

# NEW ENGLAND BIRDING FIELD TOUR

## Mountains to Coast

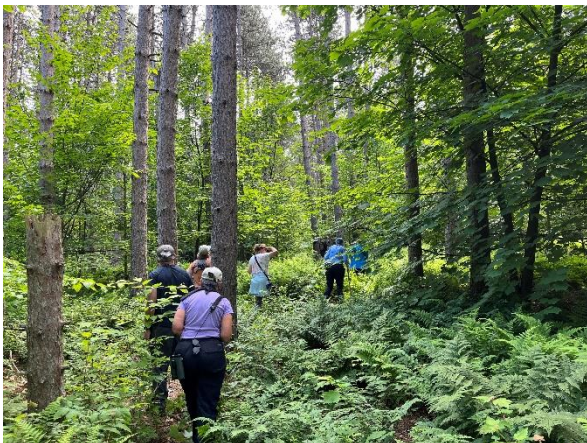
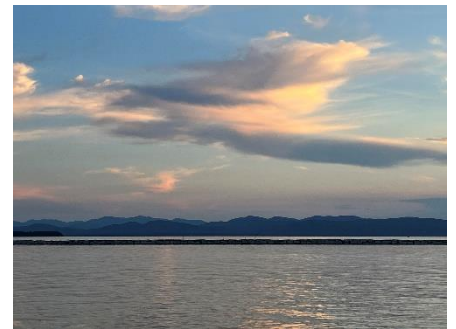
June 30-July 9, 2022

A birding tour organized by *Seven Ponds Nature Center & New England Bird Tours*

### Trip Report and Sightings Notes



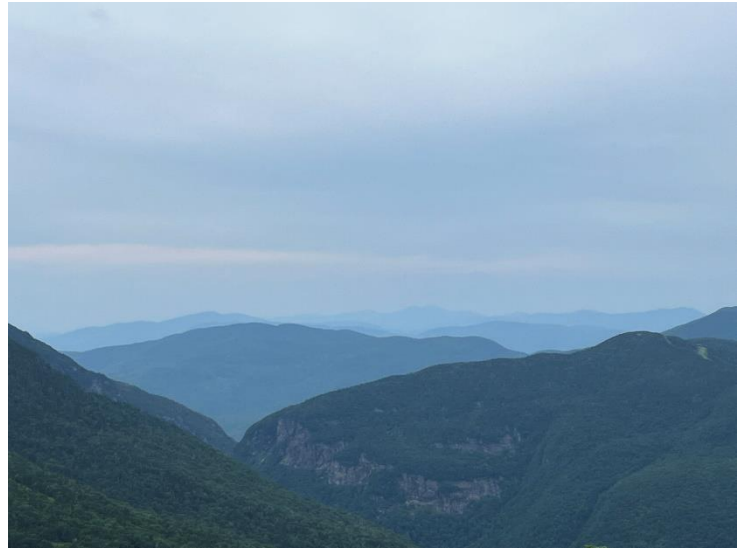
**DAY 1 (June 30) Burlington, Vermont.** Despite some later-than-originally-planned arrivals, we had everybody except Sue (who was due to touch down after 11:00 PM) so we headed off to dinner in the Black Hawk. While we waited for our table at Splash at the Boathouse, we couldn't help but notice the birds in the harbor – our first birding in Vermont. Birders gotta bird, after all! After a nice dinner we headed back to the hotel to rest up for the next eight days and three states of birding. *Night in Burlington, Vermont.*



### **DAY 2 (July 1) Birding the Champlain Valley and Stowe.**

First thing in the morning we headed south to Cram Road powerline to search for our first songbirds of the tour, and we found plenty, including eight warbler species (Prairie Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler among them). Many of these species were not new for the group but kicked off our trip list in fine fashion. Next up, Dave took us to a secret location near his home in Ripton where he had staked out a Northern Goshawk nest. Although the young had recently fledged, one of the adults was still patrolling the area and we were treated to an amazing experience as the powerful accipiter roared

over our heads, calling a warning that this was their territory, and we were not welcome. It was an experience none of us are likely to forget. Our next stop in the Green Mountain National Forest provided an up-close encounter with a beautiful Mourning Warbler, among several other birds. While leaving the forest, a Ruffed Grouse crossed the gravel road in front of us, providing a very accommodating view for all. Our evening trip up Mt. Mansfield (elevation 4,395 feet) was met with stunning vistas, powerful winds, and frustrating experiences with several Bicknell's Thrushes, none of which wanted to give us anything more than a fleeting glimpse, though we were able to enjoy their flute-like song. A wonderful bonus bird on this mountain hike was incredible looks at Blackpoll Warblers on breeding territory. *Night in Stowe, Vermont.*



**DAY 3 (July 2) North from Stowe to Pittsburg, New Hampshire.** As we made our way north through Vermont, we were interrupted several times by new trip birds en route, as birds like American Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting, Chipping Sparrow, and Eastern Bluebird kept popping up and demanding our attention. Finally, we stopped for a short while along a rural road where grassy fields held numerous new birds for our trip, including Savannah Sparrow and Cliff Swallow. A restroom and lunch stop near Lakeside Park at Island Pond gave us our first Common Loon of the trip. We finally reached our destination – Moose Bog – by late morning. This beautiful boreal bog held the promise of

Spruce Grouse and Black-backed Woodpecker, but we could find neither. Still, we had a wonderful time there, enjoying stunning views of Blackburnian Warbler, our first Northern Parulas, Magnolia Warblers, and Black-throated Blue Warblers of the trip, and nesting Eastern Kingbirds attending to almost-ready-to-fledge nestlings. We also found a very recent fledgling Chestnut-sided Warbler crossing the gravel road, toad-like. Dave picked it up, posed for a pic, and placed it back near its very vocal parents. Crossing into New Hampshire, we stopped at the Town Common Road Bridge to score our first New Hampshire birds before continuing north to Pittsburg, which we would call home for the next three nights. *Night in Pittsburg, New Hampshire.*



**DAY 4 (July 3) Northern New Hampshire boreal forest.** We spent over eight hours slowly driving East Inlet Road, traversing just over ten miles as we neared the Canadian border. Along the way we made many stops and saw incredible birds, eventually racking up a list of 42 boreal breeding birds. Among them we had Boreal Chickadee, Canada Jay, Ruffed Grouse, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and fourteen species of warblers! *Night in Pittsburg, New Hampshire.*



**DAY 5 (July 4) Moose Bog to Dixville Peak.** Our plan for



today was that our birding would be a sort of redemption from two days ago, when we basically went 0 for 3 on Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Bicknell's Thrush (with the latter being mostly heard only). In the morning we returned to Vermont and Moose Bog for another shot at the two boreal birds – this time first thing in the morning, which we felt would give us a better shot. From the parking lot, we heard some distant tapping. But despite a concerted effort we were unable to drum up a woodpecker. And the Spruce Grouse – always a tough bird – were once again a no-show. Still, it was a beautiful morning at the bog, where we had our only Lincoln's Sparrow of the trip and some fun interactions with curious Canada Jays.

And the baby kingbirds had fledged! After heading back to New Hampshire, we spent the midday hours checking out a few spots at nearby Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge before having an early dinner in advance of our evening drive up Dixville Peak (elevation 3,480 feet) for another shot at Bicknell's Thrush. On the drive up we encountered our second moose of the trip along with several snowshoe hares. At the top, the steady roar of giant wind turbines competed with our hoped-for singing Bicknell's Thrushes. Alas, there were no thrushes of this variety to be had and our efforts were thwarted once again. *Night in Pittsburg, New Hampshire.*

