

# The KINGBIRD



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# The KINGBIRD

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## 1956-1957 INVASION OF ARCTIC WOODPECKERS

HAROLD D. MITCHELL

The past winter has been noteworthy for the most remarkable invasion of Arctic Woodpeckers, *Picoides arcticus*, ever recorded in the ornithological history in our state of New York. It may be well, therefore, to compare the results with former recorded invasions of this species, and to cover some of the previous knowledge of its range and of its wanderings and feeding habits in this and nearby areas.

Eaton (1) states, "Confined to spruce and balsam belt of Canadian Zone during breeding season and permanent resident, but in late fall and winter wanders some distance from its normal habitat. Recorded from Tully, Syracuse, Chautauqua Co., Sag Harbor, Ithaca, Sennett, Cattaraugus Co., Orleans Co., Saratoga, Bridgehampton and Poestenkill, dates October 6-February 22. Commonest in November and December."

The only actual breeding specimens are from the Adirondack wilderness but also reported as breeding in Tioga County near Smithborough and in the higher portions of the Catskills. Next to Sapsucker and Hairy Woodpecker in abundance in spruce and balsam belt and much more common than American Three-toed and Downy Woodpeckers. Feeds on boring and bark beetles.

Forbush (2) gives dates for Massachusetts, September 28 - May 23 (June 12, summer). He mentions that invasions of this species may follow summers when its food has been unusually abundant, with consequent increase in numbers of young birds raised to maturity.

Van Tyne (3) reports on a heavy flight in 1923 and offers a similar explanation. He also says that in 1909 and 1914 there was an irruption of the spruce budworm in Eastern Canada and Maine causing the death of many trees and increase of bark beetles and borers, followed by an increase in numbers of Arctic Woodpeckers.

Forbush (2) also mentions a great irruption in the autumn of 1860, when six or eight birds were seen at one time on a piece of fire-killed pine trunk in Lynn (Brewster, 4). A lesser movement occurred in the autumn of 1925 and another in 1926.

In *Audubon Field Notes* for the fall migration in the New England area, it is stated that the invasion of the Arctic Woodpecker constitutes the third such invasion in Massachusetts ornithological history and shows promise of being the greatest ever recorded. Their records started September 29, 1956, with two records, followed by a flood of October and November records from Massachusetts, but none reach Rhode Island. However, one was recorded in Nantucket October 21.

In the New England notes it was also stated that the last big flight was in 1923 and that some birds from that flight apparently lingered until 1926. We should be on the watch for stragglers next winter. Since 1926 there have been only three Massachusetts reports. In the fall of 1956 reports had already been received from 16 localities.

*Audubon Field Notes* for the Ontario-Western New York region note first records of the 1956 invasion September 25 at Barrie, Ontario, followed by reports in October from London and Pt. Pelee, Ontario, and in New York

at Wilson, October 20, by the Axtells, and from one to two individuals at the same place by many observers soon afterward. The birds were stripping the bark from hemlocks, felled by a bulldozer, to get at the bark beetles and borers. Later many were noted stripping the bark from dead elms, to get at the bark beetles. This was particularly noticeable in the cities of Rochester and Buffalo, where these events were noted in the press. Motion pictures taken by Fred Hall illustrate how the Arctic Woodpeckers carry out their characteristic procedure in debarking trees to get at the bark beetles. While Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers have been noted on the trees so debarked, I believe they were merely gleaning the remaining insects left by the Arctic Woodpeckers which instituted the work.

Regarding the Arctic Woodpeckers' fall migration, William Gunn (5) states, "There is some indication that they may have come from Central Quebec rather than from Northern Ontario, where they were conspicuous by their absence last summer."

Among the early 1956 fall records were: October 14, two male birds in Chenango Valley State Park by Robert Saunders, Elinor Whitson and Tony Wiegiers (rep. by Leslie E. Bemont) and one bird on October 20 at Mianus Gorge, Bedford Village where it was studied closely by Douglas Orbison, Mabel Little and Gerald Wood (rep. by Fred N. Hough).

A female was seen in Letchworth Park near the Lower Falls by Clayton Knox on October 28, 1956, and a male was seen at Wolf Run in the same park on November 4 by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Ulrich and party. One bird was seen as far south as Culvers Gap, Sussex County, New Jersey on October 22, 1956.

The Genesee Region furnished more reports than any other of our New York State regions, although the first record was not until November 18, near 1105 Monroe Avenue, Rochester. In this locale many observers saw several birds, believed to be seven in all, three males and four females, as late as April, 1957. A female at Scottsville November 23, 1956, and another at Long Pond Woods near Lake Ontario on April 27, 1957, were seen by O'Hara and Miller. A male and a female were seen between January 2 and 10 at Morville Drive, Rochester, by Leo Tanghe, and a female near the lake at Summerville Boulevard on December 30 by the Whites. Several other reports by non-birders, but not confirmed, are not included above.

An American Three-toed Woodpecker female was seen on several occasions at Genesee Valley Park between December 27, 1956 and March 1, by Muchmore and others, and a female (possibly the same bird) was seen about two miles away at Winslow Road by Starling and Brumer on May 11, 1957.

The only report from the Finger Lakes area was of one seen in mid-January, 1957, by David Allen in the flooded trees on the west side of Sapsucker Woods Pond.

Frank Clinch reports that a bird was seen several times from December on by Belknap, who once saw two birds, and another was seen by Arthur W. Allen on March 10, 1957 between Clayton and St. Vincent. A specimen was brought to Thomas Lesperance on December 8, but this is in the bird's normal habitat, in all probability. Walter Spofford listed one from Fayetteville on the Syracuse Christmas Count on December 30. Other Syracuse

area records submitted by Fritz Scheider include a male near Ava, Oneida County on December 1, 1956, by A. Jones of Oneida; a female in the third week of January, 1957 near Manlius (fide Mrs. R. Gould, Manlius, N. Y.). A series of records from the Three Rivers Game Management area two miles NE of Baldwinsville, Onondaga County, as follows:

In flooded Elm Swamp, Scheider and Maurice Wrangell saw a female Arctic Woodpecker on February 17; a male and two females were seen on February 24 in the same area by Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Al Fudge of Elmira; a female seen March 3 in the same place by Scheider; a female seen March 10 in the same place by Evans and Scheider. Evidence of work of the Arctic Woodpecker also found at Oakwood Cemetery in Syracuse and at Camillus. In all but one case, the birds were noted "debarking" dead or dying elms. The one exception was evidence of fresh work on dead cedars adjacent to an elm swamp.

James Merritt reports a female first seen December 22 at Watervliet Reservoir in their Christmas Count, and it was still nearby on January 20 (Esly Hallenbeck and Jim Merritt). A male was seen by George Gorman at New Rochelle, April 28, 1957 (fide Watson Hastings.)

John Elliott reports a male seen by members of the Lyman Langdon Audubon Society at Mill Neck, Long Island in mid-February for over a week. It fed voraciously on the trunks of dead Red or Scotch Pines. John later visited the area and was surprised at the large sections of bark, some over a square foot in area, which had been ripped off. Bark was lying in patches around the foot of each dead tree. "One particular tree, a Japanese Black Pine, of an estimated 25-30 feet with around a ten-inch base was practically denuded clear to its top, its yellow undercoat ragged and gouged from the powerful beak of the feeding bird as it bored into the decaying and sound interior." John reports that the Queens County Bird Club had an Arctic Woodpecker on one of the field trips early this year (no details available).

In Western New York a bird was seen by Charles Simmons while hunting near Little Genesee, east of Olean, on November 24.

A male Arctic Woodpecker appeared on a dead elm at the corner of Parkridge and Minnesota Avenues, Buffalo on December 9 and was reported to Gertrude Webster, his teacher, by a schoolboy, Tony Ucci. One bird, possibly the same one, was reported at 196 Shirley Ave., Buffalo, by another of her students. At least one remained in the neighborhood until December 25. I have motion pictures of a bird feeding in this area, taken by Fred Hall of the Buffalo Museum of Science.

Mrs. Milligan of 5189 Abbott Road, near Armor, south of Buffalo, had been seeing an Arctic Woodpecker working on a decaying apple tree in her yard, without being sure of its identity. She finally called in Mrs. John Bacon of Hamburg who fortunately saw the bird on the last day it was seen, April 10, and could verify the identification.

I now know of at least 36 birds seen in New York State out of their normal range during the 1956-57 winter, as compared with about 43 Massachusetts records from reports at hand as I write this paper. I think that it is quite possible, as James Merritt suggests, that our territorial coverage leaves much to be desired. I doubt if Massachusetts had more Arctic Wood-

peckers present than New York State had during this invasion, but I feel sure that Massachusetts has more trained observers per square mile than we have.

On the other hand, the Christmas Count shows only one Massachusetts bird, whereas New York State had a total of eight, five from Rochester, and one each from Buffalo, Schenectady and Syracuse. Also one American Three-toed Woodpecker was reported from Rochester, so it looks as if we held up our end there.

My thanks are extended to the many regional editors who supplied me with the interesting data without which this article could not have been written and especially to Fred Hall for the loan of his excellent film showing closeups of the Arctic Woodpecker.

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  - (2) Forbush, E. H., *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*, Vol. II, p. 271-273.
  - (3) Van Tyne, Josselyn, *Auk* 1926, p. 469-474.
  - (4) Brewster, William, *Bull. Nuttall Ornithological Club*, 1883, p. 122.
  - (5) Gunn, William, *Audubon Field Notes*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Feb. 1957), p. 24. 238 West Royal Parkway, Williamsville 21.

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## BREEDING HAWKS ON EASTERN LONG ISLAND

ROY LATHAM

This paper incorporates notes on seven species of breeding hawks on eastern Long Island, New York, as recorded by the writer.

*Sharp-shinned Hawk*: There are five local nesting records in over 50 years for this abundant transient and frequent winter visitant. Nesting localities are Montauk, North Haven, Riverhead, Southold and Orient. All five nesting sites have been in dissimilar habitats. At Montauk they nested in the center of a large dry woods, the nest 30 feet up in the main crotch of an oak. At North Haven they built in a dry pasture with scattered cedars, the nest 12 feet up in the main crotch of a red cedar. At Riverhead the habitat was in a dark white cedar swamp: the nest was 20 feet up in the center crotch of a white cedar. This was a very dark site, the sun being shut out at all times. At Southold they selected the border of a sand-dune facing Long Island Sound. The nest was 15 feet up in the main crotch of a pitch pine. At Orient the nest was built 25 feet up in the main crotch of a tall cedar at the edge of a salt marsh. In the localities quoted, only the one in the cedar swamp at Riverhead had been occupied before, where an old nest of the previous year was found in an adjoining tree. All of the others were the first nesting records for those stations.

*Cooper's Hawk*: This is a more general breeding hawk on eastern Long Island than the sharp-shin, although it is restricted to single breeding pairs in any location. It is partial to tracts of dry woods, but also nests in swamps. The nest is usually in a center crotch, normally 15 to 20 feet up, and has been recorded up to 60 feet high. Most of the nests the writer has examined have been in old Crow's nests, which have been enlarged by twigs and trash

and lined with loose bark on which the eggs are deposited. The first eggs are laid here about April 15, at the time Crows are laying. Nesting localities are Orient, East Marion, Greenport, Southold, Cutchogue, Mattituck, Riverhead, Northwest, Three Mile Harbor, Noyack, Montauk, Shelter Island and Gardiner's Island. This species is a much less common transient and winter visitant than the Sharp-shin; the spring flight is earlier than the smaller species, and the nesting season is a month earlier.

*Red-tailed Hawk:* Nesting records are Montauk, Northwest, Southampton, Greenport, Orient, Shelter Island and Gardiner's Island. One pair nested regularly in the Heather Woods, Montauk, until 1935. The nests were in the main crotches of large oaks from 20 to 40 feet high. They were nesting in the Northwest woods until 1944 and may still be there. In the 1920's there were three pairs between Sag Harbor and Three Mile Harbor, nesting in tall oaks and white pines. North of Southampton a pair was nesting as late as 1955. The writer saw two birds there in April, 1956; one was noted in aerial tumbling and they were probably breeding. The species has been reported by McKeever and others as nesting in the vicinity. From one to three pairs have nested on Shelter Island since the 1890's, but have been reduced to one pair in recent years. These hawks have been harried severely by the caretakers on that island. The young have been taken from the nest to raise, and the females have been shot from the nest while incubating. They nest in high oak trees on the island up to 50 or 60 feet, sometimes in high side branches. Black snakes, which are common on Shelter Island, are a common food of the Red-tails and are brought to the nests to feed the young. The Red-tail was a summer resident in the Moores Woods, Greenport, until 1910, when the female of the last nesting pair was shot at the nest. They nested there in large pin oaks in swampy woods. The last Red-tail nested in Orient about 1895 in a 25-acre cedar grove near the writer's home. This was said to have been the finest stand of red cedars on Long Island. The cedars, like the Red-tails, have long been gone from the picture. At Gardiner's Island one pair nested in the Tobacco-lot woods, and may still be there, although all hawks, except the Ospreys, were treated roughly by the gamekeepers. The Red-tails were permanent residents on Shelter and Gardiner's Islands. It is never a common transient species in recent years, but more records are taken in April than in other months at Orient. It used to be frequent in winter, but is now really rare during that season on the north fork of the island. It is an early nester: eggs were found in the nest on April 2, 1932, on Shelter Island, a month before the Ospreys were laying.

