

FIELD NOTES

Bluebird Nest Box Project in Dutchess County: In 1962 a Bluebird housing project was started by the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, one member putting up 20 houses in March. One pair of Bluebirds nested and brought off two broods.

In 1963, 13 more houses were put out, this time farther from human habitation, and in more carefully selected localities. Bluebirds used 6 boxes, with approximately 20 young fledged.

In 1964, 16 new boxes were placed in those locations which had been most successful in 1963. Of 42 houses now available, 20 were used by Bluebirds. Five pairs raised second broods, and the young totalled 112, of which 47 were banded by Thelma Haight. Of the 22 remaining boxes, 16 were occupied by Tree Swallows, 3 by House Wrens, 1 by House Sparrows, 1 was unoccupied, and 2 contained dead Tree Swallows.

Mrs. Homer Germond, Shunpike, Clinton Corners

Cedar Waxwing with a Red Tail-band: On 1 November 1964, I observed a flock of six Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) feeding on the berries of a Mountain Ash, which is about twenty feet from my window. While watching them, I noted one bird had a bright red or scarlet band on the tip of the tail feathers instead of the usual yellow or orange. The time was near noon on a bright sunny day, so there was no mistaking this unusual color. The bird with the red band was the same size and had the other markings similar to the rest of the flock and did not resemble the Bohemian Waxwing (*B. garrula*).

Margaret Cornwell, 8 Henfling Road, Scarsdale

Note: This observation is of interest as *B. japonicus*, the waxwing found in Japan, northern China, and Siberia, has a bright red tailband.

An examination of approximately 480 Cedar Waxwing specimens in the American Museum of Natural History shows that, occasionally, the shafts of the tail feathers will be red, terminating in a "drop of wax" as on the wing. None of the specimens exhibit red instead of the usual yellow on the tail feathers. The closest approximation to this condition was one individual which had the yellow of two of the tail feathers replaced by an orange wash.

Peter W. Post, 575 West 183 Street, New York, N. Y. 10033

Fall Feeding of Pileated Woodpecker: On October 19, 1964, at 4:00 P.M. EDT, I watched a Pileated Woodpecker feeding on the fruits of the Frost Grape (*Vitis vulpina*). The interval was over a twenty-minute period, during which the bird hopped about over the vines which grew over the shrubs and herb growth in an open woodland in Central Park, Schenectady. While feeding and climbing surrounding saplings, the bird cackled constantly.

Russell W. Carter, Curator of Natural Science, Schenectady Museum Association, 37 Steuben Street, Schenectady

Ed. Note: In the fall, the Pileated Woodpecker frequently adds fruits and mast to its diet. Several species of wild grapes, chokecherries, fruits of Virginia Creeper and Poison Ivy all seem to be relished, but there are not many published accounts of observations of this type of feeding.

Notes on Winter Owls in Northern New York: On December 24, 1964 Frank Clinch and I were called to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Gorgen in Black River village to identify a Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*) in their backyard. While we were there we watched it catch a field mouse, return to a low tree limb and consume it head first. Some pictures were taken. I saw it again on January 2, 1965 perched on a roof antenna of Pine Lodge in Black River.

Two Hawk Owls seen by the writer and others and previously reported in this publication were one from Dec. 11, 1958 to Jan. 1, 1959 at 3 mi. NE Three Mile Bay, Jeff. Co. and one on Feb. 9, 1963 at 1½ mi. E of Sears Pond on Tug Hill in Lewis Co. Both were in treetops. (Note by Dr. Walter Spofford: Other observers seeing the 1958 bird noted that it sometimes perched close to the trunk halfway up in trees, unusual behavior for this species.)

Probably individuals of this species regularly visit the area but are not reported by competent observers.

On Jan. 1, 1965 at 4 P.M. EST as the sun was getting low, I saw a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) make repeated harrassing dives on a red fox in an open field on Pt. Peninsula. The fox made no attempt to fight back but was crossing the field to get to some trees. The owl did not seem to strike the fox. Two more Short-eared Owls came over this field to join the first in a few minutes. At dusk, 4:55 P.M. EST, I saw three different Short-eared Owls flying around a barn on Pillar Point several miles away on the same date.

David C. Gordon, 1347 Sherman Street, Watertown

Gyr Falcon in Jefferson County: On Dec. 23, 1964 I saw a dark phase Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) sitting on a telephone pole on the Dablon Pt. Road near Cape Vincent, Jeff. Co., and observed it from about 11:00 to 11:30 A.M. EST at close range. It greatly resembled a dark phase Rough-legged Hawk until it flew, but lacked any white on the tail and the flight was quite different. I had to shout and clap to make it fly the first time. I followed it from one pole to another several times in my car and could drive up beside it or past it without disturbing it. Only when I approached near on foot would it fly. Then it flew low over the ground with a steady, deceptively slow, gull-like beat — never soaring or hovering — before it flew up to its next perch. Once I saw it fly to the ground and walk around.

Frank Clinch and I located it later in the afternoon in a tree and observed it for nearly another 30 minutes on poles and in other trees near Cape Vincent.

On Dec. 26, 1964 in the morning I saw a black Gyr Falcon on Pt. Peninsula in a tree and later on a telephone pole beside the road. Although it looked like the first one I saw, I suspect it may have been a different bird.

All markings and other characteristics, which were noted at close range, have been compared satisfactorily with several of the most authoritative books on birds of prey.

David C. Gordon, 1347 Sherman Street, Watertown

An Albino Horned Grebe: In early February 1965 Walter Friton photographed a pure white bird from the West End Jetty at Jones Beach, Nassau County. He thought he detected a red eye and although he was in doubt as to the species he felt it was a Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), even though it seemed smaller than other grebes in the inlet.

Walter Friton, William Hackett and I observed the bird on February 23 and 26. The possibility occurred to us that it might be a Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*), but choppy water, distance, and the wariness of the bird prevented our seeing it well or securing a photograph.

Returning to the inlet on 8 March, we spotted a group of Horned Grebes (about 24) in a compact flock and there, on the outside of the group, was the white bird. We tried to photograph it, but as we attempted to get nearer, it dove and reappeared on the far side of the group. As we advanced, it was the only bird to swim away, the others appearing unconcerned over our presence. This time the typical Horned Grebe shape of the head and thin neck were very apparent, and the bird's plumage, which a few weeks previously was totally white, was now streaked on the back and sides with buff.

Daniel Rafferty, 2307 Loring Place, Bronx 10468