**DAY 6 (July 5) Pittsburg to the coast of Maine.**

Today was by and large a travel day, but of course we stopped to bird several times along the way. At Mollidgewock Road in Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge we had our best views of Boreal Chickadee, with two very accommodating birds. Spruce Meadow Picnic Area at Grafton Notch State Park



gave us our only Red Crossbill of the trip as well as a nice spot for lunch. Just down the road at the Grafton Notch State Park—Appalachian Trail parking lot we scored two Philadelphia Vireos, up close and personal, and then it was onward to Maine. We rolled into Belfast just before 6:00 PM, and after checking into the Gull Motel we headed off to Young's Lobster Pound for our first coastal Maine seafood dinner, birding Belfast Harbor, of course, while we dined on lobster. *Night in Belfast, Maine.*

### **DAY 7 (July 6) Charter boat trip to Seal Island NWR.**

This morning we ambled our way down the coast toward Rockland Harbor and our 1:00 PM date with Captain John aboard the *Equinox*. Before that, however, we had some time on our hands, so of course we went birding. Between Camden and Rockland we found a nice place called Merryspring Nature Center, and there we had a pleasant morning bird walk followed by lunch in the nature center's wonderful gazebo. After lunch we met our captain in the harbor and boarded the *Equinox*. We had been warned that the seas would be rough and the 24-mile ride out to Seal Island would be very uncomfortable, but fortunately all our concern was for naught, as the ride out (and back) was quite pleasant. On the way out to the island we had some exciting birds, including Black Guillemot and Wilson's Storm-Petrel.



Once we reached Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge, we slowly circled the island, lingering at several key spots. We enjoyed amazing views of Atlantic Puffins (150+) as they bobbed in the water, rested on the rocky island, and zipped past us. Black Guillemots were plentiful, and we spotted more than two-dozen Razorbills. On the far side of the island, we had great looks at the colony of Great Cormorants, including nearly adult-sized fledglings. About 300 Common Terns and 100 Arctic Terns also vied for our attention, as did 40 or so Common Eiders, mostly females and ducklings but a few breeding plumaged males as well. As our time near the island waned, Dave was busy studying some nearby puffins in the water, when he began growing more and more excited. This drew Daryl's attention, who suddenly shouted out, "TUFTED PUFFIN! TUFTED PUFFIN! TUFTED PUFFIN!" (As a backstory, a lone Tufted Puffin, normally bound to the Pacific Ocean with only a few Atlantic Ocean records, was found on June 22 at Petit Manan Island off the Maine coast. It then moved north to Machias Seal Island, where it was spotted on July 1. Our group was the first to spot the bird at Seal Island NWR. Post-tour note: The Tufted Puffin was subsequently found at Eastern Egg Rock on July 15.) What a great way to end our time at Seal Island! *Night in Belfast, Maine.*

**DAY 8 (July 7) South to Brunswick.** We departed Belfast and headed south along the Maine coast. Our first stop was a bridge over the Little River Mouth, where we found a lone White-winged Scoter. At Weskeag Marsh we had our first sightings of the "sharp-tailed sparrows" – both Saltmarsh Sparrow and Nelson's Sparrow along with 20+ other species. At Sherman Lake we stopped for lunch and enticed a beautiful Virginia



Rail to emerge from the cattails to give us amazing views. Dave knew of a Henslow's Sparrow staked out near Brunswick, so we decided to chase after this northeast rarity, which would be a Lifer for several in the group. The bird was incredibly cooperative, moving from perch to perch, providing great looks through the scope. A hot, midday stop at the Brunswick Airport didn't produce hoped-for Grasshopper Sparrows or Upland Sandpipers, and soon it was time to head to New Harbor for our scheduled trip to Eastern Egg Rock. We arrived at the dock and boarded the *Hardy III*, awaiting our departure. Birding from the top deck, we enjoyed an incredible experience as we watched a Merlin chase Barn Swallows for what was likely just a