*Red-shouldered Hawk:* This is the rarest of the locally breeding hawks on the eastern part of the island. I have established only one record of a nest with eggs. This was at Greenport in 1926. It may have nested there on other occasions as more stray individuals of this species have been noted there in the spring than elsewhere. It probably nested in Orient prior to 1900, as did the Red-tail and the Broad-wing. This is probably true of many other localities.

*Broad-winged Hawks:* Nesting localities are Orient, Greenport, Calverton, Noyack, Northwest and Gardiner's Island. Nests are 15 to 40 feet up in oaks, red maple, white and pitch pines and at Greenport in tulip trees. The habitat is usually dry woods, but at Greenport and Northwest swampy

woods. Nests are lined with species of loose bark picked from trunks of standing trees. The Broad-wing starts laying early in May in this region. A nest at Nowack, near Sag Harbor, in a pitch pine tree in dry woods contained three fresh eggs on May 20. In the Noyack site were five old nests of this species within a radius of 100 feet. One cold day in April this hawk was seen swooping down after some object moving in the salt meadow grass in Orient. The hawk came up carrying a Clapper Rail, which it probably mistook for a rat or mouse. The hawk, however, ripped off the feathers and proceeded to devour the rail. On Gardiner's Island a pair of Broad-wings nested sociably with a pair of Red-tails in the Tobacco-lot wood. They did so formerly in Orient.

*Marsh Hawk:* This species is in quite widespread distribution over the eastern sections of Long Island. My nesting records are Orient, East Marion, Greenport, Montauk, Shelter Island and Gardiner's Island. Except at Gardiner's Island, there was only one pair in a station. All of the nests located have been in cattail marshes, except in Orient, where the nest was placed in short grasses in a wide brackish marsh. The Marsh Hawk always nests on the ground. The eggs are laid in May and early June here. In East Marion a nest was found within six feet of a black duck's nest. In 1930 there were three pairs of Marsh Hawks on Gardiner's Island, all nesting around Tobacco-lot pond. As stated above, all hawks on Gardiner's, except the Ospreys, are persecuted by the gamekeepers. The writer once saw both sexes of a pair of Marsh Hawks shot at the same time in June as they ranged over the downs hunting for meadow mice. They perhaps took Pheasant chick also; at least the gamekeepers thought so. The male of this pair was such a beautiful light-colored individual that it was brought home to mount.

*Sparrow Hawk:* Nesting records are Orient, Greenport, Peconic, Riverhead and Shelter Island. At Orient they nest about buildings; at Greenport, in Flicker holes; at Peconic, in bird boxes placed high in trees in woods; at Riverhead, in hollow trunks of trees. There has been no local change in the breeding status of this small species since the 1890's. It is a regular permanent resident throughout the area. It is, nevertheless, a rare breeder, as are all of the hawks except the Osprey, on the eastern half of Long Island.

*Orient, Long Island*

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## 1958 FEDERATION WATERFOWL COUNT

January 11 - 19, Target — January 12



THE STATUS OF THE TERN COLONIES AT SANDY POND  
(NORTH POND), OSWEGO COUNTY: SUMMER, 1956

ROBERT E. GOODWIN

Scheider and Evans (1956, *Kingbird* 6:81-85) have presented an excellent survey of the interesting avifauna of the Sandy Pond area and have mentioned the precarious balance which exists on the barrier beach due to human interference.

Two species of the family Laridae, the Black Tern and the Common Tern, breed at Sandy Pond. These colonial nesters offer an excellent example of divergence between two closely related species. The Black Tern is a bird of the cat-tail marshes while the Common Tern nests on the *Ammophila*-covered dunes and open beaches of the area. This location is unique in having both species nesting within a few hundred yards of each other. The present status of the Sandy Pond populations of these two species reflects the difference in human and predatory pressures on these diverse ecological niches.

The "success story" is that of the Black Tern. Although predation does take its toll, it is not as heavy as one might expect in a marsh habitat. Out of 12 nests observed in 1952, only one was destroyed by predation. This occurred during the egg state and the offender was not determined. Aside from one other nest that was destroyed during a storm, all the young from the remaining nests reached flight stage safely. Out of fifteen nests observed through the summer of 1956, one was destroyed by children. The rest of the young (two or three per nest) reached flight stage.

Potential predators are numerous in the Sandy Pond marshes. The Bowfin, Large-mouthed and Small-mouthed Basses, Northern Pike and Snapping Turtle are common inhabitants of the shallow water where the terns nest, while the Great Blue Heron, American Bittern and Florida Gallinule roam the marshes in large numbers. Mink are probably present also and Marsh Hawks are occasionally seen flying over the nesting areas. Any of these might be classed as a possible threat to the young or, in several cases, to the eggs of this species, but none can be considered as a serious predator.

During 1956, the Black Tern had the most successful breeding season in the last decade at Sandy Pond. Between 40 and 45 pairs nested in the marsh at the south end of the pond. This has always been the site of the main colony in spite of its proximity to the largest and most active camping community in this area. The remaining marshes supported approximately 25 pairs. Between 1948 and 1955, the number of breeding pairs in the south marsh varied from 14 to 25 with an average of approximately 35 pairs for all of the Sandy Pond marshes. The breeding seasons have been consistently successful with a very high percentage of survival.

The success of the Black Tern depends upon several factors. One of these is that the colonies are fairly well isolated from the human population. Few people enter the marshes and fewer still penetrate deeply enough to discover the nesting sites. Probably the most important factor, however, is the nature of the habitat itself. Protective cover is heavy and the young take advantage of it by fleeing from the nest when the alarm call is given by a parent bird or a group of birds, and hiding among the nearly masses of emergent vegetation. The fact that the species is colonial and that an alarm

call given by a single bird will instigate a well-coordinated social attack has considerable survival value.

For the past ten years there has been a steady decline in the breeding population of Common Terns. In 1946, approximately 40 pairs nested on the dunes south of the outlet to Lake Ontario. In 1956, only one pair of birds nested in the former colony site and the young of these were killed, presumably by a dog, shortly after hatching. About half a dozen pairs nested on the dunes north of the outlet and were moderately successful.

Even when the Common Tern colony was large, survival was very poor. It was rare to find young produced from the first nesting attempt. Often three attempts were necessary before any young were produced in the colony because of human interference, predation or storms.

This unfortunate situation can be blamed primarily on the growing popularity of this narrow strip of land as a picnic area and bathing beach. Dogs are responsible for the destruction of many young birds and children and even adults have taken their toll in the past. I recall a noteworthy example of this which took place about nine years ago. The first attempt of the colony to nest had been unsuccessful due to predation by gulls. The birds had moved to a wide expanse of beach immediately south of the outlet and had renested. When I discovered the new site, a few nests had full clutches, but most of the birds were in the process of scraping out nests and laying eggs. Several days later, while scanning the area through binoculars, I saw a man and woman, each carrying a pail, busily picking things up from the beach. When I reached the colony, I found that the things which they had been collecting so avidly were Common Tern eggs and not one remained on the beach.

Gulls are known to have destroyed eggs in the past, but apparently this is not a regular occurrence. Foxes are present on the barrier beach and probably feed on young terns when they are available. As far as I have been able to determine, rats, a serious predator in other localities, do not inhabit the area.

Unlike the Black Tern habitat, that of the Common Tern is open and very accessible. The only chance that the young have to escape predation is by hiding in rather loose clumps of beach grass. This is of little effect when the predator is endowed with a keen olfactory sense. Predation and human interference have been so heavy in recent years that it is remarkable that the colony, small though it is, has persisted.

Another species which formerly nested regularly in the same area has suffered to the extent that it has become an uncommon resident of the barrier beach. This is the Piping Plover. The last breeding record of which I am aware was in 1948. The eggs were deposited in a low section of the branch on the windward side of the dunes. During a severe storm, they were covered with water and sand and were deserted. Although a pair was present irregularly through the summer of 1956, they apparently did not breed in the immediate vicinity.

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## NOTES

**Elmira's Night Herons** — For at least fifteen years a flock of Black-crowned Night Herons has roosted in the trees on Elm Street, near West Third Street in the city of Elmira. As their numbers grew, they gradually spread around the corner on Third Street, forming quite a colony. Five years ago (1952) they built their first nest there and successfully reared young. They became a great nuisance in this section of the city, not far from the business section nor from the river. Area residents tried each year to get permission from the police, the health department or game warden to do away with them but to no avail. The birds were protected and the law forbade shooting in the city.

This year (1957) there were five nests and a great many herons roosting, making much noise at night, and making the streets filthy with dead fish and excrement. The nearby citizens were desperate and finally appealed to the City Council which, in turn, took the matter to the State and Federal Conservation agencies in Albany and Boston. They received permission for the police to shoot the birds. Some people deplored this so the Council decided first to try frightening away the birds by streams of water from the fire hose and to have the nests torn down, before trying the shooting. This method seems to be succeeding (as this is written in late summer). An occasional bird does return, but does not remain and at last the people are able to sleep through the night.

Apparently this nesting in cities is not as unusual as was first thought. A similar situation occurred in nearby Corning several years ago, and Roman candles were used to disperse the birds.

Over Labor Day one of the men working in the crusade to get rid of our herons visited Washington, D. C. and was surprised to see a similar situation in a locality in that city. The people disliked it there but were making no attempt to rid themselves of the nuisance.

We shall eagerly await next spring to see if any of our Elmira colony return or if it has been dislodged permanently — Olive R. York, (Mrs. Harry C.), Elmira.

**A black and white Redstart** — Part albinism in birds is not very unusual and such individuals are occasionally met with in the field. For example, birds like Robins may show an over-all paleness with whitish or buffy breast. Another form of albinism tends to make a bird patchy, and occasionally we see English Sparrows with such white blotches or spots on the upper parts. Again, feathers on one side of a bird may match those on the other side, as for example a Seaside Sparrow seen on several occasions into November at Oak Beach about a decade ago. This bird had Junco-like white outer tail-feathers. Several years previous to this a Sharp-tailed Sparrow flew around the Idlewild marshes with a well defined white wing patch on each wing and was seen for several weeks.

The two birds to be described apparently cannot be classified under such hit and miss albinism as described above, but rather as black and white birds lacking color pigment.

The first is a Bobolink which was shown in color movies, with several excellent close-ups, at the annual dinner and meeting of the Linnaean Society of New York, March 12, 1957, by Angelo DeAngelo in his illustrated talk 'Birds of Sussex County' (New Jersey).

As we know the Bobolink is a black and white bird, except for the nape which is buffy. One of DeAngelo's birds showed the nape to be white, thus making this Bobolink a black and white bird. DeAngelo spoke of the absence of this buffy and, while remarking on the remote possibility of this cause through ageing, he said the bird was extremely vivacious and appeared to be young and vigorous.

The second individual under observation was a male American Redstart (*Setophaga reticilla*) seen by Eugene T. Mudge at Northport, May 8-10, 1956. Whereas Bobolinks deviate from black and white in one area, the male Redstart has six patches of salmon-orange. In Mudge's bird these were white, in other words, a completely black and white Redstart.

Notes from Mudge's field notes: "It was identical in all black areas to a normal adult male Redstart. The head, throat and upper breast were jet black. As to the

areas which are normally salmon-colored, (sides of breast, wing and tail patches), these areas were white. I saw very clearly that the tail area of whiteness was a very little blurred here and there with black. In other words, the white tail-patch was not a pure white area, but had a little black mixed into the white in the border regions where the white and black joined.

"I had a wonderful observation of this bird and could have caught him in a butterfly net had I carried one."

Verbal inquiries among local observers showed no similar experiences, so a desire to investigate spring plumages of other American Redstarts caused Elliott to visit the several hundred male skins in the trays of the American Museum of Natural History.

