

an adult White-crowned Sparrow sat on a bare branch within about four inches of the Harris', thus providing size comparison. Most noticeable were the high crown, more rounded than that of a White-crowned Sparrow, the irregular blackish patch on the upper breast, and the extensive olive-buff color on the sides of the head and neck. Other outstanding characteristics of the bird were the pink bill, the dark slaty forehead, and the buffy-brown flanks, overlaid with dark streaks. The underparts, including the throat, with the exception of the breast-patch and the buffy undertail coverts, were off-white. The back spotting, wing pattern of two narrow wingbars, and uniformly brown tail were similar to those of the White-crowned Sparrow. The colors of the eye, feet, and legs were not noted. At no time did the bird call.

The bird was last seen about 5:00 p. m. on October 16 when the writer again visited the area with Timothy Zorach, who had a brief but recognizable look at the bird before it flew off into the adjacent cornfield, as it had done on each of the two previous occasions. Corbin is familiar with the species from western Minnesota, and Sutherland had seen one in Massachusetts in 1959.

On the basis of the whitish rather than dusky throat and the black rather than reddish breast patch, it is thought that the bird was an adult female in winter plumage. Immatures in the Cornell University collection have the throat marked with dark brown and the breast patch ruddy brown. Of the specimens in this collection, the observed bird appeared most like an adult female, No. 12055, collected on December 28, 1941, in Cleveland Co., Oklahoma.

This appears to be at least the fourth record for New York State. There is a sight record of one at Hamburg, Erie Co., on November 8-11, 1951 (Ed. — See **Kingbird**, July, 1954, p. 38). An immature was seen at Saltaire, Fire Island, in Suffolk County, on Sept. 30, 1956, and one was at a Jamestown feeder through November of 1957. There have been a number of recent records from Massachusetts, most at feeders. One was seen at Troy Meadows, N. J., May 7, 1935, and there are a few other published records for the northeast.

The fall migration route of this species is extremely narrow, encompassing a 250-mile wide strip through the central plains, just west of the Mississippi River. It winters in this same narrow belt from Kansas and Iowa south to the Texas coast. In Minnesota the bulk of autumn records fall between mid-September and mid-October; in other midwestern and central states October is the peak of migration. In this respect the Ithaca record is in accord with the migration dates in the species' normal range.

A cold front originated in central South Dakota on October 12, and this passed the Ithaca area late on October 13. The appearance of this bird may in some way be correlated with these climatic conditions. — Douglas J. Futuyma, Department of Conservation, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca.

Herring Gulls Catching Flying Ants: In the October, 1961, issue of the **Kingbird** Mr. Thomas Lesperance of Keeseville cites the habit of Herring Gulls catching flying ants. While mist-netting migrating birds on the outer beach at Tiana Beach, Shinnecock Bay, Long Island, during the months of September and October, 1961, I noted numbers of Herring Gulls catching flying ants from about 5:00 to 6:00 p. m. on the consecutive evenings of Sept. 22 and 23.

The easternmost lane and the westernmost lane where the mist nets were operated are about one mile apart. On both evenings there was very little wind, and all the ants were flying west in this one mile area. This activity was apparently limited to the times specified above. The gulls were feeding on the ants at a height of about 50 to 100 feet in the same manner as described by Mr. Lesperance. There were such tremendous numbers of ants that they could be seen in this entire one mile area, and the nets, which are about five feet high, were covered with crawling ants. — Leroy Wilcox, Oceanic Duck Farm, Speonk, Long Island.

Additional Notes on Birds Hawking Insects: Reading Thomas Lesperance's "Herring Gulls Catching Flying Ants" in Northern New York State brings to mind a similar experience my wife and I had this past fall. At about 6:00 p. m. on a

windless evening in mid-September we were traveling to Jones Beach to count white herons on their roost. Just south of the Sunrise Highway on the Wantagh Causeway we saw roughly 100 Starlings over an open grassy area actively engaged in catching insects. They evidently were successful while zig-zagging and circling around like swallows, and were continuously performing five minutes later as we left.

Proceeding down the causeway, and just south of the Jones Beach toll booth, we were surprised to see both Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, as described by Lesperance, flying in tight circles, darting here and there with necks and legs extended, and these two were under observation through binoculars and appeared very successful in their insect hunt. Their object of search was, as described by Lesperance, winged ants which were so abundant that they alighted all over our car, even entering the interior. Their rather soft bodies were sufficiently delectable to attract these large birds as well as the Starlings. Although the insects were very abundant at the fishing station on the bay side of Jones Beach, there was little action among the gulls there, and a half-dozen Common Terns present were not observed to engage in these feeding practices.

A couple of weeks earlier, on Aug. 31, at about 6:15 p. m. on Long Island's north shore at Port Washington, Mrs. Wm. Dove's daughter called her to look at 40 to 50 Laughing Gulls and five or six Nighthawks flying over their back yard hawking insects. They watched the gulls open their bills and snap at something repeatedly. These stayed over their yard for about 15 minutes and then slowly moved westward "wheeling and circling, still pursuing the insects and still in the company of the Nighthawks whose feeding habits they seemed to be emulating." — John J. Elliott, 3994 Park Ave., Seaford, Long Island.

Albinism in a Catbird (continued): This note is a sequel to that written by Mrs. Margaret Cornwell of Scarsdale concerning her discovery of a partial albino Catbird here at the Audubon Center of Connecticut. Mrs. Cornwell's note appeared in the last issue of the **Kingbird**.

After Mrs. Cornwell had told us that she had seen an albino Catbird last May 31, we on the staff watched carefully for it, and it wasn't too long before I discovered the bird nesting directly behind my house. The nest was in a tangle of barberry and forsythia, and as the month of June progressed and our Audubon Camp of Connecticut got under way the bird instructors at the camp watched very closely. In late June the brood was raised, and we found that all four of the young were normal gray birds. The partially albino Catbird stayed around for perhaps another month, after which we no longer saw it.

The Catbird's mate was a normally colored bird with an extremely short tail which, incidentally, grew back as the summer progressed. — Duryea Morton, Director, Audubon Center of Connecticut, Riversville Rd. & John St., Greenwich, Conn.

More on Hybrid Flickers: In the July, 1961, issue of the **Kingbird** Dr. E. M. Reilly, Jr. of the N. Y. State Museum mentions three recent records of hybrid Flickers (*Colaptes auratus* x *C. cafer*) in New York State. The following additional records may be of interest.

I have been operating a banding station on the outer beach at Tiana Beach, Shinnecock Bay (seven miles west of Southampton) under "Operation Recovery" — a program of mist-netting birds in the fall migration. My assistant has been Mr. Walter Terry of Blue Point.

In the past four years we have banded 12,867 birds during the months of September and October, and of this number 340 were Yellow-shafted Flickers. In 1958 we banded 31 Flickers out of 1507 birds with a peak of 13 on Sept. 20. In 1959 we banded 92 Flickers out of a total of 3170 birds with a peak of eight on Oct. 20. In 1960 we banded 62 Flickers out of 4152 birds with a peak of seven on Sept. 24 and again on Oct. 1. In 1961 we banded 155 Flickers out of 4038 birds with a peak of 16 on Sept. 30.

Among these 340 Flickers there were two hybrids. The first was a female on Oct. 6, 1959, band 643-24323, in which the fourth and fifth primaries in each wing were red and the tail was all red. On Sept. 27, 1961, a second hybrid was caught, another female, band 693-23118. Again the tail was all red and the first four primaries in each wing were all red. The balance of wing and plumage of each female was typical Yellow-shafted. — Leroy Wilcox, Oceanic Duck Farm, Speonk, Long Island.