

path of this movement. Although the number of gull communities is limited, the concentration of birds occupying them is impressive. Most of the islands are small, some only low shoals, such as Salmon and Long Islands. Little Galloo, covering 44 acres is the exception. The birds choose islands having few trees, and level grassy areas are preferred as nesting sites. The Ring-billed Gull occupies a concentrated area, in distinction to the Herring Gull, which spaces its nests more widely. This is well illustrated on Four Brothers where the Ring-bill utilizes a portion of the level open area in a tightly knit group, while the Herring Gulls are found on the remainder of the island with nests widely separated.

Literature Cited

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BIRD CLUBS MAKE NEWS

M. C. WHEAT, JR.

Recently the nest of a pair of Dickcissels was found near Rochester—a rare discovery these days; although a century ago these birds were widely distributed along the Atlantic seaboard. Soon word of this find by members of the Genesee Ornithological Society had spread throughout the State. The Associated Press had wired the story to its member newspapers—an indication that editors want to use nature stories with unusual angles or with news interest.

In two leading papers, The New York Times and New York Herald Tribune, it is not uncommon to find some rare bird like the Lewis's Woodpecker, Cattle Egret or Black-Headed Grosbeak sharing the front pages with Presidents, Senators and Generals. At least two upstate papers now carry weekly bird columns; the Syracuse Post-Standard by B. P. Burtt and The Rochester Times-Union by John Brown.

Here is an excellent opportunity for bird clubs to develop good publicity for their activities. At the same time they can render an important public service by disseminating knowledge and understanding about our wild life.

If your paper does not now carry enough nature stories of local interest, visit the editor and explain that you can furnish material for stories that will attract readers. The editor probably will offer suggestions on what he can use. Some possibilities are listed below.

First, remember that there are two types of stories; feature and news.

Feature stories employ unusual angles or educational elements. Editors like these stories because they vary the tempo of their papers and gain more readers. Thus, these stories usually are displayed prominently with two or three-column headlines.

Here are some feature ideas; finding a rare bird, unusually early or late dates or birds observed out of season, appearance of a new resident species as has been the case with Cardinal, invasions by a species like the Red Grossbill or Snowy Owl, a Spring migration story with emphasis on what people can see in their own backyards, story on the May Count or Christmas Census, experiences of local persons with feeding stations, the large number of persons operating feeding stations, lunar bird watching by local observers, bird banding or other special projects of club members, and a day in the field with your bird club.

Take advantage of every opportunity for a straight news story — no matter how small it may seem. Here are some suggestions; advance and follow-up stories on club meetings and field trips, advance biographical notices on speakers and readable quotes from their talks afterwards, resolutions passed by your club and sent to legislators on issue like Echo Park Dam and Panther Mountain Dam, election of officers, club members attending or giving papers at Federation or other meetings, appointment of any of your members to regional, state, or national offices and committees of other nature organizations.

Dress up your stories with interesting sidelights. Tell something about the birds concerned — any of the curious habits and how far they migrate. Here is a good chance to show why birds should be protected — especially hawks.

Editors want people's names. Include them whenever possible; the farmer who discovered a Snowy Owl, the housewife who reports Evening Grosbeaks at her feeding station, or the young member of the school Audubon club who sees the first Robin in Spring. When you can, use names of persons not connected with bird watching. You not only gain more attention, but you may win new friends for your club as well.

Certain practices will go a long ways toward cementing good working relations with your papers. If you hand in an advance story, always turn in a follow-up report. If there isn't any story, at least let the paper know. Make sure that the paper gets the story no later than the day after it occurs. Nothing irritates an editor more than to receive a story several days after it happens — even though he might not use it until sometime later. Let the reporter write the story in the paper's style. If at first there are errors, friendly criticism and patience will pave the way for better reporting in the future. Remember that the editor and the reporter want the story to be as accurate and readable as you do.

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