



Bird Notes

From Northeast Kingdom Audubon
1302 Main Street, Saint Johnsbury, Vermont 05819

For Immediate Release

Springing in Like a Lion

Even though snow buntings just landed on my house and the ice-laden birch trees are bending over the bird feeding station, spring has happened, astronomically speaking. With the roar of a lion, the wind not only bends and breaks the frozen trees, but also brings with it the harbingers of spring that we long for these days, the early spring migrants. This morning's purple finches, common red polls and American tree sparrows are still depending upon my feeders after this most recent storm.



However, it does seem too early for some things - daylight savings time, Easter and red-winged blackbirds. Reports of the spring arrivals are welcome after such a long winter. If waterfowl are returning early in the Champlain Valley, any spot of open water in our NEK may surprise us these days. While the winter's irruptive species, the Bohemian waxwings remain in some areas, the migrant song sparrows are turning up in others. Even northern flickers and kingfishers have been reported right along with the lingering northern shrikes. Don't let the look of winter fool you, clean out your bluebird houses now, the birds are on their way back and have started inspecting possible nest boxes in some areas.

From the woodpeckers displaying up and down the trees, to the wood ducks showing up on the occasional open pond or inlet, the woodcocks have started to sing in southern New Hampshire, so it really won't be long now, will it? Any day now we can be surprised and delighted by the new arrivals. Turkey vultures with their familiar rocking soar, killdeer calling at roadsides or first open fields, or kestrels on the power lines, waiting, waiting for the lion to leave.

Some birds of prey may still be having a hard time. Will a barred owl eat earthworms at a feeding station? Apparently when they are as hungry as they have been this winter, they will, according to one observer. Others, like bald eagles, are busy incubating their eggs at this time. One pair is oblivious of the camera showing the world their entire nest season on the Connecticut River. Visit this site to watch them, <http://www.firstlightpower.com/eagles/default.asp>

The bottom line is that it is definitely not too early to think about taking a spring birding hike just about anywhere. NEK Audubon's scheduled outings are listed on www.nekaudubon.org. Before long the May Birdathon will be happening and the lion will surely have left us by then, won't it?

Happy Early Spring Birding!

Carolyn E. Boardman is a board member of NEK Audubon living in Brownington, Vermont. NEK Audubon is one of 8 chapters of Audubon Vermont and part of the National Audubon Society. NEK Audubon is a non-profit organization that encourages people's enjoyment of birds, wildlife and natural habitats through field trips, programs and publications. For previous Bird Notes, as well as, information about meetings, field trips and special events, visit www.nekaudubon.org. Art work by Robin Rothman.