

Checklist of Birds of the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge and Vicinity

Jefferson, Whitefield, and Carroll, New Hampshire

Pondicherry is a conservation partnership between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NH Fish and Game Department, and NH Audubon. Pondicherry is a division of the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge. The current size is 6,405 acres. It was first established in 1963 at 312 acres to provide feeding, resting, and nesting habitat for migratory birds at remote Cherry and Little Cherry Ponds. Since 2000, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has acquired over 6,000 additional acres of prime boreal forest, river, swamp, and marsh habitat using Duck Stamp and Land and Water Conservation Funds.

Pondicherry was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1972 because of its bird diversity and wetland habitat. It was designated as New Hampshire's first Important Bird Area in 2004. Pondicherry has been a destination for birders since 1899 when Ornithologist Horace Wright began studies here. The Refuge and adjacent lands form the headwaters of the John's River, an important tributary of the Connecticut River. Grassland, shrub-land, and successional forest habitat surrounding the Refuge enhances the diversity of wildlife found here. The view from Cherry Pond of the surrounding White Mountains is considered to be one of the finest in the region.

Birding Pondicherry using the Trail System

The Pondicherry Trail is 1.6-miles long starting on Airport Road in Whitefield and goes to Cherry Pond and an observation platform. The Mud Pond Trail is a 0.6-mile wheelchair accessible boardwalk trail to a boreal forest fen that starts on Route 116 in Jefferson. The mile long Little Cherry Pond Trail connects Cherry and Little Cherry Ponds and starts at the west side of Cherry Pond. The Colonel Whipple Trail is 2 miles long and starts on Whipple Road in Jefferson. The best birding is in May and June for warblers and September and October for migrating waterfowl.

Key to the Checklist

Breeding Status: B Breeds on or near the Refuge. B? Breeding is unconfirmed.

Status:

M Migrant V Vagrant or Accidental
PR Permanent Resident I Irruptive
SR Summer Resident * Pondicherry Specialty
WR Winter Resident

Season and Date Range:

Sp Spring 16 March - 15 June
Su Summer 16 June – 31 August
Fa Fall 1 September - 15 November
Wi Winter 16 November - 15 March

Relative Abundance:

C Common: Easily found in suitable habitat.
U Uncommon: Present but found in limited numbers.
O Occasional: Seen several times during the season.
R Rare: Occurs at intervals of 2-5 years.
VR Very Rare: Has been seen only once or twice.

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Loons-Grebes-Cormorants							
Red-throated Loon		M	R		R		
Common Loon *	B	SR	U	U	U		
Pied-billed Grebe		M	U	O	U		
Horned Grebe		M	O		U		
Red-necked Grebe		M	U		U		
Double-crested Cormorant		M	O	U	U		
Great Cormorant		M		VR	R		
Bitterns-Herons-Crane							
American Bittern	B	SR	U	U	U		
Least Bittern		V	R	R			
Green Heron	B	SR	O	O	O		
Black-crowned Night-Heron		V	R	R			
Great Blue Heron	B	SR	U	U	U		
Sandhill Crane		M	O	O			
Great Egret		M	O	R			
Glossy Ibis		V	VR				
Geese-Ducks							
Tundra Swan		V			VR		
Snow Goose		M	R		R		
Brant		M	R		R		
Common Eider		V			VR		
Canada Goose	B	SR	C	U	C		
Cackling Goose		M			R		
Wood Duck	B	SR	C	U	C		
Mallard	B	SR	C	U	C	R	
American Black Duck *	B	SR	C	C	C	O	
Gadwall		M	O		O		
Northern Pintail		M	R		O		
American Widgeon		M			O		
Northern Shoveler		M	R	R	O		
Blue-winged Teal		M	O		O		
Green-winged Teal	B	SR	U	O	U		
Canvasback		M			VR		
Redhead		M			VR		
Ring-necked Duck *	B	SR	C	U	C		
Greater Scaup		M	O		O		
Lesser Scaup		M	O		O		
Surf Scoter		M	O		O		
White-winged Scoter		M	O		O		
Black Scoter		M	O		O		
Long-tailed Duck		M			O		
Bufflehead		M	O		U		
Common Goldeneye		M	O	R	U		
Hooded Merganser	B	SR	C	U	U	R	
Common Merganser		M	U	R	U		

