

SAX-ZIM BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for Sunday March 17, 2019

***\*\*The Welcome Center is now CLOSED for the season as of Sunday March 10th. We will try and be open regular hours during mid May to mid July. Stay tuned!***

***\*\*If you were planning to come up to Sax-Zim to do some winter birding in the next few weeks, I'd wait and come back next winter. No owls have been seen for at least 4 days and other birds have headed north (Pine Grosbeaks are gone now).***

***\*\*Some Feeders (Welcome Center, Admiral Road, Sisu, and Mary Lou's remain up (until late March).***

***Great Gray Owls:*** Last sighting was March 13 along Hwy 7 south of greenhouse in bog stretch. They will likely become even less visible over the next couple weeks as they begin the process of courtship and nesting.

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** Not seen along McDavitt or trail for about 5 days. He may now have left the area.

***Snowy Owl:*** None seen for about a week.

***Barred Owl:*** Recent sightings include McDavitt Road south of Sisu Feeders, at Sisu feeders.

***Pine Grosbeaks:*** Pine Grosbeaks have now departed for Canada. They are traditionally the first of the boreal birds to vacate the Bog.

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. Up to 30 have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are McDavitt Road, Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center), Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

***Common Redpolls:*** Small flocks will likely linger into early April. Check remaining Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** Watch for them as they head back north from Iowa on way to the tundra. One was seen a couple days ago.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** Check lek along CR229/29 and the feeders marked on map in early mornings. Dancing will peak in April at the lek. You can reserve a blind with the DNR to view in April.

***Boreal Chickadee:*** Up to three have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Keep putting peanut butter and suet out at this feeder! All will be taken down in late March though, to prevent Black Bears from ripping the feeders apart.

***Black-billed Magpie:*** Best bet lately has been the farm right next to Arkola Road between Poplar Road and CR7. Look near cattle. Also showing up at road-killed deer (when the Ravens aren't present)

***Canada Jay:*** Regular at the Admiral Road feeders. Many pairs will be visible along roadsides in the Bog now as they gather food and nest building materials. This is probably the best time to see Canada Jays all year!

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple females and a male have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk. Listen for the sound of them flaking bark. Note that there are more Hairy Woodpeckers here than Black-backed.

***Snow Buntings:*** Watch for them as they pass through on their way to breeding grounds in the Arctic.

***Mammals:*** Pine Marten comes semi-regularly to the Admiral Road feeders (if there is peanut butter out!), but could be encountered anywhere in the Bog. Ermine have been scarce this winter but check the rib cage at end of the boardwalk AND at beginning of boardwalk. Also scan for Snowshoe Hares from the boardwalk. There have been many Bobcat sightings lately. Red Fox have been seen too.

SAX-ZIM BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for Thursday March 14, 2019

***\*\*The Welcome Center is now CLOSED for the season as of Sunday March 10th. We will try and be open regular hours during mid May to mid July. Stay tuned!***

***\*\*Feeders at the Welcome Center, Admiral Road, Bog Boardwalk, and Mary Lou's remain up (until late March).***

***\*\*If you were planning to come up to Sax-Zim to do some winter birding in the next few weeks, I'd wait and come back next winter. The recent rains have made the Bog a soggy mess. And most feeders will be taken down in the next week or two.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** The most reliable spot has been in late afternoon along east side of CR7 between the greenhouse and a couple miles N of Sax Road (CR27) in the Bog stretch. Dawn and dusk are best bets.

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** The guy that has been very regular in the logged area east of the tiny parking pad along McDavitt Road (parking pad NOT plowed) is now moving around more. He has now been seen north of this spot along McDavitt. You can still look for him as you follow

other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch. You may have to hike a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile one way. Look for it perched at the tip-top of dead Tamarack snags. It is sometimes seen right along McDavitt Road. He is singing often now. Spring is in the air!

***Snowy Owl:*** The dark and large female has been seen the last few weeks near the power substation along CR29 0.7 miles south of CR133 southwest of Meadowlands. Check all the power poles!

***Barred Owl:*** Recent sightings include McDavitt Road south of Sisu Feeders, at Sisu feeders, CR7, and Arkola Road (CR52) in bog stretch east of Owl Avenue.

***Pine Grosbeaks:*** Pine Grosbeaks have now departed for Canada. They are traditionally the first of the boreal birds to vacate the Bog.

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. Up to 30 have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are McDavitt Road, Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center), Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

***Common Redpolls:*** As is typical to late winter, the redpolls have mobbed feeders recently. Check remaining Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** Watch for them as they head back north from Iowa on way to the tundra. One was seen a couple days ago.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** Check lek along CR229/29 and the feeders marked on map in early mornings. Dancing will peak in April at the lek. You can reserve a blind with the DNR to view in April.

***Boreal Chickadee:*** Up to three have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Also very regular at Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog on suet.

***Black-billed Magpie:*** Best bet lately has been the farm right next to Arkola Road between Poplar Road and CR7. Look near cattle. Also showing up at road-killed deer (when the Ravens aren't present)

***Canada Jay:*** Regular at the Admiral Road feeders and at the Welcome Center deer rib cages.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple females and a male have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the

boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk. Listen for the sound of them flaking bark.

