

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

### 5. *Magnificent Frigatebird*



*Photograph by Dennis Puleston*

The Magnificent Frigatebird or Man-o'-war bird (*Fregata magnificens*) is largely an inhabitant of tropical and subtropical seas and coasts of the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. In the Atlantic the species ranges: "... along the Caribbean coasts of northern South America and the West Indies, north to southern Veracruz, Texas, Louisiana, and Florida, casually, to North Carolina, and south along the coast of South America to ... Brazil (A.O.U. Check-list, 1957: 40).

The species wanders extensively, and has been recorded along the northeastern coast from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey in addition to our own state of New York. It has also been recorded far inland from Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio (A.O.U. Check-list, *op. cit.*). Most of these occurrences are during summer and early autumn, often after hurricanes (Eisenmann, in Palmer, *Handbook of North American Birds*, vol. 1, 1962:371).

*F. magnificens* has been recorded seven times in New York State:

1. 4 August 1886; an adult female shot on Gardiner's Island, Suffolk Co., by the lighthouse keeper, J. P. Miller (Dutcher, *Auk*, 5: 173, 1888); AMNH No. 11705.
2. 5 September 1934; Easthampton, Suffolk Co.; seen by John Hel-muth following a tropical storm (Cruickshank, *Birds around New York City*, 1942: 66).
3. 19 May 1959; an immature or female seen at Jones Inlet, Nassau, Co. by Gilbert and Richard Rogin (Bull, *Birds of the New York City Area*, 1964: 89).
4. 15 September 1960; an individual seen flying over West Islip, Suffolk Co., by Irwin Alperin, three days after hurricane "Donna" (Buckley, *Linn. News-letter*, vol. 14 no. 6, Nov. 1960).
5. 20 August 1963; an individual seen by G. Simmons, Jr. at Fisher's Island, Suffolk Co. (*Kingbird*, 14(2): 125, May 1964).
6. 3 July 1965; an immature seen at Montauk Point and Harbor, Suffolk Co., by Thomas H. Davis and Leonard Epstein (*Kingbird*, 15(4): 254, Oct. 1965).
7. The most recent record for the state is the bird pictured above. It was seen on 18 September 1965 by Dennis Puleston who writes:

"The bird was seen flying over the lower Carmins River, Brook-haven, Suffolk Co., by several people about 2:00 p.m. It was not pursuing terns, although a number were fishing in the river. It then soared over our house at a height of several hundred feet and headed south towards Great South Bay. About an hour later it was seen again over the mouth of the river off Long Point. Several yachtsmen told me they had seen it earlier that day, about noon, off the barrier beach on the south side of the bay. At one time it perched on a stake off the end of the boat dock where their boats were moored, quite close to shore, and stayed there until an approaching power boat scared it away, when it flew off to the north over the bay. To my knowledge it was not seen again. The bird was in adult female plumage, entirely black except for the pale bill and white belly. All who saw it, myself included, had the impression that it was in good condition."

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