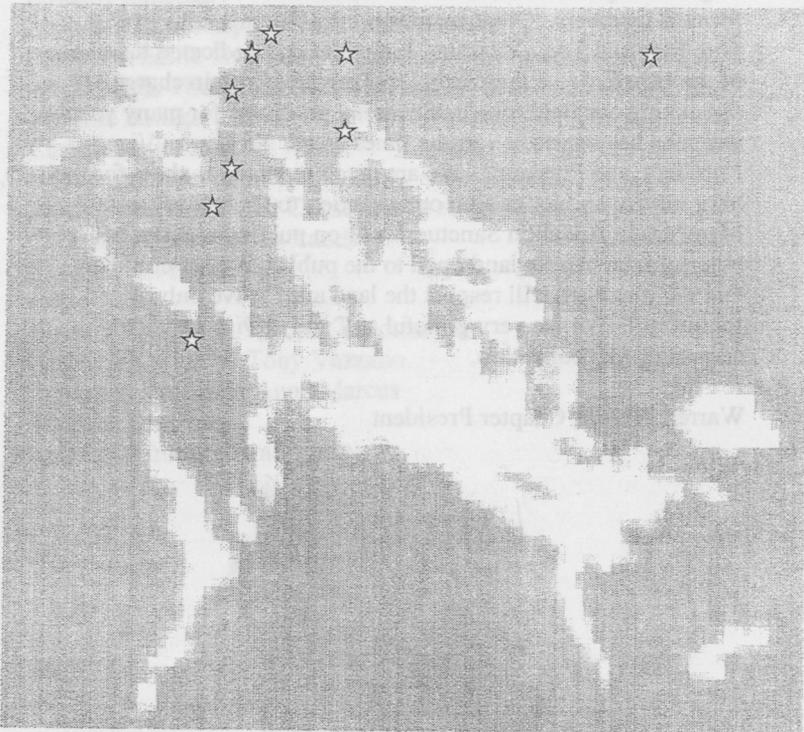


# Birding and Nature Sites of the Lakes Region

By Jane Rice



Lakes Region Chapter of  
Audubon Society of New Hampshire

NH.ROOM  
NATURE  
Ric

Members of the Lakes Region and Mt Washington Valley Chapters of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire have seen these articles on sites for birding, botanizing and sheer enjoyment in our area because they have been reprinted from our bimonthly newsletter. The officers and board of directors of the Lakes Region Chapter felt that a collection of them would be a nice gift for new members. Older members may obtain a copy at cost. Jane Rice and Tony Vazzano, long time and dedicated members of our board, wrote these articles. Tony has been in charge of organizing our field trips and evening programs for many years and Jane has served at various times as our Treasurer, Vice President, and President. We are much indebted to them for their long service and for calling our attention to these lovely sites. Many are in Audubon Sanctuaries or on public property, but others are on private land open to the public. We are confident that our members will respect the land and "leave only footprints". We are very grateful to Cyndy "Tig" Davis for compiling this collection.

Warren Walker, Chapter President



Frederick and Paula Anna Markus Willdlife Sanctuary

## Contents

Gertrude Keith Hoyt and Edward Eaton	
Hoyt Jr Wildlife Sanctuary	2
Charles Henry and Mabel Lamborn Watts	
Sanctuary	3
Lovejoy Sanctuary	4
Leonard Boyd Chapman Wildbird Sancuary	5
Proctor Wildlife Sanctuary	6
Alice Bemis Thompson Sanctuary and	
Wildlife Refuge	6
Chamberlain-Reynolds Forest	7
Unsworth Preserve	8, 9
Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area	10, 11
Chocorua Conservation Lands	12, 13
Nature Trail news	14, 15
Little Gems	16, 17
Birding Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary in	
North Sandwich by Tony Vazzano	18, 19, 20
Frederick and Paula Anna Marcus	
Wildlife Sanctuary	21, 22
(reprinted from the trail guide)	



### Gertrude Keith Hoyt and Edward Eaton Hoyt Jr Wildlife Sanctuary

Located on Route 153 in the village of East Madison, the sanctuary donated to ASNH through the will of Gertrude Keith Hoyt in memory of her parents, is a microcosm of New Hampshire's history and wildlife community.

