested, please contact me.

### New Birding Ethics Web Page

The *New Hampshire Bird Records* website now has a new place to find information about safe birding practices. It is under the “Resources” tab and is called “Birding Ethics.” The page includes the “Save our Shores” link featured below, as well as links to several other useful websites and articles such as Snowy Owl Viewing Etiquette.

<https://nhbirdrecords.org/birding-ethics-be-a-responsible-birder/>

### “Share Our Shores” – A Bird-friendly Photography Website

There is an excellent website about bird-friendly photography called “Share Our Shores” now available. It was developed through a collaboration of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Initiative. The main focus of the website is how to behave on the beach while trying to get a good shorebird photo without compromising the safety of the birds. The information is applicable to all birders, including the non-photographers.

These are some of the specific topics that are covered:

**Before You Hit the Beach**—learn about the birds

**When You Get to the Beach**—dos and don’ts

**When You Post Your Photos Online**—make your media safe

**Common Signs of Disturbance**—what to watch for in the birds’ behavior

The website is well-organized and easy to navigate. It contains some links to sources of good information about bird species and also includes an extensive list of online resources available to birders and bird photographers. Try it out—there is something here for all of us to learn!

<https://sos.atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/ethical-bird-photography/>



Stilt Sandpiper by Steve Mirick, 7-15-22, Hampton, NH.

# 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award

*Presented by Robert A. Quinn at the New Hampshire Audubon Annual Meeting, September 17, 2022.*

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

NH Audubon is honored to present the Goodhue-Elkins award to Rob Woodward. Rob is eminently qualified for this prestigious award as the list of his birding accomplishments attests. First, however, let's think of him in the light and spirit of Charles Goodhue and Kimball Elkins themselves. Rob is like them in many ways including his outstanding field skills, his passion to learn more about the birds in his local area, his generosity in helping newer birders, his humility and sense of humor, and his years of selfless and low-key efforts to enhance the New Hampshire birding community and our bird conservation efforts. I cannot emphasize enough how much he has encouraged and nourished new birders. All of these characteristics are hallmarks of the Goodhue-Elkins award.

His list of birding accomplishments is long and is headlined by his expert leadership on hundreds of local field trips. He also created several "citizen science" projects on his own such as his Turkey Pond Survey and the long-standing Common Nighthawk Migration Watch in Concord, and few people know that his idea was the brainstorm that resulted in the Carter Hill hawkwatch in Concord.

It is worth mentioning some of the details of these projects. From 2002 to 2016, he completed a regular weekly survey around Turkey Pond in Concord and ultimately created a bird list for the area. Those efforts have produced an unparalleled amount of bird data for the city of Concord.

As mentioned, Rob pioneered the surveying of the Common Nighthawk migration statewide. He conducted the Concord watch from 2008 to 2016. He expanded the watch from five nights the first year to approximately three

weeks, spending every evening from late August through early September on the roof of a parking garage counting nighthawks. He counted thousands of birds and, just as importantly, he welcomed many visitors to join him. This important survey continues to this day, now run by others who were inspired by Rob.

At the same time, he was one of the first people to recognize the potential of Carter Hill in Concord as a hawkwatch site. Starting with his idea, and with help from NH Audubon, Carter Hill became an official site that produced valuable data for ten years, all because of Rob.

As you now realize, Rob emphasizes birding locally, which greatly expands our knowledge of a given area. Most recently

he has focused on the lesser-known Belknap County where he spends his summers. Rob has a penchant for nest finding, a challenging skill that he honed by following his own tactic of "walking the same path twice" or, in the case of the Turkey Pond Bird Survey, hundreds of times!

Less well known are his contributions behind the obvious curtain of birding. For years, he was an officer in the Capital Area Chapter of NH Audubon, ultimately becoming the President. Also, he is a former member and Chair of the NH Rare Birds Committee.

His heart and passion are always in the field, however, often with other birders. That is how he has touched so many people. He has always been a favorite leader who made his field trips fun by doing things like bringing cider and pie to his fall sparrow trips. He has a wonderful sense of humor and

can always turn a clever phrase. When Rob was leaving the state (thankfully not forever), Kathleen Brockett wrote:

*Rob has been one of my favorite trip leaders. He has taught me so much about bird identification and has inspired me to be a better birder. I will certainly miss him.*

We are lucky to still have Rob Woodward with us for part of the year and NH Audubon is honored to present the 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award to him for his decades of service to the birding community.



*Rob Woodward receiving NH Audubon's 2022 Goodhue-Elkins Award. Photo by Dyanna Smith.*



# Celebrating the Birds of the Squam Lakes Region

by Iain MacLeod

In 1977, Beverly Ridgely wrote *Birds of the Squam Lakes Region*, a wonderfully-detailed account of the bird species that he and his son Bob had documented in the Squam area. The book was universally well received. It had a scholarly introduction by the late Tudor Richards, one of the greats of New Hampshire ornithology and a good friend to me in my days with NH Audubon. It went out of print in 1985 and Bev then decided to write a revised and expanded edition, which was published in 1988 and which included lovely pen and ink illustrations by John Gwynne and Cyndy House. That second edition has had pride-of-place on the bookshelf next to my desk since I came to the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in 2006. It too is long out of print.

Bev died in 2017, just shy of his 97th birthday. Bob of course has gone on to world renown for his bird conservation work in the tropics and has remained active in the birding scene here in the Lakes Region. He and I have birded together over the years and worked on the Sandwich Christmas Bird Count together and so, when Bob started talking about a new version of his father's book, I was intrigued.

In early 2019, Bob convened a meeting here at the Science Center with me and another Squam area birder, Ken Klapper, and we agreed to collaborate. Bob and Ken would work on revising the original bird accounts, writing new accounts for species that had been added to the area list since 1988 and sourcing photos. I would do the book design and layout and the Science Center would serve as fiscal agent and publisher.

Over the next three years, we chipped away at this huge project and the end result was published in June, 2022. The new *Birds of the Squam Lakes Region* is 400 pages, packed with detailed information on the natural history and status of the more than 280 species of birds recorded here and illustrated with more than 200 color photos by some of the finest wildlife photographers in the region. It also includes a Birds and Hiking section highlighting the best locations to see birds in the region.

In the Preface of the new book, Bob writes

*... Dad would go out on near-daily bird walks, or later drives, carefully recording the birds he'd seen. I've never seen so many notes! Toward the end they became scattershot, but their first few, many of them detailed, formed the basis for what became his Guide to the Birds of the Squam Lakes Region. Copies of that book, with its familiar green cover*

## Birds of the Squam Lakes Region



*adorned by my friend John Gwynne's lovely drawing of a Common Loon and its chick, became a familiar sight in many homes around the lake. That was just as he wanted it. He wanted everyone to know about, and to love, birds! As a professional ornithologist and conservationist, I do too. And I gradually realized that there was going to be no better way to honor Dad's memory than to republish his book, getting it back into circulation.*

The book is available to order online here:

<https://nhnature.org/programs/birdsofsquambook.php>

All proceeds from the sale of the book support the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. You can also buy it at the NH Audubon nature store at the McLane Center in Concord, at the Loons Feather Gift shop at the Loon Center in Moultonborough and several other bookshops in New Hampshire.

## June 1 through July 31, 2022

by Jason K. Pietrzak



Jason and his two children, Prinia and Sova. Photo by Anne Winters.

The summer, June through July, is generally considered birding's slow season and the summer of 2022 certainly felt slow at the time. A cool and wet spring gave way to an abnormally dry June and a hot, dry July. The rarest species were late spring holdovers and early fall dispersers that nearly all fell within the first and last handful of days of the summer season. Reviewing the

data, however, revealed many interesting surprises including a respectable species total of 248, the second-highest New Hampshire summer in eBird.

I have broken down the season summary into two sections. In the first section, I have highlighted the rarest and most notable statewide bird reports of the season and listed them chronologically. The second section follows a more traditional family-by-family report, largely following taxonomical order, and presents species highlights, breeding reports, and other information of note.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird is the standard for reporting bird sightings and so it was my primary tool for reviewing bird reports during the summer season. The growing popularity of eBird during the last decade has made it the best resource for finding contemporary data on species occurrence, individual counts of birds, and the relative frequency of species occurrence.

*The Birds of New Hampshire* by Keith and Fox was my second most-used resource in producing this season summary. This comprehensive compilation of bird records in New Hampshire includes data from the earliest records through 2009. Species accounts in this reference include compilations of reports and often make note of historic trends as well as developing trends contemporaneous with the publication of the book.

Less frequently used were the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *All About Birds* and *Birds of the World* websites. The former is a general resource for species accounts and is available for free, the latter is a much more robust and comprehensive resource available for a fee. I used these

resources to explore habitat and resource needs as well as general life history information for many species featured in this season summary.

*Note: References to Odiorne and Odiorne Point refer to Odiorne Point State Park in Rye and may include the adjacent marshes.*

## Rare and Notable Vagrants

*Presented in Chronological Order*



Female King Eider (right) with a Common Eider by Steve Mirick, 7-23-22, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

Holdovers from the spring season naturally account for the earliest rare species of summer. This year included a female **King Eider** found on May 22 by Brett Hillman and continuing reliably just south of Odiorne Point, through the end of summer and into the fall. This species is rare in New Hampshire waters and typically seen during the winter. This is only the eighth summer record (all since 1998) and the first time that a King Eider has spent the entire summer on our coast.



Tricolored Heron by Jean-Marie Maher, 6-1-22, NH coast.

Another spring holdover were two **Tricolored Heron**, also seen just south of Odiorne, but in the marshes to the



## SUMMER SEASON

west. One bird was first found on May 25 by Zeke Cornell and two were reported from May 28 to June 5, but only one continued until June 19 (Robbie Prieto). Tricolored Herons have become regular on the coast and there is speculation this bird could have been associated with nesting waders in the newly re-established (2020) heron rookery on Appledore Island. Historically, there had been a large heronry on the island that included Snowy and Great Egrets and Glossy Ibis until the early 2000s when raccoon predation caused total abandonment by 2004.

The last spring holdover just barely snuck into the summer season. The **Clapper Rail** in the Hampton Salt Marsh Conservation Area that was originally found on May 28 by Zeke Cornell and Rebecca Suomala was last seen on June 1. This was only the second report of this species in the last decade.

One of the more intriguing vagrants of the summer was a **Tropical/Couch's Kingbird** reported just south of Odiorne Point on June 2 by Holly Bauer. Either of these species would have been a first state record, but unfortunately the bird was only seen and photographed briefly before flying away. The two species are best distinguished by voice and this bird did not vocalize. The few available photos were inconclusive and did not show some key field marks.

A **White-faced Ibis** reported by Steve Mirick in the Hampton Salt Marsh Conservation Area was seen by many on June 3 and June 4. This was only the second report of this vagrant in a decade. Although visually challenging to separate from the locally common **Glossy Ibis**, many were treated to great opportunities to compare the two species side-by-side (see comparison photos on the back cover).



*White-faced Ibis by Leo McKillop, 6-4-22, Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area, Hampton, NH.*

The history of **White-eyed Vireos** in the state (and region) is intriguing and a bit unclear. There were numerous reports in the late 1800s through 1907, but then a total absence until 1955. During those intervening years many questions were raised about the veracity of the earlier records, including

an 1889 record from Grafton County. Regardless, records of this species are sparse in recent decades and a report from Plymouth on July 7 by Elaine Marie was only the second summer record for this species in the state and nearly the northernmost contemporary record.

Summer's long dry spell of rarities broke on July 27 when a **Little Stint** was found by Steve Mirick at the Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area and remained until July 29. Only the second state record for this species, (the first was in 2003), this bird probably launched the most regional twitches of any New Hampshire bird this summer.

A **Little Gull** was seen and photographed by Holly Bauer in Little Harbor on July 28 and may have persisted in the general area into August. This has nearly become an annual species; however, summer records remain sparse with over nine years since the last summer report.

An **American White Pelican** was reported by Gail Smith from the First Connecticut Lake on July 30 and July 31. It was only the second state record of this species in a decade, and the first ever from Coos County. Coincidentally, an individual pelican was reported this summer on many checklists from Montreal, Quebec, up the St. Lawrence River and around the Gulf of St. Lawrence, so this could be that same Canadian bird. American White Pelicans have been reported in Quebec province with increasing frequency over the last decade.

The last of the rarest birds, a **Swallow-tailed Kite** was reported from Moultonborough in Carroll County by Yvette Cendes on July 30. Still incredibly rare but increasingly reported in the northeast, there were several records from New Hampshire back in 2020. The observer described it well and is familiar with the species but was unable to photograph the bird. As with all such rarities, the record will be reviewed by the NH Rare Birds Committee.

### Highlights by Family

*Generally in taxonomical order*

### Geese, Ducks, Grebes, and Loons

Always notable in summer, a pair of **Blue-winged Teal** were reported by Alan Murray from Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) on June 3 and another from Charlestown by Stan McCumber on June 20.

Any inland scoters are a good find, but they are particularly rare in summer. A surprising **Surf Scoter** was reported by Kyle Jones on the Connecticut River near Lebanon on June 1 and is only the fourth summer inland record for the state. Nearly as notable inland, **White-winged Scoters** were reported by Bernard Foy on the Connecticut River at Monroe from June 3 to 5, as well as by Janet



Paddleford on Lake Winnepesaukee from June 25 to July 3.

A late migrating **Bufflehead** was reported by Dick Dionne at Akers Pond near Errol on June 1 and persisted until June 4. Buffleheads typically leave New Hampshire by mid-May to breed in the boreal forest. This sighting was a summer first for Coos County and a notable summer record anywhere in the state.



