

SUMMER RECORDS OF RED CROSSBILLS

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Two small family groups of Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) seen in midsummer in east-central part of the state, by a well known ornithologist who recently related the facts to the writer, give suggestive nesting records of this subspecies in New York in 1951.

On July 22, 1951, Mr. Herbert G. Deignan of the Division of Birds, United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., while motoring from Gilboa to Conesville, N. Y., in the southeastern section of Schoharie County, was surprised to observe Red Crossbills feeding at the edge of the highway. Fearful that his car might have struck one of the startled birds, he stopped as soon as possible and walked back on the road. The small flock of four to six individuals had settled in a nearby pine tree. It appeared to be a family group as there was a bright red male and a greenish female; the others, apparently juveniles, were of duller streaked plumage. On the same day another similar group in both number and plumage was seen by Mr. Deignan a short distance from this location which was about ten miles from the southwestern corner of Albany County.

There are numerous coniferous trees in this area and while this is not a particularly high spot, within ten miles to the east, south and west there are five peaks of elevations 2885 to 3599 feet. This type of habitat provides plenty of suitable nesting places and it has a supply of cones and other food upon which these birds which are known to be erratic wanderers can live.

Chapman, *Birds of Eastern North America* (1932), says Crossbills have "no home ties" and that they may rear their young in foreign land which is far south of their normal breeding range.

On May 27, 1951, S. E. Fordham and S. R. Madison of Delmar, N. Y., noted a flock of 12 to 15 individuals near East Berne, N. Y., which is some 20 miles northeast of Gilboa and 15 miles southwest of Albany.

Red Crossbills from one to 50 birds were observed in Washington Park, in Albany between April 22 and May 31, 1951. Other observers reported the birds in other Albany County localities in May.

In New York State Museum files there is a record by Dr. D. H. House of one male Red Crossbill seen on July 1, 1934, one and one-half miles west of Berlin, Rensselaer County; there are other records for March and April 1941 for West Albany and Watervliet Reservoir districts. Stoner and Stoner *Birds of Washington Park*, Albany, N. Y. (1952 State Museum Bulletin in press) describe the March 30-May 9, 1941 visit of these birds in this city park.

May, *Natural History of the Birds of Eastern and Central North America* (1939) says that this erratic bird may nest either in January or in midsummer. Silloway, *Syracuse Univ. Bull.* Vol. 22, No. 4 (March 1923) refers to summer records as follows: "This (Common) Crossbill was seen and heard every day, often only a pair or a group of four or five —." While Eaton, *Birds of New York* (1914), cites eight summer dates for the bird from 1888 to 1906 in Niagara, Hamilton, Ontario, Monroe and Tompkins Counties and gives six egg or breeding dates 1875-1904.

To these records we now add Schoharie County, as the two family groups seen by Mr. Deignan on July 22, 1951 give circumstantial evidence of the Red Crossbills nesting in this county.