

FIELD NOTES

House Finch in the Schenectady Area: The first record of a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) in the Schenectady area was on April 29, 1964. The bird, an adult male, came to the writer's feeder with a pair of Purple Finches, at about 5:30 P.M. It was observed from 25 feet and resembled a Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) except that its rump and breast were brighter colored and it lacked the brightness about the head of a male Purple Finch. I also noted the striped flank.

On May 5, the bird appeared again at our feeder, and with a 10 x 50 binocular I observed the breast, rump and striped flanks. Peter Wickham, the records chairman of the area who knew the species from Long Island, was able to provide additional points of identification. Attempts to catch the bird by netting were eventually successful, and eleven Club members observed it before its release. Measurements were taken, as follows: Total length: 155 mm; Wing 82 mm; Tail 67 mm; bill 11 mm; tarsus, 16.5 mm, weight 24.2 grams. While being handled, the bird gave the House-Sparrow like "cheep" call. It was banded with F. and W. band #101-103007 on its right leg.

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Ed. Comment: Attention is called to the article in the July 1962 KING-BIRD by Gilbert Cant, which summarizes the history of the House Finch in the state, and gives useful tips on identifying the bird in the field.

Franklin's Gulls in Central New York. A group of six small gulls with black heads was observed on April 11, 1964 by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Farnham and Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Ives on flooded land just east of the Seneca River near Montezuma. The gulls roared high in the water and occasionally fed like dabbling ducks; from time to time flew up, circled round and returned. When in flight the distinctive pattern of the wing, the white space separating the grey of the wing from the black near the ends, was obvious. With the white spots at the very tip the pattern was thus white-black-white-grey. We are convinced that these birds were Franklin's Gulls (*Larus pipixcan*).

Although there are a few upstate records of the Franklin's Gull, a group of six in breeding plumage appears to be unprecedented.

Hubert F. Ives, 5039 Skyline Drive, Syracuse 15

Wintering Baltimore Oriole: For two winter seasons, I have had a female Baltimore oriole (*Icterus galbula*) at one of my backyard feeders on Long Island's north shore. This is unusual for several reasons, chief of which is we have no orioles nesting nearby during the spring and summer.

The first winter the oriole came to the feeder, which is a large glass one on a tall pole, she was bedraggled and her tail feathers were scanty. She fought for food. (I put suet, corn bread and doughnuts out for her mixed with seed for my other visitors). She showed no fear of our banging kitchen door or of belligerent Bluejays and Starlings.

After a particularly bad ice storm, when the trees were stiff with sleet, the oriole was noted to have an injured foot. She could fly but had difficulty alighting on the feeder perch. She found a very clever solution to what could have been a fatal problem. Branch by branch, she laboriously hopped up a tall arborvitae which stands next to the feeder. When she was slightly higher than the feeder, she would drop, not fly, right down into the food tray. The distance was just short enough to make the maneuver successful.

On very cold days, when the temperature was five to ten above zero, the oriole sat huddled in the feeder long after eating. The glass sides and back provided concentrated sunrays and perfect protection from wind. She survived the winter and left in the spring.

The second winter, what was apparently the female oriole came again (the scant tail feathers identified her for me). But this time there was a