# Mew Hampshire-BIRD RECORDS







Vol. 41, No. 4 **WINTER 2022-23** 

# <u> Lingering Migrants</u>



Canada Warbler by Steve Mirick, 12-9-22, Seabrook, NH.



Barn Swallow by Steve Mirick, 12-20-22, Rochester, NH.



Cape May Warbler by Pam Weeks, 1-13-23, Auburn, NH.



Pine Warbler by Kyle Wilmarth, 12-13-22, Salem, NH.



This Rufous Hummingbird lingered at a residence in Newmarket, NH for most of December. Read about the homeowner's experience in this issue. Photo by Jeanne-Marie Maher, 12-10-22.



#### NEW HAMPSHIRE BIRD RECORDS VOLUME 41 NUMBER 4

WINTER 2022-23

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# 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.

Steve and Jane Mirick. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

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# From the Editor

#### **WINTER 2022-23**

by Rebecca Suomala

#### Thank You, David Deifik

David began volunteering for New Hampshire Bird Records as the Winter Editor for the Winter 2001-02 issue. He analyzed and wrote up not only the winter season as a whole but also the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) results. After ten years, he retired as Winter Editor but he continued to write the CBC summary and prepare the table of results through 2021. We so much appreciate all that David has done over

the 20 years he volunteered for New Hampshire Bird Records.

We are grateful to Jason Pietrzak for tackling the CBC summary in this issue. It is a big job!

#### **SOMETHING NEW!**

There's a new benefit for NH Audubon members – free digital copies of New Hampshire Bird Records! All members will receive an email with a link when a new issue comes out. You can still receive a printed copy for an annual fee. The fee covers the four issues of a given year (spring, summer, fall, and winter) and payment reminders are sent with the Winter issue. Check out the enclosed notice for details. Thank you for your support of New Hampshire Bird Records.

#### **Steve and Jane Mirick**



Steve and Jane with their "4th and Longspurs" teammates in the 2020 Superbowl of Birding, Paul Lacourse (left) and Kurk Dorsey (right). Photo by Susan Carlson.



Steve and Jane seawatching, one of their favorite birding activities. Photo by Rebecca Suomala at Pulpit Rocks in Rye, NH on 6-3-23.



Top, right: Steve and Jane going for a ride at the Seacoast Science Center, Rye, NH. Photo by Pam Hunt, 9-10-18.

Right: Steve and Jane on a birding field trip with Bob Quinn on Lake Umbagog, 6-8-21.



#### **Thank You to Donors**

We are very grateful to everyone who has donated to New Hampshire Bird Records, sponsored an issue, or supported Becky Suomala during her alternate Superbowl of Birding. Subscription revenue does not cover the full costs of New Hampshire Bird Records, including our eBird quality control work. Your contributions help make it possible for NH Audubon to bring you this publication and maintain the quality of the records. We are especially grateful to those who have contributed to the New Hampshire Bird Records Endowment Fund. This fund is building a secure base of long-term support for the collection, organization, publication, preservation and storage of New Hampshire bird sighting information.

The following list acknowledges donations from August 1, 2022 through August 20, 2023. We apologize if we inadvertently omitted you or mis-spelled your name – please let us know.

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Peregrine Falcon by Kyle Wilmarth.

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# December 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023

by Katherine Towler and Jim Sparrell



Katie and Jim in full birding mode on a trip to California. Photo by Bruce Aird.

Tew Hampshire, like a number of other New England states, saw the warmest winter season on record from December 2022 through February 2023. Temperatures in Concord averaged 4.4 degrees above normal. Although precipitation was average or above average throughout the state, it frequently

came in the form of rain or freezing rain, even in central and northern regions. Snow cover was low overall and many bodies of water, including the Connecticut River, remained open for extended periods. Together, these trends created unpredictable and unusual conditions for winter birds and those who enjoy searching for them.

Despite the overall warming trend, there were periods and regions that experienced notable exceptions. This is New England after all, with its famously variable winter weather patterns, now impacted by advancing climate change. The first storm of the season on December 16 brought rain on the Seacoast, but two feet or more of snow to some areas in the west and north. The bomb cyclone that hit over Christmas featured a sudden deep freeze with dangerously low wind chill temperatures, high winds that led to widespread power outages, and a storm surge that caused flooding and serious damage to seawalls on the coast. Another severe storm that arrived on February 3 ushered in a dramatic shift in temperatures, with Mt. Washington setting a record for the lowest wind chill temperature ever recorded on earth at -108 degrees F. The Seacoast saw more flooding and more erosion to beaches.

The open water allowed waterfowl to remain present on central and northern lakes where they would typically not be found in winter. This includes **Common Loons** seen on northern lakes in January and February. The warm weather in mid-February brought early return dates for a number of species, roughly a week earlier than the average, among them **Killdeer**, **American Woodcock**, and blackbirds.

With no widespread irruptions as we have seen in some

years recently, there was little movement of winter finches this winter. **Evening Grosbeaks** were the exception, with large flocks found at feeders in southwestern, central, and northern locations. **Pine Grosbeak** sightings were numerous in northern counties. Although crossbill sightings were sparse, there were a few reports of **Red Crossbills** south of the White Mountains.

Perhaps the most notable trend for birds this winter was less a trend than a collection of unexpected reports featuring species that typically migrate. A number of these birds lingered to unusually late dates or overwintered. These include first winter records for American Oystercatcher, Barn Swallow, Rufous Hummingbird, and Canada Warbler, a record late date for Great Egret, and overwintering Wood Duck and Cape May Warbler.



Pink-footed Goose by Ed Norton, 1-15-23, Durham, NH.

Scattered rarities showed up this season, among them: an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, another first winter record; three **Varied Thrushes** recorded north of the White Mountains in winter for the first time; and a **Western Tanager** that overwintered in Greenland. **Mountain Bluebirds** found in Newington and Peterborough were the third and fourth state records for this species (see the article in this issue). The goose show in the Seacoast area delighted birders who got out to see **Ross's Goose**, **Pink-footed Goose**, and **Greater White-fronted Goose**.

Note: Odiorne Point State Park is in Rye, NH.

#### **Waterfowl and Loons**

With one of New Hampshire's warmest winters on record there was a lot of open water and open fields without snow cover for long periods of time, providing excellent habitat for geese and ducks and other waterfowl to linger. These mild conditions persisted for much of the southern part of the state and even ice cover in many areas was inconsistent.

Throughout the fall, there was a **Greater White-fronted Goose** lingering in Kittery, ME. In fact, one observer who



Greater White-fronted Goose by Steve Mirick, 12-16-22, Portsmouth, NH.

was working on a New Hampshire Big Year noted that, with a scope, the bird could be seen on the Maine side of the Piscataqua River from Portsmouth. According to eBird rules, the observer could count this bird, since eBird relies on the location of the birder rather than the location of the bird, but ABA rules rely on reporting the actual location of the bird. Finally, in December, this bird appeared to move south and ended up spending time all over the Portsmouth area, including the Wendy's (where Heather Rutledge first spotted it on 12-16-22) and Market Basket parking lots, on North Mill Pond, at the Portsmouth traffic circle, and finally on the nicely manicured lawns around the Residence Inn by Marriott at the Pease International Tradeport. It was sighted again on North Mill Pond on the last day of February.



A "Blue Goose" (a morph of the Snow Goose) by Ken Faucher, 12-25-22, Rye, NH.

Meanwhile, just to the west, Moore fields on Rt. 155A in Durham provided a bonanza of geese that drew observers both in December and again in January. On December 20, Molly Jacobson observed a **Pink-footed Goose** along with a few hundred Canada Geese. There were subsequently hundreds of observations of this bird which was also seen nearby from the Great Bay Discovery Center for a couple of days. Just at the end of the year on December 31, Brian Murphy photographed two **Snow Geese** in Moore fields. They stayed just long enough for many birders to add to

their new year list, but they were not seen after January 1. On January 3, Sean Agrodnia reported that he was scanning the farm fields looking for the Pink-footed Goose when he spotted two **Greater-white Fronted Geese**. The goose flock gradually diminished and neither of these species was seen at the fields after January 21.

As if that weren't enough of a New Hampshire *Goosapalooza*, the **Ross's Goose** at the Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) that Sam Stoddard found on the last day of November continued until December 12 when it was seen in Rochester in the morning and then briefly seen and photographed by Ken Faucher at Jackson's Landing in Durham, roughly ten miles away. Ken also photographed a nice blue morph **Snow Goose** at Odiorne Point State Park on Christmas Day. Also, on the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for the Lee-Durham circle, Steve Mirick found and photographed a **Cackling Goose** on Little Bay. In the far west, Hector Galbraith had a nice inland flock of 25 **Brant** at the Hinsdale Setbacks on December 10. This appears to be a first winter record of the species for Cheshire County.

Not to be outdone by the geese, there were many interesting duck and waterfowl sightings during the winter season. Donna Keller found a pair of Redheads on Spofford Lake on December 26. While searching for them the next day, Nora Hanke found a Canvasback, but no Redheads. In Manchester, Bernard Foy found a Harlequin Duck on December 27 in the Merrimack River that was seen over the next couple of days by many other birders. This is also a productive location for Common and Barrow's Goldeneye in the winter season. Kathryn and Roger Frieden had the first Barrow's of the season there on December 18 during the Manchester CBC and Susan Wrisley had a hybrid Common x Barrow's Goldeneye there on December 8. First spotted on January 2 by Randy Langer and Kathy Wheeler, a lone American Coot spent about two weeks on Lake Winnisquam at the mouth of the Winnipesaukee River. In the far north in Gorham, a female Wood Duck was spotted by Jennie Leonard and Alex Sundvall on January 12 in the Androscoggin River hanging out with a group of Mallards. This overwintering bird continued at this location through the remainder of the season.

Meanwhile, the Seacoast/Great Bay area had its share of interesting duck/waterfowl sightings. Susan Wrisley found six **Redheads** on Great Bay from the Osprey Cove Trail in Greenland on December 21. Mark and Becky Suomala observed a total of eight a few days later, the second highest count for the state in eBird. On December 27, your Winter Editors were scanning the ocean from Odiorne Point in Rye and had three Redheads fly in long enough for a photo. This was a first for the Odiorne Point State Park eBird list and one



Redhead by Susan Wrisley, 1-8-23, Great Bay, Greenland, NH.

of the few ocean sightings for Redhead in New Hampshire in eBird. The female **King Eider** present since last summer continued as a celebrity all winter off of Odiorne Point in various locations. A colorful **Eurasian Wigeon** was spotted on Great Bay by Logan Anderson on December 18, but not seen again until January 25, when Greg Tillman found it from the Portsmouth Country Club winter access to Great Bay. A **Blue-winged Teal** found by Len Medlock on the Coastal CBC (December 17) was a likely first for the CBC (see the CBC summary) and a late winter record for New Hampshire. Holly Bauer noted a group of four **Green-winged Teal** on Meadow Pond in Hampton on December 30, which lingered on with varying numbers throughout the winter. On February 9, Steve Mirick noted that one of them was a Eurasian subspecies, likely evident then because it had molted.

**Ring-necked Ducks** were seen in high numbers as early returning migrants at the end of January on Powwow Pond in Kingston. The highest count of 84 was by Susan Wrisley on January 31.

#### **Shorebirds**

The highlight of this winter season was the sighting of a pair of American Oystercatcher by Zeke Cornell and Becky Suomala on January 8. While birding along the Seabrook side of the Hampton Harbor channel, they noted in their eBird report: "Flying south; shocking! All dark head and upper breast; white belly; dark upper wing with white stripe; long bill with glimpse of orange color (some back lighting interference)..." This species has recently been confirmed breeding on the Isles of Shoals in the summer. Historically found more to the south, the eastern Massachusetts population expanded greatly after 1990 and nesting was confirmed in Maine by 1996 (Keith and Fox, 2013). This report from January is a new winter record for this species in New Hampshire.

Back for a reprise, Stuart Varney had another overwintering **Wilson's Snipe** in Portsmouth, first spotted on January 25 and last seen on February 24. He previously had

one in his yard in January of 2021. Chris McPherson also found a Wilson's Snipe this winter season on December 24 at the Hollis Brookline High School.



Sanderlings by Christoper McPherson, 12-17-22, Hampton, NH.

Expected winter shorebirds, **Purple Sandpiper**, **Sanderling**, and **Dunlin** were reported throughout the winter season along the New Hampshire coast. On December 26, Cameron Johnson photographed a **Black-bellied Plover** at Odiorne Point State Park, but there were no other reports of less common shorebirds as winter set in. **Killdeer** and **American Woodcock** started showing up toward the end of February, consistent with their patterns of early migration.

#### **Gulls, Seabirds, and Alcids**

On the first day of the winter season, Susan Wrisley found a nice **Black-headed Gull** at Odiorne Point State Park mixed in with a flock of about 100 **Bonaparte's Gull**. This bird was seen sporadically for a couple of days from New Castle or near Odiorne. A **Glaucous Gull** was consistently reported from the Rochester WTP/Pickering Ponds area (ushering in the winter season on November 30, photographed by Alan Murray), but elsewhere, they were uncommon, even along the Seacoast. **Iceland Gull** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** sightings were scattered around familiar spots in Strafford and Rockingham counties, but an interesting exception was an Iceland Gull that Jack Swatt found on December 24 in Pittsburg on the Connecticut River by the Bacon River Bridge.

There were relatively few pelagic birding trips this winter because the Eastman's Fishing boats shut down relatively early in December for scheduled maintenance. Nonetheless, there was an early December trip (12-5-22) on Eastman's, the Isles of Shoals CBC (December 29), and one trip on a UNH research vessel in late January (1-25-23) that Steve Mirick was able to join. The trip in early December had 94 **Dovekie**, four **Common Murre**, one **Northern Fulmar**, and



Atlantic Puffin by Kyle Wilmarth, 12-29-22, offshore waters, NH.

17 Black-legged Kittiwake. The Isles of Shoals CBC takes a different route and does not go out to Jeffreys Ledge, so the mix of birds is different. This year there were 22 Black Guillemot, 15 Black-legged Kittiwake, and one Atlantic Puffin during the time that the boat was in New Hampshire waters. On the UNH research trip which does go out to Jeffreys Ledge, Steve Mirick had 25 Common Murre, one Atlantic Puffin, 28 Dovekie, and no Black Guillemots. He also had a nice count of 192 Northern Fulmar and 56 Black-legged Kittiwake.

Reports of **Razorbills** from shore were consistent throughout the winter, while there were only two reports of **Thick-billed Murre** (coastal flyby 12-6-22 by Steve Mirick, 1-22-23 by Roger Stephenson at Odiorne Point SP). Although the population of Thick-billed Murre is likely still in the millions, there are reports of declines of 20% to 50% in some large breeding colonies, suggesting that it is a species that may be vulnerable to the changing climate. An interesting non-pelagic discovery was a Black-legged Kittiwake found and photographed by Donna Keller and Wendy Ward at the Hinsdale Setbacks on December 11, about as far west from the coast as it could be and still be in New Hampshire.

#### Herons, Eagles and Hawks to Owls

For the second year in a row, an American Bittern was reported from Meadow Pond in Hampton. First seen by Holly Bauer on December 21, the bird was seen again at the end of December and on January 1. Another sighting by Holly Bauer on February 22 leads to speculation that the same individual remained throughout the season, even though there were only a few widely spaced reports. A sighting of a Great Blue Heron on December 2 by Ginny Umiker near Pinkham Notch in Coos County is a rare late date for this species in the north. A Great Egret was seen on the Coastal CBC and last reported by Marjorie Watson in Seabrook on December 22, the latest date for this species on record.





A Black Vulture in the snow by Len Medlock (top) and three huddled over a chimney for warmth by Steve Mirick. Both photos were taken on 1-22-23 in Exeter, NH.

Both Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures continue to push their territory northward, with winter sightings of Turkey Vultures increasing in southern sections of the state. The trend continued this winter season. Reports of Black Vultures were numerous and more widespread than they have been in the past. One found by Len Medlock in Exeter during the Coastal CBC (December 17) is a first record of this species on this count. Additional reports came in from a couple of locations in Exeter and Kingston in December. In January, five were located among a large number of Turkey Vultures at a roost site in Exeter. A juvenile was included in this group, further evidence of probable nesting Black Vulture in the spring of 2022, presumed to be the first for New Hampshire. Black Vultures were seen in Hinsdale, Walpole, Westmoreland, Langdon, Nashua, Manchester, and Lyndeborough in February.