***Snow Buntings:*** Watch for them as they pass through on their way to breeding grounds in the Arctic.

***Mammals:*** Pine Marten comes semi-regularly to the Admiral Road feeders (if there is peanut butter out!), but could be encountered anywhere in the Bog. Ermine have been scarce this winter but check the rib cage at end of the boardwalk AND at beginning of boardwalk. Also scan for Snowshoe Hares from the boardwalk. There have been many Bobcat sightings lately. Red Fox have been seen too.

SAX-ZIM BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for Tues. February 27, 2019

***\*\*Cars continue to go in the ditch on almost a daily basis. Please drive attentively and don't pull over too far...but far enough to be out of the driving lane. Mrs. Macs Towing phone is 218-393-7377 Website here***

***\*\*Loretta's feeders are closed for the season. Her wonderful array of feeders will be back in full-force next December.***

***\*\*The Welcome Center will be closing for the season on Sunday March 10th.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** Best to get out at dawn and dusk to have a chance to see a Great Gray Owl at this time. The most reliable spot has been in late afternoon along east side of CR7 between the greenhouse and a couple miles N of Sax Road (CR27) in the Bog stretch. McDavitt, Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center) and Zim Road (CR28) near Yoki and Lukkenen are locations where Great Grays have been seen in the last month. Also check Admiral Road and Lake Nichols Road. Your best chances are on cloudy, snowy, calm, warm days (temps in teens and 20s). Your least chance of success will be on clear, sunny, windy, bitterly cold days (well below zero).

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been very regular in the logged area east of the tiny parking pad along McDavitt Road (parking pad NOT plowed). Follow other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch. You may have to hike a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile one way. Look for it perched at the tip-top of dead Tamarack snags. It is sometimes seen right along McDavitt Road. (NOTE\*\* Don't park directly across from other vehicles; road is too narrow to allow that.)

***Snowy Owl:*** The very white and very small mature male has moved down to the fields of the game farm SW of Meadowlands. Check the power poles and deer blind near the intersection of CR29 and Kellner Road (CR226). He has been very regular lately.

***Barred Owl:*** Recent sightings include McDavitt Road south of Sisu Feeders, CR7, and Arkola Road (CR52) in bog stretch east of Owl Avenue. Boreal Owl: None this winter. Last year was an irruption year so a few were seen.

***Pine Grosbeaks:*** Pine Grosbeaks (including many males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders and Admiral Road feeders. You can also see them gritting along Bog roads, at the Sisu feeders on McDavitt, Admiral Road feeders and also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard."). NOTE: Pine Grosbeaks are the first boreal winter visitor to "head home." They usually depart the Bog by the first week or two in March.

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. They have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center), Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

***Common Redpolls:*** As is typical to late winter, the redpolls have started coming to feeders in larger numbers. Also small to medium-sized flocks can be found foraging in alders throughout the Bog. It is not an irruption year so numbers are relatively low but you should be able to find them. Check Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

***Hoary Redpolls:*** Only report so far was one at the Admiral Road feeders. But more should be discovered as the redpolls come in bigger numbers to area feeders. Pine Siskins: A few have been seen at the Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** Recent heavy snows have made sight-hunting for the vole-eating Roughlegs very difficult. Likely that they have almost all moved south to open country with less snow.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek since mid December! Check in early mornings. They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map). They are NOT regular on the lek during bitter cold or windy days.

***Boreal Chickadee:*** Up to three have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Also very regular at Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog on suet.

***Black-billed Magpie:*** Best bet lately has been the farm right next to Arkola Road between Poplar Road and CR7. Look near cattle. Also showing up at road-killed deer (when the Ravens aren't present)

***Canada Jay:*** Regular at the Admiral Road feeders and at the Welcome Center deer rib cages.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple females have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk. Listen for the sound of them

flaking bark. Other Black-backed Woodpecker have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders).

**American Three-toed Woodpecker:** NONE this winter. Last year was an irruption year and they were regularly seen in the Bog.

**Snow Buntings:** Very rare this winter. Check along the roadsides and railroad tracks bordering CR7, also CR5 and CR133 west of Meadowlands.

**Mammals:** Pine Marten comes semi-regularly to the Admiral Road feeders (if there is peanut butter out!), but could be encountered anywhere in the Bog. Ermine have been scarce this winter but check the rib cage at end of the boardwalk AND at beginning of boardwalk. Also scan for Snowshoe Hares from the boardwalk. There have been many Bobcat sightings lately. Red Fox have been seen too.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for Tues. February 12, 2019**

***\*\*Cars continue to go in the ditch on almost a daily basis. Please drive attentively and don't pull over too far...but far enough to be out of the driving lane. Mrs. Macs Towing phone is 218-393-7377 [Website here](#)***

***\*\*It is Sax-Zim Winter Bird Festival Weekend! 130 folks from across the country will be out and about Friday through Sunday noon. Say Hi and welcome them to the Great White North! The groups will be out on school buses all three days.***

**Great Gray Owls:** A few have been seen out and about after the great Polar Vortex cold of a couple weeks ago. Best to get out at dawn and dusk to have a chance. McDavitt, Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center) and Zim Road (CR28) near Yoki and Lukkenen have been semi-reliable. CR7 between the greenhouse and a couple miles N of Sax Road (CR27) in the Bog stretch was very reliable but no recent reports. Also check Admiral Road and Lake Nichols Road. Your best chances are on cloudy, snowy, calm, warm days (temps in teens and 20s). Your least chance of success will be on clear, sunny, windy, bitterly cold days (well below zero).

