

A Kingfisher and Some Swallows: About 8:00 p. m. on July 29, 1948, while sitting on the porch of our camp located on a 75-foot bluff overlooking Canandaigua Lake, ten miles south of Canandaigua, I observed an interesting sequence of bird behavior. A Belted Kingfisher was flying south over the lake approximately a hundred yards from shore when it was annoyed by a flock of about twenty swallows (species undetermined). One swallow, then another and another, separated from the rather loose flock and flew in single file down toward the kingfisher. The kingfisher dove into the water and after one or two seconds emerged and flew in the opposite direction. The swallow flock circles back, and another two or three swallows, in file, again stooped down toward the kingfisher. Again it dove and emerged flying in the opposite direction. The swallow flock, flying approximately a hundred feet above, circled back and again swallows flew down toward the kingfisher. The bird dove a third time, and this time the swallows did not wheel back. The kingfisher flew in toward shore and perched while the swallows continued down the lake.

I have often wondered whether this could be interpreted as "play" on the part of the swallows and kingfisher or whether it was true attack and escape behavior on the part of both birds. Swallows are known to be aggressive as a flock (Forbush, E. H., **Birds of Massachusetts**, Vol. 3, p. 150) and to even chase Sharp-shinned Hawks (Bent, A. C., **U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.** 179:452). Kingfishers have been seen to escape attack from other kingfishers (Bent, A. C., **U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.** 176:123) and Cooper's Hawks (Johnson, S. E., **Auk** 42:585-586), but the situation reported here is an apparent combination of errors, the swallows misidentifying a short-necked kingfisher as predator and the kingfisher misidentifying the short-necked pointed-winged swallows as a stooping hawk.

Another possible explanation, on the assumption that the swallows and kingfisher were young birds, is that this might represent what E. A. Armstrong (**Bird Display**, Cambridge, p. 261) calls "play". Another thing that is difficult to explain in this observation is the ability of the kingfisher to turn under water and reverse his field. This was also noted by Johnson (*ibid.*) when a kingfisher was attacked by a Cooper's Hawk. — Stephen W. Eaton, Dept. of Biology, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure.

Notes On a Wintering Catbird: Here in Ulster County wintering Catbirds are difficult to find since few ever remain beyond the Fall migration period. Those that do stay usually linger in some favored thicket area of bushes and vines that have a southern exposure. With the instinct to migrate lost the Catbird may remain here for the winter. So it happened at my residence near Kripplebush last fall (1960). I first noticed a Catbird in a little thicket back of the house during late October but felt that the bird was a migrant that would soon pass on. This did not turn out to be the case as I kept on infrequently seeing the bird on into November when it became apparent that he was going to stay. Where he was spending the nights during this period I never knew but when winter set in during early December I discovered he was using the dense honeysuckle vine growing against the corner of the house. Two Song Sparrows were also using the vines for a roost. Snow came and stayed and the rigors of winter were constant. Snow was definitely hostile to the Catbird's normal ground frequenting habit and he avoided it most of the time. Consequently, his daily habits became restricted and were centered about the vicinity of the house with short trips up and down the shrubbery bordering the driveway. The only bare ground he had was a few inches along the foundation of the house. The sun helped to keep this bare and the bird spent much time here. His survival food was mainly the dried fruits of the Boston Ivy vine growing over the sides of the house. Fortunately these were not cleaned up by a Starling horde. From the observations I could make this was his main diet. He ate but little from the bird seed mixtures and was not seen to take any suet although he might have. He sampled Holly berries but did not seem to prefer them.

As winter progressed more snow and cold came and our Catbird spent most of the day about the roost, his food supply, and immediate vicinity. The shyness exhibited earlier was tempered by the existing conditions and he became easier to approach. On stormy or very cold days he would often sit in the vines just under one of the windows which was nearly always open a few inches and probably offered a little warmth or he would sit on the canopy of the kitchen exhaust fan

securing what warmth that came through here. His flight was slower on cold days and he spent much time in inactivity. Any warmth of the sun nearly always perked him up and if warm enough his activity increased to a point where he would even give forth one or two of his cat-like notes. He survived the worst storm of the winter and he was indeed an out-of-place sight when seen bucking the swirling snow of a blizzard that temporarily covered just about everything exposed to the outside. We could see that the elements were fierce but there was a life-line present and our Catbird was being provided for. We were fearful with one apprehension. At least three prowling neighborhood cats were in the area almost daily and we knew that the Catbird would be lucky to escape being caught. Near mid-February the seemingly inevitable happened — the Catbird was missing and the tracks and feathers found by the foundation of the house told the story. — Fred Hough, Accord.

A Partially Albino Blue Jay: On January 31, 1961 Mrs. Ruth Williams and the writer received a call from the Misses Grace and Florence Kirk of 47 George St., Owego asking us to check the identity of a grayish white bird that had been coming to their feeders regularly since January 16. They believed it to be a Canada Jay. After waiting inside the Kirk house for about an hour and a half we were rewarded with an excellent view of the bird, at a distance of about 15 feet with 7 x 50 binoculars and in good light.

We immediately noticed that the bird in question had a prominent crest. Then by comparing its size, shape, flight pattern and behaviour with that of the Blue Jays visiting the feeders at the same time we soon realized that it was merely a Blue Jay that was lacking in color. We could see no trace of blue anywhere on it. Instead it was predominantly grayish white, gray enough so that the pure white of the wing bars could be readily seen by contrast. The normally black collar was a reddish brown color and the bill was yellowish brown. The feet and eyes were dark. The other Blue Jays behaved normally towards it and showed no particular tendency to attack it. It was still visiting the Kirk feeders as late as March 8, 1961 and had been seen by several of the neighbors. — Mrs. Mildred White, 1 West Front St., Owego.

Barrow's Goldeneye on Oneida Lake: On March 31, 1961, Dr. David Peakall, Jon Bart, and I were scanning a mixed collection of waterfowl on a small crescent of open water along the west side of Fischer's Bay, Oneida Lake. With the 30X Balscope we had optically bagged numerous Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Red-Breasted Mergansers when an adult male Barrow's Goldeneye was located along the ice-rimmed edge of open water. Repeated perusal through the scope confirmed the initial identification, and the details of greater extent of black upon the back and sides, the differently-shaped head, the fat crescent pre-ocular patch and, most striking, the black peripectoral bar, were seen and commented upon by the three of us. Despite abundant courtship activities of the adjacent Common Goldeneyes, this bird was never noted to perform any courtship maneuvers on this day or on days of subsequent observation (up to April 5). The bird was found again on April 1; on April 2 it was seen by two different parties somewhat further east on Fischer's Bay (the first bay east of Hitchcock Point at the mouth of Chittenango Creek north of Bridgeport). On this date a female was noted with the male which by head shape but not by bill color could well have been a female Barrow's Goldeneye. This pair of birds remained consistently together, usually resting or feeding at the ice edge of the open water. On April 3 and 4 extensive melting occurred, and the open water area enlarged considerably. On April 5 the pair was seen at two different times, and one observer (who had previous acquaintance with the species) felt that the female accompanying the male was definitely a Barrow's Goldeneye. At the time of the last observation on the afternoon of April 5, this pair of birds and many other waterfowl were scared away from Fischer's Bay by target shooting on the western margin of the bay. A vigorous search on April 6 failed to turn up the birds, and repeated checks thereafter to April 14 were similarly unsuccessful.