Rough-legged Hawk reports were scattered, without reliable spots to find them as there have been in some years. One found in Errol on December 15 by Christine Howe is an unusual northern sighting for this species at this time of year, but the lack of snow cover may have made hunting for

mice, rabbits, and other small rodents easier. On January 21, one was seen at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Newington by Allison Collins and Arthur McDermott. The following day, one was spotted soaring over the marsh south of Odiorne Point State Park by your Winter Editors. An additional coastal sighting came in from Holly Bauer in Hampton on January 24. All three reports were of dark morph individuals. There were single sightings of this species in Charlestown in January (1-24-23, Jack Swatt) and February (2-18-23 Charles Caron), and in Westmoreland in February (2-20-23, Jen Armstrong).

Snowy Owl sightings were confined to Hampton and Seabrook this year, with no reports from western and central locations as there have been the past couple of winters. The first sightings were on December 5 at Hampton Beach State Park. Ed Norton found a Snowy Owl in the Seabrook marsh off Cross Beach Road on December 10. A single individual continued to be seen at this location through January 16. The rest



Snowy Owl by Ed Norton, 12-10-22, Seabrook, NH.

of the scattered sightings were primarily at Hampton Beach State Park, with the last report from the Hampton Harbor State Marina by Greg Harrington on February 12.

**Short-eared Owls** did not appear in multiple locations or numbers this year, as they did last winter. The first reports came from Hampton Beach State Park on January 22 (Jim Sparrell and Katie Towler) and Beckman's Landing in Seabrook on January 30 (Ashton Almeida). The only other report is from Steve Bennett on February 4 at Pease Airport in Newington.

#### **Woodpeckers to Waxwings**

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have become an increasing presence in winter. An expected migrant to southern states, Mexico, or South America, this species was seen in eight out of New Hampshire's ten counties this winter, with numerous reports coming in during each month of the season. Jason Pietrzak observed one coming to a feeder in Walpole from December 1 through December 22. Bob Crowley first reported one at his feeder in Chatham on December 24 and continued to

post sporadic sightings through January and February.

**Red-headed Woodpeckers** are typically found as single individuals and have not been predictable, but in the past two winters, it was recorded consistently in reliable spots each year. This winter, however, there were only two sightings, one from Somersworth (2-25-23, Deborah Shelton) and the other from Richmond (12-30-22, T.J. Marsden).



Red-headed Woodpecker by Jim Sparrell, 3-12-23, Somersworth, NH.

American Kestrel sightings were also infrequent this winter and confined to Cheshire County (Keene and Walpole) and Merrimack County (Concord). There was just one report in Rockingham County from Kensington; however, a sighting from Pittsburg on January 5 (Charlie Nims, Joe Scott, and Rick Steber) establishes the first winter record in Coos County, according to Keith and Fox (2013) and eBird. Historically, this species has been found in winter as far north as Woodsville and Littleton, but not in Coos County.

The **Rufous Hummingbird**, first found in the fall in Newmarket, NH, continued to come to the homeowner's feeder until December 22. Read Marisol Delgado's story of this bird in this issue.

Another species expected to be far south by the winter months is the **Barn Swallow**. While Tree Swallows have lingered into winter in recent years, the sighting of a Barn Swallow this year is the first winter record. Found at the Rochester WTP by James Bradshaw on December 9, it was seen by multiple birders through December 22.

Another exciting first winter record was the **Ash-throated Flycatcher** found by Kurk Dorsey in Durham on December 11. Seen by many birders in subsequent days, the flycatcher was last reported on December 14. A **Mountain Bluebird** found by Ethan Maier on December 22 at the Great Bay NWR in Newington delighted birders who continued to see this bird with a flock of Eastern Bluebirds through the end of February. A birder from Washington State, Ethan was



Mountain Bluebird by Jim Sparrell, 12-31-22, Great Bay NWR, Newington, NH.

searching for his life Eastern Bluebird when he made this significant discovery, the third record of this species for New Hampshire. On February 8, another Mountain Bluebird, the fourth New Hampshire record, was found by Charles Carlson in Peterborough. This individual was seen through February 21. Read the stories of both these discoveries in this issue.

A report of an **Eastern Phoebe** from Odiorne Point State Park in Rye on February 22 by Jen Armstrong suggests an early returning individual rather than an overwintering bird. There were no other reports of this species over the winter season.

Northern Shrikes were seen in various locations statewide, with birds reported in each month of the season. In the north, December sightings included ones in Colebrook, Errol, North Stratford, and Whitefield. There were additional single reports from Errol in January (1-10-23, Lori Charron) and Colebrook in February (2-24-23, Aubrie Giroux). On January 4, Wayne Benoit found a Northern Shrike at Great Bay NWR in Newington that was seen by many birders through February 27.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were seen across southern and central portions of the state, with nearly 30 reports coming in. A notable northern sighting was made by Glen Chretien on December 14 in Pittsburg during the CBC. After the exciting irruption year for Red-breasted Nuthatch last winter that brought many birds south, this species was found only in expected numbers in southern and central counties this year.

Three **Varied Thrush** were reported this winter, all from Coos County. Randall Burt in Bath reported a female (or young male) that arrived in November and stayed until April 9. This bird represents the first record for this species in winter north of the White Mountains. A bright male was first reported by a homeowner in Pittsburg on December 18 and was seen by a number of birders through December 21. The third was another female-type seen at a private location in



Varied Thrush (with a Black-capped Chickadee in the background) by Sue Francesco, 12-20-22, Pittsburg, NH.

Lancaster in late December through February.

The most reliable locations to see **Bohemian Waxwings** this winter, as has often been the case in the past, were in Plymouth, Berlin, and Gorham. These delightful winter visitors did not come south as they do in years when food sources in the north are exhausted, other than a few birds seen in the Keene area. The largest flocks seen were: 170 in Carroll (12-19-22, Nora Hanke); 300 in Berlin (12-19-22, Claudette Morneau); 75 in Gorham (1-11-23, Charlie Nims); and 320 in Plymouth (1-25-23, Elaine Faletra). Most observers found a few Cedar Waxwings mixed in with these flocks.

# Pipits, Finches, Sparrows and Blackbirds to Tanagers

Reports of American Pipit were more numerous this year than last winter. Christopher McPherson found six at Woodmont Orchard in Hollis on December 2. There were a few other reports of groups of this size, including Christine Pelletier's sighting of six at Odiorne Point State Park on February 16. Most other reports were of single birds or pairs found on the Seacoast in February.

Winter finches, when they were found, stayed primarily in the north this winter. A few **Pine Grosbeaks** were found in the south, notably a group of seven seen by Eric Masterson in Hillsboro on December 14. Otherwise, sightings came from northern counties, where reports were more widespread than last year. Large flocks were found in Franconia, Gorham, and Errol, with the highest count of 50 birds observed by Will Johnson in Hanover on February 6.

With over 900 reports in eBird, **Evening Grosbeaks** are the winter finch story of the year. They congregated in large flocks at feeders, in numbers not seen in some areas in a couple of decades. Although there were only a few reports in the southeast, with flocks not showing up at feeders as they did elsewhere, the grosbeaks were a constant presence at



A tree full of Evening Grosbeaks by Steve Mirick, 12-11-22, Twin Mountain, NH.

several spots in the southwest and central areas of the state, in addition to northern counties. Backyard birders faithfully reported on their flocks (and fed them!) throughout the season. Among these were David Govatski, whose Evening Grosbeaks arrived in late November and stayed through February at his feeder in Jefferson. His high count was 126 on January 29. Other backyard observers were Lori and Paul Charron in Errol (high count of 200 on 12-23-22), Aubrie Giroux in Colebrook (high count of 200 on 2-2-23), and Elizabeth Heron in Harrisville (high count of 65 on 2-7-23).

This was not an irruptive year for redpolls, with reports of **Common Redpoll** coming in primarily from northern counties and only a few reports of large flocks. Most sightings were of single birds or small groups of under ten. Exceptions were reports of 35 in Compton on February 16 (Brett Hillman) and 60 at Trudeau Road in Bethlehem on February 28 (Stuart Varney).

Crossbill sightings were scattered, with only small groups reported and little movement among these birds. White-winged Crossbills were only seen in northern counties, with the exception of one report from Somersworth by Dan Hubbard on December 2. A high count of 18 came from Pittsburg on December 14 (Katrina Fenton and Levi Burford). The only other notable flock reported, with 24 birds, was found in Errol on December 15 (Glen Chretien). Red Crossbill sightings were more numerous, though also confined mostly to the north. A few reports came in from the Seacoast and southwestern locations. The high count was a flock of 21 seen by Joe Scott in North Chatham on February 25.

**Lapland Longspurs** were found at expected locations at Hampton Beach State Park and in Walpole. In Hampton, up to two individuals were seen from early December through late February. A single bird was first reported in Walpole on



Lapland Longspur (right) with a Horned Lark (left) by Donna Keller, 1-26-23, Walpole, NH.

December 19 (Don Clark, Taj Schottland, Ken Cox) but not reported again until January 26 (Wendy Ward) and joined by a second bird in the following days. Lapland Longspurs were seen at this spot through February 5.

This winter saw a number of interesting sightings of sparrow species. Not commonly expected in winter, **Chipping Sparrows** were seen all three months in southern and central locations. Notably, Lori and Paul Charron found one in the north while conducting the CBC in Errol on December 15.

Fox Sparrows were found in several locations in southern counties in December. On December 4, Andrea and George Robbins reported two in their yard in Pittsfield. One of these individuals continued at this location through the end of February. A rare northern sighting of this species came from Leo McKillop and Susan Wrisley in Jefferson on February 15. Pam Hunt and Unity Dienes found a Fox Sparrow in the same location on February 20, likely the same bird.

A **Lincoln's Sparrow** was found by Steve Mirick on January 1 at Stuart Farm in Stratham and then again on January 22. These are the only winter reports for this species.

With the warm weather in mid-February, the first flocks of blackbirds arrived roughly a week earlier than their average return date. A flock of 18 **Red-winged Blackbirds** was found on February 9 (Stuart Varney) and a flock of 200 on February 15 (Kurk Dorsey), both in Portsmouth. Kyle Wilmarth had a high count of 150 in Salem on February 22. **Common Grackles** showed up at the same time and were often found in mixed flocks with the Red-winged Blackbirds.

Tanagers are a rare and welcome sight in winter. The Western Tanager found by Steve and Jane Mirick on December 17 during the Coastal CBC remained in the same spot in Greenland through the end of February. The bird was regularly observed feeding on apple trees along Ocean Road. A life bird for many who came to see it, the tanager was photographed and enjoyed in its bright plumage by birders from across New Hampshire and neighboring states, with 225 reports made in eBird.



Western Tanager by Ken Faucher, 1-2-23, Greenland, NH.

#### **Warblers**

The last two winters established records for the highest number of warbler species seen in the winter season, totals of ten and eleven consecutively. This winter we did not have as high a number, with a total of only six warbler species; however, one of these was a species not previously reported in the winter season.

A **Canada Warbler** found in Seabrook on November 27 by Steve and Jane Mirick continued to be seen through December 10 at Beckman's Landing. This is the first winter record for this warbler species. Canada Warblers are typically early migrants, with few records from late fall. The bright bird was an exciting find for those able to spot it foraging on the edge of the marsh on sunny days.

The star warbler of the winter was a **Cape May Warbler** found by Pamela Weeks coming to a feeder in Auburn in early January. The bird frequented this property through January 20. On February19, a Cape May Warbler was found at a feeder a little over a mile away by Brynlee Kimball at another location in Auburn, presumably the same bird. The Cape May



Cape May Warbler by Pam Weeks, 1-13-23, Auburn, NH.

remained through February at the second location, making it only the second Cape May Warbler observed successfully overwintering in New Hampshire. The first one was at Odiorne Point State Park in Rye back in 2012.

There were a few sightings of **Palm Warblers** on the Seacoast. Ken Klapper and Susan Francesco photographed one at Great Bay Farm in Greenland on December 1. Another found at the Portsmouth City Park by Steve Mirick on December 31 lingered until January 26. A Palm Warbler reported from Hampton on January 24 by Greg Tillman was also recorded on January 26. These records join 16 others in winter for this species since 1951.

Orange-crowned Warblers are known to migrate later in the fall and are therefore a less surprising find in winter. This year reports came in from Hampton on December 22 (Steve Mirick) and Odiorne Point State Park on January 17 (Brian Tucker). These reports are added to 11 other winter records since 1951.



Orange-crowned Warbler by Steve Mirick, 1-22-23, Hampton, NH.

**Common Yellowthroat** is another warbler species historically seen in winter more frequently than others. This year two records came in, one from Kurk Dorsey in Durham on December 18 and one from Ken Klapper in Center Harbor on December 31.

Pine Warbler sightings were fairly widespread again this winter. On December 9, Gregory Tillman spotted one at Two Rivers Conservation Area in Epping, found again a few days later. Also on December 9, Stuart Varney saw a Pine Warbler at Great Bay NWR in Newington. Kyle Wilmarth reported one from Salem on December 13 and Chris Duffy one from Stratham on December 17. Pine Warblers were reported in January and February coming to feeders at homes in Portsmouth and Hancock over a period of several weeks. Another was seen in a yard in Lyme in January and February.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** is the species most commonly seen in winter. There were numerous reports this winter in all

#### WINTER SEASON

three months. These include sightings on the Seacoast and in Canterbury, Concord, and Hollis.

#### **Haiku Highlight**

For all of us backyard feeder watchers, Kathryn Frieden sent in this lovely haiku capturing a common experience:

Sharp-shinned Hawk in tree Where have all the songbirds gone? Stillness fills the yard

#### References

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



Sharp-shinned Hawk by Kyle Wilmarth, 1-7-23, Salem, NH.

# Regional Report, Winter 2022-23

Regional reports are dependent on the availability of authors and the occurrence of notable sightings. If you are interested in writing a regional summary, please contact the Editor.

#### **Coos County**

by Robert A. Quinn

If you want to truly experience "winter" the way it used to be with deep snow, frozen rivers that look like they might never thaw, and temperatures rarely getting above freezing, you should spend time in late winter in Coos County, especially the northern part of it. Winter usually comes early and it always lingers late. As I write this in early March 2023, there is knee-deep snow outside my window in Webster and Coos seems to be slumbering, from a bird point of view. Yet,

as with the Red Sox, hope springs eternal and a glimmer of spring was recorded in February 2023 in Coos with a few early migrants in Lancaster. See details below.

#### Lingerers

December in Coos County is not quite what it used to be with some mild days and seemingly fewer big snowstorms. Accordingly, there were a few birds that lingered such as a Great Blue Heron in Pinkham Notch seen by Ginny Umiker on December 2 and a Winter Wren along Mechanic Street in Gorham on December 5 reported by Benjamin Gagnon and Will O'Brien. For more about Mechanic Street see below. A Common Loon seen by Claudette Morneau in Berlin on the Androscoggin River on January 5 was unusual. One species that is far from a lingerer, and might still be increasing, is the Wild Turkey. An astounding exact count of 154 turkeys were tallied in Colebrook on December 30, 2022, by Rick Heil.



Bohemian Waxwing on the Pittsburg CBC by Benjamin Griffith, 12-14-22.

#### **Christmas Bird Counts**

The relatively mild weather meant decent conditions for the two northern Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). The **Pittsburg** CBC counters on December 14, 2022 found open water on Lake Francis and First Connecticut Lake. Snow depths were paltry being between one-three inches. The cone crop was "quite poor" per compiler Phil Brown, but apples and birches provided enough food that the northern finches were diverse though in low numbers, to wit: White-winged Crossbill (21), Red Crossbill (12), Pine Siskin (2), Pine Grosbeak (3), Common Redpoll (25), and Evening Grosbeak a bit better at 175. This count has been conducted for over 70 years, so it was a surprise that three brand new species were found: Iceland Gull, Northern Saw-whet Owl (two), and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

The **Errol-Umbagog** CBC counters on December 15, 2022 found similarly clement conditions with temperatures up to 40 degrees (!) and little snow. The wild food crop *seemed* similar to Pittsburg, but it *must* have been better since

the finches were recorded in greater numbers: White-winged Crossbill (25), Red Crossbill (57, record high), Pine Siskin (13), Pine Grosbeak (147, record high), Common Redpoll (24), Purple Finch (3), American Goldfinch (104), and Evening Grosbeak (114). The Errol CBC has been conducted for over 60 years, so it was a pleasant surprise that two brand new species were found, Spruce Grouse (long overdue) and a Chipping Sparrow. The "southerners" were noteworthy too with two Red-bellied Woodpeckers, a Tufted Titmouse, and eleven Northern Cardinals.