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Red-breasted Merganser		M	O		U		
Ruddy Duck		M	O		O		
Hawks-Falcons-Vultures							
Turkey Vulture		SR	U	U	U	R	
Osprey	B	SR	U	U	U		
Bald Eagle		M	O	O	O	R	
Golden Eagle		M			R		
Northern Harrier *	B	SR	U	U	U	R	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	B	PR	U	U	U	O	
Cooper's Hawk	B	PR	O	O	U	O	
Northern Goshawk	B	PR	O	O	O	O	
Red-shouldered Hawk		SR?	O	O	O		
Broad-winged Hawk	B	PR	U	U	C		
Red-tailed Hawk	B	SR	U	O	U	O	
Rough-legged Hawk		WR			R	R	
American Kestrel	B	SR	C	U	U		
Merlin	B	SR	O	O	O		
Peregrine Falcon		M	R		R	R	
Gyrfalcon		I				VR	
Grouse-Turkey-Pheasant							
Spruce Grouse	B	PR	O-R	O-R	O-R	O-R	
Ruffed Grouse *	B	PR	C-U	C	C	U	
Wild Turkey	B	PR	O	U	U	O	
Northern Bobwhite		Stocked			VR		
Ring-necked Pheasant		Stocked	R		R	R	
Rails							
Virginia Rail	B	SR	U	U	U		
Sora		M	O		O		
Common Moorhen		V	R				
American Coot		M	R	O	R		
Plovers-Sandpipers							
Semipalmated Plover		M	O	R	R		
Killdeer	B	SR	U	U	U		
Greater Yellowlegs		M	U	O	O		
Lesser Yellowlegs		M	O		R		
Solitary Sandpiper		M	U	O	U		
Spotted Sandpiper	B	SR	U	U	U		
Upland Sandpiper		V		VR			
Semipalmated Sandpiper		M	O	R	O		
Least Sandpiper		M	U	U	U		
White-rumped Sandpiper		V	VR				
Pectoral Sandpiper		M	VR				
Dunlin		M	R		R		
Stilt Sandpiper		V	VR		VR		
Short-billed Dowitcher		M	R				
Long-billed Dowitcher		M	R				

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Wilson's Snipe *	B	SR	U	U	U		
American Woodcock *	B	SR	C	C	C		
Red-necked Phalarope		M	R				
Red Phalarope		M			R		
Gulls-Terns							
Bonaparte's Gull		M	R	R	R		
Ring-billed Gull		M	O	O	O		
Herring Gull		M	O	O	O		
Lesser Black-backed Gull		M			VR		
Great Black-backed Gull		M	O	O	O		
Common Tern		M	R				
Arctic Tern		M	VR				
Black Tern		M	R				
Doves-Cuckoos							
Rock Pigeon	B	SR	O	O	O	O	
Mourning Dove	B	SR	C	C	C	U	
Black-billed Cuckoo	B	SR	O	O	O		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		M	R	R			
Owls							
Great Horned Owl	B	PR	U	U	U	U	
Long-eared Owl		V	R				
Barred Owl	B	PR	U	U	U	U	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	B	PR	O	U	U	O	
Northern Hawk Owl		I				VR	
Snowy Owl		V				VR	
Nightjars							
Common Nighthawk		M	O		O		
Whip-poor-will *	B	SR	U	U			
Swifts-Hummingbirds							
Chimney Swift		SR	O	O	O		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	B	SR	U	U	U		
Kingfishers							
Belted Kingfisher	B	SR	U	U	U		
Woodpeckers							
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	B	SR	C	C	C		
Downy Woodpecker	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
Hairy Woodpecker	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
Red-bellied Woodpecker		M	R				
Black-backed Woodpecker *	B	PR	U	U	U	U	
Northern Flicker	B	SR	C	C	U		
Pileated Woodpecker	B	PR	U	U	U	U	
Flycatchers							
Olive-sided Flycatcher	B	SR	O	O	O		
Eastern Wood-Pewee	B	SR	O	O			
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	B	SR	U	U	U		
Alder Flycatcher	B	SR	U	C	U		

