

FIELD NOTES

Black Brant at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co., New York: October 5, 1974 marked the arrival of wintering Brant (*Branta bernicla*) at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge with the appearance of 15 birds. By October 14 their numbers had swelled to over 1500 individuals. On this day small flocks of brant were constantly flying back and forth between the west pond and the bay immediately south of the pond. Birds on the pond were resting or drinking, and birds on the bay were feeding on patches of sea lettuce exposed by the low tide. The latter birds were accompanied by many American Wigeons.

Sensing an opportunity, Jim Ash and I positioned ourselves between these constantly shifting brant and began systematically examining every passing flock. As a group of 40 to 50 birds passed over, we simultaneously noted an individual with extensively black underparts. These birds landed in the bay among a large aggregation of brant about 150 yards distant. Training a 20x spotting scope on this flock, we immediately found an individual with a more conspicuous, wider neck mark. As we watched this bird it turned toward us and we saw that a narrower band of white extended around the front of the neck. We followed this bird's movements for nearly an hour and finally it waded into shallow water, exposing its underparts. The underparts were concolor with the neck and upper breast and they were sharply delineated, terminating abruptly at the white undertail coverts. The combination of this bird's concolored underparts and the neck mark confirmed our belief that this was an adult Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*).

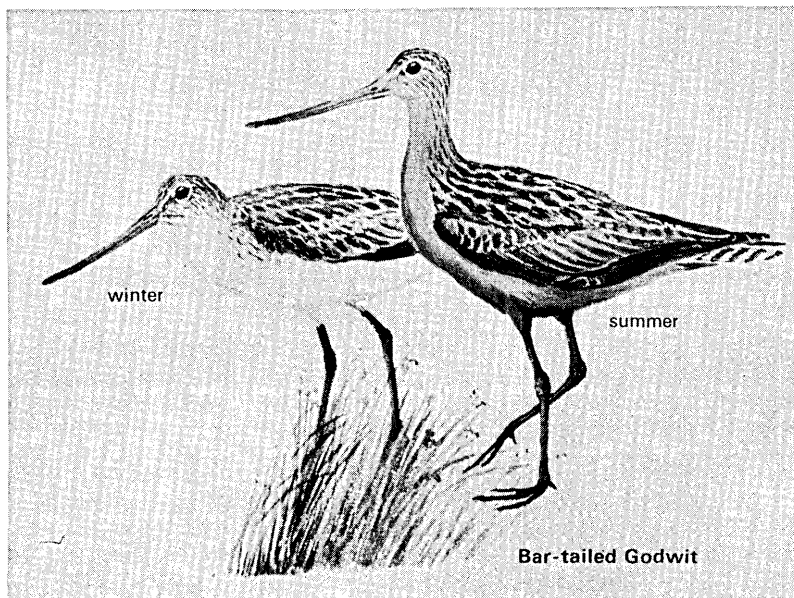
The Black Brant was noted occasionally to November 2 at low tide on the flats south of the west pond. Following this date the brant shifted their feeding grounds further west in Jamaica Bay. On November 29 Dr. Paul A. Buckley of the National Park Service reported an adult Black Brant at Floyd Bennett Airfield, an area restricted to the public. Very likely this bird is the same one reported earlier at the Refuge and will winter at Jamaica Bay.

The Black Brant has been recorded on six previous occasions in New York State. John Bull's *Birds of the New York Area* (1964. Harper and Row, New York) cites five Long Island occurrences (date span Oct. 25 - Mar. 31), and one was seen at Niagara Falls November 13, 1949 (verb. comm., John Bull).

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Addendum to July, 1974, Field Note on King Rail: In addition to the record of the King Rail reported in this Note, two other Cayuga Lake Basin records have been brought to the editor's attention: April 14, 1970 (*Kingbird*, Vol. XX, No. 3, p. 132) and May 16, 1970 (*Kingbird*, Vol. XX, No. 3, p. 138). JWT

Bar-tailed Godwit at Moriches Inlet, Suffolk Co., New York: On August 17, 1974 the author, with Jim Ash and Paul Lehman, discovered a breeding-plumaged Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) at East Inlet Island, situated a half mile ENE of Moriches Inlet. We later learned that this bird had been observed earlier in the day at West Inlet Island, a half mile to the west by Lore Schore, Stephen B. Dempsey, Jeannette Doran, Arline Dove, and other participants of Lyman Langdon Audubon Society and North Fork Audubon Society field trips. We independently identified this bird as the above species, based on its godwit size and proportions, dowitcher-like tail pattern, pale wing linings, and clear rufous underparts.



When first observed by Lore Schore *et al.* it was high tide, and the Bar-tailed, 10 Hudsonian Godwits (*L. haemastica*), and a variety of other shorebirds were roosting at the western extremity of West Inlet Island. As the tide ebbed, these birds became active. They preened and fed for a short while, and then all the godwits suddenly took flight to the east.

When I arrived at East Inlet Island the tide was half way out. We first spotted the 10 Hudsonian Godwits sitting together in shallow water preening. One hundred and fifty yards further the Bar-tailed was found probing its bill into wet sand exposed by the tide. It obviously preferred this feeding habitat, for it returned to wet sand each time it was flushed. In sharp contrast, the Hudsonians fed together on exposed mussel beds. Also, the Bar-tailed was very belligerent while feeding; it attacked and chased every shorebird that approached.

The Bar-tailed Godwit was seen again August 18 at East Inlet Island by Michel Kleinbaum, Robert O. Paxton, *et al.* It appeared at the onset of the ebb tide, flying in from the west. The bird was not seen following this date despite much intensive searching.

This is the third occurrence of Bar-tailed Godwit in New York State. Interestingly, the previous two records were also from the vicinity of Moriches Inlet; an "adult of the nominate race collected on Moriches Bay, opposite Mastic, November 15, 1946" (J. Bull, 1964. *Birds of the New York Area*. Harper and Row, New York), and one observed at West Inlet Island, May 10-12, 1971 (Mrs. J. B. Conolly, Jr., 1971. *Kingbird* 21 (3): 142-143).

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