

New Hampshire Bird Records





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Cover Photos: Gyrfalcon by Len Medlock (top) on 1/25/15, Seabrook, NH, and Tom Graham, 1/26/15 (bottom).

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Winter 2014-15

by Rebecca Suomala

Thank You!

We appreciate all of the support from volunteers and contributors that makes *New Hampshire Bird Records* the wonderful publication that it is. Please see page 2 for a special thank you to donors.

The goal of the *New Hampshire Bird Records* publication is to bring you information on birds and birding in New Hampshire, provide analysis and summaries that help us all learn more about the birds in our state, encourage the recording and submission of bird sightings (via NHeBird), provide a venue to record bird stories that might otherwise be lost, and foster the birding community and our enjoyment of birds. A critical part of *New Hampshire Bird Records* is the effort to ensure New Hampshire has quality data on bird sightings that is organized, useful, accessible, and archived for the historic record. Thank you for subscribing, volunteering, donating, submitting bird sightings, and supporting all of these efforts.

New Feature Coming Soon!

The *New Hampshire Bird Records* web site will soon have all back issues available in pdf form on line. There will be a password to view the archives and it will be the same one for everyone in a given subscription year. If all goes according to plan, you will receive the password with the Spring 2015 issue, provided your subscription is up to date. Stay tuned for updates.

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This is the last issue of this subscription year and your renewal notice is enclosed with this issue. (If your subscription is up to date you will have a different notice stating that you do not need to renew.) Thanks for your subscription and support of *New Hampshire Bird Records*.

PHOTO QUIZ

**Can You Identify
This Bird?**

Answer on page 43.

Photo by Jen Esten



Thank You to Donors

We are very grateful to those who have donated to *New Hampshire Bird Records*, sponsored an issue, or supported the “Twitchers in the Rye” during the annual Superbowl of Birding. Subscription revenue does not cover the full costs of *New Hampshire Bird Records* and your contributions help make it possible for New Hampshire 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.

Support for data compilation and management was also received from New Hampshire Audubon’s Dr. Margery J. Milne and Dr. Lorus J. Milne Biological Science Research Fund.

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December 1, 2014 through February 28, 2015

by Pamela Hunt



For all intents and purposes, the winter of 2014-15 began in late November, when 7-14" of heavy, wet snow arrived in New Hampshire and resulted in the fourth largest power outage in the state's history. This was followed by a relatively warm and wet December, although cold temperatures in November had already resulted in early freezing of many inland water bodies. January was cold and the end of the month

ushered in the pattern that would remain through all of February. The snow started on January 24 and, from then until February 22, there was a snowstorm of some sort every three or four days. Many of these storms produced a foot or more of snow, particularly in southeastern New Hampshire, where municipalities quickly ran out of places to put the stuff. By the time the month was over, Concord had recorded 42.5", 30 above normal and the fourth snowiest February ever. To our south, Boston broke its record for overall winter snowfall. February was also bitterly cold (the second coldest ever in Concord) and often windy, which in combination with all the snow made winter birding difficult in much of the Granite State.



Scarlet Tanager by Mario Vanini, 12/1/14, Londonderry, NH.

While the cold certainly affected waterfowl via the freezing of water bodies and the snow interfered with owls' ability to find food, the brutal winter was surprisingly notable for the large number of half-hardy birds that graced the state. Red-shouldered Hawks, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, and Pine Warblers were more

common than usual and standouts included **Eastern Phoebe**, **Orange-crowned** and **Palm Warblers**, **Lincoln's Sparrow**, and **Scarlet Tanager**. In contrast, the winter finch flight was something of a bust. Bohemian Waxwings, Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins were the only species to come south in numbers, but even they were spottily distributed and didn't make it to southern New Hampshire until later in the season. In addition to some of the lingering half-hardies, other rarities included a **Pacific Loon**, **Varied Thrush**, and a relatively cooperative **Gyr Falcon**. The bird of the season, however, would have to be a first state record of **Smith's Longspur** from Sandwich, although it technically misses that appellation in the absence of the requisite photo or three observers.

Waterfowl through Grebes



Barrow's Goldeneye by Len Medlock, 2/22/15, Adams Point, Durham, NH.

With the fairly rapid freeze-up, lingering waterfowl were few and far between this winter, with most concentrated on Great Bay and along the immediate coast. Notable exceptions were a good number of inland records of Black Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, and Red-necked and Horned Grebes in late December. By early February, even Great Bay was mostly frozen except for some narrow leads far from shore. Although they did a great job of concentrating birds, these leads were hard to view, but diligent birders managed to turn up some noteworthy species such as Redhead and Eurasian Wigeon. Later in February, even those areas froze, and ducks, now including Barrow's Goldeneyes previously undetected, were forced into Little Bay above Adams Point. In Rye, a female Harlequin Duck was present at Concord Point for most of the season, one of the few overwintering individuals of this species for New Hampshire in the last couple of decades. While Harlequins can be common north and south of us, the New Hampshire coast lacks the extensive rocky shores this species prefers.

A **Pacific Loon** off Rye in early December was one of only a handful of documented winter records for this species in the

WINTER SEASON

state. As in recent years, an impressive number of Common Loons congregated in Hampton Harbor late in the season.

Date # Location Observer



Snow Goose by Leo McKillop, 12/5/14, Litchfield, NH.

Snow Goose

12/06 1 Charles Bancroft Hwy., Litchfield J. McKibben
12/10 1 Charles Bancroft Hwy., Litchfield C. Sheridan, S. Bennett

Brant

12/02 40 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland R. Buchsbaum
01/01 2 Odiorne Point SP, Rye G.& A. Robbins

Wood Duck

12/01 1 Wendell Marsh WMA, Sunapee D. Jackson
12/03 1 Lake Massabesic, Auburn J. Maher
01/03 4 Lake Winnisquam, Laconia CBC G.& A. Robbins
02/04 1 Merrimack River, Manchester E. Masterson

Gadwall

12/04 1 Westmoreland boat launch A. Burnett
12/07 1 Bay Rd., Newmarket C. Nims
12/08 1 Mine Brook, Hollis C. Sheridan
12/10 8 Sunset Farm, Greenland J. Lambert
12/12 1 Suncook River Reservoir, Pembroke/Allentown G.& A. Robbins
12/12 1 Black Oak Dr., Hollis J. McKibben
01/01 2 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland P. Hunt
01/11 2 Fort Stark, New Castle K. Towler
01/17 1 Rye Harbor Z. Cornell
01/18 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham M. Watson, J. Weisner, A. Perko
01/20 2 Great Island Common, New Castle G. Sheridan
02/21 2 Fort Stark, New Castle S. Mirick, S. Heron

Eurasian Wigeon

12/10 5 Sunset Farm, Greenland J. Lambert
01/25 2 Great Bay, Greenland B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
01/25 1 Great Bay, Greenland K. Klapper, et al.
02/01 1 Great Bay, Bayridge Rd., Greenland P. Hunt

American Wigeon

12/12 143 Sunset Farm, Greenland S. Mirick
12/20 45 Greenland sector, Coastal CBC S. Mirick
01/17 10 Bayridge Rd., Greenland B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/01 10 Great Bay, Bayridge Rd., Greenland P. Hunt
02/11 1 Exeter WTP J. Maher

Northern Shoveler

12/08 1 Mine Brook, Hollis C. Sheridan, J. Maher
12/18 1 Derry WTP K. Wilmarth

Date # Location Observer

Northern Pintail

12/02 1 Pointer Club Brook, Meadowcrest Dr., Bedford H. Sliwerski
12/03 2 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard
12/06 2 Black Oak Dr., Hollis C. McPherson
12/07 2 Philbrick Marsh, N. Hampton S. Heron
12/10 1 Charles Bancroft Hwy., Litchfield C. Sheridan
12/15 1 Sunset Farm, Greenland J. Maher
12/18 2 Derry WTP K. Wilmarth
12/27 2 Hollis E. sector, Nashua-Hollis CBC M. Resch
01/03 2 Silver Lake, Tilton P. Hunt
01/10 1 Exeter WTP L. Medlock
01/11 1 Riveredge Marina, Ashland I. MacLeod
02/08 1 Nashua C. McPherson
02/12 1 Daniel Webster College, Nashua J. Maher
02/17 1 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard
02/28 2 Exeter Reservoir D. Jackson, S. Heron

Green-winged Teal

12/01 1 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard
12/01 1 Awcomin Marsh, Rye G.& A. Robbins, G. McKibben
12/06 3 Dodge Ponds, Hampton Falls P. Miliotis
12/14 5 Meadow Pond, Hampton S. Mirick
12/20 2 Newington Rd., Greenland, Coastal CBC S. Mirick
01/01 3 Hampton salt marsh A. Altena
01/12 1 Mascoma R., Lebanon J. MacQueen
01/17 1 stream near N. Hampton State Beach M. Watson, J. Weisner, A. Perko
01/30 1 Mascoma R., Lebanon K. Jones
02/07 1 Exeter WTP S. Heron

Redhead

12/12 1 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland S. Mirick
01/19 1 Great Bay, Greenland B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/01 1 Great Bay, Bayridge Rd., Greenland P. Hunt

Ring-necked Duck

12/01 2 Great Pond, Kingston S. Heron
12/03 14 Eel Pond, Rye J. Maher
12/13 1 Exeter WTP S. Heron
12/17 1 Pond Rd., Derry G.& J. McKibben
12/30 51 World End Pond, Salem K. Wilmarth
01/03 4 Lake Winnisquam, Laconia CBC G.& A. Robbins
01/03 1 Exeter WTP J. Sparrell

Greater Scaup

12/06 1 Exeter WTP P. Miliotis
12/12 1623 Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland S. Mirick
01/01 1 Seal Rocks, Rye P. Hunt
01/03 3 Lake Winnisquam, Sanbornton G.& A. Robbins, P. Hunt, D. Crook
01/10 1 Hampton Harbor, Yankee Fisherman's Coop. D. Blezard, J. Sparrell
01/17 500 Bayridge Rd., Greenland B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
01/29 1 Hampton Harbor, Yankee Fisherman's Coop. S. Miller
02/01 1800 Great Bay, Bayridge Rd., Greenland P. Hunt

Date	#	Location	Observer
02/07	300	Adams Point WMA, Durham	K. Wilmarth, A. Altena, S. Mirick
02/28	330	Adams Point WMA, Durham	E. Nielsen
02/28	2	Exeter WTP	D. Jackson, S. Heron

Lesser Scaup

12/20	8	Great Bay, Seacoast CBC	S.& J. Mirick, B. Goodwin
01/25	12	Great Bay, Greenland	B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/14	1	Exeter WTP	J. Lambert
02/18	5	Adams Point WMA, Durham	J. Maher
02/28	4	Exeter Reservoir	D. Jackson

King Eider

12/20	1	Pulpit Rocks, Rye	L. Kras, B. Griffith
12/28	1	Hampton Harbor	A. Altena, K. Wilmarth



Harlequin Duck by Scott Heron, 1/11/15, Pulpit Rocks, Rye, NH.

Harlequin Duck

12/01	1	Hampton River Marina	G.& A. Robbins
01/01	1	NH coast, Rye	D. Jackson
01/11	1	Concord Pt., Rye	G. Tillman
02/28	1	Concord Pt., Rye	E. Nielsen

Black Scoter

12/18	1	Sunapee State Beach, Newbury	D. Jackson
12/22	2	Sunapee State Beach, Newbury	D. Jackson, J. Gamble
12/28	7	Squam Lake	R. Ridgely
12/29	2	Sunapee State Beach, Newbury	D. Jackson
01/02	1	Lake Winnisquam, Sanbornton	P. Hunt
01/12	1	Opechee Bay, Laconia	P. Hunt

Long-tailed Duck

12/22	2	Whittier Hwy., Center Harbor	C. Suich
12/22	2	Hinsdale Setbacks	J. Smith

Bufflehead

12/21	126	Oyster River sector, Lee-Durham CBC	S. Mirick
01/03	33	Rye Harbor SP	B. Hall, M. Mahata
01/17	30	Bayridge Rd., Greenland	B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/14	40	Adams Point WMA, Durham	A. Scholten, B. Black
02/25	1	Powwow R. at Pond St., Kingston	S. Heron
02/27	1	Lambert Park, Hooksett	S. Schmitt
02/27	3	Merrimack R., Manchester	S. Mirick

Common Goldeneye

12/07	35	Stark Landing, Manchester	C. Sheridan
12/17	3	Sunapee State Beach, Newbury	D. Jackson
12/20	150	Greenland sector, Coastal CBC	S. Mirick
12/23	3	Errol CBC	J. Cosentino
12/27	34	Hinsdale bluffs	E. Richard
01/01	50	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	P. Hunt
01/03	151	Lake Winnisquam, Laconia CBC	A. Robbins

Date	#	Location	Observer
01/10	15	Merrimack R., Crown St. to Burke St., Nashua	C. Sheridan
01/20	22	Winnepesaukee R. by Rt. 140, Tilton	G.& A. Robbins
02/01	50	Great Bay, Bayridge Rd., Greenland	P. Hunt
02/03	63	Merrimack R., Manchester	S. Mirick
02/07	161	Adams Point WMA, Durham	S. Mirick
02/18	107	Adams Point WMA, Durham	J. Lambert
02/22	60	Sewalls Falls Recreation Area, Concord	J. Nadeau
02/22	12	Androskoggin R. at Errol dam	A. Burnett
02/22	102	Hampton Harbor	J. Lambert
02/27	51	Merrimack R., Manchester	S. Mirick



Female Barrow's Goldeneye (right) compared to female Common Goldeneye. Barrow's by Steve Mirick, 12/14/14, Meadow Pond, Hampton, NH; Common by Len Medlock, 2/22/15, Adams Pt., Durham, NH.

Barrow's Goldeneye

12/03	1	Great Boars Head, Hampton	J. Maher
12/12	1	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	S. Mirick
12/29	1	Stark Landing, Manchester	J. Maher
01/12	1	Opechee Bay, Laconia	P. Hunt
01/14	1	Merrimack R., Manchester	Z. Cornell, M. Thompson
01/22	1	Opechee Bay, Laconia	P. Hunt
01/31	2	Merrimack R., Manchester	K. Wilmarth
02/04	3	Merrimack R., Manchester	S. Mirick
02/07	2	Adams Point WMA, Durham	S. Mirick
02/22	2	Adams Point WMA, Durham	L. Medlock
02/27	3	Merrimack R., Manchester	S. Mirick

Hooded Merganser

12/01	120	Hinsdale Setbacks	P. Gurn
12/04	56	Jenness Pond, Pittsfield	G.& A. Robbins
12/07	33	Waukewan Inlet, New Hampton	I. MacLeod
12/22	102	Hinsdale Setbacks	J. Smith
01/17	20	Bayridge Rd., Greenland	B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
01/19	38	Opechee Bay, Laconia	I. MacLeod

Common Merganser

12/10	7	Seminole Point, Sunapee	D. Jackson
12/14	63	Spofford Lake, Chesterfield	P. Brown
01/02	120	Opechee Bay, Laconia	P. Hunt

Red-breasted Merganser

12/02	1	Sugar River, Sunapee	D. Jackson
12/14	1	Spofford Lake, Chesterfield	P. Brown

Ruddy Duck

12/12	5	Country Pond, Sunshine Dr., Kingston	S. Heron
12/20	1	Greenland Sector, Coastal CBC	S. Mirick
01/01	2	Seal Rocks, Rye	P. Hunt

WINTER SEASON

Date # Location

Observer



Pacific Loon by Steve Mirick, 12/13/14, New Castle, NH.

Pacific Loon

12/13 1 Fort Stark, New Castle S. Mirick

Common Loon

12/14 30 Fort Stark, New Castle M. & P. Wolter
 12/28 1 Spofford Lake, Chesterfield A. & R. Burnett
 12/28 1 Lake Wantastiquet, Hinsdale P. Hunt
 12/28 1 Sunapee State Beach, Newbury D. Jackson
 12/29 2 Hinsdale Setbacks L. Bate
 02/07 71 Hampton Harbor S. Mirick
 02/22 62 Hampton Harbor J. Lambert

Pied-billed Grebe

12/12 1 Powwow Pond, Kingston S. Mirick
 01/03 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham G. Tillman
 01/25 1 Peirce Island, Portsmouth P. Brown, et al.

Horned Grebe

12/01 2 Brookhurst Lane W., Meredith I. MacLeod
 12/03 2 Spofford Lake, Chesterfield E. Masterson
 12/21 5 Newfound Lake R. Quinn
 12/22 1 Gardner Bay, Sunapee D. Jackson
 12/28 26 Black Cat Is., Lake Winnepesaukee K. Klapper

Red-necked Grebe

12/18 1 Connecticut R. above Wilder Dam, Lebanon C. Rimmer
 12/22 2 Hinsdale Setbacks J. Smith

Northern Fulmar through Gulls



Great Shearwater by Eric Masterson, 12/16/15, offshore waters, NH. Eric provides the following information about this photo: New Hampshire birders most often encounter Great Shearwater during summer and fall. During summer, many shearwaters are mid-molt and often show extensive feather wear, most obviously on the remiges (flight feathers). This Great Shearwater, photographed on December 16, is quite a contrast, showing newly minted, uniformly dark brown primaries and secondaries, in contrast to the faded and abraded flight feathers of summer birds.

There were only a couple of offshore trips this winter, although Eric Masterson managed to tally a diverse mix of pelagic species on December 4. His list included Great Shearwater and Pomarine Jaeger, both of which regularly linger off Massachusetts into at least mid-December and may be expected just a little farther north. The only other trip was the Isles of Shoals Christmas Bird Count (CBC), where the marine highlight was a Dovekie seen from land on Star Island. The deep freeze even made Great Blue Herons somewhat scarce on the coast (they were present in low numbers, but not included in the listings), although a handful lingered inland through early January.

Despite the arctic conditions (it was **warmer** in Fairbanks much of the winter!), Turkey Vultures continued their recent trend of overwintering in the Exeter area, with records throughout the season. Far more unusual were the two vultures in the White Mountains on January 9. Somehow I doubt they were there for the skiing. In mid-January, volunteers for New Hampshire Audubon's Mid-winter Bald Eagle Survey tallied a record 100 birds, clearly indicating this species' continued recovery. A second survey at the very end of February revealed that at least two pairs had already started incubation.

When we tend to think of half-hardy birds, our thoughts usually go to songbirds such as Hermit Thrush and Gray Catbird that can linger during mild seasons. But Red-shouldered Hawk also fits into this category and the winter of 2014-15 was a banner year for this species. Hawks move around a fair bit making it hard to get a solid estimate, but based on the dispersion of records I can safely estimate that over a dozen were present this winter. Almost all of them were in eastern Rockingham County. Two Golden Eagles were reported from opposite ends of the state, one visiting a meat pile near Berlin and a fly-over in Westmoreland.



Black-headed Gull by Zeke Cornell, 02/14/15, Hampton WTP, NH.

The cold and early freeze probably also affected lingering shorebirds, with only a single Greater Yellowlegs making it into the season, and even regular species like Sanderling and Dunlin were present in relatively low numbers. A highlight in the gull department was an adult Black-headed Gull that

appeared at the Hampton wastewater treatment plant in late January and continued off and on through the end of the season. As was the case last year, a smattering of Iceland Gulls were found inland west to the Merrimack River and the adult Glaucous Gull that's been frequenting Seabrook for several winters returned for another one. Other than those seen on offshore trips as noted earlier, the most noteworthy alcids were a couple of Thick-billed Murres seen from shore later in the winter.

Date # Location Observer

Northern Fulmar

12/16 4 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson

Great Shearwater

12/16 4 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson



Northern Gannet by Scott Heron, 1/3/15, Isles of Shoals CBC, NH.