**Northern Hawk Owl:** One has been very regular in the logged area east of the tiny parking pad along McDavitt Road (parking pad NOT plowed). Follow other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch. You may have to hike a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile one way. Look for it perched at the tip-top of dead Tamarack snags. (NOTE\*\* Don't park directly across from other vehicles; road is too narrow to allow that.)

**Snowy Owl:** Unfortunately, the Snowy Owls that were very regular in the first half of the winter have disappeared. [Former locations include the fields along CR229/29 near Dart Road and Watsula; on the high power poles near the substation on CR29 south of Meadowlands; and near intersection of Sax Road (CR27) and CR7; CR5 near Church Road] ***\*\*If you do locate a Snowy Owl, please report to the Welcome Center.***

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Two or three weeks ago one was reported and only seen briefly along "Hawk Owl trail" just off McDavitt Road ...and this sighting was at dusk.

**Boreal Owl:** None this winter. Last year was an irruption year so a few were seen.

**Pine Grosbeaks:** Pine Grosbeaks (including many males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders and Admiral Road feeders. You can also see them gritting along Bog roads, at the Sisu feeders on McDavitt, Admiral Road feeders and also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard.")

**Evening Grosbeaks:** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. They have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road. Sometimes at Loretta's feeders too.

**White-winged Crossbills:** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are Owl Avenue (south of Welcome Center), Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

**Common Redpolls:** As is typical to late winter, the redpolls have started coming to feeders in larger numbers. Also small to medium-sized flocks can be found foraging in alders throughout the Bog. It is not an irruption year so numbers are relatively low but you should be able to find them. Check Welcome Center feeders, Mary Lou's feeders and Loretta's feeders.

**Hoary Redpolls:** Only report so far was one at the Admiral Road feeders. But more should be discovered as the redpolls come in bigger numbers to area feeders.

**Pine Siskins:** A few have been seen at the Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

**Rough-legged Hawks:** Recent heavy snows have made sight-hunting for the vole-eating Roughlegs very difficult. Likely that they have almost all moved south to open country with less snow.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek since mid December! Check in early mornings. They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map). They are NOT regular on the lek during bitter cold or windy days.

**Boreal Chickadee:** Up to three have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Also very regular at Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog on suet.

**Black-billed Magpie:** Best bet lately has been the farm right next to Arkola Road between Poplar Road and CR7. Look near cattle. Also showing up at road-killed deer (when the Ravens aren't present)

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple females have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk. Listen for the sound of them flaking bark.

Other Black-backed Woodpecker have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders).

***American Three-toed Woodpecker:*** NONE this winter. Last year was an irruption year and they were regularly seen in the Bog.

***Snow Buntings:*** Very rare this winter. Check along the roadsides and railroad tracks bordering CR7, also CR5 and CR133 west of Meadowlands.

***Mammals:*** Pine Marten comes semi-regularly to the Admiral Road feeders (if there is peanut butter out!), but could be encountered anywhere in the Bog. Ermine have been scarce this winter but check the rib cage at end of the boardwalk. Also scan for Snowshoe Hares from the boardwalk. There have been many Bobcat sightings lately. Red Fox have been seen too.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for February 1, 2019**

***\*\*Check out Winterberry Bog & Fermoy feeders too.***

**\*\*Low temps have been in the MINUS-20s, -30s and even MINUS -40s. Cotton, Minnesota has been the cold spot in the Lower 48 three times in the last two weeks. Warmup this weekend!**

***Great Gray Owls:*** Bitter cold and sunny and windy weather over the last two weeks has not been conducive to seeing Great Grays lingering along roadsides. Must get out at dawn and dusk to have a chance. CR7 between the greenhouse and a couple miles N of Sax Road in the Bog stretch has been the most reliable lately. Also check Zim Road (CR28) west of the St. Louis River, , McDavitt Road, Admiral Road and Lake Nichols Road. Your best chances are on cloudy, snowy, calm, warm days (temps in teens and 20s). Your least chance of success will be on clear, sunny, windy, bitterly cold days (well below zero).

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been very regular in the logged area east of the tiny parking pad along McDavitt Road (parking pad NOT plowed). Follow other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch. You may have to hike a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile one way. Look for it perched at the tip-top of dead Tamarack snags. (NOTE\*\* Don't park directly across from other vehicles; road is too narrow to allow that.)

***Snowy Owl:*** The beautiful and very white mature male Snowy in the fields along CR229/29 has been less regular lately. He mainly perches atop hay bales along Dart Road east of CR229/29. Look for him at any time of day. A darker probably young female has been seen on the high power poles near the substation on CR29 south of Meadowlands...but absent during the last week. A third intermediately-colored Snowy Owl was seen several days last week near



intersection of Sax Road (CR27) and CR7. **\*\*NOTE: DO NOT WALK OUT INTO ANY FIELD ALONG CR229/29, DART ROAD OR WATSULA. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY. VIEW FROM THE ROAD.**

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Only one reported and only seen briefly along "Hawk Owl trail" just off McDavitt Road ...and this sighting was at dusk.