The landscape we see today was formed during the last Ice Age (so far) as the ice sheet that covered the state melted and withdrew to the north. The kettle-hole pond was formed by a chunk of glacial ice that was buried in the sand and gravel and later melted, and the esker where the trail is now located was once a bed of a fast flowing stream of melt-water. Beavers dammed the brook and created Purity Lake long before the arrival of the European settlers, who followed their example and built a dam to power a sawmill, which operated from about 1800 until 1935. The dam and mill building are on private property, but the sanctuary includes cellar holes, stone walls, and a cemetery that tells of the 19<sup>th</sup> century farm landscape.



Now, the land is again covered with white pines, oak and maple trees, and visitors may see bog plants including sundew, bladderwort and pitcher plants; shrubs of Labrador Tea Grass, pink and rose Pogonias of the Orchid family, plus Great Blue Herons, painted turtles, yellowthroats, and redwings, moose, deer, mink and raccoons.

The Esker Trail is a loop that can be accomplished in about 45 minutes, while the Heath View Trail may take an hour and a half to fully enjoy. Parking is at the intersection of Route 153 and Horseleg Hill Road, near the Purity Spring Resort.

### Charles Henry and Mabel Lamborn Watts Sanctuary

Another of the ASNH sanctuary properties within our chapter boundaries is the Charles Henry and Mabel Lamborn Watts Sanctuary in Effingham, which is one of our less well known areas, but one that is pleasant to visit, especially during the blueberry season, as it has many high-bush shrubs that can be sampled.

The property was cared for by the Watts family for sixty years, and the father of Charles Watts kept records of his bird sightings there over the years, which included a Bald Eagle sighting on the river. It was donated to Audubon by Patricia and Charles Watts II, in memory of his parents. River otters, beavers, water birds and Pileated Woodpeckers are among possible wildlife sightings during a visit. "Edge" habitats are always a good chance to spot some of our bird and animal neighbors, and the riverbank creates an opportunity for such sightings. Audubon's Hoyt Sanctuary is not too far up Route 153 in Madison, and a visit to both sanctuaries would make a rewarding outing for those who live in or visit this section of our chapter area.

The parcel consists of about 200 acres and has frontage on the Ossipee River. It is located on Route 153 in Effingham, just before it crosses the border into Maine. Traveling east on Route 25 from Center Ossipee, Route 153 joins Route 25 from the north (left hand) side of the road. After running together for about a mile, 153 diverges to the right (south) and the Watts preserve is located about one mile down the road to the left, where there is a sign and parking area. Trail guides should be available on site, but from the parking area a "new trail" runs down the river, which it parallels for several hundred feet to an old cabin site. Walkers can return to the parking area on the Hummock Trail. The property also includes some wetland areas which do not have any trails at this time.



## Lovejoy Sanctuary

One of six Audubon Sanctuaries in the Lakes Region Chapter Area, the Lovejoy Sanctuary, protected by the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, is located on the east side of Route 16, just north of the Piper Trail Cabins on Route 16 in Albany. There is a trail leading onto the property from Route 16, but better parking may be found at the World Fellowship property on Drake Hill Road, east of Route 16, which runs behind the Lovejoy property and exits onto Route 16 both north and south of the sanctuary. Sanctuary trails also connect with trails maintained by the World Fellowship.

The property includes a stream which has been dammed by the beavers, creating a swamp which is home to a variety of wildlife. If you enter the property from the Route 16 side, you may have to wade across the wet area. Beyond is a wooded area with some mature trees, and some open glades where birds may be seen. The gravelly character of the soil underfoot originates with the glacial activity of the last Ice Age and the retreat of the glacier about 10,000 years ago. There is a variety of habitats that should provide a pleasant nature walk and some interesting bird sightings, especially during migration.

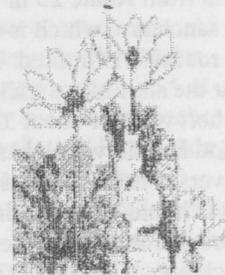


## Leonard Boyd Chapman Wildbird Sanctuary

For the past three issues of the PFAC/Lakes Region Chapter Newsletter, I have written some notes to encourage our members to visit some of the Audubon sanctuaries located in our chapter area. This time, with the season during the winter, I thought I would recommend a visit to the Leonard Boyd Chapman Wildbird Sanctuary in Sandwich, which unlike any of our Audubon Properties has groomed cross country ski trails in a woodland setting abutting the White Mountain National Forest. Ice skating is also available on Teacup Lake, and a bird feeding station hosts all our usual winter birds.

The property has a network of trails on its 125 acres, and most are suited to skiers of moderate ability, with the steeper slopes marked on the map. Snow-shoeing is also encouraged but dogs are not allowed on trails in the winter. Spring and summer are also good times to visit the perennial gardens surrounding the former Chapman homestead and the trails are open for summer hiking.