Northern Gannet

12/16 9 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson
 12/20 Pulpit Rocks, Rye B. Griffith, L. Kras
 12/27 1 Hampton Beach SP K. Rosenberg
 12/31 2 Hampton Beach SP M. Stone, M. Megrath
 01/03 1 Isles of Shoals, NH B. Griffith, Isles of Shoals CBC
 01/25 2 Seabrook Beach B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert

Double-crested Cormorant

12/01 2 Hampton River Marina flats G.& A. Robbins
 12/13 1 Adams Point WMA, Durham D. Jackson
 12/13 6 Hampton Harbor S. Mirick
 12/15 1 Sunset Farm, Greenland J. Maher
 12/20 1 Depot Rd., Hampton Falls P. Miliotis

Great Cormorant

12/21 1 Oyster River Sector, Lee-Durham CBC
 S.& J. Mirick, et al.
 12/30 1 Merrimack R. near Queen City Bridge, Manchester
 C. Sheridan
 02/03 7 Merrimack R., Manchester S. Mirick
 02/11 8 Exit 10, Rt. 93, Hooksett L. Kras
 02/27 12 Lambert Park, Hooksett S. Schmitt
 02/27 1 Walden Pond Dr., Nashua C. Sheridan

Great Blue Heron

12/22 1 Hinsdale Setbacks J. Smith
 12/26 1 Reeds Marsh, Orford J. MacQueen
 01/08 1 WalMart, Winchester St., Keene D. Adams

Date # Location Observer



Turkey Vulture by Steve Mirick, 1/10/14, Exeter, NH.

Turkey Vulture

01/03 16 Alder St., Exeter P. Lacourse
 01/09 2 Attitash Mt. Resort, Bartlett C. Nims
 01/20 18 Exeter B. White
 02/21 1 Caldwell Rd., Nashua C. Sheridan

Golden Eagle

01/31 Hill Rd. meat pile, Dummer L. Alexander
 02/04 1 Cheshire County Farm Complex, Westmoreland
 S. Kelly

Northern Harrier

12/01 1 Lake Waukewan, Meredith I. MacLeod
 12/01 1 Awcomin Marsh, Rye G.& A. Robbins,
 G.& J. McKibben
 12/04 1 Woodward Rd., Westmoreland R. Burnett, A. Burnett
 12/12 1 Bodwell Farm, E. Kingston S. Heron
 12/23 1 Barrette Dr., Manchester J. Maher
 12/24 1 Worcester Rd., Hollis C. Sheridan
 12/30 1 Portland St., Lancaster S. Stoddard
 01/10 1 Great Bay NWR, Newington J. Kelly
 01/17 1 Great Island Common, New Castle
 K. Towler, J. Sparrell
 01/23 1 Little Jacks restaurant, Rt. 1A, Hampton
 C. McPherson
 01/23 1 Rye Harbor SP C. McPherson



Northern Goshawk by Amy Kane, 2/8/15, N. Hampton, NH.

Northern Goshawk

01/03 1 Hurricane Rd., Belmont P. Hunt, D. Crook
 02/07 1 Mill Road, N. Hampton A. Kane
 02/09 1 N. Main Street, Antrim M. Noble
 02/18 1 Rt. 293, Bedford B. Griffith

Bald Eagle

02/04 15 Bayridge Rd., Greenland Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
 02/22 13 River Rd. boat ramp, Bow W. Waskin

WINTER SEASON

Date # Location Observer

Rough-legged Hawk

12/13 1 Little River saltmarsh, N. Hampton
L. Kras, B. Griffith
12/20 2 Hampton, Seacoast CBC C. McPherson, W. Fogelman
12/22 1 Woodward Rd., Westmoreland A. Burnett
12/28 1 River Rd. s., Walpole P. Hunt
01/10 1 Great Boars Head, Hampton
D. Blezard, Seacoast CFT
02/08 1 Maple Acres, Keene S. Brooks
02/27 1 Rye Harbor SP J. Sparrell, K. Towler

American Coot

12/03 1 Exeter WTP J. Maher
12/09 1 Eel Pond, Rye S. Mirick
12/15 2 Eel Pond, Rye J. Lambert
12/20 1 Eel Pond, Rye M. Wilson

Greater Yellowlegs

12/01 1 Awcomin Marsh, Rye
G.& A. Robbins, G.& J. McKibben

Sanderling

12/24 24 N.Hampton State Beach F. Marengi, J. Dwyer
01/18 13 Hampton Beach SP Z. Cornell
01/31 11 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton
Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/01 25 Hampton Beach SP S. Heron

Dunlin

12/01 150 Hampton Beach SP G.& A. Robbins
01/16 17 Rt. 1B, Portsmouth Z. Cornell
02/14 31 Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook J. Lambert
02/25 100 Concord Pt., Rye J. Maher



Purple Sandpipers by Scott Heron, 2/21/15, Hampton Beach SP, NH.

Purple Sandpiper

12/15 50 Seal Rocks, Rye J. Maher
01/03 30 Isles of Shoals, NH B. Griffith, Isles of Shoals CBC
01/16 40 Concord Pt., Rye M. Harvey
01/29 70 Seal Rocks, Rye
B. Crowley, J. Scott, C. Nims, S. McCarthy
01/31 30 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/07 33 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton S. Mirick
02/21 35 Hampton Beach SP S. Heron
02/21 44 Rye Ledge S. Mirick

Date # Location Observer

Pomarine Jaeger

12/16 1 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson



Dovekie by Scott Heron, 1/3/15, Isles of Shoals CBC, Star Island, NH.

Dovekie

12/16 18 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson
01/03 1 Isles of Shoals, NH B. Griffith, Isles of Shoals CBC

Common Murre

12/16 10 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson

Thick-billed Murre

02/07 1 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton S. Mirick
02/08 1 Jenness/Sawyers Beach, Rye L. Kras, B. Griffith
02/10 1 Seal Rocks, Rye J. Lambert
02/19 2 Jenness/Sawyers Beach, Rye J. Lambert
02/28 1 Concord Pt., Rye E. Nielsen

Razorbill

12/16 50 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson
12/20 7 Pulpit Rocks, Rye L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/03 17 Isles of Shoals, NH B. Griffith, Isles of Shoals CBC
01/15 6 Great Island Common, New Castle M. Harvey

Atlantic Puffin

12/16 1 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson

Black-legged Kittiwake

12/16 14 Jeffreys Ledge E. Masterson
12/23 1 Little Boars Head, N. Hampton S. Mirick
01/01 3 Great Boars Head, Hampton S. Mirick
01/03 3 Isles of Shoals, NH L. Medlock
01/19 1 Rye Harbor SP T. Murray

Bonaparte's Gull

12/07 60 Hampton Harbor S. Mirick
12/26 15 Fort Stark, New Castle S. Mirick
12/26 100 Portsmouth Harbor S. Mirick
12/27 24 Rye Harbor SP E. Nielsen

Black-headed Gull

12/20 1 Pulpit Rocks, Rye L. Kras, B. Griffith
01/25 1 Hampton WTP S. Mirick, et al.
02/27 1 Hampton WTP J. Sparrell, K. Towler

Iceland Gull

12/07 1 Stark Landing, Manchester C. Sheridan
12/10 2 Hedgehog Pond, Salem K. Wilmarth
12/21 4 Old Stage Rd., Madbury L. Medlock
12/21 5 Pickering Ponds, Rochester L. Kras
12/24 1 Hampton Beach SP F. Marengi, J. Dwyer
12/24 1 N. Hampton State Beach F. Marengi, J. Dwyer
01/02 3 Rochester WTP D. Hubbard
01/08 4 Rochester WTP J. Lambert
01/11 1 Exeter WTP P. Miliotis

Date	#	Location	Observer
01/14	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch
02/06	2	Waumbec Mill, Manchester	J. Maher
02/18	2	Adams Point WMA, Durham	J. Lambert
02/25	2	Exeter WTP	J. Maher
02/28	1	Adams Point WMA, Durham	D. Jackson, S. Mirick, D. Abbott, E. Nielsen



Lesser Black-backed Gull by Steve Mirick, 12/23/14, N. Hampton State Beach, NH.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

12/21	2	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	L. Kras
12/23	1	N.Hampton State Beach	S. Mirick
01/04	1	Bicentennial Park, Hampton	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
01/25	2	Hampton River Marina flats	L. Kras, B. Griffith, et al.
01/25	1	Great Island Common, New Castle	L. Kras

Glaucous Gull

12/09	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch
12/13	1	Hampton Harbor	S. Mirick
12/20	1	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook	S. Heron
12/21	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	L. Kras
12/31	1	Hedgehog Pond, Salem	K. Wilmarth
01/10	3	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/25	1	N. Commercial St., Manchester	R. Woodward, Capital CFT
02/14	1	Seal Rocks, Rye	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/22	2	Hampton Harbor	J. Lambert

Owls through Falcons



Snowy Owl by Scott Heron, 12/26/14, Rye Harbor SP, NH.

It was deja vu at Rye Harbor and Hampton Beach State Parks, with both hosting Snowy Owls, and owl photographers, for the second year in a row. These birds were part of a second significant irruption following that of 2013-14 and apparently a result of another productive breeding season in the Canadian arctic. Up to three were also reported at the Isles of Shoals by the winter caretakers on Star Island. Away from the coast, other Snowys were seen at Manchester and Lebanon Airports, Alstead, and way up north in Berlin. As the snow deepened through February, feeders and roadsides once again became good places to see Barred Owls, many of which were in poor condition because they could not easily find prey in the woods. Even a few Northern Saw-whet Owls seemed to have had the same problem, based on a handful of calls to New Hampshire Audubon (see the Backyard Birder feature in this issue).

An immature Red-headed Woodpecker found in November at Adams Point in Durham remained remarkably faithful to a very small area (although not always easily found) and, by February, it was clearly attaining the red head for which it is named. Meanwhile, Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued their inexorable march north across the state, including the second record in a row for the Errol CBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are a classic half-hardy species, but it's a little hard not to think of them as fool-hardy in a winter like this one. In any event, sapsuckers were all over the place, with at least 13 records, and this continued increase as a winter species may ultimately be less a result of mild weather (which we haven't had for the last two winters) and more a result of increasing regional populations.



Gyrfalcon in the snow by David Larson, 1/26/15, Hampton Harbor, NH.

My vote for star of the season goes to the dark morph **Gyrfalcon** that haunted coastal New Hampshire and southern Maine in January. It first came to light in a photo taken on December 12 (according to the photo date stamp, but it may have been December 14) in Madbury and was later seen at the nearby Rochester wastewater treatment plant on two occasions in early January. It then wandered north to Maine and entertained birders in Kennebunk and Wells

WINTER SEASON

for several days before relocating to Hampton. Here it finally attained star status, when it elected to kill and eat a Herring Gull in plain view in Hampton Harbor. The fact that this happened during the Superbowl of Birding ensured that it may very well have been the most-viewed Gyrfalcon in recent New Hampshire history. After a couple of days in Hampton, the bird disappeared for almost a month before reappearing in Wells on February 20. After the season ended, it was next seen heading north in Salisbury, Massachusetts on March 18 and reappeared in Wells March 24-28. Then it was gone, presumably into the arctic wilds from whence it came.

Date # Location Observer



Eastern Screech-Owl by Christopher McPherson, 2/28/15, Hollis, NH.

Eastern Screech-Owl

12/14	1	Ferry St., Allentown	G. & A. Robbins
12/27	1	Berkeley St., Nashua	D. Deifik, J. Maher
01/01	1	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	L. Medlock
01/10	1	Salem	K. Wilmarth, A. Altena
01/22	1	Red Mill Ln., Rye	S. Mirick, L. Kras, J. Lambert
02/05	1	Edgewood Cemetery, Amherst St., Nashua	J. Maher
02/14	1	Monument Sq., Hollis	C. McPherson, C. Sheridan

Snowy Owl

12/03	1	Hampton Beach SP	A. Kane, W. Flack
12/03	1	Rye Harbor SP	A. Kane, J. Maher
12/06	1	Pease Golf Course, Portsmouth	N. Purmort
12/11	1	Manchester Youth Development Ctr.	M. Lachance
12/15	2	Manchester-Boston Regional Airport	J. Kolas
12/28	1	Pease Intl. Tradeport, Portsmouth	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
12/29	1	Kelly Ave., Manchester	C. Glacy, J. Maher
12/31		Berlin	L. Alexander
01/11	1	Drewsville Rd., Alstead	S. Porter
02/10	1	Lebanon Airport	G. Greene

Short-eared Owl

12/27	1	Dillant-Hopkins Airport, Swanzey	D. Hof
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Northern Saw-whet Owl

12/20	1	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	P. Hunt, et al.
12/21	1	Oyster River Sector, Lee-Durham CBC	S. Mirick

12/26	1	Black Mt., Jackson	B. Pendleton
01/03	1	School St. at Sherry Dr., Tilton	P. Hunt
01/22	1	Wentworth Coolidge Historical Site, Portsmouth	L. Kras
01/22	1	Recreation Rd., Rye	L. Kras
02/04	1	Wentworth Coolidge Historical Site, Portsmouth	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/06	1	Frank C. Gilman Hwy., Alton	T. Kiley
02/17	1	Thurston Pond Rd., Deerfield	K. Hartnett
02/17	1	Concord Rd., Northfield	K. Valley
02/19	1	Berlin	L. Arguin
02/20	1	Oak Hill Rd., Concord	J. Jaworski



Red-headed Woodpecker by Len Medlock, 2/22/15, Adams Pt., Durham, NH.

Red-headed Woodpecker

12/07	1	Adams Point WMA, Durham	S. McCarthy, C. Nims
02/28	1	Adams Point WMA, Durham	S. Mirick, D. Abbott

American Kestrel

12/28	1	Rt. 25, Moultonborough	K. Klapper
01/02	1	Opechee Park, Laconia	K. Klapper
01/11	1	Manchester-Boston Reg. Airport	M. Timmerman
01/29	1	Hampton marsh, Rt. 101	S. McCarthy, C. Nims
01/29	1	Manchester-Boston Regional Airport	F. Keenan

Merlin

12/07	1	Hampton Beach SP	S. Mirick
12/14	1	Spofford Lake, Chesterfield	P. Brown
12/16	1	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	A. Burnett
12/26	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard
12/31	1	Alpendorf Loop, Bartlett	S. Liffmann
01/10	1	Eel Pond, Rye	D. Bleazard, J. Sparrell
01/28	1	Rt. 12 at Maple St., Keene	D. Clark
02/13	1	Woodbury Ave., Portsmouth	L. Woodard, T. Duddy
02/14	1	Exeter Rd., Newmarket	A. Scholten, B. Black
02/22	1	Hampton Harbor	J. Lambert

Gyrfalcon

12/12	1	Rt. 9 gravel pit, Madbury	R. Raynes
01/02	1	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/07	1	Rochester WTP	D. Hubbard
01/25	1	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook	L. Medlock, C. Ciccone, G. Keller, et al.
01/26	1	Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook	J. Lambert, G. & A. Robbins, et al.

Flycatchers through Waxwings

A close contender for bird of the season was an **Eastern Phoebe** at Rochester into early January, where it briefly overlapped with the Gyrfalcon. In the end, this non-hardy likely succumbed to the elements and it's hard to imagine what it was eating even when it was still around. Based on data going back to 1986, this is the third-latest wintering phoebe on record. The winner is a bird that made it through February 16, 2002, also at Pickering Ponds, and another was in Merrimack on February 5, 2007. A few sometimes linger into December, but otherwise the normal time frame for phoebes is March to October (for now...).

It's pretty hard sometimes to figure out why some lingering songbirds are present in good numbers and others are absent. In addition to sapsuckers, one of the standouts in this regard was Hermit Thrush, which was widespread across the southern half of the state, with at least 40 birds in 27 towns, one of which was well to the north in Bartlett. The CBCs tallied 41, some of which are included in the previous total of 40, and others were reported during the Backyard Winter Bird Survey in February. But Winter Wrens, which are at least as cold-tolerant as Hermit Thrushes, were scarce by comparison; 23 reported to eBird and 20 on CBCs. One reason for this disparity may be that the thrushes are far more likely to visit feeders and were probably driven there by the cold and snow. Gray Catbirds also made a good showing, with 10 reported from the Seacoast area. Carolina Wrens, like Red-bellied Woodpeckers, continue to increase, although this season the cold temperatures seem to have caused some attrition later in the winter. In many parts of the state, it was an excellent winter for Red-breasted Nuthatch after a strong fall flight.



*Bohemian Waxwings
by Christine Sheridan,
2/10/15,
Plymouth, NH.*

Bluebirds and robins continue to be reliable winter birds in New Hampshire, although the latter were relatively scarce. The listings below include *all* reports of over 100, relatively few big flocks compared to some winters. A **Varied Thrush** appeared for over a week in Dublin at the very end of the season (Feb. 22 to March 1). This season's winter finch forecast from Ontario predicted that the Bohemian Waxwing

flight would be mediocre and by many accounts it was. There were none until Christmas Day, when one was with some Cedar Waxwings in Plymouth, and it was almost a month before the next report from Conway. Numbers started to increase slowly at the end of January and, by early February, the flocks were both larger and more widespread, although still all in the White Mountains. Mid-February saw flocks starting to appear in west-central New Hampshire and by month's end they were as far south as Concord and Rye, although flocks were still few and far between. This end of season influx was presumably because they'd exhausted the fruit supply farther north. At the same time, Cedar Waxwings were generally scarce.