minute or so but seemed much longer when viewed continuously through binoculars. The little falcon dipped, dived, rose again, and pulled all manner of aerial stunts and maneuvers, but the acrobatic Barn Swallows were up to the task, and eventually the Merlin gave up the pursuit and perched atop a nearby roof to recover. Wow! We pulled away from the dock and into the harbor, and before long we were circling Eastern Egg Rock, where the group of 40-50 passengers enjoyed Black Guillemots, Common Eiders, Laughing Gulls, Common Terns, and what most of them had signed up for: Atlantic Puffins. For our part, we were keen to get our bins on the Roseate Terns that also nest on the island, and most of us managed to do so, at least fleetingly. Still, some were left wanting. *Night in Brunswick, Maine.*



**DAY 9 (July 8) Brunswick to Portland, via Scarborough Marsh and Pine Point Beach.**

Our first stop of the day was famed Scarborough Marsh, and our first good bird of the day was a staked-out Black-necked Stilt. At the marsh proper (and what a marsh!) we had more looks at both sharp-tailed sparrow species, plus our first major shorebird haul of the tour, with Least Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Willet, along with Least Tern, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, and several woodland songbirds in the forest at the edge of the marsh. At nearby Pine Point Beach, we found a mesmerizing flock of (mostly) Common Terns feeding at the shoreline at arms-length from our

vantage point. The terns, facing into the wind, would rise and swoop and eventually dive into the surf for small fish hidden in the thick seaweed. But wait! A few of the terns were Roseate Terns, giving us much closer, better, satisfying looks than those we had the previous day from the upper deck of the *Hardy III*. Now everyone was satisfied with their Roseate Tern experience! But Pine Point Beach wasn't done providing satisfaction for our group, for just down the shore we found a family of four Piping Plovers: mom, dad, and two little pipers trotting around the beach, often just a few feet away from us. Our final stop for the day was Kennebunk Plains, an area dominated by grasses and stunted shrubs. Here we found a nice selection of songbirds, including our only Vesper Sparrows of the trip along with amazing views of three Prairie Warblers – a wonderful encore of this beautiful warbler, and a perfect way to conclude our birding. *Night in Portland, Maine.*



**DAY 10 (July 9) Portland to home.** Most folks flew out today, heading for home – to Michigan for most, to Colorado for Jane. Gavin was picked up by his sister, who lives in Connecticut. Daryl and Dave made the four-hour drive back to Burlington, Vermont, where they turned in the Black Hawk and then parted company.

## LEADER & GUIDE

- **Daryl Bernard** – Executive Director – Seven Ponds Nature Center
- **Dave Hof** – Professional Birding Guide & Ornithologist – New England Bird Tours

## PARTICIPANTS

- **Anita Spencer** – Lapeer, Michigan
- **Candy Petrick** – Buelah, Michigan
- **Colleen Vogler** – Saline, Michigan
- **Gavin Awerbuch** – Hypoluxo, Florida
- **Jan Giesken** – Lapeer, Michigan
- **Jane Pedersen** – Durango, Colorado
- **Sue Keener** – Rochester, Michigan
- **Yvonne Lentner** – Lake Orion, Michigan



## LODGING

**La Quinta Inn & Suites** – *South Burlington, Vermont* – June 30  
**Commodores Inn** – *Stowe, Vermont* – July 1  
**Northern Trails Motel** – *Pittsburg, New Hampshire* – July 2, 3, 4  
**Gull Motel** – *Belfast, Maine* – July 5, 6  
**Comfort Inn** – *Brunswick, Maine* – July 7  
**Clarion Hotel** – *Portland, Maine* – July 8

