

Autumn Colours of New England

Naturetrek Tour Report

30 September - 11 October 2016



Lake Umbagog



Balsam Spruce forest floor, Lake Umbagog



Magalloway River, Lake Umbagog



White Mountains

Report compiled by Philip Thompson
Images courtesy of Sharon Thompson



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Philip Thompson (Leader) with eight Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Friday 30th September

The group began our trip to New England with a midday flight from Heathrow direct to Boston, arriving there in the early afternoon. We transferred directly to our downtown hotel where we were to spend the first night.

Tired after our long day, our activities were limited to a pre-dinner get together to get to know each other and the imparting of information for the coming trip and the next day. Whilst we were located in the Theatre District, the weather had closed in during the evening and was now gloomy and raining, discouraging anyone from venturing out for dinner. The group confined themselves to a meal in the hotel restaurant instead.

Day 2

Saturday 1st October

Unluckily, the gloomy weather forecast from the previous day proved accurate and, after early checks with our whale-watching boat company, we were informed that sea conditions were too rough and our trip was cancelled. Despite this setback we looked on the bright side, as this would allow us more time to explore the coastal salt marshes on our transfer to New Harbor. Even this looked to be in doubt, as with our immediate departure from Boston the rain and gloom seemed interminable and miserable! Luckily our optimism bore fruit as we travelled north and the skies began to clear and the rain abate and cease. A quick stop en route to buy some lunch provisions was rainless, as we spotted a couple of Northern Mockingbirds in the car park alongside several other common and soon-to-be-familiar birds.

Arriving at Scarborough Marsh the rain had almost completely stopped allowing the group to enjoy a couple of pleasant walks. The tide was at its highest with the timing of our visit and so any sightings of wading birds were limited to several Greater Yellowlegs. The flooded creeks did, however, hold good numbers of herons and egrets. We firstly walked a trail leading alongside some woodland fringed creeks and pools. We enjoyed numerous sightings of the large and spectacular Belted Kingfishers that were present in small numbers. Passerines spotted perched on the dead tree stumps among the flooded meadows were an Eastern Bluebird, several Myrtle (also known as Yellow-rumped) Warblers and American Robins and Savannah Sparrows. An Eastern Phoebe present was seen by a few but vanished before the main group to get to grips with it.

We returned to the vehicle and drove a short distance further towards the coast where we parked up once more to walk the route of an old railway line that crossed the marshes and creeks. Among the Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets a single Tricoloured Heron was found, here at the most northerly point in their distribution. A ringtail Northern Harrier was next spotted as it quartered the marshes but remained fairly distant. The highlight of the walk was an American Bittern taking flight and travelling some distance across the marsh allowing most of the group to pick it up.

After this gentle introduction to American birding we continued on in our journey to New Harbor. Unfortunately, an illness in the group required a stop at a service station followed by another longer stop to hopefully allow time to recover. This second stop was taken with a visit to the historic Fort Edgecomb overlooking the estuary near Wiscasset. Several interesting birds were seen here as well as a small number of Harbour Seals hauled out on the appropriately named Seal Rock. The main bird highlight was an incredibly

tolerant Pileated Woodpecker that came down to attack and feed from a large tree stump in the middle of the manicured lawns. We were able to quietly watch this stunning bird from little more than 10 metres as it probed and excavated the rotten stump.

We continued on through the attractive scenery to arrive in good time in New Harbor where we were soon checked in, followed by an enjoyable seafood dinner in the unpretentious Shaw's Lobster Shack on the harbour jetty.

Day 3

Sunday 2nd October

A short pre-breakfast walk got no further than the Inn's car park as a large mixed flock of passerines were present in the surrounding gardens, trees and shrubberies. These included Pine Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Grey Catbird, Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches and abundant Black-capped Chickadees!

After our earlier rather inclement weather, today had dawned bright and clear with little wind. As a result our boat crossing to Monhegan Island was good to go and we were able to enjoy a rather exciting journey for those with sea legs and an affinity with the ocean! During the one-hour crossing a number of Northern Gannets passed close by, plus a rather distant Cory's Shearwater, rewarding our constant vigilance.

Once on the island we were on high alert to keep our eyes open for any bird activity as this renowned migrant trap can turn up any number of rare and scarce migrants. We were soon rewarded with a Cape May Warbler feeding within a spruce just above us. This was followed by a similarly close Yellow-bellied Sapsucker within a line of cherry trees. Next on the agenda was a visit to the island's general store where we were able to purchase our lunch sandwiches and drinks before continuing a number of walks exploring the multitude of trails on the island.

