

# *The Woodcock*

## **ANTIOCH BIRD CLUB**

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Killdeer by Chad Witko

### **Spring is Here!**

For many, March is a time of transition. “In like a lion, out like a lamb” is often the proverb used when describing the dynamic month named after Mars, the Roman god of farming (and war). This is especially true in the Northeast where the grips of Old Man Winter and his snowbirds often remain long into the month relinquishing their hold to Spring and her southern migrants only during the “best” of years. Nevertheless, birders in New Hampshire can expect some of the best birding opportunities of the calendar year this month with early spring arrivals among the highlights. Be on the lookout for Wood Ducks, Killdeers, Tree Swallows, Eastern Phoebes, and Red-winged Blackbirds to take residence in our local fields and marshes. Mourning Doves and American Woodcocks will soon begin their display flights over our local hedgerows and fields while resident songbirds such as Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens, and House Finches fill our woods and town centers with song. Even if winter persists, spring is on the way and our feathered friends are a clear sign of the changes to come.

## ABC News

### The Eastern Phoebes are Coming!



Spring migrants are headed North, and among them is the Eastern Phoebe. A common flycatcher to New Hampshire, this songbird helps signal the Spring transition. It can be identified by its dark head and white underparts, and is often distinguished by its characteristic tail bob while perched on a low branch. There has yet to be a phoebe sighting on campus this Spring.

*ABC is hosting a competition* with no birding experience required. Simply guess what day the first Eastern Phoebe will be spotted on campus. ABC members are birding the area often and will be prepared for the arrival day.

Guessing slips can be found at the information desk in the AUNE lobby, immediately visible upon entrance to the building. Place a guess with your email in the box labeled

with the image of a phoebe and anxiously await this bird's arrival. The closest guess to the actual phoebe arrival will **win a \$25 gift card to the Farm Cafe** in Keene! While the contest has been taking place for multiple weeks, submissions are being accepted until the phoebe is sighted. For information on historical Eastern Phoebe arrivals and for help making educated guesses, [eBird](#) is an accessible resource.

## ABC Monthly Update

### ABC Global Big Year Update

In February, a total of 280 species were observed, bringing our current total to **536 species!** See Appendix I for species added in February. New countries added to our effort include **Canada, Tanzania, and Kenya**, bringing our country total up to 12. So far the United States leads the way with 227 species, but Guayana and Kenya are catching up with 138 and 127 species, respectively. Our **checklist total (628)** nearly doubled the number of checklists submitted in January. Nearly **20 observers** have participated by submitting sightings to the club via eBird. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this endeavor so far! To check in on our progress or view photos, visit our [eBird profile page](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#). If you would like to get involved, check out our [event page](#) on Facebook, or [email](#) us!

## Library Scavenger Hunt

For a two week period, 10 mysterious bird images were hidden around the AUNE library. Hiding places and bird identifications were of varying difficulty level. Brave contestants wandered the library in hopes of winning the book *God Birders Still Don't Wear White*, a set of flashcards, or a plush bird toy. Stayed tuned or check ABC's [Facebook](#) to find out who won!

## Bagels and Birds

On Saturday, February 17th, 15 students, faculty, and staff stopped by the library for a morning of socializing, food, and fun. This semi-annual event is a great way for the club to interact with our members in a relaxed environment as we watch for the comings and goings of birds at our feeders. This is a great opportunity for new birders or club members to learn many of the common species as well as the myriad of resources that reside in the corner of the library. Thanks to the Library for allowing us to host this event and for providing additional iPads so we could stream live feeder cams from Ithaca, NY and Panama (the fruit cam!). Finally, many thanks to [the Works](#) of Keene for their generous donation of bagels and cream cheese.



## Great Backyard Bird Count

Each year, during the winter cold of February, the National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology band together to host the annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC). Conveniently, this year's GBBC coincided with our Bagels and Birds event! As a result, the [birds we observed](#) at our campus feeders helped contribute to this international bird survey project! Each participant that joined in our event was given a certificate to thank them for their effort.