*Red-necked Grebe in breeding plumage by Paul Kursewicz, 6-14-22, Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.*

A couple of late migrating **Red-necked Grebes** were reported, one by Steve Mirick on June 1 from Little Boars Head and another by Paul Kursewicz on June 14 from Rye. Both early and late migrating birds have been reported during the summer annually since 2014.

An adult **Red-throated Loon** seen by Steve Mirick from North Hampton State Beach on July 7 was notable both as a rarity but also for its breeding plumage. Summer records have typically been of nonbreeding or subadult birds.

To follow-up on one of last summer's great rarities: **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** were not seen in New Hampshire in the summer of 2022. They were, however, reported nearby in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Quebec this summer, as well as in Maine in the spring. Although we missed out on finding this species this summer, it is certainly a species to be on the lookout for.

## Cranes and Shorebirds

It was a quiet summer for **Sandhill Crane** reports with birds only regularly seen in one location (Monroe) and sporadically seen elsewhere. Prior to the summer season, a pair of adults with two chicks were reported on May 11 near Dead Pond, Nottingham, by Steve Mirick and Davis Finch. Unfortunately, cranes were not spotted in the area again until October 3 when only two adults were reported without young (Roger and Kathryn Frieden, Rt. 156, Nottingham). The pair in Monroe were finally confirmed to have a chick on August 21 by Jeff MacQueen. Another pair was reported flying over Nashua on July 27 by William Goleman. A great

lesson that even large, noisy birds can go undetected!

**American Oystercatchers** continued breeding on the Isles of Shoals, and Manomet's Shiloh Schulte found two chicks on Lunging Island on July 22 along with three other nests on Maine islands. There were only four summer reports of birds from the shore but that's more than previous summers (there were no reports in 2021), likely due to the increasing numbers of birds nesting at the Isles of Shoals.

New Hampshire Fish and Game biologists reported a tremendous year for **Piping Plovers** at Hampton and Seabrook beaches. In total, 14 pairs of birds fledged 28 chicks, far surpassing the previous high of 20 chicks back in 2020. **Least Terns** also had a highly productive season with 20 pairs experiencing high success, although an exact fledgling count is unavailable. **Upland Sandpipers** remained in-line with recent years with four or five successful nests producing at least 12 fledglings at Portsmouth International Airport at Pease.

**Red Knots** in breeding plumage only occasionally turn up in the summer on our coast. One was found this year at Rye Harbor by Stuart Varney on June 8 and was also seen and photographed by several other birders.



*Stilt Sandpipers by Steve Mirick, 7-20-22, Hampton Saltmarsh Conservation Area, NH.*

A new summer record high count was set for **Stilt Sandpipers** when Steve Mirick reported nine on July 20 at the Hampton Salt Marsh Conservation Area. This species is not annually reliable in the summer season, but this year there were daily reports of one to five birds from July 21 through the end of the month.

An estimate of 2,000 **Semipalmated Sandpipers**, reported by Holly Bauer and Steve Mirick from Hampton on July 26, is among the highest counts of this species in decades. A handful of reports between 1,800 and 2,170 birds have been reported since 2019, following decades of lower counts.

**Solitary Sandpipers** are among the earliest southbound migrating shorebirds in New Hampshire and multiple birds were reported ranging across the state on dates that

## SUMMER SEASON

approached the earliest ever recorded. Andrew Weber reported one on July 2 in Rockingham County, Kyle Jones reported one on July 3 in Grafton County, and Dan Hubbard reported four on July 5 in Strafford County.



*Willet (Eastern subsp. on left, Western subsp. on right) by Benjamin Griffiths, 7-19-22, cove south of Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

The **Willet** is one of a handful of birds where identification to subspecies is fairly straightforward in the field and splitting these into two species has been debated. **Eastern Willet** is a common breeder in New Hampshire, but **Western Willet**, a rare fall migrant, was reported in the summer season for only the eighth time this century by Dick Dionne, Gregg Dionne, and Paul Charron on July 17 at Odiorne Point. It was seen again on July 19. Aside from its rarity, the bird was notable for being the first adult Western Willet reported in the state and the earliest ever reported in the state. The early timing would make sense for an adult since they migrate earlier than juveniles. Previous records for the subspecies have been from August through October (all juveniles).

### Alcids, Gulls, Terns, Storm-petrels, Shearwaters, and Herons

The Shoals Marine Laboratory (SML) provided estimated numbers for nesting terns on White and Seavey Islands in the New Hampshire section of the Isles of Shoals. SML estimated 3,066 **Common Tern** nests; 124 **Roseate Tern** nests, a new high count for the species; and one **Arctic Tern** nest. Productivity was high for all tern species and SML scientists attributed that success to high prey abundance, good weather, and low predation pressure. Aside from terns, SML also reported the following species breeding on the Isles of Shoals (including the Maine portion): **Black Guillemot** (44 nests), **Snowy Egret**, **Great Egret**, **Glossy Ibis**, **Black-crowned Night-Heron**, and **Great Black-backed Gulls**. The gulls were reported to be experiencing higher levels of mortality due to avian influenza than the other species nesting on the Shoals.



*Common Tern  
by Levi Burford,  
7-20-22, Errol,  
NH.*

Speaking of terns, Levi Burford photographed a Common Tern on Lake Umbagog on July 20. Summer inland records of this species are sparse, but Lake Umbagog is one of the more reliable spots with three previous summer records since 2000.

Apart from reports from the Isles of Shoals, most reports of pelagic species come from whalewatch ships, fishing boats, and research vessels. Unfortunately, conditions in the summer of 2022 led to most boats spending their time in Massachusetts waters throughout most of the summer. The highest numbers of pelagic birds were reported from a UNH research vessel on July 20 by Steve Mirick. His count of 545 **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** was the highest for that species in the summer in a decade.



*Common Murre by Steve Bennett, 7-5-22, Isles of Shoals, NH.*

A **Common Murre** was seen by Steve Bennett at the Isles of Shoals on July 5. This species remains noteworthy in the summer with only occasional records. SML scientists reported a **Razorbill** on Seavey Island on June 6. Razorbills were reported on three occasions from the Isles Shoals and Jeffreys Ledge in 2021, but there were no summer records during the previous five years.

Another year, another possible breeding location for **Least Bitterns**! In addition to the Lebanon, Salem, and Hollis sites, a pair was found in wetlands along the Rockingham Recreational



Rail Trail in Newfields by Ellen Snyder on June 6 and was observed through June 15. Breeding was not confirmed at this site, but juveniles were reported at Salem (Kyle Wilmarth, 6-10-22) and Lebanon (Wayne Scott 7-22-22).

There were two separate reports of immature **Little Blue Herons** this summer. On June 3, Steve Mirick reported one from Odiorne Point State Park and on July 18, Alan Murray reported one from the Rochester WTP. An annual bird since 2015, nearly all of them are young birds.

Although reliable on the coast, an inland **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** found by Diane Seabury on June 29 in Gilford was a first record for Belknap County and is possibly the northern-most record in New Hampshire. Coincidentally, the northern-most Yellow-crowned Night-Heron record in eBird anywhere in continental North America this summer occurred northeast of Quebec City.



*Glossy Ibis by Len Medlock, 6-20-22, Rye, NH.*

The many reports of **Glossy Ibis** on the coast this summer had mostly above-average numbers, including the all-time high count in eBird of 61 birds seen by Linda Woodard on July 30 in the Parson's Creek Saltmarsh in Rye. The increases in numbers is likely due to the re-establishment of a nesting colony on Appledore Island at the Isles of Shoals. Although common on the coast, inland birds remain rare and so a photographed bird in Rumney on July 1 by Gail and Gerry Coffey is notable.

## Diurnal Raptors

**Black Vultures** have been annually reported for over a decade now, most regularly during the summer from the Connecticut River Valley, where as many as three birds were seen this year. New for this year was a pair of birds seen

regularly around Pickering Ponds and the Rochester WTP, one of which was distinctively missing some secondary wing feathers.

Multiple pairs of **Mississippi Kites** returned for another season around Great Bay. Pairs were reported in Durham, Newmarket, Stratham, and Greenland, but efforts to find and monitor nests were mostly unsuccessful. The one exception was a nest in Stratham which fledged one chick. Mississippi Kites are known to wander widely and turn up in surprising places. Intriguingly, as many as 12 kites were reported around Yarmouth, Nova Scotia this year, starting with a report of five by Alix d'Entremont on July 20. This group contained adults and juveniles that were hawking insects on the west coast of Nova Scotia as late as September. There are no previous eBird records in Nova Scotia nor any of the Maritimes and the next closest records are near Portland, Maine in previous years, so the explanation for this Yarmouth flock of kites is open to speculation. It is likely they are birds dispersing from multiple nests following a group of insects into this migrant trap, but did they come from farther south or are there unknown breeding areas to our north and east? Wherever these birds nested, birders in New Hampshire should be prepared to see or hear this species anywhere that forests occur near open habitat, rivers, or lakes.

A **Rough-legged Hawk**, soaring with a small group of Broad-winged Hawks, was reported flying over the Balsams Resort near Dixville Notch by Lori Charron on June 6, more than a month later than this species typically departs the region. This was the first summer record of this species since 1965. Curiously, other reports of this species occurred during the same week at similarly southern latitudes from Ontario to New Brunswick.

## Vireos and Crows

Having crept north over the last few decades, **Fish Crows** seem to have hit their limit where the Lakes Region meets the White Mountains. Pushing the edge of that limit, a small number of Fish Crows were reported in and around Plymouth. Curiously, the species is nearly absent from the Connecticut River Valley.

Major questions were raised this summer concerning the ability to distinguish between **Philadelphia Vireo** and **Red-eyed Vireo** by sound. Philadelphia Vireos experienced a noticeable uptick in reports seemingly coinciding with the rise in use of "Merlin." Merlin is a smart phone app that listens to bird sounds and presents potential identifications to species. The challenge is that Merlin can make mistakes, especially with similar sounding vocalizations. Philadelphia and Red-eyed Vireos are extremely difficult to tell apart

## SUMMER SEASON

and should be confirmed with a sighting. eBird reviewers are concerned that birders may be relying on Merlin and reporting Philadelphia Vireo whenever the app suggests the species without a visual confirmation. As yet unpublished research into distinguishing these two species by sound alone suggests that this is not possible. With this new information, eBird reviewers in New Hampshire are no longer accepting reports of Philadelphia Vireo without a visual confirmation.

### Finches, Sparrows, Orioles, and Blackbirds

**Evening Grosbeaks** remain across the forested regions of the state and summer records near the coast are few and far between. A pair photographed by Tanya Glenn on a birdfeeder in Durham on June 16 was noteworthy.

**Red Crossbill** reports were sporadic and in small numbers across the state, but a couple of larger flocks rivaled the numbers of the last few good years. Top estimates of around 50 birds were reported from both the south at Pack Monadnock by Nora Hanke on July 15, and the north near Pittsburg and the Connecticut Lakes by Levi Burford on June 27.

**White-winged Crossbills**, on the other hand, seem to be stable with similar numbers of reports and birds over the last few years. The largest flock was 17, counted by Scott Sumner near Pittsburg on June 11.



*Fox Sparrow by Charlie Nims, 7-31-22, Caps Ridge Trail, WMNF, NH.*

Among our high elevation breeders, **Fox Sparrow** stood out this summer with many reports across the White Mountains. This is a species that has slowly been expanding across the high country over the last couple of decades, but the number of sightings this summer is noteworthy.

**Bobolinks** are known to form huge flocks in the fall, but they occasionally start building up early. A flock of at least 60 birds was photographed by David Lichter on July 8 in Jefferson. This was not only notably large and early, but also an all-time high count for Coos County.

At Bedell Bridge State Park in Haverhill, **Orchard Orioles** have been reported with increasing regularity since 2019. A pair was observed on numerous occasions this summer, but breeding was not confirmed. A report by Christopher Nichols of a pair of birds on June 11 in the Lakes Region in Meredith was also noteworthy. Orchard Orioles are regular at



*Orchard Oriole by Holly Bauer, 6-5-22, Pickering Ponds, Rochester, NH.*

Pickering Ponds in Rochester, but a nest with young on July 24 was a very late date for this early-migrating species (see the Field Notes).

### Warblers

One **Golden-winged Warbler**, once a rare breeder in the state but declining for decades, was reported by Kirk Elwell from East Kingston on June 2. Two other possible Golden-winged Warblers were reported later this summer in Grafton County, but Blue-winged Warbler hybrids could not be ruled out in either case.

Very common northern breeders, **Blackpoll Warblers** pass through southern New Hampshire into early June on their way north and fall migrants begin returning in small numbers in August. Adult birds are unheard of in southern locations in July, but one in breeding plumage was photographed by Stuart Varney at Odiorne Point State Park on July 9.

Notable for their absence, **Cerulean Warblers** went completely unreported this summer. Though very rare, nearly annual reports and occasional breeding have been reported over the last few decades in New Hampshire. Recent research, including an article by David Sibley (link below), shows that Black-throated Blue Warblers in New England mimic Cerulean Warbler songs, so this is another species where a visual confirmation is essential.

A Cerulean-like song variant of Black-throated Blue Warbler:

<https://www.sibleyguides.com/2020/05/a-cerulean-like-song-variant-of-black-throated-blue-warbler/>.



# Regional Report, Summer 2022

*Note that there is no report for Sullivan County and Lake Sunapee. – Ed.*

## Coos County

*by Robert A. Quinn*

I have included a few personal observations (RAQ) as well as highlights from eBird.

### Late Spring Migrants

May 30, 2022 (RAQ)

Forty plus Chimney Swifts entering one chimney in Gorham were an indication that swifts were still migrating in Coos County as the summer season began.

Besides the Chimney Swifts there was one Bufflehead in Errol on June 4 and a Rough-legged Hawk in Colebrook on June 6 (with a good description) which were very late spring migrants.