**Boreal Owl:** None this winter. Last year was an irruption year so a few were seen.

**Pine Grosbeaks:** Pine Grosbeaks (including many males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders. You can also see them gitting along Bog roads, at the Sisu feeders on McDavitt, Admiral Road feeders and also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard.")

**Evening Grosbeaks:** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. They have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road. Sometimes at Loretta's feeders too.

**White-winged Crossbills:** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are Owl Avenue, Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

**Common Redpolls:** A few small to medium-sized flocks can be found foraging in alders throughout the Bog. It is not an irruption year so numbers are low. They have now started coming to feeders in small numbers. NO Hoary Redpolls have been reported...yet.

**Pine Siskins:** A few have been seen at the Welcome Center feeders and Mary Lou's feeders.

**Rough-legged Hawks:** Almost non-existent right now. The few sightings over the last month were along Stone Lake Road, CR7, and Sax Road.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek since mid December! They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map). They are not regular on the lek during bitter cold or windy days.

**Boreal Chickadee:** Up to three have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Also very regular at Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog on suet.

**Black-billed Magpie:** Best bet lately has been the farm right next to Arkola Road between Poplar Road and CR7. Look near cattle.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk.

Other Black-backed Woodpecker have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders).

***American Three-toed Woodpecker:*** NONE this winter. Last year was an irruption year and they were regularly seen in the Bog.

***Snow Buntings:*** Very rare this winter. Check along the roadsides and railroad tracks bordering CR7, also CR5 and CR133 west of Meadowlands.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for January 18, 2019**

***\*\*Feeders are up and filled at all feeding stations. Check out Winterberry Bog feeders too.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** They have become more visible in the last few weeks...though the weather forecast of bitter cold (lows at MINUS 20 below zero and highs in single digits) is not conducive to Great Grays lingering along roadsides for very long at dawn and dusk. Get out early! Check Owl Avenue, Overton Road, Zim Road west of the St. Louis River, CR7 between the greenhouse and Sax Road, McDavitt Road, Admiral Road and Lake Nichols Road. Your best chances are on cloudy, snowy, calm, warm days (temps in teens and 20s). Your least chance of success will be on clear, sunny, windy, bitterly cold days (well below zero).

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been very regular in the logged area east of the tiny parking pad along McDavitt Road (parking pad NOT plowed). Follow other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch. You may have to hike a 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile one way. Look for it perched at the tip-top of dead Tamarack snags. (NOTE\*\* Don't park directly across from other vehicles; road is too narrow to allow that.)

***Snowy Owl:*** A beautiful and very white mature male Snowy has been seen in the fields along CR229/29, mainly seen perched atop hay bales along Dart Road east of CR229/29. More regular in late afternoons but can be out any time of day. A darker probably young female has been seen on the high power poles near the substation on CR29 south of Meadowlands. **\*\*NOTE: DO NOT WALK OUT INTO ANY FIELD ALONG CR229/29, DART ROAD OR WATSULA. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY. VIEW FROM THE ROAD.**

***Pine Grosbeaks:*** Pine Grosbeaks (including many males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders. You can also see them gritting along Bog roads, at the Sisu feeders on McDavitt, Admiral Road feeders and also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard.")

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. They have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road. Sometimes at Loretta's feeders too.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some. Best bets are Owl Avenue, Arkola Road (1.5 mile stretch just east of Owl Avenue), and Admiral Road.

***Common Redpolls:*** A few small to medium-sized flocks can be found foraging in alders throughout the Bog. It is not an irruption year so numbers are low. They will likely start coming to feeders in second half of winter.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7, Sax Road.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek since mid December! They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map).

***Boreal Chickadee:*** Several have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call. Also very regular at Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk on suet.

One was also seen in the dense firs at the end of Loretta's bird feeder trail (in a flock with many Black-caps).

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. If you can't find them along the boardwalk, continue on the foot trail that goes north off end of boardwalk.

Other Black-backed Woodpecker have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders).

***Snow Buntings:*** Very rare this winter. Check along the roadsides and railroad tracks bordering CR7.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for January 4, 2019**

***\*\*Feeders are up and filled at all feeding stations. Check out Winterberry Bog feeders too.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** They have become more visible recently. Zim Road, CR7, McDavitt Road, Admiral Road. Best to search at dawn and dusk along the roads marked on our Birding Map as good for Great Gray. Your best chances are on cloudy, snowy, calm, warm days (temps in teens

and 20s). Your least chance of success will be on clear, sunny, windy, bitterly cold days (well below zero).

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been semi-regular (semi NOT-regular) along bog stretch of McDavitt Road. Most visible in early morning...and sometimes in late afternoon. It hunts way back in the logged area to the east of McDavitt. Follow other birder's tracks that go east from the tiny parking pad on the bog stretch (NOTE\*\* Probably best to park on the side of the road since the parking pad is not plowed. And don't park directly across from other vehicles; road is too narrow to allow that.)

***Snowy Owl:*** The Snowy Owls have been tougher to find recently. There was a beautiful and very white bird has been seen in the fields along CR229/29, mainly seen perched atop hay bales along Dart Road east of CR229/29. **\*\*NOTE: DO NOT WALK OUT INTO ANY FIELD ALONG CR229/29, DART ROAD OR WATSULA. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY. VIEW FROM THE ROAD.**

***winter finches:*** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations. Pine Grosbeaks (including many males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders. Also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard.")

