

WINTER 2016

# NH Audubon Afield



## Annual Meeting Awards Recognize Conservation Efforts

The 102nd Annual Meeting and Gathering was a day filled with sunshine, exploration, friends, colleagues, laughter and warmth.

Keynote speaker Bernd Heinrich packed the room at Massabesic Center before the meeting launched into award announcements:

The Tudor Richards Award was presented to Ann and Roger Sweet of Sullivan, NH for working tirelessly and effectively for conservation in the Granite State. From trail work to conservation committee work, Ann and Roger have contributed immense

**"From trail work to conservation committee work, Ann and Roger have contributed immense time and effort to conservation in the state."**

time and effort to conservation in the state.

Our Goodhue-Elkins Award was presented to Davis Finch of East Kingston, NH for outstanding contributions to our knowledge of New Hampshire birds. Davis has spent his lifetime observing, recording and sharing his knowledge of birds with birdwatchers and professional ornithologists, alike.

Our Volunteers of the Year are Dennis Skillman of East Kingston, NH and Warren Trested

of East Hampstead, NH. Dennis and Warren have spearheaded the effort to return Purple Martins to the saltmarshes of Seabrook, NH, installing nesting gourds, monitoring the nests, and addressing the concerns of local residents.

We honored two recipients for our President's Award this year, both of whom have significantly advanced our work in the past year:

Pat Niswander of Concord, NH for her long-time commitment to NH Audubon and volunteer work spanning more than 30 years.

Single Digits, Inc. of Bedford, NH for hosting the immensely popular Peregrine Web Cam and providing two new

cameras which greatly improved the viewer experience.

*Ann and Roger Sweet receive the Tudor Richards Award. Photo by Terri Donsker.*

## February Fun Nature Camp



**February 27-March 3**

*See page 5 for details!*

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**NH AUDUBON**

Protecting New Hampshire's Natural  
Environment for Wildlife and for People



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

In recent weeks, I have regularly needed to take a break and catch my breath by simply going outside and remembering the importance of our natural environment. Every time I go outside I see something new. I always return with a renewed energy and sense of purpose.

As we emerge from recent divisive rhetoric in the media, I urge you to reflect on what is most important to you about where we live, work, and play. New Hampshire is a special place because we can bridge differences in order to focus on common goals. Our history is full of examples where politics took a back seat to the common ground we all share for supporting environmental causes. Why is this?

Because New Hampshire is a state with abundant opportunities to be outside, breath fresh air, drink clean water, and soak in nature.

We must continue our science-based work in the years ahead, and advance our mission to protect New Hampshire's environment for wildlife and for people by providing effective education programs, promoting responsible habitat management, and supporting constructive environmental legislation. These actions – how we achieve our mission – make us unique and relevant in New Hampshire. They guide our decisions, and they inform our citizens as we all face tough choices.

**"I love New Hampshire, and I believe in our country. I believe our work is critical, just, and patriotic. Together, let's strive to be a model of environmental leadership in New Hampshire, in our nation, and in our world."**



I am proud to work for an organization and with a group of people that share these values. Our work is just as important today as it was when NH Audubon was founded in 1914. In many ways it is more important—more

critical—than ever before. I love New Hampshire, and I believe in our country. I believe our work is critical, just, and patriotic. Together, let's strive to be a model of environmental leadership in New Hampshire, in our nation, and in our world.

If you need to remember what is important to you, simply go outside. No matter where you live, there is something in the natural world that will

remind you why we work so hard to protect our environment.

Doug Bechtel  
President

## NH Audubon Grant Acknowledgements

### TD Charitable Foundation:

Monthly environmental science program at Beech Street elementary school-Manchester.

### Franklin Savings Bank:

Advancement Fund-Construction of platform for boat rental area at the Newfound Center.

### Nuttall Ornithological Club's Blake-Nuttall Fund:

Bank Swallow conservation outreach, determining local and broad-scale movement of Peregrine Falcons, and New Hampshire Bird Records data conversion.



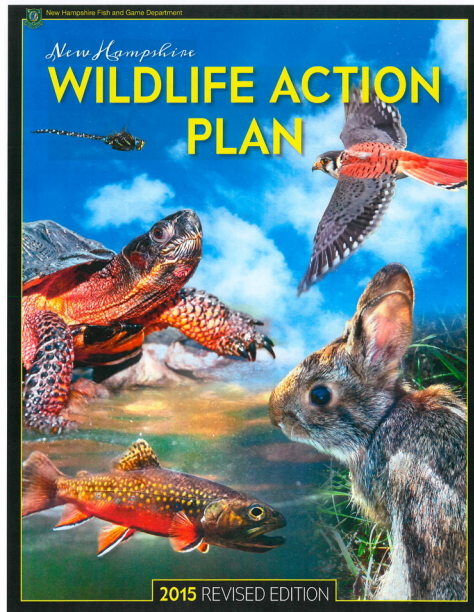
## New Proposed Funding for Wildlife Recovery

H.R. 5650

By Carol Foss, Senior Advisor for Science and Policy

A bill recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives would fund management of fish and wildlife species identified by State fish and wildlife agencies in their recently updated Wildlife Action Plans. H.R. 5650 would allocate \$1.3 billion annually from existing energy development on federal lands and the Continental Shelf to a subaccount within the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act.