### June Highlights

June 4-6, 2022 (RAQ)

Some of the six Mourning Warblers I found on the morning of June 5 were probably on territory, but some could have been late spring migrants. A nice new find was several Cliff Swallow nests along Harvey Swell Road in Colebrook on June 5, 2022.

Uncommon but Possible Breeders

- Common Nighthawk in Milan June 13 (may also have been a late migrant)
- Sora at Whitefield Airport June 20
- Wilson's Warbler along Scott Bog Road on June 27 (plus one Sharp-shinned Hawk, two Black-backed Woodpeckers, and three Yellow-bellied Flycatchers)

### July Highlights

July 6-9, 2022 (RAQ)

A stay of three nights in the Second College Grant was highlighted by a Spruce Grouse family on July 7.

July 24 - 26, 2022 (RAQ)

My last "summer" trip to Coos County was noteworthy for an almost complete lack of swallows. It was obvious that most of them had left with only a few here and there. One pleasant surprise was a male Ring-necked Duck on Back Pond in Stewartstown. It might have been wandering but if it was part of a local pair that would be a new breeding site. On July 26, it was nice to hear and see several Alder Flycatchers along Scott Bog Road and East Inlet Road in Pittsburg. The *Empidonax* flycatchers also tend to depart the North Country early, therefore, the Alders were noteworthy.

## Noteworthy Sightings

The rarity of the season in Coos County was a White Pelican photographed July 31 on First Connecticut Lake in Pittsburg. Other sightings of interest were:

- two Eastern Meadowlarks and a Northern Harrier in Jefferson Meadows July 10
- three Green-winged Teal (thought to be fledglings) on July 10 at Whitefield Airport
- a Philadelphia Vireo (seen and heard) at Airport Marsh in Whitefield July 20
- several whip-poor-wills, especially a nest in Berlin which included fledglings (later banded)
- two Great Horned Owls duetting in Cambridge at the south end of Lake Umbagog July 27
- Willow Flycatcher audio recording at Fort Hill WMA on July 28 (a very northerly record)
- one Horned Lark above tree-line in the Presidential Range on July 31

Finally, a Red Crossbill family was seen just across the border into Maine, literally within a stone's throw of New Hampshire.

## Early Fall Migrants

One Common Tern on July 20 was an early migrant plus there were obvious shorebird migrants from July 22 onward in the Errol/Umbagog region. Birders discovered several Green Herons wandering north of their breeding grounds, possibly more individuals than for a normal July in Coos?



*Mourning Warbler by Steve Mirick, 7-4-22, South Bay Bog, Pittsburg, NH.*

# Summer 2022 Field Notes

Anita Fernandez, Editor

## Ruby-throated Hummingbird Rescue

by Joe Reisert



*A male Ruby-throated Hummingbird appears as sentinel over a juvenile while it recovers at Joe's feeder in Amherst NH.*

This season at my residence, we have just had what I think is a second juvenile Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The way I determine a young juvenile is by the slightly shorter bill of a bird observed at a feeder. Also, a male hummingbird often sits on the top perch over the feeder, like a guard, allowing the bird to feed. When any other hummingbird approaches, even a female who could be the mother, the male swoops down and chases the intruder away, almost acting like a dive bomber.

Yesterday afternoon (Saturday, July 23), we discovered a hummingbird trapped in the garage at our home. The garage door was wide open, but the bird kept flying at or near the ceiling instead of dropping down a few feet lower to exit the garage. Over the years, this is not the first time this has happened. I suspected at the time that it was a juvenile. We opened the other garage door to assist escape and attempted to coax it to leave, but to no avail. Finally, exhausted, the bird flopped down lifeless and laid limp on a board near the floor.

I jumped into action. The last time we experienced this, several years ago, I carefully took the bird in my hand to a hummingbird feeder with a long spout and pushed its bill into the spout. Eventually it drank the fluid, recovered and flew off.

This time the rescue was a little different as my feeder is now a flat bowl type with four ports. With the bird in hand, I quickly inserted its bill into a port on the feeder, but there was no response. I then took two Q-tips, saturated them with water and rubbed them carefully on the side of the bird's bill. There was still no response. I then reinserted its bill back into a hole in the feeder. Next, I tipped the feeder sideways until the fluid covered the bird's bill. After a minute or so, I

felt the bird vibrate slightly. It then vibrated a second time. I immediately left the bird on the feeder with its bill still inserted in the port and moved inside our house.

Almost immediately, a male hummingbird appeared on the scene, first hovering over the almost lifeless bird and then literally perched just above it. It looked like it was trying to nurse the lifeless bird back to life. It looked very strange. I took a picture from inside our house. After a few minutes, the almost lifeless bird stirred and both birds flew off together. Wow, it looked like it had survived.

The next morning, I saw what appeared to be the same hummingbird flying near flowers just below the same feeder. Finally, it went to the feeder. Instantly, the male hummingbird appeared and perched on the top support rod. Then a third hummingbird appeared and the dive bombing began. By now, I was 95% sure this was the same bird that had been revived the previous day.

I recommend you keep your garage doors closed when hummingbirds are present. Should you need it, the procedure I describe above will hopefully work to revive any hummingbird in a similar situation. If not, be sure to call a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator.

*Editor's Note: Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are not involved in rearing young. Females undertake the entire process of raising young from nest-building, through incubation to feeding young with no help from the male. That makes Joe's observation especially remarkable (and puzzling).*

## Seven Juvenile Sora found in Hollis



*A Sora was reported at the Hollis Brookline High School in May of 2022 in Hillsborough County, but not seen (or heard) again until seven juveniles were observed at the same location on July 17, 2022. As the typical clutch size for these birds is 8-11 eggs, it seems likely that these are all from the same female. Photo of one of the juveniles by Christopher McPherson.*



## Historic Note: Virginia Rail Chick Reunited in Barrington

Almost 30 years ago, on July 15, 1992, Steve Mirick received a call about a cat bringing a black furry little bird into a residence. The bird, which turned out to be a Virginia Rail chick, was still alive and running around the living room. When Steve showed up, the chick had been securely placed in a box and he took it to a small section of the Bellamy River Wetland Preserve on the west side of Rt. 125, as the only “logical wet area” for it. When the chick was released, it ran into the marsh emitting loud vocalizations. Then, Steve heard a female call back! The two calls came closer and closer together as the mother and baby were reunited.

## Common Merganser Chick Hitching a Ride

by Anita Fernandez



One Common Merganser chick scrambles up for a ride on its mother's back while three more chicks swim and feed close behind at the Main Street Bridge in Laconia, NH. Photographed by Rob Woodward on 07-07-22.

Common Mergansers generally only have one brood per season, but it can often appear to be quite large due to the frequent practice of egg dumping (females laying their eggs in another female's nest). There was even a sighting in July 2018 of a female with 76 chicks in tow (Katz, 2018)! A number this large is the result of multiple females combining their young into one group. This is seen as a type of “daycare system” for the young to stay together while giving other adults a chance to feed. Females will call their chicks from the nest box, nest cavity, or rock crevice to bring them to the water 24-48 hours after hatching, and one or two chicks will occasionally climb onto the female's back for a ride and can even manage to hold on as the female dives. While the female will lead the chicks to food sites, the young will feed themselves from the surface until they can begin to dive on their own at around eight days.

Rob Woodward originally posted the link to this photo on 07-07-22 to the NHBirds email list. He sent us an update on 09-20-22. He writes that on July 7 there were five chicks, on July 19 there were three chicks, and on August 6 two chicks remained. He observed the female and both the chicks into September when they were almost fully grown and feeding together below the dam on the Winnepesaukee River in downtown Laconia.

Katz, B. 2018. Why a Female Duck Was Spotted with a Huge Brood of 76 Ducklings. *Smithsonian Magazine*  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/why-female-duck-was-spotted-huge-brood-76-ducklings-180969757/>

## An Irate House Wren Moves In

by Anita Fernandez

Bill Chaisson posted the following observation to the NHBirds email list on 07-12-22:

Twice now a House Wren has come to my front porch and hopped from object to object all the while scolding me (sitting innocently in the adjacent kitchen, indoors). I have not heard or seen a House Wren all year until now. Since those initial visits I now hear this male singing all the time in my yard.

Do wrens suddenly shift territories late in the breeding season? What is up?

His intriguing observation prompted us to do some research into House Wren behavior in *Birds of the World* (Johnson, 2020). House Wrens are cavity nesters and they readily take to nest boxes or other non-natural cavities in backyards. The majority of pairs will work together to raise a brood and may make a second or even a third nesting attempt.

Pair bonds usually remain intact until mid-nesting, when extensive brooding is no longer required. After that, one member of the pair may desert the other partner. In one study, only about half of monogamous pairs remained together for a second brood. Males are more likely to desert than females, but the behavior can be initiated by either. Mate desertion is likely due to an increased chance of offspring survival; the deserting partner is able to begin a second brood much earlier than “sticking around” until the first brood is fledged.

Males who desert their females will sometimes stay in the same territory and begin to advertise for a new mate on a surplus nest site, but others will find a new territory altogether. This may be the source of Bill's bird. Female desertion usually begins by scouting and laying eggs on a new territory while still feeding nestlings on her original territory.

There are also “floater” male House Wrens who can be on the periphery of the territories of mated males. It’s possible that Bill’s bird was one of these floaters trying to attract a deserting female who was looking for a site to make a second nesting attempt.

Johnson, L. 2020. House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (A. Poole, ed.). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.houwre.01>

## Dive Bombed by a Merlin in Winchester

by Joshua Jarvis

The journey of identifying some noisy raptors began in the spring, when I heard them making a killdeer like call (kikiki) in Winchester. I snapped some poor-quality photos and misidentified them as Sharp-shinned Hawks. Then, they largely slipped my mind until July as I had heard them only occasionally.

In July, they became very active and vocal, constantly calling. They would dive bomb any bird of prey that came close. After a few weeks of continuous sightings, I tried to identify them properly as I was having doubts on my initial identification.

Getting a proper identification was harder than it seemed. The birds were often seen only briefly or obscured by trees. Using a birdcast call ID app only frustrated the issue, as they were being misidentified as kestrels. Playing calls did not help either as no call matched exactly and most raptors seem to make a similar sounding call.

In late July, I decided to dedicate the entire day if need be to finally identify them. It took a while for them to start calling and a bit longer for me to pinpoint their location. Eventually, the time paid off and I finally had it! A bird was perched on a treetop – it was a Merlin! I took a picture of it and heard a whoosh of something moving quickly just over my head. I turned to see another Merlin turning back towards me to swoop again! When I turned to face it, it turned away and flew off. I decided it was best to leave (although I did get a couple more photos on my way out).

I was lucky to have decided to spend time out there that day, as within a week they left the location.

*Editor’s Note: According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, many raptors will display this type of air-borne behavior on intruders during the nesting season. They recommend leaving the area, just as Joshua did!*

## Hairy Woodpecker Feeding Eastern Bluebird Chick

by Amy Severino



*Eastern Bluebird chick and Hairy Woodpecker together at a feeder with mealworms in Ipswich, NH. Photograph by Amy Severino on 06-14-22.*

I’ve had mealworms at my feeder that a family of bluebirds have been enjoying, mostly the adult male and five fledglings. There is also a Hairy Woodpecker nest on my property. The adult female Hairy began stopping by a couple of times a day to snack soon after her eggs hatched. One day, one of the bluebird fledglings hopped on the feeder while the Hairy was eating and began demanding food. To my surprise, the Hairy fed the young bluebird! I only saw her do it one additional time after that, and since then, she’s been squawking at them to leave when she arrives at the feeder. There’s definitely a hierarchy between the bluebirds, the starlings, and the Hairy!

## Red-shouldered Hawk Nest

Text and photos by Rebecca Suomala

I’m not sure what I expected a Red-shouldered Hawk nest to look like, but this wasn’t it! Zeke Cornell began hearing Red-shouldered Hawks in his Bow yard on March 20 and then observed copulation a few days later. After that, he continued to hear or see them constantly and it finally dawned on me that there was a nest nearby. I took my scope and began scanning the crotches of trees that I thought looked suitable for a nest. According to *Birds of the World*, they typically nest in large, deciduous trees, more than halfway up the tree in a crotch of the main trunk. In conifers, they are usually against the main trunk. All the pictures showed big trees with good-sized branches supporting the





*Photos showing the Red-shouldered Hawk nest in a small dead pine and an adult (presumed female) incubating, 4-17-22, Bow, NH.*

nest. The first suspicious crotch of a tree I looked at held a sleeping raccoon! Zeke's yard is full of pines so I looked for clumps of branches against the trunk. Nothing. There was a suspicious lump of sticks in a very small, leaning dead pine that didn't seem to meet any of the criteria, but when I put my scope on it, there was a Red-shouldered incubating!

I was excited that I might be able to follow and document the progression of incubation to hatching to fledging as I have done for nests of Common Nighthawks and Horned Larks (see the Spring 2021 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, Vol. 40, #1, p. 24). I looked up incubation (33 days) and chick growth (35-45 days to fledging) to get my time chart started. On May 14 for the first time, I saw the adult on the nest clearly feeding a chick, although I couldn't see the chick itself. I suspect it had hatched very recently. On May 23, there was an adult on the nest, but alas, that was the last time they were seen at the nest. I suspect the chick was predated. If my calculations were correct, it would have been 10-12 days old when it disappeared, a very vulnerable age.

Zeke continued to see an adult periodically in the yard so I'm hoping they will return next spring to try again. Maybe it can find a more typical nesting tree, but Carol Foss at NH Audubon

has postulated that there may be a shortage of ideal nest trees for raptors like the Red-shouldered. It takes many years for a tree to develop crotches with large branches and in young forests, they are probably in short supply. I don't know if their nest site contributed to the nest failure but I am guessing this was a young pair possibly nesting for the first time.