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Willow Flycatcher	B?	SR	O	O	O		
Least Flycatcher	B	SR	C	C	U		
Eastern Phoebe	B	SR	C	C	C		
Great Crested Flycatcher	B	SR	U	U	O		
Eastern Kingbird	B	SR	C	C	C		
Shrikes-Vireos							
Northern Shrike		WR/I	R		O	O	
White-eyed Vireo		V	VR				
Red-eyed Vireo	B	SR	C	C	C		
Warbling Vireo	B	SR	O	O	O		
Philadelphia Vireo	B?	SR	R	R	R		
Yellow-throated Vireo		M	R	R			
Blue-headed Vireo	B	SR	C	C	C		
Jays-Crows							
Canada Jay	B	PR	O	O	O	O	
Blue Jay	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
American Crow	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
Common Raven	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
Larks							
Horned Lark		M			R	R	
Swallows							
Tree Swallow	B	SR	C	C	O		
No. Rough-winged Swallow	B	SR	O	O	O		
Bank Swallow	B	SR	U	U	O		
Cliff Swallow	B?	SR	O	O	O		
Barn Swallow	B	SR	C	C	O		
Chickadees-Nuthatches-Creepers							
Black-capped Chickadee	B	PR	C	C	C	C	
Boreal Chickadee	B	PR	O	O	O	O	
Tufted Titmouse		M	O	O		O	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
White-breasted Nuthatch	B	PR	U	U	U	O	
Brown Creeper	B	PR	U	U	U	O	
Wrens-Kinglets-Gnatcatchers							
House Wren	B	SR	O	O	O		
Winter Wren	B	SR	C	C	C		
Carolina Wren		V	VR		VR		
Marsh Wren *	B	M	O	O	O		
Sedge Wren		M	VR		VR		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	B	PR	C	C	C	C-U	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	B	SR	U	U	U		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		SR	R	R	R		
Thrushes							
Northern Wheatear		V	VR				
Eastern Bluebird	B	SR	O	O	O		
Veery	B	SR	U	U	U		

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Gray-cheeked Thrush		M	R		R		
Bicknell's Thrush		M	R		R		
Swainson's Thrush	B	SR	U	U	U		
Hermit Thrush	B	SR	C	C	U		
Wood Thrush	B	SR	U	U	U		
American Robin	B	SR	C	C	C	O-R	
Thrashers							
Gray Catbird	B	SR	C	C	C		
Northern Mockingbird		SR	R	R	R	VR	
Brown Thrasher	B	SR	U	U	U		
Starlings							
European Starling	B	PR	U	U	U	R	
Pipits							
American Pipit		M	R		O		
Waxwings							
Bohemian Waxwing		I	O		O	O	
Cedar Waxwing	B	PR	C	C	C	O-R	
Wood Warblers							
Tennessee Warbler		M	U		O		
Orange-crowned Warbler		M	R		R		
Blue-winged Warbler		V	VR				
Golden-winged Warbler		V	VR				
Nashville Warbler	B	SR	C	C	C		
Northern Parula	B	SR	C	C	C		
Yellow Warbler	B	SR	C	C	C		
Chestnut-sided Warbler *	B	SR	C	C	C		
Magnolia Warbler	B	SR	C	C	C		
Cape May Warbler		M	U		O		
Black-throated Blue Warbler	B	SR	C	U	C		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	B	SR	C	C	C	R	
Black-throated Green Warbler	B	SR	C	C	C		
Blackburnian Warbler	B	SR	C	U	C		
Prairie Warbler		V	VR				
Palm Warbler *	B	SR	U	U	C		
Pine Warbler	B	SR	O	O	O		
Bay-breasted Warbler		M	U		U		
Blackpoll Warbler		M	U		U		
Black-and-white Warbler	B	SR	U	U	U		
American Redstart	B	SR	U	U	U		
Ovenbird	B	SR	C	C	C		
Northern Waterthrush	B	SR	U	U	U		
Louisiana Waterthrush		V	VR				
Mourning Warbler *	B	SR	O	O	O		
Common Yellowthroat	B	SR	C	C	C		
Wilson's Warbler	B?	SR	O	O	O		
Canada Warbler *	B	SR	U	U	U		