There is an especially large clump of early spring Bloodroot which are always beautiful in late April, one of the first wildflowers we see. The sanctuary is a non-profit organization, and the grounds are open to the public during daylight hours for low-impact recreation. You may call the director Sarah Zucarelli or President Sue Rowah at 284-6428 for more information or leave a message at 284-6516. The property is located on Mt. Israel Road in Sandwich, about 3.5 miles from Center Sandwich. The paved road turns to gravel before reaching the sanctuary, which is on the left. Parking is in the yard of the white Cape Cod style farmhouse and the trails start just in the back. Please sign in before you set out, a record of sanctuary use is important.



## Proctor Wildlife Sanctuary

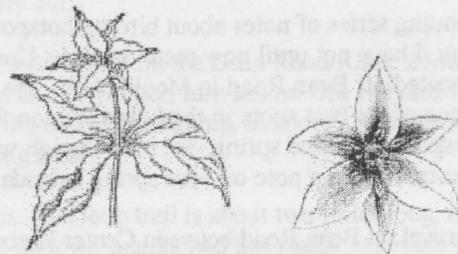
Our review of ASNH sanctuaries within the Lakes Region Chapter boundaries continues with the Proctor Wildlife Sanctuary in Center Harbor. This 47 acre wooded refuge is located on Center Harbor Neck Road and its trails feature spring wildflowers including Partridgeberries and Trilliums and a forest of white pine, red oak, yellow birch, beech and maples. The short trail is essentially a loop (Brookside Trail, yellow blazes), with a cut-off across the middle (Woodland Cut-off, red blazes). The property can be reached by taking Route 25B from the fountain in Center Harbor, and after 1.1 miles, turning left on Center Harbor Neck Road. The sanctuary is one mile ahead on the left; watch for the Audubon sign.

## Alice Bemis Thompson Sanctuary and Wildlife Refuge

This ASNH property may be reached via Route 113, turning north from Route 25 in South Tamworth. Proceed 2.9 miles to the sanctuary, which is on the left side of the road. Parking on the roadside is limited. Trail guides are available at the kiosk near the start of the trail.

A short walk of about 350 yards brings visitors to a bridge over Wood Brook, which has been dammed by generations of beavers. Their work has transformed a hayfield into a swamp that is home to many birds and other animals. Moose, bear, deer, otters, herons, kingfishers, kingbirds, ducks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Yellow-throats, Northern Harriers, swallows, rails, and more have been spotted here.

For those who wish a longer walk, the trail continues in a loop through a forested area of white pine, hemlock, and glacially deposited boulders, with additional views over the marsh. The trail is winding and rough, but has no major ups and downs.



## Chamberlain-Reynolds Forest

The Chamberlain-Reynolds Forest, property of New England Forestry Foundation Associates, is located on College Road, which cuts off the corner between Route 25B and Route 3, and can be accessed from either. A small parking area is located near the sign on the east side of College Road.

Chamberlain-Reynolds is a great place to visit at any season and its features include 3.5 miles of trails maintained by the Squam Lakes Association, shelters for overnight camping (call SLA at 968-7336 for reservations), a dock and sandy swimming beaches on Squam Lake, woody swamp with boardwalk, and loon nesting platform in Heron Cove. There are some open field areas and recently logged areas on the property, but most is wooded with a mixed forest of white pines and hardwoods. There is an excellent selection of wildflowers and variety of habitats where one may see birds and other wildlife. Trail maps are posted at the trailhead and at most intersections, or you can visit [www.neforestry.org](http://www.neforestry.org) and print out a map from the NEFF website. The site is worth a visit in itself, as it also lists dozens of other NEFF properties in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont which can be visited.

## Unsworth Preserve

In this continuing series of notes about birding hotspots in the Lakes Region, I have not until now mentioned the Unsworth Preserve. Located off Bean Road in Moultonboro, the Unsworth Preserve is one of the best spots in the Lakes Region for waterfowl, especially in the spring. So, even though we are in the winter season, make a note on your spring calendar to pay it a visit.

Those who travel on Bean Road between Center Harbor and Sandwich may be familiar with the large swampy pond on the west side of the road, about 3 miles from the traffic light in Center Harbor, however you may not be aware that there is a trail that gives access to the back side of the pond, where a large variety of birds may be seen. The property was given by the Unsworth family, long-time Squam Lake residents, to the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, and it is they who maintain the trail.

