

WHERE TO GO BIRDING

Editor's Note. This issue of *Bird Observer* has two articles excerpted from the latest bird-finding guides of New England states: *A Birder's Guide to New Hampshire*, published by the American Birding Association (paperback, 222 pages, Wire-O binding, \$16.95), and *A Birder's Guide to Maine* (paperback, 400 pages, \$23.95), published by Down East Books. *Bird Observer* is grateful to the publishers and the authors for permission to reprint these excerpts. To order these books or for more information, call ABA Sales (800-634-7736) or Down East Books (800-766-1670).

BIRDING THE PAWTUCKAWAY AREA IN SOUTHEASTERN NEW HAMPSHIRE

by Alan Delorey

The main feature of this trip is Pawtuckaway State Park, which encompasses a 5500-acre natural area, including 800-acre Lake Pawtuckaway. The tent camping area at the park is open from late May through Columbus Day. For information on camping and other park facilities, call 603-895-3031. This area provides fruitful birding during spring and fall migration, but especially during the summer nesting season. Allow a full day for this trip.

Gile Road Marsh. From the junction of State Routes 125 and 152 in Lee, go west on Route 152 for 0.4 mile, turn right on Gile Road, and stop at the large marsh in 0.2 mile on the right. Look for Green Heron, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Osprey (in migration), Red-shouldered Hawk, Virginia Rail, Chimney Swift, Tree, Bank, Cliff, and Barn swallows, Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. From the woods opposite the marsh, you are more likely to hear than to see Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-rumped and Black-and-white warblers, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, and Rufous-sided Towhee. During summer the marsh comes into bloom with yellow pond-lily (or spatterdock) and both the white and rare pink forms of fragrant water-lily.

Fundy Cove. Return to State Route 152 and continue west. In 3.0 miles you will come to the junction with State Route 156 in Nottingham. Continue on Route 152 for another 0.2 mile, and turn left onto Flutter Street, which goes 1.1 miles to end at Deerfield Road. Turn right, and proceed for 1.0 mile to an unmarked dirt road on the left. This 0.5-mile road leads to a boat launch at Fundy Cove on Pawtuckaway Lake.

This is a nice spot to launch a canoe or rowboat to explore the Lake. This is also a good starting point to hike a few trails to look (and listen) for woodland

birds such as Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, Solitary Vireo, and Black-throated Green, Pine, Black-and-white, and Canada warblers. Pawtuckaway is a reliable area for nesting Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Listen carefully for its *mew* call.

Walk past the metal gate, just to the right of the boat launch, and over the bridge. Continue straight, following this trail to the south for about a half-mile to a small path on the left leading out to the edge of Fundy Cove. (You can also catch a glimpse of Burnham's Marsh off to the right.) Continue on the main trail for another few hundred feet to trail marker number 11. Turn right here, and walk a quarter-mile to a stream crossing and a marshy area. Look for Great Blue Heron and Belted Kingfisher.

When you return to trail marker 11, you can turn left to return to the parking lot at the boat launch, or you can turn right to follow the trail southwest along the edge of Burnham's Marsh. In about a mile this trail leads to the paved road near the group camping and picnicking area.

From the parking area at the boat launch, return to Deerfield Road, and turn left. In 3.0 miles you will come to a power-line crossing. This is a good spot to stop and check for birds such as Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Kingbird, Gray Catbird, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, and Prairie warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Field Sparrow. Watch the sky for soaring Turkey Vultures.

Dole's Marsh. Resume your route along Deerfield Road, and in 1.6 miles stay right at the fork, and drive another 0.8 mile to the junction of Routes 107 and 43. Turn right on Route 43, and proceed for 2.0 miles to a marsh on the left side of the road. Pull off here, and take a quick look at the marsh. As you drive along this section of State Route 43, you can see Saddleback Mountain off to your left.

Continue for another 1.0 mile to the Northwood town line at a stream crossing under the road. In just 0.1 mile after the town line, turn right on an unmarked dirt road which leads a short distance to Dole's Marsh in Woodman State Forest. Park near the dam, and check the marsh for such regular species as Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Belted Kingfisher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Barn Swallow, Common Yellowthroat, and Red-winged Blackbird. There are also beavers in the marsh.

