

## REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE

The New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) was established in 1977 to review significant New York State ornithological records. Procedures for submitting reports and a list of species for which reports are desired appeared in *The Kingbird* (Vol. 28, pp. 72-76). Reprints of that report and reporting forms have been distributed to the Federation's member clubs, and also are available upon request from the Secretary of the NYSARC, Charles R. Smith, c/o Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853.

Robert O. Paxton has agreed to replace the late Robert W. Smart as a Committee member. Committee composition otherwise continues unchanged from 1978. In the following report of our activities for 1978, we use the term "documented" to refer to a written report and "substantiated" to refer to a documented report also accompanied by physical evidence such as a tape recording, photograph or specimen.

During its first year of operation the NYSARC received 50 reports representing 36 records. The generally high quality of these reports has led the Committee to accept, usually unanimously, 25 (69%) of them. This figure is similar to levels reported by equivalent committees in other states during their early years of operation. Equally significantly, these accepted reports include first substantiated reports of two species from New York and increase the list of species proven to have nested within the State by one.

With reference to reports not accepted, the criteria for identification were generally plausible, but not enough detail was offered to preclude the possibility that the report was of another, less noteworthy species. A good record cannot be damaged by the inclusion of too much detail. We cannot overemphasize the value of including as much information as possible in submitted reports and suggest that observers treat any report submitted to the NYSARC as if it were the first report of the species from New York State.

Reports submitted to date suggest two primary areas for future concern. First, comparison of the Regional Reports from *The Kingbird* with the list of species for which reports are desired indicates that some significant records are not being submitted to the NYSARC for review. While such submission is the prerogative of the ob-

server, we also suspect that observers frequently assume that someone else will submit a report, with the end result that no one does. Several independently submitted reports in themselves can be convincing evidence of the validity of a record and are always welcomed by the NYSARC. Particularly significant in this respect are reports that establish first and last dates of observation for a record. Second, some reports accompanied by photographs include insufficient written detail to evaluate the report should the photographs be lost or damaged. We urge that contributors treat substantiating evidence as a supplement to and not the basis of reports they submit.

We received a few reports of birds said to have been photographed, but unaccompanied by any photographic evidence. We consider the assembly of reports with substantiating evidence at a single location to be of equal, if not greater, value to future generations of ornithologists than the review process itself, and urge contributors to submit at least copies of photographs, if available, with their reports. A few reports were received as duplicates of reports submitted to local clubs. Processing and establishing an archive of reports by the NYSARC is facilitated if an original report is submitted to us. We again emphasize that use of the NYSARC reporting form is not mandatory; several excellent reports whose format was totally different were accepted in 1978.

All reports, whether accepted or not, are available for inspection by qualified investigators at the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University. Reviews are confidential to the NYSARC. Reports are catalogued as received according to the following system: year of receipt—serial order of receipt (by record)—serial order of receipt by observer (within record), the last item being indicated by a letter (i.e., report 1978-3-B is the third report received in 1978 as submitted by the second observer). When listed, abbreviations for the name of observers are of the person(s) submitting the report only, regardless of the number of observers involved.

#### 1978 ACCEPTED REPORTS

**WESTERN GREBE** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*): 1978-14-A to H; female, dark phase; Tupper Lake, St. Lawrence/Franklin Cos., 2 July to 7 Oct., photographs on file (AH, CD, GMM, MK, THD, PDeB, FGS, KPA). A full account of this, the first substantiated record for New York, appears in *The Kingbird* (28: 208-209; 1978).

- WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*): 1978-6-A, B; adult in nuptial condition; Cross Lake, Onondaga/Cayuga Cos., 5 May, photograph on file (DWC, PDeB). 1978-17-A; adult in basic plumage, Wilson Hill Wildlife Management Area, St. Lawrence Co., 9 Aug. (PR). Three birds were reported from Bernhards Bay, Oswego Co. on 3 May, from Cross Lake on 4 May, and from Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca Co., between 7 May and 27 Sept. (photograph in *American Birds* 32: 1002; 1978). The latter are known to have wandered widely and were followed to Lake Ontario west of Rochester on one occasion in late May. Thus, it is possible that all these reports refer to the same birds.
- WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*): 1978-16-A, B, C; adult, 1+ imm; various localities in Town of Portville, Cattaraugus Co., 11 to 20 Aug., photographs on file (FGS, MF, THD). At least one adult and four immatures are believed to have been present for varying intervals between 14 July and 25 August. A more complete account is in *The Kingbird* (29: 2-4; 1979).
- PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyryla martinica*): 1978-11-A; adult; Kew Gardens, Queens Co., 11 May, photograph on file (THD). This bird was captured exhausted and photographed in hand; it disappeared after having been released at Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge on 13 May.
- PIPING PLOVER** (*Charadrius melodus*): 1978-11-A; adult; Sandy Pond, Oswego Co., 27 May, photograph on file (PDeB). 1978-31-A, B; adult; Sylvan Beach, Oneida Co., 3 to 13 Oct., photographs on file (DWC, DDA). Inland reports.
- WILSON'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius wilsonia*): 1978-12-A; female; Great Kills Park, Richmond Co., 21-22 May, photograph on file (THD).
- MARbled GODWIT** (*Limosa fedoa*): 1978-30-A, B; one, Sylvan Beach, Oneida Co., 19 Sept. to 15 Oct., photographs on file (PDeB, DWC). Inland report.
- CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*): 1978-34-A; adult in basic plumage; Rockland Lake, Rockland Co., 4 Oct. 1978 to early Jan. 1979, photographs on file (PDeB). This is the first record for New York State and the entire Northeast.
- SABINE'S GULL** (*Xema sabini*): 1978-19-A; adult in prebasic molt; Block Canyon, 80 mi. s. Montauk Point, Suffolk Co., 8 Oct. (THD).
- BOREAL OWL** (*Aegolius funereus*): 1978-19-A; one; Durand Eastman Park, Rochester, Monroe Co., 4 Feb. (RGS).

- HAWK OWL** (*Surnia ulula*): 1978-1-A; one; Ithaca, Tompkins Co., 18 and 23 Feb. (DRG).
- SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscivora forficata*): 1978-33-A; adult; Spring Creek Park, Howard Beach, Queens Co., 22-27 Oct., photographs on file (THD).
- MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia currucoides*): 1978-3-A, B; male; Hyde Park, Dutchess Co., 17-21 March, photographs on file (DWC, HCM). Third state record, all since the winter of 1974-75.
- TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Dendroica townsendi*): 1978-8-A, B; adult female, Hickory Grove Road, Town of New Haven, Oswego Co., 11 May, photographs on file (DWC, FGS). This is the second substantiated report for New York, made only four days after the first (*The Kingbird* 28: 150-151; 1978), and is the first report for upstate New York.
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Wilsonia pusilla*): 1978-27-A; female, nest with 4 eggs; North Meadow, Town of North Elba, Essex Co., 1 July (JMCP). A full account of this first proven nesting in New York appears in *The Kingbird* (28: 215-220; 1978).
- PAINTED BUNTING** (*Passerina ciris*): 1978-35-A; female; Town of West Monroe, Oswego Co., 7 June; photographs on file (DEE). This bird was mist-netted and photographed in hand; it showed no signs of prior captivity.
- HOARY REDPOLL** (*Carduelis hornemanni*): 1978-2-A; "female"; Pompey Township, 13-15 Feb., trapped, banded, and photographed in the hand (*The Kingbird* 28: 91-93; 1978), photographs on file (DWC). 1978-15-A; two "females"; Eggertsville, Erie Co., one 3-14 March, the other 14-30 March (A & BM). 1978-21-A; "female"; Webster, Monroe Co., 26 Feb. 1978 (RGS). 1978-23-A; "female"; Greece, Monroe Co., 9-10 April (FD). 1978-36-A; "female"; Pompey Township, 16 March (DWC). These reports, photographs of a bird at Rye, Westchester Co. (*American Birds* 32: 404; 1978), and others noted without details in several of *The Kingbird* Regional Reports suggest that this was the largest influx of Hoary Redpolls ever recorded in New York State.
- LARK BUNTING** (*Calamospiza melanocorys*): 1978-9-A; male; East Northport, Suffolk Co., 14 Jan. to 3 May; photographs on file (THD).
- HARRIS' SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia querula*): 1978-4-A; subadult (?); Crane Neck Point, Old Field, Setauket, Suffolk Co., 10 April-7 May (CFW).