Birders who have visited the area consistently have seen various species of ducks, including Goldeneyes, Oldsquaws, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked, Wood and Black Ducks. Even Scoters, who usually stick to salt water, have been seen here. A mailbox at the trailhead contains a logbook where recent sightings of birds and other wildlife may be recorded.

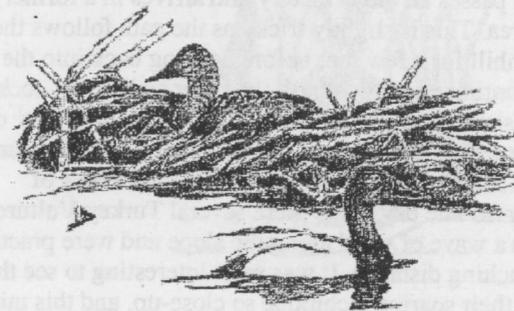
Also seen in the mixed woodlands are numerous species of warblers, including Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated, Parula, Black and White, Blackburnian, and Northern Water Thrush. Tree Swallows and Kingbirds swoop across the swampy areas and Kingfisher, Osprey, Great Blue Herons, and Green Herons are also present. Wildlife sightings of a mammalian nature include otters, mink, raccoons, muskrat and deer.

Even when the ice is just starting to break up, waterfowl can be seen on this body of water, and the best viewing is before the black flies come out, when the swamp growth is still minimal and the water level is high. The trail is also pleasant during the summer and fall, and could be snow-shoed during the winter

months. Please be respectful of the property and remember to carry in/carry out.

Directions: 3.5 miles from the Bean Road/Route 25 intersection at the lights in Center Harbor, turn left on Old Harvard Road. After passing by the end of the swamp, in about 150 feet turn left into a small parking area.

Trail Details: The loop trail is about two miles long, including some travel on town maintained dirt roads. Maps are posted at trail intersections. The highlight for swamp viewing comes about one quarter mile along the trail (marked with yellow markers on trees) where a side trail leaves on the left (marked with orange) and in a very short distance reaches two good viewing spots overlooking the swamp, one of which comes complete with a wooden bench for comfortable nature watching. If you wish to continue, the trail proceeds parallel with the shoreline of the swamp, and there are more useful viewing spots. Some wet spots are possible. The footpath runs into an old woods road and eventually comes out on Harvard Point Road. Turn right and in about one quarter mile you will reach the intersection of Old Harvard Point Road. Turn right again and return to the parking area in about another 400 feet, on the right.



## Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area

I recently visited the newly-dedicated Hamlin Recreation and Conservation Area in Meredith, which is located on Chemung Road in Meredith Center and borders on the westerly side of Lake Wicwas. Thanks to the Meredith Conservation Commission, this property with about five miles of trails is open to the public.

Just a short distance from the parking area, there is a short side path that leads to an overlook of a beaver pond, which has standing dead trees and several heron nests. Although it was fall when I visited, it would certainly be worthwhile to check back in the spring and see if the herons are actively using this location. The swamp bordering Chemung Road on the easterly side as the driver approaches the Hamlin Area from Meredith Center has also been known to have active Great Blue Heron and Great Horned Owl nests, which are visible from the road. Also, look for the nesting pair of flamingos in the large pine tree.

Maps of the trails are available at the kiosk in the parking area. The Yellow Trail passes the viewpoint on the beaver pond, and shortly after that the Blue trail diverges to the left and makes a loop around some other smaller ponds before arriving at another viewpoint over a swamp. Continuing to follow the yellow trail spots, one passes an old cemetery and arrives in a former log yarding area. This is slightly tricky as the path follows the dirt road downhill for a few feet before heading back into the woods. Continuing on this trail, the hiker arrives at Crockett's Ledge, a steep drop-off that provides a rather nice view of Wicwas at the foot of the hill, plus the more distant swamp across the road, and to the right, more distant views of Winnisquam. The day I was there several Turkey Vultures were soaring in a wave of wind along the slope and were practically within touching distance. It was most interesting to see the details of their soaring technique so close-up, and this might also be a spot for hawk watching. Another trail marked by red

spots continues from the ledge, and makes a loop, which eventually brings the hiker back to the same Crockett's Ledge Lookout. There is another ledge on this trail, which gives views north to the White Mountains, and there is also a short spur trail to the shore of the lake.