Eastern Phoebe

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
12/10	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard
12/20	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard
01/03	1	Pickering Ponds, Rochester	D. Hubbard

Northern Shrike

12/06	1	Diamond Ledge, Sandwich	T. Vazzano
12/15	1	Portland St., Lancaster	S. Stoddard
12/21	1	Rt. 3 at Baron Brook, Whitefield	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
12/26	1	Pillsbury SP, Washington	N. Purmort
01/01	1	Fremont Conservation Land, Peterborough	E. Richard
01/16	1	Trask Brook Rd., Sunapee	D. Jackson
01/18	1	Kinson WMA, Marlow	W. Ward
01/19	1	Strafford County Farm, Dover	D. Hubbard
01/23	1	Great Bay Rd., Greenland	L. Kras
01/23	1	Cottonstone Farm, Orford	J. MacQueen
01/26	1	West Rd., Bradford	D. Halsted
01/27	1	Bretton Woods X-C Ski Area, Carroll	L. Bergum
01/31		Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	L. Alexander
02/26	1	Washington	J. Moul



*Gray Jay by Lauren Kras, 2/7/15,
Milan, NH.*

Gray Jay

12/22	8	Back Lake, Pittsburg	L. Kras, Pittsburg CBC
12/31	3	Mt. Jackson, Beans Grant	L. Megna
01/01	2	Starr King Trail, WMNF, Jefferson	D. Ellis
01/10	1	Mt. Garfield, Franconia	T. Carlile
02/07	2	Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT
02/21	2	Diamond Gorge, Second College Grant	A. Burnett
02/28	1	Mt. Pierce, Beans Grant	E. Lipton

WINTER SEASON

Date	#	Location	Observer	Date	#	Location	Observer				
Fish Crow											
12/14	3	Rt. 28 at Rt. 38, Salem	K. Wilmarth	01/11	1	River Rd., Stratham	L. Medlock				
12/15	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch	01/11	1	Wendell Marsh State WMA, Sunapee	D. Jackson				
01/12	4	99 Restaurant, Rt. 28, Salem	K. Wilmarth	01/17	1	Great Bay NWR, Newington	J. Sparrell, K. Towler				
02/26	8	99 Restaurant, Rt. 28, Salem	K. Wilmarth	01/18	1	Willowbrook Ave., Stratham	S. Mirick				
Horned Lark											
12/06	125	Parker Ln. at Rt. 130	C. McPherson	01/25	1	Perkins Rd., Rye	P. Hunt, et al.				
12/27	70	N. River Rd. fields, Milford R. & M. Suomala, A. Robbins, K. Mitchell		01/25	1	Rt. 1 at Rt. 1A	K. Klapper, et al.				
01/01	55	Stuart Farm, Stratham	G. Tillman	Brown Thrasher							
01/01	200	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	P. Gurn, E. Synnott	02/14	1	Bypass 28, Derry	C. Milbury				
01/13	110	Agway, Main St., Walpole	D. Clark	European Starling							
01/21	229	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	W. Ward	12/20	5000	Long John Rd., Rye	P. Hunt, et al.				
01/23	50	Stuart Farm, Stratham	S. Mirick, P. Lacourse	American Pipit							
02/06	360	River Rd., Walpole	D. Clark	12/20	1	Rye Harbor SP	P. Hunt, et al.				
02/07	60	Stuart Farm, Stratham	S. Mirick	12/28	1	Rye Harbor	K. Wilmarth, A. Altana				
02/07	100	Rt. 63 at River Rd., Westmoreland	K. Cox, D. Clark								
02/21	112	Stuart Farm, Stratham	S. Mirick								
02/25	65	Exeter WTP	J. Maher								
02/25	200	Agway, Main St., Walpole	H. Galbraith								
Boreal Chickadee											
12/22	10	Pittsburg CBC	P. Brown, K. Fenton, J. Cosentino					<p><i>Bohemian Waxwing by Amanda Altana, 2/15/15, Berlin, NH.</i></p>			
12/31	1	Mt. Jackson, Beans Grant	L. Megna								
01/17	1	Mt. Passaconaway, Waterville Valley	D. Ellis								
01/20	5	WMNF, Pinkham Notch	W. O'Brien								
02/10	17	Mechanic St., Gorham	W. O'Brien								
02/11	5	Hall's Ledge, Jackson	B. Pendleton								
02/22	2	Management Ctr., Second College Grant	A. Burnett								
02/28	1	Crawford Path, Beans Grant	E. Lipton								
Eastern Bluebird											
01/03	22	Hollis	C. McPherson	12/25	1	High St. at Memorial Hall, Plymouth	R. Suomala				
01/08	20	Oak St., Milford	G. Belanger	01/20	2	Balcony Seat View, N. Conway	T. Murray				
02/03	24	Gen'l. John Sullivan Way, Rollinsford	A. Kippley	01/22	13	Black Bear Lodge, Waterville Valley	S. Harvell				
American Robin											
12/13	160	Great Bay Discovery Ctr., Greenland	D. Jackson	01/24	28	Snowflake Inn, Jackson	S. McCarthy, C. Nims				
12/13	150	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	D. Jackson	01/25	89	Androscoggin R., Bridge St., Berlin	S. Whitebread, J. Scott, C. Nims				
12/21	200	Old Lake Shore Rd., Gilford	I. MacLeod	01/31	38	Conway Public Library	S. Heron				
12/22	260	Upper City Rd., Loudon	G. & A. Robbins	02/03	231	Mechanic St., Gorham	W. O'Brien				
12/22	115	Siel Road, Pittsfield	G. & A. Robbins	02/04	43	Main St., Lincoln	C.K. Borg				
12/22	157	Upper City Rd. orchard, Pittsfield	G. & A. Robbins	02/07	40	Rt. 93 at Exit 40, Bethlehem	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala, P. Hunt				
01/03	150	Silver Lake s., Belmont	P. Hunt, D. Crook	02/07	175	Gorham Hydro Station	B. Griffith, Seacoast CFT				
01/03	220	RR tracks near Noyes Rd., Tilton	P. Hunt	02/07	32	Rt. 25A, Orford	J. MacQueen				
01/04	100	Mountain Rd., Concord NH	J. Nadeau	02/07	120	Post Office Square, Plymouth	I. MacLeod				
01/06	100	Highland Ave., Salem	K. Wilmarth	02/08	37	Burkehaven Hill Rd., Sunapee	D. Jackson				
01/07	200	Boire Field, Nashua	C. Sheridan	02/10	175	downtown Plymouth	C. Sheridan				
01/30	145	Exeter WTP	P. Miliotis	02/14	250	White Mountain Rd., Conway	J. Maher				
Varied Thrush											
02/22	1	Windmill Hill Rd., Dublin	C. Cerroni	02/17	65	Rt. 3, Whitefield	S. Stoddard				
02/27	1	Windmill Hill Rd., Dublin	D. & G. Levene, et al.	02/18	3	Rt. 1A, Rye	S. Mirick				
Gray Catbird											
12/15	1	Woodland Rd., N. Hampton	J. Lambert	02/21	120	Whipple Hill residence, Lyme	B. Allison				
12/20	2	Newington Rd., Greenland	S. Mirick	02/21	5	Rt. 1A, Rye	S. Mirick				
12/21	1	Maglaras Park, Dover	J. Lambert	02/22	13	River View Rd., Newport	B. & C. Baker				
12/21	1	Mathes Cove Rd., Durham	S. Mirick	02/22	34	Seminole Point, Sunapee	D. Jackson				
01/06	1	Boulters Cove Rd., N. Hampton	Z. Cornell	02/24	35	New London Shopping Center parking lot	M. Vernon				
				02/25	75	Strafford School	J. Lambert				
				02/26	1	Broad Street, Hollis	J. Wing				
				02/27	5	Limmer Ln., Bartlett	G. & J. McKibben				
				02/27	200	County Rd., New London	C. McPherson				
				02/28	40	Sam's Club, Rt. 106, Concord	D. Jackson				
				02/28	100	Main St., Jackson	J. Maher				

Longspurs through Finches

In a season with very little in the way of open ground, it's not surprising that Snow Buntings actually became hard to find. The same was true for Horned Larks, although a huge flock frequented the Walpole Agway for much of the winter, largely because seed was being provided at this location. In this flock, there were several Lapland Longspurs, a species that usually occurs in ones and twos in the state and which is often not all that reliable. Speaking of longspurs, the undisputed rarity of the season award goes to a **Smith's Longspur** found in Sandwich on December 18. This would be the first state record of this denizen of arctic tundra and the Great Plains, but because only two people saw it and there is no photograph (see the article on page 25), it is considered hypothetical under the criteria set by the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee.



Orange-crowned Warbler
by Steve Mirick, 12/7/14,
Fort Stark, New Castle,
NH.

Another half-hardy that seems to be doing quite well is Pine Warbler, with six reported this season (all at feeders). A female Common Yellowthroat found in early December in Portsmouth managed to survive until at least January 25 and another was a surprise in Durham only two days later. A total of only nine Yellow-rumped Warblers is typical for this species in recent years, although it used to be more reliable in small numbers farther into the winter. The only February report was of an individual that had been coming to a feeder in Concord and was last reported on February 11. Two Palm Warblers and a single Orange-crowned Warbler lingered along the coast, with New Castle being something of a hot spot this winter. Inland, in addition to a few Pines and Yellow-rumpeds, a Black-throated Blue was a surprise at a feeder in Hancock, while another Orange-crowned lingered in Concord until February 15, but was found dead a few days later.

This was a particularly good winter for sparrows, with up to seven species frequenting the Great Bay Farm in Greenland. In this group, the standouts were a **Lincoln's** and a **Gambell's White-crowned Sparrow**, the latter a subspecies from the western arctic that normally winters west of the Great Plains. Up to three Chipping and a Field Sparrow provided a little excitement for birders in Exeter during

January, but Fox Sparrows were almost unreported during a season of sparrow plenty. Barely making it into winter was a male **Scarlet Tanager** at a feeder in Londonderry on December 1. Blackbirds were generally scarce, although four Baltimore Orioles at three locations was definitely more than usual. None made it past early January.



Baltimore Oriole
by Len Medlock,
1/4/15, Exeter, NH.

The winter finch flight of 2014-15 was diverse but sparse. All the expected species were reported at one point or another, but only Common Redpolls (with a handful of Hoarys) and Pine Siskins were at all common. The siskins had pushed south earlier in the winter in small numbers and increased into February, although they were still spotty in distribution. Redpolls were almost completely restricted to the north and west until mid-February, when a handful started appearing elsewhere. Purple Finches were almost non-existent after a moderate fall flight, while Evening Grosbeaks were a little more common than the last two winters, but still nothing in comparison to the invasions of decades past. A handful of Pine Grosbeaks and crossbills round out the list and now we'll just have to see if there's a better irruption in the winter of 2015-16.

<i>Date</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Observer</i>
Lapland Longspur			
12/20	1	Stuart Farm, Stratham	G. Tillman
01/01	2	Stuart Farm, Stratham	G. Tillman
01/01	1	Chickering Farm, Westmoreland	P. Gurn, E. Synnott
01/08	1	Krif Road, Keene	P. Gurn, E. Synnott
01/12	1	Agway, Main St., Walpole	D. Clark
02/07	4	Agway, Main St., Walpole	K. Cox, D. Clark
02/25	7	Agway, Main St., Walpole	H. Galbraith
Smith's Longspur			
12/18	1	Bickford Farm, Sandwich	T. Vazzano, R. Ridgely
Snow Bunting			
12/01	25	Hampton Beach SP	G.& A. Robbins
12/04	35	Hampton Beach SP	R. Downs
12/08	14	Boggy Meadow Farm, Walpole	D. Clark
12/15	21	Berlin	B. Gagnon
12/20	90	Exeter Falls Dr., Hampton Falls	D. Deifik
01/12	24	Boggy Meadow Farm, Walpole	P. Gurn, E. Synnott
01/31	80	Sherman Farm, Rt. 113 at River Rd., Conway	R. Steber
02/06	10	River Rd., Walpole	D. Clark
02/07	3	Exeter WTP	S. Heron
02/15	25	Alton	B. Welch

WINTER SEASON

Date # Location Observer

Orange-crowned Warbler

12/07 1 Fort Stark, New Castle S. Mirick, J. Lambert
02/15 1 Gentian Dr., Concord G. Coorssen



Common Yellowthroat by Scott Heron, 12/13/14, Urban Forestry Ctr., Portsmouth, NH.

Common Yellowthroat

12/03 1 Urban Forestry Ctr., Portsmouth P. Miliotis
01/25 1 Urban Forestry Ctr., Portsmouth B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert
01/27 1 Faculty Rd., Durham J. McKibben

Black-throated Blue Warbler

12/26 1 Old Hancock Rd., Hancock S. Blanchette

Palm Warbler - Western subsp.

12/20 1 Stuart Farm, Stratham G. Tillman

Palm Warbler - Yellow subsp.

01/22 1 Fort Stark, New Castle J. Lambert, L. Kras

Pine Warbler

12/21 1 Rochester Neck Rd., Rochester L. Kras
12/31 1 Autumn Ln., Merrimack T. Johnson
01/03 1 Morrill St., Gilford K. Klapper
01/12 1 Morrill St. feeder, Gilford P. Hunt
01/22 1 Woodland Rd., N. Hampton J. Lambert, L. Kras
02/09 1 Willow Rd., E. Kingston D. Skillman
02/15 1 Autumn Ln., Merrimack T. Johnson

Yellow-rumped Warbler

12/01 3 Odiorne Point SP, Rye G.& A. Robbins
12/15 1 Woodland Rd., N. Hampton J. Lambert
12/20 1 Parson's Rd., Rye P. Hunt
12/24 1 Plainfield Rd., W. Lebanon L. Bunten
01/03 1 Star Island, Rye B. Griffith, Isles of Shoals CBC
01/18 1 Odiorne Point SP, Rye S. Heron, C. McPherson
01/22 1 East Side Dr., Concord F. Philippe
01/27 1 East Side Dr., Concord F. Philippe
02/11 1 East Side Dr., Concord F. Philippe

Eastern Towhee

02/25 1 Concord Pt., Rye J. Maher

Date # Location Observer



Chipping Sparrow by Steve Mirick, 1/23/15, Exeter, NH.

Chipping Sparrow

12/01 1 Tilton Hill Rd./Suncook R., Pittsfield G.& A. Robbins
12/04 1 Monadnock Community Hospital, Peterborough P. Brown
12/04 1 Ten Rod Rd., Rochester D. Hubbard
12/14 1 April Ave. at Academy St., Boscawen P. Hunt, J. Cosentino
12/21 1 Rochester Neck Rd., Rochester L. Kras
01/04 1 Upper City Rd., Pittsfield A. Borrer
01/18 1 Hayes Park, Exeter S. Mirick
01/20 3 Hayes Park, Exeter J. Lambert
02/11 2 Hayes Park, Exeter P. Hunt

Clay-colored Sparrow

12/20 1 Newfields Sector, Seacoast CBC B. Goodwin

Field Sparrow

01/20 1 Hayes Park, Exeter J. Lambert
02/14 1 Hayes Park, Exeter S. Mirick

Savannah Sparrow

12/15 1 Merrimack R. RR trestle, Concord P. Hunt
01/09 1 Boggy Meadow Farm, Walpole W. Ward
01/19 1 River Rd., Walpole D. Clark
01/25 4 Great Bay Farm, Greenland S. Heron,
K. Wilmarth, C. McPherson, J. Maher, A. Altena
01/31 1 Trinity Farm, Orford J. MacQueen
02/07 3 Stuart Farm, Stratham S. Mirick

Savannah Sparrow - Ipswich subsp.

12/27 1 Hampton Beach SP K. Rosenberg
01/18 1 Rye Harbor SP S. Heron, C. McPherson
02/01 3 Yankee Fisherman's Coop., Seabrook O. Burton



Fox Sparrow by Siobhan Basile, 1/26/15, Epping, NH.

Date	#	Location	Observer
Fox Sparrow			
12/01	1	Nashua R. behind DMV office	J. Maher
12/03	1	Tilton Hill Rd./Suncook R., Pittsfield	G.& A. Robbins
12/04	1	South Rd., Kensington	G. Gavutis
12/14	1	Appleton St., Concord	A. Robbins, D. Lania
12/15	1	Woodland Rd., N. Hampton	J. Lambert
01/14	1	Whitey Ct., Epping	S. Basile

Date	#	Location	Observer
Lincoln's Sparrow			
12/20	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	S. Mirick
02/01	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	P. Hunt

Date	#	Location	Observer
Swamp Sparrow			
12/01	2	Hinsdale Setbacks	P. Gurn
12/01	1	Odiorne Point SP, Rye	G.& A. Robbins
12/08	1	Great Pond, Kingston	S. Heron
12/20	1	Greenland Sector, Coastal CBC	S.& J. Mirick
12/20	1	Highland Park Ave., Rye	P. Hunt, et al.
01/01	1	Wallis Rd., Rye	P. Hunt
01/25	2	Northshore Rd., Hampton	S. Mirick
02/01	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	P. Hunt

Date	#	Location	Observer
White-crowned Sparrow			
12/20	3	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	S. Mirick
12/27	1	N. River Rd. fields, Milford	R. Suomala, K. Mitchell

Date	#	Location	Observer
White-crowned Sparrow - Gambel's subsp.			
02/01	1	Great Bay Farm, Greenland	P. Hunt, et al.
02/21	1	Orchard Hill Rd., Peterborough	S. Joseph

Date	#	Location	Observer
Scarlet Tanager			
12/01	1	Lilac Circle, Londonderry	M. Vanini

Date	#	Location	Observer
Red-winged Blackbird			
01/11	10	Airport Road, Keene	W. Ward
01/15	20	South Rd., Kensington	G. Gavutis
01/18	1	Perkins Rd., Rye	P. Hunt, et al.
01/25	20	Northshore Rd., Hampton	S. Mirick
01/25	25	Highland Park Ave., Rye	P. Hunt, et al.



Rusty Blackbird by Scott Heron, 12/2/14, Kingston, NH.

Date	#	Location	Observer
Rusty Blackbird			
12/02	1	Wadleigh Point Rd., Kingston	S. Bennett, S. Heron
01/13	2	Barrington	D. Sanders

Date	#	Location	Observer
Common Grackle			
12/03	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch
12/21	1	Willand Dr., Dover	J. Lambert
12/25	3	Riverside Farm Dr., Lee	D. Blezard
12/28	1	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch
01/23	15	Pease Intl. Tradeport, Portsmouth	B. Griffith
02/13	3	Stoney Ridge Farm, Mont Vernon	S. Strasen

Date	#	Location	Observer
Brown-headed Cowbird			
12/01	6	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	A. Burnett
01/05	100	South Rd., E. Kingston	D. Finch
02/08	1	Darcie Dr., Jaffrey	K. Yurenka



Baltimore Oriole by Pam Hunt, 12/13/14, Brentwood, NH.

Date	#	Location	Observer
Baltimore Oriole			
12/01	2	Prospect St., Dover	L. Keazer
12/13	1	Middle Rd., Brentwood	P. Hunt
12/15	1	Prospect St., Dover	L. Keazer
12/24	1	Haven Ln., Exeter	L. Medlock
01/04	1	Haven Ln., Exeter	L. Medlock



Pine Grosbeak by Lauren Kras, 2/7/15, Gorham, NH.

Date	#	Location	Observer
Pine Grosbeak			
12/20	6	Base Station Rd., Crawfords Purchase	D. Govatski
12/21	1	Wiggin Farm Conservation Land, Newmarket	K. Dorsey
12/22	2	Back Lake, Pittsburg	L. Kras, Pittsburg CBC
01/21	2	Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	B. Crowley, C. Nims, J. Scott
02/07	2	Gorham Hydro Station, Gorham	B. Griffith, L. Kras, J. Lambert

Date	#	Location	Observer
Red Crossbill			
12/14	2	Westmoreland S. sector, Keene CBC	P. Brown, et al.
12/22	1	Pittsburg CBC	P. Brown, et al.
12/27	1	Mountain Lakes, Haverill	W. Hutcheson
12/28	2	Loon Rock Rd., Holderness	I. MacLeod

WINTER SEASON

Red Crossbill—continued

01/20	1	Green Rd., Kingston	J. Lambert
02/01	8	Squam Lakes Natural Science Ctr., Holderness	I. MacLeod
02/16	1	Squam Lakes Natural Science Ctr., Holderness	A. Altena
02/22	3	Antrim Rd., Hancock	P. Brown

White-winged Crossbill

12/05	1	Jefferson	L. Kras
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Common Redpoll

12/05	3	Jefferson	L. Kras
12/07	45	Lake Sunapee	D. Jackson
12/13	5	Miltmore Rd., Antrim	A. Soule
12/13	5	Squam Lakes Natural Science Ctr., Holderness	I. MacLeod
12/13	65	Sunapee State Beach, Newbury	J. Gamble
12/14	2	Westmoreland S. sector, Keene CBC	P. Brown, et al.
12/15	24	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain, Carroll	N. Mitiguy
12/20	2	Great Bog, Banfield Rd., Portsmouth	P. Hunt, et al.
01/01	130	Woodward Rd., Westmoreland	A. Burnett
01/06	30	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski
01/21	36	Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	B. Crowley, C. Nims, J. Scott
01/22	50	Hammond Hollow, Gilsum	M. Wright
01/24	90	Ridgewood Rd., Bartlett	R. Steber
01/28	50	Bretton Woods X-C Ski Area, Carroll	L. Bergum
01/30	50	E. Shore Dr., Madison	G. Bailey
02/04	130	Diamond Ledge, Sandwich	T. Vazzano
02/06	250	Kilburn St., Littleton	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/07	200	Mansion Hill Dr., Lincoln	P. Hunt
02/09	160	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski
02/14	200	Daniel Webster College, Nashua	C. McPherson
02/14	75	Lund Ln., Warren	M. Cordero
02/15	140	Lund Ln., Warren	M. Cordero

Hoary Redpoll

02/04	1	Diamond Ledge, Sandwich	T. Vazzano
02/06	1	Kilburn St., Littleton	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
02/07	1	Mansion Hill Dr., Lincoln	P. Hunt
02/21	1	Clapp Pond Rd., Marlborough	K. Klapper



Evening Grosbeak by Jen Esten, 12/21/14, New London, NH.

