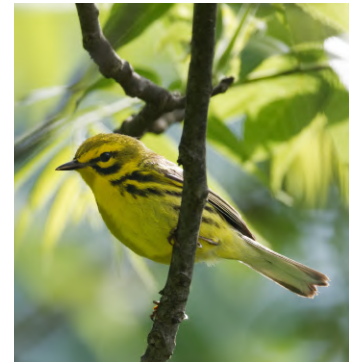


Maine & New Hampshire's Mount Washington June 4–10, 2024 | Trip Report | by Michael Good



Naturalist Journeys guide Michael Good with Scott, Kathy, Lloyd and Jill



Tues., Jun. 4 Canco Woods | Fore River Sanctuary

Our Naturalist Journeys field trip started in Portland, Maine, where we will spend 2 days before heading off to Mount Washington and the surrounding region. Our first walks today started at Canco Woods and Fore River Sanctuary, where we totaled 50 species as a great start to this trip. Highlights included Prairie Warbler and 8 other warbler species. A lingering Red-tailed Hawk led to numerous photos and amazing observations of this migratory raptor. We ended our day with dinner at Scales Restaurant in downtown Portland and compiled our evening trip list at the Embassy Suites.

Wed., Jun. 5 Wells Reserve at Laudholm Farm | Biddeford Pools | East Point Sanctuary | Scarborough Marsh | Maine Audubon Gilsland Farm Preserve

With sunny blue skies, very little wind and just a gorgeous day, we took a ride south of Portland to Wells Reserve at Laudholm, which is also home to Maine Coastal Ecology Center and is just an amazing piece of property for birds. Everyone was stunned by its beauty and the landscape. We documented 35 species of birds, including



some highlights like Marsh Wren, good looks at Willet, Bobolink, Ovenbird and a displaying and singing Veery. Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge produced a Coopers Hawk sitting for many minutes. Our next stop took us to Biddeford Pool and the Maine Audubon East Point Sanctuary where we spent some time sea-watching, observing Black Guillemot, Common Eider and Northern Gannet. It was an interesting walk out to the East Point Sanctuary and a new location for all of us. An important target species and a new Life Bird for everyone was added at Scarborough Marsh right behind the Clambake Restaurant, with Saltmarsh Sparrow seen closely; we got some good photos right as a thunderstorm swept by to our south, producing some rain and lightning. We ended the day with drizzles at Gilsland Farm and the Maine Audubon Society, where Wild Turkey were displaying, Eastern Bluebirds singing and American Redstart checking out the Naturalist Journeys group. Overall, it was an excellent day 2 ending with 76 species.

Thurs., Jun. 6 Scarborough Marsh Eastern Trail | Songo Lock | Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary | Delaney’s Hole-in-the-Wall | Glen House

Today began with partly cloudy skies and perfect conditions to find Nelson's Sparrow along the Scarborough Marsh Eastern Trail. This target species was the highlight for everyone. We heard and saw 10 this morning, along with a flyby Short-billed Dowitcher, many Willets and a few other goodies. New life birds for the Delaneys and Scott made this a great way to start the day. We ventured back to the Embassy Suites and prepared for our trip to the Glen House, nestled beneath the great Mount Washington. The picturesque drive through western Maine is unsurpassed and opens the door to the serene landscape of New Hampshire and the Presidential Range. With stops at the 1870s-built Songo Lock in Maine and the Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary in New Hampshire, we added 10 species to our list, including Scarlet Tanager, Warbling Vireo and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. An Indigo Bunting was a great find when we arrived at The Glen House. Overall, this travel day was a great time for everyone.

Fri., Jun. 7 Mount Washington | Lost Pond Trail | Pinkham Notch

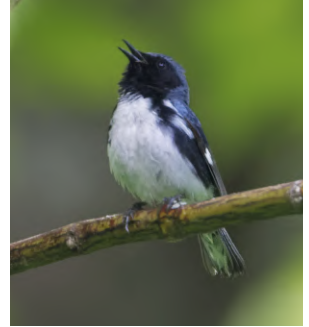
The weather forecast for today predicted increasing chances of rain, so we hoped for the best as this was our day to ascend Mount Washington. As we looked to the mountain and saw that it was cloudy almost down to the Glen House, we all were a little dubious about our chances of finding today’s target, Bicknell's Thrush. But as we drove up the famous Mount Washington Auto road, we began to see blue sky which, fortuitously, continued as we made our way to 4000 feet above sea level and the Signal Crops Site on the Mount Washington Auto Road.



