

THE 1966 BREEDING BIRD SURVEY IN NEW YORK

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During the summer of 1966, New York birders cooperated in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife's continental Breeding Bird Survey. This survey, conducted on a trial basis in Maryland and Delaware during 1965, was expanded to all States east of the Mississippi River and four Canadian Provinces during 1966. Approximately 600 routes were run, 27 of which were in New York. The 27,850 individual birds recorded within New York represent approximately 2.5% of the total number recorded on the survey. This survey was established to provide much needed information on the distribution and abundance of North American birds and specifically to measure differences that might result from land use changes and the widespread application of pesticides.

The 25-mile routes were selected at random within the State. Each roadside route, driven one time during the breeding season, consists of 50 stops placed at half-mile intervals. During each 3-minute stop-period all birds heard and seen were recorded on special forms. All data were later transferred to machine punch cards so that comparisons could be made as the exact routes are rerun from year to year.

Although 151 species were recorded within the State, as would be expected, the survey best measured those species which were most conspicuous. The five most conspicuous species thus recorded were the Starling (5163), Red-winged Blackbird (3491), House Sparrow (1907), Robin (1778) and Common Grackle (1695) followed by the Song Sparrow, Common Crow, Barn Swallow, American Goldfinch, and Chipping Sparrow, in decreasing order of abundance. Yellow-shafted Flickers, Barn Swallows, Catbirds, Robins, Starlings, Red-eyed Vireos, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, Chipping Sparrows, and Song Sparrows were recorded on every route run within the State.

Special thanks are extended to the following individuals who conducted the 1966 survey routes: John Belknap, Danny Bystrak, Paul Bystrak, Thomas Davis, Stephen Eaton, Frank Enders, Helen Fessenden, Aden Gokay, E. E. Ketcham, Harriette Klabunde, Dorothy McIlroy, Eugene Mudge, Jean Propst, Dennis Puleston, Frances Rew, Margaret Rusk, Walter Sabin, Sally Spofford, Walter Spofford, Robert Sundell, Edward Treacy, Otis Waterman, Marie Wendling and Peter Wickham.

A great deal of enthusiasm was shown by those who assisted in last year's survey. The list of completed routes does not necessarily reflect the total effort expended. For example, Gordon Meade wrote of his St. Regis Falls route. "Mission attempted - failed of objective... We rose at 3:00 A.M.... to allow for an hour and a quarter run. After going a hundred yards... we had a flat tire... in a rain shower... [then] we hit the sandy spot in the road and... down to the hubcap. And were we stuck!" Nor does the list show the persistent efforts of enthusiasts such as Harriet Delafield who tried in vain to obtain coverage of some of the northern routes. The success of the survey, both present and future, can be attributed to the fine cooperation of all these people.

Plans are currently underway to conduct the 1967 Breeding Bird Survey. Much of New York state received only minimal coverage during 1966 and it is hoped that additional routes can be run throughout the state this summer.

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