Evening Grosbeak

12/07	7	Joslin Rd. gravel pit, Surry	W. Ward
12/13	5	Twin View Dr., Twin Mountain, Carroll	N. Mitiguy

12/14	14	Hammond Hollow, Gilsum	M. Wright
12/21	9	Bailey Rd., Jefferson	D. Govatski
12/21	1	Knollwood Rd., New London	J. Esten
12/22	27	Tabor Rd., Pittsburg	Z. Cornell, R. Suomala
12/27	3	Mountain Lakes, Haverill	W. Hutcheson
01/17	1	Wentworth by the Sea, New Castle	P. Eppig
01/21	36	Chickwolnepy Rd., Milan	B. Crowley, C. Nims, J. Scott
01/25	8	Franconia	G. Jeffryes
02/07	6	Lancaster Elementary School, Ice Pond Rd.	S. Stoddard



Great Horned Owl by Len Medlock, 1/6/15, Exeter, NH.



Long-tailed Ducks by Scott Heron, 12/7/14, Hampton, NH.



Northern Flicker (left) and Red-bellied Woodpecker by Carolyn Borkoski, 1/23/15, Bedford, NH.

Christmas Bird Count Summary 2014-2015

by David Deifk



Gray Jay by Jason Lambert, 1/22/15, Pittsburg CBC, Day Rd., Pittsburg, NH.

This year's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) were held between December 14, 2014 and January 5, 2015. There are 19 counts whose center is within New Hampshire borders. Although centered in Vermont, the Barnet and Saxtons River CBCs overlap into New Hampshire as well. Two of the New Hampshire counts have substantial overlap into neighboring states. The Hanover-Norwich CBC extends into Vermont and the Isles of Shoals CBC extends substantially into Maine. Three other counts have minor overlap into neighboring states as well, those being Errol-Umbagog and North Conway into Maine and a tiny bit of Nashua into Massachusetts. Sightings from the New Hampshire portion of the Saxtons River and Barnet, Vermont counts do not appear on the CBC table but are discussed in the individual count highlights.

Total species across all counts were 144. That was only two species less than last year's total. There were no new species to the state this year, thus, the total of species ever seen remains at 248. There have only been three new species in the last eight years, a Fish Crow on the Nashua-Hollis Count last year, a Northern Parula on the Coastal count in 2011, and a Clay-colored Sparrow for the Concord count in 2006. There were 12 species that set new record high counts for the state, above the average of 7.5 over the last ten years. Eight of the 12 of these new records came from the Coastal CBC, the exceptions coming from the Peterborough-Hancock count, which set a new record for Wild Turkey with 322, and the Lee-Durham count with a record tally of two Red-shouldered Hawks and 74 Red-bellied Woodpeckers. The last and quite notable state high came from the AMC-Crawford Count with 30 Snow Geese. They were also the only Snow Goose seen in the state this year. There were 97 individual count high records this year, about 40% above average for the

last few years. There were 24 species new to their respective counts, about 20% above average for recent years.

There were some interesting waterfowl records this year. The AMC-Crawford count recorded 30 Snow Geese, a new state high count. This was new for the count and only the second occurrence of the species in the last five years. The last record was two birds seen in Concord in 2009. Wood Duck was seen in the highest number since 2006. Two counts set individual high counts for the species. For our most numerous ducks, American Black Duck and Mallard both fell off from their relatively high numbers of last year to about average for the last several years. The presence of Black Scoter on three inland counts this year is without precedent. It was a new species for the Laconia-New Hampton, Sunapee and Sandwich counts. Hooded Merganser records were more than double their ten year average last year. This year was more than double that total! Common Merganser also more than doubled last year's total. For the third time in four years, Keene recorded Red-breasted Merganser which is quite unusual inland. The Coastal count exceeded its outstanding state record of eight Northern Pintails by one this year. Inland Common Loon records were again relatively numerous with a total of 20 tallied. Sunapee set its count record for the species, and it was new for the Nashua-Hollis count. Widely present open water certainly contributed to the trend of inland waterfowl.

As for raptors, Bald Eagles were down a bit to a total of 45 birds compared to the CBC record of 56 birds last year; however, as late as 1999, state totals were in the single digits.



Red-shouldered Hawk by Zeke Cornell, found during the Concord CBC, 12/14/14.

Red-shouldered Hawk staged a major incursion, being seen on six counts, including two individuals on the Lee-Durham Count for a state high. Not even recorded annually, the total of eight birds far exceeds the maximum of two ever seen in one year. Two American Kestrels were found this year. This is the first time in eight years that more than one bird has been seen, being completely missed as often as not. As recently as 13 years ago, American Kestrel was seen in at least the high single digits on an annual basis.

Red-bellied Woodpecker continues its presence in the state. The Lee-Durham count exceeded its own record of 53 set last year with 74 birds. The Coastal count broke their previous record as well with 69 birds and seven other counts set individual count highs. The total exceeded last year's statewide count by more than 50%. To show that last year's outstanding count of seven Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was not an isolated anomaly, eight were recorded this year. It was new to three counts including the Littleton count in the northern part of the state. Until the last few years, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker often went unrecorded statewide.

Eastern Bluebird continues a major upward trend with a record total of 882 seen across the state. Until two years ago, we had an average of 228 statewide. The total was 388 in 2012 and then 620 last year. The Coastal CBC set a new state count high of 238 exceeding its own record from 2012. American Robin bounced back from a relatively poor year last year to about average for recent years. Cedar Waxwing recovered nicely from last year's low count to almost triple that of last year. Amazingly, Bohemian Waxwing went unreported this year. The major irruption we saw this winter did not start in earnest until after the counts.

Notable finds on the Coastal count were four species of warblers including only the 13th record for Palm Warbler statewide. Eastern Towhee and Lincoln's Sparrow were rare finds as well.

As for irruptive finches, all expected species were seen except for White-winged Crossbill, which was absent; however, no finch experienced a major incursion this year. Common Redpolls were seen in modest numbers after only one was seen last year. Littleton was able to record the always rare Hoary Redpoll for the first time. Pine Siskin was present in much greater numbers than last year's 59 with over 1,000 tallied. There were 70 Evening Grosbeaks, certainly an improvement over last year's 11. Overall the trend has been downward over the last 25 years.

Individual Count Highlights

Nashua-Hollis

- First count record: Common Loon, Eastern Screech-Owl
- Count high: Mute Swan, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-

bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Song Sparrow

- Fish Crow was seen for only the second time on any CBC. The first record was last year in Nashua. Northern Flicker tied its previous count high from 2002.

Peterborough-Hancock

- New state count high: Wild Turkey
- Count high: Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird
- Barred Owl tied its previous record as did Northern Flicker.

Keene

- Count high: Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, American Tree Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird
- Red-breasted Merganser was seen for the third time. Barred Owl tied its previous count high from 2007. Gray Catbird was seen for the fourth time.

Coastal

- New state count high: Northern Pintail, Double-crested Cormorant, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird
- Count high: Lesser Black-backed Gull (tied state high of three), Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch
- Clay-colored Sparrow was seen for the second time on the count, fourth time for the state.



Black-legged Kittiwakes by Scott Heron, 1/3/15, Isles of Shoals CBC.

Isles of Shoals

- Count High: White-winged Scoter, Common Loon

- Carolina Wren was seen for the second time. Peregrine Falcon and Northern Mockingbird were seen for the fourth time.

Lee-Durham

- New state count high: Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Count high: Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Cardinal
- Long-tailed Duck tied its previous count high. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen for the second time. Pine Warbler was seen for the fourth time.

Concord

- First count record: Bufflehead, Red-shouldered Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Count high: Northern Pintail, Common Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird

Laconia

- First count record: Black Scoter, Pine Warbler
- Count high: Wood Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Raven, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Cardinal
- Red-shouldered Hawk was seen for the third time. Merlin was seen for the second time.

Hanover-Norwich

- Count high: Wood Duck, Eastern Bluebird
- White-crowned Sparrow was seen for the second time.

Baker Valley

- Eastern Bluebird was seen for the fourth time.

Littleton

- First count record: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hoary Redpoll
- Count high: Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch
- American Kestrel and Chipping Sparrow were seen for the third time.

Grafton-Bristol

- Count high: Cedar Waxwing
- Eastern Bluebird was seen for the second time.

Errol-Umbagog

- Count high: Wild Turkey
- Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen for the second time.

Pittsburg

- Count high: Bald Eagle, Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers tied their previous

count highs. Cedar Waxwing was seen for the second time.

North Conway

- Count high: Tufted Titmouse
- Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen for the fourth time. Hermit Thrush was seen for the second time.

Lake Sunapee

- First count record: Black Scoter, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Count high: Common Loon, Hairy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal
- Bald Eagle tied its previous high. Common Grackle was seen for the second time.

Manchester

- First count record: Northern Pintail, Red-shouldered Hawk
- Count high: Common Goldeneye, Cooper's Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrow
- Barrow's Goldeneye tied its previous high and was the third count record overall. Hermit Thrush was seen for the third time.

Sandwich

- First count record: Black Scoter, Hooded Merganser, Merlin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rusty Blackbird
- Count high: American Black Duck, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird was seen for the second time.

AMC-Crawford

- New state count high: Snow Goose
- First count record: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Count high: Rock Pigeon, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker
- Black-backed Woodpecker, American Tree Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, and Purple Finch were seen for the third time.

Saxtons River, VT

The count was held on December 20, 2014 with six observers in the New Hampshire portion of the count. They recorded 48 species. Highlights included two Bald Eagles, a Red-shouldered Hawk, two Brown-headed Cowbirds, a Purple Finch and 60 Pine Siskins. The Red-bellied Woodpecker tally of 22 set a new high for the New Hampshire portion of the count. A Rough-legged Hawk was seen during Count Week.

Barnet, VT

The count was held on January 1, 2015 with two observers in the New Hampshire portion of the count. They tallied 24 species. Highlights included one Ruffed Grouse, a Bald Eagle, two Song Sparrows, one Rusty Blackbird, four Common Redpolls, and 23 Evening Grosbeaks.

115th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2014 - Jan. 5, 2015

species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Isl	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Snow Goose	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	**30	30
Canada Goose	637	6	74	4564	17	808	155	112	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	1	278	-	-	6652
Mute Swan	10	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Wood Duck	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Gadwall	-	-	-	6	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Eurasian Wigeon	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
American Wigeon	-	-	-	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
American Black Duck	102	-	2	2045	3	240	23	28	28	-	-	-	2	-	-	12	11	61	-	2557
Mallard	594	-	75	952	4	452	283	555	802	-	-	34	6	119	2	276	409	115	-	4678
Northern Pintail	2	-	-	**9	-	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*2	-	21
Green-winged Teal	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Greater Scaup	-	-	-	1381	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1391
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
King Eider	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Eider	-	-	-	286	1200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1486
Harlequin Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Surf Scoter	-	-	-	178	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	195
White-winged Scoter	-	-	-	185	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	250
Black Scoter	-	-	-	158	20	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*7	-	*7	-	193
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	76	56	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135
Bufflehead	-	-	-	101	-	170	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	273
Common Goldeneye	23	-	-	352	3	30	25	260	-	-	-	CW	3	-	-	5	181	26	-	908
Barrow's Goldeneye	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3
Hooded Merganser	11	-	13	21	-	10	19	207	101	-	4	2	-	-	-	21	-	21	-	430
Common Merganser	24	-	92	-	-	14	66	154	29	-	CW	CW	20	-	-	1	27	390	-	817
Red-br. Merganser	-	-	1	220	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	239
Ruddy Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ruffed Grouse	-	4	3	2	-	-	1	1	2	3	1	-	1	3	3	1	-	9	2	36
Spruce Grouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Wild Turkey	17	**322	126	154	-	174	111	202	103	84	24	10	48	37	36	49	27	46	6	1576
Red-throated Loon	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Common Loon	*1	-	2	96	68	4	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	6	-	7	-	188
Horned Grebe	-	-	-	63	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	CW	-	*26	-	92
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	33	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
Northern Gannet	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Double-cr. Cormorant	-	-	-	**18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18

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Great Cormorant	-	-	-	18	18	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
Great Blue Heron	2	-	-	20	-	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Turkey Vulture	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Bald Eagle	CW	4	6	6	-	4	1	4	3	-	-	CW	2	6	1	2	3	3	-	45
Northern Harrier	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	1	2	5	-	3	2	CW	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	22
Cooper's Hawk	8	-	5	14	-	8	2	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	2	4	-	-	50
Northern Goshawk	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	CW	-	-	1	-	6
Red-shouldered Hawk	-	-	1	1	-	**2	*1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	7
Red-tailed Hawk	61	15	23	**78	-	37	33	13	12	-	2	1	-	-	CW	3	16	3	-	297
Rough-legged Hawk	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
American Kestrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Merlin	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	6
Peregrine Falcon	2	-	-	**4	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	11
American Coot	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Sanderling	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	18	98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	116
Dunlin	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Black-headed Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bonaparte's Gull	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
Ring-billed Gull	138	-	22	227	4	212	99	222	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	87	5	-	1022
Herring Gull	65	-	16	1730	400	2854	4	45	-	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	-	5124
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	3	2	9	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
Nelson's Gull	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lesser Black-bac. Gul	-	-	-	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Great Black-bac. Gull	31	-	4	232	45	170	2	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	514
Black-leg. Kittiwake	-	-	-	1	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Dovekie	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Razorbill	-	-	-	15	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
Black Guillemot	-	-	-	3	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Rock Pigeon	632	48	471	843	-	335	382	102	444	-	58	30	-	1	-	116	498	28	13	4001
Mourning Dove	333	260	216	349	-	217	262	328	243	22	87	6	5	21	113	107	105	123	-	2797
Eastern Screech-Owl	*1	-	-	10	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Great Horned Owl	-	1	-	6	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Barred Owl	-	4	7	1	-	3	2	2	1	-	3	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	29
N. Saw-whet Owl	-	-	-	**6	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8

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115th Christmas Bird Count: Dec. 14, 2014 - Jan. 5, 2015 — continued

species	Nsh	Pet	Kee	Cst	Isl	Lee	Con	Lac	Han	Bak	Lit	Grf	Erl	Pit	Cnw	Sun	Man	San	Amc	Total
Belted Kingfisher	3	-	1	7	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	20
Red-bel. Woodpecker	52	35	38	69	-	**74	23	20	2	-	2	-	1	-	1	2	12	4	-	335
Yellow-bel. Sapsucker	1	CW	-	2	-	1	*1	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	*1	8
Downy Woodpecker	135	119	148	**205	-	182	98	140	94	9	23	12	16	27	32	65	67	65	28	1465
Hairy Woodpecker	41	85	58	52	-	57	43	75	53	5	30	10	9	25	36	54	16	45	19	713
Bla.-bac. Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Northern Flicker	16	2	2	20	-	9	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	59
Pileated Woodpecker	5	22	16	8	-	23	9	16	10	1	5	3	2	9	5	7	4	11	2	158
Eastern Phoebe	-	-	-	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Northern Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
Gray Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	24	-	-	-	-	10	38
Blue Jay	364	559	480	605	-	858	648	792	459	55	135	182	7	26	269	404	196	273	17	6329
American Crow	217	192	382	1153	1	188	221	2204	837	9	88	72	14	19	75	148	326	138	13	6297
Fish Crow	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Raven	5	24	23	5	-	11	15	18	32	2	63	9	59	72	18	10	2	16	6	390
Horned Lark	78	-	16	99	-	10	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	214
Black-cap. Chickadee	796	977	1069	1300	-	1016	717	1300	1290	76	585	302	414	705	746	772	287	1033	195	13580
Boreal Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	-	-	-	-	15	49
Tufted Titmouse	160	189	188	387	-	394	208	241	126	10	7	22	-	-	65	92	135	96	-	2320
Red-br. Nuthatch	4	33	60	19	-	11	35	120	39	2	71	8	55	62	84	27	1	102	31	764
White-br. Nuthatch	193	188	184	289	-	240	179	135	140	8	61	25	4	2	119	74	83	190	5	2119
Brown Creeper	9	5	13	11	-	10	16	19	8	-	8	-	2	1	7	3	1	16	-	129
Carolina Wren	38	3	20	29	2	8	12	1	13	-	CW	-	-	-	-	CW	6	-	-	132
Winter Wren	3	-	3	**10	-	4	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Marsh Wren	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Golden-cr. Kinglet	2	12	25	13	-	22	22	3	5	-	37	-	23	18	6	2	5	7	7	209
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Eastern Bluebird	192	45	65	**238	-	165	72	41	8	3	-	1	-	-	-	CW	37	15	-	882
Hermit Thrush	1	1	2	12	1	16	3	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	CW	1	-	-	41
American Robin	308	484	576	1951	1	1556	763	2633	263	15	-	69	-	7	2	103	143	419	-	9293
Gray Catbird	-	-	1	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
N. Mockingbird	76	-	8	45	1	27	25	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	7	-	-	204
European Starling	1630	212	1031	9627	-	1459	614	354	403	63	253	65	4	49	82	347	361	46	-	16600
American Pipit	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Cedar Waxwing	237	324	196	35	-	368	330	448	343	12	-	107	-	1	2	205	188	105	-	2901

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Ylw.-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	5
Pine Warbler	CW	-	-	1	-	1	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Palm Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Yellowthroat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Eastern Towhee	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Am. Tree Sparrow	163	95	152	358	-	232	84	112	130	6	21	4	-	1	26	48	119	25	2	1578	
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
Clay-colored Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Savannah Sparrow	-	-	-	3	-	-	CW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Fox Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Song Sparrow	102	1	18	-	3	56	40	11	4	-	2	2	-	-	3	1	7	3	-	253	
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Swamp Sparrow	2	-	-	7	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
White-thr. Sparrow	71	6	52	215	-	77	67	32	11	1	1	1	-	1	4	4	20	14	-	577	
White-cr. Sparrow	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Dark-eyed Junco	642	181	733	752	-	689	430	345	396	27	11	10	-	2	68	98	262	128	5	4779	
Lapland Longspur	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Snow Bunting	-	-	-	140	-	15	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	14	-	9	-	183	
Northern Cardinal	254	62	152	330	3	283	158	140	93	6	8	8	-	-	24	47	45	38	1	1652	
Red-winged Blackbird	4	-	6	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	CW	1	-	40	
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*2	-	4
Common Grackle	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Br.-headed Cowbird	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Small finch sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	8
Pine Grosbeak	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	22	3	-	-	-	-	6	35
Purple Finch	-	-	16	7	-	5	-	16	2	8	2	-	-	-	3	4	-	3	6	72	
House Finch	332	40	83	343	-	125	148	46	94	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	19	6	-	1248	
Red Crossbill	-	CW	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	1	-	1	-	20	-	34	
Common Redpoll	1	85	2	3	-	5	3	18	8	-	87	-	16	41	-	CW	-	5	27	301	
Hoary Redpoll	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Pine Siskin	33	115	38	10	-	1	75	423	90	4	152	-	-	3	22	13	7	-	29	1015	
American Goldfinch	772	429	434	968	-	948	559	734	114	66	66	20	1	5	97	73	165	431	3	5885	
Evening Grosbeak	-	-	20	-	-	CW	-	-	10	-	10	CW	1	31	-	2	-	-	-	74	
House Sparrow	1119	120	325	1166	-	394	440	330	388	-	-	30	-	-	59	73	252	20	-	4716	
Number of Species	65	42	61	121	34	74	65	62	50	25	43	30	28	35	37	50	48	54	28		
Number of Participants	23	50	32	31	17	33	26	28	25	1	14	5	10	16	22	18	14	22	11		