Woodman Marsh. Return to State Route 43, turn right, go 1.2 miles, and take a sharp right onto Lower Deerfield Road. In 0.9 mile you will come to a small parking area next to a sign for Woodman Marsh - New Hampshire Fish and Game Waterfowl Management Area. Check for typical marsh birds, such as those at Dole's Marsh. Beyond the dam the road becomes too rough to drive, but you can walk along it to bird more of Woodman State Forest.

Northwood Lake. Return to State Route 43, turn right, and go 1.3 miles to U.S. Highway 4. Turn left to follow U.S. Highway 4 for 5.7 miles, and turn left

at a small crossroads. Take an immediate left into the gravel boat launch on the edge of Northwood Lake.

Bird along the edge of the trees for species such as Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Gray Catbird, and Yellow-throated and Red-eyed vireos. Scope the lake for nesting Common Loons and American Black Ducks. During spring and fall waterfowl migration, look for species such as Green-winged Teal, Canvasback (uncommon), Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, all three scoters, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Hooded and Common mergansers.

As you leave the boat launch, turn left and drive slowly through the 0.8-mile loop that takes you back to U.S. Highway 4. There are several good vantage points where you can see the lake from the road.

Pawtuckaway State Park. Turn left on U.S. Highway 4, go 1.2 miles, and turn left on State Route 107. Follow State Route 107 south for 9.8 miles to Reservation Road. Turn left on Reservation Road at the small brown Pawtuckaway State Park sign indicating the way to the lookout tower. After 1.0 mile the road becomes dirt, and in another 0.1 mile you will come to a power-line crossing with easy access on both sides of the road. Stop at the power-line right-of-way to look for Gray Catbird, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Prairie, and Black-and-white warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Field Sparrow. Listen for Hairy and Pileated woodpeckers, Veery, Hermit Thrush, and Solitary Vireo in the adjacent woods. Watch the sky for Turkey Vultures, and listen for the guttural calls of the Common Raven.

Continue along Reservation Road; in 0.1 mile bear right at the fork, and in 1.0 mile stop at a small marsh visible on both sides of the road. About 100 feet past the marsh there is a trail leading into the woods on the right side of the road. This short path is an excellent place to look for flycatchers, nuthatches, vireos, and warblers.

Another 0.2 mile along Reservation Road will bring you to a T in the road. Turn left toward the lookout tower, and proceed 0.3 mile to a large swamp on the right. Park off to the edge of the road, and bird along the edge of the swamp and down to the next bend in the road.

This area attracts a great diversity of nesting species, including some that are usually thought of as more "northern," such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Purple Finch, White-throated Sparrow, and Evening Grosbeak. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher is usually easy to find in migration if you are familiar with its call. Ruby-crowned Kinglet is a common migrant.

You can also expect nesting Belted Kingfisher, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated woodpeckers, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least and Great Crested flycatchers, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, Hermit Thrush, Solitary, Yellow-throated, and Red-eyed vireos,

Chestnut-sided and Black-and-white warblers, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, and Swamp Sparrow. You may even find Northern Saw-whet Owl.

After thoroughly exploring the area near the swamp, driving another 0.4 mile will bring you to the trailhead (on the right) that leads to the lookout tower. There is usually room to park a few cars here. A Cerulean Warbler has been a regular in this immediate area in recent years. Listen for its song which is similar to that of the Black-throated Blue Warbler. However, be sure to *see* the bird, because one of the numerous local American Redstarts sings a fine copy of the normal song of the Cerulean. (This is a widespread phenomenon which has produced some dubious records of Ceruleans elsewhere.) This is the most reliable area in New Hampshire to find the Cerulean.

Along the trail to the tower listen for Swainson's Thrush during spring migration. You should be able to find Dark-eyed Juncos in summer. The base of the tower is at an elevation of 908 feet. This altitude presents you with an impressive panorama of southeastern New Hampshire. Look for Turkey Vultures and Common Ravens. The tower also provides a good viewing-site for observing fall hawk migration during September and October.

