

permanently available description, however, supplies useful evidence. It can be examined in detail and used as the basis for a reasoned judgment as to the probable correctness of the identification. This written confirmation is both the evidence and the authority for the record. If the observer's techniques of observing and reasoning were adequate, he has an opportunity to prove it in his verifying account of how he identified the bird.

It should be added that although an observer's birding experience, knowledge, ability, and honesty are not, by themselves alone, sufficient to make his unusual sight records acceptable to a properly informed compiler, these achievements are none-the-less of basic importance. Every competent censor-compiler learns to look for signs of these characteristics in every verifying account by "reading between the lines," if necessary. Finding such signs, however, cannot add the least bit to the validity of a logically incomplete write-up; but failing to find them often invalidates a write-up which might give a superficial impression of being adequate.

Adoption of these verifying procedures will not give us sight records in which the correctly identified are always distinguishable, with 100% certainty, from the misidentified. But the improvement in the ability of compilers to judge the probable validity of the records will be enormous. It will be a great benefit to all who are interested in increasing the reliability of sight records. It will introduce some persons to the joys and rewards of using the scientific attitude in everyday living. Most pertinent for our present discussion, it will add immeasurably to the value and prestige of the sight records of those individuals, clubs, and compilers who adopt these verifying procedures, thereby achieving for them a goal long desired by every amateur field observer.

Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo 11, New York.

BARROW'S GOLDEN-EYE AT AUSABLE POINT, LAKE CHAMPLAIN

THOMAS A. LESPERANCE

Ausable Point, composed of sand and silt, extends into Lake Champlain approximately 200 yards from the main shoreline. Shaped like a bended arm it contains on its inward curve several acres of water unaffected by wind action, regardless of wind direction, and to which large groups of resident as well as migrating waterfowl seek its advantages.

In the early breakups of ice in 1953 a single male Barrow's Golden-eye was observed feeding in this area. By late March when the American Golden-eyes were indulging in pre-nuptial display and courtship antics, this lone Barrow's male was observed trying to interest various female American Golden-eyes in the possibilities of a match. American Golden-eye males vigorously opposed such a situation and the frustration of the Barrow's male was pathetic as well as humorous to watch. This bird was seen for several days and then moved on.

On November 10, 1954 while hunting ducks from a blind at Ausable Point three Barrow's Golden-eyes decoyed to the blind, two were males, one a female. A male and female were collected, prepared into study skins and deposited with the collection of New York State birds at State University Teachers College, Plattsburgh, New York. The data on the birds are as follows: male, length 18", spread 31", weight 2 pounds, 2 ounces; female, L. 18", S. 30", W. 1 pound 7 ounces. American Golden-eyes collected during the same period weighed slightly less.

E. H. Forbush (Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States, Vol. 1, p. 251) mentioned two or more birds shot at Bridport, Vermont on Lake Champlain. K. C. Parkes (*Kingbird* 1951, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 54-56) reviewed the birds occurrence in New York up to that time and stated that the only place in the State where the bird can be expected regularly in winter is at the eastern end of Long Island. He does not mention any Barrow's Golden-eye records from Lake Champlain. F. R. Turrentine (*Kingbird*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 51) reported two male sight records on Saratoga Lake March 13, 1952. F. A. Clinch (*Kingbird*, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 112) reported a specimen shot by Wayne Davis at Alexandria Bay on Lake Ontario in October 1954 which was preserved as a mounted specimen.

I believe that many Barrow's are shot by hunters along Lake Champlain, but as mentioned in a previous article — *Storms and Unusual Visitors in Lake Champlain* (*Kingbird*, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 56) — a lack of interest and knowledge prevents these occurrences from coming to light. Future records may establish some yearly continuity of occurrence for this species in the Lake Champlain area.

Keesville, New York.

WALTER ELWOOD
WINSTON WILLIAM BROCKNER

Walter Elwood, dedicated friend of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs from its inception, died in Amsterdam, New York, on April 28, 1955, at the age of 69. Born April 13, 1886, in the Orange County community of Florida, he was the son of Emory Elwood and Catherine Lingenfelter. In his death, New York State conservation and education, has suffered the loss of a great worker.

After receiving his degree in education from Cornell University, in 1908, he went to the Philippine Islands as a Supervisory Teacher for the Bureau of Education.

In 1912, he returned to the United States and became principal of a school in New Market, New Jersey. During World War I, he served in France with the Red Cross. Upon returning to these shores, he was engaged by Oscar Hammerstein II as a playwright and authors' assistant.

Following that, he became a District Superintendent of Schools for the Second Supervisory District in Montgomery County. While in this capacity, he initiated the 4-H Club program in the county.

Walter Elwood's greatest contribution was his organization of a Public School Museum in Amsterdam, in 1939. Many of the exhibits he personally collected while touring in Europe and Asia.

Many who were privileged to attend the organizational meeting of the Federation, will with nostalgia recall the delightful outdoor museum and sanctuary of the Sassafras Bird Club. This too, was a result of the unselfish work of Walter Elwood. In 1931 the sanctuary was established, and almost immediately the Sassafras Bird Club was organized, and he served as its President from 1933 to 1937.

For sixteen years he was President of the Montgomery County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

An important contribution to conservation, was made in 1951, while he was in Albany working for the State Education Department, revising the State Syllabus in Science and Social Studies to include specific references for teaching conservation in the public schools of New York State.

Because of his tremendous interest and drive, he was appointed the first