We firstly made our way towards the Ice Pond to see if any wildfowl were resting there. On the way we passed a number of the local houses with feeders, one of which had drawn in both Nuthatches and Red-eyed and Blue-headed Vireos. The pond water level was very low (a symptom of the drought conditions affecting much of southern New England, resulting in low pond levels and little flow in the rivers throughout the trip) and only held a few American Black Ducks and Mallards. The bushes alongside held a large flock of feeding Yellow-rumped Warblers, which we carefully checked through in case they had any other accompanying warblers. Retracing our steps a further couple of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen and a single Brown-headed Cowbird.

We next took a walk leading up to the island's lighthouse set atop a small central hilltop. Continuing on we headed to the eastern side of the island with its high and dramatic cliffs. Here we rested and ate lunch watched by a polite and patient American Herring Gull who was clearly aware of the potential for scavenged scraps at this spectacular viewpoint! Large numbers of Common Eider bobbed below us in the rocky coastal coves whilst passing overhead a young Peregrine Falcon, Ravens and Sharp-shinned Hawk were spotted. On our return we were somewhat surprised to spot a small Smooth Green Snake coiled by the side of the path. It appeared completely unconcerned by our presence but was probably rather torpid in the cool conditions. A short distance further produced the gem of a Black-throated Green Warbler that showed well for everyone close to the path.

Back on the lighthouse hilltop, the open grassy areas had been baited with grain and had resulted in attracting a number of birds that comprised mainly the common Chickadees and Blue Jays, but also a few elusive sparrows eventually ID'd as Chipping, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows.

During the remainder of our time in slow and gentle walks we were able to spot Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and Northern Flicker to add to the range of birds seen. It was soon time to re-board our ferry taking us back to the mainland. The return journey was enlivened by the sighting of a couple of Harbour Porpoises passing close by the front of the boat. Back in the harbour we slowly pulled up to the jetty, finally spotting a number of Common Loons, Black Guillemots and Common Eiders as we docked.

We had a little time to relax and rest before once more enjoying a fish supper at Shaw's.

Day 4

Monday 3rd October

We began the day with a short walk before breakfast from the hotel, around the harbour edge and leading through some attractive woodland and arriving at the Rachel Carson Salt Pond Reserve where we could enjoy the reflections of the recently risen sun in the mirror-like pond waters. In contrast to yesterday morning birdlife was quiet but we did connect with Northern Cardinal, Hermit Thrush and a number of other regular birds.

After loading up the minibus we then set out, travelling initially south and visiting the popular Pemaquid Lighthouse where we enjoyed the bright sunshine exploring the various buildings and galleries. A local Red Squirrel kept us amused as it collected nuts to store skipping across the lawns and around the trees and boulders. Looking out along the coast, an adult Bald Eagle was spotted resting on a rocky spit surveying the area.

We next began our scenic transfer towards Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park set on Mount Desert Island where we would spend the next couple of nights. Having travelled some way north from Boston, the autumn colours were now beginning to become apparent and this, in combination with the stunning coastal scenery and mix of white weather-boarded towns and villages along the way, made for a pleasant journey. We stopped in Moose Point State Park for a picnic lunch looking out over Penobscot Bay. Whilst eating an Osprey appeared from around the wooded headland, to the delight of the group, before moving off on its fishing foray.

We then completed the transfer into Bar Harbor where we checked into our comfortable B&B before heading out to visit a Beaver pond within the Acadia NP. We were disappointed to find on arrival at the pond that the water level was very low and seemingly unsuitable for the Beavers. We found no sign of them and were only able to admire the large lodge somewhat marooned in the muddy shallows of the pond. Birdlife elsewhere was also quiet with only a few Canada Geese of note on the nearby large Eagle Lake, which was also at a record low and rather a concern for the residents of the island as this is the main source of fresh water.

We returned to our hotel to freshen up before the group went to explore the attractive and vibrant town of Bar Harbor and pick a suitable restaurant for dinner.