Wicwas is also an interesting lake to visit by canoe or kayak, and the boat ramp is located right on Chemung Road. You can see Crockett's Ledge from the boat launch. There were loons present when I paddled it this fall, and there is a swampy area on the end closer to Route 104 which could be good for turtles, Cardinal Flowers, and other seasonal highlights.

To reach Chemung Road, Take Corliss Hill Road off Route 104 or take Meredith Center Road from the intersection of Elm Street and Parade Road in Laconia to reach Meredith Center. Proceed westerly and look for Chemung Road on the left. Just past the swamp where the herons, owls and flamingos are found, Camp Waldron Road proceeds straight, and Chemung Road turns sharply to the right. The parking area is .3 miles on the right.



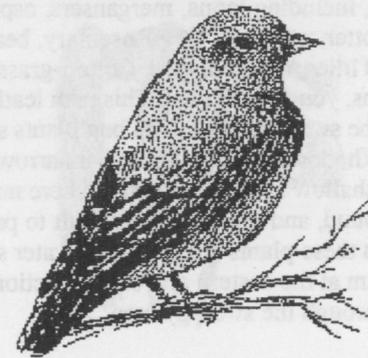
## Chocorua Conservation Lands

Many folks are familiar with the view of Chocorua Lake and Mount Chocorua that is seen from Route 16 as one heads north for winter sports, or for shopping. The Chocorua Conservation Lands offer an opportunity to get out of the car, get some fresh air and exercise, and experience nature for a few hours, with the chance of seeing moose, deer, birds, and other wildlife, plus landforms created by glacial activity.

A total of about 700 acres, including shorefront on Chocorua Lake, are managed by the Chocorua Lake Conservation Foundation. There are trails of varying degrees of difficulty, and many are quite suitable for cross-country skiing or snow-shoeing in the coming months. There are trailheads off of Fowler's Mill Road a mile or so beyond the scenic wooden bridge that crosses the gap between Chocorua Lake and Little Lake, which is visible from Route 16, and from Scott Road, a left-hand turn from Route 16 (coming from the south) shortly after the sign for the Bowditch-Runnells State Forest north of Chocorua Lake. Both are dirt roads. The parking area at the end of Scott Road, which is a dead end, is also a trailhead for the Hammond Trail, heading for the summit of Mt. Chocorua. The road crosses Stony Brook, where remnants of an early water-powered mill dam and foundation are visible, before reaching the parking area. Maps are available at kiosks located a short ways up the trails from the parking areas, either on Scott Road or Fowler's Mill Road. From the Scott Road parking area, you may take the Heron Pond Trail to visit a kettle-hole pond known as Heron Pond, which was formed by a lump of ice that was buried in the gravel beds left behind when the continental glaciers last retreated about 10,000 years ago. The esker that the trail crosses is also a glacial formation, formerly the bed of a stream carrying runoff away from the melting glacier. There are also several kettle-holes noted on the map, as well as erratic boulders torn from the bedrock by the glacier and carried downstream to their present

location until the glacier returns to pick them up and move them even further!

Continuing south on the Heron Pond Trail, there is a short dead-end trail that brings the hiker down to the northern edge of Chocorua Lake, where moose are sometimes seen dining on water vegetation, as well as the popular Common Loon. Wildflowers, ferns, balsam fir and hardwoods also are found in the forested area. Continuing past the registration kiosk located on this trail, hikers will arrive at one of the trailheads on Fowler's Mill Road, or you may turn onto the Watkins Way, which is noted as difficult for cross-country skiing. Half a mile or so west on Fowler's Mill Road, there is a trailhead for the Old Mail Road, a fairly lengthy and more hilly trail that will eventually bring you back to the Scott Road parking area, and there are also other trails that can form a shorter loop within the perimeter of these two longer north-south trails. There is a cellar hole left behind when one of the early settlers moved on to greener pastures, and also a dead-end side trail to an outcropping where they cut slabs of granite for their foundation. As with all natural areas, please treat this special spot with care. No fires, no camping, and no motorized vehicles are allowed on conservation land or on the private property which some of the access trails cross. If you bring refreshments, make sure to carry out what you carry in.



## Nature Trail News

To help our members enjoy the Audubon properties within our chapter boundaries, I started writing about one of them each month in the newsletter. The six sanctuaries have all been covered, and I have gone on to describe other natural areas open to the public in the Lakes Region where birders and naturalists can get out and enjoy the biodiversity of our state. Water is always an attraction to wildlife, and a good place to see birds is the edge area between one type of habitat and another. With that in mind, I paid a visit this month to one of the best bodies of water in the area for seeing wildlife, which is Red Hill Pond in Sandwich. The land surrounding the pond has been put into the conservation easements thanks to some foresighted landowners and funding from the NH Land Conservation Investment Program of the early 1990's.