Examination revealed that black areas and salmon patches were very regular in size and location, but the white underparts varied considerably; whereas some were almost clear white, others were blotched and streaked to some degree with black, and two specimens were particularly melanistic below. In these, wide-spread black areas enclosed the side salmon patches, peculiarly resembling the large black enclosures of the spring male Myrtle Warbler's yellow side-of-the-breast areas. Peculiar also, the areas normally salmon in these two melanistic individuals were pale and bordering on yellow or buffy, although they were normal Redstarts in all other details. So it happened that of all the birds in the trays, one of these two dark ones, a bird collected at Bayridge, L. I., May 20, 1880 (American Museum of Natural History specimen 440,589) came the nearest to the white and black of Mudge's Redstart.

In this Bayridge bird the inner vanes of the tail feathers were almost white, the outer vanes pale buffy; the wing patches ranged from whitish to pale burnt orange, as did the sides of the breast, both being a shade buffier than the tail patches. The restricted white on the underparts was relegated to the undertail coverts and forward to enclose both legs, ending in a peak one-half inch forward.

Therefore, the nearest the Museum trays had to offer was an almost all black Redstart with whitish-buff tail patches and slightly buffier side and wing patches. So we close with an appeal to readers of *The Kingbird*: has any one among you seen a black and white Redstart? — Eugene T. Mudge, R. F. D. 1, Northport, L. I.; John J. Elliott, 3994 Park Avenue, Seaford, L. I.

**Winter record of the Kentucky Warbler in Ulster County** — On December 5, 1956 I discovered a Kentucky Warbler on the property of S & E Farms Inc. (a professional laboratory animal concern) at Stone Ridge. As I stepped from the Office-Lab on this day I heard a sharp chip and out of the corner of my eye caught a glimpse of the bird as it dived to the ground among some Yew bushes. The dense evergreen shrubbery and Honeysuckle vines that landscapes the area must have been a strong attraction for this vagrant warbler, resembling in part its natural habitat of dense cover. The bird was not extremely wild but was constantly on the alert, apparently instinctively sensing the strangeness of at least part of the scene. It was seen several different days between the discovery date and Dec. 27 when it disappeared. It would come out of hiding on sunny mornings and search for food about the sunny exposed foundations of two of the buildings. Here the ground was always bare and with a warm sun there was a good chance of finding sluggish flies or spiders that crawled out to sun themselves. Although the bird habitually stayed close to the ground near shrubbery, it was seen on several occasions flying high up the side of the house to catch a fly. Scarcity of food must have prompted this action. So far as I could see it did not respond to the offer of commercial bird seeds. It generally ignored the other birds frequenting the area around the buildings. It was never heard to utter even the chip following the day it was found. Apparently the bird's chief concern in coming out into the open was to secure flies, a mainstay for this time of year since most of the natural food was gone. With the several buildings and driveways, a main highway, dogs, a dangerous cat, lots of human activity — all that must have been strange — it is a wonder this Kentucky Warbler stayed even for a day. Henry and Ilse Dunbar, who saw the bird, agreed that it was a male, judging from the bright, distinctive plumage.

Where did he come from? Perhaps he wandered off course from the Central New York colony in Cortland County or maybe Kentuckys have extended their breeding range up the Hudson Valley and he and his mate nested right here in Ulster County. Of course, we will never know this but at any rate we now have

the first winter record of a Kentucky Warbler in New York State. — Fred N. Hough, *Accord* 1.

**Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) collected in Dutchess County, New York.** — On March 16, 1953 a Solitaire was collected in the Town of Amenia, Dutchess County, New York. The specimen is preserved as a study skin in the Vassar College collection at Poughkeepsie. The bird was a female with an ovary which measured 5.5 by 3.0 millimeters. It was first observed on March 4, 1953 by Mr. George Decker of Dover Plains, N. Y. Mr. Decker watched the bird on several different days between March 4 and March 16. In every case the bird was seen in the late afternoon in one restricted area, usually sitting quietly in the top of a dead oak at the edge of an abandoned field. There were occasions, however, when the bird could not be found.

The only other record for the State of New York is a bird collected on November 25, 1905 by J. A. Weber in King's Park, L. I. (*Dwight*, 1906, *Auk*, 23:105-106). King's Park is approximately 75 miles south of Dutchess County.

Mr. Chandler Robbins was kind enough to check the files of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and reports that three other specimens have been taken in Eastern United States: one at Waukegan, Illinois on December 16, 1875 (*Nelson*, 1876, *Bul. Nutt. Orn. Club*, 1:40); another by Herbert L. Stoddard at Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, about February 20, 1910 (*Ward*, 1912, *Bull. Wis. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 10:47); and a third by Alan Rusch in Dodge Co., Wisconsin on December 6, 1952 (*Strelitzer*, 1953, *Passenger Pigeon*, 15(2):65).

In addition there are three sight records for eastern United States: one seen several times in Ohio between December 26, 1938 and January 14, 1939 (*Campbell*, 1940, *Bull. Toledo Mus. Sci.*, 1:127-128); another seen at Hudson, Wisconsin in December, 1942 (*Robbins*, 1943, *Passenger Pigeon*, 5(1):3-4); and a third seen by many observers at Blue Island, Illinois from December 27, 1953 to January 17, 1954 (*Barter*, 1954, [*Ill.*] *Audubon Bull.*, No. 89:6).

A study of these records indicates that most are for the winter months of December, January, or February in the states of Wisconsin (3 records), Illinois (2 records) or Ohio (1 record). The New York records are for November and March. This period, from late November to mid-March, also agrees with the three records listed in *Roberts' Birds of Minnesota*. — John L. George, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie.

**Some interesting band returns** — It is generally supposed by many people that as fall approaches a strictly southerly movement of birds takes place. Among banders cooperating with the Federal Wildlife Service, this idea is being discarded. For some time it has been surmised that as fledglings take wing and a waning food supply makes competition keen, many birds move north in search of food. Whether this is so, and if so why, has not been determined to the satisfaction of ornithologists, who are now and will be for some time to come, engaged in the study of what seems to be a contrary movement.

The bulk of my personal banding operations have been conducted on the islands of Lake Champlain near Keeseville where an average of 750 to 800 Herring and Ring-billed Gulls are banded as downy young. Because of their size, these birds provide a better incidence of band recovery than the small land birds. This has meant that I have accumulated a fair number of returns, enough to show that many birds are moving north. Two other banders are active in this area: Mrs. R. E. Mason of Essex and Mr. and Mrs. Bruce McGregor of Ellenburg Depot, the former giving good coverage to the south of my operations, the latter to the north. Both of these teams are engaged, however, in banding smaller species.

In interpreting the information in the following recovery records, it should be recalled that the area to the north of Keeseville is sparsely settled with the exception of the Montreal area. In the following list which is designed to compare north and south movements, all banding was done on Four Brothers Island in Lake Champlain.

**HERRING GULL.** Banded July 29, 1954, recovery Nov 30, 1955, Savannah, Georgia. 14 birds banded June 11, 1955: recoveries: Arundel, Quebec, Oct 1, 1956; Cte. Saguenay, Quebec, Sept 2, 1955; Sorel, Quebec, Sept 15, 1955; St. Jean, Quebec, Sept 23, 1955; Granby, Quebec, Sept 24, 1955; Cap-de-la-Madeline, Quebec, Sept 17, 1955; Cote Ste. Catherine, Quebec, Aug 17, 1955; Willsboro, New York, July 3, 1955; Orlando, Florida, Dec 28, 1955; Althol, Massachusetts, Aug 4, 1955;

Wellesley, Massachusetts, Aug 25, 1955; Wareham, Massachusetts, June 25, 1956; Athol, Massachusetts, Aug 4, 1955; Natchitoches, Louisiana, May 5, 1956. Four birds banded June 24, 1956: recoveries: Verdun, Quebec, Sept 23, 1956; Rochester, New York, October 21, 1956; Montreal, Quebec, Aug 6, 1956; Montreal, Quebec, July 22, 1956.

RING-BILLED GULL. Banded June 11, 1955, recovery: Durzea, Pennsylvania, June 15, 1956.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON. Banded June 11, 1955, recovery: Bilwas-karma, Nicaragua. — Thomas A. Lesperance, Keeseville.

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**North Country bird notes** — In the past 20 years, I have averaged more than one trip a year between Nyack and Canton, in St. Lawrence County. Thus I have come to know the North Country rather well — but as a tourist, not a birder. My birding has been casual, wayside observation. Even so, this summer's trip confirmed a few interesting points noted in earlier years:

1. The Upland Sandpiper seems to be increasing in abundance in a triangle bounded roughly by a Lowville-Watertown-Antwerp line. Up to three years ago, I had never seen this bird along the way. Then I saw two near Evans Mills; the next year, I saw two again in the same general area. On last June 27, one was flying across Route 12 just south of Lowville and another was perched on a wire south of Antwerp; on July 2, a bird was seen again near Lowville, perched on a stump. If so many Upland Sandpipers can be seen from a fast-moving car passing through the area, how many might a real search reveal?

2. The Black Tern may frequent the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, but I have never seen it there until this summer, when I saw two ranging over a small marsh on the "officially closed" portion of Route 37-B between Massena and Waddington. My only previous St. Lawrence Valley terns had been on the Canadian side upriver from Prescott.

3. The tail of Hurricane Audrey, which lashed the Canton area for 36 hours on June 29-30, had more effect on birdlife than I have ever seen in several hurricanes at Nyack. Wind velocity was on the moderate side — for a hurricane — but several huge trees and many branches were brought down. Being in the nesting season, this storm could be expected, I suppose, to cause more disturbance to birds than more severe storms in the autumn. In any event, three Warbling Vireos that sang near the house in Canton on June 28 were silent or absent thereafter. Sidewalks were dotted with nests, many of them from this year but none with eggs. A day or two after the storm, an abnormal number of young birds were around the lawns, especially Flickers, Robins and Grackles. At least two Robins appeared a few days too young to be thrown on their own devices, and at Ogdensburg, I did see a nestful of naked young robins that had been thrown to the sidewalk.

According to the newspapers, Hurricane Audrey was revitalized in northern New York when it struck a strong low-pressure area. I saw wind velocity figures that indicated an acceleration from 40-50 mph. winds at Syracuse to above 80 mph. at Plattsburgh. — Robert F. Deed, 50 Clinton Ave., Nyack.

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**The Red-headed Woodpecker in northern New York** — There is considerable evidence that the Red Headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is increasing as a summer resident in northern New York. Prior to 1951 I saw this species on only one occasion, despite the fact that I travel extensively in the area and have done so since 1935. Beginning in 1951 the Red-headed Woodpecker has been noted fairly regularly, particularly in Jefferson County. It arrives in May and is not usually seen after September. A number of nesting sites have been located, most of them in Jefferson County, but there is at least one near Lowville in Lewis County, and one was discovered in 1955 near Gouverneur in St. Lawrence County. North of Watertown, in the general vicinity of Perch Lake, there are probably at least four nesting sites.

In northern New York the preferred habitat of this species consists of open groves in dry upland areas. Mature trees, such as elm, maple, and basswood with dead stubs situated in old pasture land constitute a typical nesting site.

The Red-headed Woodpecker is relatively common in parts of western New York,



growing scarcer as one moves east and becoming rather rare as the easterly border of the state is reached. Its numbers apparently fluctuate rather widely. Fifty years ago it seems to have been more numerous than it is today. A quarter century later several writers mention a marked decrease in numbers, the lethal effect of the automobile being given as one reason for its decline.

A perusal of the "Kingbird" discloses numerous references to the Red-headed Woodpecker. Since 1950 it has been seen or found breeding in a number of areas where it had previously been absent, and seems to be making a gradual but fairly widespread recovery in much of the state. A recent issue of the Kingbird (1956, 6(3):97) mentions probable increases of this species in Oswego and Oneida Counties just south of the area under consideration. The editor for Region V makes the pertinent comment, "this may indicate an actual population increase or more observers, probably both." — J. B. Belknap, Gouverneur.

**An experience with the Greater Shearwater.** — For an observer like myself who rarely gets offshore, nothing could be so exciting as to watch at close range a Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus Gravis*). Such was my experience last summer. Greater Shearwaters are seldom seen from shore. Usually when they can be observed, they are around fishing boats five to ten miles or more out in the ocean.

August 26, 1956 was a day set aside for the family to picnic. We selected our place on the beach at Westhampton and proceeded to prepare for the annual outdoor barbeque. While this was being done I assembled my tripod and Balscope, and set them up overlooking the ocean. There was a slight wind from the southeast.

