

DeWitt Clinton was one of the organizers of the "Literary and Philosophical Society of New York" which was formed in 1814. He served as the first president and delivered an "Introductory Discourse" which has been called one of the best summaries of the state of scientific knowledge in America at the time. Its length is 57 pages and the notes which follow take up an additional 106 pages. Birds are among the many subjects discussed, and Clinton is quoted as follows: "Many meritorious attempts have been made to illustrate the ornithology of America. Mr. Alexander Wilson, whose death is to be sincerely lamented by every friend of science (Wilson died in 1813) had devoted himself for years to this subject with an enthusiasm, industry and ability never surpassed. Although he has done much, yet the subject is by no means exhausted. The whole number of species, according to Latham is 3000. Considering that the American Republic, including our Louisiana acquisition extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it is not unreasonable to suppose that we may claim at least 1000 species of birds, who either reside with us, or occasionally visit us. But the most interesting part of ornithology is the migration of birds. There are some that stay with us the whole year; there are others that visit us regularly; and there are several that visit us occasionally or accidentally, which are driven by storms on our coast, by famine from their usual country, by excessive cold from the north, by excessive heat from the south, or by some cause unknown to us. All of these birds ought to be carefully noted and accurately distinguished. Strange birds are frequently seen in the vicinity of the ocean after a storm. Several years ago a large flock of paroquets was observed 25 miles to the NW of Albany. There are birds that sometimes stay with us the whole year, and at other times depart; this depends upon the mildness of the weather, and the quantity of food."

DeWitt Clinton married twice, his first wife being Maria Franklin who died in 1818. He later married Catherine Jones. He himself died suddenly in Albany on February 11, 1828.

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FIELD NOTES

The Evening Raptor Succession at Rough-leg Meadow — There is a wide flat "meadow" immediately south-west of Bridgeport, N. Y., which is bordered on the West and South by the low maple woods of Cicero Swamp, over which the writer noted an unusually large concentration of Rough-legged Hawks (*Buteo lagopus*) in the winter of 1952-53. This area, now locally known as "Rough-leg Meadow" has well lived up to its name in winters of low snow cover, although the terrain is more

than "meadow," including unmown grass, some corn fields, much brushy field, fence rows and wetlands. Not only are Rough-legs seen here regularly in winters of good mouse-hawking, but also Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), fewer Red-tails (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and occasionally or frequently a Sharp-shin (*Accipiter striatus*) a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) or an American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*). In addition, Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) may winter on the meadow, and to be complete, both Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) may be heard on the borders.

During the late fall and early winter of 1957-58, Rough-leg Meadow has presented a fine raptor showing especially in early evening. As the day draws to a close a regular raptor succession takes place, and the following observation is a good example of this.

Arriving on the meadow at 4 p. m. on Dec. 22, 1957 (Christmas Census) with Ian C. T. Nisbet recently of Cambridge University, we counted 10 Rough-legs in a single scanning. Probably more were actually present. Some were perched, others flying low, or hovering, both light and dark phases being observed (and both adult and juvenile plumages of both phases). By 4:30 p. m. most of these had retired to night perches off the meadow proper and at this time we first scanned 3 Harriers appearing on the scene. At 4:45 p. m. we counted 7 Harriers and then 10, two of which were light gray adult males. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen in a tree at this time, but soon flew toward the woods. The Harriers hunted very actively until about 5 p. m., but several were still to be seen when the first Short-eared Owls got up to begin hunting. By 5:15 p. m. the last Harrier had settled into the meadow for the night, while the "snerk" calls of the Short-eareds could be heard now on all sides, and counts in the waning light established at least 12 owls. By 5:45 p. m. it was getting quite dark, the owls no longer could be seen, and the "snerk" chorus had about ceased.

Many trips have established that the owls perch upon the ground in the area all day and come up in the evening to hunt. Since the calls are heard only for a short time after they get up, either they soon cease to call or more likely many move out of the area to hunt further.

The Harriers perch there during the night, and leave early in the morning for various hunting fields, although a few may be seen at any time of day. Later in the afternoon they return and hunt intensively just as the Rough-legs leave the meadow, and settle down for the night just as the owls get up.

The Rough-legs hunt over Rough-leg Meadow all day, arriving from the bordering woods in the first morning light, when they sometimes call. The call is a somewhat plaintive cry, not the airy whistle of the Red-tail or the musical call of the Red-shoulder, but a long full-bodied whistled cry, somewhat descending in pitch. Maximum count for the Rough-leg on Rough-leg Meadow is 12 birds but with 4 more seen nearby. The maximum for the owls is 14 and for the Harrier, 11. It is interesting that this particular area consistently shows very high raptor counts, more so than neighboring similar areas. The mouse population appears to be high here during good-hawk winters, as I have myself caught them by hand! — Walter P. Spofford, 766 Irving Ave., Syracuse.

Behavior notes on the Olive-sided Flycatcher. — Whether in its northern tamarack-studded bog, in Canadian spruce, birch and hemlock, or in migration to and from these haunts, the Olive-sided Flycatcher generally seeks a dominant perch for its feeding, usually on the "tip-most branch of the top-most tree". Here, this "rather large bull-headed flycatcher," as Roger T. Peterson calls it, affords little in insect life to pass without a challenge, and shows a perseverance and unalterable intent in the chase which will be described.

My first "fall" migrating Olive-sided Flycatcher in 1957 was seen at Massapequa, August 13. On August 17 I left, with my family, for northern New Hampshire and on August 19 at Dixville Notch, I saw an Olive-sided still feeding young, in this case a full-grown juvenile. I was surprised during the 15 or 20 minutes I watched to hear one subdued but articulated song, although from hearsay and personal experience I have learned that singing tapers off by late June or very early July in the Adirondacks — a point to remember by those wishing to get maximum pleasure in hearing this species in its summer home.

Watchful for the light migration of these birds that usually comes through Long