Day 5

Tuesday 4th October

A full day was spent exploring and walking in various areas of Acadia NP, beginning with a visit to the Mont Siens Spring Botanical Gardens and nearby walking trails. We spent some time walking among the Botanical Garden, which is planted out with various habitat selections of native American trees and wildflowers, before then taking a boardwalk through some wet marshy forest. New birds spotted included Brown Creeper and a couple more Hermit Thrushes for those of the group who had not come on the morning walk in New Harbor. The trail left the woodland and entered an area of open wet grassland with dotted trees that were a flaming red among the tawny grasses. A large playful group of Ravens were spotted cavorting about the summit of the nearby Dorr Mountain. As we approached some thicker woodland, the high contact notes of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet were heard and after patient searching the group were able to spot this tiny Goldcrest-like substitute. We were also pleased with some very close views of a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers. We retraced our route back to the boardwalk where we then took a different route through some mature spruce forest. Slowly making our way along the route, a pair of White-tailed Deer was spotted ahead of us. They were aware of us and stepped off the path to continue their approach among the forest trees and undergrowth. Having moved carefully passed us they then rejoined the path to allow easier progress as they continued on their way.

Back at the vehicle, we then undertook a transfer route around the whole island. Our next stop was for a short view from a roadside lay-by of Somes Sound, the only glaciated fjord on the East coast, although this has now been downgraded to a fjard. Here we watched several Common Loons, birds that seem to be present in every sheltered inlet and bay on this coast, and a number of American Herring Gulls attracted by some curious shoaling fish behaviour on the waters' surface. A distant immature Bald Eagle was also spotted.

We continued onto the western half of the island and on to the southern coast where we stopped to check the gull roost at Seawall. Unfortunately some other tourists had walked out onto the rocky spit where the gulls usually gather, as they had presumably been disturbed and were absent apart from a small number in the freshwater lagoon behind the seawall. Here the gulls comprised mainly American Herring Gulls but also included a few Laughing and Ring-billed, allowing a good opportunity to compare the relative sizes, bills and colouring of these three species. The cold easterly wind was not considered conducive to picnicking, so we drove a short distance further to find some relatively sheltered benches on the coast to eat. At the access road a very tame White-tailed Deer was feeding at the roadside, but with the appearance of cameras it frustratingly stepped into a thicket and prevented a good shot!

From our picnic site another short drive was taken to walk the pleasant Wonderland Trail through a mix of boreal softwoods and short heathy vegetation. The track led to a surprisingly warm and sandy beach where we stopped for a while to enjoy our surroundings.

After our walk we completed our scenic circuit back to Bar Harbor where the group once more had free rein to pick their favourite restaurant for their evening meal.

Day 6

Wednesday 5th October

We began the day with a pleasant easy walk along the Shore Path of Bar Harbor. Offshore a number of Common Loons and Common Eiders were joined by the vast bulk of one of the many cruise ships that now

visit here. In the garden shrubberies that border the path a confiding Northern Cardinal preened in the morning sun, whilst in the tops of the tallest pines a flock of House Finches were harassed by a passing Sharp-shinned Hawk. Several sparrows flitted among patches of cover were ID'd as Song Sparrows once adequate views were obtained.

Returning to our hotel we loaded the minibus and began our transfer away from the coast towards Lake Umbagog. It was not long before this move inland and further north began to demonstrate the amazing autumn colours for which New England is famous. For anyone used to muted English autumn, it is hard to comprehend the richness and overwhelming ubiquity of the reds, golds, oranges and purples on display covering whole mountainsides. We broke our journey with a light lunch in a typical local diner joined by several timber workers to complete the local flavour.

Moving on we paid a visit to one of the famous and much photographed covered bridges of the region. Our destination was the Artist's Bridge on the Sunday River. Here a time was spent admiring the structure and pleasant rocky river with accompanying colourful trees. Our next stop was at the Screw Augur Falls in Grafton Notch State Park. Here, over millennia, a fascinating and beautiful array of hollows has been carved by the action of water and sediment on the bedrock making for numerous photographic opportunities with some incredible scarlet red Sugar Maples.

After a long and scenic day we soon then arrived at our hotel in Upton from where we travelled into Errol for a typical local meal after we had got settled in our rooms.

Day 7

Thursday 6th October

We began the day with a short exploration along one of the unsurfaced logging roads of the area, where we stopped in a likely looking spot to have a listen and scan. This resulted in picking up a number of mixed sparrows feeding from the seed heads of the dried grasses and herbs nearby. These comprised Savannah Sparrow and some good views of White-throated Sparrow. Feeding in the roadside grit for spilt seed were a number of the handsome Dark-eyed Juncos of both sexes.