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 50-plus has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning, and some at Loretta's feeders. Get to Mary Lou's before 11am to have your best luck. They have also been recently visiting the Sisu feeders on McDavitt Road.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7, Sax Road.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek since mid December! They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map).

***Boreal Chickadee:*** Several have been feeding on the deer rib cage, suet and peanut butter at the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call.

One was also seen in the dense firs at the end of Loretta's bird feeder trail (in a flock with many Black-caps).

***Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:*** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

Other Black-backed Woodpecker have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders), and Indian Pipe Bog (bushwhack).

***Snow Buntings:*** Very rare this winter. Check along the roadsides and railroad tracks bordering CR7.

***Townsend's Solitaire:*** Very rare in the Bog, but one has been seen sporadically the last few weeks between the Sisu feeders on McDavitt and the paved north end of McDavitt.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for December 19, 2018 (& Christmas Bird Count Results)**

***\*\*Feeders are up and filled at all feeding stations.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** A couple reports but with no locations. Best to search at dawn and dusk along the roads marked on our Birding Map (Admiral, McDavitt, Lake Nichols)

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been semi-regular (semi NOT-regular) along bog stretch of McDavitt Road. Most visible in early morning...and sometimes in late afternoon.

***Snowy Owl:*** A beautiful and very white bird has been seen in the fields along CR229/29. It has wandered between just N of CR133 to Dart Road and to the fields near Watsula Road. Recently mainly seen perched atop hay bales along Dart Road east of CR229/29. **\*\*NOTE: DO NOT WALK OUT INTO ANY FIELD ALONG CR229/29, DART ROAD OR WATSULA. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY. VIEW FROM THE ROAD.**

Another darker Snowy has been regular on the huge power poles along CR29 south of the CR5 & CR29 intersection. This is south of CR133 and NOT on our Birding Map.

***winter finches:*** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations. Pine Grosbeaks (including several males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders. Also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard.")

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 25 to 50 has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning, and some at Loretta's feeders.

***White-winged Crossbills:*** A bunch of small flocks have begun showing up in scattered locations. Listen anywhere there is a stand of Black Spruce with a decent cone crop. They will pish in closer if you find some.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7, Sax Road.

***Sharp-tailed Grouse:*** The world's most charismatic group of Sharp-tailed Grouse have been seen DANCING on their CR229/Racek Road lek already! They have also been at the feeders along CR229 in early morning (location on birding map).

***Boreal Chickadee:*** 2-3 have been seen regularly in the tops of the spruces adjacent to the Admiral Road feeders. In the last few days they have been seen feeding on the deer rib cage there. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call.

One was also seen in the dense firs at the end of Loretta's bird feeder trail.

***Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:*** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. A possible male AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was also photographed a month ago.

Other BBWO have been seen north of the Admiral Road feeders (look for worked over spruces on east side of road), in Winterberry Bog (must walk back into bog along trail that starts at feeders), and Indian Pipe Bog (bushwhack).

### ***Complete Christmas Bird Count Results (Mon. Dec. 17):***

Monday December 17th could not have been a more beautiful winter day for the 33rd Annual Sax-Zim CBC. A low temp of 8 degrees and a high of 27 meant that hiking was very tolerable. And the sunny calm conditions were perfect for hearing birds and pishing them in. Big thanks to our 16 participants: Count compiler Sparky Stensaas, Sarah Beaster, Lori Williams, Kim Eckert, Frank Nicoletti, Dave, Lars and Pam Benson, Dave Steininger, Bill Tefft, Susan Meisner, Eileen Schantz-Hansen, Steve Schon, Clinton Nienhaus, Kristina Dexter, and Jessica Dexter.

RECORDS SET!: We tallied 35 species which is only 2 short of our all-time records from 2014 & 2017. We smashed the old record of Red-breasted Nuthatches (100 in 1987) with a grand total of 195. Black-capped Chickadees were found which eclipsed the old record (last year) by 136 birds! Other records that were set included 32 Hairy Woodpeckers (old record 23), 127 Blue Jays (old record 97)

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS: The 32 Canada jays that were tallied is the most since 2001 and our second highest total ever. 5 Wild Turkeys including the first ever at the Welcome Center (highlight or lowlight?). THIRTEEN Boreal Chickadees were discovered including 7 by Clinton, Jessica and Kristina who walked/bushwhacked on all FOSZB properties in the count circle. They found 4 in Indian Pipe Bog, 2 in Winterberry Bog, and 1 at Warren Nelson Bog (Kim and Frank had one along the Bog Boardwalk at Warren Nelson). Sparky, Sarah and Lori found a Boreal Chickadee in the dense fir stand at the end of Loretta's feeder trail. 1 Northern Hawk Owl on McDavitt and the Snowy along CR229/29 were also seen. 1 Barred Owl. Kim and Frank watched the charismatic and energetic flock of Sharp-tailed Grouse along CR229/Racek Road dancing on the lek at 9 in the morning!

BIG MISSES: No Great Grays were found (We've had them 17 of 33 years).