Common Name	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
Tanagers							
Scarlet Tanager	B	SR	U	U	O		
Sparrows							
Eastern Towhee		M	O	R	O		
American Tree Sparrow		M/WR	U		U	U	
Chipping Sparrow	B	SR	U	U	U		
Field Sparrow		M	R	R	R		
Vesper Sparrow		M	R	R	R		
Savannah Sparrow	B	SR	C	C	U		
Grasshopper Sparrow		V	VR				
Fox Sparrow		M	O		O		
Song Sparrow	B	PR	C	C	C	U	
Lincoln's Sparrow	B	SR	O	O	O		
Swamp Sparrow	B	SR	C	C	C		
White-throated Sparrow	B	SR	C	C	C	O	
White-crowned Sparrow		M	U		U		
Dark-eyed Junco	B	PR	C	U	C	U	
Lapland Longspur		M				O	
Snow Bunting		WR/I			O	O	
Blackbirds-Orioles							
Bobolink	B	SR	U	U	O		
Red-winged Blackbird	B	SR	C	C	O		
Eastern Meadowlark		M	R	R	R		
Rusty Blackbird	B?	SR	O	O	O		
Common Grackle	B	SR	C	U	U		
Brown-headed Cowbird	B	SR	O	O	O		
Baltimore Oriole	B	SR	U	O	O		
Cardinals-Finches-Grosbeaks							
Northern Cardinal	B	PR	O	O	O	O	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	B	SR	U	U	U		
Indigo Bunting	B	SR	U	U	O		
Pine Grosbeak		I	O	R	O	O	
Purple Finch	B	PR	C-U	U	C-U	C-O	
House Finch		SR	O	O	O		
Red Crossbill		I	R	R	R	R	
White-winged Crossbill	B	I	U-O	O-R	U-O	U-O	
Common Redpoll		I	R		U-R	C-O	
Hoary Redpoll		I				VR	
Pine Siskin	B	PR/I	O	O	C-O	C-O	
American Goldfinch	B	PR	U	C	C	U-O	
Evening Grosbeak	B	PR/I	O	O	O	U-O	
Old World Sparrows							
House Sparrow	B	PR	U	U	U	R	

Total Species: 241 (Arctic Tern and Red-necked Phalarope were first seen in 2006, Great Egret in 2008, Sandhill Crane in 2012, Snowy Owl in 2017, Red-bellied Woodpecker in 2018, common eider in 2019)

Breeding Species: 122 plus 5 unconfirmed as breeding on the refuge
Common and Uncommon Species: 118

What species will be next: Species not confirmed as having been seen on the Refuge but possible in the next ten years:

Ross's Goose
Snowy Egret
Cattle Egret
Eastern Screech Owl
Short-eared Owl
Great Gray Owl
Black Vulture

Birders are encouraged to report sightings of species not listed, hypothetical, rare or with unconfirmed breeding status to NH Bird Records at New Hampshire Audubon, 84 Silk Farm Road, Concord, NH 03301. (603 224-9909) or by e-mail to <http://ebird.org/content/nh> and David.Govatski@gmail.com

The area covered in this report includes:

- Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge
- Airport Marsh and Hazen's Pond
- Mount Washington Regional Airport grasslands and adjacent wetlands
- Route 116 on the north, Whipple Road and Route 115A on the east, Route 115 on the south, and Airport and Hazen's Road on the west.

For more information about birding Pondicherry contact David Govatski at the Friends of Pondicherry. David.Govatski@Gmail.Com

Friends of Pondicherry Website: <https://www.friendsofpondicherry.org/history>

<https://www.trailfinder.info/trails/trail/pondicherry-wildlife-refuge-main-trail-system>

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Last Update: 27 June 2020 by David Govatski

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