

house and the owners of such homes cannot be censured if they place the blame on the woodpeckers alone, not knowing the real culprits. It might be good conservation practice to see that builders and home-owners know the real cause and take steps to eliminate the insects rather than the woodpeckers. All instances of woodpecker damage in our areas should be examined, if possible, and home-owners should take reasonable precautions, where possible, to prevent future damage both to houses and to the woodpeckers.

Woodpeckers, usually the Hairy Woodpecker or the Flicker, have been known to use a house for a drumming post to the understandable annoyance of the occupants. Such action, however, would not lead to the severe and extensive damage shown in the photograph. — E. M. Reilly, Jr., Curator, Zoology, N. Y. S. Museum, Albany 1, N. Y.

Yellow-nosed Albatross off Long Island: On Sunday, May 29, 1960, a Yellow-nosed Albatross was observed about a mile and a half off the Jones Beach water tower, along the southern shore of Long Island. The bird was seen by some forty or fifty persons in two chartered boats on a scheduled Linnaean Society sea trip for pelagic birds.

When the albatross was discovered by the first boat, a radio message was sent to the second boat, some five miles away at the time. When the bird was first seen, it was on the water with Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls and resembled the latter in pattern. It was repeatedly flushed by the boats, upon which its wing-spread, estimated at seven feet, could be observed at extremely close range. While in the air the albatross, an adult, was harassed by some of the gulls. Colored photographs, both still and moving, were made of the rarity by several of the observers. The bird was under observation for about an hour, and when the boats turned homeward it was still sitting on the water. Besides the albatross the ocean was alive with birds of a great variety of species (see Region 10, this issue). Chumming over the side brought many of these into close range.

An ocean trip by several Long Island bird clubs just six days later, Saturday, June 4, revealed no evidence of the albatross. The ocean was destitute of birds and except for an epidemic of mal de mer the net result was a half dozen Wilson's Petrels!

The normal range of the Yellow-nosed Albatross is restricted to the south Atlantic and Indian Oceans and to the seas near Australia. There have, however, been three or four previous North American records for the species, as indicated by the Fifth Edition of the AOU Checklist. This is apparently the first reported occurrence of any species of albatross in New York State waters. — John J. Elliott, 3994 Park Avenue, Seaford, Long Island.

Cattle Egret reaches Western New York: What is regarded as possibly the first record for the Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis*) in western New York, was observed by Gail Seamans and Richard G. Beebe, of Batavia, on May 29, 1960, west of the village of Byron, (Route 262 and Bank Street Road). They immediately notified Mrs. O. L. Pixley, of Batavia, who in turn telephoned Mr. and Mrs. Edward C. Ulrich, in Buffalo. The Ulrichs advised us of this record on the same day. On the next day, May 30th, after a short search, and returning to the pond where the bird was supposed to be seen, I found the bird on the margin of the small farm pond.

It was an all white bird about the size of a Green Heron. The top of the head, over the back, and breast feathers were tinged by a brownish rust wash. One leg appeared to be injured.

While watching the bird, I talked to Mrs. Beach, wife of the man operating the farm where the Egret was discovered. She informed me that the white bird had been there for "about four weeks".

I had previously seen the Cattle Egret, at the "Coal Pocket Area" near Schenectady, on May 25, 1957. This was the first inland New York State record, and was seen by many attending the annual Federation meeting in Schenectady that year.

Another Cattle Egret was reported in John W. Brown's, "Birds Afield" column, published in the Rochester Times-Union newspaper, on June 2, 1960. This bird

was observed by Brown and Alfred Starling, on June 1st, on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. C. Morton Wadsworth, 369 Hill Road, Parma. The Wadsworths also saw the bird.

I discussed this second bird with Alfred Starling, and asked him if the legs appeared to be normal. He replied in the affirmative. This leads me to believe, that the Parma record was of a different bird than the earlier Byron record, and that two Cattle Egrets had been found west of the Genesee River. — Winston William Brockner, 63 Ardmore Place, Buffalo 13, New York.

A Concentration of Rough-legged Hawks: Late in November 1959 it was seen that Rough-legged Hawks were more numerous than usual in northern New York State, and it was soon apparent that a real incursion was taking place. As the winter progressed a concentration of these birds was noted in that portion of Jefferson County lying immediately north of Watertown. This area, in the towns of Brownville, Clayton, Pamela, Orleans, Leray, and Philadelphia, covers approximately 300 square miles and consists mainly of open farm land with an abundance of isolated trees for perching. Since the Rough-leg is primarily a "mouser," it may be presumed that this portion of Jefferson County provided an ample supply of small rodents.

Unsuspicious by nature, the Rough-legged Hawk is easily observed when perched in the open or flying leisurely over fields and meadows. In the area mentioned I observed thirty or more birds on several occasions, with a maximum count of forty-nine on February 8. It is believed that there may have been as many as 200 birds present. The majority were normal or light phase, with perhaps 20 percent being dark phase birds. While these hawks are usually solitary, groups of three or four were occasionally seen.

The Rough-legs remained throughout March and were present in small numbers during early April. It was evident, however, that the northward movement was underway soon after the end of March. — John B. Benknapp, 92 Clinton Street, Gouverneur.

An Unusual Duck in Central New York: While walking the path around Green Lake in Fayetteville on the morning of December 25, 1959, I observed a duck of problematic identity upon two occasions at close range. I first saw the bird at fairly close range when it sprang with grouse-like abruptness from some floating cedar snags along the edge of the deep and unfrozen lake. It flew low across the lake and disappeared along the far shore. Closely observed through my 10 x 50 glasses, this bird was distinctly small, teal-sized, uniformly dark grayish-black above, with no trace of any wing marking whatsoever.

I did not identify the bird at once, although it seemed familiar, and I reflected that its identity would without doubt occur to me as I walked along. Some fifteen minutes later, when I realized I had not identified it, I began to earnestly consider what I had seen, and seen well. I did come to a tentative conclusion, and then wished I had taken more pains while I had the bird in close view. Suddenly, as abruptly startling as before, it arose close-in again, and again flew off low across the lake until about a quarter mile away. The duck then turned, gained some twenty feet and came back past me, whereupon it left the lake and disappeared toward the north. The bird was centered in my glasses almost as its feet left the water, and I noted, as did those with me, that it was attempting to swallow a small fish as it left. I again noted the uniformly unmarked dusky, gray-black upperparts, and this time also a trace of white in front of and behind the eye. The rounded head was almost hooded in appearance due to the small short beak being inserted at right angles below the high forehead. When the duck came past at a higher elevation, I noted the whitish ventor, which shaded without abrupt margin into the dark breast. Although I now believed I knew what I was seeing, it was not until I consulted my library with some care that I decided that I could find no alternative identification. While several expert field observers have suggested that I had seen a female Hooded Merganser, the latter is so unlike my observation that I can only conclude that I failed to communicate what I saw. From familiarity with this bird after watching one in the surf for about ten minutes at Sandy Pond Beach along Lake Ontario with Dr. Ian Nisbet on November 23, 1957, I identified the stranger as "Columbine" the female Harlequin Duck, *Histrionicus histrionicus*, a duck unusual in central New York State. — Walter R. Spofford, 766 Irving Avenue, Syracuse.