Hours had passed when at about three p. m. a flock of birds were seen working their way eastward. Common and Least Terns made up the greater part of this group; with them were also a few gulls and two dark birds that would dip from one side to the other.

In the scope, these birds revealed themselves to be Greater Shearwaters. They were working their way towards me about 100 yards off-shore. I wondered how close I could get to them. Surely I could swim 100 yards in the surf before they arrived. Without a second thought I took off for the water.

It was about ten minutes before my experiment became a reality. Here I was bobbing in the water, no more than 25 feet from one and 150 feet from the other shearwater. They would flap, then sail from one side to the other or circle about. One started in my direction while the other one left. The remaining Shearwater seemed to spot me, and then circle around me. Surely, I thought, it wouldn't dare attack.

The Greater Shearwater, 18-20 inches long and with a wing-spread to almost four feet, is a fishing petrel, which follows moving shoals of surface-swimming fishes as well as squids that come to the uppermost layers of the ocean during the hours of half-light or dark days (Murphy, *Oceanic Birds of South America*, 1936, p. 663). Herbert K. Job states in "Birds of America" (1936, p. 82) that their food consists of floating animal or vegetable matter, besides such marine organisms as small fish.

Perhaps I looked like some floating animal or piece of vegetable matter for it came rushing at me about to make the belly-landing characteristic of the species and was only an arms length away now. I could see that big, dark, hooked bill and wondered what would happen to my arm if I grabbed it. I saw its dark tarsus and light feet which were a sort of pink or flesh color. The eye looked dark; I didn't notice any distinguishing color.

I splashed some water as I started to back away from the attack, never once taking my eyes off it. This move seemed to startle it, and the Shearwater started to reverse action with wings flapping furiously, like those of a tern hovering above a prey. As it lifted its body, tail end down, I could see the white patch on the rump very clearly now. Then it started to take off. My blood pressure started to return to normal, but I realized it wasn't through, for circling it came toward me again. This time I prepared myself for a deep surface dive. However, it was not necessary, as the Shearwater looked at me and probably decided that I wasn't quite what it was looking for.

With its departure I returned to shore and to my family. "Well!" they wanted to know: "Did you get close enough?" "Close enough," I responded. "Yes sir, close enough for a long time to come!" — Alan H. Penberthy, Freeport.

**An observation of Barn Swallow—Starling commensalism** — On August 14, 1957, between 9:30 and 9:45 A. M., on a strip of four to eight-inch high grass recently cut along the Mohawk airport runway NE of Ithaca, I observed about 30-40 Starlings foraging. Just above them, perhaps six inches to two feet in the air, 25 Barn Swallows were circling and catching insects which the Starlings stirred up. This entire activity, involving over 50 individuals, took place in an area no larger than 20 x 20 feet. When I approached and frightened the Starlings so that they moved a short distance, the Swallows moved with them. They were definitely taking advantage of the insects raised by the Starlings, although I could not see that the Starlings benefitted in any way. — Randolph Little, 111 Crest Lane, Ithaca.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

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### THE BREEDING SEASON: June 1 - August 15

When I returned from Indiana in mid-August it was to a parched landscape. A trip west along the Lake Ontario shore from Rochester showed marshes and even ponds completely dried up with grass often completely defacing their original identity and cracks cutting deep into the hard clay earth. East of Rochester in the sandy sections, even in areas where a good deal of artificial watering done, lawns were completely parched and brown. The only New York areas which have escaped this drought seem to be the Finger Lakes and some parts of the Adirondacks.

Although there are the usual reports of little coverage from many regions, much interesting field work has been done this summer. Of special note is the coverage in Region 5 of the interesting Tug Hill breeding area by Fritz Scheider and a number of other birders. There are also reports — from Long Island this time — of continuing changes in bird populations due to changing land use.

In the Region 4 report is recounted an interesting incident which all interested in bird protection should read. This is an account of publicity leading to enforcement of our present hawk protection laws. It is to be hoped that these present laws will be strengthened by legislation within a short time. All birders should keep abreast of such developments.

As usual some interesting birds turned up. A mid-June flight of peep along Lake Ontario included — according to Walt Listman — *mostly* Western Sandpipers. This is an interesting observation and should be worth checking in other years, possibly even by collecting. Short-billed Marsh Wrens, observed in a number of regions, may be showing a welcome upswing in numbers. Saw-whet Owls gave evidence of breeding in the Albany area. It is interesting also to note in that region the status of the Cardinal. This interesting southerner is just now establishing itself here, as contrasted to its complete establishment in the western part of the state. In this one aspect the west is some 15 years ahead of the east.

There are three other interesting finch records. A Pine Grosbeak was recorded near Watertown August 16 and the Blue Grosbeak was noted in two parts of the Hudson Valley, the farthest north near Albany. At Etna Sally Hoyt had Rose-breasted Grosbeaks bringing young to her feeding stations. GRR.

## REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

HAROLD D. MITCHELL

Except for a few warm days, mostly in early summer, the weather was comparatively cool, with occasional rainy periods to prevent the severe drought conditions experienced further eastward in the state. Few migrant warblers tarried as late as June. A successful nesting of Mockingbirds in Westfield, where an unusual number were reported, is especially noteworthy.

**Loons — Ducks:** Normal nesting activities, with nothing special to report.

**Hawks — Owls:** Beal noted an Osprey at Chautauqua Lake near Jamestown, June 16, and one was observed at Gainesville on July 25 by Mrs. Smith, who also reported a Snipe and 5 Whimbrel from the same area on Aug 15. Larkin reported 3 Bald Eagles at Derby, June 9. Rosche saw 2 Turkeys at Allegany State Park, June 8. An early Whimbrel appeared on Bird Island Pier, Buffalo, July 13 (Filor). Snipe probably nest at Kent's Switch where one was seen July 31 (Knott, fide Parker). Two Caspian Terns were seen July 16 at Ontario Beach (Buckland, Janiec). Heavy southwest gales in June caused havoc in the nesting colony of Common Terns in Buffalo Harbor, forcing later nestings of many pairs. Very few Bonaparte's Gulls were reported during the period. Six young Barn Owls were successfully reared in Alden (Mitchell).

**Swifts — Shrikes:** Bourne reported Olive-sided Flycatcher near corner Thruway and Camp Rd., Hamburg, June 1, and a Loggerhead Shrike at Sturgeon Pt., June 11. Parker saw a Tufted Titmouse at Chautauqua Lake July 25, and a Short-billed Marsh Wren at Bear Lake, June 23. Two Carolina Wrens were seen daily at Niagara Falls from July 28 to 31 and one remained throughout August. Another appeared in a Buffalo residential district, Aug 3, (Andrle). A group of Mockingbirds, which first appeared April 20, raised at least one brood successfully at Westfield (Bentley), and remained in the vicinity until July 20. As many as 16 were known to be present at one time, an unprecedented number for this area.

**Vireos — Warblers:** At Taylor Hollow three Black and White Warblers were seen on June 2 (McShane et al). The last Blackpoll Warbler migrant was seen June 2 at Hickok's Rd (Bourne). A Yellow-breasted Chat was noted at Ohoville, June 8 (Rosche et al) and another June 23 in the Tonawanda Indian Res. (Brockners).

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** A Dickcissel was seen June 4 at Elma (Rosche et al). It was a male in full song but remained in the area for only a few days.

238 West Royal Parkway, Williamsville 21

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## REGION 2 — GENESEE

HOWARD S. MILLER

The present period may be characterized as somewhat cooler than average and much drier than normal. The dying hurricane "Audrey" produced heavy rain and wind in late June. This rainfall, in addition to frequent thundershowers in early July, constituted most of the rainfall for the period, as since that time we have had only brief local showers and thunderstorms which have not been sufficient to prevent gradually increasing drought conditions. Except for a hot spell in late June and another short heat wave in mid-July temperatures have consistently been somewhat under normal. The lowering water level has produced good shorebirding along Lake Ontario but many of the mudflats elsewhere are so grown up with vegetation that they are unsuitable for any number of shorebirds.

**Loons — Ducks:** There was not a single report of any grebes during the period.

No American Egrets have been reported in our region this year. Black-crowned Night Herons and American Bitterns, which were almost unreported in the early part of the period, appeared in normal numbers by mid-July. A Least Bittern was at Buck Pond June 16 (Tanghe, Dobson). Although this bird is fairly well distributed in this area, it can be very elusive and easily overlooked unless especially searched for. An adult Whistling Swan appeared at Manitou July 6 (Listman) and remained for the rest of the period. The last Brant for the spring migration were three birds June 6 at Manitou. A single male Pintail was reported July 24 at Ling Road (O'Hara). A Green-winged Teal was observed at Buck Pond June 8; small numbers were appearing by the end of the period. Two Hooded Mergansers were along the Ontario shore west of Rochester June 8.

**Hawks — Owls:** 19 Turkey Vultures were seen at Bergen Swamp June 9. Eight Broad-winged Hawks on June 14 at Manitou (Listman) marked our last spring date for this species. One Bald Eagle was at Braddock Bay June 6 (Listman).

One Black-bellied Plover was seen Aug 3 at Shore Acres. Two records so far this year for Hudsonian Curlew: the first July 15 (Listman) and the second Aug 12 (Holland), both from Braddock Bay and both of single birds. A Greater Yellowlegs seen June 20 and July 6 at Buck Pond may have been a summering bird. One Lesser Yellowlegs June 2 at Ling Road was our last spring date. The only record for the Knot for the period was a single bird June 4-8 at Manitou. The first fall White-rumped Sandpiper was seen Aug 10 at Shore Acres. Dowitchers occurred in fair numbers, ten seen July 27 along the west lakeshore being the largest number reported. Five Stilt Sandpipers at Manitou July 20 (Starling, Miller) were the largest number seen, although from one to three birds were frequently reported. Two Semipalmated Sandpipers were reported from Manitou Jun 12. There was a heavy late May and early June flight of "Peep" of which some were surely and an additional number probably Western Sandpipers. Some believe that this late flight was composed **mainly of Westerns**. A little careful collecting could probably settle this thorny question. A single Sanderling on May 30 and three birds June 8 gave two records of this rare spring shorebird. A Wilson's Phalarope was at Ling Road for a short time June 2 (Tanghe, Miller).

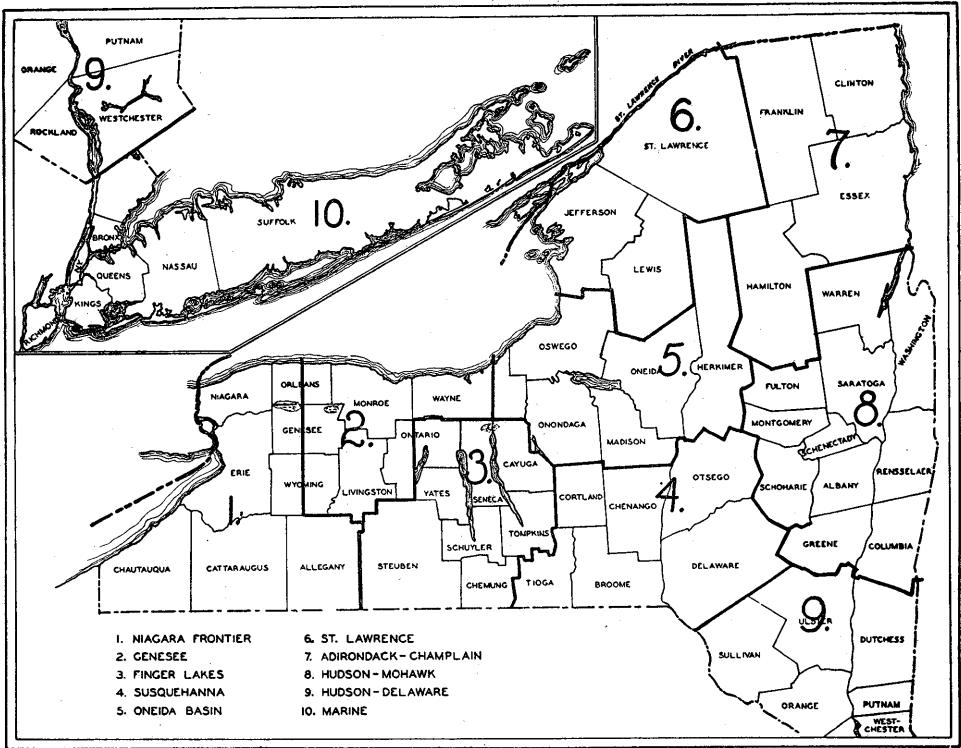
A sub-adult Franklin's Gull was seen at Manitou on July 15-16 (Listman). A Caspian Tern was at Manitou June 20 and the species was present in small numbers during the last month of the period. A pair of Barn Owls which have nested irregularly in a barn in Scottsville were burned out by a fire which destroyed the building. Apparently they lost either young or eggs. Mourning Doves seem unusually common this summer.