Enacted in 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act authorizes a federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition and distributes the funds to State fish and wildlife agencies for wildlife management and restoration. States provide a 25% match of non-federal funds, typically from license fees, to support wildlife restoration projects that focus on game species but also benefit non-game wildlife, including habitat acquisition and improvement, research and monitoring projects, and hunter education. The new funding would be focused on species in greatest of need of conservation action, which are primarily but not exclusively non-game species. State agencies have a proven track record of using these funds effectively, and the new funding will enable states to implement



their congressionally mandated Wildlife Action Plans.

**New Hampshire's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan identifies 165 species in greatest need of conservation action.** Prompt and effective intervention can prevent the need to list these species as threatened or endangered. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 5650), introduced by Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI), would dedicate annual funding to states to address this conservation challenge.

America has a proud history of bringing wildlife back from the brink. Thanks to restoration efforts of the 20th century, beavers, bald eagles, ospreys, and wood ducks have made strong recoveries in New Hampshire and elsewhere in the United States. Today we face a new conservation crisis as emerging diseases, invasive species, habitat loss, and extreme weather threaten wildlife at a scale inconceivable just a few decades ago. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would benefit wildlife populations from American Oysters in

**"The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would benefit wildlife populations from American Oysters in Great Bay to Canada Lynx in Coos County."**

Great Bay to Canada Lynx in Coos County. **Proactive efforts can ensure that iconic species such as American Marten, Ruffed Grouse, Brook Trout, and Monarch Butterfly remain integral members of our State's wildlife heritage.**

We anticipate that a Senate version of this bill will be introduced early in 2017. Stay tuned for updates on the progress of this key legislation!

## TWO GIFTS IN ONE!

**This season, give the gift of membership\* and receive a beautifully hand-crafted glass ornament from Old Hancock Glassworks**

To purchase a gift of membership, and receive a free ornament, stop by the Nature Store at McLane Center or call Membership at 224-9909 ext310.

\*Does not apply to membership renewals.



## PROGRAMS & EVENTS: THE MCLANE CENTER



In addition to being a program center, the McLane Center is home to NH Audubon's central operations. It is located on the Silk Farm Sanctuary in Concord. Sanctuary trails are open dawn to dusk daily, as are the raptor mews. The Center is open Monday–Friday 9am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm.

84 SILK FARM RD • CONCORD NH • 603-224-9909

### Birds of Midway Atoll

January 12, 7-8pm

Cost: \$5M/\$7NM

Kiah Walker had a rare opportunity to spend six months as a biological volunteer on the remote Midway Atoll, equidistant between North America and Asia. Nearly three million seabirds nest there including the world's largest population of albatrosses, Bonin petrels and one of the world's most endangered ducks. Residents also include a flock of rogue canaries and "Wisdom," a Laysan albatross who was banded 65 years ago and is the oldest known wild bird.

### Owls of New Hampshire

February 16, 7-8:45pm

Cost: \$5M/\$7NM

Eleven species of owls can be seen in NH, and this time of year some of our year-round residents are setting up territory and nesting. Join long-time birder and owl prowler Tom Warren as he shares slides, recordings and information about owl behavior. After the indoor presentation, the group will venture out to listen for the sounds of barred owls and possibly other species as they declare their territory and search for mates.

### Birds and Beans Coffee House Presents: Peggo & Paul Hodes with Kent Allyn

January 26, 7-8:45pm

Cost: \$15M/\$18NM

Seating is limited

Tickets may be reserved by calling 224-9909 ext. 313 or purchased online at [nhaudubon.org](http://nhaudubon.org)

Peggo Hodes, a classically trained vocalist, and her husband and guitarist Paul Hodes will be joined by the talented multi-instrumentalist Kent Allyn. The trio will perform *Love Songs and Other Trivia*, weaving together elements of pop, jazz, and traditional folk, with a lot of humor.

Refreshments and Birds and Beans bird-friendly coffee will be available.



## In Memoriam

New Hampshire Audubon is honored to receive donations in memory of friends and relatives who have passed. These gifts are a valuable contribution to the work we do for wildlife and conservation. Thoughtful gifts were made by the following individuals and groups:

#### In memory of James M. Jones:

Paul R. Nickerson

#### In memory of Pauline E. Theriault:

Monica A. Labrie

#### In memory of Priscilla T. Page:

Christine M. Nuccio

#### In memory of Susie Van Laarhoven:

Manchester Association of

Police Supervisors

## Thank You!

NH Audubon is proud to be supported by the following businesses who contributed \$500 or more this calendar year in support of our programs:

Ambrose Bros., Inc.