Diagonally opposite from the tower parking area you will find the remnants of an old homestead from the nineteenth century. Still visible are the foundation, a root cellar, and the old family graveyard. Louisiana Waterthrush can also be heard near the stream just below the old cellar-hole 100 feet down the hill. Lilacs, rhubarb, day-lilies, and forsythia have survived from this homestead. Check the trees and bushes carefully for warblers.

Beyond the observation-tower trailhead, continue for another 0.3 mile to a small clearing on the right side of the road. Park in the clearing, and bird the edge of the woods and along the road. An Acadian Flycatcher spent the summer here in 1991.

Beyond the small clearing the road becomes rough. You should continue only if your car has adequate ground-clearance. In 0.3 mile you will come to an area where the road starts to drop steeply downhill. There will be a steep uphill slope on the left side of the road. This area has been a hot spot for southern warblers. A few years ago, a singing male Kentucky Warbler was found here in mid-May. In May of 1994 a singing male Worm-eating Warbler was located on this same slope.

Continue for another 0.2 mile to a T in the road. Turn right, and proceed for 0.5 mile to the trail leading to Boulder Field, an area of large boulders and cliffs. The trail is marked with white blazes leading from the road to the Boulder Field. Listen for Winter Wren and Louisiana Waterthrush along this trail.

In 0.3 mile after Boulder Field you will come to a swamp on the left formed by beavers. Look for Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. In another 0.2 mile you will come to Round Pond on the right and the other end of the Boulder Trail

on the left. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Cedar Waxwings have been known to nest on the edge of the pond. Watch for Turkey Vultures soaring overhead. The pond usually floods the road so that you cannot continue. Even if not flooded, the road becomes too rough to drive beyond this point.

Turn around at Round Pond and backtrack to the T. Go straight across the tip of the T (as opposed to turning left, which would return you to the tower). From the T proceed for 1.2 miles to the junction with Reservation Road. Along this stretch you will pass by a swamp and drive through a red pine forest. Continue to listen for warblers, vireos, and flycatchers. Turn right on Reservation Road, and return 2.2 miles to State Route 107.

When you reach State Route 107, turn left to go south. In 3.0 miles you will come to the junction with State Route 27. Bear left to follow State Routes 107 and 27. In 4.0 miles, at a set of lights, turn right to stay on State Route 107 south. In 0.5 mile you will come to State Route 101. You can take State Route 101 west toward Manchester or east toward the seacoast.