**Swifts — Shrikes:** A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers again nested at Manitou this summer. A single Cliff Swallow was seen at Braddock Bay June 18, and another or the same bird was seen July 28 and Aug 3. Four Carolina Wrens were seen or heard along Irondequoit Creek Aug 4 (Miller) and a nest of this species was found in an outbuilding just south of Rochester. Two young were reared in this nest of which one was banded (Starling, Leubner). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen Aug 11 at Tryon Park (Miller). A few Migrant Shrikes have been seen west of Rochester during the period.

**Warblers — Sparrows:** No Prothonotary Warblers were reported this year. Two singing male Nashville Warblers were at Bergen Swamp June 9. The Yellow-breasted Chat was reported June 23 at Conesus (Haller) and at LeRoy where it has become a regular summer resident. The Western Meadowlark apparently nested successfully at Manitou. The writer will discuss this more fully in a separate note. A White-throated Sparrow was heard singing on the edge of Bergen Swamp June 9 and a very late migrant White-crowned Sparrow was seen in Island Cottage Woods June 1 (O'Hara).

61 Richland Street, Rochester 9

## REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. IV, Nos. 1 and 2

### REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

SALLY F. HOYT

The latter half of June was hot. July and August had normal or slightly sub-normal temperatures. The Finger Lakes escaped the drought which plagued much of the rest of the state and north-east, as rainfall was above normal in July. However, August was dry, and in general the circumstances of the spring and summer seem to have combined to hinder the development of an abundant or even normal fruit and nut crop, although weed seeds seem plentiful.

Breeding birds were below normal in all species, and there was unusually high mortality among nestlings. Even Starlings and Redwings raised few young, although Grackles had their usual success. In most areas of the region, warblers were very scarce. There were few broods of Mallards at the head of Cayuga this year.

The storage pool at Montezuma was drained for millet seeding, volunteer growth of smartweed, and carp control.

**Loons — Ducks:** Pied-billed Grebes were observed commonly and nested successfully at the Montezuma Refuge this summer. Mr. Smith, the manager, estimated a high count of 110 Great Blue Herons and there were several reports of one melanistic one. It is not known if this was true melanism or some staining of the plumage. Along with 40 American Egrets at Montezuma, at least 10 Snowy Egrets and 7 immature Little Blue Herons occurred. (Smith, F. Scheider) 5 Snowy Egrets were also seen at the Horseheads dump for three days, May 30, and June 1. (C. Runey) The Black-crowned Night Heron colony in Elmira appears to be doomed. Area residents have secured permission to eliminate the 'nuisance.' A Whistling Swan was on the Hobart College pond from late May to June 9 (L. Ward). The Canada Geese raised one young at Sapsucker Woods.

Mallards and Wood Ducks raised young at Sapsucker Woods pond. Black Ducks nested as usual near Avoca (Atwood). Manager Smith reports the following counts for the waterfowl at Montezuma for the summer, June 1 through Aug 15: Canada Goose 11; Mallard 1500; Gadwall 250; Pintail 25; Green-winged Teal 120; Blue-winged Teal 400; American Widgeon 10; Shoveller 30; Wood Duck 400; Red-head 25; Ruddy Duck 10; Hooded Merganser 30 (this count must include some late spring migrants.) A crippled immature Golden-eye was found on Sugar Creek, a mile north of Branchport on July 7 (F. Guthrie).

**Hawks — Owls:** Hawks generally seemed scarce this summer. A Sharp-shinned at Breeseport and one at Big Flats on Aug 4 (M. Welles) were the only ones of this species seen in the Elmira area, and other observers noted their scarcity. A pair photographed by AAAllen raised but two young. The two pairs of Red-shouldered Hawks were much less in evidence this summer around Sapsucker Woods and apparently did not bring off any young. A pair of Marsh Hawks hatched and raised but one young from 4 eggs. The adult Eagles were seen all summer at Montezuma, and an immature was observed there in July, but it is not believed that this bird was hatched at Montezuma. The nest was inaccessible as reported in the last issue, but no one saw a young bird in it at any time, although incubation was observed throughout the spring. Mrs. York reported a flight of Buteos over her hill in Elmira on Aug 18. An Osprey was noted at the south end of Cayuga Lake on July 15, Aug 19 and 23 (PPKellogg).

Ruffed Grouse raised young again in Sapsucker Woods, and another brood was seen about a mile north of this sanctuary in late July (SFHoyt). Ring-necked Pheasants seemed fairly successful around Ithaca, were scarce at Avoca (Carter). Soras nested successfully at a marsh pool in N. Hornell (Grosbeck). Soras were scarce and Virginia Rails absent at Keuka (Guthrie). There were more Florida Gallinules at Montezuma this year than in recent years. Two broods were seen at Mitchelville (ten miles from Avoca) in a newly-established marsh area (Carter). The Coot population at Montezuma was estimated to be 310 (L. Smith).

Good mud flats at Montezuma through July and the first week in August resulted in good shore-birding there. Some appeared early. On July 7, Scheider reported Pectorals, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers and a Dowitcher. On July 22, Rush and Scheider reported 12 species of shorebirds at the refuge, including Stilt Sandpipers and Dowitchers. Contrasting with the early appearance of the 'fall' migrating shorebirds, 200 Semi-palmated Sandpipers were still at the Refuge on June 2, on their northward trip. Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen on July 20 at Newton Bridge in Horseheads (K. Fudge). One Western Sandpiper at Montezuma Aug 10 (Scheider). A Wilson's Phalarope was observed at Montezuma on July 27 by Rush and Scheider, in an intermediate plumage between breeding and fall. The Keuka area, on the contrary, had a scarcity of shorebirds because of high water over mud flats, and the filling in of Hollister's Swamp (Guthrie).

Fewer Common Terns nested at the Montezuma Refuge this year (Smith) but more Black Terns than usual. Caspian Terns appeared in early August at Montezuma (Scheider) and on Cayuga (Kellogg). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were extremely scarce throughout the region. The Great Horned Owl nested again in Stewart Park in Ithaca, but other reports of them were scarce. A flight of 75 Nighthawks was observed over Hornell on Aug 23 (Grosbeck).

**Swifts — Shrikes:** For the first time Chimney Swifts nested at Montezuma Refuge — in the office chimney. Flickers seemed in good numbers. Pileateds are gaining ground at Avoca (Carter) and were more conspicuous than usual at Montezuma this year. The Red-bellied Woodpeckers were not at their usual station at

Montezuma and in fact there were no summer reports of them. Red-headed Woodpeckers, however, were frequently seen at the refuge, and a pair spent the summer at the Welles farm at Elmira, nesting there. Reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were more common this year. They were seen at four separate locations at Cornell's Arnot Forest near Newfield (Sheffields), young ones were brought to a tree at the Beck home in Freeville the week of Aug 15, and an adult appeared in my yard in Etna several times early in July. Hairy Woodpeckers continue to be scarce at Avoca, and Downies are down in numbers too.

Eastern Kingbirds were abundant at Avoca and at Montezuma Refuge; they were scarce around Ithaca early in the summer, but more common by mid-August. There were fewer Crested Flycatchers and fewer Alders around Waterloo and Montezuma (Walker), while Alders were in good numbers at Avoca (Carter). Hundreds of Tree Swallows and Bank Swallows were seen on the wires near Canoga on Aug 2 (McIlroy, Hoyt). Barn Swallows on the Welles farm (Elmira) had a third brood of nestlings on Aug 6 — the nest having been added to for the second and third nesting. Purple Martins were new at Hornell and Almond, there being 16 pairs in the latter colony. Blue Jays were scarcer around Avoca (Carter) but from most other localities I've heard nothing but complaints of their increasing in numbers to the point of being a real nuisance.

Carolina Wrens, often not seen at Keuka in summer, occurred in three areas there, and one appeared on July 20 at Mrs. York's hill at Elmira for the first time. Scheider found Short-billed Marsh Wrens at three locations at Montezuma. The Mockingbird at Avoca remained there through June (Lyons). Robins had poor nesting success early in the season, but seemed to be raising youngsters in August. Veeries were scarce in the Geneva-Waterloo area (Walker) and all Thrushes scarce at Avoca. Wood Thrushes were scarce at Sapsucker Woods. Cedar Waxwings were abundant in the Watkins-Montour area (Bardeen).

**Vireos — Warblers:** Resident vireos were low in numbers everywhere, especially Yellow-throated. Walker reported that there seemed to be the usual numbers of nesting warblers in the Geneva area, but around Ithaca Yellows and Redstarts were scarce and almost no Magnolias or Black-throated Greens were to be found. Blue-winged and Mourning Warblers were found this year in the Guyanoga Valley near Branchport, but nests were not located (Spiker). The Eaton Bird Club found the Prothonotary at its station in Montezuma on June 2. Nashvilles nested at the marsh pond at the Arnot (Sheffields).

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** Bobolinks were scarce at Avoca, in good numbers around Geneva. Redwings, Baltimore Orioles and Grackles were also abundant at Geneva. Fewer Cowbirds at Avoca. After an absence of two years, a male Cardinal appeared at the Hornell Reservoir again. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were scarce around Ithaca and Etna, but in mid-August they brought young to feeders in Etna, a most unusual occurrence which probably reflects a scarcity of natural food. Purple Finches seemed somewhat more common this summer, flocks being seen at Elmira on Aug 10 (York), many around Hornell all summer (Grosbeck), and young being brought to a feeder at Geneva on July 13 (Ward). Late White-crowned Sparrows were seen and heard singing in Avoca on June 16.

*Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca*

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## REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

It has been a pleasantly mild summer with one heat wave in June and another, lasting only a few days, around July 20. At times the coolness made it difficult to believe that it was summer at all. Rain has fallen fairly regularly so that growing conditions have been good, although the coolness has probably retarded the ripening of fruits and seeds to some extent.

**Loons — Ducks:** A Great Blue Heron was at Sherburne June 15 (Whites). Another was seen flying over Whitney Point July 31 (Bemont, R. Sheffield) and Aug 3 perhaps the same one was seen wading in the Tioughnioga River nearby. Also on

Aug 3 two were at Newark Valley and Aug 11 one was at Boland's Marsh near Binghamton. Summer records are not common from this area. An American Egret at Whitney Point June 30 (Stockton) was the only one reported. One adult Black-crowned Night Heron was at Sherburne July 16 and three immatures were at the same place July 25 (Whites). A pair of Egyptian Geese have spent almost the whole period along the Tioungnioga River in the Whitney Point area (Loomis). They are no doubt escapees from some private aviary, although they can fly normally and are not banded. No one in the area is known to keep exotic waterfowl, except the barn yard varieties, so they evidently came from an appreciable distance. Their chances of coming through both the hunting season and the winter seem extremely slim, but it will be interesting to see how they do. Three Blue-winged Teal were at Whitney Point July 2 (Sheffields). No reports of successful duck nestings have been received, but in the Deposit area a Wood Duck and a Hooded Merganser nest were destroyed by coons (Wilson). On June 23 a male Canvasback was seen on the Susquehanna River just east of Binghamton. It was apparently injured as it went up on the bank when approached (Doren). Five apparently female Hooded Mergansers were near Deposit June 8 (Wilson).