Canada Jay on the Errol-Umbagog CBC by Benjamin Griffith, 12-15-22.

#### Highlights

Very few other finches were reported in the county after the CBCs, although a male House Finch photographed by Claudette Morneau in Gorham on January 24 was an unusual occurrence of this species which is still rare in northern Coos County. Another significant report was the nine House Finch

counted by Rose Fitzgerald in Lancaster on February 18. They were at her feeder along with a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Red-winged Blackbird. The rest of the winter was long and quiet with a couple of exceptions.

Mechanic Street in Gorham exhibited a mini-Patagonia Picnic Table effect. The phenomenon started in Arizona decades ago, but it refers to when a rare bird attracts birders to a specific site and those birders find more unusual birds. A flock of Bohemian Waxwings in Gorham plus a wonderful feeder along Mechanic Street were the catalyst for a nice variety of winter sightings including three Ring-billed Gulls, Belted Kingfisher, Carolina Wren, 40 Bohemian Waxwings, 25 Evening Grosbeaks, White-crowned Sparrow, and Common Grackle.

An amazing *three* rare Varied Thrushes graced northern Coos with a striking looking male in Pittsburg on December 19-21 (Carol and Clyde Marsh) and a female-type bird (could have been an immature) in Lancaster from late December to February 19 (Bethany Belmore). The third was another female-type in Bath that arrived in November and stayed until April 9 at Randall Burt's residence.

#### **February Migrants**

Possible migrants included three Hooded Mergansers at the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters



Varied Thrush by Carol Marsh, 12-18-22 to 12-26-22, Pittsburg, NH

February 11 (Martha Wilson), two Canada Geese in Errol on February 13 (Paul & Lori Charron) four Herring Gulls and two Great Black-backed Gulls in Berlin on February 24 (Will O'Brien, Benjamin Gagnon), and eight Common Goldeneyes in Errol February 27 (Paul & Lori Charron). There had been no Common Goldeneyes on the CBC in December. Less easily classified was a Fox Sparrow at Jefferson Meadows on February 15 (Leo McKillop, Susan Wrisley), which could have been an over-wintering bird.

# Birds of 2022 and Bird of the Year Awards!

by Stephen R. Mirick

A total of 325 species of birds were reported to eBird in New Hampshire during 2022 (if you exclude Northern Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasant which aren't really countable). This is about five species less than the total from the previous two years, but generally at the high end of the range since 2010 of about 310 to 330 species. The only new species added to the overall state list was Tropical Kingbird. This is the fewest number of new state birds added in a year since 2012 when only one was added. Over 70,000 complete eBird checklists in New Hampshire were submitted for the year!

Retirement was good to me in 2022! I had the highest personal number of species in the state this year with 308. This is my highest (by far) and only the fourth time that 300 species have been reported by an individual birder. It also ties the record set by Lauren Kras in 2009. Lauren has since lost one with the lumping of Thayer's Gull. (I'm hoping to get the "official year-list committee" to give me another one-half species for the Little Egret hybrid I found this spring!) In addition, Jane and I were fortunate to be able to find four of the best birds of the year in my humble opinion! Incredibly, three of these were also my personal firsts for the state bringing my overall personal New Hampshire list to 398!



Little Egret x Snowy Egret hybrid by Steve Mirick, 4-15-22, Rye, NH. Can it be counted as half a species?

Will I get my 400th in 2023 and what will it be?

#### County Totals and Top County Birders in 2022

Rockingham County - 308 species (Steve Mirick with 290 species)

Strafford County - 229 species (tie between Alan Murray and Dan Hubbard with 188 species)

Cheshire County - 225 species (Wendy Ward with 212 species)

Hillsborough - 224 species (Nora Hanke with 183 species)

Grafton - 223 species (Kyle Jones with 174 species)

Carroll - 216 species (Ken Klapper with 192 species)

Merrimack - 209 species (Pam Hunt with 181 species)

Coos - 206 species (Lori Charron with 173 species)

Belknap - 199 species (Rob Woodward with 164 species)

Sullivan - 190 species (Dylan Jackson with 152 species)

#### **Bird of The Year Awards**

(my humble opinions!)

### Overall Bird of the Year

Tropical
Kingbird. Found
by Jane and
Steve Mirick in
Greenland on
11-13-22. This
is the first well
documented record
for the state since
it vocalized and
was recorded.
The vocalization



Tropical Kingbird by Steve Mirick, 11-17-22, Great Bay WMA, Greenland, NH.

was needed to separate it from the almost identical Couch's Kingbird. It is a tropical species found commonly throughout Central and South America and its breeding range barely reaches the United States in southeastern Arizona and along the Rio Grande Valley in Texas.

#### First Runner-up Bird of the Year

Northern Lapwing. Found by Steve Mirick on 3-7-22 in Greenland. This is only the second well documented record for the state with the first being a bird photographed on 3-10-13 in Loudon seen by only two birders. Another possible record came from Rye in 1988. This year's bird stayed for three days and was seen by many dozens of birders. Lapwings are a Eurasian bird that rarely (increasingly?) cross the Atlantic to the United States.

#### Second Runner-up Bird of the Year

Little Stint. Found by Steve Mirick on 7-27-22 in Hampton. This is only the second record for this species in the state and one of only a handful for New England. The first record was found by (then) young teenager Mike Harvey in Rye on 8-8-03. This year's bird stayed for three days and was seen by dozens of birders. Little Stints are another Eurasian species and there are only a handful of records for New England.

#### Rarest Northern Bird found in Southern New Hampshire

A one afternoon visit from a male Black-backed Woodpecker found by Stuart Varney on 9-27-22 in Portsmouth was an extraordinary sighting. This species is uncommon, but regular, at higher elevations in the White Mountains and in spruce-fir forests of northern New Hampshire. This is only the second record for all of southeastern New Hampshire.

#### Rarest Ocean Bird found Inland

Tie between an Arctic Tern found by Cory Ross on 5-14-22 at Hinsdale Setbacks and a Black-legged Kittiwake seen by Wendy Ward and Donna Keller from the same location on 12-11-22.

#### Rarest Coastal Bird found Inland

Cave Swallow found and photographed (!) by Chris McPherson flying around the Woodmont Orchards in Hollis on 11-13-22. Runner-up goes to the Harlequin Duck in downtown Manchester in December.

#### Rarest Bird found in Northern New Hampshire

American White Pelican found by Gail Smith in Pittsburg on 7-30-22. First Coos County record and one of only a handful of records for New Hampshire. Runner-up goes to the Varied Thrush found in Pittsburg on 12-18-22, which is the first record for New Hampshire north of the White

Mountains. Sadly, it is a 3:40 drive from my home so I didn't try for it and thus fell one species short of the record!

#### Rarest Summer Bird in the Winter

A Prairie Warbler made it through last December and survived into January of 2023 at the Hampton Wastewater Treatment Plant to mark the first January record for



King Eider by Steve Mirick, 10-15-22, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.

this species.
Also, a Rufous
Hummingbird
stayed at a
feeder in
Newmarket
until the
incredible late
date of 12-2222! This is the
first December
record for any
hummingbirds
in New
Hampshire!

#### Rarest Winter Bird in the Summer

King Eider. An incredibly cooperative female King Eider was found at Odiorne Point State Park on 5-22-22 by Brett Hillman. It continued to be somewhat reliably seen throughout the summer and fall and was seen by lots and lots of birders. It was still there a year later!!

#### Biggest Rare Bird Blunder of the Year

This shameful award is a tie and is given to Steve Mirick for photographing a Slaty-backed Gull on 4-8-22 in North Hampton (fourth state record), but didn't realize it until he went through his photos when he got home. It is also given to Holly Bauer who photographed what may have been the first state record of Tropical Kingbird on 6-2-22, but didn't realize it until looking at her photos when she got home!

#### Most Birders to see Rare Bird in Six Hours

Chuck-will's Widow – third state record and first "chaseable" bird. Thanks to modern communications, 25+ eBirders (plus lots of others!) saw this bird on a mid-week day in less than six hours. The bird was found by Steve Mirick at about 1:00 pm at Odiorne Point SP on 5-16-22, but (not surprisingly) was gone the next day.

#### Most Common Rare Bird of the Year

Pink-footed Goose. Incredibly, three different Pink-footed Geese were found from all corners of the state. These include the third, fourth, and fifth state records and came from Walpole on 3-11-22, Errol on 4-18-22, and Durham on

12-20-22. This European species appears to be increasing in abundance and more records are likely in the future.

#### Rarest Common Bird of the Year

Baird's Sandpiper. Although never common, this bird was completely absent this year for some reason. This appears to be the first year since 2006 that this bird was not reported anywhere in New Hampshire!

#### Most Frustrating Rare Bird of the Year

White Ibis. A *buge* flock of up to 31 birds showed up in southern Maine as part of an invasion year and many of these were seen by loads of birders over the following weeks, but birds in New Hampshire were much more frustrating. A "possible" sighting of two birds came from Lake Chocorua on 8-10-22 and then a brief sighting of a single bird by Stuart Varney in Hampton Harbor on 8-16-22, and that's it!!! There are only two previous records for White Ibis in New Hampshire.

## Rarest Birds for Which I Couldn't Find an Award Category

Ross's Goose in Rochester, White-faced Ibis on the coast, LeConte's Sparrow in Rye, Seaside Sparrow on Star Island, Swallow-tailed Kite in Carroll, Golden-winged Warbler in East Kingston, male Painted Bunting in Plymouth, Townsend's Solitaire on Mount Cardigan, Ashthroated Flycatcher in Durham, Curlew Sandpiper in Rye, Western Tanager in Greenland, two Mountain Bluebirds in Peterborough and Newington, Summer Tanager in Rye, Kentucky Warbler on Star Island, Yellow-throated Warbler in Enfield, Hooded Warbler in New Hampton, Whitewinged Dove in Hampton, Clapper Rail in Hampton, Hoary Redpoll in Sandwich, Western Grebe in Rye, and Blue Grosbeak in Hollis!

Thanks to everyone for their help and cooperation and sharing to make this another wonderful year!!!!



Pink-footed Goose by Lori Charron, 4-18-22, Magalloway River, Errol, NH.

# Two Mountain Bluebirds in New Hampshire!

# A Longitudinally-displaced Bluebird in Peterborough

Text and photos by Chuck Carlson

There is a high probability that spotting a Mountain Bluebird on a Peterborough, NH neighbor's roof won't happen again in my lifetime, but it sure was a thrill to have it happen on February 8, 2023!

I became a dedicated birder in 2012 in Texas when I did my



Mountain Bluebird in Peterborough, 2-11-23, a few days after Chuck Carlson discovered it.

first four Christmas Bird Counts. Since then, I've had some experience with vagrant sightings, but never as "first to see." From the lack of rufous on throat, breast or flanks, I quickly determined the bird on our neighbor's roof could be a Mountain Bluebird! My first thoughts were: get the ID right, submit an eBird checklist with photo, and warn our neighbors immediately—a cautious procession of steps that quickly brought birders, including some from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, to our small neighborhood to see what a Mountain Bluebird looks like in New Hampshire, 1,200 miles out of its range.

My wife, Kris, and I enjoyed meeting dozens of fellow New Hampshire birders by simply stepping out the door and



The last day the Peterborough Mountain Bluebird was reported, 2-21-23.

saying "Hi!"
Wow!! To all
of those who
came to see
the bird, we
say thank
you for a
wonderful
welcome
to the New
Hampshire
birding
community!

# A Bluebird Exchange Program in Newington

by Ethan Maier

One of the great joys of traveling as a birder is stepping off an airplane into a whole new world of birds. What may be common sightings for birders in one area can be exciting finds for a traveler. I have always lived in the Pacific Northwest, so while visiting family in New Hampshire over the holidays, seeing a Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, or Northern Mockingbird was a treat; however, another locally common bird, the Eastern Bluebird, was conspicuously absent wherever I looked.

A few days before Christmas, I headed out on a morning walk to the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge. As I walked along the Ferry Way Trail, I was marveling at the great diversity and abundance of bird life. At the first wetland, I stopped and finally spotted a group of bluebirds feeding on the winter rose hips. What beautiful birds! But suddenly, amid the group of orange and blue, I spied a similar-sized pure blue bird. It wasn't an Indigo Bunting, nor was it a Blue Jay. What it resembled was the Mountain Bluebirds we have in plentiful supply where I grew up in sagebrush-covered eastern Washington State. But I was a long way from there, so could it be? I snapped some pics through my binoculars and shared the news with some local birding friends.

A group headed out that day and confirmed with much better photos that the bird was indeed a Mountain Bluebird! This would be the third Mountain Bluebird to ever be recorded in New Hampshire. Christmas certainly came early this year! Who would have thought that the highlight of a trip "back east" would not be the sightings of Harlequin and Long-tailed Ducks at Nubble Lighthouse, nor Black-legged Kittiwakes at Odiorne Point State Park, but a familiar local bird from home in a very unfamiliar land.

An interesting footnote to this story is that upon returning home, my mother informed me of another peculiarity. Earlier in December near where I grew up, an Eastern Bluebird showed up close to an area famous for its Mountain Bluebirds! This was Washington State's first Eastern Bluebird sighting, and so made quite the stir with the local birding community.

While I would love to hear an ornithologist's take on this, for now, I am content with my own bluebird fantasy. I imagine that somewhere in the range overlap of these birds in Texas or New Mexico, these two birds met up and decided to do an exchange program. Next year, they will meet back up and compare notes, and maybe do it again? Here's hoping that the exchange is a success!

# My "Lil Girl"—the Story of a Rufous Hummingbird

by Marisol Delgado

Until the beginning of 2020, I was not able to recognize more than five birds in my yard. I started feeding them and, within two years, one feeder turned into two, then five plus a bird bath. I joined the Facebook group "Birdwatchers of New Hampshire" and started learning about all the birds that visit my feeders.

About two years ago, I was standing on my porch, when a hummingbird came right in front of my face, hovering and chirping, no more than three feet away. I froze until he was done checking me out, backing up, and flying away. It was one of those special moments you experience in life that makes you fall instantly in love! I ran to a store and bought a hummingbird feeder and then another, as I learned pretty quickly that they don't like sharing feeders. Last year, two feeders turned into three, plus five mini-feeders. I had eight to ten Ruby-throated Hummingbirds buzzing around the feeders making my yard look like an airfield.

For the past two years, I took the feeders down the first week of October. I read they should be kept up for two weeks after the last hummingbird sighting of the fall, so this year I waited. After my last "hummer" had left in mid-October, I got ready to take down the remaining feeders on October 29. I looked out the kitchen window and there she was! A new hummingbird! This one looked different, so I made fresh syrup and refilled the feeder. She was thirsty and came to the feeders very often over the next week.

On November 4, I took some videos of her, posted them on the Facebook group and was then contacted by Ben Griffith. He asked me if Steve Mirick could come take some photos because I had either a Rufous or an Allen's Hummingbird! After some hesitation, I said yes. The following day, Steve photographed the bird and confirmed it as either a female Rufous or Allen's, but could not identify her to species without in-hand measurements. Ornithologist Scott Weidensaul was contacted and again, after some hesitation, I agreed to having him come and hopefully band and measure "my hummingbird." Luckily, she continued to visit my yard and, on November 15, Scott was able to identify her as a female Rufous Hummingbird, a rare sighting for New Hampshire! I learned from Scott that, instead of migrating from western Canada or Alaska to the south, she had flown east to the coast. Now that she was banded, if she did migrate south there was always the possibility of finding

The banding turned out to be an easy process which I was able to observe. I even got to hold her in my hand and

#### "Lil Girl," the Rufous Hummingbird

Photos taken by Marisol Delgado at her feeder in Newmarket, NH.



Sitting at the feeder. If you look closely you can see her band.



Stretching up to take a look!



Settling her feathers.