## Late Nesting Orchard Orioles at Pickering Ponds

*Photos taken by Alan Murray at Pickering Ponds in Rochester, NH.*



*Adult female Orchard Oriole with food in her bill, 7-24-22*



*Female Orchard Oriole feeding young in the nest, 7-24-22.*



*A close-up of the young Orchard Oriole near the nest site, 7-26-22.*

*Editor's Note:  
During July, most young Orchard Orioles have left the nest and are independent. This species is an early southbound migrant, leaving as early as mid-July and they are typically gone by*

*the end of July. This discovery of a young Orchard Oriole still in the nest at the end of July is a rarity and a great find! The latest 2022 report in eBird for New Hampshire is August 14 at Pickering Ponds, likely due to this late nest. There are few August or September records for the state.*



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# Common Nighthawk 2022

## Nesting Season

by Rebecca Suomala



*Andrea Robbins photographed this female Common Nighthawk on the ground in Ossipee, NH on August 12, 2022.*

It was a challenging summer for nighthawk monitoring. Although we confirmed five nests in the state (compared to nine last year), none were visible and there are, amazingly, no photos from a nest site this year. Thanks to all the years of observations from Project Nighthawk, we can confirm a nest by behavioral patterns, but it takes multiple visits and a little luck to record enough behavior to confirm nesting. This summer we had nine sites where we suspected nesting, but just couldn't confirm. The majority were in the Ossipee area where it is especially difficult to confirm nesting.

The number of birds and active sites in the Ossipee pine barrens was similar to other years. With only two partial watches, we couldn't confirm breeding, but birds were active at five or six sites. These pine barrens remain a stronghold for the species in the state, but there are fewer than ten potential nesting sites and typically only five or so are active in a given year. One surprise was a female Common Nighthawk photographed by Andrea Robbins roosting on the ground in Ossipee on August 12, 2022. Adult nighthawks typically roost in trees and we usually only see them on the ground near a nest or young. Most chicks have fledged by then, but the female only flew 20 feet suggesting that a young bird might have been roosting on the ground nearby. This sighting wasn't far from a site where we had an active male.

Although there were typical numbers of adult nighthawks in the Concord area (11-12 individuals), June temperatures were fairly cool and activity was subdued. When it heated up in July, birds became regular at sites we thought were inactive! That included Steeplegate Mall which is still one of the most reliable locations for nighthawks in Concord

with two territorial males. Most of the summer, we were in a drought and it was very dry, but one of the few rainstorms we had on July 12 resulted in failure at the Concord Airport. Right before the storm, we had also discovered two males displaying nearby and appearing to be nesting, but activity ceased after the storm so we couldn't be sure.

We are sad to report that Keene had no nighthawks this year for the first time since Project Nighthawk began in 2007. It was very sad for the Keene volunteers and Brett Thelen who coordinates the Keene watches, especially after having a chick each of the last two years. Keene was the last remaining downtown area in New Hampshire where nighthawks were present. Concord had two downtown nighthawk territories in 2007, but they are gone, and nighthawks are now present only outside of town to the east where there are still pine barrens. Many years ago, Manchester was a stronghold for nighthawks, but they were long gone before Project Nighthawk even started.

Mountaintops are one of the hardest areas to survey for nighthawks but Charlie Nims was able to confirm a nest on Black Cap Mountain in Conway. He had a very active evening watch with two males, a probable female, and possible young vocalizing. Nighthawks are active at dawn and dusk so if you're out for an evening hike to an open, rocky ridge, keep an eye and ear open for peenting nighthawks.

For more on Project Nighthawk, visit: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/project-nighthawk/>

NH Audubon's Project Nighthawk is funded by donations and we are grateful to the many donors and volunteers who make the project possible.

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## Stories of New Hampshire's Nesting Kestrels

### American Kestrels Nesting in Concord

by Anita Fernandez

*Photos taken by Andrew Seibert in Concord, NH.*

During softball season in the summer of 2021, Andrew Seibert saw and photographed a juvenile American Kestrel at the New Hampshire Technical Institute (NHTI). In 2022, at the NHTI's softball field, he found American Kestrels again, this time nesting in the dugout! Since these birds are secondary cavity nesters, it is no surprise that they chose to nest in the hollow area behind a dugout wall. Andrew has observed them tucking out of sight behind the wall at game time, and he states that they don't seem to stress out, even during the busy times when two games take place each day. Kestrels often return to the same nest site year after





*A singular juvenile American Kestrel perched on a fence at the NHTI softball field during the summer of 2021.*



*American Kestrel fledglings at their 2022 nest site in the baseball dugout at the NHTI softball field.*

year, especially if they have successfully bred there previously.

Chris Martin observed an additional active kestrel nest site during Concord Market Days and posted its location to the NHBirds email group on June 27, 2022. He stated:

*They are utilizing a hole in the wooden edging of the roofline on the southeast corner of an old brick building at 56 N. Main Street. The adult bird was seen arriving at the nest hole on Thursday pm 6/23, and also seen departing the nest hole on Friday pm*

*6-24. Best viewed from Low Ave. at Phenix Ave., right outside west entrance of Shaheen & Gordon Law Offices.*

Steve Wheeler monitors nesting kestrels in New Hampshire (see his articles following). He was unaware of the NHTI nest site, and it brings to six the number of successful pairs in Concord in 2022. According to Steve, he first discovered the nest that Chris described above in 1975. The nest has been active nearly every year since then, typically raising three chicks each year. According to Steve, if you see a pair sitting side by side, they are looking at a nest site. It is part of their ritual, as they copulate and go back and forth to the nest.

## Capital Kestrels

*by Steve Wheeler*



*An American Kestrel nest box of the type Steve Wheeler now installs. As of September 2022, he had 166 boxes in 13 counties across 58 towns, with 12-15 more to put up before the ground froze. Photo by Steve Wheeler.*

In early August, I noticed an email from Becky Suomala at NH Audubon concerning nesting kestrels at NH Technical Institute (NHTI) in Concord, NH. Quickly opening the attached photos revealed three ready-to-fledge young, perched shoulder to shoulder on an out building's back wall top plate, mildly alarmed, dark eyes staring into the camera (see the previous note).

While kestrels nesting in a building isn't particularly unusual, every year I receive one or two reports from homeowners of kestrels attempting to nest in building openings or some other part in a structure. What was unusual in this situation is how it went unnoticed by everyone (including me) who bird watches at nearby Horseshoe Pond, one of the most popular birding sites in Concord.

Including Becky's NHTI birds, I am now aware of twelve kestrel territories in Concord. This year eight were occupied but two failed. The six successful sites fledged 25 young. Three previously occupied territories went unused and results at another site remained unknown.

When I first began working in Concord, I scoured the area for nesting kestrels. By 1975, I had located three active territories, two in dead elms and one in a building. Both elms were relatively small, about a foot in diameter, as old, large trees succumbing to Dutch Elm Disease had mostly fallen or had been cut down. The tree sites were along the Merrimack River floodplain. One in a broken snag near the river's edge had an excavated cavity about ten feet up. One evening my former Supervisor Flip Nevers and I, with a short ladder, peered into the small shallow cavity; two young kestrels wedged inside peered upward. The second elm nest site was off Locke Road at the south end of a large field. The cavity was maybe twenty feet up in a long-dead tree too dangerous to climb. The third kestrel territory site was really in Concord, downtown Concord. I had noticed a kestrel pair sometimes perched atop the tall gray steel power line tower next to the Ralph Pill Building. More frequently though, they perched on the other tower section across the Merrimack River by Stanley Bartlett's alfalfa field. My field notes on May 10, 1975, read:

*7:00 (pm) one pair sparrow hawks on steel tower, east side, side by side; 7:10 male caught (bird/mouse?) for female and female flew to join and fed for about ten minutes; then joined male atop steel tower; male flew east over field; female left, going west over city less than two minutes later.*

Then it was simply a matter of tracking her from the point last observed. I went across the river towards that point in an alley by the Thompson and Hogue's Building. Scanning the area, I noticed a broken eve opening several stories up in the Newbury Store building. My field notes on May 11, 1975 read in part:

*7:35 - 8:00 (pm) female flew to Newbury Building, perched on TV antenna, flew around once and perched again; less than three minutes went directly into den hole.*

Looking back, I believe she was probably just starting incubation.

Those early tree sites, small and cramped, might have produced two young each. The downtown site, more roomy, probably produced three to four young. Total annual production for Concord might have been seven or eight young.

I began putting up nest boxes in 1975. The second box I ever installed was on a power pole (permission from Concord Electric) along the east side of the Merrimack River just beneath that tall steel tower next to Stanley Bartlett's alfalfa field. Other sites would soon follow. Dr. Horace Blood's Crystal Spring Farm and Terrill Farm were two early sites still occupied today. Other early sites were successful but

short lived. A box on a large dead elm at Rt. 93, exit 15 by the Highway Hotel was used for several years until the tree was deemed an eyesore and cut down. Another box site on a powerline pole in the Concord Heights area produced young until the development of Steeplegate Mall entered the picture.

Sixty years ago, there were eleven farms in Concord. Today only two remain, but for the adaptable kestrel this is not as gloomy as it sounds. While small farm operations have faded into the past, much of habitat, open fields, grassland and farming activity, still exists, protected by conservation easements, public ownership and good stewardship of farmers who recognize and value agricultural land use in the Capital region.

While much of the same early kestrel landscape still exists today, names people associate with these areas have changed. Crystal Spring Farm with its award-winning Ayrshires is long gone, now known to birders as "Mountain Road." Stanley Bartlett's field is known as the "Post Office fields," where today, if you are observant, you can see three iterations of kestrel nest boxes. At that downtown Newbury Building site, people are still discovering kestrels. In late June of 2022, Chris Martin, while cutting through a back alley to attend Downtown Concord Days, looked up and saw a small falcon disappear directly into a broken eve opening several stories above the alley. The kestrels were nesting in the same downtown site where I found them in 1975 (no longer the Newbury Store, just 56 N. Main St. as described by Chris).

Nest sites are not always successful or even used every year. But it is fun to speculate how many, over more than fifty years of occupancy, dark eyed juvenile kestrels preparing for their initial flight, heads bobbing to gain perspective, stared out that broken eve opening, over roof tops and across the Merrimack River towards that tall gray steel tower where generations of their ancestors frequently perched.

## **A Kestrel Surprise at Rockingham County Farm Complex**

*by Steve Wheeler*

On June 28, 2022 at Rockingham County Farm Complex, I slowly climbed a ladder leading up to a weathered nest box as I had done annually since 2000. An alarmed female kestrel vocalizing "killy killy killy," as she circled a hundred feet overhead, foretold what I was about to find. Carefully opening the cover revealed four nestlings, well feathered, probably eighteen or so days old. As I retrieved each, they flipped backwards striking out with needle sharp talons. All were removed and banded, three males and a female, and returned to the box. I returned to the truck, filled out my field notes and left for the next box site. Female kestrels are often present and vocal during box inspections





*A juvenile female American Kestrel just banded at two and a half weeks old.  
Photo by Steve Wheeler.*

and mates may possibly be nearby, but in this case, as they watched me climb to that box, they both knew something I did not.

Over the years, one of my project objectives focuses on providing nest boxes over a range of suitable habitats across the landscape. This attempts to possibly represent what former kestrel breeding populations once looked like, when suitable den trees containing excavated cavities were more readily available. Other researchers in the Northeast have instead focused or concentrated nest box efforts in only a few towns and they have had good success. In Vermont, Brian Lowe, over several decades, has taken this approach with good territorial occupancy. Tom Sayers in western Connecticut, with an innovative designed box system, also has high box usage. In 2022, Merek Platter in Maine had one hundred percent of his seventeen kestrel boxes occupied (pers. comm.). My occupancy rate has been considerably lower, generally approaching forty-five to fifty percent.

Researchers in Maine and Connecticut have also spent considerable time banding territorial breeding kestrels. Not unexpectedly, results show strong tendencies for kestrels to generally return to natal areas. So in 2022, as time permitted, I resolved to focus more on banding territorial adult kestrels. After banding several local Merrimack River floodplain breeding kestrels, I decided to expand my efforts.

On July 7, 2022, I once again pulled into the Rockingham County Farm Complex and observed four kestrels perched on electric lines and power pole crossbars, evidence they had recently fledged, so far so good. I quickly set up and within twenty minutes had a male. As I disentangled his feet, I saw a flash of silver, a band! Returning to the truck with the bird, I examined his condition and recorded the band number. As I recorded it, slowly it dawned on me that the band sequence was familiar. Later, I checked my field notes. On

June 23, 2021, he was one of three males I had banded as nestlings at a box in Lee, approximately ten miles northeast of Brentwood. As a first year breeder, he had returned to his general natal area and paired with a female.