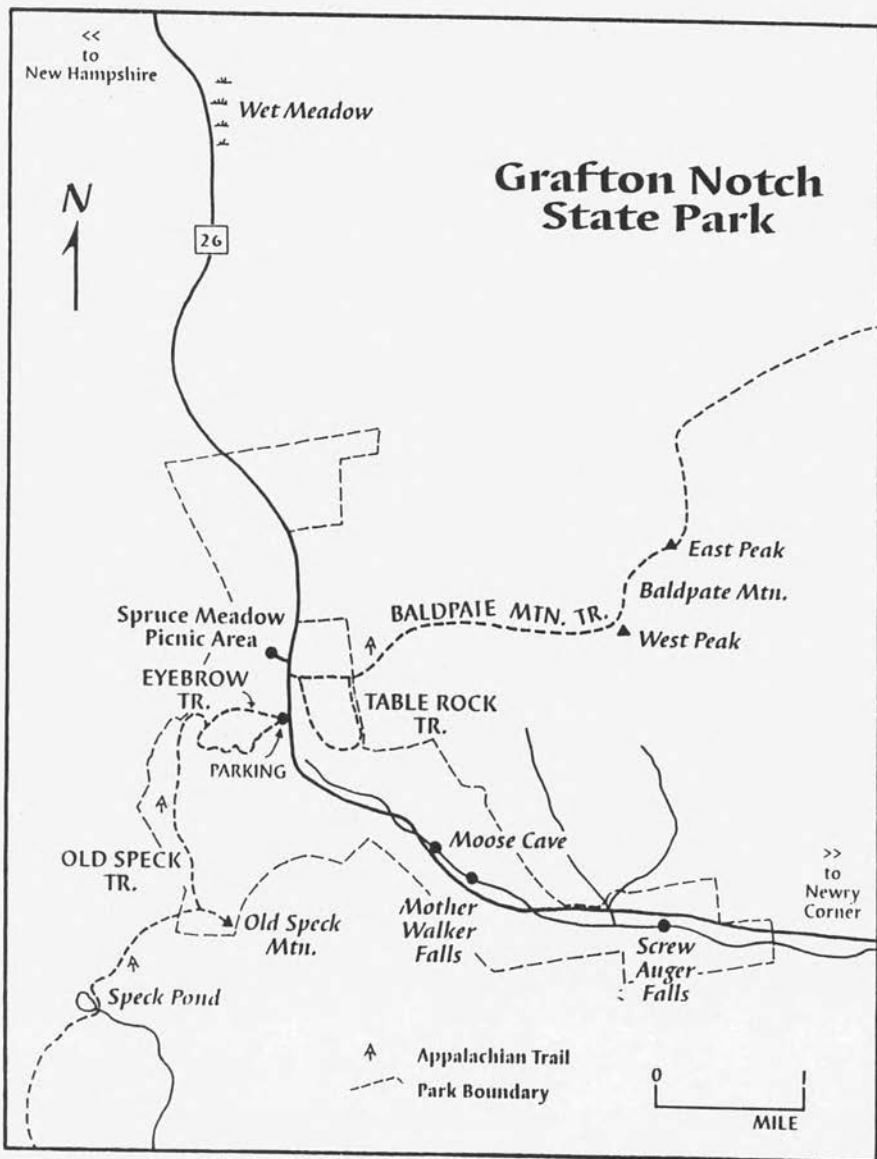
ALAN DELORY is a New Hampshire native and one of the most active birders in the state. Alan has published articles in *Birding* and *Birdwatcher's Digest*. He is a seasonal editor of the *New Hampshire Bird Records* and a member of the New Hampshire State Rare Birds Committee. Alan and his wife, Barbara, frequently lead field trips in New Hampshire and also serve as the New Hampshire state coordinators of the North American Migration Count.

GRAFTON NOTCH (MAINE) STATE PARK

by Elizabeth C. Pierson, Jan Erik Pierson, and Peter D. Vickery

Grafton Notch State Park lies at the northern end of the Mahoosuc Mountains on the Maine-New Hampshire border in a beautiful glacier-sculpted area of cliffs, gorges, and waterfalls. Nine rugged peaks, all higher than 3500 feet, dominate the Mahoosucs. Best known as a major crossing point on the Appalachian Train (AT), Grafton Notch State Park is generally considered to be primarily a hiker's park, but it is also a wonderful birding area.

The bird life in Grafton Notch blends a rich combination of northern boreal species and more southerly deciduous breeders. It is an interesting area where you can find the unlikely combination of Eastern Towhees and Lincoln's Sparrows singing side by side. Although species such as Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay, Blackpoll Warbler, and Bicknell's (formerly Gray-cheeked) Thrush are restricted to the higher elevations (and thus require some moderate to strenuous hiking), almost all of the other nesting species in the park can be found along the road or on lower, flatter trail sections. The best time to visit the area is at the height of the breeding season in June, but you are likely to find much of interest



any time between mid-May and late July. You can cover the park in three or four hours if you stay in the lowlands, but you will need a full day or more if you intend to hike up to the higher elevations.

The park includes almost 3200 acres lying along either side of a 5.6-mile stretch of Route 26 in Grafton Township. Old Speck, at 4180 feet Maine's third highest mountain, rises along the west side of the road, and to the east rises Baldpate Mountain with its two open summits, the West Peak at 3680 feet and the East Peak at 3812 feet. Both mountains are accessible by trails in the park. Also included in the park are three narrow, twisting gorges and several small waterfalls and caves, all of which are well marked with park signs. These are not exciting stops for birds, but if you have an eye for unusual geological features and the beauty of the landscape, you won't want to miss them

There are two ways to bird Grafton Notch—by following Route 26 north and stopping along the way to bird the "lowlands" (you will find several well-marked stopping points within the park) and by hiking up to the higher elevations of Old Speck or Baldpate. For a full cross section of the area's birdlife, you will want to do both.