You can see part of her tongue at the end of her bill.

release her. Within minutes, she was back at the feeder, so I guess she didn't hold any grudges! She came to the yard every day, most days from mid-morning until around 3:30 pm, and then perched high up in a tree. In preparation for winter in case she stayed longer, I bought a heater for the feeder. Some people came to take pictures of her for she was now a celebrity! I saw her last the morning of December 22, fighting the wind to get to the feeder. I want to think she decided to migrate, sensing the storm (Elliot), because she had been coming to the feeder early for the previous few days. Perhaps, she spent the winter enjoying flowers and feeders somewhere in the south.

Hosting my "Lil Girl" was a magical experience. I met some wonderful people and got close to a few ladies who were similarly hosting rare "hummers" in other New England states. We shared our experiences and our sadness after they had gone. I learned so much about hummingbirds and their migration and of keeping their feeders up longer in the fall. Hummingbirds will migrate when their instincts tell them it is time and feeders won't keep them from doing so. On the contrary, a feeder discovered in late fall is like that muchneeded gas station when you are running on empty during a road trip. It is the fuel they need in order to embark on their long journey south.

I also learned from Scott Weidensaul how important it is to get rare hummingbirds banded. It gives us the chance to learn more about them, their migration patterns, the rapid expansion of western hummingbirds to the northeast, and why they have changed patterns of migration in recent years. Then, we can work to create better environments for them with the native flowers they need and with safe nesting areas.

I will never forget her, my "Lil Girl." I feel so honored and blessed that she chose my yard and chose me as her host. Hopefully, I will see her again in the fall! From now on, my feeders will stay up until at least Thanksgiving waiting for her, or any other stranded hummingbirds out there, and I'm making a garden with native flowers for them as well.

#### **Field Notes Winter 2022-23**

Anita Fernandez, Editor

# Robin Snow Removal Service in Canterbury

by Lois Scribner

My husband Howard and I were watching a huge flock of robins on a Friday morning in January (1-20-23), seemingly swarming and dive-bombing an evergreen tree in the driveway. We watched for over an hour as they cleared the tree of snow and flew to the tarmac seeming to be picking at something. We had never seen so many at once,

though it is usual to see them during the winter now. I have a 23 second video of them flying into the tree; later the tree was very much greener than the other one next to it.

Ed. Note

While many are used to seeing American Robins foraging for and feeding on insects and earthworms, about 7% of their annual diet comes from fruits, with a heavy amount in the fall and winter months. Robins used to be uncommon in winter in New Hampshire, but in 1997, they began increasing on NH Audubon's Backyard Winter Bird Survey. That year there were 490 reported and they kept increasing, reaching a peak of 3,520 in 2014. Since then, survey totals have dropped just a bit to around 2,000.

Robins in the winter will often flock together, searching for food to get enough energy to survive winter conditions. Ben Winger from the University of Michigan's Museum of Zoology shared that, in early winter 2021, there were no robins in his neighborhood except for two days, when a flock came through and ate every fruit they could find and then were gone (Bingham 2021). In New Hampshire, flocks will usually appear around plentiful crabapples, hawthorns, holly, and berry-producing conifers like juniper for food. It looks like Lois's evergreen is some kind of juniper and the robins were after the fleshy berries. Don't forget, birds still need water in the winter and will eat snow to meet this requirement. Lois's robins may also have been taking advantage of the melted snow on her driveway where the berries had fallen.

Bingham, E. 2021. It's still winter in Michigan, so why are we seeing robins? *MLive*. February 23, 2021.

#### Leucistic Red-Tailed Hawk Suffers from Progressive Greying

by Anita Fernandez

In the winter of 2021-2022, several people reported seeing the "Zebra" Red-tailed Hawk, a leucistic bird with a very unique feather pattern displaying many white feathers, but with the characteristic red tail (see the Winter 2021-22 issue of New Hampshire Bird Records, Vol. 40, #4). In December 2022, Steve Bennett again spotted a Red-tailed Hawk in the same area in Auburn, but with considerably more white feathers. This bird may be visually closer to a Polar Bear or a Snowy Owl than a Zebra; however, there is a very good chance this is the same bird that was spotted the previous winter. This bird may have a condition referred to as "Progressive Greying" or "Progressive Depigmentation." This occurs in a bird who has developed a fully normal colored juvenile plumage, but with each subsequent molt it displays more and more white feathers. This is a condition that increases with age, but is not associated with "old age" the

way we see loss of melanin production in human hair with age. As with traditionally leucistic birds, which continue to display the same number of white feathers each molt, these birds also have dark eyes and so are never considered to be albinos, even once they reach 100% leucism.



This photograph was taken on 1-02-22 in Auburn, NH by Susan Wrisley. Note the heavily striated pattern of the wings. It also has a fully red tail.



This photo was taken by Steve Bennett on 12-27-22, also in Auburn. In contrast, the number of white feathers apparent on this bird is significantly greater. Only a faded edge of red is visible on the tail feathers, the rest of the tail is mostly white.

#### **Nuthatch Storing Seeds in Danville**

by Anita Fernandez

In December 2022 in the town of Danville, Howard McKew saw, not for the first time, a nuthatch walking across his lower roof with a sunflower seed in its beak. The bird approached a shingle and slid the seed beneath it. Howard was wondering what prompted this behavior and if the bird would return to retrieve the seed.

The answer to Howard's question is yes; the nuthatch will return during the winter to retrieve seeds that it has stored. This behavior is called caching, and it is common in nuthatches. This is a strategy that these birds use to keep a

ready food supply over the winter. Nuthatches typically cache food under a loose piece of bark and then cover it with more bark, lichen, moss, or snow. In areas with structures such as houses, shingles are very similar to loose bark in their storage capabilities.

Winter is also a great time to view the behavior that earned nuthatches their name. These birds will stuff a large seed or nut beneath tree bark and then hit it with their sharp bill to "hatch" out the seed inside.

Axelson, G. 2015. Four Nuthatches, Four Ways To Make It Through A Cold Winter. All About Birds. The Cornell Lab. https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/four-nuthatchesfour-ways-to-make-it-through-a-cold-winter/. Retrieved 4-27-23.

# Cooper's Hawk in Stratham Finds a Backyard Hotspot

Posted to the NHBirds email list 01-28-23 by Roger Stephenson.

There is at least one Cooper's Hawk that has decided that our three feeder stations are its very own hotspot. A few flight feathers are all that remain from a Tufted Titmouse "snatch-and-grab" I witnessed earlier this month. This morning, while watching three woodpecker species and hoping for a fourth species with an appearance by our Hairy, a Cooper's flew in and perched, looking intently for a few minutes before dropping to the snow. The hawk hopped around our 2022 Christmas tree that is lying on the ground, serving its intended purpose of winter songbird shelter. It poked its head into the balsam branches three times as it patrolled the tree for a minute or two. We expect that a junco or sparrow may have been sheltering in place among the branches, but managed to stay quiet enough to avoid detection. Off the Cooper's went, to the back yard and woods.

#### Ed. Note

Cooper's Hawks mainly eat birds, and while medium-sized birds such as American Robin or Mourning Dove are a preferred meal choice, putting out seed for small birds can also attract a Cooper's Hawk to your space. If a Cooper's Hawk takes up residence near your feeders, you can take them down for a few days and the hawk should move on to another area.

#### **Banded Green-winged Teal in Suncook**

Text and photos by Rebecca Suomala





Banded male Green-winged Teal (top) and Northern Pintail (bottom), 2-20-23, Allenstown, NH.

A banded male Green-winged Teal spent the winter at the Suncook River Reservoir in the company of a flock of about 250 Mallards and one male Northern Pintail. It was first reported on December 18, 2022 by Andrea and George Robbins then re-found on January 28, 2023 by Mark Suomala. I saw it with Mark on February 20 and pulled out my scope to read the band. The ducks were used to being fed and it came quite close making it relatively easy to read the band. (Many of the Mallards were also banded but I did not read those bands.)

When I reported the band to the US Bird Banding Lab (reportband.gov), I learned that it was hatched in 2021 and banded on 9-8-21 by NH Fish & Game "near Pembroke."

According to NH Fish and Game, their wildlife biologists "undertake an annual effort of attaching hundreds of metal bands to ducks throughout the state. This pre-season banding effort is conducted in the US and Canadian provinces throughout the Atlantic Flyway in August and September. This huge undertaking provides survival-rate data that are

used in combination with breeding-plot data and HIP (National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program) survey data to develop the model used to determine annual season regulations in the spring.

Numerous capture techniques exist for catching ducks; the two most widely used in New Hampshire are bait traps and rocket nets. Bait traps are simple enclosures with a closing-door mechanism to trap ducks. Rocket nets are very effective at catching large groups of birds. Three rockets are attached to a large net. When the ducks are close enough, biologists trigger a detonator, which fires the rockets, propelling the net into the air, catching the ducks unharmed underneath.

Each metal band has a unique sequence of numbers, and biologists record the species, age, and sex of each duck before it is released. At the end of the season, all the data are submitted to the Bird Banding Lab at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland. When a hunter harvests a duck with a metal band, or a wildlife viewer reads the band through a spotting scope, they are asked to report the information to a website provided on the band (www. reportband.gov)."

As a bird bander myself, I always try to get numbers on banded birds. It is so exciting when someone finds a bird I have banded, especially if it's still alive. It provides valuable information so please report any bands you find.

### North Country Field Trip Report

by Greg Tillman

A birding trip to the North Country is about the finches, and the Seacoast Chapter's February field trip (2-7-23) started off with a bang! Before we had barely started, while we were all still arranging carpooling details at the McDonald's parking lot in Gorham, participants were treated to a beautiful flock of Pine Grosbeaks posing cooperatively in the adjacent trees. Fifteen minutes later, Evening Grosbeaks turned up at a nearby feeder, with winter colors that are always crowd pleasers.

The weather was a little colder than forecast as we gathered (4 degrees Fahrenheit at the start), but the splendid start and sunny skies kept us all cheerful. Thanks go to intrepid trip leader Sam Stoddard, who filled in with aplomb when our original intrepid leader had to withdraw at the last minute.

After our terrific grosbeak duo, we began the usual drive northward on Route 16, and turned up another target bird when someone spotted a Bohemian Waxwing in the Berlin Industrial Park. As we all rushed to get binoculars on what might be our only waxwing, we spotted the other 29 waxwings of the flock calmly perched in a crabapple tree, and

good views were had by all. A second flock of Bohemians was equally satisfying twenty minutes later, as we stopped to watch turkeys on the ground below some birdfeeders. The feeders themselves had a nice collection of the usual North Country birds, including Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches.

Lori Charron met the group around lunchtime and took us to several more local feeding stations. We were lucky enough to see a Tufted Titmouse, which is not a common bird in Coos County, at least not yet. But the star of the afternoon was a bird that we often miss on this trip, a pair of cooperative, friendly Canada Jays were visiting feeders near Akers Pond. Thanks Lori!

We closed the day in Wentworth's Location and picked up our only Pine Siskin at our final feeder stop. All told, about 20 people made the trip, and we totaled 27 species over the course of the day. Redpolls might be considered our biggest miss, but they were fairly scarce this winter even in Coos. You can't see them all! An excellent trip, and a high bar for next year!



The North Country Field Trip participants looking at a cooperative Canada Jay. Photo by Greg Tillman, 2-7-23.



The very cooperative Canada Jay that the group was looking at. Photo by Holly Bauer at Akers Pond in Errol, 2-7-23.

#### **Backyard Birder**

#### The Hermit of Webster

by Robert A. Quinn



This "hermit" visits crabapple trees throughout the winter and into spring. Photo by Robert A. Quinn, at his yard in Webster, NH.

I had a pleasant and gratifying yard sighting when a Hermit Thrush appeared in one of my crabapple trees on November 22, 2022. It became a surprising record when, once again, I noticed a Hermit Thrush feeding on crabapples, on December 21 and 22, 2022. Presumably, this same individual graced my yard the entire winter and well into ornithological spring (March and onward), literally weathering numerous significant late winter snowstorms. After each storm, I hoped it would reappear and it always did, seeming to be strong and healthy from outward appearances and behavior. What a treat!

Once winter set in with snow-covered ground, the thrush fed on fallen sunflower seeds under my feeders, plus suet, but as soon as there was open ground, it returned to foraging naturally, usually underneath large hemlock trees. True to its name, it seemed to prefer to feed by itself, not when the throngs of chickadees and other species were at the feeders. It was also not tolerant of my presence outside, unlike the regular feeder species. It never vocalized as far as I could tell.

Hermit Thrushes have become regular on southern Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) and one was even recently documented on the Errol CBC on December 20, 2019 (L. Charron). Therefore, it was not a great surprise that the bird I first saw in November lingered into December. It was more of a surprise that it was still around through the winter, especially with the below zero temperatures of early February and a series of significant snowstorms in late February and into March. My plucky little friend survived all those travails, and I last recorded it on April 8, 2023. The significance of that date is that my earliest spring migrant Hermit during my 15 years in Webster was April 7. After that date, I knew he would be okay, perhaps to grace my yard again next autumn.

In *The Birds of New Hampshire* (by Keith and Fox, 2009), they describe the Hermit Thrush as "A common spring and fall migrant, summer resident, and occasional winter straggler. It appears to have become more common since 1990." The first birds of spring can be seen in early March, although these could be undetected over-winterers. The mean arrival date from 1990-2009 was April 8 (*The Birds of New Hampshire*), but that date has undoubtedly become earlier since 2009 due to climate change.

Regarding fall and winter, Keith and Fox write, "Late migrants were four at Star Island November 17, 1973..." and, between 2000-2009 "...it was reported in February every year that decade, often in several towns. A few birds have probably overwintered 2004-2009." Therefore, my visitor was a mini celebrity!

### **Starting a New Year**

by Greg Tillman



One of Greg Tillman's favorite photos from the first day of the New Year in 2023, the Western Tanager in Greenland.

There is a special kind of friendship among people who stand together in ten-degree weather looking for tiny creatures of wings and feathers. Whether it was the lingering vagrants, or resolutions, or just the holiday, birders almost outnumbered birds on the Seacoast January 1, 2023, and the day turned into an unexpected series of smile-filled reunions. With birds, of course!

The beginning of a new year means the start of a new year list and what better way to spend the first day of the year than going birding and beginning that new list. Each new species brings excitement, even the common ones, but especially the rarities. For myself, I ended New Year's morning with lots of people looking for the Mountain Bluebird at the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge. A beautiful bird in its own right, the bluebird was a life bird for

me when I first saw it at the refuge at the end of 2022. Seeing it again was all the more special for sharing the experience, with Katie and Jim, with Roger and Dave, and with others whose names I still don't know, but who remain in my memories of that New Year's Day Mountain Bluebird.

I started that morning at Moore Fields, with "Happy New Years" for Ed and Ethan and Rebecca and others. We all watched the state's fifth (or so) Pink-footed Goose stroll among a large flock of Canadas and two Snow Geese. What a treat! The Western Tanager was an equal delight and it felt like Old Home Day, greeting long-time but rarely seen friends like Steve and Jane as we watched the tanager feasting on winter apples. I took some of my favorite bird pictures of the year and I wish I had taken a few more pictures of the people.

All told, more than 25 eBird checklists were submitted on January 1 for each one of these rarities and I bet nearly 100 birders saw one or more of those vagrant visitors that day.

I am an introvert and one of my pleasures in birding is being by myself in the woods, enjoying a quiet break from "people-ing," but New Year's Day reminded me that I'm also part of a community of New Hampshire birders that is worth treasuring. And it is worth saying that I love you all, each and every one. (even if, one introvert to another, I sometimes don't say so when I see you.) I bird alone happily, but sometimes it is nice to bird together, joyously.

Thank you all for being there, with me and with each other, and thank you for a great New Year's Day!

### **Superbowl of Birding 2023**

The Superbowl of Birding is a competition that takes place in January and involves looking for as many bird species as possible in 12 hours. It is run by Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center and this was the twentieth anniversary of the event. Teams can compete in Essex County, MA and/or Rockingham County, NH in various categories.

#### Where were the Twitchers?

by Rebecca Suomala

As faithful readers know, the Twitchers usually participate in the Superbowl of Birding each year, competing in one town in Rockingham County, NH – but this year was different! I've been the Team Captain for nine years and a participant every year since 2009, but in 2023, I was on a birding trip to the southern hemisphere during the Superbowl. While the rest of the team took a break from the competition, I still participated – but from a boat in the waters off Antarctica.

