

# HAWK

## Migration Studies



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Ferruginous Hawk. Photo: Vic Berardi

# Scanning The Ridge

This summer has seen some interesting indications of possible changes in raptor distribution here in the north-east. Back in May a report was posted on the New Hampshire bird listserv that most (including myself) ignored and assumed was a misidentification. Someone, who's name I did not recognize, reported a pair of Mississippi Kites near Newmarket, NH. How silly is that? (!)

A few weeks later another birder (who I knew to be reputable) reported, yes you've guessed it, a pair of Mississippi Kites on a suburban street in Newmarket. Suddenly the birding world was a buzz and everyone was flocking to see the birds.

To everyone's amazement, the pair started carrying twigs to a large maple tree in someone's driveway right along a busy street. Surely they weren't planning on nesting in New Hampshire? Well, nest they did. Many watched as the pair copulated and the male offered his female sticks. It turns out there were three kites -- an adult pair and a 1st-year "helper" (perhaps this was not the first year this pair had nested here and their chick from last year was back to help raise it's siblings).

The human residents of the street were eager to learn about the local avian celebrities that brought so many optic-weilding strangers from many different states. Hundreds spied them as they started incubating and then started brooding a chick and then -- with the assistance of the third -- started feeding the chick on dragonflies. As I write this column, the chick is just days from fledging.

A few weeks ago I heard news that a pair of kites had successfully fledged a chick at a nest in Connecticut! Clearly something is changing here. Is this a sign of a warming climate? Can we expect a major range expansion of this beautiful bird throughout the north-east. I for one will be extra vigilant this fall to see if any kites pass over my hawkwatch site in New Hampshire.



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Photo: Maynard Wheeler

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