Route 26

As it threads its way north from the Androscoggin River at Newry Corner and begins its steady climb toward Grafton Notch, Route 26 provides a dramatic contrast between the pine-oak forests typical of southern Maine and the birch and spruce forests of the north woods. The lower section of the highway is punctuated with farms and open fields where Eastern Kingbirds, Tree, Barn, and Cliff swallows, Cedar Waxwings, Chipping, Savannah, and Song sparrows, Bobolinks, and American Goldfinches are all regular. You might also find Eastern Bluebirds nesting in some of the roadside boxes. American Kestrels hunting over the fields or perched on telephone wires, or Chimney Swifts hawking for insects overhead. For many years there has been a large, active Bank Swallow colony in the sandpit on the east side of Route 26 just a short distance beyond the intersection of Routes 26 and 2.

Following the shallow, rocky Bear River, Route 26 rises steeply into a narrow valley covered with yellow and paper birches, American beech, sugar maple, and poplars. These hardwoods support many of the same breeding birds found farther south, among them Barred Owl, Pileated, Hairy, and Downy woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Least and Great Crested flycatchers, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, American Crow, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Veery, Wood and Hermit thrushes, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

One distinctive feature separating these deciduous woods from those to the south, however, is the presence of nesting Philadelphia Vireos. These

inconspicuous vireos are fairly common in Grafton Notch but can be frustrating to find and difficult to see well. They are often found in small, open patches of birch, aspen, and white ash, and they tend to stay up high in the canopy. The song can be maddeningly similar to that of a Red-eyed Vireo, and it is easy to become confused by an odd Red-eyed song. Philadelphia Vireos have a shorter, snappier song that is higher pitched, and they generally don't drone on all day long in the monotonous way typical of Red-eyed Vireos. We have had good luck finding Philadelphia Vireos in the birch aspen groves right along the roadside near the southern entrance to the park and between Screw Auger and Mother Walker Falls.

As Route 26 climbs higher in elevation, the hardwoods give way to spruces. Look along this portion of the highway for a varied cross section of breeding species, among them Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Solitary Vireo, Northern Parula, and Nashville, Bay-breasted, and Cape May warblers. Be sure to check Spruce Meadow Picnic Area, 4.6 miles north of the park's southern boundary on the west side of the road. This is an open, level area with scattered spruces and is an excellent place to see Boreal Chickadees and Tennessee, Magnolia, and Blackburnian warblers. It is often easier to see the birds here than it is when you are looking up a mountainside. Spruce Meadow is also a good place to look for moose and a lovely vantage point from which to survey the valley below.

At the northern border of the park, continue north on Route 26 another 2.6 miles to a wet meadow on the right (east) side of the highway. The scattered alders here provide nesting habitat for Alder Flycatchers, Chestnut-sided and Wilson's warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and Swamp and Lincoln's sparrows. Curiously, Eastern Towhee, a species more typical of southernmost Maine, also occurs in this meadow. This is private property, but you can scan it from the roadside.

At any point along Route 26, keep an eye on the upper ridges across the valley. The Common Raven's loud, grating croaks are a familiar, pleasant sound frequently heard from the cliffs, and Northern Goshawks and Red-tailed Hawks sometimes soar on the updrafts.

Specific places where you may want to stop within the park, in addition to Spruce Meadow, include Screw Auger and Mother Walker Falls, Moose Cave, and the trailhead parking lot (see below; in years with tent caterpillar infestations, Yellow-billed Cuckoos can sometimes be found in the trees around this parking lot).

Old Speck and Baldpate Mountains

Those who love the solitude of remote mountaintops, who thrill at the delicate, quavering notes of Bicknell's Thrush, who admire diminutive alpine

wildflowers, will undoubtedly seek the higher elevations of Old Speck or Baldpate. Both mountains offer a similar birding experience and are accessible from the trailhead parking lot located 3.7 miles north of the park's southern boundary on the west side of Route 26. (This is where the AT crosses Route 26.) A trail map at the parking lot will direct you, but we recommend having a park or AT map with you as well. (See the *AMC Maine Mountain Guide* or *Appalachian Trail Guide to Maine*.) You should be properly equipped and conditioned for strenuous hiking.