## RESTAURANTS

**Splash at the Boathouse** – *Burlington, Vermont* – June 30  
**The Bench** – *Stowe, Vermont* – July 1  
**Buck Rub Pub** – *Pittsburg, New Hampshire* – July 2  
**Full Send** – *Pittsburg, New Hampshire* – July 3  
**Black Bear Pub** – *Errol, New Hampshire* – July 4  
**Young's Lobster Pound** – *Belfast, Maine* – July 5  
**Peter Ott's on the Water** – *Camden, Maine* – July 6  
**The Harbor Room** – *New Harbor, Maine* – July 7  
**Guerrero Maya Mexican Restaurant** – *Portland, Maine* – July 8



## TRANSPORTATION

**The Black Hawk** – over 1,000 miles of luxurious birding comfort through three states in this fantastic, nearly brand-new Ford Transit fifteen-passenger van!



## BIRDING LOCATIONS

### Thursday, June 30

- Splash at the Boathouse—Burlington harbor

### Friday, July 1

- Cram Rd. powerline
- Ripton Northern Goshawk territory
- Green Mountain National Forest
- Mt. Mansfield

### Saturday, July 2

- Incidental locations en route to Moose Bog
- Hudson Rd. fields
- Lakeside Park
- Moose Bog
- Town Common Road Bridge (New Hampshire)

### Sunday, July 3

- East Inlet

### Monday, July 4

- Moose Bog
- Mile Long Pond, Androscoggin River
- Umbagog NWR—Dam Rd.
- Umbagog NWR—Headquarters
- Turbine access road north from W. Branch Clear Stream Rd, Dixville

### Tuesday, July 5

- Umbagog Lake boat launch
- Spruce Meadow Picnic Area—Grafton Notch SP
- Grafton Notch SP—Appalachian Trail parking lot
- Messalonskee Lake—boat launch

### Belfast Harbor Wednesday, July 6

- Merryspring Nature Park
- Rockland Harbor—Piers
- Rockland Harbor & Gulf of Maine (*Equinox* charter)
- Seal Island NWR (island vicinity)

### Thursday, July 7

- Little River Mouth
- Weskeag Marsh
- stakeout Henslow's Sparrow, Brunswick
- Brunswick Airport
- New Harbor
- Eastern Egg Rock

### Friday, July 8

- Scarborough Marsh—Eastern Rd.
- Pine Point Beach—Ave. 5
- Scarborough Marsh—Pelreco Building
- Kennebunk Plains

