



# Bird Notes

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

**For Immediate Release**

## **Habitat Birdwatching explained.**

Do you love to watch birds? From your window first thing in the morning, or from the car traveling through our beautiful country landscapes, do you notice birds? Then you are a habitat bird watcher. Knowing by observing that there are different birds in different habitats comes naturally and forms the basis for a lifetime of bird watching enjoyment. Then, too, it follows that a diversity of habitats produces a diversity of bird species. In fact, some birds may require one habitat for feeding and another for raising young. As habitats have changed over time, so have birds adapted and specialized in order to survive. Some have done well, some not so well. To habitat bird watchers like us, the physical features and characteristic habits that birds need to survive, give us our clues for identification. So when our habitats change around us, the birds we notice will be different.

We know our landscape history in Vermont includes the transformation of the majestic forests first to clearings, and then too massive grazing fields and logging clearcuts. Today our forests are back from the past and we can recognize them as strongholds for warblers and other woodland specialists. Now where farms hold those forests at bay, open land and wetland species are there for our enjoyment. The birds that move in around development are more generalists, eeking out a living, sometimes at the bird's expense if their food, shelter and water are compromised.

We have all said that we can remember when certain birds used to sing around our homes or come to our feeders, but are no longer heard of seen. It's habitat. Perhaps a change in New England or far away in the bird's wintering grounds, but habitat has changed somewhere and it always will. We are seeing new species moving in as the others are leaving. Habitat. Always be on the lookout for new and different birds as you watch your feeder and neighboring landscapes. Share your observations with others on field trips as you witness the landscape changes. Some changes may upset you, some may please you. The birds will tell you what is really going on.

A helpful book for habitat birdwatching, I recommend Thomas P. McElroy's "The Habitat Guide To Birding", the first guild I have found that simplifies bird identification by showing which species you may expect to find in various types of habitats.

Since you love to watch birds in your neighborhood habitats, and chances are there is land near you that is part of the Vermont Breeding Bird Atlas, consider joining hundreds of volunteers who have been recording nesting species all over Vermont. In the next two years, more help is needed especially in the Northeast Kingdom. This atlas will document the changes in bird populations since the last atlas in 1985. Visit <http://www.uvm.edu/~vbba/about.htm> to find out more.

Happy Habitat Birding!

Carolyn E. Boardman is a 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 more information about meetings, field trips and special events visit [www.nekaudubon.org](http://www.nekaudubon.org). Art work by Robin Rothman.