On Saturday, January 28, 2023, I recorded 13 species in and around the Antarctic Peninsula, including my life Snow Petrel, a species found only in Antarctica. Despite it being



Penguins on the Superbowl? These Gentoo Penguins were in Antarctica with Twitcher Team Captain Becky Suomala on the day of the Superbowl, 1-28-23. Photo by Rebecca Suomala.

summer in the southern hemisphere, I still had to dress like I was on the Superbowl in New Hampshire, and it even snowed. I tallied 22 pieces of clothing – more than the day's species! You can read my full results here: https://nhbirdrecords.org/twitchers.

I did this day-long watch to raise funds for *New Hampshire Bird Records* and NH eBird, and to have fun. A special thank you to those who gave and those who made creative pledges that kept me on the ship's deck for 12 hours watching for penguins and other life birds. Gifts are welcome at any time:

https://www.nhaudubon.org/make-a-donation-to-twitchers/.

Congratulations to the Wild CARDinals who carried on the tradition of competing in the town of Rye, NH and won the Townie Award. Their 58 species was right on average for past Twitchers' results in Rye. We hope to see them next year!



I was a team of one, but Zeke Cornell was there to ensure I stuck to the rules!

#### The Wild CARDinals win the Townie Award

by Jim Sparrell and Katie Towler taken from a post to the NHBirds email list 1-29-23



The Wild CARDinals are having fun in Rye!

Our team for this year's Superbowl of Birding, the Wild CARDinals, consisted of us and Aidan Felch and Ashton Almeida. Recent graduates of Winnacunnet High School, Aidan and Ashton started birding in 2021 when they took the high school's ornithology course. We learned that the Twitchers in the Rye were not participating in the Superbowl this year, so we decided to carry on their tradition and participate in the Townie category, limiting ourselves to birds seen in a single town, in our case Rye, NH. The Twitchers (under captain Pam Hunt, then Becky Suomala) pioneered the townie category, though there was initially no Townie Award. Mass Audubon established the Townie Award in recognition of their effort to encourage local birding and getting to know your local patches.

We had a wonderful day and enjoyed the challenge of an intensive search in a limited area. We started at 5:00 am on Love Lane, where we were not able to call in any owls, but at 5:30 am, on the way to our next stop, we were treated to the awesome sight of an Eastern Screech-Owl flying low over the road just in front of the car. Unfortunately, Ashton missed seeing this one — it would have been a life bird for him — but as the rest of us had good looks, we could count the owl. At Massacre Marsh, Ashton whistled in his life Northern Saw-whet Owl, which instead of tooting gave us some squeaks and high-pitched barks. How many birders can say they have called in a life bird like that?! Also, at Rye Recreation Area, he whistled in another saw-whet that startled us all by coming in close and giving a very loud and definitive whistling toot.

A rising, enormous red sun greeted us on the coast. We picked up a number of ocean birds in the early light, including a life Red-necked Grebe for Aidan and Ashton. A quick stop at Seavey Acres yielded a Brown Creeper, thanks



This Double-crested Cormorant, seen near Odiorne Point for several weeks in January, was kind enough to continue hanging out through the end of the month so it could be seen by multiple Superbowl teams. Photo by Jim Sparrell, 1-28-23 in Rye, NH

to the excellent hearing of our younger team members. At Rye Harbor, we picked up a Red-throated Loon and the reliable Rock Pigeons, but the Belted Kingfisher scouted a week earlier was a no-show.

We headed inland next, where we checked out feeders and added a number of species to our list. At Rye Airfield, we did not find the previously scouted Common Ravens, though we saw one soaring over Rt. 1 as we drove from a quick stop in Portsmouth back into Rye. It was less than two-tenths of a mile from the town line, but alas, did not fly into Rye airspace and could not be counted, despite our rapidly pulling off the road at the town line and looking back, or Jim's tenuous argument that, if we had been in Rye, we could have seen it.

Wandering around inland locations as the temperatures climbed, we were excited to hear and then see Pine Siskins at a feeder on West Rd., and Aidan pished in our first White-throated Sparrow of the day. Sweeping back up the coast, we visited Rye Ledge for at least the third time. No Sanderlings or Purple Sandpipers, but we had great views of a Horned Grebe, another lifer for Aidan and Ashton. We struck out (again!) on the Iceland Gull at Eel Pond (the Hooded Mergansers never showed, either). The dazzling sight of four mature Bald Eagles flying in low off the ocean and soaring over the pond made up for these misses. At Rye Harbor, the Horned Larks put on a beautiful show feeding in the wrack and dancing in the air above our heads. We picked up the King Eider and a Razorbill found by the 4th and Longspurs at Pulpit Rocks, and Purple Sandpipers farther north.

In the waning light, we returned to Massacre Marsh, hoping for a Great Horned Owl. No owls, but we did have a flyover Merlin, another lifer for Aidan and Ashton. Aidan ended the day with four life birds and Ashton with six and they got us on many great birds we might have missed. Since

this was our first time participating as a team and our first time birding Rye like this, we were very happy to find 58 species to win the Townie Award and, most of all, to make some new birding friends. Jim and Katie made a bit of Superbowl history by being, we believe, the first official team co-captains.

Congratulations to all the teams, especially the Thrashers who won the Joppa Cup (overall award), getting a whopping 88 species without leaving Ipswich, MA! From the Wild CARDinals, a huge thanks to Mass Audubon and everyone at Joppa Flats for a fantastic day of birding.

# The 4th and Longspurs win the Rockingham County Award

by Steve Mirick

taken from his post to the NHBirds email list, 1-29-23

Jane and I joined up with Paul Lacourse and Kurk Dorsey for the Superbowl of Birding. The event is a fun way of beating the winter cold and getting out and finding birds. Our team name is the "4th and Longspurs." As we have done in the past years, we participated in the category of "Rockingham County, NH only." A weighted valuation system determines the winner, where the rarity of the species determines the number of points awarded.

The day's weather continued this winter's mild trend with partly cloudy skies and temperatures starting in the upper 20s (F), but rising to about 49 in the afternoon, perhaps the mildest weather we've ever had for this event. Moderate to strong southwest winds in the afternoon created some difficulty trying to get a few late day songbirds and trying to pick out birds in the choppy and wavy ocean.

We decided to begin the day trying for owls in the Great Bay area and this worked out very well with three owl species. We got to the Exeter Vulture roost before dawn, so we waited....and waited....but could not pick out the Black Vultures. So we gave up and decided to work some neighborhoods. We managed to get many of the regulars including Northern Flicker, a Pileated Woodpecker, and a nice flyby Merlin near Paul's house. Plus, we got our scouted Hermit Thrush which hadn't moved from the bush we saw it in less than 24 hours earlier. The big surprise was when we stopped at a feeder where two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers had been reported to us. We missed the sapsuckers but got a flock of Turkey Vultures accompanied by at least two Black Vultures! We missed Red-shouldered Hawk in town, but I decided to do a "drive-by" along Rt. 101 and we picked up an adult near the Guinea Road overpass. For some reason, the Red-shouldered Hawks have liked this area over the years!

At the Great Bay Discovery Center, we didn't get much, but while taking a bathroom stop, I hooted a Barred Owl

and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker flew in!! We headed to the Portsmouth Country Club next, where I had previously warned the team that we were in for a long walk out to the point. This spot (which is open to the public) was snow free, but still a long walk and over an hour time commitment for a Superbowl effort. Fortunately, we managed to get both the Eurasian Wigeon and the Wood Duck that had previously been reported...but we missed the Gray Catbird.

The Great Bay Farm was our next stop where we picked up White-crowned Sparrow, but the nice surprise was getting the nearby Western Tanager as a drive-by! Not even needing to get out of the car as the bird was (still) feeding in the big apples along Ocean Road in Greenland. Now...the stupid Greater White-fronted Goose. Two teams had already reported it, so we drove around and around (and around) trying to find it. We even went around the traffic circle to the liquor store where there were geese, but no luck anywhere. We got permission to view a Wilson's Snipe in Portsmouth and, coincidentally, three teams converged on Stuart Varney's house at the same time. We all managed to see the snipe before it ran back into the swamp!

Heading to the coast, we quickly got most of the basic birds and also managed a Northern Harrier at Odiorne, the continuing King Eider, and continuing Double-crested Cormorant south of Odiorne. We took a detour to some neighborhoods where we missed the scouted Pine Siskin and Fox Sparrow, but pulled in a clutch Palm Warbler that had previously been reported at the Hampton Wastewater Treatment Plant. We finished the day at Hampton Beach State Park where we got Dunlins, Snow Buntings, and Horned Larks, but missed the Lapland Longspur and Sanderlings.

We ended up with a new team record of 86 species, beating our previous high of 84 species set in 2014 and 2020. We had four 5-pointers (1 for 8-points) and added three new species for our all-time Superbowl list which now stands at around 157!!! We finished with winning the Rockingham County award for the most species reported in Rockingham County!

#### A Personal Best for the Harris Center Kestrels

by Phil Brown

taken from his post to the NHBirds email list, 1-29-23

The "Harris Center Kestrels" participated in the Superbowl of Birding in Rockingham County, NH, this year. Our team consisted of me, Katrina Fenton, Steven Lamonde, Will Stollsteimer, and Chad Witko, all biologists/students affiliated in some way with the Harris Center for Conservation Education in Hancock. In addition to having the best day of birding possible, our goals were to have fun and to raise funds for American Kestrel conservation across the Monadnock

Region, a project the Harris Center is leading.

The Harris Center Kestrels had a terrific day of birding! We started at the Great Bay Discovery Center for owls, where we called in (and even got to see in darkness!) an Eastern Screech-Owl. Our next few owling spots were slow though, and it appears that we primed the Great Horned Owl at Osprey Cove, which was detected by our competitors, the 4th and Longspurs (you're welcome!). With one last hope for owls, we successfully tooted in a Northern Saw-whet Owl at the Portsmouth Country Club at around 6:30 am. Here, we watched a beautiful sunrise over Great Bay, where we found a wide diversity of birds for the next hour or so. Among them was the male Eurasian Wigeon (our first of three five-point birds), the Gray Catbird which I discovered during scouting, and a Great Blue Heron (which was seen by only two teammates and thus not countable for our group species list).

We had luck at Great Bay Farm, which produced a surprise Yellow-rumped Warbler. Off to Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge for another lengthy walk (always a risk on game day!), where the Mountain Bluebird didn't show...not too surprising...but we did pick up Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and our second (of three) Northern Flicker of the day. A second check of the Western Tanager spot was, this time, successful, as Steven picked out the bird as we were driving away! Following up on other five-point bird call-ins, we searched around the Pease Airport area a bit for the Greater White-fronted Goose before coming up with this nice rarity mixed in a flock of Canada Geese.

Heading down Rt. 95, we were lucky to see our only Cedar Waxwings of the day flying right over the car, a group of 25 in a tight flock, and I then picked out our first (of two) adult Red-shouldered Hawks as we headed west along Rt. 101 to Exeter. We got Turkey Vultures at and near the known roost site, but the Black Vultures were nowhere to be found. Exeter produced our first Cooper's Hawk (of three) and Horned Larks of the day, as well as the only Lesser Scaup, and a sizeable flock of Red-winged Blackbirds (and an unconfirmed Brown-headed Cowbird...argh!).

Then it was onto Stuart Varney's, where we arrived with our two other Rockingham County competitors and exchanged greetings while enjoying the backyard Wilson's Snipe (thanks for sharing this special bird, Stuart!). We were doing pretty well on time, so we decided to make a quick stop at Great Island Common in New Castle, which turned up Sharp-shinned Hawk, our first Northern Harrier, and our first of several interactions with the general public wondering if we were seeing Snowy Owls or wondering what the heck we were doing. We found most of the expected oceanic birds plus the continuing Double-crested Cormorant, an adult Northern Gannet, our only Razorbill (a flyby), and our first Purple Sandpipers. In our final hour, we decided against

the long (and likely birdless) drive to Exeter in hopes of a possible roosting Black Vulture in exchange for the multitude of possibilities that Hampton Marsh and Beach could produce for us. We came up short, however, despite working hard for Snowy and Short-eared Owls, Lapland Longspur, and just one more participant on a Great Blue Heron.

We were thrilled with our total of 83 species and 170 points (my personal highest tallies in 15+ years of participating in this event). Each teammate contributed immensely, both in preparation for and during the big day, and we had the best day of birding we could have imagined. Plus, we raised over \$3,000 for American Kestrel conservation in the Monadnock Region, so we – and American Kestrels – are winners no matter what!

#### **One Hundred Birds a Month**

Text and photos by Holly Bauer

In a casual talk with Marj Watson while looking for a Lapland Longspur, I discovered that she tries to see 100 different species of birds every month. I found the personal aspect of the challenge appealing; it would be pitting me only against my desire to stay warm and dry just watching the birds at my feeders. I decided that that would be my birding goal for 2022, to see at least 100 species of birds in New Hampshire every month.

I knew that the key to finding 100 species in January would be to hit the ground running and try to find as many lingering migrants as possible early in the month. January 1 is a great day to bird anyway and I started the new year with 49 species including a Dovekie found by Jason Lambert in Rye Harbor. That along with a Cackling Goose still hanging around since the end of December made an auspicious start.



A late-migrant Prairie Warbler in Hampton, originally photographed 12-7-21, lingered until 1-8-22, so Holly was able to add it to her January list.

With a few lingering migrants such as American Bittern and a Prairie Warbler making nice additions at the beginning of the month, I was able to hit 100 species on January 27 with a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Throughout the year, I made liberal use of "other people's birds." Using eBird's Year Needs Alerts and the Explore Region function for Rockingham County, I could see where birds I still needed for the month were being found. One nice by-product of the challenge is that I ended up discovering new places to bird; places that weren't designated eBird Hotspots but had nice pockets of birdy activity or perhaps a specialty bird. I ended up looking for a reported Winter Wren in Hampton Falls and found it in a nice marshy area along the Taylor River. I used that Winter Wren to help meet January and February goals and then again when the bird returned to the same spot in November.

Another nice thing about the challenge was how it makes even the most common birds a welcome sight every month. February began and I started my list from scratch, happy to see the common birds at my feeders, the Rock Pigeons at highway overpasses, and the Herring Gulls at the beaches.



One of common birds that became favorites during Holly's monthly challenge. This Herring Gull was taking a break from the beach in Rye on 7-1-22.

A winter field trip with the Seacoast Audubon Chapter added Canada Jay, Pine Siskin, and Purple Finch to my February totals and as the marshes and ponds began to thaw, several returning duck species allowed me to hit 100 species on February 24.

From then on, migration made it easy going for a while. I had 56 species on March 1 alone and hit 100 by March 25. In April, I reached the 100 mark by April 13 and in May by May 6. In June, I reached 100 by June 9. Regular spring birding did its thing, and I think it's probably safe to say, I didn't think about the goal during those months.

So that probably explains why, lulled into a false sense of complacency, I woke up on July 26 with only 72 species and

just six days to go. Yikes! I was able to add six species on July 26, and 11 on July 27. On July 28, in search of a Bonaparte's Gull in Little Harbor on New Castle, I not only found a few Bonaparte's but also a juvenile Little Gull. That illustrates another nice by-product of the challenge, even if you are only looking for "ordinary" birds, just by getting out there, you are more likely to find something unusual. Finally on July 29, I found a Baltimore Oriole to reach my 100th species. (Phew!)

In August, shorebird migration was in full swing. The month's highlight was seeing both a Marbled Godwit and a Hudsonian Godwit found by Becky Suomala in Hampton Harbor. I finished up the month with some of the early migrating warblers and reached 100 species on August 26.



One of Holly's species in August, a juvenile Black Guillemot in Hampton on 8-17-22.

The confluence of both shorebird and passerine migration makes September a great birding month, a fact that I was particularly grateful for because I had some out-of-state travel in September. According to Zeke Cornell, who just may be the "OG" of 100 birds a month, it doesn't matter where you see the birds as long as you see 100, but I had wanted to see all 100 species in New Hampshire alone. I birded a lot early in the month and reached 100 species on September 12, before my trip.

In October, on a pelagic trip sponsored by NH Audubon, I saw a Pomarine Jaeger for a memorable 100th species on the tenth. In November, with both ducks and sparrows migrating, I reached 100 species with a Purple Finch at my feeder on the 20th.