BCM Environmental & Land Law, PLLC

Concord Garden Club

Chick Lumber

Ecosystem Management Consultants, LLC

Ed Reilly Subaru

Foothills Physical Therapy

Ira Frost Bird Carvings

Grappone Automotive

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St. Paul's School

Student Conservation Association—NH AmeriCorps

Town of Sandwich Conservation Commission

Venture Print Unlimited, Inc.

Walmart

Weare Animal Hospital

## Holiday Fair and Book Sale

December 10, 10am-2pm

Visit McLane Center for a special holiday shopping experience! A collection of local artists will be on hand selling handmade gifts and demonstrating their craft.

**Members receive 20% off all Nature Store purchases, including binoculars.** A sale of used, nature-related books will also take place. (We are not accepting used book donations.)

**Come early for the best selections!**

*Gourmet Baked Goods*

*Nature Photography*

*Tie Dye Onesies*

*Glass Jewelry*

*Soy Candles*

*Note Cards*

*Botanicals*

*Wooden Signs*

*Wool Mittens*

*Aprons & Totes*

*Engraved Glassware*





## PROGRAMS & EVENTS: MASSABESIC AUDUBON CENTER



Located on an historic farm site, the Center is bordered by 130 acres of wildlife sanctuary that includes more than five miles of trails that lead to Lake Massabesic. The Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 9am-5pm; sanctuary trails are open dawn to dusk daily.

26 AUDUBON WAY • AUBURN, NH 03032 • 603-668-2045

### Nature Cafe

Fridays, 7-8:30pm  
Cost: \$5 per person, Free for Massabesic Volunteers

*Enjoy coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and delicious desserts while learning about our natural environment.*

#### Jan 20: Bird-Friendly Buildings

Learn about new trends in bird-friendly buildings and how you can make your home safer for birds with NH Audubon's Laura Deming.

#### Feb 10: Winter Bird Feeding

Join Naturalist Kelly Dwyer and learn what species to expect in your yard, the best feeder choices and foods to attract a variety of birds, as well as set up tips and cleaning protocols.

### Junior Explorers

Every Other Wednesday, 10-11:30am  
Leader: Kelly Dwyer; Ages 7-12  
Cost: \$12M/\$15NM per class

Homeschool science classes and workshops for school-aged children to study the natural world:

- Jan 18: Phenology: Biodiversity Connections
- Feb 1: Weather or Not: Nature's Adaptation
- Feb 15: Food Chain: the Web of Life

### Wee Wonders

Every Other Wednesday, 10-11:30am  
Leader: Kim Murphy; Ages 4-6  
Cost: \$12M/\$15NM per class

Nature-based preschool programs with hands-on activities, songs, crafts, stories, and outdoor discovery:

- Dec 14: Birds of all Seasons
- Jan 18: Weathering Winter
- Feb 1: Where Have all the Wild Things Gone
- Feb 15: Footprints in the Snow

### Coastal Birding

Dec 14, Jan 18 and Feb 15, 9am-2:30pm  
Cost: \$6M/\$9NM

Join JoAnn O'Shaughnessy to bird the coast. Meet at the Hampton Beach State Park lot. We'll stop for lunch to cap off the morning's adventure. Call JoAnn at 603-494-4209 to register (required).

### Traditional Bird Carving

Dec 17, 10-11:30am; Cost: \$5

Master Carver, Donald Combs of Auburn, NH will demonstrate the traditional techniques used by master carvers to create beautiful birds and decoys.

### Tracking Animals in Winter

Jan 14, 9-11:30am  
Cost: \$7M/\$9NM; Families \$15M/\$20NM

Learn the basics of tracking some of NH's common winter animals. Suitable for any age. Dress to be outside.

### Winter Shelter-Building

Jan 21, 1-3pm  
Cost: \$7M/\$9NM; Families \$15M/\$20NM

Jake King of Thrive Outdoors will go over tips and tricks to building your own winter shelter, then you'll go outside and build one! All ages welcome.

### Winter Tracking

Jan 28, 10am-12pm  
Cost: \$10M/\$15NM; Families \$25M/\$35NM

Naturalist Dorise Alexander teaches the art of tracking animals-put on some snowshoes and learn about prints, scat, and other sign of a variety of NH's winter mammals.

Advance registration required for all programs. Call 603-668-2045.

## NH Wild Photo Auction

Silent Auction Fundraiser: Now-Dec 4  
Final Bids: Dec 4, 2-3pm

Just in time for holiday gift-giving, come bid on your favorite photos - framed and ready for hanging! Bidding is by silent auction. Refreshments served.

### The Whole Flock



Art Exhibit: Dec 9 - Jan 27

Artist Reception: Dec 9, 5-8pm

Traditional carved bird decoys, paintings, and sculptures of birds from around the world. If you love birds, you will love this exhibit! Collaborating artists from: *The Art Group* and *Don's Carving Studio*.

## Snowshoe Rentals

Tuesdays-Saturdays, 9am-2pm  
Cost: \$8M/\$10NM pair

Enjoy nature in winter at the Massabesic Center as you trek the trails on snowshoes! For use on-site only with a minimum of 6" of snow cover. Limited pairs available for little children.

## February Fun Vacation Camp

at McLane or Massabesic!