Having made best use of our time, we then moved on to wait at the boat launch for our trip out across Lake Umbagog. The earlier thick fog had begun to lift creating a very atmospheric and attractive view across the lake. As the boat was brought round and we set off the sun had begun to break through, just in time to allow us to enjoy a wonderful panorama of vibrantly coloured forests fringing the mirror-like lake with coiling wisps of fog rising to dissipate in the warming air. A number of pairs of Common Loons were still present on the lake, among which were a couple of well-grown juveniles with their parents, indicating a successful breeding season. Raptors proved to be among the highlights, firstly with a Northern Goshawk making its way across the lake, followed by some wonderfully close views of both adult and juvenile Bald Eagles and an outstanding Merlin that allowed a very close approach as it sat calmly atop a spruce tree.

We moved into some sheltered bays in the hope of spotting any feeding Moose; unfortunately, we were out of luck, but were compensated by a family party of Pileated Woodpeckers calling and passing overhead.

We next slowly moved up the Rapid River that feeds into the lake, being careful to avoid several large boulders and shallow sections as we went. Waterfowl seen included Common and Hooded Mergansers, Wood Duck and American Black Duck. An unexpected highlight here was the sighting of a pair of Grey Jays in the shoreline forest, a key bird in this boreal interzone. With time coming to an end we began our return, during which more Loons were seen at close quarters with a pair of Red-necked Grebes seen distantly. The scenery and views from the lake were spectacular with a number of tall peaks picked out and identified by our boat guide.

Back on shore we next drove the short distance into Errol where we stopped at the general store for some lunch supplies, which we ate outside on their tables in some unusually hot sunshine! A nearby house had some seed feeders being visited by a small party of Pine Siskin and a couple of American Goldfinches allowing our birding to continue during our lunch.

For the remains of the day we took a couple of short walks in the hope of picking up a couple more of the boreal specialities that occur here. We were out of luck with the forested roadsides very quiet. We did however pick up a Red-tailed Hawk of a very pale form, appearing to be of the Krider's Hawk type. The numerous subspecies, races and forms of this very widespread species still provokes debate among the American bird-watching fraternity, so a definitive ID is undecided! Whilst trying to get the group on to this bird a Northern Harrier passed by to complicate matters.

Day 8

Friday 7th October

Today we spent the morning walking along a different stretch of gravel lumber road to the south of our hotel, still on the lookout for passing passerines. Our short foray did not produce much apart from the usual Juncos and Yellow-rumped Warblers, although the colours and various fungi and lower plants were of interest.

We drove on through Errol, where we picked up supplies once more, and then north along the Route 16 alongside the Magalloway River where we then walked around the circuit of the of the Magalloway River Trail. This passed through a wide range of different habitats and different mix of forest tree species. At a viewing screen overlooking a large pool a couple of Wood Ducks were sleeping. Nearby, we were alerted by their calls to a couple of Golden-crowned Kinglets among a party of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Once more, after some patient scanning and brief glimpses, the group all managed to pick them up with a satisfactory view of these fast flitting birds. Also among the party were a few Red-breasted Nuthatches that also proved that patience was needed to obtain a good view! The trail led through some quiet and evocative Balsam Spruce forest with a thick layer of moss on the woodland floor. Birds seen here included more Chickadees and a Hairy Woodpecker.

We next ate our lunch on the riverbank at the facilities of the Park Rangers where we could pick up some info on the area. We then continued northwards stopping at various points as we went to enjoy the incredible views and gloriously colourful hillsides before making our way back.

Day 9

Saturday 8th October

We transferred today south to the White Mountains. Our early route led along the Thirteen Mile Woods, an attractive forested area alongside the Magalloway River that we had regular views of as we travelled. A short

roadside stop was taken when a few wildfowl were seen in the shallows. These were identified as Wood Duck. A bonus of our stop was our then spotting an adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree overhanging the river.

On reaching the northern edge of the White Mountains we took a quieter scenic route through Evans Notch, where we stopped to admire the scenery (and a Harley Davidson motorcycle!) and eat our lunch. The mountainsides here were truly ablaze with a rich mix of colour clothing the steep cliffs. Local tourists also enjoying this autumn spectacle joined us at our lunch spot at frequent intervals. Moving on, we continued through the taller and predominantly deciduous forests of this region, taking a couple of short stops along the way before a coffee and refreshments were deemed to be suitable. We pulled in at a lovely wooden cabin café in the woods that had a fantastic range of coffees and snacks on offer. Refreshed, we next took a pleasant walk leading to Lower Kimball Pond. Dodging the occasional 'downpour' of large and heavy Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) acorns, we were successful in spotting three Swainson's Thrushes on the forest floor to add to the trip tally. They lack the characteristic chestnut tail of the Hermit Thrushes seen earlier in the trip. Chipmunks, fungi and the Beech parasite Beechdrops (*Epifagus virginian*) kept us occupied, whilst elsewhere a small party of White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos passed through.