Almost as soon as we exited the van, we heard our first Bicknell's Thrush and Blackpoll Warbler. Bicknell's was a Life Bird for everyone. With great observations of a Blackpoll, we started working on finding the Bicknell's Thrush. After a little pishing, we had our first bird sit out at the top of a scrub Balsam Fir, followed by another a few moments later. Everyone was able to see them well and to hear their unique ethereal song. Our new bird acquired, we ventured towards the top and the fragile Alpine zone. We were treated to many excellent views of a nesting American Pipit which flew close to us and we walked around the blanket of *Diapensia lapponica* in full bloom, interspersed with purple Lapland Azalea. We observed the white outer tail feathers of American Pipit in flight and also when it was strutting around on the ground. The crown jewel was at the top of Mount Washington where we had beautiful clouds and views to the valleys below. The famous Cog Railroad trains were moving up and down the mountain and a some were parked on top, which provided great photo opportunities. After some quality time exploring the infrastructure at the top of the mountain, we began our descent, stopping for lunch when we saw two Canada Jays fly across the road. That was our only view of this mountaintop species, so we ate our lunch accompanied by the high piercing song of Blackpoll Warbler and the occasional fluty song of Bicknell's and Swainson's Thrush in the background. The blackflies helped move us along down the mountain, but we made frequent stops along the way for Indigo Bunting and other mountain birds. Leaving the mountain is never easy but we eventually made a quick stop at the Glen House before a short walk at the Lost Pond trail. The afternoon ended at the Glen House with a relaxing rest before dinner at the base of Mount Washington.

Sat., Jun. 8 **Wildcat Mt. Ski Area | White Mt National Forest**
Pinkham Notch | Dolly Copp Road | Pinkham "B" Road
| Presidential Rail Trail

We started day 5 at Wildcat Ski Area with a wonderful walk to Thompson Falls, where we had great observations of our first Blackburnian Warbler. While walking the Wildcat roads, we came upon Philadelphia Vireo, another highlight, and got great photos and a few recordings. This small bright yellow-throated vireo, with a bill shorter than Red-eyed Vireo, was a Life Bird for Scott and the Delaneys. The white supercilium and contrasting dark eyeline and a grayish crown is noticeably different from Red-eyed Vireo. It began to rain as we made our way to the Pinkham Notch visitor center, where we took a short walk to Crystal Cascades before heading back to take a break at the Glen House. After lunch, we made a trip on the Dolly Copp and Pinkham "B" Road, finding Black-throated Blue Warbler and Jill and Lloyd's Life Bird, Ovenbird. The drive through the White Mountain National Forest was serene and led us to the Presidential Rail Trail and a nice walk through some wetland habitats, where we saw an excellent pond and signs of Beaver. We had a flyover of a molting Broadwinged Hawk before heading



back through Gorham, NH to Glen House, finishing up our day with another Notch Restaurant meal and the evening checklist. Clouds covered the top of Mount Washington as we settled into our evening and prepared for the following day.

Sun., Jun. 9 Pondicherry National Wildlife Cherry Pond | Airport Marsh Whitefield | Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge Mud Pond

The rain was falling as we ventured out on to the Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge owned, in part, by New Hampshire Audubon Society. The clouds covered the mountains and a light rain was falling as we began our day, driving towards the Mount Washington Airport and the Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge. Our walk started and finished in the rain with 24 bird species seen and heard. Cherry Pond, our final destination, was shrouded in fog and a light drizzle. One Double-crested Cormorant was seen in the water. The forest along the way was filled with the song of many warblers, especially at the beginning of our walk. Tree Swallows and one Cliff Swallow were numerous and flying over the surface of the pond, snatching insects as they darted in and out of the many small coves and inlets. The walk back was a little quiet and as we came to the trail head, the sun started coming out and the rain abated. We stopped by the Airport Marsh, where we noticed what turned out to be a Common Loon, a target bird for Jill. One Great Blue Heron was found and some really nice close-up looks at Greatcrested Flycatcher and Eastern Kingbird were had. From here we drove around to the western side of the Pondicherry Refuge. After a great lunch, we hiked out to the serene Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge Mud Pond. Here, we had great looks and photos of Nashville Warbler while we admired the beauty and serenity from the observation deck about 1.6 miles from our starting point. It was wonderful to sit in the quiet and just take it in, while looking at Pitcher Plants and the beauty of a Northern Forest Bog system. Wishing for Black-backed Woodpecker, we ventured back to the van and off to the Glen House for some reflection, quiet time and dinner at the Notch Grill before a restful sleep and preparation for our final day and trip back to Portland, Maine.

Mon., Jun. 10 Return to Portland | Departures

Our final walk around the Glen House Trails produced amazing views and photos of Philadelphia Vireo, which was the highlight of the morning. The Delaneys observed their first Northern Parula, and Alder Flycatcher was another highlight. We departed the White Mountains having reached many of our goals and target species and with a newfound love for the Presidential Range of Mountains in New Hampshire. Our drive back to Portland, Maine gave us an opportunity to talk about our week together and to relive some of the amazing highlights of the trip. Our final goodbyes were made at the Portland Airport.



Photos by Scott Page: Bicknell's Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Common Loon, Red-tailed Hawk, Prairie Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Cooper's Hawk (Juvenile), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Song Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Glen House Hotel, Yellow Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Michael Good on Mt. Washington, Bog Near Pinkham Notch, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Northern Pond and Bog, Eastern Kingbird, Lupine