February 27 - March 3  
Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm

February Fun Vacation Camp is a special opportunity for children to learn about nature in winter. Join us for a single day, several days, or the whole week! For children ages 6-12.

Visit [nhaudubon.org](http://nhaudubon.org) and click on Get Outside for details and registration.



## SECOND ANNUAL RAVEN'S RACE *and Winter Festival*

February 11, 10am-3pm

Celebrate the best of winter fun by entering our snowshoe race! It begins and ends at the Massabesic Center using the beautiful trails on Battery Point. Enter as a contestant or come enjoy the festivities. This event is a fundraiser for the education animals at MAC, starring our very own Raven. Live animals, a bonfire, and tracking activities. Fun for all ages. Check the NH Audubon website for a registration link.



# Alice Bemis Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary,

Tour the sanctuary by air!  
See video footage captured by  
drone at [youtube.com/user/  
NewHampshireAudubon](https://youtube.com/user/NewHampshireAudubon)

## Sanctuary Spotlight

*By Phil Brown, Director of Land Management*

The Thompson Sanctuary contains 80 acres of the highest-ranked wildlife habitat in the State, a town-designated 'prime wetland', old growth forest, and some 200 species of birds have been recorded here over the years – and these are just a few of its many ecological attributes. Over the past several years, NH Audubon has conserved additional acreage, surveyed and studied the sanctuary in depth, and further protected the land indefinitely with a 'forever wild' conservation easement held by the Northeast Wilderness Trust.

In 2014, through a lengthy permitting and fundraising process, the organization began to restore foot access to a beaver-flooded trail. Labor over three consecutive summer seasons was provided by hard-working members of the Student Conservation Association's NH AmeriCorps program, who, piece by piece, constructed a ADA-compliant (handicapped-accessible) trail – the first of its kind on any NH Audubon wildlife sanctuary. The benefits to the Town of Sandwich, its residents and visitors, and particularly, to an underserved portion of the community, are long-lasting.

Another trailhead with new access to the back acreage of the Thompson Sanctuary will be officially re-opened to the public this winter. Many thanks to neighbors and friends of NH Audubon, David and CC White, for their efforts to restore primitive foot access to a remote and wild part of the forest.

**NH Audubon recently completed a three-year project to restore and expand access to one of its most special places, the 300-acre 'Thompson' Wildlife Sanctuary, in Sandwich. Visitors will now be able to enjoy the views of the White and Ossipee Mountains from an attractive and functional observation platform at the boardwalk's end point, and watch wildlife in a sensitive manner along the entirety of the trail.**



# mpson Sandwich

*continued from page 6*

This fall, other neighbors and friends, Dr. Robert and Mrs. Peg Ridgely, donated a conservation easement on an important 10-acre parcel abutting the main trail. This gift was generous as well as strategic, as it served as mitigation for construction of the boardwalk in the sensitive wetland environment, and was an indefinite way to preserve additional wildlife habitat and scenic views. **The Sandwich Conservation Commission, which contributed \$5K from the Town's Conservation Fund towards costs associated with this transaction, deserves special recognition along with the Ridgely's.**



*Major support* for the ADA boardwalk and trail project was provided by the **Alfred Quimby Fund** of Sandwich, private donors, and business partners who provided considerable in-kind support. A list of these business and organizational partners is included below:

The Alfred Quimby Fund  
Student Conservation  
Association/NH  
AmeriCorps  
The Town of Sandwich  
Ambrose Brothers  
BCM Environmental &  
Land Law  
Ecosystem Management  
Consultants  
A&B Lumber  
Chick Lumber

*Photos: Drone image over the sanctuary shares a birds-eye view (top left); full length of the new boardwalk (top right, by Matt Coughlan); terminal observation platform (left, by Phil Brown).*

## Key Ecological Attributes

Exemplary palustrine marsh and scrub-shrub swamp complex

Over one mile of frontage on a local prime wetland (Atwood Brook)

Undeveloped, mature forest with abundant conifer swamps in old growth condition and scattered vernal pools

Exceptional wildlife habitat with abundant evidence of waterfowl and wading birds, moose, bear, deer, fisher, bobcat, snowshoe hare, fox, coyote, mink, and otter

Critical watershed support for a pristine, water quality reference brook

Remote and unfragmented forest land surrounded by other remote and high-quality forest land







The Amoskeag Fishways Learning and Visitor's Center is located at Exit 6 off Interstate 293 in Manchester, NH. The Center is open Monday–Saturday 9am–5pm.  
4 FLETCHER ST • MANCHESTER, NH • 603-626-3474

## Family Wreathmaking

Dec 2, 6:30-8pm; Cost: \$15/family

"Spruce" up your home and create beautiful holiday decorations with your family. We'll use materials fresh from the outdoors to make fun, natural creations and a fragrant, long-lasting and truly unique wreath.

## Fishways Annual Open House

Dec 28, 11am-3pm

Free event, no registration required

Our annual "thank you" Open House features two presentations: "Active Winter Mammals" and "Winter Backyard Birds". Create fun crafts, eat yummy treats, and win door prizes. Try not to miss this fun annual event!