## TRIP BIRDS

Canada Goose

Wood Duck

Mallard

American Black Duck

Ring-necked Duck

Common Eider

White-winged Scoter

Hooded Merganser

Common Merganser

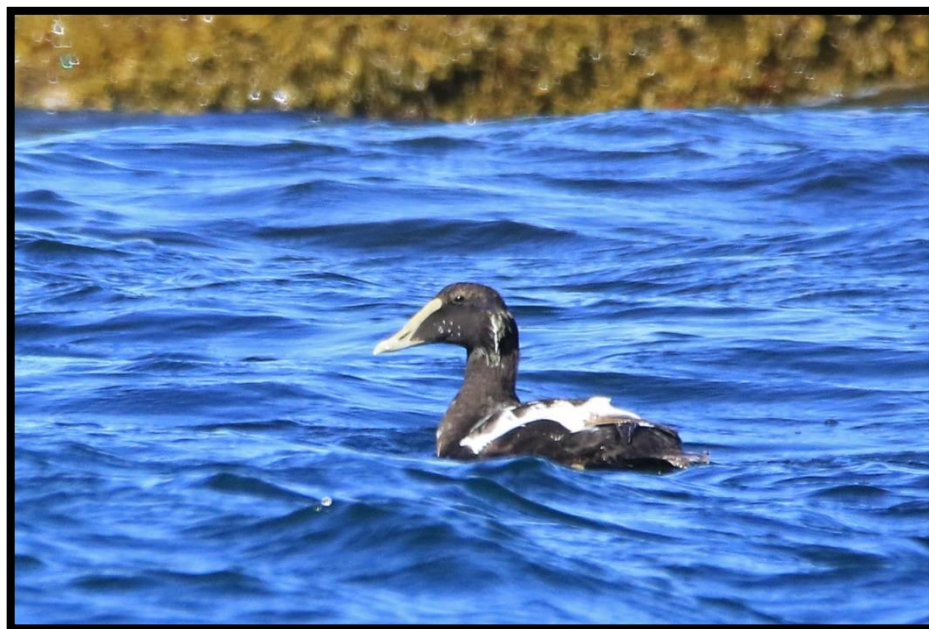
Wild Turkey

Ruffed Grouse

Rock Pigeon

Mourning Dove

Chimney Swift



**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**

**Virginia Rail**

**Black-necked Stilt**

**American Oystercatcher**

**Piping Plover**

**Killdeer**

**Ruddy Turnstone**

**Least Sandpiper**

**Short-billed Dowitcher**

**Spotted Sandpiper**

**Greater Yellowlegs**

**Willet**

**Lesser Yellowlegs**

**Razorbill**

**Black Guillemot**

**Atlantic Puffin**

**Tufted Puffin**

**Bonaparte's Gull**

**Laughing Gull**

**Ring-billed Gull**

**Herring Gull**

**Great Black-backed Gull**

**Least Tern**

**Caspian Tern**

**Roseate Tern**

**Common Tern**

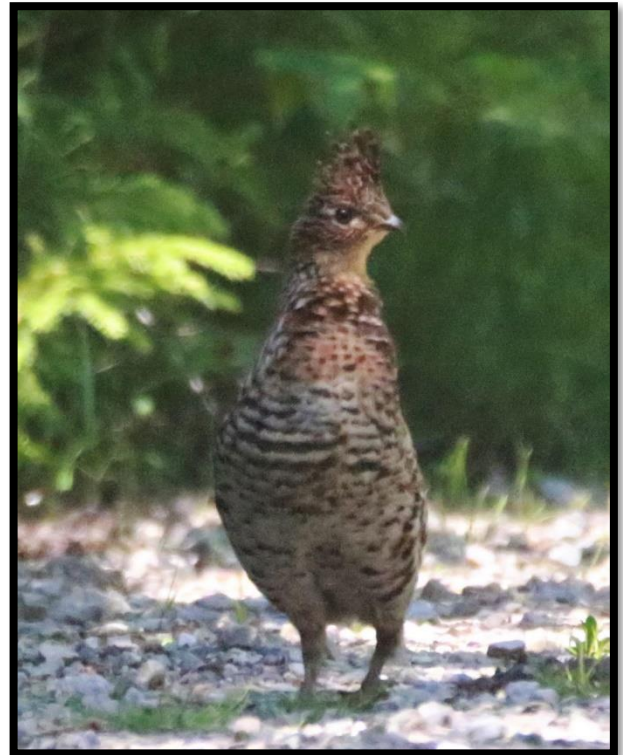
**Arctic Tern**

**Common Loon**

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel**

**Northern Gannet**

**Great Cormorant**



**Double-crested Cormorant**

**Great Blue Heron**

**Great Egret**

**Snowy Egret**

**Little Blue Heron**

**Glossy Ibis**

**Turkey Vulture**

**Osprey**

**Northern Goshawk**

**Bald Eagle**

**Broad-winged Hawk**

**Red-tailed Hawk**

**Belted Kingfisher**

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**

**Downy Woodpecker**

**Hairy Woodpecker**

**Pileated Woodpecker**

**Northern Flicker**

**American Kestrel**

**Merlin**

**Olive-sided Flycatcher**

**Eastern Wood-Pewee**

**Yellow-bellied**

**Flycatcher**

**Alder Flycatcher**

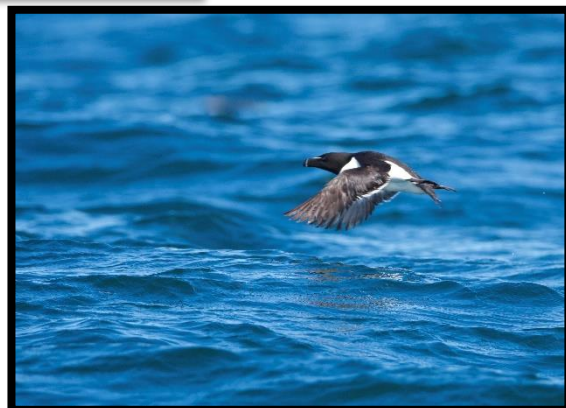
**Least Flycatcher**

**Eastern Phoebe**

**Eastern Kingbird**

**Blue-headed Vireo**

**Philadelphia Vireo**



**Warbling Vireo**  
**Red-eyed Vireo**  
**Canada Jay**  
**Blue Jay**  
**American Crow**  
**Common Raven**  
**Black-capped Chickadee**  
**Boreal Chickadee**  
**Tufted Titmouse**  
**Tree Swallow**  
**Bank Swallow**  
**Barn Swallow**  
**Cliff Swallow**  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**  
**Golden-crowned Kinglet**  
**Red-breasted Nuthatch**  