In addition, photographs of a Fulvous Whistling-Duck present at Pennellville, Oswego Co., in May 1976 were received and placed on file without formal review.

#### 1978 REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

LOUISIANA HERON: 1978-13; Cruger's Island, Dutchess Co., 13 April.

SANDHILL CRANE: 1978-7; Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca Co., 8 May. 1978-18; Huntington Bay, Suffolk Co., 19 Aug. 1978-22; Oak Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Cayuga Co., 2 April. 1978-26; Braddock's Bay, Monroe Co., 22 May. While it generally will be our policy not to comment on records not accepted, in this case we note that all reports refer to birds seen at great distances only and that report 1978-22 is accompanied by a photograph of a bird identifiable as a crane but not to species.

COMMON EIDER: 1978-20; Irondequoit Bay Inlet, Monroe Co., 6 Feb.

GYRFALCON: 1978-28; East Norwich, Nassau Co., 27 Sept.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER: 1978-24; Fairport, Monroe Co., 19 May.

LAUGHING GULL: 1978-25; west of Rochester, Monroe Co., 21 May.

NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER: 1978-5; Ithaca, Tompkins Co., 24 April.

The NYSARC treats all of the noteworthy records from the Federation's pelagic trip of 20 May (*The Kingbird* 28: 198; 1978) as having come from Rhode Island or Massachusetts waters. One report from 1978 is still under review.

A function commonly assumed by state records committees is the maintenance of an official state list. We have begun such a review, taking Bull (1974, 1976) as the starting point. A total of 416 species was accepted either by Bull or in our report above. To this list we add:

**WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL** (*Pelagodroma marina*): specimen collected at 39°48' N, 71°02' W, 18 August 1953 (*Auk* 72: 81-82; 1955). This location, often cited relative to Montauk Point, lies outside the area treated by Bull but within the marine boundary as defined by the NYSARC.

The NYSARC agrees that the following list of species, reported only vaguely from New York and treated as hypothetical by Bull, are correctly excluded from the list of birds known to have occurred within the State: American Flamingo, Trumpeter Swan, Red-crested

Pochard, Crested Caracara, Chukar, and Common Ground Dove.

Reports of the following species, although published in *The Kingbird*, also are not accepted by the NYSARC:

LITTLE SHEARWATER: *The Kingbird* 17: 86. The identity was originally published as tentative only.

MEW GULL: *The Kingbird* 27: 179-180. Newly acquired information makes the identity of this bird much less certain than before. More detailed accounts are in preparation by Lauro and by DeBenedictis.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE: *The Kingbird* 13: 23-24. This report was also rejected by Bull.

The remaining species listed as hypothetical by Bull or reported subsequently in the literature are presently under review. The NYSARC has been unable to locate detailed accounts of any of the reports of South Polar Skua, Lewis' Woodpecker, Fork-tailed Flycatcher and Golden-crowned Sparrow from New York. We solicit such documentation, preferably with copies of original field notes, for these and any other species not accepted as having occurred within New York State by Bull or in this report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul DeBenedictis, Chairman  
Robert F. Andrlé  
Kenneth P. Able  
Thomas H. Davis, Jr.  
Robert O. Paxton

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Bull, J. 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, N.Y.  
Bull, J. 1976. *Supplement to Birds of New York State*. Wilkins/Printers, Cortland, N.Y.

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Kenneth P. Able (KPA), Dorothy D. Ackley (DDA), Dorothy W. Crumb (DWC), Thomas H. Davis, Jr. (THD), Paul DeBenedictis (PDeB), Charlcie Delehanty (CD), Frank Dobson (FD), D. E. Emord (DEE), Mary Forness (MF), Daniel R. Gray III (DRG), Alan Hicks (AH), Dr. Marguerite Kingsbury (MK), Alice and Bill McKale (A & BM), Helen C. Manson (HCM), Gordon M. Meade (GMM), John M. C. Peterson (JMCP), Patricia Reixinger (PR), Dr. F. G. Scheider (FGS), Robert G. Spahn (RGS), Charles F. Wurster (CFW).