The final leg of our transfer led up and over the steep and winding Hurricane Mountain Road. With the minibus in second gear we made it to the top and began the equally steep descent round numerous switchback corners, all clothed in deep forest. Arriving back at civilisation at the bottom, we were soon onto the main road leading into Jackson. We crossed the delightful covered bridge and were soon checking in to our period Inn, complete with weatherboarding and covered veranda with its inviting rocking chairs. The garden feeders and lawn were attracting a comparative multitude of birds including Chipping Sparrows feeding alongside Dark-eyed Juncos. We were soon back out to make our dinner reservation in nearby Bartlet.

Day 10

Sunday 9th October

The early risers enjoyed a bird-filled pre-breakfast walk from the hotel and around the adjoining park and riverfront. Several woodland bird species were seen, many of which were familiar from earlier in the trip but did include our first Purple Finches. Other notable birds seen included Chipping, Savannah and White-throated Sparrows, Tufted Titmouse, Hermit Thrush and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The trees and berry-bearing shrubs were laden with numerous handsome American Robins feeding up on their southward migration. As we returned to the hotel a final highlight was a stunning Evening Grosbeak, which rather frustratingly only gave rather obscured views from its perch in some *Malus* trees before flying off.

Our morning was spent with a visit to Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge. This important reserve holds a diverse range of habitats alongside the large lake at its heart. The initial route led along an old disused railway line and was consequently very easy going. Birdlife was very quiet with only an overflying Turkey Vulture and Sharp-shinned Hawk in the early stages as we passed through a mixed forest on either side of the trail. As we neared the pond, things livened up when we connected with a large mixed flock of small passerines. These were mainly the familiar Black-capped Chickadees and Yellow-rumped Warblers but also included at least three Palm Warblers performing their characteristic tail-pumping action.

On reaching the viewing platform overlooking the lake, it appeared we had arrived on the day of the local birders' annual 'Big Look' where the day is spent in a single spot recording everything seen. It was interesting to

see their day tally so far prior to our arrival, and also to avail ourselves of their knowledge and experience (and plentiful telescopes!). An interesting mix of species were present on the lake, although a little distant. The use of telescopes proved essential for the group to appreciate the details of the birds present. Three species of grebe were present, of which the confiding and undisturbed Pied-billed Grebes were the easiest to see at close quarters, whilst a pair of Red-necked grebes was rather more distant in the middle of the lake. Furthest away of all, and regarded with a rather sceptical eye by some, was a pair of Horned Grebes in the most distant reaches of the lake. Despite assurances that you really could pick out the distinctive black cap and white throat through the scope, they were, admittedly, a long way off! In a sheltered reed-edged bay a small flock of Ring-necked Duck were loafing. The highlight was a trio of Surf Scoter resting in the middle of the lake, joined by a single Common Loon and a Hooded Merganser. Proving elusive for those observing was a Northern River Otter fishing for shellfish in the lake. Despite being out in the open water, its periods on the surface between dives were frustratingly brief and very much a case of 'now you see him, now you don't'. Joining this mix, a flock of Canada Geese dropped in to rest on the lake. As was the norm, the mountain summits visible all around among the forests were spectacular. We walked on a little further around the lake to obtain a better view of a few of the birds present before making our way back to the vehicle.

Moving on, we paused for lunch in a small picnic area before moving on and paying a visit to the impressive and famous Mount Washington Hotel. This is one of the last surviving grand hotels in the White Mountains, now being listed as a National Historic Landmark. Most of the group were impressed but for some, having seen Stanley Kubrick's 'The Shining', it was a bit 'creepy'! As we were leaving, we stopped among the huge expanse of manicured lawns and golf course for photos which allowed us to pick up a large flock of Canada Geese joined by a dozen Wild Turkeys feeding in the open. We were also fortunate in our timing as the North Conway Scenic Railway nearby had a train passing as we watched. This historic railway was using the original passenger cars from the 1870's but not the 1921 steam engine, unfortunately (it is off the tracks for a complete inspection and overhaul, apparently); it was being towed instead by a pair of massive and noisy diesel engines.

