

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

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This will be the first issue of 'The Kingbird' since 1955 without a contribution from Jim Meritt. He served as editor for region 8 from 1955 to 1959 and as writer of 'The highlights of the season' since 1958. We will miss his wide knowledge of the birds of this state and hope to hear from him before long.

In general the weather in April was normal. May was very dry and parts of it excessively hot. Two major waves of migration were reported, neither of them affected Long Island. The first of these occurred on April 28-29 in the western portion of the state. In the Buffalo area it was described as "the most extensive and noticeable wave of passerines of the entire spring season" and from Rochester "the weekend of April 28-29 produced probably the best April birding this area has ever seen." The rest of the state was not affected by this movement. For a detailed account of the weather conditions the reader is referred to Richard Rosche's excellent and detailed summary. Besides good numbers of the commoner birds this wave produced Black-throated Gray Warbler and Lark Sparrow. The second wave occurred on May 14-15 and large numbers of migrants especially warblers were noted in the central and eastern portions of the state.

The invasion of Cattle Egrets was on a much larger scale than in any previous year. The earlier history of this species in New York has been summarized by Belknap (Kingbird XI (1) 26-27). To bring his table up to date.

Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1954-61	0	8	4	1	4	2	0	2	8	12
1962	0	15/24	4/5	12/13	4/6	3/3	0	20/60	2/3	40/50

The figures for 1954-61 refer to total numbers, for 1962 the first figure refers to the largest single party and the second is an estimate of the most likely total number of birds involved. Using merely the sum of the single flocks it will be seen that more than double the number of Cattle Egrets were reported this spring than have been reported previously in all years combined. A large early flock of Common Egrets was reported from Long Island and the numbers of upstate records of Glossy Ibis were rather more than usual.

There were two other outstanding records from Long Island. One was the second record of a flock of Wood Ibis; previous records have been detailed by Elliott (Kingbird VIII (4) 109-110). The other was a Manx Shearwater off Jones Beach; this is the third record for the state (Reilly and Parkes, 1959).

The flight of Canada Geese was good to excellent throughout the state, Buffalo, Montezuma and Syracuse areas all reporting record or near record counts. In mid-April the total population of these areas alone was about 100,000. The counts of Blue and Snow Geese were also good. 200 Blue Geese at Montezuma being particularly noteworthy. It is interesting

that the percentage of chen geese is much higher in the Cayuga Lake/Montezuma area than it is in the geese concentrations both to the east and west. A single White-fronted Goose, assigned to the Greenland race *flavirostris*, was observed at Newstead (Erie Co.) and two, not subspecifically identified, were recorded near Syracuse. In contrast the spring flight of ducks was generally poor and the numbers of Canvasbacks and especially Redheads still gave cause for concern. However, two European Teal were recorded, (regions 5 & 8), both were regional firsts and they appear to be the 4th and 5th upstate records this century. A hybrid European — Green-winged Teal was observed in region 4. While, in general, I think it is good idea for local journals to follow the official names, the name Common Teal is so bad that I refuse. The species is not common to both continents, if the Asiatic part of the range worries the editors of the AOU list, then the name Eurasian Teal could be used.

Good late April hawk flights were reported along the south shores of the Great Lakes. Seventeen hundred Broadwings were noted near Buffalo and thirty-four hundred near Rochester on April 25. At the south-east corner of Lake Ontario the main flight was observed on the 26th and 27th when over eleven thousand were observed. A group of twelve Black Vultures near Castleton in May is a most unusual record.

The shorebird migration was, in general, normal although some areas reported that the late flight was poor. Outstanding was a flock of 120 Whimbrel near Rochester, probably the largest group ever recorded in the state. Regions 1, 2, & 10 reported Golden Plover, a scarce bird in spring, and a Husonion Godwit was noted in region 1. A Little Gull was reported in late May near Rochester, the discovery this year of a breeding site near Toronto helps to make sense of the records of this species in the Great Lakes area.

The collection of a specimen of a Raven from a crow shoot near Lyndonville confirms the occurrence of a species often suspected in the large April crow flights.

Carolina Wrens were reported as unusually scarce in the western part of the state. A great increase in the breeding population of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found in the lower Hudson valley. Particularly large numbers of Slate-colored Juncos were noted on migration in all central and western regions of the state.

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REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

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April began with a general winter snowstorm that dropped two to eleven inches of snow over Western New York. The first three weeks were more like March, weatherwise, than was March this year. Another major snowfall occurred at mid month. The month ended with a record breaking heat wave which brought average temperatures for the month 1.9 degrees above the normal.

Like the last part of April, May was unusually warm and pleasant. Below normal amounts of precipitation continued and the average monthly temperature was 6.6 degrees above normal. Weather patterns throughout the month were rather flat