

## 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, the NH Fish and Game Department, and NH Audubon. Pondicherry is part of the Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The current size is 6,491 acres. Pondicherry was first established by NH Audubon 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, and wetland habitat using Duck Stamp and Land and Water Conservation Funds.

Pondicherry was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1972 because of its bird diversity and wetland habitat and was also designated as New Hampshire's first Important Bird Area in 2004. Pondicherry has been a birder destination 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, shrubland, and the coniferous forest habitat surrounding the Refuge enhance the diversity of wildlife. The view from Cherry Pond of the surrounding White Mountains is considered one of the region's finest.

#### Birding Pondicherry Using the Trail System

Trail Name	Distance One Way	Trailhead	Highlights
Pondicherry Rail Trail	1.6 miles	289 Airport Rd, Whitefield	Easy rail trail access to Cherry Pond and the observation platform.
Mud Pond Accessible Trail	0.6	543 Bailey Rd, Jefferson	Accessible trail with 900-foot raised boardwalk to a swamp conifer forest.
Mooseway Path	1.4	543 Bailey Rd, Jefferson	A winter only Nordic ski and snowshoe trail to the LCP Trail.
Whipple Trail	2.0	162 Whipple Rd, Jefferson	Part of the Cohos Trail, access to Cherry Pond and Rampart Path
Rampart Path	0.4	West side of Cherry Pond	An Ice-Push Rampart geological feature with great views and benches.
Shore Path	0.2	Waumbek Junction	A short trail with views of Cherry Pond, benches, and good bird habitat.
Little Cherry Pond Trail	0.6	West side of Cherry Pond	A remote footpath in a boreal forest with several sets of bog bridges.
Slide Brook Trail	0.6	801 Owls Head Jefferson	A varied walk that includes a 400-foot long beaver dam and old fields.
Presidential Recreation Trail	2.6	794 Meadows Rd, Jefferson	Rail trail access to Cherry Pond and two marshes with good bird habitat.

The best birding is May and June for warblers and September and October for migrating waterfowl. If you only have a short time to bird Airport Marsh or Mud Pond are the best bets. Early mornings are often the best time of day to bird. Cherry Pond is a good choice during fall migration when low clouds keep waterfowl on the pond.

## 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    1 April – 31 May  
**Su** Summer 1 June – 31 August  
**Fa** Fall        1 September - 15 November (typical pond freeze-up date)  
**Wi** Winter    16 November – 31 March

### Relative Abundance:

**C Common:** Easily found in suitable habitat.  
**U Uncommon:** Present but found in limited numbers in suitable habitat.  
**O Occasional:** Seen at least once during the season.  
**R Rare:** Occurs at intervals of 5-10 years.  
**VR Very Rare:** Has been seen only once or twice.

Common Name and Family	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			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		VR	R	R			
Great Blue Heron	B	SR	U	U	U		
Sandhill Crane		M	O	O			
Great Egret		M	O	O			
Glossy Ibis		V	VR				
Geese-Ducks							
Tundra Swan		V			VR		
Snow Goose		M	R		R		
Brant		M	R		O		
Canada Goose	B	SR	C	U	C		
Cackling Goose		V			VR		
Wood Duck	B	SR	C	U	C		
Blue-winged Teal		M	R		R		
Green-winged Teal	B	SR	U	O	U		
Northern Shoveler		M	R		O		

<b>Common Name and Family</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Sp</b>	<b>Su</b>	<b>Fa</b>	<b>Wi</b>	<b>Sightings</b>
Gadwall		M			R		
American Wigeon		M			O		
Mallard	B	SR	C	U	C	R	
American Black Duck *	B	SR	C	C	C	O	
Northern Pintail		M	R		R		
Canvasback		M			VR		
Redhead		M			VR		
Ring-necked Duck *	B	SR	C	U	C		
Greater Scaup		M	O		O		
Lesser Scaup		M	O		O		
Common Eider		V			VR		
Surf Scoter		M	O		O		
White-winged Scoter		M	O		O		
Black Scoter		M	O		O		
Long-tailed Duck		M			O		
Bufflehead		M	U		U		
Common Goldeneye		M	O		U		
Hooded Merganser	B	SR	C	U	U	R	
Common Merganser		M	U		U		
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		M			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-Doves							
Spruce Grouse	B	PR	O	O	R	R	
Ruffed Grouse *	B	PR	C-U	C	C	U	
Wild Turkey	B	PR	U	U	U	U	
Northern Bobwhite		Stocked			VR		
Ring-necked Pheasant		Stocked			VR	VR	
Rock Pigeon	B	SR	O	O	O	O	
Mourning Dove	B	SR	C	C	C	U	

