

FIELD NOTES

Clay-colored Sparrow near Tupper Lake Village in the Adirondacks: On the evening of July 5, 1962, my wife and I were returning along the Pitchfork Pond road toward the town of Tupper Lake in the Adirondacks, when we stopped our car by an abandoned golf course for a photograph of the distant mountains. As we stopped, an unfamiliar song was heard consisting of five to seven, usually seven, flat penetrating insect-like buzzes, all on one pitch. Walking across the grassy field which had recently been planted with young pines, I found a Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella Pallida*) singing from the outer branches of an open grown spruce. The unmarked breast, pale median stripe, grey nape and well outlined dark cheek-patch were all well seen. The bird sang repeatedly, but at no time that evening or the following day did we see any female of the species. The bird did not permit close approach, flushed often and sang from a number of perches.

Although we were taken aback by this mid-western sparrow it was not without precedent as a summering bird in this area since Miss Amstutz reported a singing male in June and July of 1956 in the Tupper Lake area about three miles from the above mentioned location. (*Kingbird* VI (4):117). In addition, Ralph Friedman whose property lies along the Jordan River, north of Tupper Lake called to report a male and a female in his area, July 8th. No nesting data mentioned.

The possibility that this species may be breeding in the area certainly bears further investigation. The terrain here greatly resembles the bird's breeding habitats in Wisconsin and Michigan. The field in which the Clay-colored was found contained at least seven other sparrow species including Vesper, Field, Savannah and Chipping. Then again, the potential "sparrow fields" are not intensively covered because of the size of the Northern Adirondacks and the lack of observers. The three observations of this species mentioned here were quite casual. Miss Amstutz's above mentioned location (*Kingbird* VI (4):117). In addition, Ralph Friedman where he vacations, and my own, only, because of a penchant for recording mountain scenery and the distinctive song of the Clay-colored Sparrow.

A more intensive approach by interested birders may prove the species is extending its range eastward.

Richard Cohen, 72-10 37th Avenue, Jackson Heights, 72.

Attention is called to another record of the Clay-colored Sparrow in New York State which is fully described by Mrs. Malcolm McIlroy in her article, "Possible Hybridization between a Clay-colored Sparrow and a Chipping Sparrow at Ithaca" (*Kingbird* XI (1):7). It may be as Mr. Cohen suggests that this species may be in similar areas of New York State which are not now covered by intensive field work. — Ed.

Evidence of Nesting of the Tufted Titmouse in Rensselaer County: For several years the Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) has been moving northward in New York State. The progress of this invasion has been reviewed by Eaton (*Kingbird*, IX(2):59-62) and the spread of this species has continued since his paper appeared.

An interesting aspect of this invasion, however, is that few breeding records have been obtained in areas where the titmouse is common as a winter bird at feeding stations. The first record of which I have knowledge of a nesting of this species in the upper Hudson valley occurred in 1961.

Mrs. Ethel M. Cornwell, of Troy, Rensselaer County, has had titmice at her feeders through several winters, and has become very familiar with the species. In August, 1961, two adult titmice appeared at her feeder with four young. At their first appearance the young were barely able to fly, so that the nest must have been nearby. The six birds remained regular attendants at the feeder until the young were fully independent. The record came to my attention as a result of my position as a columnist on birds for the Albany Knickerbocker News. I am grateful

to Mrs. Cornwell, for the information here presented, and to Mrs. Beverly Waite, who brought the matter to my attention.

Allen H. Benton, Dept. of Biology, State College, Fredonia, N. Y.

An Albino Slate-colored Junco: While birding in the Hart Lake area on August 17th we were traveling on the shortcut which begins near the Olympic ski jump, follows the Ausable River for three or four miles and meets the main east-west artery to Lake Placid from Wilmington and Whiteface Mountain. This area has always been productive of a variety of birds during late August and September. In the thick brush on the river side of the road were Grackles, Red-w. Blackbirds, Tanagers, Indigo Bunting and innumerable warblers. On the opposite side of the road after passing the farm land, the mountain, covered with typical cold country, spruce and and balsam, sweeps down abruptly to the road. Many small groups of typical Slate-colored Juncos, flew into the conifers as the car approached and as promptly flew back again to the edge of the road after the car had passed.

The road, where it most closely approaches the river, rounds a sharp bend. Here a flock of Juncos (12-15), taking alarm at our approach, flew into the thick spruce-balsam cover. Among them was a snow white individual which had alighted on a balsam bough about seventy-five feet from the car which had stopped.

The bird, which was perched near a normal Slate-colored Junco, matched it for size, perching stance, and characteristic outline. It left the tree and joined in feeding with part of the flock which had flown back to the roadside.

Subsequent collection and identification proved the bird was a white Slate-colored Junco without any dark feathers, with white feet, nails, legs and bill. The eyes however were normal, taking it out of the category of a true albino. This specimen will be mounted and placed in the collection which I am preparing for the new ornithological room at State Teachers College of Education, Plattsburg, N. Y.

T. A. Lesperance, Keesville

Cape May Warbler Breeding in the Adirondacks: On June 23, 1962 the writer accompanied by Mrs. Dorothy Ackley, Mr. Paul Paquette, and Miss Margaret Rusk, observed a female Cape May Warbler feeding a fledgling young (apparently incapable of flight) in the Madawaska Pond area of western Franklin County, about ten miles due west of Meacham Lake, in the Adirondacks. The observers first noted the persistent food-begging cries of the young bird (an insistent lisping "tsee-tsee" plus the hard "chip" note of the female bird. The female was apparently collecting small insects and spiders from the outer branchlets and twigs of the adjacent 30-40 foot black and white spruces, then hurrying back to the noisy fledgling. At one point it was thought there might be two fledglings present, but only one was noted for certain. An attempt at "spishing" to attract the male produced only intense alarm and a barrage of "chip" notes on the part of the female. The area where this observation was made consists of mixed second growth (post-lumbering) black and white spruce forest on the periphery of a 20-acre bog of sphagnum, leatherleaf, blueberry, and Labrador tea.

The Cape May Warbler has been previously recorded as breeding at North Elba (Bent, q.v.) but to my knowledge the species is not known as a breeder from the lower northwestern Adirondack areas. It is of interest that these lower areas contain a good population of other boreal species (Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay, Bay-breasted Warbler); search of the many similar situations thereabouts may produce more records of the Cape May's breeding in that sector.

Reference: Bent, A. C. "Life histories of North American wood warblers." **United States National Museum Bulletin** no. 203, 1953, p. 222

Fritz Scheider, 151 Seventh North St., Syracuse 8, N. Y.