**Hawks — Owls:** Turkey Vultures were recorded June 1 and June 20 in the Deposit area (Wilson). Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks did not return to old nests in that area this year. An adult Bald Eagle was at Roods Creek, near Deposit, July 24 and on Aug 1 perhaps the same bird was two miles south of Deposit (Wilson). From the description, a bird seen over Oxford July 10 (Stratton) was almost certainly an adult Bald Eagle. On July 2 a picture of a young hawk was printed in the "Binghamton Press." The caption identified it as an "American eaglet" and reported that it and a nest mate had been turned over to the Ross Park zoo. Investigation revealed that it was a young Marsh Hawk that had been removed from its nest near Smithville Flats in Chenango Co. On July 4 the nest was visited and the one remaining young banded. The fourth one had evidently flown, but the two adults were still in the area. On July 6 the banded bird was also gone. The man responsible for the removal of the two young birds was later fined \$28.50, but the birds were kept at the zoo, where at least one subsequently died. An immature Virginia Rail was found at Sherburne July 6 (Whites) and an immature Florida Gallinule was near Vestal July 27 (Sheffields). An Upland Plover was at Guilford June 15 on the same hill as in previous years. No young were found, but local residents reported seeing young ones earlier (Whites). A Solitary Sandpiper was at Norwich July 21 (Whites) and another was at Boland's Marsh July 28 (Sheffields). One Baird's Sandpiper was at Norwich July 21, two were there July 25 and two Aug 10 (Whites). Aug 10 there were also three at Boland's Marsh (Sheffields). On July 25 there was also one Semi-palmated Sandpiper at Norwich. A Black Tern was at Norwich July 21 (Whites), an unusual summer record for this region. Yellow-billed Cuckoos have been scarce, being reported only from Oxford (Stratton). There have been frequent reports of Black-bills throughout the region. A Barred Owl was heard near Deposit June 9 and another near the Beaverkill June 12 (Wilson).

**Goatsuckers — Shrikes:** There has been some log cutting going on at the place near Norwich where Whip-poor-wills have been heard for the last two years so none were found this year (Whites). An adult male Red-headed Woodpecker was seen at Oxford July 2 (Stratton) and another was seen just south of Binghamton Aug 7 (O'Neil). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was still at Sherburne Jun 1 (Whites). Alder Flycatchers are more common around Binghamton this year than they have been in several years (TCNC). They were also reported from Norwich June 19 and Sherburne June 11 (Whites). A young Horned Lark was seen at Ely Park in Binghamton June 1 (Sheffields) and on June 30 at the Broome Co. Airport, where they are almost as bold as House Sparrows. An adult Horned Lark was seen breaking up pop-corn and feeding small pieces of it to its young (Bemont). At Norwich a late brood of young Barn Swallows left the nest Aug 14 (Whites). The Cliff Swallow colony just west of Richford never did show any signs of life this year, but at Newark Valley a previously unreported colony of about eight pairs was found. The owners of the farm buildings on which the colony was built expressed a strong dislike for the birds, but said they had been there many years (TCNC). July 29 a count of Cliff Swallows from a colony three miles south of Deposit totalled 44 birds (Wilson). A Red-breasted Nuthatch was at Sherburne June 22 and on July 9 four, some of them young, were seen at Norwich (Whites). The elevation there is 1600 to 1700 feet.



A Short-billed Marsh Wren was at Sherburne June 15 and still there July 6 (Whites). Long-billed Marsh Wrens have continued to be scarce in the Binghamton area all summer (TCNC). There were several July reports of singing Hermit Thrushes from the Binghamton area (TCNC) and one from Sherburne July 28 (Whites). On July 7 two Golden-crowned Kinglets, one singing, were found near Norwich in a thick stand of 20 foot spruce (Whites). The song had been heard, but not recognized, July 3 and July 5. A Migrant Shrike was seen hanging around the Whitney Point Dam July 22 (Kelsey), perhaps the same bird that was seen there in April.

**Vireos — Warblers:** A Blue-headed Vireo was at Sherburne June 22 at a high elevation (Whites). Worm-eating Warblers were still at Ely Park June 2 (Sheffields) but have not been checked on since. Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers were still singing on adjacent territories near Binghamton June 2 (Bemont, H. Marsi). A Myrtle Warbler was seen at Norwich July 11 and Aug 10 (Whites, Sheffields) and at Guilford July 26 (Whites). Two Blackburnian Warblers were at Windsor Marsh June 2 (Sheffields). Chestnut-sided Warblers have seemed less common than in other years around Binghamton (TCNC). Two Mourning Warblers, one singing, were at Sherburne June 1 (Whites). The one at Peakville in Delaware Co. was still singing June 5 (Wilson) and two were still at Norwich June 14 (Whites). A Hooded Warbler was found singing at Norwich July 3, and another, a female or immature, was at the same place July 5 with the still singing male.

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** At Bainbridge, in an area usually occupied by several pairs of Scarlet Tanagers and several pairs of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, there were none of either species (E. J. Smith). A pair of Cardinals is still at Deposit but they are almost completely silent (Wilson). A Cardinal was at Oxford Aug 9 (Stratton). Purple Finches have been more common than usual at Bainbridge (E. J. Smith). About 20 adults, later augmented by the young, hung around until July 27, or as long as the feeder offered sunflower seeds. Four or five pairs were around Deposit all summer, but of the two nests found one was abandoned and the other was broken up by a predator (Wilson). Two Slate-colored Juncos were at Guilford July 26 and were found at Sherburne several times during the summer (Whites). Several White-throated Sparrows were at Pharsalia June 2 (Whites) and an adult male was singing a "partial song" at Deposit until June 13 (Wilson). Another one was found at German, near Oxford, July 6 (Stratton).

710 University Ave., Endwell

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

June ran its usual hot, muggy course and punctuated its ending with strong protracted SW winds (29-30 June) that worked havoc on the Oneida Lake and Sandy Pond tern colonies. July was equally hot but dry, and terminated with a terrific cloudburst (30 July) that caused extensive flooding in eastern Onondaga, Madison, and Oneida Counties and was ruinous to such creekside species as Phoebe and Rough-winged Swallow.

This summer's reports have been uniform in remarking notable increases of Green Herons, Upland Sandpipers, Mourning Doves, House Wrens, and Bluebirds.

Summer expeditions to gather information on breeding birds have continued: some areas visited this year include the black spruce bog (Cicero Bog) between North Syracuse and Bridgeport, and the Pleasant Valley sector near Marcellus, both in Onondaga County, and Howland's Island Game Management Area in Cayuga County. Most rewarding of all, however, was a trip along 14 miles of lumber roads in the Tug Hill Plateau area of northern Oneida and southern Lewis Counties. Noteworthy finds of this

particular trip were a remarkable profusion of northern forms (e. g. White-throated Sparrow, Olive-backed Thrush) and warblers (see section on warblers) and the paucity of hawks and woodpeckers. Continued work in regularly visited areas (Camillus, Plainville) produced several "first-proven" nestings of southern species.

The July to early August shorebird flight was low in numbers, poor in variety, and on the whole, tardy.

**Loons — Ducks:** Pied-billed Grebe: this species has benefited markedly from the N. Y. S. Conservation Dept. wildlife marsh program, as practically every marsh built supports a pair; however, it is scarce at Clay Swamp this year where aquatic plants have grown over the open water areas following a drop in the muskrat population (disease, trapping??). Double-crested Cormorant: one seen June 4, Sandy Pond, is probably from the Henderson Harbor colony. American Egret: reported in small numbers from Howland's Is. GMA and Oneida Lake near Bridgeport with singles at Phoenix and Three Rivers GMA (JW); on the whole, scarce this summer. Little Blue Heron: an immature, Aug. 10, Howland's Is. GMA, is a rare summer visitor (MR, FS).

Whistling Swan: the group of five that lingered near Skaneateles in late May stayed until June 6 (RS). Mallard, Black Duck, Blue-winged Teal: reports indicate a very successful nesting season with little or no harm from the dry July. Green-winged Teal: a nest of this species was discovered in mid-June at Howland's Is. GMA (SE) and there is evidence that this species probably bred at Stevens Pond near Phoenix and at Clay Swamp. A spate of records of summering ducks is notable: Lesser Scaup and Golden-eye, July 28, Greater Scaup, Aug 17, all at Sandy Pond; Ruddy Duck, Aug 10, Howland's Is. GMA; most surprising is a female Red-breasted Merganser, Aug 8, on a small marsh near East Syracuse.

**Hawks — Owls:** Turkey Vulture: two were captured in a duck-banding trap, banded, and released, early June, Howland's Is. GMA (SE). Goshawk: three young were banded and both young and adults were sound-recorded, June 10, in a remote section of the Tug Hill Plateau (PPK, BB). Red-tailed Hawk: the young: nest ratio this year around Syracuse was two: one with a total of 32 banded (BB). Bald Eagle: the Lake Ontario nest again produced **no** young, the second year of failure. Harrier: growing steadily scarcer in the flatlands south of Oneida Lake; several pairs, however, have been located in small marshes at the Lake Plain mouths of the hill-country valleys.

Ruffed Grouse: many reports of nest and chicks from various areas (Constantia, Manlius, Jamesville, Tug Hill Plateau) indicate a peak or near-peak year. Bobwhite: apparently the bird has become established at Three Rivers GMA as "natural" broods were noted there in June; one seen at Manlius, July 28, (AC) is unusual. Virginia Rail, Sora, and Florida Gallinule: like the Pied-billed Grebe, these have taken readily to the N. Y. S. Conservation Dept. wildlife marshes, partially offsetting their losses from natural marshes destroyed thru drainage (parts of Clay Swamp) and dumping (Onondaga Lake marshes).

Shorebirds thru July and early Aug were scarce at both Sandy Pond (lack of food) and Sylvan Beach, Oneida Lake (continued high water). Piping Plover: nest discovered, May 30, Sandy Pond Inlet (the Burdicks); five adults there June 16; a juvenile there on July 28 would indicate partial nesting success despite the late June windstorms flooding over the sand flats. Ringed Plover: one, June 29, Sandy Pond, is a very early arrival date. No records of Black-bellied Plover to end of the period. Ruddy Turnstone: spring departure date, June 7, three; fall arrival date, Aug 3, one, both at Sandy Pond. Wilson's Snipe and Least Sandpiper: fall arrival dates are July 21 and July 14 respectively, both late.

Great Black-backed Gull: last date is June 29, two immatures, Sandy Pond. Ring-billed Gull: early June numbers at Sandy Pond were impressive with a high of 6000 on June 7. Common Tern: the strong winds of late June apparently washed out many nests at Sandy Pond and Oneida Lake; the Oneida Lake birds may have recouped some of their losses as weak-flying, food-begging young were seen into early Sept. Caspian Tern: two on June 29, Sandy Pond, are hard to allocate — ?? summering birds, early migrants. Black Tern: a small colony of eight pairs (first

colony known east of Rt. 11) found near Cicero Center, Onondaga County; these may explain the few late Jun birds seen on Oneida Lake as none are known to breed there. Cuckoos: many observers (HPN, EE, MB, RS) commented on the abundance of cuckoos, especially the Black-billed.

**Swifts — Shrikes:** Whip-poor-will: several birds along the north shore of Oneida Lake, July 15-21; birds in active song until mid-July at Cicero Bog. Nighthawk & Chimney Swift: late was a brood of two Nighthawks hatched Aug 5 and a brood of two Chimney Swifts hatched the first week of Aug and banded on Aug 13, both at Syracuse (BB); a flight of 16 Nighthawks was migrating west over Syracuse, Aug 21.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: one seen July 7, Howland's Is. GMA; two adults and a juvenile seen June 23 to July 7, Plainville (MB), is our first breeding record. Red-headed Woodpecker: a new location, much photographed, found near Skaneateles (WS, H); however, the two Bridgeport sites have been abandoned. Sapsucker: two pairs with young seen at Camp Woodland, Constantia in mid-July and in mid-Aug; a single Sapsucker seen, June 10, in the Tug Hill area reflects the general scarcity of this entire family there.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: two found, June 10, in spruce bogs of the Tug Hill country are probably breeders. Alder Flycatcher: literally a flood of these birds this summer; highest count is 55, June 10 along the roads of the Tug Hill Plateau. Least Flycatcher: this species continued scarce along the North Shore of Oneida Lake (Cleveland, Constantia) despite a slight increase in other areas (Camillus, Phoenix). Olive-sided Flycatcher: four on June 10 in spruce stands of the Tug Hill Plateau were a good find, but a pair at Camp Woodland, Constantia, July 14-21, is the first July — and probably breeding — record for that area in a 13-year period (FS).

Bank and Rough-winged Swallows: in late June - early July Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Nodecker of Oneida had a successful banding season, largely by mist-netting — totals were 449 Bank, 11 Rough-winged, well above last year's. Cliff Swallow: the colonies along the North Shore of Oneida Lake (FS) and those at the south end of Skaneateles Lake (HH) appeared to be on the increase, the first cheering note to offset four years of dismal decline; however, Mrs. Aspinwall at Rome notes several colonies in northeastern Oneida County abandoned and suspects recent barn-painting as the disturbing factor.