Four trails—two on each side of Route 26—start at or near this parking lot. On the west side of the highway, starting at the parking lot, are the Eyebrow Trail, a 2.3-mile loop that ascends about 1000 feet to the Eyebrow Cliff on Old Speck, and the Old Speck Trail, a 3.9-mile trail to the summit of the mountain. On the east side of the highway, on Baldpate, are the 2.4-mile Table Rock Trail Loop and the Baldpate Mountain Trail. Following the latter, it is 2.9 miles to the West Peak and 3.8 miles to the East Peak. Of the four hikes, we prefer the two to the summits. Old Speck is the longer of the two, Baldpate the steeper. Either one makes for a full and tiring day, but the birds, and the scenery, make it worth the effort.

Whether you climb Old Speck or Baldpate, you will soon start to climb above the beeches and maples and into the first scattered firs. Winter Wrens (all the way up the mountain and typically singing vigorously much of the day), Hermit and Swainson's thrushes, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Black-throated Blue and Canada warblers, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos can be seen or heard in the understory, whereas Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, and Yellow-rumped warblers occupy the upperstory.

The higher trail sections of both mountains are dominated by spruce forests with breeding Blackpoll (often surprisingly common), Cape May, and Bay-breasted warblers. Spruce Grouse are common at this elevation and can often be found dust-bathing in the trail. The degree of flaking on the spruce trunks indicates that Black-backed Woodpeckers are probably fairly regular (although always hard to find). Yellow-bellied Flycatchers reveal their presence with their subtle click note, whereas Purple Finches are more obvious with their rich warbling songs. Gray Jays, White-winged and Red crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks are irregular but always possible. At and near the summits of both mountains, listen for the slurred wee-you call note of Bicknell's Thrush (generally not present until late May). The Bicknell's magical fluting song, typically heard in the early evening or on cloudy days, is one of the pleasures to be found in Maine only near the summit of these isolated mountaintops.

As its name implies, the summit of Baldpate is open, with wonderful views in almost all directions. Clumps of alpine wildflowers, rare in a state where treeless mountain summits are uncommon, can be found on this exposed area, especially on East Peak. The summit of Old Speck is covered with spruce, but

for many years a fire tower has provided a stunning view in all directions, particularly of the White Mountains.

If you don't have time to do an all-day hike, try the Table Rock Trail, which ascends a shoulder of Baldpate; this is the shortest hike that provides both a spectacular view and a change in the avian community. The easiest route is to follow the white AT trail about 0.8 miles up Baldpate and then turn right on the blue trail to Table Rock. Another option is to take the very steep orange trail straight up the boulders to the base of the mountain and then return via the blue and white AT trails; you will cover more territory this way and will also get some spectacular views. Total round-trip hiking time is two to three hours depending on birding and rest stops.

If you have time for more than a full day's hike, you might want to explore the AT south of Old Speck. The trail continues south another mile to Speck Pond, which at 3777 feet is the highest pond in Maine. This part of the trail passes through large areas of thick subalpine heathlands, an interesting and uncommon vegetation type found along these ridgetops.

Wherever you are in Grafton Notch, watch for mammals, too. White-tailed deer, moose, and black bear are all spotted with some regularity.

It is also worth noting here that the mountain trails within the White Mountains National Forest in nearby New Hampshire support many of the same breeding species found in Grafton Notch State Park.

Grafton Notch State Park is open from May 15 to October 15 and has picnic and outhouse facilities. There is a small fee for day use.

Directions

Grafton Notch State Park is located along route 26 in Grafton Township. At the intersection of Routes 26 and 2 in Newry (at the Androscoggin River), bear north on Route 26. The southern boundary of the park is 8.6 miles north, and the various trails and scenic spots are well marked. For information on local accommodations and services, write or call the Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 439, Bethel, Maine 04217-0439, telephone 207-824-2282.

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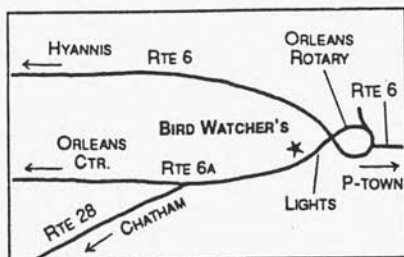
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