

Summary

The six islands under discussion lie in an area 40 miles east to west by 25 miles north to south. All are in the north-easterly part of Lake Ontario with the exception of Black Ant Island which is in the upper St. Lawrence River. Although the Herring Gull nests on all of these islands, the Ring-billed Gull is the dominant species, greatly outnumbering all of the others combined.

DICKCISSEL IN FINGER LAKES REGION

On the evening of June 7th, as I was driving along the road about three miles from Pulteney in Steuben County, I suddenly became conscious of the singing of a Dickcissel, (*Spiza americana*). I stopped the car and located the bird sitting on a roadside high tension wire, singing as if he were sitting along an Iowa road, where I have been familiar with the species since childhood. The bird is still there (three days later at this writing), and acts as if he might be established. Since I discovered him he has been seen by about twenty other observers, several of whom--Malcolm Lerch, Francis Orcutt, Frank Guthrie--are active members of our Keuka Park Conservation Club.

There is an excellent habitat of clover hay meadow on each side of the road at this point which would encourage nesting should there be a pair of the birds.--Chas. J. Spiker, Keuka Park Conservation Club, Branchport, New York.

WHITE PELICANS IN WESTERN NEW YORK

My favorite spot and by far the best place in Western New York for observing migrating Canada Geese and other water fowl lies in the Alabama swamp region. By retaining the waters of the Oak Orchard Creek, water has covered the terrain to just the right depth for the dabbling species. The Oakfield-Barre road parallels one of these ponds and gives an excellent view of nearly the whole pond. This area, once under private ownership, now belongs to the state as a game refuge and sanctuary.

I came here before 8 A.M. on Friday, April 28, 1950, and as I approached the pond I looked over the entire surface in a general way, when my eye caught large white birds. My first thought was whistling swans. I then used binoculars which gave me definitely the long yellow bills lying close to the breast. Could there be White Pelicans in this territory? I had seen them in the Yellowstone National Park and on the west coast, but what were they doing here?

The use of my twenty power 50mm telescope proved to me that they were White Pelicans. Would they raise their wings that I could see the black tips? In a few minutes they did just that. Then I was absolutely sure.

The birds were about 1500 feet from the north end of the pond in the morning. In the afternoon they floated to within 600 feet of the end and later in the evening returned to their first location. There were thousands of wild geese and several species of ducks in the area. The Pelicans remained in the middle, the geese keeping away from them for a radius of about 25 feet.

The sky at 8 A.M. was cloudy, but cleared about noon with sunny weather through the middle of the day. The day ended overcast and with a cold northeast wind.

According to the rules of our society there must be three observers to make an unusual observation authentic. I drove down to Mrs. Beadle's farm. Miss Moore was visiting her. The three of us hurried back to the pond where we studied the birds with binoculars and telescope. All agreed definitely they were 3 White Pelicans.

I hurried back to Batavia and called Buffalo about 9:30. The news was flashed all over Buffalo via a grapevine system carried on by bird students.

Mrs. Beadle called the Rochester Museum from where word went out over Rochester to members of the Genesee Ornithological Society.

After completing the Buffalo call I immediately called all Batavia bird minded people. A broadcast over WBTA on the

noon broadcast brought many people from the surrounding country to the pond that same afternoon.

People also came from Rochester, Buffalo, LeRoy, Medina Lyndonville and Albion. It would be hard to estimate how many.

The game warden said all day Saturday the road along the edge of the pond was lined with cars.

The birds stayed until Sunday A.M. About six o'clock A.M. they rose and circled over the pond, flew in the direction of the eastern (big) marsh. They did not settle there but went on in a northwesterly direction. (Ed. Note--3 White Pelicans were observed the following Monday on Lake Ontario near Irondequoit Bay proceeding east along the lake.)

The rarity of Pelicans for Western New York causes much speculation about their presence here. Several years ago the Genesee Ornithological Society recorded a White Pelican from Shore Acres about thirty miles to the east of the present birds. Other records are scarce or absent.

During April, in the area of the upper Mississippi Valley and to the west, the weather was unseasonably cold and inclement. This may have been the deterring factor, which directed the birds easterly away from their regularly traveled migration route.

Records for Oak Orchard Swamp contains Blue, Snow, White-fronted and Lesser Canada Geese; Am. Egret, Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, Yellow Rail, and the Prothonotary Warbler, and now the presence of Pelicans adds another bird to this list of rarities.--Kathryn Pixley, Batavia, N. Y.

NOTES ON THE BREEDING BIRDS OF CAYUGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

During the progress of a survey of the breeding birds of Cayuga County, New York, in 1948, several notes were accumulated which may be of some general interest.

On May 29, 1948, the nest of a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker,