

Further, particular efforts should be made to see if this striking hybrid returns to the same area to winter in subsequent years. F. H. Kortright's *The Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America*, American Wildlife Institute, Washington, D. C. 1943, plate #36 shows a picture of another Hooded Merganser-Common Goldeneye hybrid which is very like the Fulton bird, but the head shape, back pattern and leg color are somewhat different.

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An Encounter between Two Snowy Owls: On 11 February 1966 at the Syracuse Airport, a check of the grass-lined runway strips for winter birds revealed a small, very white Snowy Owl, presumably male, perched on a tall lamppost at the edge of the area. When I approached the bird for a better look, it launched itself from the light pole and flew rapidly past me with the quick, short, snapping wingbeats that I have come to associate with a hunting bird. As observed thru binoculars, it was seen to suddenly strike at another large, rather dark Snowy Owl (? female) perched on the ground some 200 yards away. The perched owl ducked and the attacking bird veered off, flying with peculiar deep slow wingbeats, almost a "moth" flight, and reminiscent of some parts of the Short-eared Owl's courtship flight. About 150 yards from the second bird the first bird alighted and proceeded to posture in a peculiar fashion. Facing the still sitting second bird, the first owl stood high on slightly flexed legs, arched the back feathers, lowered the head and depressed all the head feathers giving an odd bullet-like effect to same, and elevated the wings such that the wrists pointed straight up, the under surface directly forward, the tips of the primaries straight down and almost touching the ground, and the secondaries about one-third spread. The tail was extended straight backwards and the upper tail coverts were fluffed and drooped at the side. Holding this position for some 3-4 minutes, the owl stepped in a shuffling, dancing motion back and forth in a semicircle, always facing the second owl. The posturing bird was noted to open the beak, and throat motion was seen but no sound could be heard because of adjacent jet aircraft noise which the owls appeared to ignore. The second owl throughout this appeared transfixed, sitting perfectly upright, looking very like a fat yellow-eyed bowling pin. After posturing as described for 3-4 minutes, the demonstrating bird very carefully folded the wings (somewhat like an Upland Plover after the "angeling" position) and both owls then settled into more relaxed postures.

The actual reason for the encounter remains totally obscure but the behavior was so bizarre and arresting that a description of it seemed warranted.

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Behavior of Swallows, Warblers and Swifts at Hornell: On May 10, 1966 we were called to come and see the swallows at Canacadea Creek in Hornell. Literally thousands of swallows were coursing up and down the creek, which is confined to a concrete-walled flume as it passes thru the city. The phenomenon had started after the snow and low temperature of May 8.

The mass of birds were flying very low over the waterway, with the greatest concentration of swallows, Yellow and Myrtle Warblers, and Chimney Swifts at the Thacher Street bridge. This density seemed to be caused by the type of wall construction at this point. Elsewhere the retaining walls were of smooth concrete, but at the bridge was a section of old fashioned stone masonry laid without mortar. The swallows included Barn, Tree, Rough-winged and a lesser number of Bank Swallows. I saw no Cliff Swallows. Barn and Tree Swallows greatly outnumbered the others. High overhead and never entering the stream of swallows below were several hundred Chimney Swifts gyrating about like a cover of fighter planes high over a mass of bombers beneath. On the edge of the flowing water were more than a hundred Yellow Warblers and a lesser number of Myrtle Warblers, all intent on seeking food. A single Savannah Sparrow worked side by side with the Myrtles.

The old stone masonry must have been full of "bugs." The swallows picked off bits of food on the wing and often alighted, clinging to the irregular stone-work and pecking at the interstices. Yellow Warblers fed on the old stones or joined the Myrtles at the edge of the water or along the base of the wall. A few of the Tree and Barn Swallows often alighted and sat, apparently sunning in the noon-day sunshine. Overhead the Chimney Swifts sought winged insects but never descended to mingle with the hordes of swallows. The phenomenon continued downstream and upstream with smaller numbers than those working over the old stone masonry.

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Waterfowl at Almond Dam, Steuben County: The Almond Dam, a federal flood control project on Canacadea Creek, has been designated for development as a local recreation area. During the 1966 spring season water has been impounded at a maximum controlled depth of 20 feet. The pool now has an expanse of mud banks in a former marsh-like area, stone rip-rap against the earthen dike, several shallow or island portions and a flooded area of abandoned farm land at the inlet. In view of the very small number of ducks found on the Hornell reservoir basins during the past few years, I thought it would be of interest to note their presence at the Almond Flood Control Damsite.

A group of eight Whistling Swan rested there during a snowstorm March 26. New ice appeared, but on March 29 Hooded Mergansers (two pair), Red-breasted Mergansers (eight), Herring Gulls (six) and one Pied-billed Grebe were present. Oldsquaw (four), Ring-necked Duck (four), Hooded Merganser (seven), the Pied-billed Grebe and the gulls were seen March 30, and nine Oldsquaws, 16 Hooded Mergansers and a few Mallards April 4. Four Black Ducks appeared April 8 plus 14 Hooded Mergansers, 15 Mallards and one pair each of Wood Duck and Blue-winged Teal. By April 9 the Pied-billed Grebes had increased to five and about 12 Common Snipe were in the marsh area. On April 11 there were one pair of Buffleheads, one Bonaparte's Gull and one male Common Merganser, the only drake seen although at one time five female Common Mergansers were noted. On April 16 three Horned Grebes (the only ones seen), six Buffleheads and 14 Bonaparte's Gulls were resting on deep water. Nine Bonaparte's Gulls and 19 Herring Gulls sat on a muddy islet in 28 degree temperature on April 17 and an Osprey investigated the inlet. The next day the Herring Gulls had increased to 30. One pair of Green-winged Teal was found April 21 and a pair of White-winged Scoters on April 25. On April 29 two Yellowlegs (spp?) were feeding at the inlet.

After their first sighting, the Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers and Buffleheads were predominant in numbers. Buffleheads often reached counts of 12-15, the mergansers 15-20. Scaups (spp?) never were above seven. The five Pied-billed Grebes remained until mid-May.

On May 15 two Common Terns coursed back and forth, and five Black Terns fed low over the water where flotsam had collected against the rip-rap, with a concentration of Barn and Tree Swallows. There has been very little of interest since that date, as men and bulldozers have been busy preparing to open the area to the public July 1.

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