

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