**White-breasted Nuthatch**  
**House Wren**  
**Winter Wren**  
**Carolina Wren**  
**European Starling**  
**Gray Catbird**  
**Northern Mockingbird**  
**Eastern Bluebird**  
**Veery**  
**Bicknell's Thrush**  
**Swainson's Thrush**  
**Hermit Thrush**  
**American Robin**  
**Cedar Waxwing**  
**House Sparrow**



**Purple Finch**  
**Red Crossbill**  
**Pine Siskin**  
**American Goldfinch**  
**Chipping Sparrow**  
**Field Sparrow**  
**Dark-eyed Junco**  
**White-throated Sparrow**  
**Vesper Sparrow**  
**Nelson's Sparrow**  
**Saltmarsh Sparrow**  
**Savannah Sparrow**  
**Henslow's Sparrow**  
**Song Sparrow**  
**Lincoln's Sparrow**  
**Swamp Sparrow**  
**Eastern Towhee**  
**Bobolink**  
**Eastern Meadowlark**  
**Red-winged Blackbird**  
**Common Grackle**  
**Ovenbird**  
**Northern Waterthrush**  
**Blue-winged Warbler**  
**Black-and-white Warbler**  
**Nashville Warbler**  
**Mourning Warbler**  
**Common Yellowthroat**  
**American Redstart**  
**Cape May Warbler**  
**Northern Parula**



**Magnolia Warbler**  
**Bay-breasted Warbler**  
**Blackburnian Warbler**  
**Yellow Warbler**  
**Chestnut-sided Warbler**  
**Blackpoll Warbler**  
**Black-throated Blue Warbler**  
**Palm Warbler**  
**Pine Warbler**  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler**  
**Prairie Warbler**  
**Black-throated Green Warbler**  
**Canada Warbler**  
**Scarlet Tanager**  
**Northern Cardinal**  
**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**  
**Indigo Bunting**



**TOTAL BIRDS SEEN/HEARD BY OUR GROUP: 153** (your personal total may differ)





**MAMMALS**

**Moose**

**Whitetail Deer**

**Eastern Chipmunk**

**Red Squirrel**

**Gray Squirrel**

**Porcupine**

**Harbor Seal**

**Gray Seal**





### **Photo Credits**

**Anita Spencer** – *Razorbill · Roseate Tern · Great Cormorant colony · Canada Jay  
Boreal Chickadee*

**Sue Keener** – *Common Eider · Ruffed Grouse · Piping Plovers · Atlantic Puffin  
Hairy Woodpecker · Red-eyed Vireo · Nashville Warbler · Palm Warbler  
Magnolia Warbler · Tufted Puffin*

**Daryl Bernard** – *all other photos*