



## Interim Report to the Nuttall Ornithological Club

# **Common Nighthawk Wind Guidelines and Monitoring**

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**Principal Investigator:**

Rebecca Suomala  
New Hampshire Audubon  
84 Silk Farm Road  
Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 224-9909 ext. 309  
[rsuomala@nhaudubon.org](mailto:rsuomala@nhaudubon.org)

NH Audubon has been monitoring breeding Common Nighthawk in New Hampshire since 2007, most intensively in the Concord, NH area. During that time, volunteers have gathered data on the occurrence of Common Nighthawk nests, nest success and nesting behavior. In the Concord area the population has declined from a high of 14 adults to 6 in 2018. NH Audubon has created a profile of the birds' behavior at an active nest site versus sites with only a displaying male but no female or nest. This has been critical in responding to collision issues with wind turbines.

Wind turbine sites on ledges where nighthawks nest have resulted in nighthawk mortality and NH Audubon's expertise has been requested in these situations. We have used our experience with nighthawk nesting behavior to determine the timing of mortality and make recommendations on appropriate protocol to reduce mortality in the future at both active and proposed sites. This has highlighted the need for a standard operating protocol for wind turbine sites with nighthawk nests and a concurrent guide for conducting nighthawk monitoring.

The New Hampshire Fish & Game Department (NHFG) provided partial funding for developing these guidelines and the Blake-Nuttall Fund provided \$2,000 in matching funds in October of 2017 to complete these guidelines.

Due to federal funding requirements related to the funding from NHFG, the work could not begin until April of 2018. It was originally scheduled to be completed in the winter of 2017-18 before the nighthawk field season began. This delay allowed us to conduct additional observations of nighthawk nest sites in the early morning (approximately 3:30-5:00 am) to better define the timing of this activity period. We were fortunate to confirm a nest this summer in Concord that had adequate visibility to observe morning activity. Observations were made at this site from the time the chick was eight days old until it departed the area (28 days old). Additional morning observations were made at a visible nest site in Ossipee, NH.

The guidelines have been drafted but need further revision after the information from the additional morning surveys. After that they will go to NHFG for review and comments. Once they are approved by NHFG they will be available on the NH Audubon web site. We will send a final report with the guidelines at that time.