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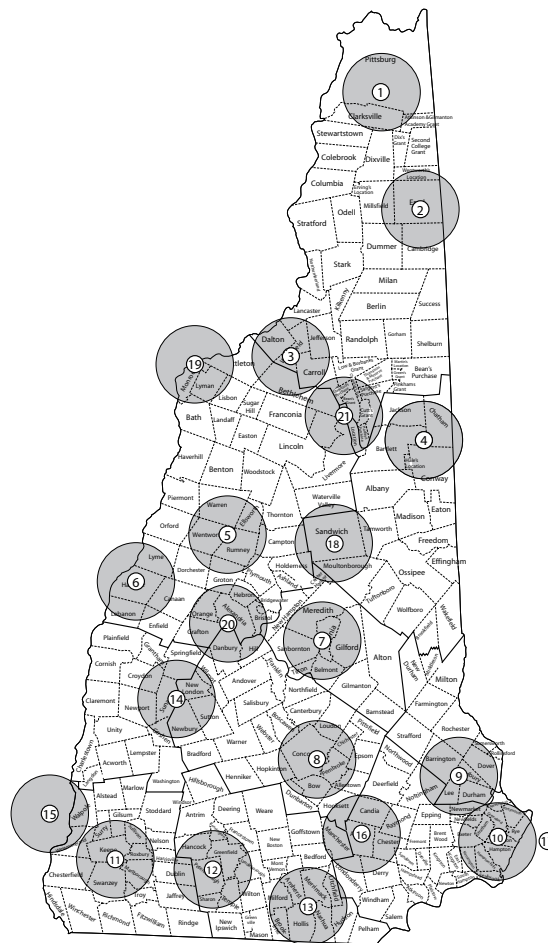
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Christmas Bird Count Compilers

1	Pittsburg	David Govatski
2	Errol-Umbagog	Chris Martin
3	Littleton	David Govatski
4	North Conway	Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr.
5	Baker Valley	Steve Rounds
6	Hanover-Norwich	Walter Ellison & Nancy Martin
7	Laconia-New Hampton	Pam Hunt
8	Concord	Robert Quinn
9	Lee-Durham	Kurk Dorsey
10	Coastal	Len Medlock
11	Keene	Phil Brown
12	Peterborough-Hancock	Dave Rowell
13	Nashua-Hollis	Richard Bielawski
14	Lake Sunapee	Gary Stansfield
15	Saxton's River, VT	Donald Clark
16	Manchester	Richard Bielawski
17	Isles of Shoals	Ben Griffith
18	Sandwich	Tony Vazzano
19	Barnet, VT	Charlie Browne
20	Grafton-Bristol	Bill Belanger
21	AMC Crawford Notch	Craig Repasz



Field Trip Report

My First Christmas Bird Count Experience

by *Robbie Prieto*

I first learned about the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) at a NH Audubon Seacoast Chapter meeting. Lauren Kras told me about it and said that I was more than welcome to participate. I decided to join in because I thought it would be fun. I also wanted to learn from more experienced birders about the birds we might see and I wanted to help count the birds that were here in New Hampshire during the winter.

I was on a team with Lauren, Ben Griffith, and Jason Lambert. We birded for two days, on a Saturday (for the Coastal CBC) and a Sunday (for the Lee-Durham CBC). It was cold – very cold! – but it was still very fun!

On the first day, we went to Odiorne Point State Park, the Urban Forestry Center, some neighborhoods in Portsmouth, and Pulpit Rocks and other spots on Route 1A. We saw Razorbills, a Common Yellowthroat, and lots of other great birds. I learned a lot from my team, such as how the Red-breasted Nuthatch's call really does sound like a squeaky baby nuthatch! I got a couple of new birds for my life list during the day and helped count whatever we saw along the way.

Saturday evening, I went to the compilation dinner

and met a bunch of other birders. We all got to share our sightings, talk about birds, and learn what the other teams saw. That was fun and it was interesting too. Len Medlock entered the number of birds for each species on a computer to keep track of it all.

On the second day, we went to the Pickering Ponds trails and some neighborhoods (lots of neighborhoods!), in Gonic (part of Rochester). We saw an Iceland Gull at Pickering and in Gonic, when we were checking through a flock of American Goldfinches and sparrows, I spotted a Pine Warbler. I was amazed to see the warbler and really excited to have found something unexpected! We all high-fived on that one!

The Christmas Bird Count was a great experience and I would definitely do it again next year. I think it's a terrific way to learn more about New Hampshire birds, meet other people who really enjoy birding, and help birds by counting their numbers and seeing what species are out there in the wintertime around our area.

Robbie Prieto is an avid 12-year old birder from Nottingham, NH.

Smith's Longspur in New Hampshire

by Tony Vazzano

On December 18, 2014, while returning home from some errands in the late afternoon, I received a call from Bob Ridgely. A random call from Bob on my cell phone often means he has spotted a good bird and it was certainly the case this time. He was sure he had a Smith's Longspur! It was with a few Snow Buntings and he was looking at it from close range. Bob is an ornithologist and he looks at birds differently than most birders do, so I didn't doubt the identification. It is extremely rare in the Northeast with only a handful of records and I didn't think there was even one record of this bird in New Hampshire. So, rather than take the time to get details from him, he told me the location and I turned the car around and headed for North Sandwich, about 15 minutes away.

On the way, I quickly scanned my National Geographic Society field guide while I waited briefly at a stop light. I once saw a Smith's Longspur in beautiful breeding plumage, but it is not nearly as bright or gaudy in winter. Still, it is different enough from the winter Lapland Longspur and the other longspurs to be able to make an identification of a bird seen well. The Smith's Longspur breeds in the arctic from Alaska to Hudson Bay. It normally winters in a relatively small geographic area, covering parts of Nebraska, Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma, northwest Louisiana and northeast Texas. It migrates through the region between the summer and winter grounds, rarely getting this side of the Midwest.

Nervous that the bird wouldn't stay put, I called Bob to see if it was still being cooperative. It was, but as he was telling me that, I heard him shout to someone nearby. Apparently a truck had entered the driveway and was about to move through the area where the bird was. Bob was trying to stop it as the birds would surely fly. He managed to let the driver know that there was a very rare bird just a few feet away and that I was only a few minutes away in my car with hopes of seeing this rarity. Sandwich is a small town and the truck driver knew me and wasn't in a hurry. Phew! I pulled into the driveway of the farm and soon saw Bob in his car and the other vehicle in front of me. Bob was pointing toward a snowbank and cleared area where the birds were. I was surprised that the birds were so close; only about 30 feet away. I picked up my binoculars and was soon sated with wonderful looks at this rare avian visitor. The buffy, streaky underside was very distinct and ruled out other types of longspurs. It isn't the world's most beautiful bird in winter plumage but it looked quite spectacular knowing that we were the only birders to ever see one in New Hampshire.

After a few minutes the birds flew and then landed a short distance away. As I was setting up the telescope to try to digiscope a photo of the bird for documentation, all the birds flew off and kept going.

The next morning a couple of other birders joined us in the search and Bob spoke with the property owner to secure permission for any birder to be on the property looking. It didn't matter; the longspur was a one-day-wonder. According to the bylaws of the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee, a first state record must have either three observers, a photo or an audio recording. So if this sighting is accepted, it will be considered as "hypothetical" on the state list. Still, the bird was very real and the next time you see a small, darker bird with a flock of Snow Buntings, it can no longer be absolutely assumed to be a Lapland Longspur.

Gyr Falcon Alert!

by Stephen R. Mirick



Gyr Falcon by Jason Lambert, 1/26/15, Hampton Harbor, NH.

The Superbowl of Birding is generally considered a "friendly" competition although teams tend to be very competitive and secretive with respect to birds that are found. The spirit of the competition, however, is meant to be friendly and a significant rule requires the sharing of very rare birds that are seen on the day of the competition. Rare birds must be phoned in and shared as soon as they are seen and a rare bird was seen during the 2015 competition!

A Gyr Falcon is one of the most treasured of sightings for a birder. Its huge dominating presence combined with its rare arctic wanderings and nomadic behavior make it a prize. The fact that a Gyr Falcon was around was clear, as one had been nicely photographed in Madbury in mid-December and then seen again in Wells, Maine; however, it had been almost impossible to try to relocate by the many birders trying to find it during the month preceding the Superbowl. Trying



The Gyrfalcon with feathers flying as it consumes a Herring Gull on the distant mudflats in Hampton Harbor, NH. Photo by Len Medlock, 1/25/15.

to pin it down seemed nearly impossible (except for one lucky birder who saw it twice at the Rochester WTP!). As the venerable hawk watcher Paul Roberts stated in an email post to Massbird (1/27/15):

“You are looking for one individual bird the size of a large chicken in an area of roughly 100-200 square miles (considering where it had been seen previously). That bird can spend a lot of time sitting down out of sight from cars, or it can be flying distances of 50 or many more miles a day linearly without giving it a second thought. What are the odds of seeing a “chicken” in such circumstances?”

Paul also described research conducted by Kurt Burnham and Ian Newton which showed (with satellite transmitters) that some individual Gyrfalcons can have winter home ranges of up to 25,000 square miles! (Find a chicken in that!). They also showed that some Gyrfalcons had no winter home ranges at all, and one was seen to travel over 2,800 miles continuously over 200 days!

Fortune was with the 2015 Superbowl teams on January 25, however! This bird had taken a liking to feeding on gulls and, on the morning of the competition, breakfast for this Gyrfalcon was in Hampton Harbor! First, at 8:25 am, Greg Keller’s team from Gordon College, the “Gordon College Kingfishers,” saw and reported the Gyrfalcon as it flew over their heads at Hampton Beach State Park! Following up on this, Christopher Ciccone and Len Medlock came across the bird as it appeared to be hunting over the flats at Hampton Harbor. Jane and I got the call at around 8:50 and arrived just in time to see this powerful bird overtake an adult



Steve and Jane Mirick watching the Gyrfalcon on 1/25/15 in Hampton, NH. Photo by Len Medlock.

Herring Gull and quickly kill it directly in front of us on the mud flats! It had flown from spot to spot on the mudflats until it isolated an adult Herring Gull, and pounced on its back as it attempted to fly off.

Now comes the fun! As this bird was in place to pluck and eat the bird it had just killed, it was clear that it would likely stay there for quite a while. Text messages, emails, and phone calls started going crazy! I emailed the Massbird and NHBirds bird groups at 9:05 am. I sent a bulk text message out at 9:07 am.

It took a while for birders to arrive, but they started coming! The bird stayed until at least 9:45 am and was seen by the “Northern Flea Flickers,” the “Great Marsh Wrens” and the “Veery Hawkwards.” Even the “Twitchers in the Rye” abandoned their territory in Rye to come down to see the bird!

The fact that it appeared on a day when many birders were out already searching for birds, and stayed in one place feeding, was a gift for a lot of birders on a cold and wintry January day!

Winter Field Notes 2014 – 2015

Compiled by Jane Wing and Rebecca Suomala

Rockingham Bald Eagle

by Scott Heron

Taken from a post to the NH Birds e-mail list, 12/16/14.



This Bald Eagle was seen and photographed multiple times in Salem and Kingston. The photos show the missing flight feathers that identify this individual. Photos by Kevin Talbot, 11/25/14 (left) and Scott Heron, 12/14/14, at Powwow Pond, Kingston, NH.

Steve Liffmann, Kyle Wilmarth, Kevin Talbot, and I managed to photograph what we believe to be the same adult Bald Eagle on different occasions in Salem and Kingston. The bird appeared to be missing a couple of outer secondaries on the left wing, possibly due to an injury, giving it a very distinctive wing pattern. Chris Martin was kind enough to weigh in and agreed that the photos suggest they could be of the same individual.

The bird was first noted by Kyle Wilmarth on Canobie Lake in Salem on September 14. He last spotted it on Canobie on September 31. I had first noticed it over Powwow Pond in Kingston on November 23, along with another adult, snacking on an American Coot. Kevin Talbot managed to photograph the individual on Powwow Pond on November 25 as it snatched up an American Coot. He posted the series on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.798014693573872.1073741905.108958195812862&type=1>

Steve Liffmann had photographed the bird over Arlington Pond in Salem on December 13. Finally, I had seen it again back on Powwow Pond on December 14 with two other adults.

It would be interesting to keep an eye out for this individual as this is perhaps a rare opportunity to ID and keep tabs on a specific eagle purely by the shape of its wings*.

**Although the loss of the missing secondaries may have been due to an injury or accident, the distinctive appearance of the left wing is probably temporary, since several of the photos seem to show replacement feathers growing in. - Chris Martin, NH Audubon Raptor Biologist.*

Six Woodpeckers at Once!

by George Robbins

On Sunday, Dec 14, 2014, I participated in the Concord, NH Christmas Bird Count. My morning ritual for more than 30 years has been to walk the east side of the Merrimack River from Concord to Penacook. At about 8:30 am, approximately a mile and a half south of the former Sewall's Falls dam location, I heard the "chack chack" call of my first Red-bellied Woodpecker of the day. I stopped to listen as I watched a Wood Duck fly upstream. As I listened, a Pileated Woodpecker started in his long series of "wuk wuk wuk" notes. A close "pik" of the Downy Woodpecker and the louder "keek" of a Hairy Woodpecker were also evident at this time. As I contemplated how I was going to cross a piece of swollen river bottom, a Northern Flicker started in with his "kiew" call from across the river. As I was just thinking how cool would that be if a sapsucker chimed in, it did! A faint, but unmistakable "weow" of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

completed the audio. All six species of woodpeckers were calling at the same time, a very special moment on a New Hampshire Christmas Bird Count.

Barred Owl Visitor

by Connie McDade



Barred Owl photographed in her Littleton, NH yard, by Connie McDade in January and February, 2015.

A Barred Owl befriended me this winter. "Strix" arrived January 6, 2015 with the Arctic plunge and continued to take refuge during the winter. The owl was wonderful company for me to enjoy and it was still here February 16, 2015!

Initially, the owl roosted in a red spruce tree right by the house during daylight hours seven days a week. At times, its gaze would follow me from window to window as I walked from place to place in the house. I think it was hunting for moles and mice, as occasionally I would see it fly to the ground and successfully get something. The owl did not seem to mind my presence. It discovered the railing of my back deck as a lovely place to take in the warmth of the sun. It then moved on to adopt the top of the bird feeder as another look-out spot. It does not seem to bother the resident and migratory birds; they ignore the owl and go right

on feeding. The squirrel population has stayed at bay. The owl began to extend its range and much to my surprise adopted the top of the wooden flagpole as a perch, perhaps to get a better view. The owl has spent hours up there, not easy to do, as there is not much of an area on the rounded top of the pole for a foothold.

Peregrine Courtship – Nashuans, Look UP!

by Christine Sheridan

Taken from a post to the NH Birds e-mail list, 12/2/14.



(Left) Peregrine Falcon chasing a Red-tailed Hawk in downtown Nashua in early December, 2014. Photo by Chris Sheridan.

(Below) The Peregrine Falcon courting pair courting in early December, 2014, in Nashua, NH. Photo by Chris Sheridan.



The female Peregrine Falcon, V46, who was engaged in courtship early in December but later chased off by another female. Photo by Deanne Fortnam.

During the first few days of December (2014) a pair of Peregrine Falcons were engaged in spectacular courtship flights (and harassing Red-tailed Hawks) over the downtown Nashua area. They were most often observed on and around the Main Street Methodist Church.

Interestingly, this is not the pair that has resided, and eventually raised young here, in the past few years. Both of these birds are banded. The male, 22BD, is a 2013 “graduate” of Tufts Healthcare in Watertown, MA and the female, V46, hails from a Middletown, CT 2011 brood. It will be interesting to see what happens if/when the resident pair returns.

Note: A large female Peregrine Falcon moved into town later in December and apparently chased off the smaller female that was previously bonding with the male. The male, at first, appeared to be terrified of the larger female.

Northern Goshawk Preys on Wild Turkey

by Valerie Walters



Northern Goshawk feeding on a Wild Turkey, 1/13/15, by Valerie Walters in New Durham, NH.

I live on the New Durham Ridge, 500 feet in from a dirt road and see a lot of wildlife in my yard. The past couple of winters, I have had between 10 and 17 Wild Turkeys on most days. They eat the sunflower seed that falls to the ground when the birds and squirrels visit my feeders. This winter, I put a couple of feeders in the trees on the north side of my house at the edge of my woods.

On January 13, in the mid-morning, I heard hysterical Wild Turkeys over in that section of the yard. A little while later, when I was in the kitchen, I noticed movement down behind my car in my parking area. It was lightly snowing and I saw what looked like dark shards of ice all over the yard and parking area. Later, I discovered they were actually turkey feathers with a dusting of snow on them. I saw something throwing dark bits in the air over and over. I could only see the rear of the bird and it looked like a hawk of some kind. I got my camera and took some pictures from the kitchen window before slipping quietly out onto the deck.

When I went out on the deck, I could see that the hawk was pulling feathers out of a dead Wild Turkey and throwing them in the air. At one point, the hawk tried to carry off the Wild Turkey in its talons. It gripped it and

tried lifting it, but it was too heavy and the hawk gave up and continued feeding on the turkey where it had killed it. After I took a few pictures, the hawk noticed me and flew away. It returned three hours later, though, and I was able to get more pictures and study it for a long time through my binoculars. That's when I confirmed that it was a Northern Goshawk and realized that it was also a Northern Goshawk that had tried to grab one of my cats out of a closed window several years ago. It flew into that window stunning itself and stood on my deck rail recovering long enough for me to make a video of it.

After the goshawk flew away from the carcass, I went down to look at it. I also walked up to the feeder where the Wild Turkey had been attacked while eating sunflower seeds off the ground. I saw blood on the ground under the feeder and many, many feathers. There was a long trail of feathers all across my large yard, down into the parking area and down part of the driveway. The Wild Turkey must have tried to escape the Northern Goshawk by trying to get under the back of my car, because that's where the carcass was.

I saw the Northern Goshawk return multiple times to the carcass for three days. Every night, I believe a Grey Fox pulled the carcass out into my driveway. I saw the Grey Fox leaving the carcass when I came home just after dusk the first night. Each morning, I moved the carcass out of my driveway up on a snow bank near where the Northern Goshawk had killed it. During the day, even Blue Jays were feeding off of it. After five days, only the wings were left. I never expected the Northern Goshawk to kill a Wild Turkey. That was quite a surprising event.

Owl versus Crow

by Iain MacLeod



Barred Owl caught in the grip of a dead American Crow before being rescued. Photo by Eric D'Aleo.

On February 14, 2015, Eric D'Aleo, a Naturalist at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, got a call from a neighbor in Plymouth reporting a Barred Owl and an American Crow locked in combat on the ground. Eric went over to the location and found a very strange scene. His first assumption was that both birds were dead, but closer inspection showed that

the owl was alive and grasping onto a low sapling with both feet and its feathers seemed frozen to the shrubs around it. Several twigs seemed to be piercing the owl. The crow was dead (and frozen to the snowy ground), but it had a "death grip" on one of the Barred Owl's legs. The owl was unable to fly because of the attached ballast and was lodged and partially frozen to the base of some shrubs. Eric had to cut the leg of the crow in order to pick up the owl.



American Crow foot still attached to the Barred Owl leg. Photo by Iain MacLeod.

The owl was brought to the Science Center and I helped Animal Care Manager Lauren Moulis examine it. We had to use a pair of pliers to pry open the claws of the severed crow leg to remove it from the owl leg. The owl was very weak and at least one leg seemed completely frozen. Its face was covered with blood (that we think came from the crow).



An American Crow hitting the head of a different Barred Owl, photographed by Iain MacLeod.