Coincidentally, Susan Wrisley had also decided to make 100 species a month in New Hampshire her birding goal for 2022 and throughout the year, we compared notes. At the start of December, we both confessed to being somewhat anxious. All year, the challenge had been a fun little aside to birding, but at the start of December, we both felt the weight of our last month of 100 birds. Having gone for 11 months achieving the goal, would we end up failing at the

last month? In the end, December did not turn out to be a nail-biter. My 100th species for the month, and my last goal bird of the year, was a Greater White-Fronted Goose at the Wendy's in Portsmouth on December 16.



Many birders were entertained by this Greater White-fronted Goose that hung out near the Wendy's in Portsmouth for ten days, photographed by Holly on 12-16-22.

It was certainly easier to see 100 species a month living in Rockingham County. My goal was to see the birds in New Hampshire but, in looking at my eBird data, there were only a couple of months I didn't reach 100 in Rockingham County alone. So, is 100 species a month achievable from anywhere in New Hampshire? I took a look at eBird data by county for February (which I think is the hardest month, it's both cold and short). Most counties have over 100 species historically in February, but only Rockingham County sees over 100 in February for a single year. Still, I think that anyone who is willing to make a few trips to the Seacoast during the winter months could find 100 species a month in New Hampshire too.

#### The One Mile Radius List

by Rob Woodward

Iremember well, back when I first joined NH Audubon in the 1980s, looking at the field trips offered by the Capital Area Chapter. How could a bird walk at Horseshoe Pond or White Park be interesting? Surely you have to go farther afield than that to see interesting birds. It wasn't until many years later that I learned about the fun and pleasure of local birding. Take a small prescribed area of planet Earth and study it closely to answer the question, "What's out there?" Just because it's nearby, do you really know? If not, what surprises will you find?

Local birding means you don't have to sit in a car for many hours of the day traveling there and back. In fact, you may be able to walk the entire route. By now, I do 90% of my birding within 20 miles of my home. I can develop expertise on my local patch, but there is nothing to stop me from going on a birding trip up north or out-of-state or even overseas. Birds are everywhere, but we think of ones farther away as more interesting. Are they?

Somewhere along the way, I heard about the One Mile Radius List Challenge. How many species of birds can you find within a circle with a one mile radius over the course of a year? Put your house in the middle of the circle so you can cover the territory more often and mostly on foot. I invited New Hampshire birders to participate in 2022. I was particularly eager to get started in my urban Laconia site where expectations would be low.



White-rumped Sandpiper and two Semipalmated Plovers by Iain MacLeod, 9-5-22, Laconia, NH.

I made two predictions at the outset. First, you will find more species than you expect, and second, you will find an unexpected species within your circle. I had been birding Laconia for parts of four or five years, so I thought I had a good idea of what was out there. I made a prediction that my list total would be 60 to 70 species. By the time I left for the winter in late November, I had 98 species on the list! The second prediction also came true. The list included Semipalmated Plover and White-rumped Sandpiper. I didn't think hummingbird was likely, but I ended up with three sightings. During the two-day period of May 15-16, I added 16 species, with a total of 14 species of warblers by the end of the year. With parts of two lakes and a river in my circle, I was bound to do well with waterfowl. Seven species isn't bad. On October 25, a raft of sea ducks on Opechee Bay included White-winged and Black Scoters, Red-breasted Merganser, and Horned Grebe, but they were just outside the circle by only a few hundred yards.

I am pleased with the interest shown by birders in this project. At the end of the year, I solicited list totals and unexpected species sightings, with the following results. Becky Suomala also worked an urban circle, hers in Concord,

and did very well with 110 species with probably several others seen but not added to the list. The community gardens off Clinton Street is in her circle accounting for the 12 species of sparrows, but not the Clay-colored – that was in her backyard! Three falcons and a Great Egret, probably seen from the Common Nighthawk migration watch site, rounded out her list.

In Salem, Kyle Wilmarth, checking in with 127 species, found something I didn't predict would be found – new mini-hotspots within his circle. I should have thought of this, that new birding spots would be found, even in our own neighborhoods. His best find was Mute Swan.

It was no surprise to me that Pam Hunt, a big promoter of local birding, would embrace this challenge. Her total of 134 species in Penacook included American Bittern and Black Vulture. George and Andrea Robbins set up their circle around their home on the Suncook River in Pittsfield. According to Andrea, she determined from eBird patch totals that their 147 species was good for third place. Truly an amazing total, but it gets better.

Ken Klapper, who led Carroll County to the November County Challenge championship, counted 152 species in his circle in Sandwich. Who else has Golden Eagle on their backyard list? As if that wasn't good enough, on November 4, he found a Mountain Bluebird in his circle, only the second state record. It doesn't get any more unexpected than that!



White-winged Dove by Holly Bauer, 2-13-22, Witch Island, Hampton, NH.

The first prize gold medal goes to Holly Bauer of Hampton with an extraordinary 184 species. Yes, it helps to be on the coast but the One Mile Radius List Bird of the Year award, a White-winged Dove in her yard, only the fifth State record, had nothing to do with her coastal location. A photograph of this bird is featured on the cover of the Winter 2021-22 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*. Well done!

My hope is that this exercise will lure more birders to bird locally and discover that there are indeed plenty of interesting birds to see within just a mile of home.

### The Rockingham Recreation Trail Part II: The West End, Biking, Hiking, and Birding

by Kathryn Frieden

Part I was published in the Summer 2020 issue and covered the Newfields area at the eastern end of the trail.

The Rockingham Recreational Trail stretches 28 miles from Newfields to Manchester and is great for birding as well as a resource for community recreation. Although one often encounters runners, bikers, and dog-walkers on weekends, there are many times when we have not met a single soul on the trail while birding early in the morning and on weekdays. The trail surface consists of packed dirt with a few graveled areas and, of course, occasional rocks and roots that need to be avoided. Most of the trail runs through woods, but there are also lakes, ponds, marshes, and fields along the way that provide a good variety of birding habitats. Although some energetic adventurers could bike the entire length of the trail and back in one day, birding is probably more enjoyable and productive when the trail is divided into more manageable segments.

This article describes the western end of the Rockingham Trail, which includes Manchester and most of Auburn, a distance of a little over six miles. The entire length can be a nice round-trip bicycle ride, while several shorter sections provide good locations for a birding walk.

#### **Travel Notes**

1. Always bring water. You never know when you might inhale a black fly (this is New Hampshire).

- 2. If you are biking, use a hybrid or mountain bike. Some parts would be difficult for road bikes.
- 3. Be aware of snowmobiles in the winter which are allowed in some areas (it's not like you could miss them), but no other motorized vehicles are permitted.
- 4. There are a few short but dark underpass tunnels. Always walk your bike through or around them.
- 5. Stop and look both ways before you cross a road (but you already know that).

During 2020, the western end of the trail in Manchester was widened and resurfaced from Mammoth Road to Lake Shore Road and is now quite enjoyable for biking, however, there is no designated parking where the trail begins on Mammoth Road. The best place to park is either at Front Park on Bypass 28 (just over the border from Manchester into Auburn), or the parking lot across the road next to the softball fields.

Shortly after the start of the trail at Mammoth Road in Manchester (heading east), it passes under Route 93, so highway noise makes birding difficult in this area. In 1.3 miles, after crossing Candia Road, the birding becomes more worthwhile. From there to Lake Shore Road, about 0.7 miles, there are some woods, wetlands, and brushy areas where many common suburban species can be found. This section of the trail has recently become an eBird Hotspot called "Rockingham Rail Trail—Candia Road."

However, the best birding on the trail runs west from Front Park on Bypass 28 to Lake Shore Road, a distance of 0.4 miles, now the "West Massabesic Rockingham Trail" Hotspot. Front Park is easily reached from Route 101. Take Exit One, head south on Bypass 28 and it is the first left after a small traffic circle.

Hooksett Rd Pond S Little Massabesic Lake Massabesic Key:

Rt 121

Key:

Rail Trail

Lake/Pond

Map by Nora E. Hanke

Shortly before I retired at the end of 2014, I read Derek Lovitch's book, How to Be a Better Birder, and learned about the value of a birding "patch." At that time, I lived only a mile from Lake Massabesic, so I decided to make this section of the trail my first patch. There is a good variety of habitats within a short distance, and the trail is comfortable for walking either alone or in a group. As you enter the trail heading west from Bypass



The view of the marsh and Lake Massabesic from the Rockingham Recreational Trail between Front Park and Lake Shore Rd., Manchester. Photo by Kathryn Frieden.

28, there is a section of tall pines which is, not surprisingly, reliable for Pine Warblers. The playing fields to the south of the trail often attract large flocks of birds and one April, I counted almost 200 American Robins there. Maybe someday a Redwing will turn up, as it did in Hollis in the spring of 2016! The trail then runs through some brush and mixed deciduous woods where there are often flocks of warblers in the spring and fall. Once, in this section, I saw a Pileated Woodpecker just above the trail almost close enough to touch. The trail then opens out into a marsh on both sides. There are abundant Swamp, Song, and Chipping Sparrows, Baltimore Orioles, and of course, Red-winged Blackbirds. Raptors are often seen flying overhead or in the trees at the marsh edges. It is a reliable place to find winter sparrows such as Fox Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow.

As you continue past the marsh, on the south side there is a small pool and, beyond a narrow barrier, the full expanse of eastern Lake Massabesic is visible. The pool and adjacent reeds have hosted snipe, bittern, and rail. When the water is lower in the fall, shorebirds can be found here as well and, of course, out on the lake there are a large variety of ducks. Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, and American Black Duck are all common (need I mention the Mallards?). Common Merganser and Hooded Merganser are regulars, and even Red-breasted Mergansers have been reported once. The trail continues through mixed pine woods, ending at Lake Shore Road, where sometimes extra species can be picked up at the feeders in a yard across the road. After two years of regularly birding this part of the trail, I had recorded 96 species. The "patch" became a Hotspot and is now regularly birded by many others. With the addition of Green Heron, Red-necked Grebe (by Kevin Murphy), and Red Crossbill (by Pam Hunt) in the fall of 2022, it is now up to 150 species! What species can you add to the list?

Another nice birding walk along the Rockingham Trail goes east from Front Park. It runs along the northern shore of Lake Massabesic, so there is always a chance of spotting ducks, loons, or possibly an eagle. At about 0.4 miles, there is a public boat launch, and a parking lot in addition to the one at Front Park. The next road that crosses the trail is Route 121. From there, it is almost 0.5 miles to a large marsh which is always worth a look. After the marsh, the trail passes through mostly mixed deciduous woods for the 1.25 miles to Depot Road. Just before Depot Road, the trail crosses Clark Pond on the north side. This is a Hotspot that can also be birded from its northern end on Old Candia Road. To the south of the trail, on Depot Road, there is a small parking area that gives access to Massabesic Trails. This is a rabbit warren of mountain biking trails in the woods with several openings back out onto the Rockingham Trail. These trails are also good for running, as well as birding. Once, when running here, my husband and I surprised a female Ruffed Grouse and her brood of four chicks crossing the trail.

It is another mile from the Depot Road area to Chester Turnpike, which is the eastern end of the section of trail covered in this article. The woods and swamps along here are worth checking out. We have seen an Osprey eating a fish perched near the trail, and many woodland species such as Scarlet Tanager and Great Crested Flycatcher are common. On the east side of Chester Turnpike, there is a very small wet area where, during our most recent visit to the trail in late September 2022, we had great looks at some migrating warblers. We also saw a Philadelphia Vireo! This is a good place to turn around and head back to your starting point.



Philadelphia Vireo by Roger Frieden, 9-29-22, Rockingham Recreation Trail, Auburn, NH.

### Research: Ipswich Sparrow Tracking Study

by Rebecca Suomala



Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subspecies by Rebecca Suomala, Rye, NH.

The Ipswich Sparrow, a sub-species of the Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis princeps*), breeds almost exclusively on Sable Island, 109 miles from the nearest point of land in Nova Scotia. It winters along the Atlantic coast in sandy dune habitat. They look like a very pale version of the Savannah Sparrow which provides camouflage in the dunes. A few are usually found on the New Hampshire coast each winter into March. The best places to look for them are Hampton Beach State Park, Rye Harbor State Park, Odiorne Point State Park in Rye, and the Rt. 1A pullouts south of Odiorne.

A tracking study of Ipswich Sparrows by the Center for Conservation Biology used Motus nanotags to look at their wintering habitat on Assateague Island in North Carolina and their return migration back to Sable Island. They found that males and females use different microhabitats on the winter beaches, with males in the dunes closest to the ocean. Males leave their wintering grounds at the end of March a couple of weeks before the females depart. It takes them about a month to reach Sable Island. The island is a small sliver of land and it appears the sparrows may have trouble navigating to it because of the distance from shore and the frequency of heavy fog. The Ipswich Sparrow is one of the only species that makes repeat attempts to reach a migration destination after failing the first time. Read more on the study in an article by Chance Hines at:

https://ccbbirds.org/2022/04/04/tracking-reveals-sexual-differences-in-ipswich-sparrow-winter-and-spring-ecology/

# From There to Here: The Christmas Bird Count in New Hampshire

by Kathryn Frieden



Chris Martin and Stan McCumber on a cold day during the Pittsburg CBC, 12-20-18. Photo by Robert A. Quinn.

#### **Late 1800s on Christmas Day**

Townsmen gathered for the holiday tradition known as the "Side Hunt." They chose sides, then went out into the field where they shot and killed as many birds and animals as they could. At the end of the day, they piled up the dead animals and counted them. The side that had killed the most were the "winners."

#### Early Winter 2022-23 on scheduled dates

Townsmen and townswomen gathered in small groups for their chosen Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on a day between December 14 and January 5. They counted all the birds they could find in a designated 15-mile circle, then compiled the data for entry into a world-wide database. **Everybody wins!** 

#### How did we get from there to here?

In the late 1800s, the idea of bird conservation was in its infancy as observers became aware of declining avian populations. Frank Chapman (1864-1945) worked at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City at that time. He was also an officer in the young Audubon Society as well as the founding editor of the magazine "Bird-Lore" (which became *Audubon Magazine* in 1941). In the winter issue of 1900, he proposed what we now call the Christmas Bird Count, writing "...a new kind of Christmas side hunt, in the form of a Christmas bird-census, and we hope that all our readers who have the opportunity will aid us in making a success by spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds..."

On Christmas Day, 1900, 27 observers took part in that

first count. They covered 25 "count circles," designated 15-mile diameter areas, in the United States and Canada and recorded 90 species. New Hampshire can proudly claim a part in this inaugural count with one circle centered in Keene. Clarence Morrison Brooks performed the count, which consisted of three species: 16 Black-capped Chickadees, one American Crow, and one Northern Shrike.

The CBC has been held every year since then with more observers and more circles added over time. Chan Robbins probably played a role in this progress. From 1952-1989 he was Technical Editor for *Audubon Field Notes/North American Birds*, which was the journal that published CBC results each year. During his lifetime he participated in over 420 CBCs, starting in 1934 at the age of 16. The most recent worldwide CBC during the winter of 2022-2023 included 2,534 circles, mostly in North and South America. The data from each count circle is sent to the National Audubon Society where it is evaluated and stored. This long-term and important database contains vital information about the health and status of bird populations and is used in many ways by conservationists.

#### **New Hampshire and the CBC**

New Hampshire Count	Year(s) started/restarted
Pittsburg	1950
Errol-Umbagog	1958
Littleton	1959-1974,1987-2021
North Conway	1989
Baker Valley	1974
Hanover-Norwich	1960
Laconia-New Hampton	1947, 1950
Concord	1964
Lee-Durham	1963
Coastal NH	1950
Keene	1977
Peterborough-Hancock	1959
Nashua-Hollis	1965
Lake Sunapee	1990
Manchester	1995
Isles of Shoals	1964
Sandwich	1995
Grafton-Bristol	2002
Crawford Notch	2005

Table 1. The active/recently active New Hampshire Christmas Bird Counts and the year they started (and restarted). Some counts took place occasionally in the early years pre-1950s, but the dates in this table reflect the beginning of consistent coverage. Compiled by David Deifik.