## Eagles On the Merrimack

Jan 28, 10am-12pm

Cost: \$3/person, \$6/family

Search for bald eagles along the Merrimack River in Manchester. Begin with an orientation at the center, followed by a quest to spot the first eagle of the day! Expect to carpool, dress warmly, and bring your binoculars if possible.

## Family Fun Nights

Fridays, 6:30-8pm; Cost: \$8/family

*Family Fun Nights are for all ages and focus on Merrimack River ecology. Engaging facts and stories are followed by group activities and open crafts.*

**Rascally Rabbits:** Jan 20

Hop on over to explore the lives of our long-eared, big-footed friends.

**Winter Wildlife Detectives:** Feb 11

Learn to interpret animal tracks and signs, then put on your detective hat to help solve a mysterious wildlife puzzler.

**Pizza Party with the Painted Turtle:** Feb 24

Pizza, crafts and a visit with our very own painted turtle.

## Saturday Nature Seekers

Saturdays, 11am-12pm

Cost: \$5 donation encouraged

*Do you and your kids wish for opportunities to learn about nature but have trouble finding the time? Try these short and sweet mini-programs and nature-based activities. Discover something new every month!*

**Natural Creations:** Dec 3, 17

**NH's Bald Eagles:** Jan 7, 14, 21

**Backyard Birds:** Feb 4, 11, 18, 25

Advance registration with payment required for all programs unless otherwise noted.



## Let's Go Ice Fishing!

**Feb 17 (6-8pm) and 18 (9am-12pm)**  
Ages 8 and up

Learn how to ice fish with staff and volunteers of New Hampshire Fish and Game during this two-part program. Friday will cover ice safety, fish ecology, equipment, and more. Parents and participants over 16 do not need a fishing license during the organized field trip on Saturday, and all angling gear will be provided.

## Homeschool Discovery Programs

### PROJECT-BASED RIVER STUDY

**Thursdays, 10am-12pm**

Cost: \$10/child, Grades: 4 and up

Learn the cultural history, ecology and current status of the Merrimack River and its watershed. Students will develop river-based projects guided by the group's knowledge and specific interests.

*Dec 8, Jan 12, Feb 9 - River Life and Ecology*

## Year End is a Great Time to Make an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift to NH Audubon

*If you are 70 ½ years old or older, avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA.*

### Benefits of an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift

- » Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to NH Audubon.
- » Satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- » Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- » Make a gift that is not subject to the 50% deduction limits on charitable giving.
- » Help further the important work and mission of NH Audubon.

### How an IRA Charitable Rollover Gift Works

1. Contact your IRA plan administrator to make a gift from your IRA directly to NH Audubon.
2. Your IRA funds will be directly transferred to NHA to benefit an organization you love.
3. Note that IRA charitable rollover gifts do not qualify for a charitable deduction.
4. Please contact development director Sean Gillery at 603-224-9909 ext. 307 if you have questions or wish your gift to be used for a specific purpose.

### MERRIMACK RIVER LIFE

**Thursdays, 10-11:30am**

Cost: \$10/child, Grades: 1 & up

From algae to fish to river otters, discover how plants and animals eke out a living in and around the Merrimack River, through hands-on exploration and outdoor discovery.

*Dec 15 - Reptiles & Amphibians*

*Jan 19 - Mammals of the Merrimack*

*Feb 16 - River Raptors*

**Check [nhaudubon.org](http://nhaudubon.org) for full details on these events and all the programs listed in Afield.**



## CAPITAL REGION CHAPTER

### Coastal Birding

**January 14, 7am-4pm**

This trip will target wintering birds and whatever rarities are in the area between southern Maine and Plum Island, MA, with the final destination determined closer to the actual date.

## LAKES REGION CHAPTER

### Magyar Madarok (Hungarian Birding)

**January 19, 7-9pm**

Kurk Dorsey recounts his entertaining adventures birding in Budapest, Hungary while living there for four months in the fall of 2011. With no car or scope and only limited ability to communicate, he still managed to see some of the great birds of Central Europe – and not get lost or cause an international incident!

### The Magic of Metamorphosis

**February 16, 7-9pm**

Rick Van de Poll shares the fascinating lives of butterflies from egg to larva to pupa and adult. Discover how these incredible

pollinators sequence through the seasons in search of their favorite nectaries. Find out which ones overwinter as adults and which ones travel thousands of miles to avoid the cold of winter.

## MASCOMA CHAPTER

### Rise and Fall of the Timber Rattlesnake

**December 13, 7-8:30pm**

Meet naturalist and author Ted Levin, who'll share his new book *America's Snake*, and his wry humor in discussing the maligned Timber Rattlesnake.

### Birding Cuba: Expedition to the Forbidden Island

**January 9, 7-8:30pm**

Cuba has long held an air of mystery for American travelers. NH Audubon's Senior Avian Conservation Biologist Dr. Pam Hunt visited in January of 2016. She will share stories of her bird watching exploits while offering an historical perspective both natural and cultural.