## Winter Seabirds and Raptors

Cape Ann, Massachusetts (and the surrounding region) is one of the best locations in New England to view seabirds and coastal specialties from shore. It is this reason alone why this trip has become a semi-annual staple in the ABC itinerary. There are always the expected species which never disappoint and make each trip worthwhile: Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, and Great Cormorant to name a few. However, no two trips are the same, and each presents unique opportunities to the all involved.

For this trip, alcids (birds of the auk family) were our primary targets. Over the last few weeks there has been an amazing showing of alcids along the MA and NH coastlines with six species of alcids having been recorded: Razorbill, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Dovekie, Atlantic Puffin, and Black Guillemot. While seeing all six species in a single outing is difficult at best, our goal was to see at least *some* of these diminutive species with Dovekie, a robin-sized species that breeds in Greenland and overwinters far offshore in the Atlantic, our top target.



With seven participants making the 2.5 hour drive from Keene, this trip turned out to be one of our most memorable coastal trips to date. Part of this was the weather, having been greeted by sunshine, light winds, and mild temperatures in the low 40s. It was the PERFECT day to be on the ocean in late February! In addition to the gorgeous weather, birding was fantastic as we spotted most of our

target species, including three species of alcids (Razorbill, Thick-billed Murre, AND Dovekie), a large variety of waterfowl, and seven Snowy Owls (including five from one location!)! Finally, it was the participants on the trip that rounded out the experience. Coming from all levels of birding experience, it was a kind, fun-loving group that made each and every stop memorable! This is exemplified in the photo above, taken just moments after everyone's life Dovekie experience! For more photos from this trip, please see our Facebook [album](#).

## **Schedule of Events**

### **35th Annual “Waterfowl Safari” along the Connecticut River (Co-sponsored with New Hampshire Audubon and the Harris Center )**

**March 31 (Saturday)- 8 AM to 1 PM**

To many, waterfowl migration is an awe-inspiring spectacle to behold. Join the Antioch Bird Club in a trip to the Connecticut River, New Hampshire's west coast, where thousands of ducks, geese, mergansers, and grebes gather on their migratory journey northward. In addition to waterfowl, we are likely to encounter Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, various hawks, and a mixed-bag of early songbirds. This event is co-hosted with New Hampshire Audubon, the Harris Center, and is family-friendly. For more information see ‘Events’ on the Antioch Bird Club Facebook page or visit the New Hampshire Audubon event [page](#). Leaders: Phil Brown. ABC Contact: Chad Witko. RSVP by March 23rd.

### **Glover’s Ledge Bird Walk**

**April 2nd (Monday)- 10AM to 12PM (Carpool leaves Antioch at 9:30AM)**

The Antioch Bird Club is teaming with Glover's Ledge to offer a Spring bird walk at Antioch's beautiful off-campus natural area in Langdon. A carpool will leave Antioch at 9:30 am and return to campus around 12:30 pm. This peaceful space is sure to offer many bird sightings as species return for the Spring.

Leader: Steven Lamonde. RSVP by April 1st!.

## **Birds of AUNE**

### **Bird of the Month**

The ABC ‘Bird of the Month’ for March 2018 is the Cooper’s Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). The Cooper’s Hawk is a medium-sized hawk with blue-gray coloration. A skillful flier, this accipiter navigates woodlands at high speeds in pursuit of small songbirds, its primary food source. Once only thought to inhabit rural areas, the species has also become abundant in urban and suburban settings. These hawk's stable and positive population trends are a turnaround from the mid-twentieth century, when use of the pesticide DDT and widespread shooting greatly reduced populations. To learn more about this common, yet stealthy accipiter, please read [here](#).



