

THE FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS

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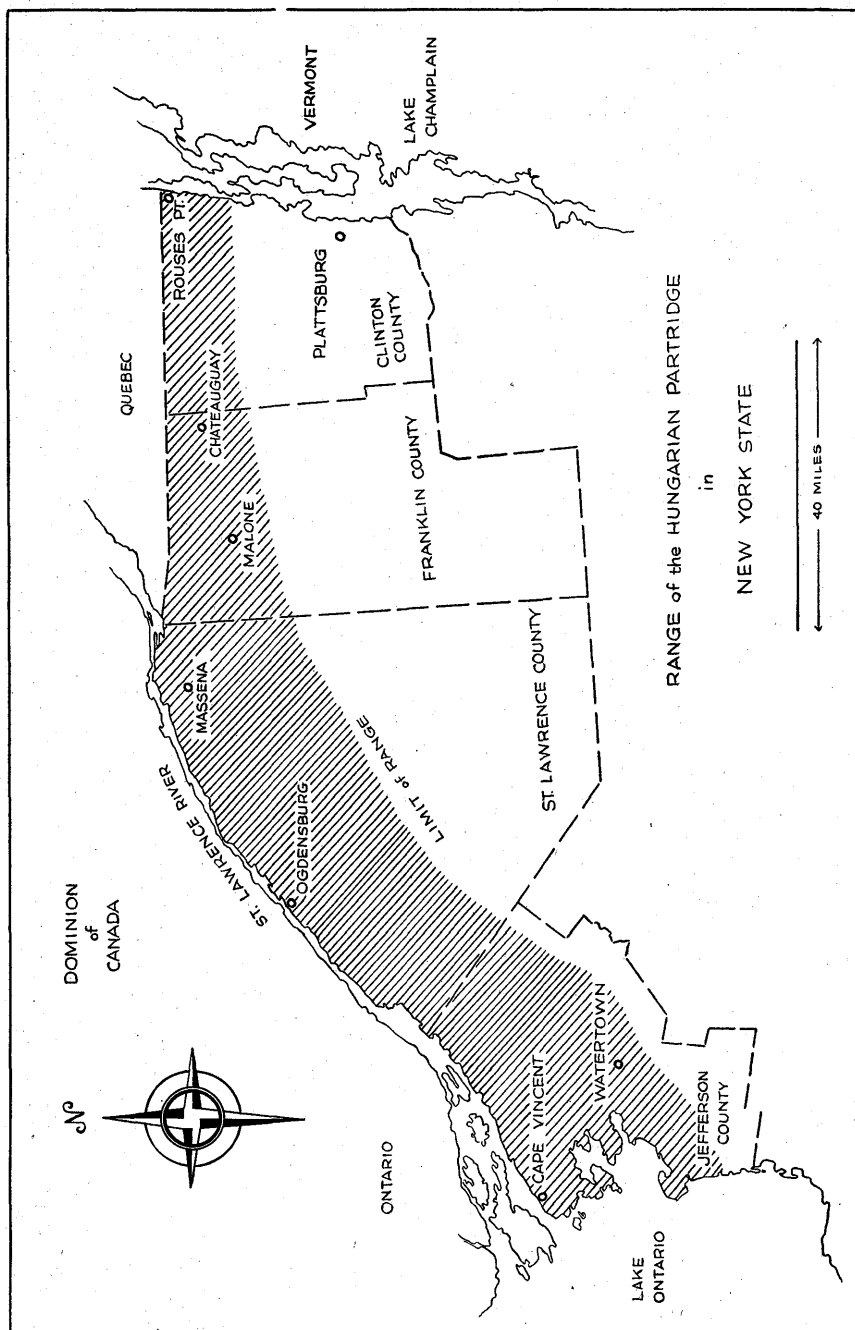
Allan S. Klonick, 828 Grosvenor Road
Rochester 18, N. Y.