TOTALS:

Bald Eagle 5  
Rough-legged Hawk 11  
Ruffed Grouse 6  
Sharp-tailed Grouse 8  
Wild Turkey 5  
Rock Pigeon 10  
Barred Owl 1  
Snowy Owl 1  
Northern Hawk Owl 1  
Downy Woodpecker 12  
Hairy Woodpecker 32  
Pileated Woodpecker 4  
Black-backed Woodpecker 3  
Canada Jay 32  
Blue Jay 127  
Black-billed Magpie 6  
American Crow 63  
Common Raven 66  
Black-capped Chickadee 541  
Boreal Chickadee 13  
Red-breasted Nuthatch 195  
White-breasted Nuthatch 9  
Brown Creeper 3

Northern Shrike 9

European Starling 16

Snow Bunting 8

Pine Grosbeak 91

Evening Grosbeak 1

White-winged Crossbill 44

Red Crossbill 16

Common Redpoll 246

Pine Siskin 1

American Goldfinch 11

Purple Finch 1

House Sparrow 13

Welcome Center IS NOW OPEN for the season and will be staffed from 10am-3pm daily (7 days per week except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

### **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for December 12, 2018**

***\*\*Feeders are up and filled at almost all feeding stations.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** A couple reports but with no locations. Best to search at dawn and dusk along the roads marked on our Birding Map (Admiral, McDavitt, Lake Nichols)

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been semi-regular (semi NOT-regular) along McDavitt Road. Most visible in early morning.

***Snowy Owl:*** A beautiful and very white bird has been seen in the fields along CR29. It has wandered between just N of CR133 to Dart Road and to the fields near Watsula Road. Another darker Snowy has been regular on the huge power poles along CR29 south of the CR5 & CR29 intersection. This is south of CR133 and NOT on our Birding Map.

***winter finches:*** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations. Pine Grosbeaks (including several males) are seen regularly at The Welcome Center's feeders. Also at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard."



***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 25 to 50 has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning, and some at Loretta's feeders.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7.

***Boreal Chickadee:*** 2-3 have been seen regularly in the tops of the spruces adjacent to the Admiral Road feeders. In the last few days they have been seen feeding briefly on the deer rib cage there. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call.

***Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:*** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. A possible male AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was also photographed a month ago.

Welcome Center IS NOW OPEN for the season and will be staffed from 10am-3pm daily (7 days per week except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day).

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for December 9, 2018**

***\*\*Feeders are up and filled at almost all feeding stations.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** A couple reports but with no locations. Best to search at dawn and dusk along the roads marked on our Birding Map.

***Northern Hawk Owl:*** One has been semi-regular (semi NOT-regular) along McDavitt Road.

***Snowy Owl:*** A beautiful and very white bird has been seen in the fields along CR29. It has wandered between just N of CR133 to the fields near Watsula Road.

***winter finches:*** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations. Pine Grosbeaks are seen regularly at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard."

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 25 to 50 has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7.

***Boreal Chickadee:*** 2-3 have been seen regularly NEAR, BUT NOT AT the Admiral Road feeders. Listen for their distinctive nasal chickadee call.

***Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:*** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. A possible male AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was also photographed a week ago.

Honestly, the birding has been quite slow...But it is early.  
Welcome Center IS NOW OPEN for the season and will be staffed from 10am-3pm daily (7 days per week) until March 11, 2019. Closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

### **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for November 27, 2018**

***\*\*Feeders are starting to be put out and filled.***

***Great Gray Owls:*** A couple reports but with no locations. Best to search at dawn and dusk

***winter finches:*** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations. Pine Grosbeaks are seen regularly at Mary Lou's feeders (especially the feeder on top of her trellis in her "backyard."

***Evening Grosbeaks:*** A flock of 25 to 50 has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning.

***Snow Buntings:*** Small and larger flocks are being seen along roadsides and in the Admiral Road gravel pit.

***Rough-legged Hawks:*** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7.

***Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:*** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

***Black-backed Woodpecker:*** A couple have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog. A possible male AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER was also photographed a week ago.

Honestly, the birding has been quite slow...But it is early.  
Welcome Center opens for the season on Saturday, December 8th. It will be open 10am-3pm daily (7 days per week) until March 11, 2019. Closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

### **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for November 13, 2018**

***\*\*Feeders are just starting to be filled since the Black Bears are now all hibernating.***

***\*\*Deer hunting (firearms) goes until Sunday Nov. 18 at dusk.***

**Great Gray Owls:** A couple reports but with no locations.

**winter finches:** Common Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks have been reported in scattered locations.

**Evening Grosbeaks:** A flock of 25 to 50 has been frequenting Mary Lou's feeders in the morning.

**Snow Buntings:** Small and larger flocks are being seen along roadsides and in the Admiral Road gravel pit.

**Rough-legged Hawks:** A few scattered individuals including a couple dark morph birds. Check Stone Lake Road, CR7.

**Boreal Chickadee & Black-backed Woodpecker:** Both have been seen along the Warren Woessner Bog Boardwalk at the Warren Nelson Memorial Bog.

\*\*Admiral Road feeders are being filled. Welcome Center is just starting to fill feeders. Mary Lou's feeders are going.