Brown Creeper: the presence of one at Muskrat Bay, South Shore of Oneida Lake, July 7, probably indicates a new breeding station. House Wren: a greater increase noted (Rome, Syracuse, Marcellus) this year than last; apparently still increasing from the striking low of the summer of 1955. Carolina Wren: another late summer explosion of this species has occurred; one, July 6, Oneida (HPN), two records near Rome, July 23 and Aug 16-18 (HA), one, Aug 25, Plainville (MB), two, Aug 17, Selkirk Shores State Park (MR, FS), and one, Aug 18, Camp Woodland, Constantia (MR, FS), the last a first record for the North Shore of Oneida Lake. **Short-billed Marsh Wren:** a pair and nest found Aug 2 near Euclid is the only regional record and the first recent nesting record!

Wood Thrush: a slight increase noted at Plainville and a marked increase at Camp Woodland, Constantia. Olive-backed Thrush, Hermit Thrush, and Veery: counts of 38, 32, and 30 respectively, June 10, give an approximation of their relative abundance in the Tug Hill Sector; in contrast, at the same time and place, only three Wood Thrushes were noted. Hermit Thrush: new stations are a small pine-oak barrens near Phoenix, June 13, and in Cicero Bog, June 8.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: a recently fledged young, July 7, Howland's Is. GMA, established this species as a breeder there (MR, FS). Loggerhead Shrike: a nest with three young found June 9, west of Camillus (PPK, DA): young birds flying by June 15. Starling: two pairs were observed nesting in enlarged, grass-lined holes in a Bank Swallow colony near DeWitt, Onondaga County, July 13.

**Vireos-Warblers:** Blue-headed Vireo: a count of 38 birds, June 10, Tug Hill Plateau, shows the prevalence of the northern forms there. Warbling Vireo: two nests located; one at Shackleton Point, Oneida Lake, and another at Sandy Pond (RS); for the first time in several years, a pair stayed thru the summer at Morrisville (AC).

The trip to the Tug Hill Plateau on June 10 was keynoted by an abundance of warblers, particularly about the periphery of the numerous spruce bogs and along the

many small creeks; the following figures are the number of singing males counted along fourteen miles of lumber road in southern Lewis County: Nashville — five; Parula — two; Magnolia — 75; Black-throated Blue — 58; Myrtle — 18; Black-throated Green — 78; Blackburnian — 65; Chestnut-sided — 145; Northern Water-thrush — 52; Mourning — 24; Yellow-throat — 75; Canada — 64; Redstart — 46; the complete absence of Yellow Warblers and the presence of the Parula and Myrtle Warblers reflects the Adirondack-like character of this sector.

Prothonotary Warbler: a new site complete with nest and two successfully fledged young was located, June 5 to July 10, at Muskrat Bay, Oneida Lake, two miles west of the regular station which was also occupied. Golden-winged Warbler: more reports than ever before; found at Pleasant Valley and Plainville, Onondaga Co., near Phoenix, Oswego Co. (in oak-pine barrens with Hermit Thrush!), and at Otter Lake, Cayuga Co. Blue-winged Warbler: a group of four, Aug 25, at Otter Lake (DW) probably represents a family group raised nearby. Nashville Warbler: four singing males were discovered in the Cicero Bog, June 8, scattered about the edge of a large blueberry burn (JW). Parula Warbler: practically every summer produces one "off-date" Parula; this year it was a female, June 30, Plainville (MB); any known central New York breeding records?? Yellow Warbler: a male singing a "prothonotary-perfect" song was noted, June 13, at Short Point Bay, Oneida Lake (WS). Cerulean Warbler: three nests discovered this summer: one, Gully Road near Swaneateles, June 23, produced a single Cowbird; nest building was seen June 2 at both Camillus and Howland's Is. GMA (RS); the species was noted regularly thru the summer at Plainville (MB). Mourning Warbler: singing males were seen in mid-June in ravines near Canastota (DA) and at Howland's Is. GMA, July 7; a pair carrying food noted June 22-23 near Plainville. Yellow-crested Chat: a nest with five young found, June 23, at Camillus (RS); **first regional nesting record!** Hooded Warbler: a new station located at Pleasant Valley, southeast of Marcellus, July 4.

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** Cowbird: most observers reported one or more examples of nest parasitism with Red-eyed Vireos, Chipping Sparrows, and Yellow Warblers most heavily victimized.

Purple Finch: this species was feeding young, July 14-21, at Camp Woodland, Constantia; a single male at Borodino, July 25, may indicate nesting there. Tallies of 46 Purple Finches (also one nest), 85 White-throated Sparrows, and 36 Juncos, June 10, again attest to the northern element of the Tug Hill Plateau. A pair of Juncos and a separate juvenile were observed, July 14-21, at Camp Woodland, Constantia; despite a 13 year history of Winter Wren, Sapsucker, and Blue-headed Vireo in that sector, this is the first summer Juncos have been noted there. White-throated Sparrow: several pairs noted in Cicero Bog, June 8; many heard and seen north of Constantia and in the Rome Sand Plains where they are regular summer residents.

OBSERVERS: DA — David Ackley; HA — Mrs. H. Aspinwall; MB — Maude Bitz; BB — Dr. Benjamin Burt; AC — Ada Carter; SE — Stan Ernst; EE — Mrs. E. Evans; HH — Harris Hiscock; PPK — Dr. Peter Paul Kellogg; HPN — Harmon P. Nodecker; MR — Margaret Rusk; FS — Fritz Scheider; RS — Roberta Seaman; WS — Dr. Walter Spofford; JW — John Weeks; DW — Douglas Whitman.

151 Seventh North Street, Syracuse 8, New York

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## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

FRANK A. CLINCH

In general the breeding season has been a fairly good one. In July the rainfall was a little above normal, but there was little rain in August. In St. Lawrence County this summer has been described as being too dry for birds.

**Loons — Ducks:** A flock of Cormorants was seen at Black Lake on July 25 by Rev. Nichols, his first summer record for St. Lawrence County. No Egrets were reported. A Least Bittern was at Perch River Marsh Aug 1. Jim Merritt sent the information that on July 8 Hallenbeck saw a Turkey Vulture at Lake Brantingham,

Lewis County. An Osprey nest was found at Yellow Lake near Oxbow, St. Lawrence County on Aug 12 by A. W. Allen and at least one immature bird was seen flying near the nest. Later John Belknap saw the nest and birds. Young Coots were seen at Perch River Marsh on Aug 1. It seems that Virginia Rails and Florida Gallinules had a successful breeding season at Perch River Refuge. Semi-palmated Sandpipers were on the rocky shore of the river at Morristown on July 25, our earliest fall arrival of that species (Nichols). An immature Great Black-backed Gull at Red Mill on the St. Lawrence River on June 17 was our first summer record (Nichols).

**Swifts — Warblers:** In this section most of us do well to see a single nest of the Red-headed Woodpecker in a season, but Belknap recorded three nesting sites north of Watertown this year. On July 5 an Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker was observed at Brantingham Lake (Hallenbeck). Tree Swallows resting on wires and roofs along the St. Lawrence River at Red Mill on Aug 5 were estimated by Nichols at about 2100. They stayed for at least a week, perhaps held by swarms of shad-flies. Bank Swallows were feeding their young in nests near Watertown July 11, but all were gone two or three days later (Clinch). Cape May Warblers arrived early, Aug 14, at Madrid and stayed several days in conifers. Nichols found a singing Pine Warbler in typical breeding territory near Ogdensburg July 18 and one appeared at Madrid Aug 15. On July 4 a Yellow-breasted Chat was seen near Watertown (Allen).

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** A Henslow's Sparrow was heard singing near Potsdam as late as July 31. A male and a female **Pine Grosbeak** were seen near Watertown Aug 13 (Allen). This is probably the first record of a Pine Grosbeak in this section in summer. They are sometimes seen here in late fall and winter. Juncos and White-throated Sparrows were found nesting south of Wanakena, St. Lawrence County June 15.

Correction: Kingbird VII (2) 66, Ruddy Turnstones and Red-backed Sandpipers were found by Gordon at Stony Point May 19.

173 *Haley St., Watertown.*

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## REGION 8 — MOHAWK-HUDSON

JAMES K. MERITT

Summer temperatures in the capital district were a bit above normal. June was an especially warm month. Rainfall was relatively light and sporadic. During most of July we were in the throes of our second major drought of the year.

The best record of the period is a Blue Grosbeak seen by two observers in southern Rensselaer County on June 24. This first record for Region 8 highlighted a generally interesting birding season. Tent caterpillar infestation was negligible throughout the period.

**Loons — Ducks:** Most local observers were made Cattle Egret conscious when one was discovered near Schenectady on May 25. There were many attempts in early June to relocate the bird in the same or nearby areas, but all were unsuccessful. Herons in general seemed relatively scarce this summer. The American Egret was not reported until July 15, when one was seen along the Mohawk at Niskayuna (Schenectady Bird Club). The high count for this species was observed in the Vischer Ponds and Crescent Reservoir area on July 21 (Hallenbeck). Over twice this number were seen last year. Black-crowned Night Herons were way down in numbers. The American Bittern was reported on only a few occasions. At Nassau an immature was seen in a vegetable garden on July 12 (Shineman). The bird was caught the next day and released in a more appropriate habitat. Wood Ducks bred again this year at Vischer Ponds. On June 30 a female with young was seen there (Meritt). Mallard and Blacks were the only other ducks to be recorded.

**Hawks — Owls:** The increasingly common Turkey Vulture was reported on three occasions. On June 23 one was seen near Catskill, and on June 28 two were at East Chatham (Smilow). One was at Rensselaerville on June 21 (Eaton). As is usual during the nesting season, reports of other hawks were not too plentiful. At Nassau some nine Ruffed Grouse were spotted on July 25 (Smilow, Turner). On

July 27 a Bob-white appeared in Scotia, a record which caused some excitement there. The bird stayed at the same spot until Aug 11, when it disappeared just as suddenly as it had arrived. It appears probable that this bird was one of a group released in Albany County during the early summer. The Bob-white has become more common in Columbia County. There were several observations there in July (Carter, Smilow, Turner). A Florida Gallinule was seen at a Scotia lake on several occasions in June (Hallenbeck). On July 27 an adult Virginia Rail with two coal-black young was seen at Vischer Ponds (Hallenbeck, Meritt), and the birds were noted there again on July 31. A Virginia Rail was at Meadowdale Marsh on Aug 11 (Merritt). Two Woodcock were recorded at Hillside on July 21 (Carter). There were several July and August reports of the Solitary Sandpiper, and on July 14 a Lesser Yellow-legs, a surprise at that date, was seen in Niskayuna (SBC). A Greater Yellow-legs was seen and heard at Rensselaerville on July 31 (Eaton).

In spite of a not overly conspicuous May migration, cuckoos were reported with surprising frequency. Black-bills were a bit the more common. This species bred at East Chatham (Radke), and at Amsterdam the Yellow-billed nested (Fitzgerald). Five species of owls were reported during the summer. At East Chatham two adult Screech Owls with one young were sighted on June 17 (Radke). A Screech Owl was present throughout the period at Guilderland Center (Van Vorst), and one was heard in Niskayuna on Aug 15 (Eddy). On June 14 a Saw-whet Owl was heard at Middle Grove (Hennig), and another was heard regularly at Jenny Lake between July 2 and 26 (Bartlett). At Rensselaerville an immature Saw-whet Owl was seen being mobbed by Robins, Blue Jays, Chickadees, and a Black-throated Green Warbler (Eaton). Horned and Barred Owls were reported regularly from the Jenny Lake area in July. A young Barn Owl, not long out of the nest, was recorded near Rensselaerville on July 19 (Eaton).

**Goatsuckers — Shrikes:** At Old Chatham a Pileated Woodpecker was seen on July 12 (Carter), and on July 23 and 25 two were seen at East Chatham (Smilow). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, not common in the Mohawk valley in summer, was in Niskayuna on July 31 (Eddy).

Alder Flycatchers were regular at Vischer Ponds and Meadowdale Marsh throughout the period. At Berne a Carolina Wren was heard on July 27 (Eaton). This species was definitely established as a breeder in Scotia when parents with two young were sighted on June 14 (Hallenbeck). The birds were present at the same locality throughout the period. Late in July a Carolina Wren in full song appeared at Amsterdam (Fitzgerald), additional evidence of the bird's spread in this area.

A Mockingbird was observed in a Schenectady suburb on June 14 (Meritt). A pure albino Robin was noted at Canajoharie in June and apparently caused much excitement there (fide Fitzgerald). The bird, a young of the year, was photographed and seen by scores of curious observers. A partial albino Robin, with a white head and back but with the familiar red breast, was present during most of June at Nassau (Turner). At Rensselaerville the Veery and Wood Thrush were last heard singing on July 23 and Aug 2 respectively (Eaton).