### Annual Wilder Dam Eagle Watch

**February 11, 10am-12pm**

Join us as we look for early bald eagle nesting activity in the woods bordering the Connecticut River downstream from the Wilder Dam.

### Getting Close to Cooper's Hawks

**February 13, 7-8:30pm**

For two nesting seasons, naturalist Tig Tillinghast was able to observe a mated pair of Cooper's Hawks raise their young. He'll share some of this photo archive to provide a rarely seen, insider's look into the daily habits of these woodland raptors.

## NASHAWAY CHAPTER

### Member's Night & Christmas Bird Count Preparation

**December 21, 7-9pm**

Bring your own photographs – we can show them on the huge screen of the library's theater! Discover the excitement of the National Audubon's 117th Annual Christmas Bird Count. Learn how you can participate, either in the field or from the comfort of your home and backyard.

### Nashua-Hollis Christmas Bird Count

**December 30; Cost: \$5**

If you are familiar with bird identification and would like to participate, either in the field or at home as a feeder counter, join us for this traditional event. Individuals

or groups will be assigned specific areas to bird. We will be counting birds by day and tallying our sightings over dinner at 5pm at Lawrence Barn, 28 Depot Rd., Hollis.

### All About the Common Loon

**January 18, 7-9pm**

Join us at our regular meeting as Director Harry Vogel of the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) and Center of Moutonborough, NH ducks out of his desk job and presents an insiders look at the efforts to increase the populations of loons here in NH and the world.

### Big Bend Texas Birding

**February 15, 7-9pm**

Roger and Kathryn Frieden have lived in NH for 30 years, but only started seriously birding in the past few years. Hear about their trip last spring with Massachusetts Audubon to Big Bend, Texas.

## SEACOAST CHAPTER

### Racing the Tide: Nesting Ecology and Conservation of NH's Tidal Marsh Birds

**December 14, 7-9pm**

UNH graduate student Bri Benvenuti will discuss her research on the nesting adaptations of Saltmarsh Sparrows and the conservation of tidal marsh birds as part of the Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Program.

### The Other Bay of Pigs Invasion: American Birders in Castro's Cuba

**January 11, 7-9pm**

Birder and History professor Kurk Dorsey will talk about his experiences with 14 other New England birders (and his octogenarian dad from Ohio) as they spent a week in January 2015 in Havana and the Zapata Peninsula looking for birds, and deciphering Cuban history and politics.

### It's Hot but the Birds are Cool

**February 8, 7-9pm**

Lauren Kras and Ben Griffith share their experiences birding Southeastern Arizona, with Elf Owls nesting in cactus holes, over a dozen species of hummingbird that can be seen in a day, and the wonderful Trogon.

### North Country Winter Finch Trip

**February 25, 8am-5pm**

The Seacoast Chapter heads north again this year with leader Kathy Dube to look for winter finches. Meet at the McDonald's in Gorham, NH, 214 Main Street.

## SANCTUARY FIELD TRIPS

### Goodhue Hill Wildlife

**Sunday, Jan. 8, 9am-12pm**

Look for wildlife signs along this moderately strenuous hike/snowshoe of Goodhue Hill at the Willard Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. We will walk to the summit of Goodhue Hill (2.5-3 miles round-trip) where excellent views of the surrounding Monadnock Region can be enjoyed on this recently-improved trail through a regenerating forest.