From 1900 to 1949 there were usually only one to four counts run in the state. There were few participants, and each

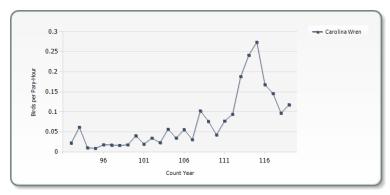
was only run a few times. For example, Chan Robbins initiated and compiled two historical White Mountain area counts in the 1940s, each of which was run once or twice. There have been a total of 28 historical counts that were discontinued, some in areas that are now incorporated into current count circles. The modern era of the CBC began around 1950 when counts were run more consistently and with more participants. Over the years, the number of count circles in New Hampshire gradually increased (Table 1), and now stands at 21.

Three of the circles are shared with Vermont: Saxton's River in the Walpole area, Barnett in the Monroe area, and Hanover in the Norwich area. The Isles of Shoals circle includes some Maine territory. The Coastal count has by far the greatest number of species on average, followed by the Lee-Durham count. The Isles of Shoals count is limited to the years when the weather permits boat travel out to the islands.

Each count circle is run by a dedicated and praiseworthy coordinator who schedules the count date, assigns territories to the team members, and then compiles the data to send to the National Audubon Society. The compilation often includes an evening with the team, dining together and sharing stories of the day's adventures.

The New Hampshire Bird Records issue of Winter 1990-91 was the first to include a map of the 13 circles existing at that time: Pittsburg, Errol-Umbagog, Littleton, North Conway, Baker Valley, Hanover, Laconia-New Hampton, Concord, Lee-Durham, Coastal, Keene, Peterborough-Hancock, and Nashua-Hollis. The Winter 1995-96 issue was the first to publish the CBC in tabular format, along with a description of count highlights written by the new Winter Editor, Alan Delorey. In 2001, David Deifik took over as the Winter Editor, continuing the practice of writing descriptions and analyses of the findings of each year's CBC. He continued to write the CBC report even after Pam Hunt succeeded him as Winter Editor in the 2010-11 issue. The winter issue of 2021-22 contains his last CBC summary. David Deifik has now retired after 20 years of valuable and memorable volunteer work with New Hampshire Bird Records. Figure 1 is an example of an interesting data chart that he has produced using CBC data.

Figure 1. Carolina Wren data from the Nashua-Hollis CBC, 1988-2018.



#### A Few 21st Century CBC Highlights

1999-2000: A century of Christmas Bird Counts was celebrated with an astounding 635 Ruddy Ducks on Lake Massabesic, still by far the highest count of this species in New Hampshire history.

2003-2004: The Slaty-backed Gull on the Lee-Durham count was the first state record for this species. It was found a few days before the count, and then was last seen on count day.

2013-2014: Gyrfalcon, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel – all four New Hampshire falcons counted on the CBC for the first time.

2020-21: Sage Thrasher! A new state record and exciting find on the Brattleboro, Vermont count, which extends slightly into New Hampshire, thus including the Hinsdale Setbacks where the thrasher was located.

2020-21: A remarkable finch irruption with a total count of 3,861 finch individuals – contrast that with only 140 total



Sage Thrasher by Jim Sparrell, 1-10-21, Hinsdale, NH.

individuals the year before. (Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll, Evening Grosbeak)

Thank you to David Deifik for providing information on the history of CBCs in New Hampshire.

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New Hampshire Bird Records 1981 through 2021. New Hampshire Audubon, Concord, New Hampshire.

# The Coastal CBC Compilation Then and Now

Some things change and some things stay the same. These two photos were taken at the Coastal CBC compilation. Can you tell which one was in the mid-90s and which one was in 2022?





For many years the Coastal CBC compilation has taken place at the Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth, NH. The first photo by Steve Mirick is from the mid-90s and shows Dave Tucker in the center (back to the camera). The second photo is by Rebecca Suomala and was taken in 2022 in the same room. Dave Tucker (far left) has taken over the reins as compiler.

# **Christmas Bird Count Summary 2022-2023**

by Jason Pietrzak



Boreal Chickadee on the Pittsburg CBC, by Benjamin Griffith, 12-14-22.

For over twenty years, David Deifik has reported on the annual Christmas Bird Count for *New Hampshire Bird Records*. This year David has decided to pass the CBC reporting torch and so I am stepping in to help. Thank you David for your decades of great work!

The 123rd annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place across New Hampshire from Wednesday, December 14, 2022 in Pittsburg through Monday, January 2, 2023 in Laconia. Of the nineteen counts centered within NH, all but the Littleton CBC ran this year. Littleton has now had two dormant years following 34 uninterrupted years of counts (if you're interested in reviving this count, please reach out to Dave Govatski before it joins the ranks of other long-quiet counts like Randolph and Dummer Hill). Another irregularly occurring count, the Isles of Shoals CBC, was able to get out this year for the second year in a row. The last time that happened was just over a decade ago. Hopefully, fair weather, favorable global health trends and sufficient birders continue into the future!



Common Murre on the Isles of Shoals CBC, by Jim Sparrell, 12-29-22.

The total number of species across all counts was 135, with three additional count-week birds (birds reported during the three days before and after the count, but not on the official count day). This count was lower than last year's 155, but slightly higher than the running average over the previous few years. The weather leading up to the CBC season was warmer than average and a major winter storm blew in on the first Friday of the count period. That snowstorm undoubtedly reduced the species count, both blowing away some of the lingering rarities and covering everything in snow, reducing detectability of the remaining birds. Another storm brought extreme cold about a week later on December 22-23. Despite the cold snap and thanks to the previous snowstorm, December ended up both much warmer and wetter than average.

Since the most notable rare birds are covered in greater detail in the season summary of this publication, I will briefly mention those rarest CBC species and then I will try to cover some of the unusual highs and lows regionally and across the state.

The 123rd CBC added two new species/taxa to the state CBC list. An occasional **Great Egret** has stayed on the coast into early December in recent years, but not quite long enough to be recorded on the CBC. This year an individual bird on the Coastal Count was the first, ever, for a CBC in New Hampshire. No doubt, it won't be long before the next.

The other new taxon added to this CBC was the Common x Barrow's Goldeneye, reported on the Manchester Count. This individual bird appears to be the same as one first reported in December of 2021 at the same location on the Merrimack River. This hybrid is certainly less common than Common or even Barrow's Goldeneye, but they are regular and fairly widespread across the region. See a photo gallery of this interesting hybrid in the Winter 2021-22 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records* and read a longer article about identifying Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes in the Winter 2019-20 issue.

Three new species were reported during Count Week: a **Pink-footed Goose**, **Northern Shoveler**, and **Barn Swallow**, all from the Lee-Durham Count. Of the three, the aerial insectivore Barn Swallow is probably the most surprising. A sure sign of the unusually warm winter.

#### **Notable Species and High Counts**

Note: high counts in this section refer to the numbers tallied by a single count circle in New Hampshire.

Many water-associated species set records this CBC, likely in part due to the late freezing date of so many bodies of water failing to hurry all these birds out of the region. A single **Greater White-fronted Goose** on the Coastal Count was notable and a tie for the record with previous birds in



Open water and bare ground on the Laconia CBC, 1-2-23, by Rebecca Suomala.

2012, 1997, and 1990. A single **Cackling Goose** from the Lee-Durham Count was new to that count and a second high for the state with other singletons in 2018, 2012, 2008. The record of two birds was reported from the Coastal CBC in 2000.

Two Blue-winged Teal on the Coastal Count was the second highest record for this species, with the high of three back in 1985 (although some question this sighting). On the Coastal Count, 37 Ring-necked Ducks were the third highest count. Again on the Coastal CBC, 2,509 Greater Scaup were a big jump up over previous high records under 2000. A total of 234 Long-tailed Ducks on the Shoals CBC was the second highest count. Also on the Shoals CBC, 964 Black Scoter was a big jump over the previous high. Hooded and Common Mergansers set individual count records in several circles. Finally, Common Loons set a new high on the Coastal Count with 155 birds tallied and numbers were high across multiple counts.

Moving on to landbirds, 478 **Wild Turkeys** in Peterborough-Hancock just edged out the previous count record set in the same circle in 2018. Both **Turkey Vultures** and **Black Vultures** set new high records, 63 and two respectively, on the Coastal Count, no doubt lingering in the region due to the low snow cover. Ten **Northern Harriers** on the Coastal CBC barely set the top record there. Four **Peregrine Falcons** on the Coastal CBC created a four-way tie with previous records in 2021, 2017, and 2014. The Peterborough-Hancock Count's 16 **Barred Owls** tied the Keene record from 2020. An **Eastern Screech-Owl** was a first for the Keene Count.

A single **Red-headed Woodpecker** on the Lee-Durham Count tied for second place. Counts of two birds from Lee-Durham in 2019 and Baker Valley in 1984 hold the record for that species.

The 108 **Common Ravens** from the Keene Count were the third highest for that species in the state, but numbers of this

species were high and set records across the state this year. The record of 114 was reported from North Conway in 2010.

**Carolina Wren** continues its positive trend in the region with new highs in several circles. The total of 42 on the Lee-Durham Count was the third highest record. The record is 63 birds set by the Coastal CBC in 2021.



Eastern Bluebird feeding on sumac on the Laconia CBC, by Rebecca Suomala, 1-2-23.

**Eastern Bluebird** is another species that reported high counts in multiple circles and a count of 303 Eastern Bluebirds on the Lee-Durham Count set the second highest count for that species in the state. The record of 324 was set in 2020 on the same count.

A single **Palm Warbler** on the Lee-Durham Count was only the third record for this species. Two birds were reported in 2020 and 2010.

A **Common Yellowthroat** was a first on the Sandwich Count.

Six **White-crowned Sparrows** at the Coastal Count were the third highest for that species. Fifteen birds on the same count in 2020 hold that record.

The **Song Sparrow** is a species that rarely gets much attention, but counts for this species were relatively high this CBC and two high records were set in central and southwestern counts.

A single **Western Tanager** on the Coastal Count ties the high with other singles from 2019, 2017, and 1997.

#### **Individual Count Notes**

### **Pittsburg**

- Record high count of 41 species with three new species: Iceland Gull, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Northern Saw-whet Owl.
- High numbers of irruptive species but low individual bird counts.
- Surprise misses included Mourning Dove, Snow Bunting, European Starling, Northern Shrike, and House Sparrow.



Ruffed Grouse on the Pittsburg CBC by Benjamin Griffith, 12-14-22.

## **Errol-Umbagog**

- First Spruce Grouse and Chipping Sparrow on count.
- Big number for Pileated Woodpecker (18; previous record 13), and record highs for American Crow, Red Crossbill, Northern Cardinal.

## **North Conway**

- American Black Duck x Mallard hybrid was new for the count.
- Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, and Eastern Bluebirds set new records.

# **Baker Valley**

 Second highest count of Bohemian Waxwing and Eastern Bluebird.

#### Hanover-Norwich

- Second Red-shouldered Hawk (first in 2021).
- High counts for Bald Eagle, European Starling, Northern Mockingbird, and a big jump for Carolina Wren (27; previous record 19).

# **Laconia-New Hampton**

• New high counts for Common Loon and Lesser Scaup.

#### Concord

- High count for Hooded Merganser (113) and Mallard (830), Common Raven, and Eastern Bluebird; ties for Peregrine Falcon and Northern Saw-whet Owl.
- First American Wigeon and Greater Scaup on the count.

### Lee-Durham

Barn Swallow was a big surprise, new to the count;
 Pink-footed Goose was a new species for count-week.

 High count for Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, Common Raven, and Carolina Wren.



Pam Hunt scanning the coast of Rye during the Coastal CBC 12-17-22 by Rebecca Suomala.

#### Coastal

- Great Egret and Black Vulture new to the count and Blue-winged Teal may be new.
- Big numbers of multiple waterbird species and raptors.

#### Keene

- High counts (and ties) for several species, including Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Redshouldered Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Common Raven, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and Northern Mockingbird.
- Low numbers of Blue Jays and most finches and feeder birds.

# **Peterborough-Hancock**

 High count for Wild Turkey, Red-tailed Hawk, and Barred Owl.

#### Nashua-Hollis

- New highs for Horned Larks, Gray Catbirds, and Winter Wrens.
- New lows for American Tree Sparrows.

# **Lake Sunapee**

 New low counts for Blue Jay, American Crow, and Black-capped Chickadee.

#### **Manchester**

- Barrow's x Common Goldeneye hybrid and Swamp Sparrow new on this count.
- Low counts of Hairy Woodpecker and Song Sparrow.



CBC participants on Star Island during the Isles of Shoals CBC, 12-29-22 by Rebecca Suomala.

### Isles of Shoals

- Lesser Black-backed Gull new to the count.
- New high records of Common Loon, Kumlien's Iceland Gull, Black Scoter, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

#### Sandwich

• First Common Yellowthroat for the count. Record highs for Hooded Merganser, Wild Turkey, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl.

# **Christmas Bird Count Compilers**

1	Pittsburg	Phil Brown
2	Errol-Umbagog	Katrina Fenton
3	Littleton	(Inactive since 2021)
4	North Conway	Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr.
5	Baker Valley	Steve Rounds
6	Hanover-Norwich	Walter Ellison and
		Nancy Martin
7	Laconia-New Hampto	on Pam Hunt
8	Concord	Robert Quinn
9	Lee-Durham	Kurk Dorsey
10	Coastal	Dave Tucker
11	Keene	Phil Brown
12	Peterborough-Hancoo	k John Ranta
13	Nashua-Hollis	Richard Bielawski
14	Lake Sunapee	Dylan Jackson
15	Saxton's River, VT	Donald Clark
16	Manchester	Richard Bielawski
17	Isles of Shoals	Ben Griffith
18	Sandwich	Ken Klapper
19	Barnet, VT	Charlie Browne
20	Grafton-Bristol	Bill Belanger
21	AMC Crawford Note	h Craig Repasz

- A Common Loon remained in a small, open area on Squam Lake.
- New low for Golden-crowned Kinglet, a single bird.

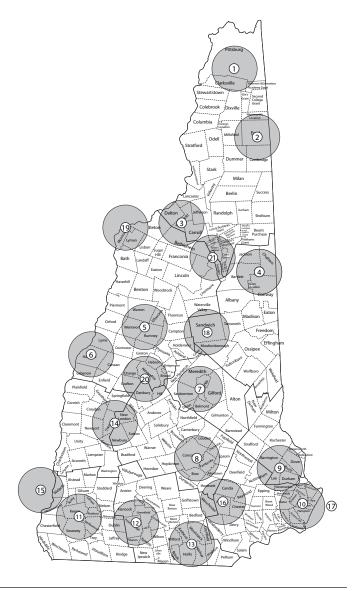
#### **Grafton-Bristol**

- Second Red-necked Grebe on the count (first in 2021).
- High counts for Rock Pigeon (177) and Evening Grosbeak.

### **AMC Crawford Notch**

• High count for Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinal (tie), and huge count of 130 Bohemian Waxwings!

Thanks again to David Deifik for so many years of writing about the NH CBC. Thanks also to Janet Byron for helping analyze this year's (and many past years') data. Finally, thanks to all the CBC compilers and the birders who go out in our unpleasant winter weather to generate all that data.