**Vireos — Warblers:** A Blue-headed Vireo was at East Chatham on June 1 (Smilow), and this species bred near Rensselaerville (Eaton). A Golden-winged Warbler was recorded at East Chatham through June 11 (Radke), but there were no other reports of this species. There were three scattered reports of the Blue-winged Warbler. From the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve near Rensselaerville many interesting warbler reports were submitted by Steve Eaton. Black-throated Greens were leaving the nest there between the dates of June 11 and Aug 2. A Nashville Warbler was recently out of the nest on June 15. An adult Tennessee Warbler was seen on July 23, and on Aug 10 three Bay-breasted Warblers (one a male still in breeding plumage) were observed. Eaton reports a noticeable group of southbound warblers of several species on Aug 12.

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** On the early morning of Aug 11 thousands of Starlings, in several groups, were observed performing aerial maneuvers high in the sky just south of Schenectady. By the latter part of July blackbirds and Bobolinks were gathering and roosting in large flocks preparatory to the fall migration. At Old Chatham an Orchard Oriole was observed on June 6 (Carter); this is the second reported locally this year. A Blue Grosbeak at Brookview on June 24 constitutes a new area record (Dorn). The bird was seen well by two observers, and all characteristic field marks were noted. The Cardinal bred again in Niskayuna this year.

On July 21 a pair with two young began making regular visits to a feeder there (Eddy). A male Cardinal was seen at Galway Lake on July 28 (Fitzgerald), and there was a report from the lower Hudson part of our region on July 27 (Alan Devoe Bird Club). Purple Finches were quite commonly reported from most areas. The last Grasshopper Sparrow was heard near Vischer's Ferry on July 27. On Aug. 10 two Henslow's Sparrows were heard at West Glenville, and three others were recorded the following day in the Meadowdale area (Meritt).

In view of the scarcity of Evening Grosbeaks this past winter, a belated report of three at Gore Mountain, Warren County, on May 30 might be of interest.

Correction to spring summary, VII(2): 69: On May 26 a flock of almost 100 Brant, not the 1700 reported, was present near Niskayuna.

16 *Ellen Lane, Scotia 2*

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## REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

FRED N. HOUGH

Dry — just about summarizes our summer weather this year and this had to follow on the heels of a relatively dry spring! The few showers that did occur quenched the thirst of the dry earth but little and as a result we could see considerable drought damage to vegetation. Seasonal temperatures varied from periods of warm to spells of cool weather, with a tendency toward cool weather especially during August.

Many of our birders were scattered about the country from coast to coast, leaving only a few "stay at homes" who seem to feel that bird activity was generally unspectacular or just plain normal. As often is the case, however, some good finds were made thus warranting the incentive to keep at it even when things appear dull.

One big question in the minds of many birders this past season has been: "What effect has the gypsy moth spray program had on our birds?" Although some detrimental effects have obviously resulted from this — what seems to be "a necessary evil" — an accurate analysis of the results as far as birds are concerned is not available under the present scope of observations.

**Loons — Ducks:** Two or three Common Loons were seen several times on the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster during July (Al Feldman; Henry & Ilse Dunbar). This is a first mid-summer record for the Loon in this area. Among other birds, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Deed saw an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron in the Lake DeForest area of Rockland on Aug 17. Two Canada Geese with five young were observed on the waters of the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester June 5 (Mr. and Mrs. Andrew McWaters). A summer record of the American Brant in Ulster was made by Al Feldman on June 26. He discovered it on the Ashokan Reservoir.

**Hawks — Owls:** The stocking of Bob-white in many areas of the Hudson Valley has given hopes to many that this fine game bird will again become a familiar part of our countryside bird-life. The Turkey has also been stocked in areas of Sullivan and Ulster and has been met with much interest in hoping that it too will become established. A Bonaparte's Gull appeared about the Ashokan Reservoir and was spotted on July 21 by the Dunbars and Al Feldman. This is a first record for Ulster County. Also on July 21 and previously on July 18 Feldman reports seeing the locally rare Caspian Tern in the Ashokan Reservoir area. Nothing unusual reported among the various owls.

**Swifts — Shrikes:** The pair of Acadian Flycatchers found by Robert Deed and Eugene Brown last May 17 at Valley Cottage near Lake DeForest, Rockland, remained to nest. The nest was constructed in an oak less than ten feet from the highway and was completed by May 24. Young were found later. The Acadian Flycatcher was also found up in Ulster Co. by Fred Hough and Dan Smiley on June 15 near West Shokan, at a place called Moonhaw which is near the base of Cornell Mt. Two

singing birds were noted in typical mature beech and maple habitat on a lower slope at about 1200 feet. Both records are area firsts. A Red-breasted Nuthatch was heard at Mohonk Lake on the Shawangunks July 18 (Dan Smiley). On July 28 Mrs. Wm. Grierson watched a Blue Jay eat a small snake (probably DeKay's) near her home at Mt. Kisco, Westchester. A Carolina Wren was found far up in the wooded valley below Peekamoose Mt. in the Catskills on Aug 18 (Hough, Smiley). Mr. Irving Kennedy discovered a Mockingbird near New City, Rockland on May 31 and a few days later Mrs. F. Steffens and E. Treacy found its nest in an ornamental shrub. The nest contained an egg and two young. Over in Sparrowbush, Orange County, another Mocker was seen on June 24 (Hammond).

On June 15 and 16 Fred Hough and Dan Smiley returned to the haunts of the Bickell's Thrush in the higher Catskills for another visit. This time it was on Balsam Cap Mt. (about 3850 ft.) The Thrush was seen and heard and another note on its status in the Catskills was made. Martha Earl reports the loss of seven first broods in the nesting Bluebirds about her home area in Blooming Grove, Orange Co. This occurred about a week after the gypsy moth spraying took place and she wonders if it was not responsible for the death of the broods. No deaths were noted in the adult birds and the second broods were successful in all cases.

**Vireos — Warblers:** Black-poll Warblers were still singing on Peekamoose Mt. in the Catskills on Aug 18 (Hough, Smiley). Henry and Ilse Dunbar found a fair mid-summer population of Mourning Warblers near the Bellayre ski slopes in the Catskills.

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** The Orchard Oriole returned to its nesting site near Stone Ridge, Ulster for the fifth straight year but no nesting took place. The birds disappeared in early June and were not seen again (Hough). Wandering summer Grackles were more prevalent in many areas of Ulster.

Andrew and Bertha McWaters of Westchester discovered a Blue Grosbeak on June 15 near Glenford in Ulster County, while visiting relatives there. It was watched several times that day and the McWaters feel there is no doubt about the observation as being that of this southern species. A pair of Purple Finches were found nesting in Katonah, Westchester (Mrs. Wm. Grierson) and another pair was seen again this year near Stone Ridge, Ulster but no nesting evidence was found (Hough). In May a nest of the Junco was found on the second floor steel work of the Lake Mohonk mountain house in Ulster Co. (Dan Smiley).

*Accord 1*

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## REGION 10 — MARINE

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

Spring advanced into summer with a long continued dry spell broken by only one early July rain which penetrated the parched powdery earth to only an inch or two. The 1957 spring and early summer was marked by perhaps the worst series of woods fires in the history of eastern Long Island, with hundreds of acres blackened in many areas of the pitch-pine, scrub-oak barrens. The loss of young Prairie Warblers, Northern Yellow-throats and Towhees, not to mention several species of smaller mammals must have run high.

The dry nesting season was presumably beneficial to sea bird colonies especially in the Jones Beach, Oak Beach area where some 200 Herring Gulls, over 300 Common Terns and over 35 Black Skimmers were banded (M. Levine, A. Penberthy, D. Warren). Early June was again highlighted by an enormous flight of Shearwaters. Normally Sooty Shearwaters are the species involved; this year there was an infiltration of Greater also (R. Grant).

Among nesting Herons, Yellow-crowned appears on two eastern Long Island locations, with two well-fledged young at Riverhead, June 22 (D. Puleston, G. Raynor). Estimated numbers were fewer in the large Jones Beach colony of American and Snowy Egrets, Yellow-crowned and Black-



crowned Night Herons from last year and nests more scattered. No little Blue Herons were seen. The duck population remained favorable again this summer at The Raunt (Jamaica Bay Sanctuary) with Shoveller again nesting. Young Common Terns and Skimmers were banded up to the end of this period (Aug 15) at which time Black Terns were becoming more numerous. Shore-bird migration was well in progress, and following a few cool nights Olive-sided Flycatcher and Red-breasted Nuthatch led the vanguard of small land birds at Massapequa.

**Loons — Ducks:** The phenomenal number of 15 Common Loons and four Red-throated Loons were counted June 1 from Mecox to Moriches Inlet (P. Buckley, R. Clermont, N. Smith). On the same day these observers estimated in this area 500 Sooty Shearwaters; and on June 9 some 300 Sooty and 200 Greater Shearwaters were noted from Moriches to Shinnecock Inlets (R. Grant, Q. Kramer, Miss A. and Mrs. R. E. Chamberlain); a third large assembly of 160 Greater and 185 Sooty were seen at Westhampton, June 8, all flying westward (E. Whelen, Brooklyn Bird Club).

Other pelagic records: 12 Cory's Shearwaters and 100 Wilson's Petrels, Montauk, July 23 (Puleston). A Glossy Ibis was seen flying along Meadowbrook Causeway, Aug 5 (Penberthy). Breeding Gadwall at Jones Beach apparently had poor survival of young; two broods of Shovellers hatched at Jamaica Bay Sanctuary; early Green-winged Teal appeared at Jones Beach, with two July 27 (Elliott, Rose) and several at Jamaica Bay, Aug 4 (Levine, Penberthy).

**Hawks — Owls:** Nesting Red-shouldered Hawks were observed in the North port area and Broad-winged Hawks were on territory from Apr 22 (E. Mudge). Bob-white appears well populated in the farming country; few Rail and Gallinule records. There were good counts of shore-birds around Jamaica Bay with five Stilt Sandpiper, July 4, one Willet and one Hudsonian Curlew, July 20 and a Ruff from July 4 to 20 (N. Smith). Two Upland Plover were seen at Sagaponack, July 14 (Buckley, Clermont, Smith) and on July 21 (Puleston). Maximum Hudsonian Curlew, Mecox, Aug 4, 16 in a flock (Puleston); also a flock of nine, July 14 at Moriches (Clermont, Smith). There were several June Jaeger reports. A Cabot's Tern was collected June 30 at Mecox and is now in the American Museum of Natural History (Buckley, C. McKeever); there were also several Royal Tern reports. Black Terns put in an appearance at Moriches with an increase to six on July 27 (Puleston), three at Jones Beach same date (Elliott, Rose). Cuckoos were rather uncommon; a Barn Owl was found nesting at Fire Island Lighthouse (J. Bull).

**Swifts — Shrikes:** Whip-poorwills were reported as nesting in Mastic (J. T. Nichols). A Nighthawk was seen hawking over New Rochelle in early June. Least Flycatcher was present in the Oyster Bay region, where nesting; first Olive-sided Flycatcher, Massapequa, Aug 13 (Elliott). Purple Martins nested again in Seaford; early Red-breasted Nuthatch reported in Massapequa, Aug 13. Another Mockingbird was reported this year as probably nesting on western Long Island. The Veery has been pushed further eastward with advancing population. Three young of the Cedar Waxwing were reported at Manorville June 29 (Puleston); no Shrikes have been reported to date.

**Vireos — Warblers:** A Yellow-throated Vireo was heard singing June 8 at Smithtown, about ten miles eastward of regular nesting range (J. T. Nichols). Land development has probably eliminated the Black-throated Green Warbler from the West Hills area where summering birds were previously found for some 15 years. A slight movement of Yellow Warblers was noted in early August and Redstarts on Aug 11. Louisiana Water-thrush was present at Mill Neck during breeding season, and Chat at Massapequa and Mastic.

**Blackbirds — Sparrows:** Bobolinks probably nested again this year at Babylon, but left a daisy field at Massapequa in early June for no apparent reason, as they did last year. An Orchard Oriole was heard at Brookhaven, June 12 and on July 5 and 9 (Puleston). Scarlet Tanagers appeared on the down-grade this summer; Cardinals fairly numerous; several Indigo Buntings singing near Brookhaven during breeding season. House Finches were about normal; two British Goldfinch records since spring; American Goldfinch very plentiful. No Henslow's Sparrows reported; Vesper Sparrow scarce; Swamp Sparrow numbers gradually declining, but Field Sparrow still maintaining usual numbers.

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