Technology Series

New Mega-zoom Cameras

by Iain MacLeod

Bird photography is constantly evolving. In the last couple of years, a new option has come on the scene, so-called mega- or super-zoom cameras. These are essentially “point and shoot” cameras with high magnification optical zoom capability. There are many cameras that advertise high “digital” zoom capacity, but digital zoom takes the central portion of a digital image and crops into it to achieve the effect of a zoom. This means that the existing data is not enhanced or added to, merely displayed at a lower resolution, thereby giving an illusion of an enlarged image. Optical zoom is “true” zoom using the lenses within the camera to magnify the actual image. Doing this in a compact camera is what makes this advancement so exciting. They are a bridge between the small point and shoot models and high-end professional cameras with lenses the length of baseball bats. For the last several years, my primary camera has been a second hand Nikon Coolpix 4500, which I use attached to my spotting scope for “digiscoping.” The Coolpix was a state-of-the-art camera at one point, but at four megapixels, is now an antique. More megapixels means larger, higher resolution images; 12-16 megapixels is the minimum standard now. Some super high-end cameras can be as high as 36 or 40! I was in need of an upgrade. I first heard about the new cadre of mega-zoom cameras in an article that my good friend Paul Roberts wrote for *Hawk Migration Studies* (the journal of the Hawk Migration Association of North America). Paul raved about the flexibility and convenience of his Nikon P510 and made a very compelling argument for it being the perfect camera for a birder who likes to take photographs, but was clear to say that the quality is not at the standard of the giant professional lenses.

In Paul’s article, he referenced a blog by another good friend, Lillian Stokes. Lillian, of course, is an excellent professional bird photographer, so her opinion on these cameras carries a lot of weight. Lillian particularly likes the Canon SX 50 HS.

Here’s some of what Paul wrote (from *The Rise of the Megazoom Camera: A New Era in Birding* or “Honey, Do We Really Need a Scope”, by Paul Roberts, *Hawk Migration Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2):

I was tracking the evolution of the megazoom, waiting for something that had a sufficiently powerful zoom, was technically advanced and broadly well reviewed. When Nikon introduced the Coolpix P510 megazoom (16.1 Megapixels) with a 42X (roughly 1000 mm) optical lens, I bit the bullet.

After a clean-up and several hours in a warm room it was examined again and was found to be recovering. The foot that seemed completely frozen was functioning and, after four days of recuperation, it had made a complete recovery. Eric released it in the same area where it was found. He reports that it was immediately greeted by a raucous gang of crows.

A few days later I was witness to another Barred Owl vs. American Crow incident. This was along Tenney Mountain Highway in Plymouth – not far from where Eric recovered his owl. A Barred Owl was sitting in the sun on a tree stump in the middle of the day. A group of crows landed above it and the Barred Owl seemed to brace itself for an attack. I snapped a few pictures and was lucky to capture an impact of a crow on the owls head. The owl quickly departed to dense cover.

Crabapple Tree Visitors

Photos and text by Robert A. Quinn

A pleasant surprise during the Thanksgiving 2014 snow storm was the presence of four Ruffed Grouse and two Pileated Woodpeckers in the same crabapple tree in my yard in Webster. They came in to the snow covered tree to feed on the small apples and were a wonderful distraction during the power outage!



I purchased the Nikon P510 in July 2012 as a backup for a trip to the back country in Utah . . . The camera has changed how I bird. When I am out tracking individual raptors around dawn, I often cannot identify an individual perched Redtail with my binoculars. It is too dark. But I can photograph it with my megazoom that is much more light-sensitive than my eyes and can then accurately identify individual Red-tailed Hawks by the photos. Driving through chaparral in Texas looking for Ferruginous Hawks, I don't have to climb out of the car, pull my scope and tripod from the trunk, set them up on a busy, often narrow road, and risk life, limb and car insurance to identify a hawk perched in a tree line along the horizon. I can now sit in my car and snap two photos using my megazoom, and identify Redtails a mile or more away before I find that Ferruginous and pull out my scope as well. I can then photograph the Ferruginous at 42X, the equivalent of 1000 mm, or higher digitally, and digitally magnify that image on my camera LCD by 100X to examine details of the bird: is it an adult or immature? What morph?

To my knowledge, currently there are only three [now four or five. IM] other megazooms clearly in the P510's class. In mid-2012, Canon introduced the SX 50 HS (12.1 Megapixel), which offers 50X optical. A friend bought the SX 50, which has excellent images at high magnification and may be a little brighter than the P510 in very low light situations. Several other features of the SX 50 also appeal to me, so I have considered getting it as my new main or backup camera.

In 2013 Nikon introduced the Coolpix P520 (18.1 megapixels), the successor to the 510. I love my P510, but the camera has two irritating flaws. Having used an SLR for 30 years, I shoot everything through the viewfinder. The resolution on the P510 viewfinder is disappointing, easily surpassed by the SX50 and most newer cameras. Second, the LCD display screen on the P510 is fixed, exposed at all times, meaning that you will scratch it as you wear it, just from fabric abrasion alone over time. That gives a limited lifespan to the camera when used frequently. The P520 [and the Canon SX 50. IM] has a multi-angle LCD, which can be flipped closed to protect the screen. The P520 also provides other benefits such as instantaneous Wi-fi connections, but the resolution of the viewfinder apparently has not been improved. As with many new models, the P520 makes some tradeoffs. For example, because the P520 has a larger, brighter LCD screen than the P510, the battery life appears to be significantly reduced.

In the second half of 2013 Panasonic Lumix came out with a 60X optical zoom (1200 mm equivalent), the DMC-FZ70. Lumix has an envious reputation, but the reviews of this model have been mixed, especially regarding the quality of images at high magnification. This model has not had time to form a reliable user base like the P510 and SX 50, so check out the camera and reviews carefully before buying. Panasonic also has

an older model, the LUMIX FZ200 12.1 megapixel camera. The camera's optical zoom is "only" 24X (600 mm) but it has a fast F2.8 aperture across the entire zoom range. At least one photographic professional recommends this as her favorite "megazoom" because of the aperture and the quality of the lens. She believes it provides the closest megazoom experience to a high-end professional DSLR because you can shoot at 24X and crop more extensively to yield a better, higher quality image than you might achieve with larger optical zooms by other manufacturers. The camera, listing at \$599, is somewhat more expensive than most megazooms.

One other model might be worth examining. At the January 2014 Consumer Electronics Show, Samsung introduced a 60X (1200 mm) 16 megapixel megazoom that has received very favorable introductory reviews.

Since Paul wrote his article, Nikon has introduced the P530 (updated version of the P510 at 42X Optical) and the Nikon P600 (most recent model with 60X optical), so options are growing.

Now we'll turn to Lillian Stokes thoughts and observations. Lillian's blog post of Feb. 1, 2013 focused on the Canon SX 50 HS.

I just got the new Canon SX 50 HS point and shoot super-zoom camera and I love it. It's in my right hand, my Canon 1D Mark IV with the 300mm lens and 1.4 teleconverter is in my left hand. The SX 50 HS has a 12.1 megapixel sensor and image stabilization. The focal length when optical and digital zoom are combined is as follows (35 mm equivalent) 24-4800 mm (24-1200mm with optical zoom alone.)

To get good photos, use the camera in good light and keep it in the optical zoom range of 24-1200 mm. This camera does best in good light and photo quality diminishes in low light. If you are really not steady, you could use the camera on a tripod, but I do not advise this.

To zoom closer to the bird, use the Digital Zoom which lets you apply up to 1.5 or 2x (up to 2400mm) worth of digital zoom beyond the optical zoom with a minimum drop in image quality, sort of like applying a 1.5 or 2x teleconverter. Standard lets you zoom all the way in 200x, but there will be a loss of image quality at this far range. You can also use the "Framing Lock" button (on the bottom of the lens barrel) which helps stabilize the image when you take it.

At these extreme zoom ranges, such as 200x, the photo quality is not usable for many things such as fine prints. However, for use on blogs, a facebook page, etc., and the internet, which only require photos of 72 dpi, these photos may be usable.

Don't get me wrong. The Canon SX 50 HS does not produce the same quality images that DSLR cameras do and you should consider purchasing these if you want high quality images. The Canon SX 50 is not in the same league with the big, professional, or near professional DSLR equipment. Then again,

it costs around \$430 vs. the Canon 1D Mark IV originally cost around \$5,000.

The Canon SX 50 HS can make decent bird photographs within the reach of even a novice bird photographer just by shooting on Smart Auto, then Sports Mode for birds in flight. In the hands of more experienced photographers it can provide great fun and the ability to capture good bird photos, even when birds are impossibly far away. It will make getting record shots of birds more possible because the reach of the camera is so great. It may convert many to bird photographers/birders and give them a love for and appreciation of birds. That would be a good thing.

It is interesting to me that just about every birder, experienced bird photographer, or novice birder/photographer I have showed this camera to in the last week has said they want one. The light weight of the camera and ability to zoom in so close on a bird just blows people away.

To read Lillian's complete blog go to <http://stokesbirdingblog.blogspot.com/2013/02/canon-sx-50-hs-for-bird-photography-i.html>. Lillian also offers an in-depth tutorial via email.

So, in late October, 2014, right before I left to lead a birding trip to New Mexico, I purchased the Canon SX 50 HS and, like Lillian, I love it. Ten days of birding in the beautiful light of the desert Southwest provided me with the perfect opportunity to really put it through its paces and try all the settings on all kinds of birds. I took over 2,000 photos which I quickly whittled down to 1,300 and eventually down to 700 "keepers." I took some of the best photos I've taken in years. In March 2015, I took a vacation in Florida and had another chance to put the camera through its paces.

Here are a few of my favorites from those trips:



This beautiful Say's Phoebe at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge was taken hand-held using the "High Speed Burst" mode.



This Burrowing Owl is one of my favorite photos of the New Mexico trip. He popped out of a Prairie Dog burrow and I only had a few seconds to snap him, hand-held, but supported on the van window sill in "High Speed Burst" mode. His head was moving and he quickly flew away, but one of the fifteen or so images in the burst was crisp on the face and that's all you need.



This Osprey in flight was one of hundreds I took. Using the "Sport" setting allowed for bursts of up to ten images at high shutter speed. The bright Florida sunlight and reflections from the white sand helped.



This Royal Tern coming into land was taken using "Sport" mode.

These mega- or super-zoom cameras are a perfect solution for a birder. They are light-weight, easy to use with responsive auto settings that do most of the work for you and are literally just point and shoot. Canon just came out with a new 65x zoom SX 60 which Lillian reviewed in another blog. She prefers the SX 50 for bird photography.

So, if you are in the market for an affordable, versatile camera that will allow you to take great bird photos, I highly recommend you check these out. Search online for the many review sites, read Lillian's blog and/or borrow a friend's mega-zoom for a field-test.

Backyard Birder

Northern Saw-whet Owls

There were a number of sightings of Northern Saw-whet Owls, both dead and alive, reported to NH Audubon in February, 2015. These owls are seldom seen but the deep snows of this winter may have made hunting difficult for this small owl and brought them closer to bird feeders where small rodents are more readily found. Although some migrate out of the state in the fall, others stay year-round. We don't know a lot about the timing of the spring migration north, but these February sightings are likely too early to be returning migrants. The saw-whet's distinctive tooting call, similar to a backing up truck, is most often heard in March or April. – Ed.

Alive and Well

by Theresa Kiley



This Northern Saw-whet Owl was photographed by Theresa Kiley in her yard in Alton, NH on February 6, 2015. He was there from 10:00am to 5:08pm during which time Theresa observed and recorded the following. Lisa Arguin also sent in a photo of a live Northern Saw-whet Owl sitting on a pole above her bird feeder in Berlin on February 19, 2015.

On a frigid winter day around ten o'clock in the morning, I glimpsed a brown and white blob rocking gently in the bough of a pine tree. Poor eyesight led me to think that it was most likely just a clump of snow. I peered more closely and was stunned to see what I believed was a saw-whet owl. I touched one once over twenty years ago at a

Tin Mountain Conservation event. They allowed us to gently poke through the feathers to its almost non-existent little body and to hold it, feeling its weightlessness. On every hike and walk since then, I have searched to see one in its natural habitat; I never have.

I live in the center of town, mere feet from the highway. Although many birds flock to my feeders every day, this little visitor was more than unexpected. I was afraid to move or breathe for fear he would startle and leave. I crept silently into the house for the binoculars and my bird book. I returned to the porch and sat with him until I was frozen and forced to go in. Throughout the day, he slept with his head tucked under his wing, and only when the larger trucks went by did he lift his head and turn serenely toward the sound. Then he gently returned to sleep. I was shocked at his stillness and lack of fearful reaction in an environment that I felt might be foreign to him.

Hours later, he was still here and I needed to leave. My truck was directly underneath him, maybe ten feet below. I took one last look believing my activity would startle him and he would be gone. I loaded the truck for a transfer station run and he never flinched. He occasionally would lift his head and look down at me, but then went right back to sleep. I was compelled at this point to try for a picture with my only camera, an unreliable old digital with a half dead battery. I climbed my truck as high as I could, and reaching forward simply held the camera above my head centered on him. At most, the camera was a few feet away. He lifted his head and posed as if sitting for a portrait. I drove off sad that he would most likely be gone when I returned and that I had not seen him in flight. I returned and he was still here. I parked directly underneath him and later left once more on other errands. When I returned, he was still here.

At four o'clock near the oncoming dusk, I sat in an upstairs window at eye level with him. At four-twenty his head just snapped up. Not a gentle lifting as I had seen earlier. He tried for many more minutes to return to sleep, but his head kept snapping up. He would squint his eyes and tuck his head under his wing and then it would pop right back up. Each time he seemed more alert, his demeanor more vigilant, his eyes more focused. He lost the fight and sat up straight, shook one little foot, then the other. He shot two nicely arced slices off the back of the branch which made me laugh, and began preening. Then, we both sat in the stillness for about half an hour, he fully awake, but unmoving, occasionally looking around. At this time, I began to fear for my little field mouse, "Pfeffernusse" whose feeding grounds were directly in front of his perch. At five o'clock without a prior hint, he simply lifted off the branch, turned inward toward the tree trunks, and glided silently through the boughs into the night.



On February 7, 2015 Kate Hartnett found and photographed this dead Northern Saw-whet Owl in her yard in Deerfield, NH.

Kathy Valley of Northfield, NH, found a dead Northern Saw-whet Owl in her barn on February 16, 2015. Earlier in February, Kate Hartnett found one dead in her Deerfield yard:

“On Tuesday, February 7, 2015, I found a dead saw-whet owl at ground level under my south deck. I have a long wood pile stacked one deep up against the exposed one story high foundation wall. The body was in the front corner of a three foot square crate turned sideways. There were six five-gallon buckets filled with kindling in the crate sheltered under the woodpile roof. The owl was sitting in an empty front corner. It had one wing across its face like a cape. It seemed to be in good shape, except I think that extended wing had been broken. I could feel breast muscle (indicating that it had not starved to death), so it may have been healthy, but hit or was hit. I found it after the Sunday/Monday blizzard with extreme cold and winds Monday night.”

Superbowl of Birding XII with the “Twitchers in the Rye”

by Pam Hunt

On January 25, the “Twitchers in the Rye” took part in the 2015 Superbowl of Birding. For those who don't know, the Superbowl involves looking for as many species as possible in 12 hours and is run by Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center. Teams compete in Essex County, MA and/or Rockingham County, NH on the last Saturday in January. We search for as many species as possible from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm. Species are worth different numbers of points from one to five with five-pointers being the most coveted.

As usual, the “Twitchers” restricted our search area to just one town (hence the name!), even though there's no category for that in the competition. This can be good and bad. Good because we spend a **lot** less time driving from one end of Rockingham County to the other and bad because we obviously don't get as many species and points as other teams. But we have fun, raise money for *New Hampshire Bird Records*, and have an awesome team name.

Once again, the weather made news, this time to the extent that event organizers actually made use of the snow date for the first time since we've participated (seven years). Yes it snowed, and as a result, we ended up heading coastward **very** early Sunday morning instead of staying over as we have the last three years. We ended up not having that bad a day on the weather front, with temperatures dropping and wind increasing only for the afternoon, and it wasn't until we were almost ready to wrap up that it really became all that bad.

So it was, that our fearless team (the usual suspects: Pam Hunt, Becky Suomala, Pat Myers, and Andrea Robbins) pulled off on the side of Route 1A at Odiorne Point State Park at 05:10 and started imitating an Eastern Screech-Owl. Given the snow the day before, there wasn't much room to pull over, but we had a secret weapon – the use of our friend Zeke Cornell's enormous white pickup truck with extended cab and plenty of room in the bed for scopes and such. Would the “Zekemobile” allow us to roll over the competition or, “keep on truckin” when other teams were buried?

It didn't help with owls though, and we were shut out at traditional spots for both Eastern Screech and Great Horned. By dawn, we'd made it down the southern edge of Rye, and were off to a good start with our only Northern Flicker of the day, as well as a great look at a Cooper's Hawk (our first in four years). Actually, it turned out to be a great day for hawks, with lots more Cooper's, and Red-taileds seemingly



The 2015 Twitchers in the Rye (clockwise, Andrea Robbins, driver Becky Suomala, captain Pam Hunt, and Pat Myers), ready to make a mad dash to the compilation in our borrowed truck, January 25, 2015. Photo by Pam Hunt.

every time we turned around. There was no time for dawdling over hawks and flickers however, and we were off.

One of the surprises of the day was a Gray Catbird that popped out of a bush and checked out a suet feeder. A four point bird, and a new species for the overall historical Twitchers' list. We **did** deviate from our usual Rye restriction when word got out about a Gyrfalcon feeding on a Herring Gull in Seabrook (see page 25), but we were only out of Rye for 35-40 minutes and didn't count it for our totals (we need to stick to principles after all).

We made a quick stop at Rye Harbor State Park, where I'm sure a group of four people with scopes **ignoring** the Snowy Owl on the restroom was perplexing to the Owl Paparazzi.

Then, we headed for a stop at Concord Point for the female Harlequin Duck. While this attractive little species can be common to the north and south, it is actually fairly rare in New Hampshire, so we were happy to have this one staked out right here in "our" town! Of course, we couldn't find it. An excellent consolation prize at a nearby stop was another 4-pointer: a Winter Wren!

Over the years, we've had good luck in Central Cemetery in Rye, so we couldn't pass it up. Luckily, it had been plowed so we drove in and hit pay dirt when an immature Red-shouldered Hawk flew across the road. This 4-pointer (our third) was especially appreciated since a bird scouted the weekend before could not be found earlier in the day. Our final inland stop was Love Lane, where we hoped for things like nuthatch, creeper, and kinglet, but instead found a Hermit Thrush.

It was 15:00 when we hit the coast a final time. There were quite a few things we could still find, but the ocean was generally quiet, as if the birds were punching the clock and going home early on a Sunday evening. We had a nice high point back at Concord Point, however, where Becky found the Harlequin Duck. Somewhere around 16:00, as we

approached Seal Rocks, I spotted a Peregrine Falcon flying south for what turned out to be our last bird of the day. A few more scans of the darkening Atlantic failed to turn up any guillemots, unusual gulls, or shorebirds, and we needed to head to Newburyport for the wrap-up.

One important Superbowl rule is that teams must report to the wrap-up by 17:30 or suffer penalties, and having dawdled a little longer than ideal in our futile search for Red-throated Loon, we suspected we'd be cutting it close. But Becky handled the Zekemobile expertly, slowing down for police cars as needed, and we made it with seven minutes to spare. Our totals ended up at 59 species and 100 points, both right around our average.

Thanks to everyone who donated to The Twitchers. We raised \$2,500, all of which goes to support *New Hampshire Bird Records* and NHeBird. Check the *New Hampshire Bird Records* web site for the expanded summary, the full list of species, and past years' results.



