

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

Bonaparte's Gulls nearby, was very conspicuous. Apparently it was an immature coming into adult plumage. With telescopes at fairly close range, some flecking of white could be seen in the black hood, which came well down the back of the head. At rest, the primaries showed black, the rest of the wings and back gray, the bill dark, feet and legs red. In flight, the wing linings were still white, some of the zig-zag pattern of the immature was visible, the tail was white with an incomplete, narrow black band at the end, the central tail feathers being white to the tips. More than 20 people saw the gull.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON

April 1 – May 31

DAVID B. PEAKALL

April was cold and rather wet throughout the state and migration was, in general, late and slow. However, there was a heavy duck flight in Region 1 and some early arrivals were noted in Region 3. May was variable. An early warm spell was responsible for the peak migration towards the end of the first week. Afterwards migration was, at least to the observer, poor. Although the date of the main wave corresponds almost exactly to last year's, numbers seemed to be markedly lower. Presumably this was due to poor conditions for observation rather than to actual low numbers. It would be most helpful to have breeding bird census data from various parts of the state. Any persons interested in this vital project should contact Dr. Reilly at the State Museum at Albany.

Although the overall impression was poor, there was considerable variation in which species were affected in different areas. For instance, in waterbirds Region 1 reported Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Shoveler and Ring-necked Duck as unusually numerous; loons, grebes and Widgeon as scarce. Region 3 had more Common Loons and Horned Grebes than usual; Widgeon and Shoveler in good numbers. Region 5 noted Pintail, both teal and Widgeon as scarce, with Shoveler in good numbers. All that is in common is a good flight of Shoveler. Warbler migration was considered poor by most regional editors, but again there was no uniformity in the species considered to be especially down in numbers. Some interesting occurrences of the Prairie Warbler were reported. Bent aptly sums up the distribution of this species as "Its range is quite extensive in the eastern United States but its distribution is very spotted and its numbers seem to vary considerably from year to year." This spring a group of at least three singing males were located in Cattaraugus County, there were nine singing males in a new site near Elmira, and there were three records from the Rochester area. Possibly