THE HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE IN NEW YORK STATE

The European Grey Partridge, *Perdix perdix perdix*, usually called the Hungarian Partridge in this country, is a native of Central Europe. Successfully introduced to the British Isles several centuries ago, it was brought to North America as early as 1870 and large scale importations have been carried out since that date. Chapman, *Birds of Eastern North America*, states that nearly 50,000 were imported in the first decade of the 20th century. It has been liberated in Canada as well as in the United States. Eaton, *Birds of New York*, mentions releases in New York State in 1909.

Mass liberation of the Hungarian Partridge was carried out by the New York State Conservation Department between 1927 and 1932. During this period 27,750 birds were secured in Czechoslovakia and set free throughout the state. For the most part they did not maintain themselves, and the experiment was largely a failure. In one section of the state, however, the Hungarian Partridge has become well established and appears to be flourishing in suitable habitats. This is a belt of land extending across the northern border of the state from Lake Ontario to Lake Champlain. This lies mainly in the St. Lawrence River Valley, having elevations less than 600 feet above sea level for the most part. Distribution is uneven, birds tending to concentrate in favored localities. A survey of this area ten years ago indicated that there were about 14,500 Hungarians present. At that time the birds were most numerous in the vicinity of Ogdensburg and Malone. Recent observations indicate an increase in Jefferson County. There is considerable fluctuation from year to year, winter sleet storms having a deleterious effect on the population. John E. Wilson, Game Manager of the St. Lawrence-Ontario District, who has recently made contribution studies of this species, believes there are now between 8 and 10,000 in the area.

This species is non-migratory and its range in the state according to the



best available information is shown on the accompanying map. The areas south of Watertown and east of Chateaugay represent recent extensions. Hungarian Partridges have also been introduced in Canada immediately north of the area under consideration and appear to be doing well there.

Consideration has been given to the factors which have led to the success of the Hungarian Partridge in Northern New York in contrast to its failure to survive elsewhere in the state. Agricultural land with grain fields appears to be a primary requirement. Wilson has noted that the species is partial to clay flatlands which accounts for its spotty distribution. Light rainfall during the nesting season is believed to be a requirement. The birds are able to survive heavy snow and severe cold weather which are normal constituents of northern New York winters, but, as mentioned earlier, sleet storms which prevent access to normal food supply have an important effect on mortality.

In the fall of 1952, twenty years after the period of liberation, hunting of the Hungarian Partridge was permitted for a period of five days in Franklin, St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties. Conservation Department officials estimate that 300 birds were taken.

Most of the above data was obtained from the *New York State Conservation Department*, the writer being particularly indebted to the game manager of the St. Lawrence-Ontario District.

John Belknap
North Country Bird Club
Gouverneur, N. Y.

THE PINE-WOODS SPARROW IN NEW YORK STATE

In Prospect Park, Brooklyn, on April 21, 1948 I flushed from the ground a small bird which cocked up its tail in a wren-like manner. Its bill, however, showed it to be a sparrow. The crown and upperparts generally, except the tail, were a light reddish brown, suggestive of a Field Sparrow, but the bill was large than the latter's, and grayish horn in color. There was a light reddish brown line through the eye. The buffy breast and white belly were unstreaked. Some dark gray marks were scattered through its back. The bird soon flew into a thicket, where it was remarkably secretive. At this time I suddenly realized that it was a Pine-woods Sparrow, *Aimophila aestivalis* subsp. Shortly afterward there came from the thicket on two occasions a very sweet song similar to that of this species, which I had observed in Georgia and Florida. After stalking the bird I obtained two more observations. On April 22, Mr. Edward J. Whelan, now president of the *Brooklyn Bird Club*, saw the bird and confirmed the identification.

The same spring there was a spread of this species into new territory in Ohio, Michigan and Kansas (*Audubon Field Notes* v. 2, 1948, p. 167). A previous record in New York State was in Monroe County, May 8-12, 1940 (*Auk*, v. 58, 1941, p. 103-4). A previous record for the New York City region was at Fort Lee, N. J., May 9, 1918 (*Griscom, Birds of the New York City Region*, N. Y. 1923, p. 283).

Geoffrey Carleton
The Linnaean Society of N. Y.
New York 24, N. Y.