This adult Red-shouldered Hawk, found during scouting, went missing the day of the Superbowl, but the Twitchers found an immature nearby. Photo by Andrea Robbins, 1/18/15, Rye, NH.

Winter Birding in Manchester, NH

by Rebecca Suomala and Zeke Cornell



Barrow's Goldeneye by Christopher McPherson, 2/1/15, Manchester, NH.

The Merrimack River, which traverses the heart of downtown Manchester, is the major draw for birding in the city during the middle of winter. The river runs from north to south through Manchester and our primary area of interest begins just after it crosses the Amoskeag Dam near the Amoskeag Bridge. Because of the dam, this part of the river tends to remain open during the winter. Waterfowl are the highlight including such unusual species as Barrow's Goldeneye and Great Cormorant, and lingering species such as Hooded Merganser. Raptors are also frequent visitors to the river corridor, especially a pair of Peregrine Falcons which nest on one of the tall buildings near the Amoskeag Bridge.

This article focuses on specific sites for viewing the Merrimack River in Manchester and Hooksett. There are access points along the east bank of the river, which offer good views of the river in the downtown Manchester area and a bit to the north there are viewing spots along both sides of the river in adjacent Hooksett. Finally, a visit to the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (actually in Londonderry) provides an overlook of the runways viewed from the south side of the airport. The birding focus is primarily on winter birding from December through February; however, waterfowl can arrive by early November and linger into April, and Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, and other raptors can be seen year round.

Both the route to the airport and the access points along the river can be confusing to find. Detailed directions to these locations are provided in a subsequent section.

I. Merrimack River from the Amoskeag Bridge to Stark Landing

This stretch of the river is a good place to look for all the wintering ducks. The most common species are Common

Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Mallard and American Black Duck. Barrow's Goldeneye has been reliable in more recent years, with one or two usually found among large groups of Common Goldeneye. Great Cormorant and Bufflehead are fairly regular. Less frequent visitors might include Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, and both Greater and Lesser Scaup. Raptors, besides the previously-mentioned Peregrine Falcons, are likely to include Bald Eagles flying up and down river, and Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks, which are fairly reliable. This is also a good area to check for gulls on the water. Iceland Gull is sometimes found on this stretch of river, and there are records of Lesser Black-backed Gull and Glaucous Gull, as well. Along the shoreline, there's also a chance for songbirds not frequently seen in the winter, such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, or winter irruptives such as Bohemian Waxwing .



Cooper's Hawk by Christopher McPherson, 2/1/15, Manchester, NH.

A. Amoskeag Dam overlook

At our first stop along N. Commercial Street (just below the Amoskeag Bridge and along the east bank of the river), there is a wooden viewing platform that is accessible from the upper parking lot at Eversource Energy. A small trail wanders past an electrical substation to give direct access to the platform if the snow is not too deep. This platform provides a close view of the dam and also from here we can view the rapids (more or less depending on water flow) and the islands below the dam. Check the pools among the rocks and rapids below the dam for ducks. Immediately below this deck is a nice expanse of bushes where it is worth pishing for sparrows—Song Sparrow is most likely. Don't forget to scan the local trees, especially on the islands below the dam, for perched raptors. If the wooden platform is not accessible, this same area of river can be viewed from a lower parking lot, which is on the edge of the river.

B. Brady-Sullivan Tower Peregrine Falcon viewing

From the Eversource upper parking area, we can also scope the Brady Sullivan Tower for Peregrine Falcons. The Tower is at the east end of the Amoskeag Bridge and, at 12 stories high, is the tallest structure in the area. There is a nest box on the south side of the Tower that is used each season, and the local pair frequently remains in the area during the winter, often perching on or near the box. During the nesting season, there is a Web cam on the nest, donated by Single Digits, Inc., that you can view via the NH Audubon web site.

There is a slightly closer viewing area for the Peregrine Falcons in the NH State Armory parking lot. The building's name can only be seen from Canal Street, but the parking lot may be accessed from Canal Street (which is on the west side) or Pennacook Street (which is on the south side of the large parking area). From here, there is a good view of the Brady Sullivan Tower just to the north.

C. 540 Commercial Street

Returning to the river corridor, the next stop is behind 540 Commercial Street. From here, it is possible to look upriver and see a greater portion of the backwaters below the dam. The distance from the dam has increased enough that a scope is helpful for optimal viewing of the waterfowl that often gather there. The riffles are good places to find goldeneyes diving and feeding. At the north end of the parking lot, a small side stream joins the river. It is worth checking here for gulls and songbirds.

D. Arms Park

This "park" is a strip along the river next to a couple of large parking lots. It is accessed just south of 540 Commercial Street. Turn onto Arms Street and into the parking lot, go to the river, and check for waterfowl, gulls, and cormorants perched on the rocks in the river.



Great Cormorant by Lee Hansche, 2/14/15, Manchester, NH.

E. 200-400 Commercial Street, Waumbek Mills

A little farther south on Commercial Street is a group of former mill buildings. Some are adjoining and others are separated by small driveways. Behind this set of buildings are two one-way roads along the river that can be confusing to find but give great views of the river. Check the river from any spot along both roads. This is an especially good area for Barrow's Goldeneye and Great Cormorant. Scan the trees along the opposite side of the river for perched Bald Eagle or Great Cormorant.

F. 100 Commercial Street

For one final stop along the river by these buildings, turn right (south on Commercial Street) and watch for #100. On the south side of the building, between it and #88 (University of New Hampshire), is a very small parking area from which one can view the river. It is remarkable how often the Barrow's Goldeneye can be seen from this location.

G. Stark Landing

This boat launch area is accessed by driving through the small drop off area in front of the Northeast Delta Dental Stadium and watching for the steeply ramped connector to the river. The road down to the boat launch is not always passable in winter, and it may be necessary to walk the short distance in snowy or icy conditions.

This is an excellent place to find Barrow's Goldeneye and any late lingering ducks. The riffles in the river must be a nice feeding area, because large numbers of Common Goldeneye often gather just below the boat launch to as far down as an old railroad bridge (now a pedestrian bridge). A Bald Eagle flying by will often bring all ducks to the surface or put them to flight. There can also be long views up and down the river from here, but a scope would be required. In addition, the trees along the ramp can have a variety of perched songbirds.

If there is no snow cover, it is possible to walk south on a path along the river to the pedestrian bridge. This provides an excellent view of this stretch of the river. In snowy conditions, this bridge can be accessed on the west side of the river off of Second Street – see the Detailed Directions.

2. Moore's Crossing and the Manchester Airport

While in the area, a check of the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport and one other stop along the river may be worthwhile.

H. Moore's Crossing at Depot Road

A view of the river can be accessed from Depot Road near its intersection with Brown Avenue (the main access road to the airport from Rt. 293). Depot Road ends at a railway that is along the river. Birders have been known to cross the tracks on foot, but be advised that walking along active railroad

tracks is illegal. Check the river for ducks, Bald Eagles and Great Cormorants, and the bushes along the tracks for songbirds.

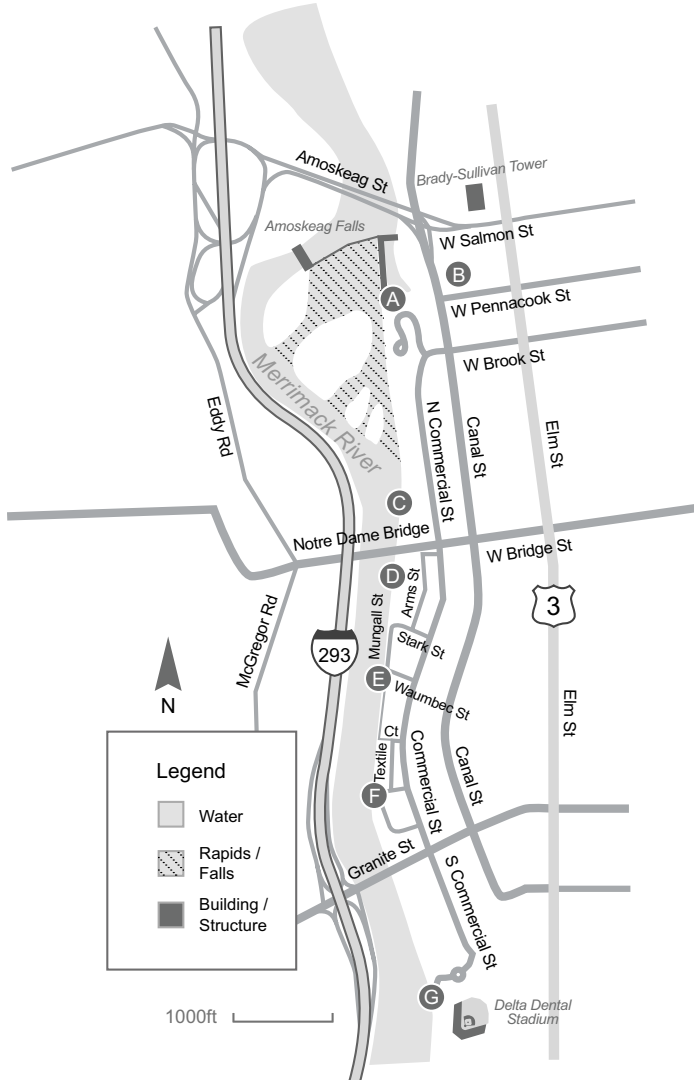
I. Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

The route to the overview of the airport runways is a bit circuitous, but the best viewpoint is at the south end of the runways. There is a small overlook circle off of Delta Dr., which abuts a pet cemetery. From here, scan for raptors such as an occasional Snowy Owl or Rough-legged Hawk, early or late American Kestrel, and a possible Northern Harrier or Red-shouldered Hawk. Horned Larks or Snow Buntings are possible, and in early spring an Eastern Meadowlark.

3. Merrimack River in Hooksett

In the Hooksett area, the main route across the Merrimack River is Main Street, which is also Rt. 3/28. On the west side of the river at this crossing, there are nice vantage points of the river from the parking lots at Robie's Country Store and the American Legion. Besides looking for the usual ducks

Figure 1. Map of birding access sites for the Merrimack River from the Amoskeag Bridge to Stark Landing.



and raptors, it is also a good place to check for other birds of interest such as waxwings at any time during the winter or Fish Crow, which arrives in late March.

After crossing the river, turn left onto Merrimack Street (sign to Allentown). In one-half mile, watch for Lambert's Park, a small city park on the left. This is a good place to check for waterfowl in the open water below the small check dam. Common Loon and Great Cormorant have been spotted here, as well. This entire corridor provides for good winter encounters with Bald Eagles, which can often be perched in trees along the river bank. A little farther north (0.2 miles) on Merrimack Street is another vantage point that is located by the Hooksett District Court and Hooksett Dog Park. The access road to these sites is a left hand fork, which ends at a boat launch by the Amoskeag Rowing Club where all of the same species may be seen.

Detailed Directions

1. Merrimack River from the Amoskeag Bridge to Stark Landing

A. Amoskeag Dam overlook

From the Everett Turnpike/Rt. 293, take Exit 6 and head east on Amoskeag Street (to Rt. 3) across the Amoskeag Bridge. Stay in the right lane, which will bear right at the east end of the bridge onto Canal Street. At the first set of lights, turn right onto N. Commercial Street and immediately take a right into the access road to the parking areas for Eversource Energy. The upper parking area will be immediately on the right. To reach the lower parking area, follow the access road a short distance, and after a significant curve to the left, turn right into the parking lot at the edge of the river.

B. Brady-Sullivan Tower Peregrine Falcon viewing, NH State Armory

Return to the intersection of N. Commercial and Canal Streets and go straight across onto W. Brook Street. At the lights, turn left onto Elm Street. Take the first left onto W. Pennacook Street (by the Mobil station) and then turn right into the large parking lot (NH State Armory, but the name cannot be seen from this entry into the lot). To return to Commercial Street, do not go west on Pennacook Street (it ends at a one-way section of Canal Street headed north). Instead, drive through the parking lot and exit the west side, turning left onto Canal Street south, then take a right back onto N. Commercial Street.

C. 540 Commercial Street

Driving along N. Commercial Street, heading south downriver (a right turn from the Amoskeag Dam overlook), watch for #540 Commercial Street and turn right into the driveway for the building (on the south side). Follow the driveway back to the edge of the river.

D. Arms Park

To get to this area from #540, turn right on N. Commercial Street, go under the overpass for the Notre Dame Bridge (N. Commercial becomes Commercial Street at this point), and take an immediate right on Arms Street into the parking lot (it is next to the parking lot for #540, but the two lots are not connected).

E. 200-400 Commercial Street, Waumbek Mills

To access the one-way roads behind the buildings, return to Commercial Street and turn right (south). Watch for #286, turn right into the narrow drive along the south side of the building and follow it to the river. Turn right onto a narrow one-way road north (Mungall Street). This ends at Arms Park. Return to the driveway at #286 and turn left onto the one-way that goes south along the river. This ends at Textile Court.

F. 100 Commercial Street – Follow directions in the section above.

G. Stark Landing

Turn right (south) onto Commercial Street and cross Granite Street (an intersection with a signal). The road now becomes S. Commercial Street. After a short distance, turn right (Line Drive on the maps, Robert A. Baynes Way in the parking lot) into the parking lot for the Northeast Delta Dental Stadium (next to the Hilton Garden Inn). Follow the drive along the edge of the parking lot to the river where there is a boat launch and Stark Landing.

To access the pedestrian bridge from the west side of the river, return to Granite Street, turn left and cross the

river, then turn left on Second Street. Proceed for several blocks and park on the left just before the pedestrian bridge overpass.

2. Moore's Crossing and the Manchester Airport

H. Moore's Crossing at Depot Road

From Stark Landing, go back north on S. Commercial Street to Granite Street. At this signal, turn left and get onto the Everett Turnpike/Rt. 293 heading south. Bear right to exit and continue on Rt. 293. Once past the exit for Rt. 101W and the merge with Rt. 101E, move to the right lane for Exit 2 onto Brown Ave./Rt. 3A. Turn right at the end of the exit ramp. After about 0.8 miles turn right onto Depot Road immediately before the light and go to the end.

I. Manchester-Boston Regional Airport

After returning to Brown Avenue, turn right (towards the airport), and continue straight at the lights onto Airport Road. At the first traffic circle, take the first right off the circle onto Raymond Wieczorek Drive towards Commerce Avenue. Follow it to a second traffic circle and take the third exit onto Commerce Avenue. Turn right on Industrial Drive (to Rt. 28), then left on Pettingill Road, which will take you to the south end of the runways. For the best viewpoint, turn right at the lights onto Harvey Road for just a short distance, then left on Delta Drive, and immediately left into a circular parking loop by the pet cemetery.

3. Merrimack River in Hooksett

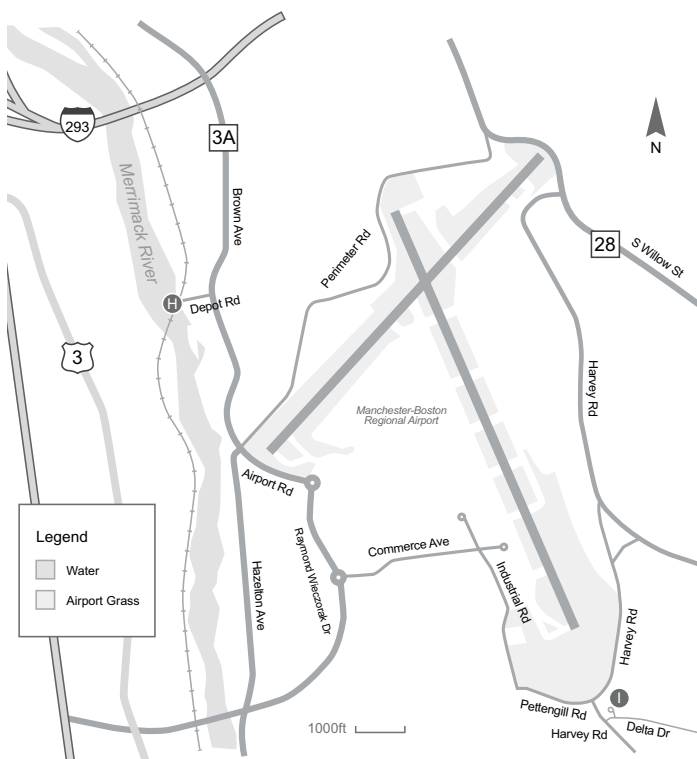
To reach Hooksett from the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport, retrace your steps back to Rt. 293 and head east. Take the exit for Rt. 93 north (toll road) towards Concord. Just north of Manchester, take Exit 11 to Rt. 3A, Hooksett. Go through the toll booth to the stop sign and turn left on Hackett Hill Road to Rt. 3A. Turn left on Rt. 3A north to Hooksett. After 0.6 miles, turn right at the first light onto Rt. 3/28 (Main Street). On the left, just before crossing the river is Robie's Country Store and the American Legion parking lot. Turn left onto Riverside Street and at the Hooksett Village Water Precinct building turn left over the railroad tracks into the parking lot for the American Legion.

Cross the river and follow the directions in the section above for views from the east bank of the river.

Zeke Cornell has been birding for four plus decades, but only recently in New Hampshire. He is enjoying becoming acquainted with the nooks and crannies of the Granite State and New England birding.

Maps by Scott Heron.

Figure 2. Moore's Crossing and the Manchester Airport.



Volunteers and Research

Emerald Ash Borer – What You Need to Know and How Birders Can Help

by Phil Brown, Molly Heuss, and Steve Roberge



This photo depicts “blonding” made by bark flicking, as well as deeper holes, made by woodpeckers foraging for Emerald Ash Borer larvae. Photo by Molly Heuss.

Introduction to the Pest

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a transplant here in New Hampshire, where it was first detected in Concord in 2013. The metallic green beetle was transported unintentionally from Asia, most likely to Michigan ports in the 1990s on cargo ships. In North America, EAB is known to infest all true ash (*Fraxinus*) tree species to which it has come in contact. In New Hampshire, this includes the most commonly found White Ash (*F. americana*), but also Green Ash (*F. pennsylvanica*) and Black Ash (*F. nigra*).

EAB is a phloem-feeding beetle, meaning the beetle’s young, a creamy white larva, feeds just under the ash tree’s bark. All growth and nutrient and water flow occurs in this layer of the tree. Larvae feeding back and forth under the bark can therefore choke the tree from the inside. This behavior also makes EAB infestation very hard to see because most damage occurs within the tree itself. EAB starts out in low numbers, but populations quickly explode. Adults are capable of flying several miles in a year, although most stay close to home.

EAB will begin killing ash trees within three to five years of arriving in a stand or woodlot and is a voracious feeder, often filling the phloem layer of a tree with thousands of larvae. This beetle’s incredible ability to succeed in our ash species spells the potential loss of billions of forested and landscape trees. It is a prime example of the danger invasive species pose to our native systems, which we rely on for clean air, drinking water, food resources, and recreation. Millions of ash trees have been killed over the past 10 years from the Midwest to the East Coast.

As of November 2015, EAB has been found in 25 states as well as Ontario and Quebec (visit emeraldashborer.info for updated information). This can seem like a shockingly large infestation, but many communities in the Northeast remain un-infested. We all want to keep it that way for as

long as possible so our neighbors have more time to learn about EAB and prepare for its arrival. In New Hampshire, 13 towns within Merrimack, Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Belknap Counties are currently known to have infested ash trees (Figure 1). All four of these counties are now under state and federal quarantine (visit NHbugs.org for updated information), however, six remaining New Hampshire counties, as well as neighboring Maine and Vermont, where EAB hasn’t yet been detected, rely on those of us living in the quarantined area to help slow its movement into their backyards. You can help by keeping ash firewood near where it was grown, following best management practices when moving ash *within* the quarantine, and by following the EAB quarantine regulations when conducting a timber harvest. A plethora of EAB information, including quarantine regulations and best management practices, are available at NHbugs.org.