### Deering Wildlife Sanctuary Timber Harvest Tour

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 9am-12pm**

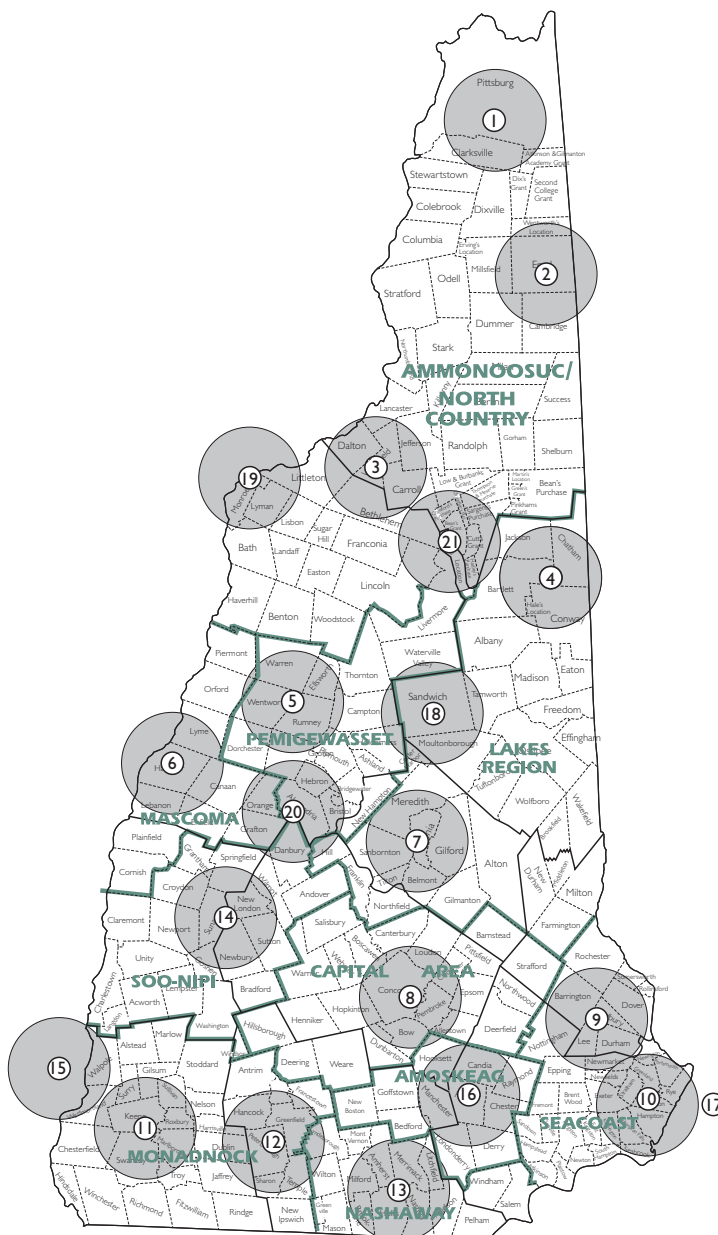
This walking tour will demonstrate how carefully planned timber harvests can be designed to improve wildlife habitat and accomplish additional goals. Wildlife experts and foresters will discuss how different types of management can benefit a diverse assortment of wildlife.

Contact: Phil Brown at [pbrown@nhaudubon.org](mailto:pbrown@nhaudubon.org) or at 224-9909x334 to RSVP for either trip.

FOR COMPLETE EVENT DETAILS, VISIT [NHAUDUBON.ORG](http://NHAUDUBON.ORG)

It's time for the annual Christmas Bird Count! There are 21 counts in New Hampshire, and they are open to all interested birders. Many are run by New Hampshire Audubon Chapters. Look for a count near you and contact the person listed if you'd like to help. Each count takes place in a designated "count circle" on a specific day. The coordinator assigns teams to count birds in each section of the circle, but if you live in the circle you can simply count the birds in your backyard. Each count's survey area stays the same from year to year, comprising a circle fifteen miles in diameter around a central point.

International in scope, the Christmas Bird Count is organized and compiled by the National Audubon Society, who coordinates all count circles so they don't overlap. Each count picks its own particular survey day between December 14 and January 5. So join in a 100-year-old tradition and have some winter fun!



- 1. Pittsburg – December 14.**  
Contact: David Govatski (586-7776 or David.Govatski@gmail.com).
- 2. Errol-Umbagog – December 15.**  
Contact: Chris Martin (224-9909 x317 or cmartin@nhaudubon.org).
- 3. Littleton – December 18.**  
Contact: David Govatski (586-7776 or David.Govatski@gmail.com) or Mary Boulanger (444-6993 or mboul@roadrunner.com).
- 4. North Conway – December 28.**  
Contact: Nora Dufilho, Tin Mtn. Conservation Ctr. (447-6991 or nbeem@tinmountain.org).
- 5. Baker Valley – tbd.**  
Contact: Stephen Rounds (764-9011 or ullungdo96@yahoo.com) or Nory Parr (786-9896 or northparr@gmail.com).
- 6. Hanover-Norwich – January 1.**  
Contact: Dan Crook (448-2544) or Walter Ellison (rossgull61@gmail.com).
- 7. Laconia-New Hampton – January 2.**  
Contact: Pam Hunt (753-9137 or biodiva@myfairpoint.net).
- 8. Concord – December 18.**  
Contact: Robert Quinn (RAQbirds@aol.com [preferred] or 746-2535).
- 9. Lee-Durham – December 18.**  
Contact: Kurk Dorsey (397-5844 or kd@unh.edu).
- 10. Coastal – December 17.**  
Contact: Len Medlock (lenmedlock@comcast.net).
- 11. Keene – December 18.**  
Contact: Phil Brown (pbrown@nhaudubon.org or 224-9909 x334).
- 12. Peterborough-Hancock – December 17.**  
Contact: Dave Rowell (924-8790 or daverowell@myfairpoint.net).
- 13. Nashua-Hollis – tbd.**  
Contact: Richard Bielawski (429-2537 or rbielawski@mac.com).
- 14. Lake Sunapee – December 17.**  
Contact: Gary Stansfield (inuknh@gmail.com [preferred] or 863-8737).
- 15. Saxtons River (VT-NH) – December 17.**  
Contact: Donald Clark (802-843-2347 or sapsbks@gmail.com).
- 16. Manchester – tbd.**  
Contact: Richard Bielawski (429-2537 or rbielawski@mac.com).
- 17. Isles of Shoals – tentatively January 2.**  
Contact: Ben Griffith (bgriffith@gmail.com [preferred] or 801-1856).
- 18. Sandwich – January 2.**  
Contact: Tony Vazzano (284-7718 or tvazzano@ncia.net).
- 19. Barnet (VT-NH) – January 1.**  
Contact: Charlie Browne (802-592-3545 or ccbrowne63@gmail.com).
- 20. Grafton-Bristol – tbd.**  
Contact: Bill Belanger (455-3741 or penmen1@metrocast.net).
- 21. Crawford Notch – December 17.**  
Contact: Craig Repasz (203-230-1697 or crepsz@hotmail.com).