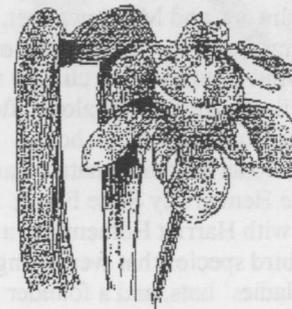
Access to the pond can be made from Top of the World Road in Sandwich, via an unmarked logging road on the easterly side, which has parking for two or three vehicles and a track by which a canoe or kayak can be carried to the shoreline.

The distance from the road is probably 250 yards, so a set of folding wheels for your boat is useful. There may be mud along the way, so dress your feet appropriately. A bug hat would also be useful, but it is all worth it once you get down to the shoreline. I have never been there yet without seeing something of interest in the natural world, including loons, mergansers, ospreys, songbirds, deer, otter, mallards, Bog Rosemary, beaver lodges, dragonflies, pond lilies, moose tracks, Cotton-grass, Red-winged Blackbirds, herons, you get the idea. This path leads to the part of the pond where the swampy areas with bog plants such as Leatherleaf and Rhodora. Passing through a narrow channel will bring you into a shallow area of the pond, where many lily-pads and cattails are found, and this can be difficult to paddle late in the summer when these plants are all on the water surface. There is an old stone dam at the eastern end of this section, from where a stream flowing through the swampy area

ultimately reaches Route 109 and flows down through the fairgrounds.

To reach the dam area on foot, there is a marked path (Red Hill Pond Trail) departing from Route 113 in Center Sandwich, just beyond The Designery (turn from Route 109 between Sandwich Home Industries and the Corner house.) A walk of 15 minutes will bring you to the pond at the dam, and you may well see Bunchberries, Lady Slippers, and even a warbler or two along the way. Be careful, there is poison ivy near the road. Also in Center Sandwich, the Lakes Region Conservation Trust is in the process of creating a trail that starts just north of the Sandwich Fair Association office on Route 109 on the opposite side of the road, and leads toward the pond, but although the information kiosk has been put in place, trail construction is apparently not complete. If you don't mind a little bushwacking, the swampy area below the dam can be reached, and there were more of the Black-winged Emerald Damselflies there than I have ever seen in one place.

Remember land around the pond is still private property, and the access trails and their surroundings should be treated with care. It is an excellent place to visit, so please make sure you leave it as you find it. Don't forget to check out the fairgrounds on your visit to Sandwich, as there are often grassland birds sighted there that aren't so often seen elsewhere.



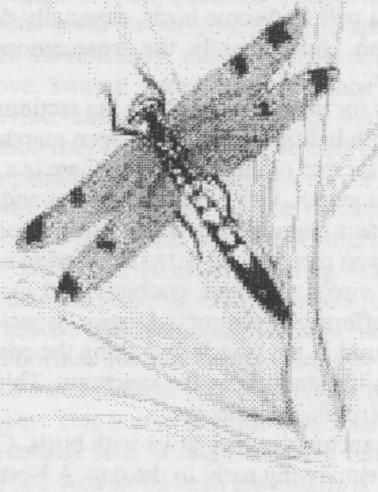
## Little Gems

As this issue goes to the printer, we are looking down the barrel of Labor Day weekend and the "official" end of another summer season. Swallows and other early birds are flying south, but the rest of the fall migration is still ahead, with great birding opportunities before winter closes in and we are reduced to chickadees and nuthatches at the feeders. I have been using this space in the newsletter to mention a few of the many wildlife sanctuaries and nature trails in the Lakes Region where birders and others who appreciate the works of Mother Nature can get out and see the sights. Keep in mind, however, that there are many little gems that don't have a sign saying "ASNH" or "TNC" on them that are a pleasant surprise when discovered.

For example, this morning I stopped at a bridge on Route 25 in East Sandwich, and there, scant feet from the roar of summer traffic, the slow waters of Meadow Brook flow under the road, making their way to the Bearcamp River. Clumps of brilliant red Cardinal Flowers were in full bloom, and being visited by a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Black-winged Damselflies were on the wing; the male of this species is emerald green with black wings, while the female has dark brown wings with white spots near the tips. (Last year and this year one of my projects has been to identify dragonflies and damselflies, and they are probably even less inclined to hold still than the birds are. But this one is unmistakable.) Also in bloom were Flat-topped Goldenrod, Joe Pye weed, Thoroughwort, and Meadowsweet, while Buttonbrush, Wild Raisin, and Traveler's Joy had already enjoyed their seasons. We are fortunate to live in a climate where nature can make a comeback like this when left alone after the highway crews and heavy machines have gone home.