The Connection between Birds and EAB



The ash tree depicted in this photo has been de-barked by a forest ecologist to show the larval galleries (tunnels). The bark in the right portion of the image has not been removed but shows heavy blonding caused by birds. Photo by Molly Heuss.

Identifying infested trees is challenging, and often times EAB cannot be detected until ash trees begin dying three or more years after the infestation. Four species of birds, including three woodpeckers (Hairy, Downy, and Red-bellied) and White-breasted Nuthatches, appear to play a particularly important role in helping forest ecologists detect infestations. In infested ashes, birds remove the bark to expose larval galleries and the D-shaped exit holes where larvae will mature into adults, and then pry out the larvae.

The larger Red-bellied and Hairy Woodpeckers are better equipped at prying large strips of bark off trees (sloughing), but the Downy and the nuthatch, and other species to a lesser extent, also play a role in removing smaller scales of bark (scaling), and all are known to feed upon EAB larvae. The resulting effect of heavy feeding on ash trees is referred to as “blonding,” and this is the tell-tale mark of EAB infestation. Birders might notice a woodpecker’s affinity for select backyard trees which

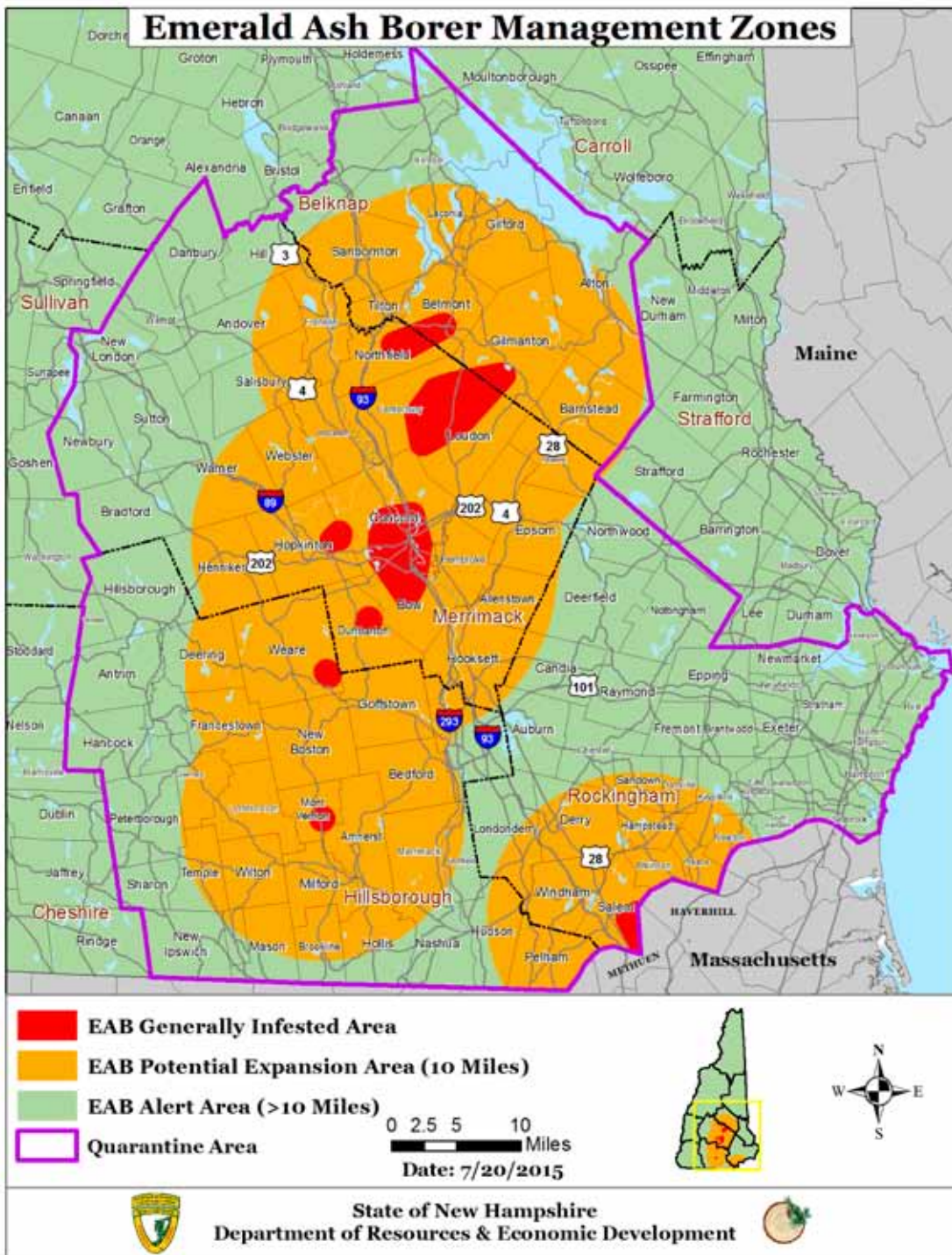


Figure 1. Emerald Ash Borer infestation in New Hampshire.

are infested by this pest before noticing the bark blanding, which may follow soon after. Only the amount of feeding seen on EAB infested trees (as opposed to foraging on native pests or naturally-occurring bark sloughing) produces this appearance, which is most notable on trees during the winter months. Although woodpeckers are quite effective EAB larvae foragers, and some trees appear completely de-barked, studies have put their mean foraging rates at only 35-40% of the EAB population. Thus, woodpeckers alone cannot defeat this insect pest, but they may still help by providing us an opportunity to detect its presence on our landscapes.

Birders are generally more tuned into the signs of heightened bird activity in backyards or a favorite patch of woods than the average person. With this in mind, UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Division of Forests and Lands partnered with NH Audubon in 2014 to begin a series of outreach programs about this insect pest, particularly as birders are well-positioned to help identify new infestations. New Hampshire birders are geographically fairly well spread out and are already accustomed to searching in trees and forest settings for their quarry, many with high-powered optics and a penchant for minute detail. Armed with just a little knowledge of tree identification and what to look for, birders and other outdoor enthusiasts could multiply the ongoing efforts to keep up with the spread of EAB around the state. Finding new detections of EAB infestation might lead to more intensive surveys around these areas, where bio-controls (including both egg and larvae-parasitizing wasps) and other treatments can be tried to slow the spread.

Although the outlook for ash survival in New Hampshire is grim, it appears to be quite the opposite for this group of native bird species which are benefitting from an added and increasingly abundant food source, EAB larvae. A well-referenced, long-term study conducted by the US Forest Service and Cornell University in the Detroit area titled "Effects of the Emerald Ash Borer on Four Species of Birds" (Koenig, et al. 2013) has shown that both short-term and sustained population increases have resulted from the introduction of EAB. This trend appears to play out

elsewhere in infested areas. All four bird species (Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch) named in the Detroit study are also cavity-nesters and stand to reap the habitat benefits of many dead snags across their home ranges, which may further increase their survival.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data show that Red-bellied Woodpeckers are thriving not only in New Hampshire, but across the northern portions of its range, including the Northeast. The Red-bellied Woodpecker's most recent population expansion in New Hampshire and across the Northeast may stand to benefit from the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (which is now present in roughly the eastern third of the country). Whether the upward trend in Red-bellied Woodpecker population growth will hold or if these population gains are short-term is anyone's guess. EAB, itself, diminished from the landscape after a core period of 10 or more years following its establishment in the Midwest. With its population leveling off after depletion of its host tree, there is perhaps some hope that this group of foraging birds may serve as an effective long-term control measure if and when EAB does level off across the landscape. The one thing that seems certain is that woodpeckers in New Hampshire will be able to lead us to EAB for several more years to come.

The Impact Landowners Can Expect

Landowners should take a proactive approach to this situation and stay educated so that they can make informed decisions about their trees when EAB flies into their town. For woodlot owners, conservation commissions, and concerned residents, it's important to get a sense of what component of your forest is ash. This can be done on your own if you have experience identifying ash, or you can opt for a forest inventory completed by a consulting forester, which will yield the amount, size, and location of your ash trees, as well as their value and health. University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's County Foresters are also always available to meet and walk with you. The inventory will prepare you for what action you'll need to take if and when the emerald ash borer is detected on your property. In some cases, no action will be recommended, but in others, a more active and aggressive approach such as a timber harvest may be needed to prevent mortality.

Even if you do not own a woodlot, you may have ash trees surrounding your home or yard. In this case, you will need to be a little more involved with the health of your ash and deciding if the tree needs to be removed when it becomes infested. It is one thing for an ash tree to die in the middle of the woods, because when it falls over it does so with little to no impact, and it can be seen as a useful habitat feature for birds and other wildlife. If an ash next to the house dies and falls over, there is a high probability it will cause significant

damage to your property. If you have an ash tree within striking distance of your home, garage, or anything else you value on your property, you should plan on hiring an arborist to remove the tree safely. (New Hampshire Audubon, at considerable expense, recently conducted the removal of about 15 potential hazard trees that were dead and dying adjacent to the McLane Center parking lot.) If you wish not to cut the ash in your yard, there are insecticide treatments that can keep your ash from succumbing to the emerald ash borer. These treatments will have to periodically be repeated for the life of the tree as long as EAB is present on the landscape.

EAB's arrival in New Hampshire has complicated forest management efforts and has already cost homeowners and landowners thousands of dollars in tree removals and pesticide treatments. This "green menace," however, has encouraged us all to be more aware of forest health concerns and attend more closely to our trees, and has certainly created a sense of appreciation for the struggling ash (including a nationwide seed-saving program). EAB has necessitated communication between private citizens who love their trees, regulators who try to slow EAB's spread, and those in the forest products industry who rely on healthy trees for a thriving business. We are better prepared now to respond to future infestations of invasive forest pests, which is an ever-present threat in our changing world. By helping to monitor the movement of EAB through observing birds, you can help your neighbors and local businesses prepare for its arrival.

References

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Molly Heuss (formerly a Forest Health Specialist with NH Division of Forests & Lands), Steve Roberge (UNH Cooperative Extension Cheshire County Forester), and Phil Brown (NH Audubon's Director of Land Management), and various others teamed up to bring knowledge of EAB to birders and outdoor enthusiasts in 2014 in response to the EAB infestation in the Concord area. They have since reached audiences in several venues across the state, and this article is an attempt to summarize their educational, informative, and often entertaining, workshops. Their message: New Hampshire forests are changing with the arrival of EAB, but knowledge is power and there can sometimes be a silver lining.

Answer to the Photo Quiz

by David B. Donsker

With its short conical bill, this bird can only be a member of one of the several families that we commonly refer to as “finches.” The finches encompass several families of small passerine or “perching” birds. These include: the American sparrows and old world buntings; the longspurs and the related Snow Bunting; the so-called “cardinal-grosbeaks;” the “true” finches; and an introduced family, the old world sparrows, of which House Sparrow is the only New England representative. That is still a large number of birds to consider, but the reasonable choices can be limited fairly quickly by examining the plumage characteristics and, to some degree, the habitat of the bird in question.

Our featured bird is notably a complexly well-marked species. Particularly striking is its facial pattern. It has a very prominent auricular region or “ear patch” which consists of a central pale zone strongly outlined in black behind and below the pale area. It also has a dark lateral throat (malar) stripe, distinct pale supercilium (eyebrow), and a prominent, wide, dark breast band on the upper breast with pale feather tips giving it a grizzled appearance. A paler patch can be glimpsed on the back of the head. It is strongly streaked on the upperparts and is more weakly streaked on the flanks. Its wings have strong pale feather edges, but it lacks distinctive wing bars. The lower breast, belly and visible parts of the under-tail are predominantly white. Not to be discounted is the time of year that the photograph indicates. This bird is sitting on a bank of snow. Clearly, it is a bird that can be seen in winter in our state.

Most of our “finches” can be eliminated on the basis of the strong head pattern alone. The male House Sparrow in winter plumage has a similarly grizzled black patch on the upper breast, but this is part of a larger, dark bib which incorporates the throat as well. The throat of this photographed individual is white. Further, House Sparrow lacks the striking ear patch of this bird, has unstreaked flanks, and is grayer below.

The members of the cardinal-grosbeak family are generally characterized by brightly colored males and warm colored, otherwise unmarked females, but several species are fairly well marked. Female and non-breeding male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and its close relative, Black-headed Grosbeak are strongly marked. Both have a prominent ear patch vaguely similar to this bird. Both have streaked upperparts and variable streaking on the underparts, but the grosbeaks are structurally quite different. Both are chunky, thick-set species. As their common name implies, both of these birds have massive, triangular bills. They also have two strong

white wing bars and more prominent eyebrow stripes. Very importantly, these species are Neotropical migrants. They would generally be long-gone by the time snow is on the ground. Dickcissel is another member of this group. Somewhat like the featured bird, winter males can have a grizzled dark patch on their upper breast, but the breast patch includes the lower throat and is more bib-like. Dickcissel also lacks the head pattern, pale feather edging and flank streaks shown on this bird.

None of our “true” finches resemble this bird. Most species are more extensively streaked (think female House Finch, Pine Siskin or Common Redpoll), are more richly colored (e.g., male Purple Finch) or plainer (female or non-breeding male American Goldfinch).

The large assemblage that includes the American sparrows and old world buntings is primarily composed of a multitude of streaky birds several of which must be seriously considered here. Some sparrows are unmarked below, such as White-crowned and Chipping Sparrow, so these can be easily eliminated. Also easily discounted are the many sparrows with extensively streaked underparts such as Fox, Song, and Savannah Sparrows.

The sparrows that do need some consideration include Vesper Sparrow, Harris’s Sparrow, and Lark Sparrow. Vesper Sparrow shouldn’t be a problem. It has an ear-patch reminiscent of this bird, but it is much less strongly outlined. Like this bird, it has a pure white belly and it has a significant amount of white on the under surface of the tail, but rather than a dark breast patch, the breast of Vesper Sparrow is streaked. It is much more like the finely streaked breast of Savannah Sparrow, a sparrow with which it is often confused. Vesper Sparrow is also unlikely to be encountered in New England in the winter. Harris’s Sparrow in male non-breeding, or in female plumage shares some of the features of this bird. It has a streaked back and the streaking on the underparts is limited to the flanks. It has a black patch on the upper breast and has a vaguely similar ear patch, but, as in House Sparrow, the breast patch in Harris’s Sparrow also includes the throat, so it is much more extensive. The auricular patch is much less well outlined or as prominent. Further, Harris’s Sparrow has a dark under tail, a much darker crown, and two prominent wing bars. Lark Sparrow is, perhaps, the strongest contender in this family. Like this bird, it has a strong facial pattern dominated by a prominent ear patch and a black malar. It is white on the breast and belly and is extensively white in the tail, but the bold facial pattern of Lark Sparrow is different from that of this bird. The central part of the ear patch in Lark Sparrow is darker, and is somewhat separated from, and much less contrasting with, its black outline. The malar of Lark Sparrow is darker and it is separated from the auricular patch by a much more

contrasting white line. Further, the lores, or space between the eye and base of the bill, in Lark Sparrow is black. The lores in this bird are pale. Lark Sparrow further lacks the flank streaking of this bird and it has a black spot in the center of its white breast rather than a large breast patch.

Any finch-like bird seen in association with snow should recall the last group of birds in this assemblage of species, the longspurs and Snow Bunting, which are winter visitors to our state. This group was once thought to be closely related to the New World sparrows and Old World Buntings in the family *Emberizidae*, but recent genetic studies have proved them to be a completely different family: *Calcariidae*. None-the-less, the resemblance of this group to the Old World buntings and New World sparrows is uncanny.

Snow Bunting is the most distinctive of the group. It is aptly named. Although adult birds in breeding plumage, especially males, are sharply dressed in black and immaculate white, we see them typically in non-breeding plumage. That plumage is more subdued with the black replaced by streaky buffy tones. Buffy patches appear on the upper breast (more prominent on the sides) and the auriculars. The breast patch is much paler in Snow Bunting than in our featured bird. The ear-patches in Snow Bunting lack sharp, black edges. Further, even in this “duller” plumage, the whiteness of Snow Bunting cannot be denied. The underparts and flanks retain their snowy whiteness and they lack any streaking. The most salient feature, however, is the extensive amount of white retained in the wings. Even in duller, first winter females, the inner rear wing (the secondary flight feathers) and most of the greater coverts retain their brilliant whiteness. This is especially astonishing to see when the birds take flight and the full wing is exposed. The featured bird lacks these astonishing white wing patches.

Frequently associating with Snow Bunting and longspurs, Horned Lark is another species which, although not a “finch,” bears a superficial resemblance to these birds. Breeding males with their black masks and sharp black bibs are unmistakable; females, particularly in winter plumage, are duller with less sharply defined masks and breast patches. The lark, however, has only a faintly streaked back. It also lacks the prominent ear patch and it has a thinner bill.

The longspurs are the other members of this group. Three of the four species have been reported in New Hampshire. Lapland Longspur is an uncommon but regular winter visitor. Chestnut-collared Longspur is a very rare accidental to our state with only one documented record. Smith’s Longspur has been observed only once (this winter, in fact) and its official status as a “state bird” is yet to be determined. Although the adult males of these species all have very distinctive breeding plumages, the females and non-breeding males are more similar to each other. All

three have an auricular patch, streaked upperparts, and a significant amount of white in the tail. In these plumages, Lapland Longspur is distinctive from the other two species in having streaked flanks and a much more prominent, darkly framed, auricular patch. Although it cannot be appreciated in the photograph, it often has a rusty nape in winter plumage and, uniquely among longspurs, the greater wing coverts (the feathers between the shoulder and flight feathers of the wing) are rufous. Chestnut-collared Longspur shares with Lapland Longspur the grizzled blackish breast (at least in non-breeding males), but the blackish breast is more extensive and extends to the upper belly. The rufous on the nape, if present, is restricted to a small patch. It may also show some white in the shoulder. The female is rather nondescript and often has blurry breast streaks. Smith’s Longspur has a very finely streaked breast which lacks the black breast patch of its congeners and has buffy rather than white underparts. Males often have a small white shoulder patch. It is a much skulkier species than the two other longspurs.

This fine portrait of a male Lapland Longspur in non-breeding plumage was taken by Jen Esten at the Agway in Walpole, NH on March 16, 2015. It can be confidently identified as a longspur and distinguished from other longspurs by its prominent, darkly edged ear patch, grizzled black upper breast and streaked flanks. The photograph also shows a feature that is not often appreciated in the field. Note the extremely long rear toe in this image. It explains why this group of birds is called “longspurs”.

Longspurs are birds of open country. They breed in the arctic tundra and prefer similar habitats on their wintering grounds. Look for them as scattered individuals in large flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings in open, bare or short grassy areas such as in fields, airstrips or parking lots along the seacoast or inland. Careful scanning of these mixed flocks will produce a fine reward: an occasional encounter with this uncommon winter visitor.

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Abbreviations Used

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
PMRO	Pack Monadnock Raptor Observatory
PO	Post Office
R.	River
Rd.	Road
Rt.	Route
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SPNHF	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Concord
T&M	Thompson & Meserves (Purchase)
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WMNF	White Mountain National Forest
WS	NHA Wildlife Sanctuary
~	approximately
WTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

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Black-throated Blue Warbler by Sue Blanchette, 12/26/14, Old Hancock Rd., Hancock, NH.



Red-headed Woodpecker by Christopher McPherson, 2/27/15, Adams Point, Durham, NH.



Northern Goshawk by Amy Kane, 2/8/15, North Hampton, NH.



Black-headed Gull by Jason Lambert, 2/4/15, Hampton, NH.



Snowy Owl by Gerry Coffey, 1/1/15, Rye Harbor SP, NH.

