

It should also be noted that there were many days when counts numbered zero, especially during the last week of February and the first week of May.

In summation, my total estimate indicates that roughly 92,000 crows passed over Sodus Point from February 20-May 9. Whether this is above or below the annual norm for this species cannot be ascertained as no previous counts were available to me.

The flights of greatest magnitude occurred with the aid of brisk south or southwest winds. If the grand total appears too high for our loyal hawk lookout observers, they should be aware that Sodus Bay is many miles east of this observatory — a span which allows more northward winging crows to strike the lake before turning east towards Sodus Point.

Observations were made by the writer during the early morning hours, and at other hours of the day by Mr. Frederick Harrington, Sr. of Sodus Point. Estimates of totals for each day were derived from a combination and comparison of our notes, taking into account each day the hours of flight (which are dependent upon wind and weather conditions.)

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Lots of Blue Jays: The abundance of Blue Jays during the winter of 1962-63 was noted by many people. Allan Cruickshank in his summary of the 63rd. Christmas Bird Count (AFN Vol. 17 #2) says: "Many localities — mentioned an unusual number of Blue Jays. In New York the Bronx-Westchester Region listed 995, Elmira 483, Peekskill, 754." After reading this I was led to delve more deeply into the December incidence of this species as shown by the Christmas Bird Count.

Of the 44 counts published (63rd. census) for our state, all reported Blue Jays except the one taken at sea off Long Island. The total for the state is 7298, headed by the 995 Jays seen in the Bronx-Westchester Region. In order to ascertain the prevailing number of Jays in earlier years the previous four counts were tabulated giving an average of 4154. It should be noted that the number of counts for New York state during this period averaged 40.

Many of the larger counts came from the lower Hudson valley. In addition it appeared that most of them were from areas having numerous observers reflecting more complete coverage within the prescribed circle.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON

April 1 - May 31

DAVID B. PEAKALL

A fuller tribute to John Elliott by those who knew him much better than I will be found elsewhere in this journal. The passing of this fine ornithologist and courageous gentleman has left a great gap and personally I shall miss the friendly messages that he wrote on the manuscripts of his regional reports.

The weather this spring alternated spring and winter in a way that was reflected by the monthly weather statistics which average out as near normal. There were severe frosts towards the end of May over much of the state. Most regions noted a rather poor landbird flight (an exception was the Long Island, lower Hudson valley area) and the mid to late May migrants arrived late. Drury and Keith (Ibis 104:449-489, 1962) have recently published an extensive paper on radar studies of bird migration in New England. Radar is a good tool for measuring the volume of migration although it gives little information on the identity of the species involved. One of the interesting facts that emerges is that most of the spring migration (60% or more) occurs on only four or five nights. Thus, considering that in addition the weather has to be suitable to concentrate the migrants and observers have to be present, it is not surprising that notable waves are comparatively rare.

Although Cattle Egrets were reported from seven regions the invasion was slight compared to that of 1962 except in region four. If the Audubon Christmas counts in Florida are a reliable index then the population in 1962/63 was lower than in 1961/62. It will be of great interest to observe what pattern of post-breeding dispersal finally emerges for this new arrival to the North American continent.

The hawk migration observed at different points along the shore of Lake Ontario correlated well. The principal movements of Broad-wings were noted April 19-21 and April 27-29; in both periods the peak counts were earlier in the west. Despite almost continuous coverage at the south-east corner of the lake the Broad-wing counts did not reach last year's total. This was probably due to less favorable weather for observation, however the counts were within the normal range. More Eagles, both Bald and Golden, were noted than usual; but Peregrines were scarce. Region eight reported a bad breeding season for hawks including the Red-tail but a good season for this species was reported in the Syracuse area and normal conditions were noted in the lower Hudson valley. The decline of the breeding population of the Marsh Hawk was noted in regions five and eight, in both areas all known nesting areas were deserted for the second successive year and the species was noted as scarce in other regions. It seems that this species is following the Bald Eagle, Osprey and Peregrine into a rapid decline as a breeding species.

There was a good flight of Red and Northern Phalaropes on Long Island although it did not reach the proportions of the 1958 flight. The Wilson's Phalarope, scarce in spring, was noted at Rochester and on Long Island. The Curlew Sandpiper was reported from Long Island.

The decrease of the Carolina Wren, from its position in the late fifties, has continued. Rosche reports that it "appears to have almost completely disappeared from all parts of the region", and there were no reports from regions two and five. The position of the Bluebird appears unaltered except for minor fluctuations. The first nesting of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher occurred on Long Island. Further gains of this species were noted in the lower Hudson valley and in the Oneida Lake basin.

There was, as usual, a sprinkling of rarities. An Arctic Loon, in breeding plumage, was reported from the Rochester area, the second spring record from Lake Ontario. Three Purple Gallinules were reported in May, one from Wyoming county and two (apparently separate birds) in Westchester county. Both Swainson's and Townsend's Warblers are listed by Reilly and Parkes (Preliminary Checklist of New York State Birds, 1959) as hypothetical. They list one sighting of Swainson's Warbler and two of Townsend's, there appear to have been no records since their checklist appeared. Both of these species were seen in the parks of New York City during the present period and another Swainson's may have occurred in region nine. What appears to me to be a good record of a House Finch comes from region four. I think that Leslie Bemont's idea of giving the facts and letting others judge as they will is an excellent way of dealing with difficult sight records.

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