### **AUNE eBird Hotspot Update**

While there have been no new species added to the AUNE campus [list](#) this February, 2 species appeared in record numbers: Sharp-shinned Hawk (2; Feb. 4th) and Red-tailed Hawk (2; Feb. 9th). A Herring Gull was also spotted just off campus on 2/12 by Chad Witko, who texted Steven Lamonde. Steven ran outside to find the bird shortly after, and relocated the bird, which brought his campus species list to 93. In other hotspot news, Antioch University New England currently ranks 7th (out of 750+ hotspots) for number of checklists submitted all-time in New Hampshire. Keep up the bird sightings on campus!

**Our Next Meeting is Wednesday, April 4th at 3:00 PM in Room 231.**

## Appendix I: Species added to Big Year List in February (Taxonomic Order)

Cinereous Tinamou	Abyssinian Nightjar	Common Bulbul
Gadwall	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Willow Warbler
African Black Duck	Blue-naped Mousebird	Yellow-breasted Apalis
Harlequin Duck	Guianan Trogon	Green-backed Camaroptera
Black Curassow	Narina Trogon	Hunter's Cisticola
Helmeted Guineafowl	Eurasian Hoopoe	Rattling Cisticola
Little Grebe	Green Woodhoopoe	African Hill Babbler
Marabou Stork	Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill	Eurasian Blackcap
Long-tailed Cormorant	Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	Black-lored Babbler
American White Pelican	Pied Kingfisher	Arrow-marked Babbler
Great White Pelican	White-fronted Bee-eater	White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher
Pink-backed Pelican	Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater	Rüppell's Robin-Chat
Hamerkop	Southern Carmine Bee-eater	White-browed Robin-Chat
Gray Heron	Lilac-breasted Roller	White-starred Robin
Black-headed Heron	Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	Northern Anteater-Chat
Purple Heron	Red-fronted Barbet	Abyssinian Thrush
Little Egret	Nubian Woodpecker	Red-winged Starling
Black Heron	Mountain Gray Woodpecker	Sharpe's Starling
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Barred Forest-Falcon	Superb Starling
Sacred Ibis	Red-fronted Parrot	Cape Starling
African Spoonbill	Dusky Parrot	Red-billed Oxpecker
Black-breasted Snake-Eagle	Guianan Streaked-Antwren	Collared Sunbird
Crowned Eagle	Guianan Warbling-Antbird	Green-headed Sunbird
African Goshawk	Common Tody-Flycatcher	Amethyst Sunbird
African Fish-Eagle	Lesser Kiskadee	Scarlet-chested Sunbird
Augur Buzzard	Black-throated Wattle-eye	Bronze Sunbird
Black-bellied Bustard	Chinspot Batis	Golden-winged Sunbird
Blacksmith Lapwing	Black-backed Puffback	Eastern Double-collared Sunbird
Spur-winged Lapwing	Black-crowned Tchagra	Sunbird
Crowned Lapwing	Brown-crowned Tchagra	Variable Sunbird
Southern Lapwing	Tropical Boubou	Western Yellow Wagtail
Three-banded Plover	Gray Cuckooshrike	Mountain Wagtail
American Woodcock	Northern Fiscal	African Pied Wagtail
Common Sandpiper	African Black-headed Oriole	Blue Dacnis
Marsh Sandpiper	Fork-tailed Drongo	White-collared Seedeater
Dovekie	African Paradise-Flycatcher	Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Thick-billed Murre	Carrion Crow	Blue-black Grosbeak
Gray-hooded Gull	Pied Crow	Orchard Oriole
White-winged Tern	Plain Martin	Spot-breasted Oriole
Red-eyed Dove	Barn Swallow	African Citril
Ring-necked Dove	Red-rumped Swallow	Brimstone Canary
Tambourine Dove	Black Sawwing	Kenya Rufous Sparrow
Namaqua Dove	White-bellied Tit	Baglafecht Weaver
African Green-Pigeon	Yellow-whiskered Greenbul	Speke's Weaver
Hartlaub's Turaco	Cabanis's Greenbul	Yellow Bishop

Crimson-rumped Waxbill  
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu  
Purple Grenadier  
Red-billed Firefinch