<b>Common Name and Family</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Sp</b>	<b>Su</b>	<b>Fa</b>	<b>Wi</b>	<b>Sightings</b>
<b>Rails</b>							
Virginia Rail	B	SR	U	U	U		
Sora		M	R		R		
Common Gallinule or Moorhen		M	R				
American Coot		M	R	O	O		
<b>Plovers-Sandpipers</b>							
Semipalmated Plover		M	O	R	O		
Killdeer	B	SR	U	U	U		
Greater Yellowlegs		M	U	O	O		
Lesser Yellowlegs		M	O		O		
Solitary Sandpiper		M	U	O	U		
Spotted Sandpiper	B	SR	U	U	U		
Upland Sandpiper		V		VR			
Semipalmated Sandpiper		M	O		O		
Least Sandpiper		M	U	U	U		
White-rump 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				
Wilson's Snipe *	B	SR	U	U	U		
American Woodcock *	B	SR	C	C	C		
Red-necked Phalarope		V	VR				
Red Phalarope		V			VR		
<b>Gulls-Terns</b>							
Bonaparte's Gull		M	R	O	R		
Ring-billed Gull		M	O	O	O		
Herring Gull		M	O	O	O		
Lesser Black-backed Gull		V			VR		
Great Black-backed Gull		M	R	R	R		
Common Tern		M	R				
Arctic Tern		M	R				
Black Tern		M	R				
<b>Cuckoos</b>							
Black-billed Cuckoo	B	SR	O	O	O		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		M	R	R			
<b>Owls</b>							
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		I				VR	
<b>Nightjars</b>							
Common Nighthawk		M	O		O		

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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	O	O		
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		
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	
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		?	R		R	R	

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Tufted Titmouse		M	O	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		V	VR		VR		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	B	PR	C	C	C	C-U	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	B	SR	U	U	U		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		M	R	R	R		
Thrushes							
Northern Wheatear		V	VR				
Eastern Bluebird	B	SR	O	O	O		
Veery	B	SR	U	U	U		
Gray-cheeked Thrush		V	R		VR		
Bicknell's Thrush		M	VR				
Swainson's Thrush	B	SR	O	O	O		
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		M	R	R	O	R	
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		
Connecticut Warbler		V			VR		
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		

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Black-throated Blue Warbler	B	SR	C	U	C		
Yellow-rump 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	R				
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		
<b>Tanagers</b>							
Scarlet Tanager	B	SR	U	U	O		
<b>Sparrows</b>							
Eastern Towhee		M	O	R	O		
American Tree Sparrow		M/WR	U		U	U	
Chipping Sparrow	B	SR	U	U	U		
Field Sparrow	B	SR	U	U	U		
Vesper Sparrow		V	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		M	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	
Horned Lark		M				O	
Lapland Longspur		M				R	
Snow Bunting		WR/I			O	U	
<b>Blackbirds-Orioles</b>							
Bobolink	B	SR	U	U	O		
Red-winged Blackbird	B	SR	C	C	O		
Eastern Meadowlark		M	O	O	O		
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		

Common Name and Family	B	Status	Sp	Su	Fa	Wi	Sightings
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		
Dickcissel		V			VR		
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 or English Sparrow		V	R	R	R	R	

**Total Species: 243** (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: 117 plus 8 unconfirmed as breeding on the refuge**

**Common and Uncommon Species: 110**

**Rare or Very Rare Species: 54 (Rare species are seen at 5-10 year intervals and Very Rare may have been only seen once or a few times since 1899).**

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](mailto:David.Govatski@gmail.com)

The area covered in this report include:

- Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge
- Cherry and Little Cherry Ponds
- Mud Pond
- Airport Marsh and Hazen's Pond
- Localizer Drive at the Mt Washington Regional Airport
- 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](mailto: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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