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for March 1, 2018**

**Boreal Owls** have not been seen for the last 3 days. It is likely that they are returning north already.

**Great Gray Owls** continue in several locations...Try CR7 north of Sax Road and Owl Avenue has been good lately. Dawn and dusk are always best. Your best bets are on cloudy, calm, "warm" days (temps in 20s or 30s F). Cruise slowly...or look for other photographers who've already found one. **But remember...When joining other photographer/birders who have already found an owl, don't drive or move in front of them. They were there first. Ask to join them, or stay respectfully back a ways.**

**Northern Hawk Owls** have been harder to find lately. Check Stone Lake Road and McDavitt Road near the parking pad in the bog stretch.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** continue at the lek north and east of intersection of Racek Road and CR29/229 (marked on birding map). Amazingly they have been seen "dancing" on this lek all winter! (weather dependant...and early in morning). They are also seen at the feeder at the house just north east of this same intersection. **\*\*Watch respectfully from the road...DO NOT WALK OR DRIVE INTO Mr Racek's DRIVEWAY! Several birders have been seen doing this. We do not want to jeopardize our good standing with Mr. Racek's amazing tolerance towards birders.**

The best way to see a **Ruffed Grouse** is to stay in the bog until dusk and then scan tops of alder, aspen trees for silhouetted grouse eating buds. They like to feast at this time since their mortal enemy, the Goshawk, is going to bed. Nichols Lake Road, CR7 south of Arkola, Owl Avenue are all good roads to check.

*American Three-toed Woodpecker* & *Black-backed Woodpecker* continue at the **Warren Nelson Memorial Bog** (marked on our birding map). Walk in on the path near the big sign and listen for them as they flake bark off beetle-infested Black Spruce and Tamarack. Keep voices low as you search. *Black-backed* have also been seen at two of our other tracts.... Wintergreen Bog (must snowshoe in on trail near sign) and East Stone Lake Bog (hike/snowshoe from where road ends). This woodpecker could be anywhere in the Bog this year...It is an irruption year for both species.

*Boreal Chickadees* have NOT been coming to the **Admiral Road feeders** this winter. Several have been heard and seen near the feeders though.

*Gray Jays* can be seen near the feeders or along Admiral Road occasionally. They have been seen gathering nesting material during this last week. They are early nesters and can be on eggs in March!

**Mary Lou's feeders** on CR444 are always better before lunch time...She continues to host many *Evening Grosbeaks* and now a regular group of *Pine Grosbeaks* that are often at the feeder on her backyard arbor. Several guides have also reported *Hoary Redpolls* here. [Don't forget to park in her driveway please...and DO NOT point binoculars or camera at the house across the street! That is not a birder-friendly location. Also, please DONATE GENEROUSLY to Mary Lou's efforts \(there is a donation box at the entrance to the driveway\).](#) She puts in so much of her own money to make this spot a pleasant experience for visiting birders...including a heated port-a-potty!!

**Loretta's FORTY-ONE (!) feeders** along Kelsey-Whiteface Road have been hosting a regular flock of *Pine Grosbeaks*, including many males. They often feed at eye-level. [Please DONATE GENEROUSLY to Loretta & Mark's efforts \(there is a donation box at the entrance to the feeder trail\).](#) She puts in so much of her own money to make this spot a unique and productive spot for visiting birders/photographers.

The **Welcome Center** on Owl Avenue is a great place to see Gray Jays and Common Redpolls. There have also been several Hoary Redpolls (male and female) here all winter. [\\*\\*Note that the Welcome Center closes for the season on March 11.](#)

Note that *Pine Grosbeaks* are one of the first of our winter visitors from the North to head back. Most are gone from the Bog by the end of the first week in March.

*Northern Shrikes* have been seen in many places across the Bog. There are a couple more tolerant shrikes that hang out along Stone Lake Road. Usually shrikes fly the instant you step on the brake pedal!

Watch the new feeders on both sides of **Arkola** just east of Owl Avenue for ...anything! They are new and not much has been seen there yet. But this is a historic site for Boreal Chickadee. *White-winged Crossbills* have been spotted on the road gritting/salting recently.

These species have very rare or non-existent in the Bog recently....*Snow Bunting, Rough-legged Hawk, White-winged Crossbill, Snowy Owl*. But this could change as birds begin to head north. But Clinton and Kristina saw 2 *Rough-legs* today in the Bog...They may be coming back through on their way to the tundra.

*Redpolls* will often linger until late March/early April before heading back to the taiga/tundra. *Great Gray Owls* are year-round residents but become very hard to find as they start their courtship & nesting in late March/April/May.

\*\*Safe viewing is crucial...Please pull over on shoulder (but not too far so you get stuck!). Don't park across from another parked car...Local folks need to be able to get around as well. If pulled over on a paved road, please put on flashers. And watch for traffic! If a car is coming, please get well off on to the shoulder or beyond.

**Mammals:** It has been a great winter for mammal sightings. A Bobcat was seen on Feb 27. The most amazing was probably the Lynx photographed a few weeks ago. They do not regularly inhabit Sax-Zim Bog and there are only a few records from the last 30 years. One visiting birder saw THREE Bobcats together in December (likely mom and 2 kits). Fisher and Marten have been seen, as well as an Ermine at the Welcome Center (though not observed for the last 3 weeks). Muskrat have been VERY COMMON above the ice this winter. They do not store food like Beaver and so are wandering in search of food now. They must have had an exceptional breeding season last summer!. Moose, wolves, deer, Porcupine, and even a Star-nosed Mole out and about above the snow, have all been seen this winter.

Lets all be kind and courteous out there! ...to both the birds and other birders.