A spot not far from Route 25 where nature has been preserved by official means is the Hemenway State Forest. The Hemenway name is associated with Harriet Hemenway, a leader of the movement to save bird species that were being "shot out" to obtain feathers for ladies' hats, and a founder of the

Massachusetts Audubon Society. The state forest is located on Route 113A in Tamworth and includes a portion of the Swift River, a stream flowing along the bed of a river that must have been much more powerful when it was powered by glacial meltwater at the end of the Ice Age. Wood Sorrel blooms along the banks in early summer. There is a former fire tower that makes a good spot to watch for birds, as the treetops are now near the height of the tower. It's nice to look at birds on their level once in a while, instead of always looking up from below. The Big Pines Trail is 1.1 miles, and the Hemlock Spur Trail to the fire tower branches off about halfway along. The distance to the tower is 1.15 miles, or you can get there in a shorter distance from the Hemenway Road, a dirt road which runs between 113A and Great Hill Road. The forest is shown on page 40 in my edition of the DeLorme topographical atlas of New Hampshire. Enjoy your visit!



### **Birding Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary in North Sandwich**

Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary is an Audubon Society of New Hampshire property and offers a variety of habitats making it attractive to birds year round, especially from late April to early October. It is located on Route 113 in North Sandwich, 2.8 miles west of the junction of Route 25 and 113. There is a small sign on the left side of the road and there is room for two cars to park. The best birding section is a fairly short walk on level terrain. There can be a few wet spots on the trail, but usually just in spring. The first couple of hundred yards of the trail is wooded and near the edge of the marsh. The next stretch of trail is across the open marsh and a stream with a beaver dam. The trail then becomes wooded again along the backside of the marsh for another hundred yards and ends in a short loop on the left. From there a much longer loop trail winds through the forest. While this section of deep woods is not as productive as the woods that are close to the marsh, you will find some birds, especially during the breeding season. Unfortunately, the dense canopy will make them difficult to see.

The best areas for migrants are along the sections of wooded and brushy trail both before and after the open marsh. Along the latter stretch, at the far end of the short loop, there is a short spur trail to the edge of the marsh. While this can be wet and is used mostly by moose, birders can walk out a few yards when warblers are nearby. Then you can look back to the wooded edges and with a little luck, the vireos, thrushes, warblers, and sparrows will parade close by you offering unobstructed views, especially in fall. Birds can also be found in the woods and along the edge of the field directly across the street from the sanctuary. This is private property but birders are welcome.

In spring the sanctuary comes alive with birds. Common Snipe can be heard winnowing early in the day. A Northern Harrier will sometimes cruise the marsh and other raptors such as Sharp-shinned Hawks move through. The typical vireos are Red-eyed and Blue-headed but occasionally there will be a Philadelphia. A variety of flycatchers migrate through and an occasional Blue-

gray Gnatcatcher. Warblers are often heard as you begin your walk and sometimes there is a good variety that may include Northern Parula, Magnolia, Canada, Blackburnian, Black and White, Black-throated Blue and Green, Northern Waterthrush, and almost certainly Nashville. Cape May Warbler has been seen at least once.

During the summer breeding season at Thompson, especially in June, the early morning air is filled with the songs of nesting birds. The pumping sound of the American Bittern can often be heard at dawn and sometimes they can be seen in flight across the marsh. Common Snipe stay to breed and both Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks usually nest in the sanctuary or nearby. Alder Flycatchers are numerous in the brushy marsh and in some years there are Willow Flycatchers. Olive-sided Flycatchers probably nest by the bog directly across Route 113 and birders are welcome to venture there. Winter Wrens can be found in the forested section. Common Yellow-throat is the most conspicuous wood warbler, but about 15 species of warblers nest in the sanctuary, including most of the ones mentioned above. Swamp Sparrows are common in the marsh and there are White-throated Sparrows in the woods.