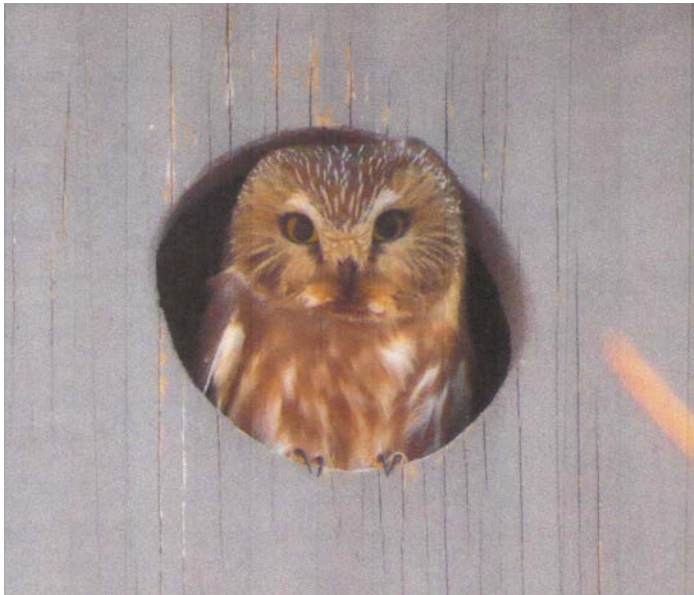
On July 11, I again returned to the County Farm and two kestrels, a male and female, still remained. Exactly unsure of which individuals I was looking at, I decided to attempt banding one or both. On the first try, the female dove from the power pole, out of sight behind tall grass and did not reappear. I had her. As before, as I untangled her feet, there it was again, a bright aluminum band. Twice in a row? Once back to the truck, I examined her closely. She was an adult in excellent condition. The band was well worn. Although numbers were easily read, close examination clearly showed top and bottom band edges worn thin. I've seen this before while banding waterfowl. Sometimes a recaptured Mallard or American Black Duck's band would be worn knife edge thin and, in extreme cases, numbers were not legible. I recorded the band numbers and released her. She flew a hundred yards back to a power pole crossbar, roused herself and settled down. That well-worn band really piqued my curiosity. What faraway place had she possibly come from and where had she been? That evening, I scanned through old paper copies of the Federal Banding schedule and there it was – #91, banded on June 17, 2013 at the Rockingham County Farm box site! My corresponding field notes that day read "adult female on three eggs".

When approaching nest boxes, I often use my hat to temporarily block the exit hole prior to very carefully opening the front. The day I first banded #91, I had glimpsed adult plumage – an incubating kestrel. I slowly and quietly removed her, applied a leg band, checked for eggs and carefully put her back in the same position. She never moved. I left as silently as I could. She had only three eggs that year (four or five is normal) so possibly was a first year breeder. This would make her now at least ten years old. So on that June 28 day in 2022, after almost a decade of watching a two-legged intruder shouldering a ladder come across the field, she must have known exactly what to expect and flew towards her nest box ready to repeat a display she had performed many times before.

*Steve Wheeler is a retired state biologist who became interested in American Kestrels while in graduate school and continues today putting up kestrel nest boxes, banding birds and gathering productivity data.*

# Nesting Saw-whet Owl in Dublin, NH

by Tom Warren



*A female Northern Saw-whet Owl poking her head out of a nest box on Charcoal Road in Dublin, NH on 3-8-22 by Tom Warren. He first heard the pair calling on February 24.*

*Tom Warren has nest boxes for Northern Saw-whet Owls in his Dublin yard and keeps daily nest box records. His records go back to 2017. Tom found a number of territories in the Dublin area and four in Dublin itself. He sent the following information and chronicle of one family in his yard in 2022. It provides an interesting view into the daily activity of these typically secretive birds.*

For more than three months, I observed a family of Northern Saw-whet Owls from mating, to raising their fledglings, to departure from the forest (February 24 – June 2). One of our smallest northern owls, saw-whets are smaller than an Eastern Screech-Owl, and about the size and weight of a robin. These owls are reddish-brown with a white “V” facial disk and their head has white spots around the eye discs. Their eyes are yellow. The young are a much darker uniform brown with a buffy breast and a pronounced white “V” over their yellow eyes.

The male provides the food for the female every night during incubation and brooding of young. The females pick meat from the dead mice to feed the young. The female will eventually leave the nest a couple of weeks before the fledglings depart as the nest gets too crowded. By then, the older young in the clutch are able to feed their younger siblings with mice and voles provided by the male.

The female is scrupulously neat, cleaning up all fecal matter and pellets from the nest. Cleaned nest boxes may

be used in successive years, but not by the same bird. If not cleaned, the bird box may not be used for two years.

Fledgling success is estimated at 56% with a number of predators in the area such as Northern Goshawks, Cooper's Hawks, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls, as well as foxes, coyotes, and fishers. When the owlets fledge, they jump out of the nest hole, land on the ground, and claw their way up the tree to safety, where they will join the rest of the family including the parents. They will remain with the parents in the forest a few more weeks until they are able to fend for themselves.

The best nesting location in my area is a field with adjoining woodlot.



*Adult Northern Saw-whet Owl at nest box in his Dublin yard in 2022. Photo by Tom Warren.*

## 2022 Chronicle

February 24 – calling about 7:00 pm near bird house.

Light snow the next day.

March 4 – female poking head out of nest box, male calling at 6:30 pm nearby.

March 13 – male calling, Great Horned Owl calling a few hundred yards away in woods.

March 16 – female poking head out of box, male calling nearby.

March 17 – female owl at nest box.

March 18 – male calling around 12:00 noon on a cloudy day.

March 20 – female poking head out of box at 1:15 pm.

March 21 - female poking head out of box at noon.

March 22 – owl poking head out at 9:00 am.



March 23 – owl poking head out at 1:00 pm. At dusk, male flew to hole and transferred a mouse to the female.

March 25-26 – male calling in woods nearby.

March 28 – very cold, 12 degrees F.

March 30 – Twice in five minutes, male flew to nest box to feed female. Barred Owl calling nearby.

Eggs should hatch on March 31, 27 days after I first saw female poking head out. Eggs are laid every other day and hatch every other day.

April 5 – male tooting in woods nearby, had not heard for five days. Literature says male stops tooting if he hears a Barred Owl or a Great Horned Owl.

April 13 – male delivered food to female at 8:00 pm. Barred Owl calling.

April 14 – male calling at 5:27 am.

April 15 – male calling at 5:05 am.

April 18 – female poking head out at 11:30 am.

April 25 – female poking head out of box at 10:30 am.

April 30 – female poked head out in response to me striking tree.

May 3 – female at nest box.

May 6 – male brought food to female at box. Male flew directly into the box and did not stop at hole. Heard a Great Horned Owl hooting nearby.

May 9 – As I was dumping brush near box, female poked her head out.

May 12 – At 2:23 am, I was awakened by a loud hooting Great Horned Owl near the saw-whet box. A lot of noise, hooting, screeches, loud calls, chaos. It sounded horrible. I thought for sure the Great Horned Owl had killed the male saw-whet, but he would not have had a chance to cry out. I was away for the day and imagined a great tragedy when I came home. When I returned at 6:30 pm, I struck the tree, and the female poked her head out of the box. At 8:00 pm, the male dutifully brought in a mouse to his family and I heard him nearby as if nothing had happened. All was well.

May 15 – female poking her head out of nest box. At 11:00 pm, Great Horned Owl calling in driveway. I turned lights on, made noise, and the Great Horned Owl departed.

May 17 – female poked head out of nest box at 7:15 am

May 20 – I tooted male saw-whet owl at 8:55 pm. He called right back but did not see him enter bird house.

May 22 – Have not seen female at bird house since May

20. Literature says after 18 days brooding owlets, female roosts in forest and both male and female feed young. Sibling owlets tear apart mice and feed their nest mates.

May 25 – fledgling owlet poking head out of nest box at 6:30 pm, first sighting of fledgling owlets.

May 26 – two fledgling owlets poking heads out of box at 5:00 am. From 3:00 to 5:00 pm, two fledglings poking heads out and bobbing heads left and right as well as up and down, I believe gauging sounds of mice in leaves below box.

May 28 – male flew to bird house, left off mouse.

May 29 – Mark Wilson came by at 4:30 am to photograph owlets.

May 30 – fledgling poking head out at 8:30 pm, male calling in woods nearby.

May 31 – owlets in nest hole. A Northern Goshawk flew over nest tree, so we had Barred Owls, Great Horned Owls, and goshawks all in the area while saw-whet owls were nesting.

June 1 – little saw-whet owls still in nest box but look ready to fledge. Chickadees and nuthatches dive-bombing the young at the hole.

June 2 – At 1:15 pm, baby owlet almost fell out of bird house, ass-backwards. He saw me, turned his head for a better look, flapped his wings and went back in hole. They are ready to leave.

June 3 – the owlets left early in morning. At 7:00 am, I heard chickadees and nuthatches agitated, flying at owlets in bushes nearby.

The saw-whet owl family vanished, but I hope for a return in February.



*The two juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owls just before fledging, 6-1-22. Photo by Tom Warren in his Dublin yard.*

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# Field Trip Report

## ***Birding for All* at the Edward MacDowell Lake in Peterborough**

by Phil Brown



*Eastern Wood-Pewee nest found during the field trip to Edward MacDowell Lake in Peterborough. Photo by Tom Momeyer.*

On June 12, the Harris Center kicked off a new monthly series of field trips called *Birding for All* in which birders of all walks are welcome. *Birding for All* outings are designed with inclusivity in mind and, specifically, for people who experience accessibility challenges as a result of a disability or other health concern. This outing was co-led by Susie Spikol, the Harris Center's Community Programs Director, and me, in my new role as Bird Conservation Director for the organization. We chose Edward MacDowell Lake, a well-known birding hotspot in Peterborough, NH, as it features a level, hard-packed multi-use path that skirts the edge of this dammed up portion of Nubanusit Brook, a tributary of the Contoocook River. It also offers great spring and early summer birding.

In order to provide enough attention to each participant, this free field trip was limited to 15 individuals and the trip filled. A diverse audience of mainly New Hampshire residents joined in search of the breeding birds that June features. After introductions, we slowly made our way from the lower parking lot down the multi-use path, stopping to enjoy all the birds we could find by sight and sound. We searched for and found both common breeding species like

the colorful Yellow Warblers and Common Yellowthroats that frequent the shrubs along the path, and less conspicuous songbirds, including Least Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and Warbling Vireo, all of which are relatively numerous here during the early breeding season. A pair of Eastern Kingbirds put on a show as they darted right over the path. It was later discovered, thanks to the sharp eyes of Tom Warren, that a nest was present directly overhead in the outer branches of a Red Oak. Even better looks of a nest were enjoyed when Tom then found the nest of an Eastern Wood-Pewee, which had been singing incessantly from an area close to the path! The group enjoyed scope views of this phoebe-lookalike perched on a seemingly undersized, lichen-covered nest in a small fork of branches of a hardwood tree, a rare treat. We enjoyed watching male Tree Swallows foraging along the path just in front of us and got more distant scope views of a Great Blue Heron hunting in the shallow lakeshore. In all, 27 species were observed during this relatively short outing.

*Birding for All* field trips continued through the Harris Center and are offered during the warmer-weather months to different locations across the Monadnock Region. All outings feature an easygoing pace and trails which meet certain accessibility standards. The Harris Center has taken the initial step of submitting a site review for the Edward MacDowell Lake on the *Birdability* website, which hosts a clearinghouse of information on trails which offer accessibility features.

To submit a site review, to view trails with accessibility features near you, and to learn more about *Birdability*, which promotes a welcoming, inclusive safe, and accessible birding community, please visit <https://gis.audubon.org/birdability/>. Other *Birding for All* outings have ventured to the Tenant Swamp in Keene, Distant Hill Gardens in Walpole, and the Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory in Peterborough. For more information about Harris Center outings, visit <https://harriscenter.org/events>.

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## Two Peterborough Birding Hotspots

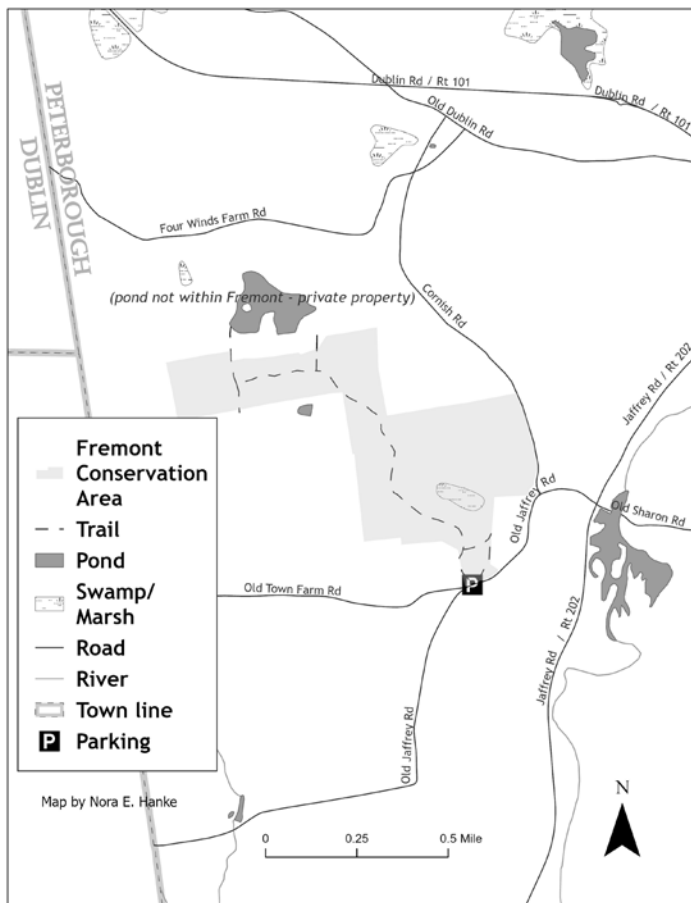
by Nora Hanke

### **Fremont Conservation Land**

eBird Hotspot: <https://ebird.org/nh/hotspot/L2878289>

The town of Peterborough maintains the Fremont Conservation Land for walking and nature observation. The conservation area is about 178 acres in size and is accessed by a trail from a parking area on Old Jaffrey Road. From the intersection of Rt. 101 and Rt. 202 south in Peterborough, drive south one mile and then turn right (west) onto Old Jaffrey Road. After 0.5 miles the small





*The Fremont Conservation Land parcel shows as light gray. Parking and access are where the parcel abuts Old Jaffrey Road to the southeast (P-Parking symbol). The beaver pond to the north of it is on private land outside this hotspot and has erroneously been included in hotspot reports. Map by Nora E. Hanke with data from NH Granit and imagery from Esri.*

parking area for the trail is on your right.

