

First record of Black-headed Grosbeak in Dutchess County: On Jan 23, 1964, in the midst of the heaviest snow storm of 1964-65, a storm that originated in the Texas Panhandle and moved northeast in about 36 hours, a bird, tentatively identified as a Black-headed Grosbeak in the immature plumage of a first year male, appeared at my feeder in Pleasant Valley.

The bird had a striped head, the center stripe being the same cinnamon or burnt orange as the throat, chest and rump. This same color followed around the back of the head and gave way to a bright yellow at the center of the breast. The mandible was dark, the maxilla light. Identification was confirmed through the study of skins at the American Museum of Natural History, by courtesy of John Bull. The latter has retained two of the seven slides taken of the bird.

The Grosbeak remained at my feeder for 81 days and was last seen on April 13. I had it under observation for a total of 115 hours during this time. It was extremely timid and always came into the feeding area from the same direction. The area from which it came is profuse with Multiflora Rose, Wild Grapes and Sumac. It usually stayed only a few minutes on the feeder, eating nothing but sunflower seeds, then left, not to return for another hour or so. The least noise or movement inside the window would frighten him away, and our pictures had to be taken from six feet within the room. There was no evidence of plumage change before his last appearance.

Records indicate that two or three of these birds are noted every winter in New England and the mid-Atlantic states. While some are single time observations, several like this one remained for some time. In at least two reported cases the birds moulted into adult plumage before leaving.

Eleanor Pink, Main Street, Pleasant Valley, N.Y. 12569

Adult Little Blue Heron at Watertown: On May 9, 1965, while driving through Brookside Cemetery at Watertown, my wife, June, and I saw a heron fly from the edge of a pond to a tall tree. Realizing it was not a Green Heron, we moved nearer for a closer look but it flew out of sight. In 3 or 4 minutes it returned and perched in a nearby tree in full view about 30 feet from the ground.

We were able to study closely this adult Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*). The slim body, longer neck, dark legs and slate blue plumage distinguished it from a Green Heron. The bill was light blue with a dark tip. The bird remained in view for 10 to 15 minutes in large trees on the edge of the pond. Returning 30 minutes later, we found the bird wading in several inches of water.

At least 13 birders saw the heron that day at the cemetery ponds. We returned the next morning but were unable to locate it again.

The occurrence of a Little Blue Heron, especially an adult, in Northern New York in the spring seems unusual since most records show the "wanderers" of this species to be white immatures. There was, however, an adult seen five miles east of Phoenix, May 19, 1959. (*The Kingbird*, IX(2): 89.)

Robert C. Walker, Watertown, N.Y.

Sandhill Crane in Southern Oswego County: On May 16, 1965 I observed an adult Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) in a small marsh about one mile southeast of Pleasant Lake, Town of Schroepfel, Oswego County. The bird was observed for approximately 25 minutes in good light (1700 EDST) with 10X binoculars and a 30X spotting scope by myself, Christian G. Spies, Jr., and Jon R. Bart. When seen initially, the bird was vigorously preening but shortly thereafter began to feed in a

sedate, almost studied fashion about the margins of an open area in the small marsh. The pointed dark bill, bald red crown, the smooth gray plumage with marked brown cast to back and wing coverts, the heavy, drooping posterior plumage, and the long gray legs were all carefully noted. No call was heard and the bird was not seen to fly. When the pond was checked one hour later, the bird was gone and no further observations of this individual are known. The same day, a day of strong southwest winds, two Cattle Egrets were observed near Phoenix by J. R. Bart and C. G. Spies, Jr., and five Snowy Egrets were observed in a small marsh near East Syracuse by G. Weissberg. Probably all of these birds were moving on or in advance of a surge of warm southern air moving northeasterly that day and were precipitated locally by frontal thunderstorms that occurred intermittently on the afternoon of the 16th.

This is the first record of this species locally this century.

F. G. Scheider, 427 South Main Street, North Syracuse 13212

Western Grebes at Upper Lisle: On Sunday May 16, about 7 AM, as I was looking slightly west of south down the Whitney Point Flood Control Lake at Upper Lisle, I saw two very odd water birds. Distances on water are very deceiving, but I would say they were 1500 to 1800 feet away. Light was good, and I studied them for quite a time with my 25X telescope.

It was very clear they were not loons, geese or ducks. They were quite good-sized birds (duck size) with bodies low slung and dark and with long necks. The whole front of the neck from the bill right down to the waterline was dazzling, sparkling white. It gleamed in the sunlight like the white of a Common Merganser. The top of the head and the back of the neck were dark, the line between these and the white very clear and clean cut. The bill was yellow.

The only bird in my guide which fits this description is the Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*). The only water birds of this type with yellow bills are the Western and Red-necked Grebes. To eliminate the Red-necked Grebe, the front of the neck was sparkling white, the back of the neck dark, the line between the two very clear cut, and there was not the slightest indication of a triangular white patch on the cheek. The neck had a longer, slimmer look than in the Red-necked Grebes I have seen.

Mrs. Robert Sheffield, R.D. 5, Binghamton

English Visitor Helps Identify Little Gull at Montezuma: On June 16 at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, I was shown some of the American shore and water birds. I was being introduced to Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls congregated on a gravel bar by the main pool, when Mrs. Pettingill spotted a smaller gull with black head standing a little back from the others. In my 12x50 binoculars, it showed up well, a Little Gull (*Larus minutus*).

It is remarkable how often single members of this species get separated from their kind and turn up, all alone, on lakes and reservoirs where they will stay some days, to the delight of local birdwatchers. This has happened twice at our reservoir near Bridgewater, Somerset, England. My best sight was in Finland in 1959 at a nesting place on a marshy lakeside some 40 miles from Helsinki. We were able to sit in cover (liberally anointed with mosquito repellent) and watch the birds of a small colony flying, feeding, bathing and preening, a delightful sight for the Little Gull is a dainty bird.

Marie L. Colthurst, Bridgewater, Somerset, England

Note by Local Observers: The small size of the gull, much smaller than any of the