We next took a short walk around a small lake in Crawford Notch State Park that had an active Beaver lodge but no sign of active Beavers! As we set off, the train seen earlier slowly came booming into the nearby station so we could get an even better view of this impressive sight. After our walk the weather had become to get noticeably cold and breezy so we opted to return to the hotel to relax before heading out for our evening dinner in Gorham.

Day 11

Monday 10th October

The day dawned bright sunny and clear with a cool wind blowing. We took another pre-breakfast walk, but the cold wind that had built up overnight seemed to have moved on the numerous birds seen yesterday, leaving the area rather bereft! We undertook a pleasant exercise around the park nonetheless.

With the conditions set fair, we arrived at the base of the Mount Washington Auto Road, confident of being able to make the ascent. Things went all to plan and it seemed we had arrived just in time to avoid any too long delay in waiting for the next available special minibus to take us up. We were able to utilise the short wait in the comfortable information centre with its shop and restaurant.

It was not long before our bus number was called and we loaded up to begin the climb, being able to skirt around the ever-growing queue of private cars wanting to make their own way up. Our driver kept up a running commentary of interesting facts and stories regarding this, the oldest man-made attraction in America (or so they kept informing us)!! Despite the popularity of the trip at this busy time and with good conditions (apparently the summit is completely covered in clouds on 300 days of the year, the rest are merely cloudy with only a handful completely clear) the journey up was stunning; we went from colourful deciduous forest to a mix with conifers, on past stunted and dwarfed conifers in an alpine setting, to finally a landscape frosted with frozen clouds! Along the way the views out across an enormous distance, filled with blazing forests with lakes and hardly any sign of habitation or towns, were breathtaking. We were just about able, in the difficult light conditions at midday, to make out the Atlantic Ocean as well as five States (I think). We even saw an Buff-bellied (American) Pipit braving this icy and inhospitable terrain.

On the summit, as we disembarked into what appeared to be Antarctica, the howling wind (merely a light breeze by this mountain's standards) made walking difficult at times when facing directly into it. Every rock and structure was frosted with what looked like coral, all facing away from the wind, making the most beautiful ice crystals; these periodically rained down from the tall weather station structures and their supporting wires, making for an interesting hazard. A photographic frenzy was going on at the pile of rocks denoting the summit, with a long queue of people waiting to have their memories immortalised on this iconic mountain. After time exploring a couple of the historic buildings and museum, we were then able to add to our train photos with the arrival of the cog railway pulling into the station! Our time on the summit was soon up, requiring a rendezvous back at the bus for our descent back to warmth and sun down below.

Another picnic site was used for lunch before we drove on to undertake a short stretch of the scenic Kancamagus Highway. Time was fast running out as we stopped alongside the Swift River to take the short Loop Walk around Falls Pond. Despite a scarcity of birds within the forest, it was still an enjoyable period as we made our last exploration of a small fraction of these huge and evocative New England forests on a scale unlike anything we are accustomed to at home.

We returned to Jackson for an evening meal in the town. After the group had made their own way to the local hostelry/bar/restaurant, we were joined sometime later by the last two members of the group who rather breathlessly informed us that they had just been taken by two very obliging locals to a nearby Beaver pond where they had been feeding three Beavers with apples!! Suppressing our envy of their good fortune, we resolved to make a visit to this pond the following morning.

Day 12

Tuesday 11th October

With our final day beginning, we were soon making a quick visit to the nearby Beaver pond discovered yesterday. Unfortunately, in the cold and misty morning, any Beavers present we suspected were curled up in the warmth of their nearby lodge! We moved on a short way to admire the striking Jackson Falls before returning to the hotel for breakfast and some free time to have a quick exploration of Jackson itself and its namesake covered bridge.

After having loaded our luggage and before setting out for our transfer back to Boston, we had another quick stop at the Beaver pond, but it would seem they had forgotten to set their alarm and had all slept in. All that

remained was the lengthy transfer south back to Boston and our return flight. Due to some confusion on a very complicated motorway intersection we got onto the wrong motorway, needing a delaying transfer across country back to our desired route. This resulted in time getting very tight for our planned visit to Walden Pond. The group decided they would be happier making for the airport directly, proving with hindsight, wise as the motorway traffic soon became very congested and slow-moving meaning we only arrived a little ahead of schedule at check in.

Day 13

Wednesday 12th October

We arrived safely back in the UK, which was rather grey and damp and looking decidedly dull and monocoloured after the glorious New England fall colours!