This parcel contains open fields, a couple of small wetlands, a powerline corridor, and forest which is primarily coniferous. From the parking area, you can walk directly into the first field on a mowed path or walk north along a dirt driveway which takes you into the first field at a more northerly location. There is often a mowed trail connecting this driveway to the main trail to the south (a left turn off the drive). The road allows you to pass through more of this first field. Both approaches lead to the same narrow neck that passes over a small stream, through a second field, then a small wooded area followed by a power cut. After passing through the power cut, there is a gradual uphill through forest. The main path ends at a T where a short distance in either direction abuts the edge of the parcel. If you report your sightings to eBird using this hotspot, please do not report observations made beyond where conservation easement discs are nailed to trees. These are private properties and not part of the town-owned conservation property.

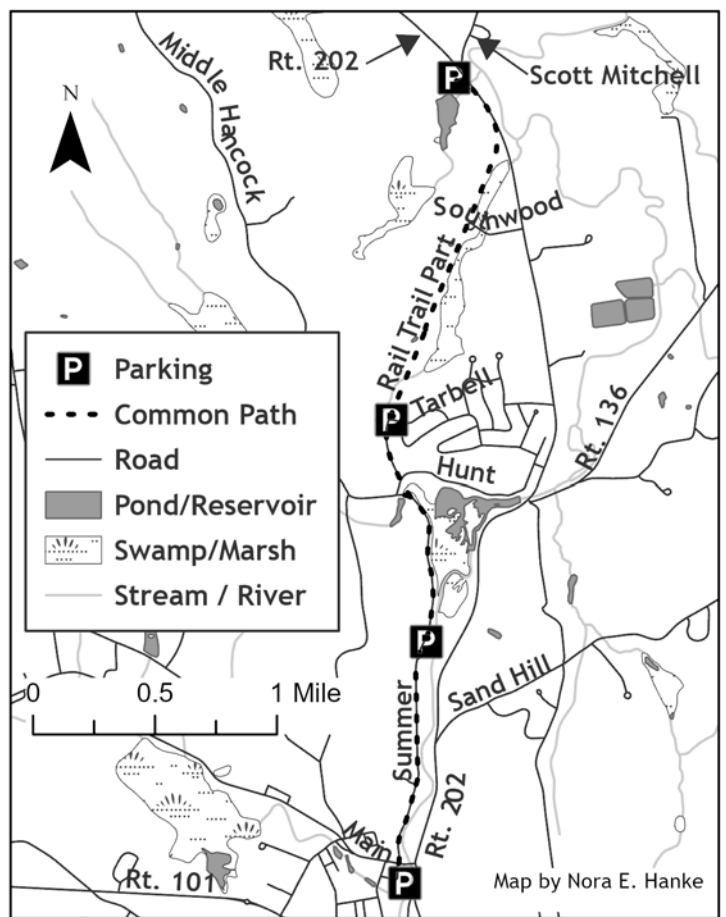
Fremont is reliable for our common forest species, those needing scrub/shrub areas and a number of field or

edge specialists, including American Woodcocks. Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows use the fields' nesting boxes. Gray Catbirds, Yellow Warblers and Chestnut-sided Warblers are reliable in breeding season. Raptors are often encountered. Seasonally the forest contains Blackburnian Warblers and Blue-headed Vireos and our three common forest thrush species (Hermit, Wood and Veery), among others.

As of 2022, approximately 120 species have been reported for Fremont Conservation Land eBird Hotspot. This count excludes the about 10 species erroneously reported for this hotspot which clearly were observed from adjacent private property that has a beaver pond (map attached). There is no pond on the Fremont Conservation Land. Do not expect to observe waterfowl, herons or shorebirds except as flyovers unless you stray from Fremont (and then please do not report them for the hotspot). Sightings from private properties are best reported using a personal location (after obtaining permission to access the area from the landowner).

## Common Pathway—Summer St. to Rt. 202

eBird Hotspot: <https://ebird.org/nh/hotspot/L13519111>



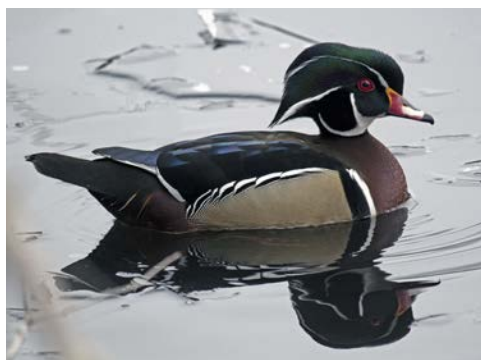
*Common Path section included in the hotspot is shown here (the trail continues south from here to Noone Falls, south of Rt. 101). The hotspot pin is along Summer Street, about one-third of the way up from its start downtown (second P from the bottom). Map by Nora E. Hanke with data from NH Granit and imagery from Esri.*

The Common Pathway in Peterborough runs all the way from Noone Falls off Rt. 202 south of town to Rt. 202 north of town, but the hotspot includes only the part from Summer Street in the heart of downtown north to Rt. 202 at Scott Mitchell Road (3.5 miles). The eBird Hotspot pin is one-third of the way up this north-south route, at a commodious parking area on Summer Street. To access this parking area from the intersection of Rt. 101 and Rt. 202 north, drive north on Rt. 202 for 0.6 miles to the new bridge into town. Turn left to cross this bridge and in under 0.1 miles turn right onto Summer Street. In 0.9 miles, the parking area is on your right.

The downtown area also offers many (free) parking options including a large lot with public L2 EV chargers on the Riverwalk (part of the Common Path). From that lot, the Common Path to Summer Street consists of 0.2 miles along paths by the river and then sidewalks. The hotspot begins at Summer Street's southern end, where it follows its footpaths north to the hotspot pin lot mentioned above. It is 2.6 miles from the hotspot pin to the northern terminus, where there is another ample parking area just off Rt. 202 north. (Across Rt. 202 from here is the parking area and trail start for another rail trail, Peterborough's Old Railroad Trail, a separate eBird Hotspot. A footpath under the road [that often floods in spring] provides a pedestrian connection between the two.)

The trail passes through wooded sections, and follows stretches of the Contoocook River and related wetlands for much of its length. After crossing Hunt Rd., the route briefly follows the side of a quiet residential street (Tarbell Rd.) before it becomes a pedestrian and bike path again. A particularly scenic and productive section is the rail trail between Tarbell Road and Southfield Lane, which includes a large wetland, a variety of woods and a shrubby area. (There is a small parking area on Tarbell Road just before the trail runs north into the woods.) A variety of waterfowl including Mallards, American Black Ducks and Wood Ducks as well as Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Swamp Sparrow and Belted Kingfisher are often observed. Ring-necked Ducks and Northern Pintail have also been seen in water bodies adjacent to the trail. There is a good variety of forest birds and during

migration songbird fallouts (especially warblers) can be impressive.



Wood Duck by Debra Powers.

## The Odd Behavior of Anting and Sunning

*compiled by Anita Fernandez*

These two stories describe the interesting bird behavior of “Anting” and “Sunning.” These behaviors are not well understood, but are considered to be possible anti-parasite behaviors. “Anting” is thought to be a type of “anointing” behavior in which birds apply pungent materials to their feathers and has been observed in more than 200 species of birds.

In contrast to a chemical deterrent, “Sunning” could assist birds in the removal of parasites through heat. This behavior is also common, as it has been observed in over 50 bird families. Sunning birds pant and show signs of heat stress, which may make this a voluntary behavioral “fever” that works to kill off pathogens and parasites. Sunlight may also cause ectoparasites to move around on feathers, increasing their vulnerability to preening. The preen gland in bird species is also thought to contain material that converts to vitamin D when exposed to the ultraviolet light in sunlight, which can then be digested by birds during their preening behavior.

See the article “Anti-parasite behaviour of birds” at [rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org](http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org) for additional information.

## Tufted Titmouse Sunbathing in East Kingston

*by Dennis Skillman*

*This story was originally posted to the NHBirds email list on 8-9-22. Photos taken by Dennis Skillman on 8-9-22 in East Kingston, NH.*



*“Help me, I’m melting...” A Tufted Titmouse finds a low perch in the sun. By its position and expression, you can imagine its words.*

While staked out to photograph birds in my backyard, I witnessed a Tufted Titmouse suddenly fly down on





*"That's it. I'm done for. Goodbye world." The preen gland is clearly visible in this prostrate Tufted's posture.*



*"Wait. No. I'm still alive!" This bird perks up a little bit after a few minutes of face down sunbathing.*

some hot stones and spread eagle on its belly. Like a crash landing, it was all very fast. At first, I thought it had died right in front of me as it remained motionless, but after a minute it got up and flew away without any difficulty. The same bird or others did the same thing several times over the next 10 minutes. I had never seen this before, so I searched the internet and found it is known behavior that has a variety of possible reasons ranging from getting mites out of their feathers to getting some sunshine vitamin D by exposing the oil gland at the base of their tail.

## Pine Warbler Anting in Portsmouth City Park

*by Jim Sparrell*

*Photos taken by Jim Sparrell on 05-27-22 in Portsmouth, NH.*

Part of the rush of spring migration is the great looks at flocks of warblers in low trees and bushes as they touch down before moving on. Typically, I get a few great photos of Pine Warblers in April and May and then spend the rest of the summer listening to them trilling high in the treetops and rarely getting a glimpse of them. That's why this bird surprised me. I was walking in the city park, which has a nice mix of habitats from brushy powerlines to an extensive



*This Pine Warbler is actively "anting" by applying the ant in its beak to the tail feathers.*



*A right profile view of the bird, its left elevated wing just visible.*



*An acrobatic view of this Pine Warbler from behind, seen here now rubbing the ant on its wing feathers.*

marsh to a small pond and a few acres of mixed forest. Early morning on May 27 as I walked the road, I noticed a Pine Warbler hopping along just in front of me. At first, I thought it might be foraging for insects, but as I watched it, I noticed that it picked something up and then was all aflutter and appeared to be rubbing it under its wings and on its



feathers. I wondered if it was taking a dust bath or picking up grit to rub on itself to help with mites. I followed it and took pictures along the way. It continued to do this for five minutes or so and I was intrigued because I had never seen a warbler engaged in this kind of behavior.

Later, when I got home and looked at the photos, I noticed that the warbler was holding a tiny ant in its bill in each of the pictures, and that's what it was rubbing under its feathers. Somewhere in the dusty halls of my memory I thought I had heard the word "anting" before, but I had never seen the behavior. So, I looked up anting and discovered that it has a long and enigmatic history for birdwatchers trying to understand it. Wenny (1998) notes that "surprisingly few warblers have been observed anting..." (p. 122). He notes four hypotheses as to why a bird might ant: removal of parasites; protection against an infection from fungus or microbes; to soothe irritated skin during molt; or as a method of food preparation to remove toxic or irritating substances. In discussing the current understanding of typical "anting," Kricher (2020) explains that birds are thought to pick ants with a high level of formic acid and crush them with their beaks to release the acid before rubbing them on their feathers. Formic acid from ants has been shown to be a strong repellent to bird lice. So, there I was, watching the Pine Warbler apply its own version of DEET. This was new learning for me as well as a sense of wonder in considering how this small bird that will have a short lifespan learned or instinctively knew to do this.

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# Backpack Birder

## Nest-finding on a Father's Day Hike: Teaching a Two-Year-Old About Nests

by Jason Pietrzak

*All photos of the Dark-eyed Junco nest on Mt. Kearsarge were taken by Jason Pietrzak on 6-19-22.*

On Father's Day (6-19-22), I took a daddy-daughter walk with my two-year-old, Prinia. I'd been enviously reviewing eBird reports from the White Mountains for weeks and wondered if any exciting high-elevation species could be hiding out closer to home. Living in Merrimack County at the time, I settled for Mt. Kearsarge, the county high-point, and my wife Anne drove us up to Winslow State Park.

There's a great little playground at the upper parking lot at Winslow, which makes this an especially great place to hike with kids. Prinia burned a ton of energy sliding and swinging for about an hour so she was perfectly happy relaxing and enjoying the ride in her kid carrier backpack during the challenging stretches of the hike.

Winds were strong at the parking lot and my birding expectations were low, but several woodland species could be heard even from the trailhead. Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue and Yellow-rumped Warblers were all singing on territories in decent numbers. A Golden-crowned Kinglet was singing away near the top. Being only two years old, Prinia wasn't too interested in the songs, but she laughed as the gusting winds blasted us, nearly knocking us over on the bald summit.

After cresting the peak and beginning our descent, we found a sheltered spot to have our snacks. We'd just sat down on a broad granite slab when a Dark-eyed Junco male popped up near us with a bill full of black, winged insects.

Prinia repeated "junco" after me. The black-and-white bird stood out handsomely against the unbroken green forest. I didn't want to confuse things with "dark-eyed" or "slate-colored" just yet. I told her birds don't normally carry food around, they just eat it where and when they find it. Unless of course, they're bringing it to their young babies! Two-year-olds love babies and Prinia was thrilled that we might see a daddy junco feeding his baby. The junco slowly and quietly circled us, mouth full, hopping along the boulders and spruce branches...

Another hiking party stumbled through our patch. Their dog ran over sniffing our snacks and snouting the cracks of our boulder, and moving on. Daddy junco hopped more urgently now. A second junco joined, a female with a bill full of green caterpillars, almost glaring at us. Watching the birds holding Prinia's attention was awesome...