# Thirty Years of Counting Backyard Birds!

By Rebecca Suomala, Survey Coordinator and Nanci Mitchell, Survey Volunteer

The first Backyard Winter Bird Survey was conducted in 1987. Since then, thirty years of survey data have been collected by thousands of volunteers. With that data, we've been able to see many changes and patterns of ups and downs. NH Audubon initiated the first statewide survey in 1967 to document the increase of three southern species that were invading the state: Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, and Northern Mockingbird. We expanded it to include all birds in 1987. The original southern species have continued to increase – Northern Cardinal numbers have increased by more than a factor of two since the expanded survey began, with 950 reported in 1987 and 2,152 in 2016. Several other “southern” species have followed in the footsteps of those original three. We can see the Red-bellied Woodpecker expanding its range northwards – there were none reported in 1987, the first report of a single sighting came in 1991, and by 2016 there were 522 on the Survey. Similarly, the Carolina Wren has also expanded its range north with only two sightings in 1987 and 133 in 2016.



*Red-bellied Woodpeckers have continued to increase on the Backyard Winter Bird Survey since they were first reported in 1991. Photo by Len Medlock.*

Evening Grosbeaks never used to even be in New Hampshire until the mid-1900s and it looks like their increase may be linked to the spruce budworm. Outbreaks of these caterpillars across the boreal forest may have fueled Evening Grosbeak population changes. You can read about it in the 2015 Backyard Winter Bird Survey summary by Dr. Pamela Hunt,



*Evening Grosbeak, a species that has almost disappeared from the Backyard Winter Bird Survey since it began in 1987. Photo by Len Medlock.*

Why the increases? There is no definitive answer, but most likely some combination of climate change, suburbanization and bird feeders account for the increases.

Conversely, Evening Grosbeak numbers have dropped from 6,124 in 1987 to 35 in 2016. Some of us remember when they used to descend on our feeders in a group and empty the sunflower seed in a few minutes. What happened? The answer is more complex than you might expect.

online at: [nhbirdrecords.org](http://nhbirdrecords.org) under the Conservation tab. With a budworm outbreak in Canada, they may be on the increase again and the Survey will help us see what's going on.

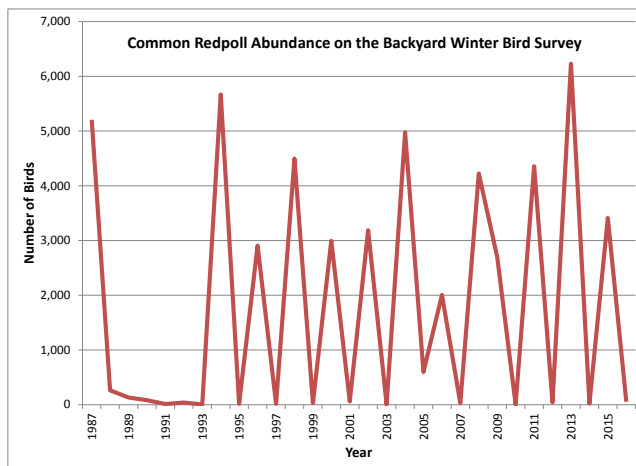
Then there are the species that regularly appear in large numbers during the winter. The survey clearly shows the regular patterns of these irruptions. Common Redpolls irrupt every other year with almost clockwork regularity, while American Goldfinch have a cycle of peaks every 2-3 years.

You can help us keep track of these birds by taking part in the survey. The 2017 Survey takes place on February 11 and 12. Anyone can participate by counting the birds in their own backyard on the survey weekend and reporting online or sending the results on a special reporting form to NH Audubon. To receive by mail a copy of the reporting form and complete instructions on how to participate, e-mail your mailing address to

[bwbs@nhaudubon.org](mailto:bwbs@nhaudubon.org). Forms are also available at NH Audubon centers and online. Data may be submitted online at [nhaudubon.org](http://nhaudubon.org), through the Birding tab under “Get Outside.”

Reports of a lack of birds are just as valuable as reports of many birds. The key is to participate each year regardless of how many or how few birds you have. This provides a consistent long-term set of data that shows both the ups and downs.

*The Backyard Winter Bird Survey is supported entirely by donations. Thank you to everyone who has contributed over the years and continues to make the Survey possible.*



*Data from the entire history of the Backyard Winter Bird Survey show the pattern of ups and downs in Common Redpolls. This winter visitor appears in large numbers (“irrupts”) in New Hampshire every other year based on the semi-annual pattern of tree seed production (i.e. birch catkins) to our north.*



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