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

Species Lists

Trees

Scientific Name	Common Name	Autumn Colour
Class Gymnosperms		
Cupressaceae		
<i>Chamaecyparis thyoides</i>	Atlantic White-cedar	
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Redcedar	
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Northern White-cedar	
Pinaceae		
<i>Abies balsamea</i>	Balsam Fir	
<i>Larix laricina</i>	American Larch	
<i>Picea glauca</i>	White Spruce	
<i>Picea mariana</i>	Black Spruce	
<i>Picea rubens</i>	Red Spruce	
<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	Red Pine	
<i>Pinus rigida</i>	Pitch Pine	
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Eastern White Pine	
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Eastern Hemlock	
Class Angiosperms		
Anacardiaceae		
<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	Shining Sumac	Brilliant orange to red
<i>Rhus glabra</i>*	Smooth Sumac*	Brilliant orange to red
<i>Rhus typhina</i>	Staghorn Sumac	Brilliant orange to red
<i>Toxicodendron vernix</i>	Poison-sumac	
Betulaceae		
<i>Alnus alnobetula</i>	Green Alder	
<i>Alnus incana</i>	Speckled Alder	
<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	Smooth Alder	
<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	Yellow Birch	Yellow
<i>Betula lenta</i>*	Sweet Birch*	Yellow
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>*	Paper Birch*	Yellow
<i>Betula populifolia</i>	Gray Birch	Yellow
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American Hornbeam	Red
<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Beaked Hazel	Dark red
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Eastern Hophornbeam	Yellow
Cannabaceae		
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Northern Hackberry	Pale yellow
Cornaceae		
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate-leaf Dogwood	
<i>Cornus florida</i>*	Flowering Dogwood*	Red
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>*	Black Tupelo*	Brilliant yellow to red
Fabaceae		
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	Golden yellow
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Honeylocust	Pale yellow
<i>Robinia hispida</i>	Bristly Locust	

Scientific Name	Common Name	Autumn Colour
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black Locust (False Acacia)	Yellow
Fagaceae	Beech Family	
<i>Castanea dentata</i>	American Chestnut	Drab yellow
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American Beech	Golden yellow
<i>Quercus alba</i>	Eastern White Oak	Red/purple
<i>Quercus bicolor</i>	Swamp White Oak	
Quercus coccinea*	Scarlet Oak*	Red
<i>Quercus ilicifolia</i>	Bear Oak	
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Burr Oak	Copper/yellow
<i>Quercus montana</i>	Chestnut Oak	Yellow-orange
Quercus palustris*	Pin Oak*	Red
Quercus rubra*	Northern Red Oak*	Red
<i>Quercus velutina</i>	Eastern Black Oak	Yellow to red
Hamamelidaceae	Witch-hazel Family	
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	American Witch-hazel	Yellow
Juglandaceae	Walnut Family	
<i>Carya alba</i>	Mockernut Hickory	Yellow to orange-brown
<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Bitternut Hickory	Yellow to orange-brown
<i>Carya glabra</i>	Pignut Hickory	Yellow to orange-brown
Carya ovata*	Shagbark Hickory*	Yellow to orange-brown
<i>Juglans cinerea</i>	Butternut	
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut	
Malvaceae	Mallow Family	
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American Basswood	Pale yellow
Oleaceae	Olive Family	
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White Ash	
<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>	Black Ash	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Green Ash	
Platanaceae	Sycamore Family	
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	American Sycamore	Yellow to orange-brown
Rosaceae	Rose Family	
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Downy Serviceberry	
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Eastern Serviceberry	
<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Smooth Serviceberry	Yellow, red to purple
<i>Amelanchier sanguinea</i>	Red-twigged Serviceberry	
<i>Craetegus crus-galli</i>	Cockspur Hawthorn	
<i>Craetegus flabellata</i>	Fanleaf Hawthorn	
<i>Craetegus mollis</i>	Downy Hawthorn	
<i>Craetegus punctata</i>	Dotted Hawthorn	
<i>Prunus nigra</i>	Canada Plum	Purple
<i>Prunus pensylvanica</i>	Pin Cherry	Golden yellow to red
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Black Cherry	Orange to red
<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Chokeberry	
<i>Sorbus americana</i>	American Mountain-ash	Yellow to orange-red