*Adult junco with food, waiting to feed its young.*



*Pointing to the area where the nest was hidden.*

Suddenly, I realized the birds weren't doing anything with their food, just circling us. Oh! Are we too close to a nest?

Most people assume nests are homes for birds, but they're really more like cribs for babies. They're used for only a brief and exciting period of life. For most New Hampshire songbirds, nests are built over a period of a couple days to a week. Eggs are laid over the next couple of days and the adults begin to incubate the eggs by sitting on them.

With most birds, finding nests is fairly straightforward. From the start of nest building through incubation, birds slowly become more invested in their nests. Spending a little time and carefully observing can lead us right to their nests, but once the eggs hatch and young birds start begging for food nest finding becomes easy. The key is to keep quiet and still and at enough distance to avoid disturbing the parents and impacting the success of the nest at any stage.

We were definitely disturbing the birds now. I quickly gathered up our things and started leading Prinia away backwards. She kept her eyes on the juncos as I explained the unfolding scene before us. The juncos circled closer to the spot we'd just left until we were just far enough. First one bird, and then the other, darted into the crack in the boulder where the dog's snout had gone. There was a muffled commotion and moments later they zipped out.



*The nest lay under the blueberry branch in this rocky crack.*



*Four young in the nest.*

Once you've found a nest, approaching is a risk. There's always a chance you could bring harm to the chicks or their parents. You could scare the adult birds away permanently or for long enough to endanger the young; you could lead predators to a nest, where they'll eat eggs, chicks, and adults; you could spook the nestlings, causing them to leap out of their nest, "force-fledged," before they are able to survive outside of it; you could even simply bump into the nest, spilling its contents or knocking it down. After spending many years studying birds in the field, I have personally seen all of these accidents happen. Even experienced biologists can screw up or be unhappily surprised.

I looked around for predators and saw none. The howling winds above grounded the ravens. The juncos were completely occupied with their foraging off in the bush. The nest was in a spot where countless hikers were stepping over it every day and dogs were poking their noses in, so I figured this pair and their nest were more resilient than most. There weren't any hikers or dogs in sight...

I told Prinia we could look into the nest, but it had to be careful and quick. She was really excited! We went to the



crack, carefully pushed a sprig of blueberry an inch to the side and there it was! A deep, cup-shaped nest with four begging nestlings! I saw it, Prinia saw it, I snapped a pic, and we rushed back to our viewing spot and waited. Within a couple of weeks of hatching, most birds go from bald pink lumps to fully-feathered and fully-grown. The parents, worn ragged from the constant sprint of feeding the young, will encourage the chicks to jump out and none of them will ever return to that nest again.

Five minutes later, an adult returned to the nest with more food. Prinia and I hiked down the mountain.

## Report Unique Distance for eBird Traveling Counts

by Nora E. Hanke

Even veteran eBirders may be unaware of how eBird prefers distances to be recorded for traveling counts. Cornell only wants *unique distance* to be reported. That is, if you bird an out and back route, perhaps adding in new species or a larger group of a species on the return, the distance to report is only the out (or back!) distance. Adjustments need to be

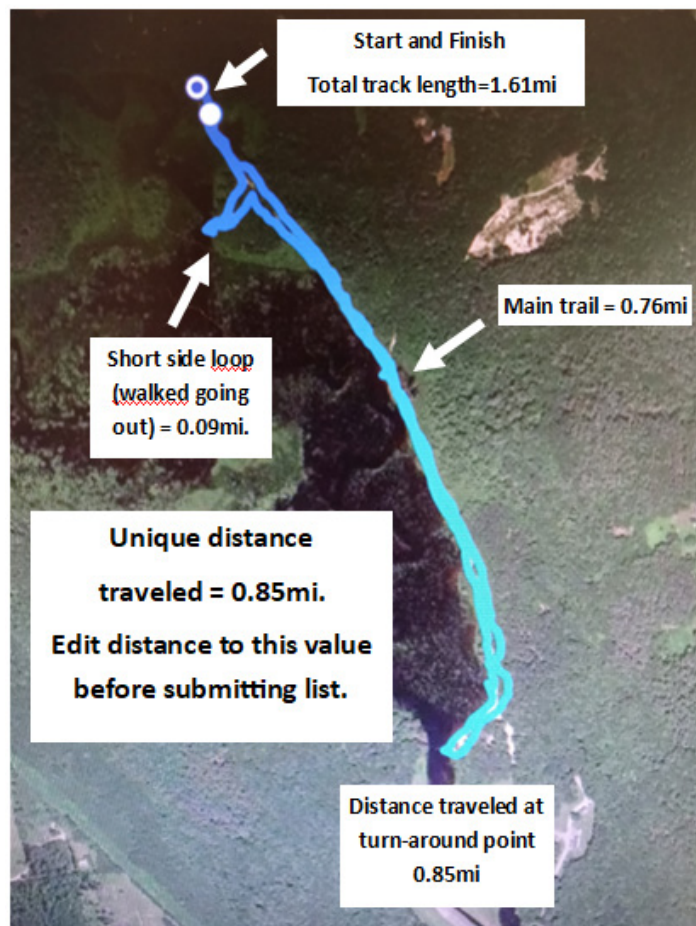


Figure 1. This map shows a situation where a short side trail is walked on the outbound portion of the walk, but not on the return.

made for any back-tracking, so that the same stretch is only reported once. For example, if you walked one mile down a trail before turning around and heading back along this same route, your checklist distance should be one mile, not two miles.

Many of us hope that our submitted checklists will be used in someone's research to benefit bird conservation. Time and distance are the two main components of effort in birding and are factored into many kinds of data analysis. By adjusting for effort, researchers may transform our submissions to birds per hour, or birds per mile. By making these adjustments, research projects can then compare different datasets (including different eBird lists).

Unique distance for a traveling count can be most easily determined if using the eBird app. This involves making a manual adjustment to the distance before you submit. When you stop your track and the review screen appears, click on the distance and manually enter the adjusted distance. Distance can also be measured using other mobile apps or satellite imagery applications (such as Google Earth Pro) on a desktop computer after the fact.

Here is an example of how to ensure you report unique distance in your eBird checklist using the eBird app:

1. After opening the eBird app on your phone, before clicking on the green "Start checklist" bar, make sure the smaller green "RECORD TRACK" icon above it shows as "on" (to the right).
2. Observe during your walk that on the upper left of your phone's screen, the distance traveled shows. (The default unit is miles, but this can be changed by the user in the app's settings.)
3. To visualize your track on the landscape at any time, click on the wavy green track icon in the far upper left. To return to the data entry screen from the track screen, click the left arrow.
4. For the situation of an out-and-back traveling count that follows the same track both ways, simply note the distance traveled at the end of your walk. If your outbound walk was longer, during your walk note the distance at your turn-around point. (This can be documented on a piece of paper you have along or by writing in the Details section of any species on your list. Just make sure to remove such notes before submission.)
5. After finishing your walk and clicking the app to stop your list and track, edit the distance traveled. If your track was the same in both directions, simply cut the total distance in half. If there was variation in your outbound and return tracks, such as when you walked a side trail on only one of these portions, use



the noted distance at your turn-around point. If the longer stretch was on the outbound track, use your distance showing at the turn-around point. If the return was your longer stretch, subtract the turn-around point distance from the total distance to yield the unique distance traveled.

This topic is covered in eBird online at:

<https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000950859-guide-to-ebird-protocols#anchorTraveling>

Short excerpts from it include:

- **Please do not include any repeat portions of trail in your total distance estimate.**
- **If you are using eBird mobile:** Do not stop your GPS track when you start backtracking. *Keep your GPS track running the entire time you are birding* and adjust your checklist to reflect the unique distance (i.e., non-repeated portions of track) only *after* you have pressed the “Stop” button to end the list.

Understanding how to accurately report our efforts makes our contributions more valuable for avian science that is based on eBird data.

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## Whip-poor-will Habitat Research

by Jeffrey T. Larkin



Eastern Whip-poor-will by Jeffrey T. Larkin.

*If a whip-poor-will sings in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it really make a sound?*

Habitat loss and degradation has long been recognized as a prominent driver of biodiversity loss and declining wildlife populations. Habitat driven declines in many members of North America's avifauna have been well documented over the past several decades. The plight of North American bird populations was chronicled in a 2019

study that estimated the loss of nearly three billion birds over the last half century (Rosenberg, et al. 2019). Some of the most significantly declining avian groups include aerial insectivores and those associated with grassland, shrubland, and eastern forest habitats. It's not surprising that species belonging to two or more of these groups are experiencing the most significant declines. One such species, the Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus*; hereafter whip-poor-will), is a nocturnal aerial insectivore that inhabits the forests of eastern North America. This nocturnal songster has experienced a 64% population decline since 1970. Whip-poor-wills use a wide variety of forest conditions during the breeding season ranging from young to older forests for foraging, nesting, and roosting.



Figure 1. Autonomous Recording Unit (ARU or AudioMoth) deployed in a young forest site.

Several state and federal agencies and their conservation partners have been conducting forest management on public and private lands across the eastern United States to create habitat for declining wildlife that require diverse forest conditions (e.g., Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Woodcock, and New England Cottontail). There is great interest in understanding the degree to which non-target species may also benefit from these forest management efforts.



Figure 2. Photos of the sites surveyed for Eastern Whip-poor-wills from April-July 2020 and 2021: A) unmanaged, B) shelterwood harvests, C) overstory removals with residual trees, and D) clearcuts.

Due to its ecology and behavior, the whip-poor-will is logistically difficult to survey, especially over large geographic areas. The surveys can only be conducted at night during two, 2-week windows (centered around the lunar cycle) and restricted to nights with appropriate weather conditions. As such, whip-poor-will surveys usually occur along roadways, which makes it difficult to understand the species use of managed forest that often occur far from accessible roads. However, the recent availability of low-cost autonomous recording units (ARUs), specifically the AudioMoth developed by Open Acoustic Devices (<https://www.openacousticdevices.info>), has made monitoring whip-poor-wills within managed forests and across large spatial extents more feasible (Figure 1). ARUs can be programmed to record for several hours each day for weeks on end and can be deployed safely during daylight hours.

To understand how whip-poor-wills respond to various forest management efforts, our partnership (University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and University of Pittsburgh) deployed hundreds of ARUs in managed and unmanaged forests ranging from western North Carolina to southern Maine (Figure 2) during 2020 and 2021. ARUs were deployed long enough to cover at least one of the two-week whip-poor-will survey windows and recorded daily for two hours post-sunset when the species is known to be most vocally active. We began recovering ARUs in late June (after the second survey window) and simultaneously conducted a vegetation survey to quantify habitat features around each point. Additionally, we used a Geographic Information System to characterize landscape level conditions, such as percent forest cover and human development, around each survey location to better understand how landscape context influences whip-poor-will presence.

Over the course of two field seasons, we surveyed over 1,200 locations and collected over 150,000 hours of recordings. It is not logistically possible for us to process this

large number of recordings by human listening. Thus, in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh's bioacoustics lab, we developed an automated machine-learned classifier to identify the image of a whip-poor-will song on a spectrogram (Figure 3). Our classifier was built by training the computer with field recordings and those from Xeno-canto ([www.xeno-canto.org](http://www.xeno-canto.org)), a publicly available bird song library. Through a series of steps, we refined the classifier until it performed at a high level of accuracy. Once completed, the classifier was run on recordings from all of our sites, and it returned the portions of recording that had whip-poor-will singing.

Preliminary results revealed that whip-poor-will were detected at nearly half of all sites surveyed (verified via human listening). Of the 44 locations we surveyed in New Hampshire, 17 were occupied by whip-poor-wills. Of the various management conditions investigated, managed forests accounted for 65% of all whip-poor-will detections. Analyses are ongoing to examine the influence of site-level vegetation and landscape context on whip-poor-will presence.

Based on our preliminary results, whip-poor-wills benefit from forest management that creates a patchwork of diverse vegetation conditions. Many studies have found that other at-risk forest species use a diversity of forest conditions throughout their full breeding seasons from nesting to fledgling rearing. Landscapes that have a "mosaic" of diverse forest conditions can be achieved through implementing forest management practices that benefit forest health and resiliency. Additionally, it is important to note that ARUs are an effective tool that can greatly increase the efficacy and efficiency of research and monitoring efforts. With proper planning and programming, ARUs can detect many species that make an auditory cue. For example, our ARUs also detected numerous songbirds and frogs, Ruffed Grouse drumming, American Woodcock "peenting" and flight displays, coyotes, and Wild Turkey, to name a few! There is no doubt that advances in ARU technology and data processing methods are improving our ability to assess



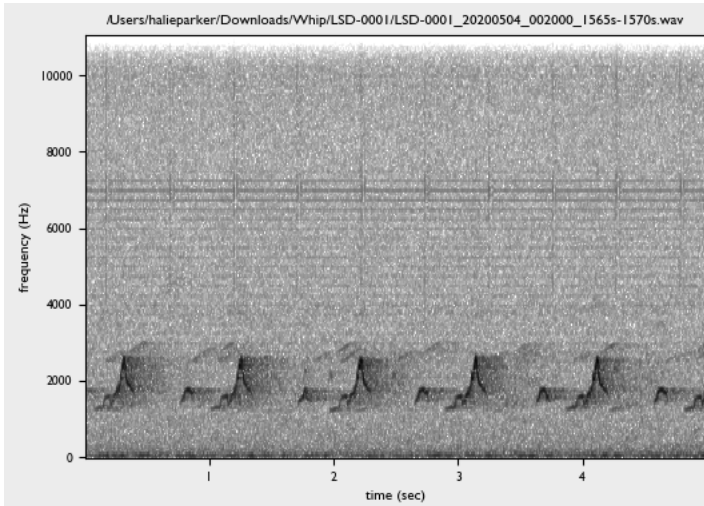


Figure 3. Image of a whip-poor-will spectrogram collected from one of our recording units in 2020.

conservation outcomes across large spatial extents in ways that were previously unfeasible. So, if a whip-poor-will sings in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it really make a sound? Thanks to ARUs, the answer is yes!

