



## Report to the Nuttall Ornithological Club

### **New Hampshire Bird Records Data Conversion**

*September, 2016 through August, 2017*

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#### **Summary**

New Hampshire Audubon (NHA) independently collected and computerizing bird sightings from 1986 to 2009, at which point we began collaborating with eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) to provide an on-line data entry system for these data. NHA has since been working to upload to eBird the 22 years of birding data comprising 188,778 records. We have received targeted grant funding for certain areas of the state but it has been challenging to find funding for towns in northern New Hampshire's Coos County. Due to the presence of several popular birding sites (e.g. Pittsburg, Errol, and the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge), there are more than 16,000 records for Coos County. A Blake-Nuttall Fund grant in September of 2016 was used to target this area for upload and provide leverage for additional funding requests. We have completed 15 towns, comprising 6,542 records with eight more towns in process comprising an additional 6,000 records.

#### **Importation of Records**

The upload process requires that written locations be converted to points on a map. This often requires considerable research to determine the current locations of some of the records. Many of the written descriptions in the older data involve colloquial names and this seemed especially so in the North Country (i.e. "Creampoke," and "the Northern Harrier nest site"). Locating trails in the White Mountain National Forest provided another challenge. Volunteers do the majority of the work for each town, with the NHA Project Leader providing coordination, training, and oversight.

The first towns completed were Whitefield and Jefferson, home of the aforementioned Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge. Errol was also a priority with nearly 2,500 reports, the second highest for any town in Coos County. One volunteer has been concentrating on the White Mountains which required obtaining trail maps and locating the trails on a Google satellite map. She has completed towns such as Sargents Purchase (which includes Mt. Washington), Thompson & Meserves Purchase (location of the Caps Ridge Trail with its many boreal sightings), and Beans Grant. Pittsburg, the town with the most data at over 5,000 sightings, is in process. When that is complete we will have uploaded two thirds of the Coos data. In total we

have completed uploading the data for 15 of the 41 towns with data in Coos County with eight more in process.

### **Funding and Volunteer Contributions**

We have submitted a grant application to the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund for funding to complete the Coos County data, using the 2016 Blake-Nuttall Fund grant as leverage. The fund specializes in community and economic development in Coos County. We have not heard back yet. Two volunteers have been dedicated to Coos County and have spent about 250 hours so far.

### **Challenges**

Two of the eBird upload volunteers retired in 2016 and we have not yet been able to fill their positions. The two volunteers currently working on Coos County have been working on this project for several years and are very experienced. We continue to search for a volunteer with the experience needed to review the observations of rare and unusual birds to ensure they were properly documented and reviewed using the standard *New Hampshire Bird Records* process. These records are automatically “flagged” by eBird and must be reviewed by a qualified, approved individual before they will be accepted into the database. This provides an important quality control check and helps ensure quality data.