# 123rd Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2022 - Jan. 5, 2023

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Isl	Total
Pink-footed Goose	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW
Gr. White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cackling Goose	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Canada Goose	349	-	138	2191	913	410	21	-	-	4	2	2	-	-	292	CW	-	20	4342
Wood Duck	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Gadwall	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
American Wigeon	-	-	-	43	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
American Black Duck	21	1	8	799	204	32	9	9	3	-	-	6	13	-	-	CW	-	1	1106
Mallard	302	3	136	1072	189	830	662	235	-	37	-	49	-	177	427	54	-	-	4173
Mallard x Am. Black Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Blue-winged Teal	-	-	-	*2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Northern Shoveler	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	37	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	59
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	**2509	-	*1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2511
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	8	2	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Common Eider	-	-	-	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	575	630
Harlequin Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	93	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	115
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	112
Black Scoter	-	-	-	44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**964	1008
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	137	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	234	376
Bufflehead	-	-	-	79	98	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	184
Common Goldeneye	12	-	2	204	24	54	273	1	-	8	-	2	-	-	62	2	-	2	646
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Common x Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+1	-	-	-	1
Hooded Merganser	7	-	35	61	55	113	173	15	-	7	-	-	-	10	19	47	-	-	542
Common Merganser	7	35	39	2	67	49	266	12	-	13	11	26	-	-	22	98	-	-	647
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	-	114	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	160
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Ruffed Grouse	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	1	CW	1	17	17	1	-	-	CW	1	-	47
Spruce Grouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Wild Turkey	35	**478	241	258	202	100	112	265	25	66	12	17	6	86	11	255	26	-	2195
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Common Loon	-	-	2	**155	3	1	22	CW	-	3	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	83	275
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	11
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3

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# 123<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2022 - Jan. 5, 2023

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Isl	Total
Northern Gannet	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5
Double-cr. Cormorant	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Great Cormorant	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	20
Great Blue Heron	5	-	-	8	3	CW	1	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	18
Great Egret	-	-	-	+1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Black Vulture	-	-	-	**2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Turkey Vulture	-	-	CW	**63	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
Northern Harrier	-	-	2	**10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	12
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	3	4	6	4	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	*1	-	25
Cooper's Hawk	3	2	8	11	13	5	3	2	-	-	-	-	1	CW	1	-	-	-	49
Northern Goshawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	*1	-	3
Bald Eagle	2	3	17	5	13	8	14	11	CW	2	8	1	-	CW	2	4	-	CW	90
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	2	2	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Red-tailed Hawk	18	17	26	43	40	29	10	13	1	-	1	CW	1	CW	5	8	-	-	212
American Coot	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	11
Common Murre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Razorbill	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	28
Black Guillemot	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	36
Atlantic Puffin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Blaleg. Kittiwake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	78
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	7
Ring-billed Gull	70	-	14	241	188	62	215	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76	5	-	8	879
Herring Gull	14	2	-	751	1783	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	-	579	3141
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Kumliens Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**6	6
Lesser Blabac. Gull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	1
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Blabac. Gull	10	-	-	81	182	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	328	604
Gull sp.	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Rock Pigeon	760	159	320	705	860	712	309	527	1	177	-	11	19	22	471	21	29	-	5103
Mourning Dove	200	243	402	347	297	344	179	210	1	29	1	-	32	95	50	195	16	-	2641
Eastern Screech-owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Great Horned Owl	1	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Barred Owl	1	16	5	2	3	3	1	1	CW	-	-	1	-	1	-	7	-	-	41
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	*2	-	-	-	3	-	-	10
Belted Kingfisher	3	1	1	6	5	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	26
Red-hea. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

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# 123rd Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2022 - Jan. 5, 2023 — continued

Species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Isl	Total
Red-bel. Woodpecker	38	17	29	90	101	24	18	15	1	-	2	-	6	3	15	6	-	-	365
Ylwbel. Sapsucker	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	6
Downy Woodpecker	66	82	140	116	141	93	110	73	10	12	30	20	34	14	32	84	7	-	1064
Hairy Woodpecker	24	58	53	21	33	52	54	37	13	7	26	11	27	13	3	50	9	-	491
Northern Flicker	3	2	-	11	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	27
Pileated Woodpecker	9	18	9	9	13	12	7	11	CW	3	18	2	2	2	4	16	-	-	135
woodpecker sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+1	-	1
American Kestrel	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Merlin	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Peregrine Falcon	2	-	CW	4	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	12
Northern Shrike	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	11	-	-	-	-	2	-	36
Blue Jay	240	31	142	482	370	238	143	176	4	19	49	34	21	16	96	73	7	-	2141
American Crow	90	83	195	313	212	299	680	450	22	53	50	25	25	16	62	117	16	-	2708
Common Raven	13	40	108	9	33	29	23	29	9	8	44	28	13	7	1	31	7	-	432
Horned Lark	130	-	15	74	45	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	282
Barn Swallow	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW
Black-cap. Chickadee	310	847	1138	593	758	532	612	684	-	203	675	838	376	180	111	702	196	-	8755
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	26	-	-	-	6	1	-	37
Tufted Titmouse	111	279	311	236	390	179	172	142	21	34	1	-	59	42	36	116	3	-	2132
Red-br. Nuthatch	3	22	16	7	47	9	13	31	8	6	127	22	23	6	-	46	47	5	438
White-br. Nuthatch	118	116	197	140	262	116	142	117	38	18	11	8	46	25	33	121	5	-	1513
Brown Creeper	12	20	33	8	12	12	4	12	-	2	13	2	5	2	1	4	3	-	145
Winter Wren	4	-	2	-	6	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Carolina Wren	30	10	38	30	42	11	3	27	-	1	-	-	3	2	11	1	-	4	213
Golden-cr. Kinglet	2	40	78	15	18	9	-	2	-	6	48	85	1	2	-	1	5	-	312
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Eastern Bluebird	108	91	169	262	303	124	83	46	7	6	-	-	13	4	21	55	-	-	1292
Hermit Thrush	-	1	2	6	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	18
American Robin	152	170	166	1844	455	468	321	77	-	5	1	-	-	2	87	23	-	1	3772
Gray Catbird	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
N. Mockingbird	16	2	23	44	23	33	12	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	181
European Starling	653	400	971	1569	2511	671	370	1071	10	43	-	-	52	168	488	103	-	21	9101
American Pipit	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bohemian Waxwing	-	-	5	-	-	-	65	35	14	-	4	12	7	-	-	56	130	-	328
Cedar Waxwing	3	20	155	28	58	97	295	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	708
Bohemian/Cedar Waxwing	-	-	-	-	-	-	+20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Snow Bunting	102	10	-	248	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	28	-	-	404

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Common Yellowthroat	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	2
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Am. Tree Sparrow	66	4	95	117	84	26	36	56	4	8	4	1	12	6	-	6	-	-	525
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	*1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	5
Field Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Dark-eyed Junco	165	109	546	588	613	329	210	223	7	16	3	9	62	36	68	26	4	-	3014
White-cr. Sparrow	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
White-thr. Sparrow	12	3	23	160	98	17	2	7	-	4	CW	-	2	-	8	3	-	-	339
Savannah Sparrow	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Song Sparrow	31	2	34	154	41	25	11	3	-	-	-	CW	-	-	1	5	-	7	314
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	9	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	12
Eastern Towhee	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Western Tanager	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Northern Cardinal	105	59	199	228	202	144	83	110	7	2	11	3	27	14	39	50	4	3	1290
Red-winged Blackbird	3	-	-	15	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Common Grackle	-	2	-	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Brheaded Cowbird	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pine Grosbeak	-	3	-	-	-	CW	-	-	CW	-	147	3	-	-	-	6	2	-	161
House Finch	113	48	203	281	224	159	149	177	2	-	-	-	5	18	16	4	-	-	1399
Purple Finch	-	17	4	2	14	1	-	8	-	-	3	CW	-	-	-	7	1	-	57
Red Crossbill	-	2	9	2	7	1	-	-	-	-	57	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	90
Whiwinged Crossbill	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	21	-	-	-	11	6	-	63
Common Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	24	25	-	-	-	2	-	-	67
Pine Siskin	-	2	1	-	-	-	CW	1	-	-	13	2	12	-	-	3	2	-	36
American Goldfinch	109	132	289	236	341	166	135	116	9	61	104	13	145	31	53	177	35	-	2152
goldfinch sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+3	-	3
Evening Grosbeak	-	47	64	-	5	14	30	37	46	36	114	175	6	82	-	10	7	-	673
House Sparrow	750	186	397	1095	755	337	205	210	9	26	-	-	-	-	150	26	-	-	4146
Number of Species	58	55	60	98	76	66	55	50	24	38	40	41	36	31	45	55	30	34	135
Number of Participants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

CBC Data are provided by the National Audubon Society and through the generous efforts of Bird Studies Canada and countless volunteers across the Western Hemisphere. www.audubon.org, www.christmasbirdcount.org

Total Number of Species Across all CBCs: 135 (+3 count week)

CW = Count Week

Nsh = Nashua-Hollis (12/31/2022)

Pet = Peterborough-Hancock (12/29/2022)

Kee = Keene (12/18/2022)

Cst = Coastal NH (12/17/2022)

Lee = Lee-Durham (12/18/2022)

Con = Concord (12/18/2022)

Lac = Laconia-New Hampton (1/2/2023)

Han = Hanover-Norwich (12/30/2022))

Bak = Baker Valley (12/18/2022)

Grf = Grafton-Bristol (12/31/22)

Erl = Errol-Umbagog (12/17/2022)

Pit = Pittsburg (12/15/2020)

Cnw = North Conway (12/15/2022) Sun = Lake Sunapee (12/17/2022)

Man = Manchester (12/18/2022)

San = Sandwich (12/31/2022)

Amc = AMC-Crawford Notch (12/17/2022)

Isl = Isles of Shoals (12/29/2022)

+= New Species to New Hampshire

\*= New Species to a Count

\*\*= New high species count for the state Bold italic=new individual count high

# What to Watch for in Winter

V7inter is the time for Snowy Owls, winter sea ducks and alcids on the ocean. The New Hampshire coast offers the most diversity in winter and there is always something to see. Inland can be more variable. In some years, there's the hoped-for arrival of "winter finches" invading from the north in huge flocks, although it may require a trip north of the White Mountains to find them. Watch for waterfowl to linger on open bodies of water and gather in unfrozen sections of rivers. A few half hardy birds linger into the winter, providing a welcome surprise. Unexpected birds such as orioles, towhees, or Yellow-breasted Chats are often at feeders so be sure to watch for them and keep your camera handy to document their identification. Although it may seem quiet, there are fun birding activities to keep us going the Christmas Bird Counts, the Superbowl of Birding at the end of January, and NH Audubon's annual Backyard Winter Bird Survey on the second weekend in February.

#### December

- Wintering sea ducks and other waterbirds arrive and will stay all winter. For some species, it is the only time we see them in New Hampshire: Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, Horned and Red-necked Grebes, Red-throated Loons.
- Purple Sandpipers are one of the few shorebirds that
  winter along the coast. Watch for them in rocky areas,
  not sandy beaches. They blend in very well and are
  often easiest to find at high tide in Rye or the jetty at
  the outlet of Hampton Harbor.
- American Tree Sparrows arrive from the north, taking the place of Chipping Sparrows. Dark-eyed Juncos join them at feeders.
- Greater Scaup gather in large numbers (1,000 or more) on Great Bay. Try looking from the Great Bay Discovery Center or the Osprey Cove trail in Greenland, or Adam's Point in Durham. You will want a scope as birds can be distant.

 Barrow's Goldeneye are sometimes seen with large flocks of Common Goldeneye. Stark Landing on the Merrimack River in Manchester can be one of the best spots to see them, but one or two are also usually in Laconia if there is open water, and sometimes at the coast or Great Bay.



Snow Buntings by Jim Sparrell, 12-4-22, Hampton Beach SP, NH.

- Hampton Beach State Park usually hosts a flock of Snow Buntings, Horned Larks and an occasional Lapland Longspur. Farms along the Connecticut River Valley from Westmoreland to Walpole and open areas near the Berlin Regional Airport in Milan are also good places to check for these species.
- Northern Shrikes can appear anywhere in the state but good places to check are the Great Bay NWR in Newington or Airport Marsh in Whitefield.

# **January**

 If the fishing boats are still running (e.g. Eastman's Docks, Seabrook), an offshore trip can produce Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Dovekie, Common Murre, and an occasional puffin or Thick-



Part of the large flock of Greater Scaup that is usually present on Great Bay in the winter. Photo by Steve Mirick, 12-28-22.

- billed Murre. These species are rare from shore and a boat trip is often required to see them.
- Razorbill and Black Guillemots are the most likely alcids to see on the ocean from shore. Scan from pullouts such as Pulpit Rocks and Seal Rocks in Rye, Rye Harbor State Park, Hampton Beach State Park, or Seabrook Beach. Great Island Common in New Castle is also a good spot for Razorbills.



Iceland Gull by Kyle Wilmarth, 1-26-23, Salem. NH

- White-winged Gulls (Glaucous and Iceland) visit in the winter but are seldom reliable on any given day. Hampton Harbor and Rochester WTP (only open on weekdays) are the most likely places to find them.
- The best places to look for Snowy Owls are Rye Harbor State Park and Hampton Beach State Park. Numbers vary each year and they can be absent some winters.
- Winter finches, such as Pine Siskins or Common Redpolls, can arrive in big flocks or not at all. Watch for them at feeders and stands of Birch trees with catkins.
- As rivers and lakes ice up, Bald Eagles gather at remaining open water on the major rivers, largest lakes, and the coast. Great Bay is a winter hotspot for eagle watching, and eagles are regular along the Merrimack River from Concord to Nashua, as well as southern stretches of the Connecticut River, and the Lakes Region.

## **February**

Check fruit trees for waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks. Cedar
Waxwings are the most common. Bohemian Waxwings
can visit from the north at any time during the winter
in big years, but sometimes wait until February. Pine
Grosbeaks appear in some years but typically in low
numbers. Any place with crabapple or ornamental cherry
trees that still have fruit, including supermarket parking
lots, will attract these fruit-eating species.

- Black-capped Chickadees start to sing their spring "fee-bee" song making it easy to think that your Eastern Phoebes are back, but they won't return until April.
- Hinsdale can be one of the first places for returning waterfowl as open patches appear on Lake Wantastiquet above the dam on the Connecticut River. Check also for open water in other towns that border Massachusetts.
- Short-eared Owls can occasionally be seen at the Seacoast or the Dillant-Hopkins Airport in Swanzey in winter but are more likely as we transition from February to March.
- South winds can bring the first influx of Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles. If there is some open ground the first Killdeer and American Woodcock will put in an appearance in the southernmost parts of the state.

# Submitting Unusual Sightings to eBird

#### **A Quick Review**

In eBird, unusual birds are flagged for review. That sighting is then reviewed by a volunteer. It is a huge job. Please help these volunteers by following these guidelines:

#### What is unusual?

Any record that is flagged by eBird for being rare, early, late, or a high count.

#### How do you know if a record is flagged?

You will be asked to review the observation and add comments.

#### What to include in your comments?

A description of the bird e.g., color, markings, size, behavior, bill size and shape, vocalizations.

# The following descriptions alone will result in a rejected submission:

Bird was at my feeder First of the year Seen well

Identified by Merlin

Please do not take a rejected record personally. Many good records are rejected not because the observer's identification was incorrect but because the description was insufficient. Sometimes just a few words will do.

For more details, see the article by Steve Mirick in the Fall 2021 issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.

https://nhbirdrecords.org/all-articles/NHBR%20Fall%20 2021-Documenting%20Rarities.pdf

# 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 restricted fund of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH.

For more information, contact the Managing Editor or Hope Jordan, Development Director (603) 224-9909 x307; hjordan@nhaudubon.org.

# **NHBR Payment Form**

- □ I would like to join NH Audubon and receive a free digital copy of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.
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As a member of NH Audubon I would also like to receive *New Hampshire Bird Records* in print for an additional fee (helps cover our printing costs and postage).

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Return to: Membership Department, NH Audubon, 84 Silk Farm Rd., Concord, NH 03301

# Rare Bird ALERT 603-224-9909

Available twenty-four hours a day! Also online at www.nhaudubon.org

# **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

New Hampshire Bird Records is published quarterly by NH Audubon's Conservation Department. Thank you to the many observers who submit their sightings to NH eBird (www.ebird.org/nh), the source of data for this publication. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication here does not imply future acceptance by the RBC.

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Information at www.nhbirdrecords.org

# Hawks of Winter





Rough-legged Hawk interacting with a Herring Gull by Jim Sparrell, 1-22-23, Odiorne Point SP, Rye, NH.



Merlin with a Purple Sandpiper by Leo McKillop, 1-20-23, Rye Harbor SP, NH.



Red-tailed Hawk by Kyle Wilmarth, 12-30-22, Salem, NH.



Red-shouldered Hawk by Debra Powers, 1-31-23, Dover, NH.



Sharp-shinned Hawk preening by Kyle Wilmarth, 1-7-23, Salem, NH.

# Winter 2022-23 Rarities



Western Tanager by Steve Mirick, 12-24-22, Greenland, NH.



Ash-throated Flycatcher by Steve Mirick, 12-13-22, Durham, NH



Greater White-fronted Goose by Kyle Wilmarth, 12-17-22, Newington, NH.



Pink-footed Goose by Aiden Moser, 1-15-23, Durham, NH.



Ross's Goose by Paul Kursewicz, 12-1-22, Rochester WTP, NH.



Varied Thrush by Sue Francesco, 12-20-22, Pittsburg, NH.