This research was made possible through funding provided by Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) Conservation Effects Assessment Project-Wildlife Component and The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Central Appalachian Habitat Stewardship and Delaware River Programs. We are grateful to the many private landowners who allowed us to monitor their forest stewardship projects. We encourage landowners interested in learning more about opportunities to receive technical and financial assistance through NRCS conservation programs to visit:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/newsroom/features/?cid=stelprdb1193811>.

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*J.T. Larkin received his bachelor's degree in Ecology and Conservation Biology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is currently working towards his master's degree at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, where his research focuses on Eastern Whip-poor-will response to forest management.*

# Help Your Chickadees

by Rebecca Suomala



Black-capped Chickadee by Rebecca Suomala

Did you know that Black-capped Chickadees feed their young caterpillars, not seeds? In the winter, chickadees eat seeds, but when they are raising a family, they feed the babies caterpillars which are soft and full of protein and fat. One pair of chickadees must find 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to rear one clutch of young – that's 350 to 570 caterpillars a day!

Dr. Doug Tallamy, author and a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, conducted a study on Carolina Chickadees, a close southern relative to our Black-capped Chickadee. Dr. Tallamy is also an expert on the abundance of caterpillars and the plants they feed on. His research shows that if we don't have caterpillars, we don't have chickadees, or the many other bird species that feed their young caterpillars.

Caterpillars need native plants. Many caterpillars feed on specific plant species and they aren't adapted to feed on non-native species. According to Dr. Tallamy, some native plants support far more caterpillars than others; 14% of native species support 90% of caterpillars. He calls these keystone species. You can help birds by planting these caterpillar-rich native species such as oaks, cherries, and willows. This simple action could help stem bird declines. Choose the right plants and we can restore insects and the birds that feed on them.

Dr. Tallamy presented a webinar as part of NH Audubon's pollinator series. In that presentation, he listed things that you can do:

1. Cut your lawn in half
2. Plant for specialist bees (see the keystone plants link below)
3. Remove invasive species
4. Use keystone plants (link below) that support lots of caterpillars

5. Landscape for caterpillars
  - a. Leave leaf litter (caterpillars pupate under trees in leaves or underground)
  - b. Grow ground covers such as Virginia Creeper
  - c. Put big beds around all trees with native ground cover
6. Reduce your light pollution
  - a. Install a motion sensor
  - b. Use yellow bulbs (for LEDs be sure they use yellow wavelength, not blue with bulb painted yellow)
7. Oppose mosquito spraying, even the natural pyrethroids are deadly to all insects
  - a. Biocontrol in the larval stage is more effective
  - b. Use fans at outdoor gatherings
8. Minimize insecticide use
9. No bug zappers, 99.98% of insects killed are not mosquitos
10. Join your Homeowners Association and change from within

You can see his full presentation on NH Audubon's YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/g9HdHtfmMr0>

To find plants for your area:

Native Plants: <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>  
 Keystone Plants that support lots of caterpillars:  
<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-wildlife/about/native-plants/keystone-plants-by-ecoregion>

More resources:

*Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy  
 Homegrown National Park:  
<https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>



*Goldenrod is a superfood for insects and the birds that feed on them. Planting this in your yard will benefit more birds than just your chickadees, such this White-throated Sparrow. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.*

# New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee Report

## Spring 2021 through Winter 2021-22

*Michael Resch, Chair and Secretary, [reschmike1@gmail.com](mailto:reschmike1@gmail.com)  
[nhbirdrecords.org/NHRBC](http://nhbirdrecords.org/NHRBC)*

This report from the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee (NHRBC) contains the decisions for records voted on by the Committee for four seasons: Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Winter 2021-22. These 2021 seasons included three first New Hampshire state records that were accepted by the Committee:

- Virginia's Warbler – remarkable bird found and photographed by Holly Bauer at her Hampton home on 4-26-21. Unfortunately, this bird was not re-found by others.
- Roseate Spoonbill – discovered by Dianne and Maurice Doherty on 7-30-21 at the Androscoggin River dam in Gorham. The bird was seen by many over the next two days. This is the same Coos County site that hosted the state's only Neotropic Cormorant in 2018.
- Magnificent Frigatebird – found by JoAnn O'Shaughnessy on 8-19-21 at Great Boars Head in Hampton. After soaring overhead there for an hour, the bird flew north and was briefly re-found at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye. Presumably this same bird was seen the next two days from both the New Hampshire and Maine portions of the Isles of Shoals and then in Massachusetts on 8-22-21. This sighting replaces "Frigatebird, sp." on the Hypothetical List based on a 2018 sight record.

These additions bring the official New Hampshire state list to 428 fully substantiated species, with an additional four species on the Hypothetical List (as of February 2022).

Other exciting 2021 sightings accepted by the Committee included Swallow-tailed Kite, Long-eared Owl, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Lark Bunting, Curlew Sandpiper, Swainson's Hawk, Lazuli Bunting, Townsend's Warbler, and a flycatcher considered to be a hybrid between Couch's/Tropical Kingbird and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

The members of the Committee voting on the 2021 records were: Will Broussard, Adam Burnett, Lori Charron, David Donsker, Kurk Dorsey, Jason Lambert, Jeanne-Marie Maher, Chris McPherson, and Mike Resch (Chair and Secretary).

## NHRBC Background

The NHRBC reviews rare and unusual bird sightings in New Hampshire in an effort to maintain the accuracy



and scientific integrity of rare bird records in the state. It is independent of *New Hampshire Bird Records (NHBR)* and New Hampshire Audubon. Per the NHRBC Bylaws, the purpose of the Committee includes the following:

- To review reports of unusual occurrences of birds within the state of New Hampshire and adjacent ocean waters
- To accept or reject such reports based upon the adequacy of documentation
- To establish and maintain an official state list of the birds of New Hampshire
- To permanently maintain copies of evaluated records and their associated documentation and all Committee votes, comments, and pertinent outside expert information regarding those records
- To respond to a request from the observer of the result of the evaluation of his/her records and to educate the birding community of the results of those deliberations
- To work closely with the editors and staff of *NHBR* toward our common goals
- To function as an independent technical advisory committee to *NHBR*

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

- Species to be reviewed are those listed in the NHRBC Review List, which can be found here: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/NHRBC/nh-rare-birds-committee-review-list/>
- Records of these Review List species come to the Committee either from eBird checklists, or information submitted directly to *NHBR* or the NHRBC such as through the use of the New Hampshire Bird Sighting Documentation form, available at: <https://nhbirdrecords.org/documentation-forms-for-rarities/>
- The NHRBC will request additional information on those records where key details are not provided or limited.
- Records are compiled once a year, generally in early Spring, by the Committee Secretary, to include four consecutive seasons: Spring (March-May), Summer (June-July), Fall (August-November), and Winter (December-February).
- The members of the Committee review each of the records and submit their votes to the Secretary, who then compiles all the votes.
- The Committee typically meets once per year usually in summer, often by phone, to discuss any vote that is not unanimous and finalize the votes for all records.
- The Committee requires a vote with not more than

one dissension for acceptance of a record, except for potential first state records which require a unanimous vote. A first state record also requires at least one of the following: photograph, specimen, video recording, audio recording, or separate documentation from three or more observers. If none of these criteria is met, and the record is still accepted by the Committee, the species is added to the Hypothetical State List.

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

Additional details on the NHRBC can be found on the Committee website (above).

## Spring 2021 Records

### Records Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Swallow-tailed Kite	3-31-21	Antrim
Wilson's Phalarope	5-8-21	Hinsdale
Wilson's Phalarope	5-16-21	Exeter WTP
Long-eared Owl	3-7-21	Hampton
Long-eared Owl	3-13-21	East Kingston
Virginia's Warbler – first state record	4-29-21	Hampton
Yellow-throated Warbler	4-28-21	Orford
Worm-eating Warbler	5-15-21	Hooksett
Hooded Warbler	5-3-21	Rye
Hooded Warbler	5-17-21	Brentwood
Summer Tanager	4-30-21	Raymond
Summer Tanager	5-3-21	Rye

### Records Not Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
European Goldfinch	5-8-21	Hampton
Although the ID of this bird is not in question, the provenance of this exotic species is unknown.		

### Summer 2021 Records

#### Records Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Eared Grebe	7-6-21	Lempster
Roseate Spoonbill – first state record	7-30-21	Gorham
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	6-2-21	Exeter
Lark Bunting	7-17-21	Hudson
Green-tailed Towhee	7-10-21	Salem

### Records Not Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Yellow-throated Warbler	6-26-21	Derry
The description could not eliminate other more common warbler species		

### Fall 2021 Records

#### Records Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Magnificent Frigatebird – first state record	8-19-21	Hampton
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	8-8-21	Rochester
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	8-9-21	Exeter WTP
Curlew Sandpiper	8-30-21	Hampton
Wilson's Phalarope	8-4-21	Keene
Wilson's Phalarope	8-20-21	N. Hampton
Swainson's Hawk	9-16-21	Meredith
Hooded Warbler	9-25-21	Odiorne Point SP, Rye
Lazuli Bunting	9-26-21	Star Island
Harris's Sparrow	10-20-21	Greenland

### Records Not Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
Couch's Kingbird X Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	11-14-21	Dover
The kingbird parent could not be determined definitively. Therefore, it is accepted as Couch's/Tropical Kingbird X Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.		

### Winter 2021-22 Records

#### Records Accepted by the Committee

Species	Date	Location/Town
White-winged Dove	2-3-22	Hampton
Varied Thrush	1-17-22	Fitzwilliam
Townsend's Warbler	12-4-21	Rye
Cackling Goose	12-24-21	North Hampton

### Records Not Accepted by the Committee

None



Top: Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks by Steve Mirick, 6-2-21, Exeter, NH.

Left: Harris's Sparrow by Jim Sparrell, 10-20-21, Greenland, NH.



# What to Watch for in Summer

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



*American Oystercatcher photographed by Jim Sparrell, 6-12-22, in the cove south of Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*

## June

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

of northern forests in Coos County, but this is the time to look for them, especially in the early morning during peak singing.

## July

- Hummingbird numbers increase at feeders as youngsters fledge and feed on their own.
- Great Shearwaters, and sometimes Manx, Sooty, and Cory's Shearwaters join the Wilson's Storm-Petrels in offshore ocean waters. A whalewatch or fishing boat is the easiest way to see them.
- Tennessee Warblers nest in northern New Hampshire and Canada but sometimes show up well to the south in early July.
- Southbound shorebird migration starts in early July with the first species to arrive being Least Sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitchers, and Lesser Yellowlegs. They are most common on the coast, but Least Sandpipers and Solitary Sandpipers are common inland. Migrants are also sometimes seen from boats, especially Short-billed Dowitchers.
- Watch for an influx of Bonaparte's Gulls at the coast in late July, with adults arriving first. Check coves anywhere along the coast, especially the cove north of the Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye and the Piscataqua River off Fort Constitution in New Castle.
- Early landbird migrants such as Yellow Warblers start appearing in late July. Louisiana Waterthrush are gone by the end of the month.
- The first Great Egrets appear inland in late July. This is post-breeding dispersal and birds can show up anywhere.
- Most swallows finish nesting early and begin to stage in large flocks at ponds and lakes and especially along the coast.
- Chimney Swifts start to gather in large flocks, often in cities and towns, roosting in large chimneys.



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

# New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund

Donations to this fund provide long-term support for all facets of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, from the publication to the collection, organization, quality control, dissemination, preservation, and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information.

Leave a Legacy for the Birds with a bequest in your will to the Fund:

I give and bequeath \_\_\_\_ % of my residuary estate  
(or a specific sum of \$ \_\_\_\_ ) to the New Hampshire  
Bird Records Endowment Fund, a permanently  
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For more information, contact the Managing Editor (see  
inside front cover).

# Rare Bird ALERT

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## Abbreviations Used

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

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## Summer Babies



*Red-shouldered Hawk by Susan Wisley, 6-3-22, Wheeler Rd., Hollis, NH*



*Spotted Sandpiper by Jim Sparrell, 7-12-22, Rochester WTP, NH*



*Ian Clark follows several loon families in the Upper Valley and took this photo of an adult with a baby on its back during the 2022 breeding season. He also recorded an amazing territorial dispute in his blog:  
<https://blog.ianclark.com/photography/wildlife-photography/loon-fight-for-territory/>*

*Jim Sparrell captured territorial posturing of two adult loons on 6-19-22 on Bow Lake, NH (below).*





# Summer 2023 Rarities



*Tropical/Couch's Kingbird by Holly Bauer, 6-2-22, Rt. 1A, Rye, NH.*



*American Oystercatcher by Jim Sparrell, 6-12-22, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*



*The rare White-faced Ibis by Susan Whisley, 6-4-22, Hampton, NH. Notice the complete white border around the face and the bright red legs.*



*The more common Glossy Ibis by Len Medlock, 6-20-22, Rye, NH. The pale white lines do not form a complete border around the eye and the legs are much darker.*



*Female King Eider by Steve Mirick, 6-16-22, Rt. 1A pullout south of Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.*



*A female Common Eider to compare with the King Eider. Note the larger head and long, sloped bill. The gape is straight rather than upturned so it does not have the smile of the King. Photo by Leo McKillop, Hampton Harbor, NH.*