The fall migration may be the best time to bird Thompson. The birds are often plentiful and the biting insects are gone. The most productive areas are usually the first portion of the trail and also the wooded part of the trail just beyond the marsh. Some days are quiet while others are bustling with birds. Raptors like American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Northern Harriers are typical and sometimes a Merlin can be seen hunting. Thrushes are mostly represented by Hermit but Swainson's also move through here regularly in late September and early October. This is also the time in fall that both species of kinglets are usually seen flitting amidst the tamaracks. On a good day from late August through the middle of September it is not unusual to see dozens of vireos and warblers with ten or more species present. By late September you could encounter dozens of Palm Warblers and this is when sparrows usually arrive in numbers. Swamp, White-throated and

White-crowned Sparrows can be numerous, and Lincoln's Sparrow is often present then. Some of the more unusual fall birds seen here in the past several years are Rough-legged Hawk and Connecticut Warbler.

In winter the trail is open for snow-shoeing or cross-country skiing. This is often a quiet time at the Thompson and sometimes it can appear almost bird-less. However, Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owl, Pileated Woodpecker and Brown Creeper are here throughout the year. Northern Saw-whet Owls are often here in winter and sometimes stay to breed. During irruption years, Common Redpoll can be found and sometimes Pine Grosbeaks or a Northern Shrike. When there is a cone crop and crossbills are on the move, both White-winged and Red Crossbills frequent the pine trees near Route 113.

Any time is a good time for a walk at Thompson, but it is most enjoyable on a clear day when views of the Sandwich and Ossipee mountain ranges are nothing less than spectacular. It is one of the most reliable locations in the region to see moose and up to five have been seen at one time.



The 200-acre Frederick and Paula Anna Markus Wildlife Sanctuary on the north shore of Lake Winnepesaukee is an extraordinary slice of undeveloped woodlands and shoreline in the midst of a radically developing Lakes Region. Leased to the Audubon Society of New Hampshire through the generosity of the Markus Foundation, the sanctuary also serves as the headquarters of the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC), a self-funded project of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire.

The natural beauty of the upland forests, clear streams, and over 5,000 feet of undeveloped shoreline makes this sanctuary an especially enjoyable visit. The Sanctuary is known for its abundance and diversity of ferns, berry-producing shrubs, wildflowers, and birds—over 100 species of birds have been recorded within the Sanctuary limits. Those who come in early summer may be lucky enough to catch sight of one of the Sanctuary's nesting loons, in addition to a variety of water-fowl, woodland birds, deer, otter, beaver and other wildlife. Trails at the Sanctuary are open year-round from dawn to dusk.

#### Trail Information

Both trails begin at the trailhead to the left of the lower parking lot (behind and to the left of The Loon Center). Sturdy footwear is recommended for those who want to walk the entire length of the Loon Nest Trail, but feel free to walk the Forest Trail or to the views and back for a shorter trip. Wildlife viewing opportunities abound on both trails.

#### Forest Trail

Red markers

Approximately 0.2 miles,

10 minutes round trip

The forest Trail is a very short, flat, and easy loop through mixed woods. Turn left after the bridge over Halfway Brook and enjoy edge and interior forest habitats, the warblers and wildflowers of



spring, the cool shade in summer, fall's colors, and woodland tracks in the winter's snow. The trail intersects the Loon Nest Trail (yellow markers) at the second sitting bench; turn right to go back to The Loon Center or left to walk farther along the Loon Nest Trail.

Loon Nest Trail  
Yellow Markers 1.7 miles,  
1 hour round trip



Turn right after the bridge over Halfway Brook to experience the natural beauty of upland forests, marshes, clear streams, and close to a mile of pristine shoreline. Follow the brook through mixed woodlands past an old beaver dam and toward the lakeshore. The trail becomes more rocky and uneven after the short spur to the viewpoint over the lake.

Follow the trail through a hemlock grove as it approaches the lakeshore at several points and passes several large glacial erratic boulders, left here as the glacial ice melted 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Continue on the trail until you arrive at the terminal loop (look for the small sign across from a bench). Go straight at this juncture to come to a small rise with a bench that overlooks the bay, where a pair of loons traditionally nests in June on a nesting raft floated by the Loon Preservation Committee. Continue on the trail as it passes between more glacial erratic boulders and skirts the edge of a thriving cattail marsh before heading back into the woods. Eventually, the trail brings you back to the beginning of the terminal loop (look for the bench). Turn right to follow the trail back to The Loon Center.

Directions: From Route 25 in Moultonboro, turn onto Blake Road at the Moultonboro Central School. Follow Blake Road for one mile until it ends and turn right at Lee's Mill Road. The Markus Wildlife Sanctuary and The Loon Center are on the left.

Illustrations courtesy of NH Fish and Game