\*\*Reminder: There have been recent reports of photographers getting way too close to Boreal Owls, causing the bird to flush. Please use restraint and try not to interfere with the daily routine of any owl or other wildlife. In this harsh season of cold and deep snow, these critters NEED to hunt...and rest in order to survive. Stay back and enjoy the show as these owls go about their natural routine. Trust me, it is far more interesting to just have patience and watch their behaviors...and who knows, maybe you'll capture an unbelievable moment or rarely seen behavior!

## **BIRD & WILDLIFE REPORT for FEBRUARY 23, 2018**

*Boreal Owls* have been popping up in various places in the Bog. Drive slow on backroads early and late in the day. With the snow getting deeper each day, these tiny owls may be finding it harder to catch voles so they may be hunting more in the daytime (\*\*Please read reminder above).

*Great Gray Owls* continue in several locations...Try CR7 north of Sax Road, Owl Avenue, Nichols Lake Road. Dawn and dusk are always best. Great Grays don't often appear on bitterly cold (below zero F) days that are windy and sunny. Your best bets are on cloudy, calm, "warm" days (temps in 20s F). Cruise slowly...or look for other photographers who've already found one. **But remember...When joining other photographer/birders who have already found an owl,**

don't drive or move in front of them. They were there first. Ask to join them, or stay respectfully back a ways.

*Northern Hawk Owls* have been harder to find lately. Check Stone Lake Road and McDavitt Road near the parking pad.

*Sharp-tailed Grouse* continue at the lek north and east of intersection of Racek Road and CR29/229 (marked on birding map). Amazingly they have been seen "dancing" on this lek all winter! (weather dependant...and early in morning). They are also seen at the feeder at the house just north east of this same intersection. **\*\*Watch respectfully from the road...DO NOT WALK OR DRIVE INTO Mr Racek's DRIVEWAY! Several birders have been seen doing this. We do not want to jeopardize our good standing with Mr. Racek's amazing tolerance towards birders.**

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*American Three-toed Woodpecker* & *Black-backed Woodpecker* continue at the **Warren Nelson Memorial Bog**(marked on our birding map). Walk in on the path near the big sign and listen for them as they flake bark off beetle-infested Black Spruce and Tamarack. Keep voices low as you search. *Black-backed*s have also been seen at two of our other tracts....Wintergreen Bog (must snowshoe in on trail near sign) and East Stone Lake Bog (hike/snowshoe from where road ends). This woodpecker could be anywhere in the Bog this year...It is an irruption year for both species.

*Boreal Chickadees* have NOT been coming to the **Admiral Road feeders** this winter. Several have been heard and seen near the feeders though. *Gray Jays* can be seen near the feeders or along Admiral Road occasionally.

**Mary Lou's feeders** on CR444 are always better before lunch time...She continues to host many *Evening Grosbeaks* and now a regular group of *Pine Grosbeaks* that are often at the feeder on her backyard arbor. Several guides have also reported *Hoary Redpolls* here. **Don't forget to park in her driveway please...and DO NOT point binoculars or camera at the house across the street! That is not a birder-friendly location. Also, please DONATE GENEROUSLY to Mary Lou's efforts (there is a donation box at the entrance to the driveway). She puts in so much of her own money to make this spot a pleasant experience for visiting birders...including a heated port-a-potty!!**

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The **Welcome Center** on Owl Avenue is a great place to see Gray Jays and Common Redpolls. There have also been several Hoary Redpolls (male and female) here all winter. **\*\*Note that the Welcome Center closes for the season on March 11.**

**Northern Shrikes** have been seen in many places across the Bog. There are a couple more tolerant shrikes that hang out along Stone Lake Road. Usually shrikes fly the instant you step on the brake pedal!

Watch the new feeders on both sides of **Arkola** just east of Owl Avenue for ...anything! They are new and not much has been seen there yet. But this is a historic site for Boreal Chickadee. **White-winged Crossbills** have been spotted on the road gritting/salting recently.

These species have very rare or non-existent in the Bog recently....**Snow Bunting, Rough-legged Hawk, White-winged Crossbill, Snowy Owl.** But this could change as birds begin to head north.

Note that **Pine Grosbeaks** will begin heading north to Canada in the next week or two. They are almost always gone by the second week of March. **Redpolls** will often linger until late March/early April before heading back to the taiga/tundra. **Great Gray Owls** are year-round residents but become very hard to find as they start their courtship & nesting in late March/April/May.

**\*\*Safe viewing is crucial...Please pull over on shoulder (but not too far so you get stuck!). Don't park across from another parked car...Local folks need to be able to get around as well. If pulled over on a paved road, please put on flashers. And watch for traffic! If a car is coming, please get well off on to the shoulder or beyond.**

**Mammals:** It has been a great winter for mammal sightings. The most amazing was probably the Lynx photographed a few weeks ago. They do not regularly inhabit Sax-Zim Bog and there are only a few records from the last 30 years. One visiting birder saw THREE Bobcats together in December (likely mom and 2 kits). Fisher and Marten have been seen, as well as an Ermine at the Welcome Center (though not observed for the last 3 weeks). Muskrat have been VERY COMMON above the ice this winter. They do not store food like Beaver and so are wandering in search of food now. They must have had an exceptional breeding season last summer!. Moose, wolves, deer, Porcupine, and even a Star-nosed Mole out and about above the snow, have all been seen this winter.