Scientific Name	Common Name	Autumn Colour
Rubiaceae <i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Madder Family Buttonbush	
Salicaceae <i>Populus alba</i> <i>Populus balsamifera</i> <i>Populus grandidentata</i> <i>Populus tremuloides</i>* <i>Salix nigra</i>	Willow Family White Poplar Balsam Poplar Bigtooth Aspen Quaking Aspen* Black Willow	Yellow Yellow Yellow Brilliant gold Pale yellow
Sapindaceae <i>Acer pensylvanicum</i> <i>Acer rubrum</i>* <i>Acer saccharinum</i> <i>Acer saccharum</i>* <i>Acer spicatum</i>*	Maple Family Striped Maple Red Maple* Silver Maple Sugar Maple* Mountain Maple*	Yellow Yellow red to purple Pale yellow Yellow to red Orange-red
Ulmaceae <i>Ulmus americana</i> <i>Ulmus rubra</i>	Elm Family American Elm Slippery Elm	Yellow-brown Yellow

Mammals

Eastern Chipmunk, <i>Tamias striatus</i>	Eastern Grey Squirrel, <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>
American Red Squirrel, <i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	American Beaver, <i>Castor canadensis</i>
Harbour (Common) Seal, <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Northern River Otter, <i>Lontra canadensis</i>
White-tailed Deer, <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	Harbour Porpoise, <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>

Reptiles

Smooth Green Snake, *Opheodrys vernalis*

Butterflies

Peck's Skipper, <i>Polites peckius</i>	Little Yellow, <i>Pyrisitia lisa</i>
Monarch, <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Red Admiral, <i>Vanessa atalanta</i>

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted)

	Common Name	Scientific Name	September/October												
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>				5		2		8		40	30	20	
2	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>				1			3	8	4	5			
3	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>		4	10	✓	✓				12	20	12	30	
4	American Black Duck	<i>Anas rubripes</i>			3	6	6		12			2			
5	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>										8			
6	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>			200	✓	✓								
7	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>										3			
8	Hooded Merganser	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>							2			1			
9	Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>							4						
10	Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>					2		2	12		4			
11	Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>							1						
12	Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>			4	5	12	4	10			1			
13	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>		3								6			
14	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>										2			
15	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegna</i>						2				2			
16	Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>			1										
17	Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>			50		3								
18	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
19	American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>		1											
20	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>		6			1	1		1		1			
21	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		20											
22	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>		10											
23	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>		1											
24	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>				8		25				1		2	
25	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>				1				1					
26	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>							1						
27	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>			1			1	1			2	1	1	
28	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>		1		1									
29	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>		1					1						
30	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>		1					1	1				2	

	Common Name	Scientific Name	September/October											
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
31	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>			1	1	1	1	4		1			
32	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>							1					
33	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>			1									
34	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>		5										
35	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		1										
36	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>		3										
37	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>					20							
38	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>		2		2	20							
39	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
40	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>		1	6	1	5							
41	Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>		4	8	4								
42	Rock/Feral Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓										✓
43	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>		1	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		4	2	
44	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>		6					3	1				
45	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>			2									
46	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>			1	1	1							
47	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>			1		2			1				1
48	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>			6		1		2	2		1	2	
49	Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>		1					3					1
50	Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>		1										
51	Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>			4	1						1		1
52	Blue-headed Vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>			6		1		1			1		
53	Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
54	Grey Jay	<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>							2					
55	American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
56	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>			2	3	12	4	2		2	3		
57	Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>		2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
58	Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>					1							
59	Tufted Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>			2	1						1		
60	White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>			4	3						4	✓	✓
61	Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>			1		4			3				
62	Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>								2				

	Common Name	Scientific Name	September/October												
			30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
63	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>					1					4			
64	Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>		1											
65	Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>									3				
66	Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>				1	3					1			
67	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>		6			1		1		✓	✓	✓	✓	
68	Grey Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>			4	3									
69	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>		6											
70	Buff-bellied (American) Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>											1		
71	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓							✓
72	Cape May Warbler	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>			1										
73	Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Setophaga virens</i>			1										
74	Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>		20		6		4		12	4	20	3	2	
75	Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>										3			
76	Pine Warbler	<i>Setophaga pinus</i>			2										
77	Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>			1										
78	Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>			6	1		1							
79	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>			2						12	20	✓	✓	
80	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>		10			1		2			2			
81	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>			2	4	2	4							
82	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>			2										
83	White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>			2			3				2			
84	Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>						3	20		✓	✓		✓	
85	Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>						20	4		4				
86	Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>			1										
87	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓		✓	✓								
88	Evening Grosbeak	<i>Hesperiphona vespertinus</i>										1			
89	American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>			2	4			1			2			
90	Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>							12						
91	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>						8							
92	Purple Finch	<i>Haemorhous purpureus</i>										12			