

Lark Bunting at Belmont Nov 30-April: On 30 November 1966 at about 3:15 p.m., in our yard in Belmont we noticed a strange bird with the Tree Sparrows and House Sparrows feeding on the spillage from a small feeder containing fine bird seed. In size the bird was between House Sparrow and cowbird. In general appearance it was medium brown above with darker streaks and buffy feather tips and edgings, lighter below with dark streaks from a heavily blotched area on the breast to the vent. The bill was large and conical, the head appeared puffy. A large, buffy wingpatch about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long and $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide was very distinctive when the bird flew, and was visible when it was at rest. Other markings noted were: chin dark; throat with heavy dark blotches; distinct buffy eye ring and line from bill through eye and beyond; tail dark brown with fine white edging on the outside and white patch in center near tail tip; wings black, underneath in flight.

Ed Olmstead was called over and we made a sketch of the bird. On December 1 he photographed it. Pictures were sent to Stephen Eaton and Richard Rosche. Following a clue given us by Richard Rosche, we tentatively identified the bird as a Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*). Stephen Eaton on Dec. 14 and Richard Rosche on Dec. 15 both confirmed this identification. A complete verification report by Ed Olmstead and us, and additional reports by Stephen Eaton and Richard Rosche are on file with the Buffalo Ornithological Society.

The bird was an aggressive individual. For the first few days it appeared with the Cardinals and Tree Sparrows and was not at all timid. Then it began coming with the flocks of House Sparrows and flushed with them into a multiflora rose thicket. Usually the head feathers were raised like a crest, giving the head a puffy appearance like a Purple Finch. When perched, it pumped its tail as the Phoebe does, but not as frequently.

The bird continued to come to the feeder, somewhat irregularly depending on the amount of snow cover. Many members of the B.O.S. observed it, and Harold Mitchell also photographed it. By late February the bird had developed a distinct dark bib and necklace, and on the right side only a dark area extending upward from the leg and to the fore and rear of this area.

At the beginning of March the bird had developed large, dark blotched areas over the underparts. The tail was largely black with the patch and web edgings white. As the days progressed the blotched areas came together on the underparts and the general appearance became that of a black bird with prominent white wing strips. The crest, nape and back, when viewed from above, were more gray than brown. The buffy eye stripe and the patch below the auriculars remained distinctive. The bunting was still coming to the feeder in early April.

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Ed. Note: This appears to be the first upstate record, although there have been at least seven records from Long Island.

Gull with Dark Slate-colored Mantle at Oswego: On January 2, 1967 at about 2:30 P.M. while censusing Great Black-backed, Herring, and Ring-billed Gulls on the west breakwater in Oswego harbor, I noted an unusual gull among the others. The gull, side-lighted by a hazy sun, was studied through a 30x scope at about 300 yards for twenty minutes. The following was noted: mantle solid slate-colored, not quite as black as a Great Black-backed's but very much darker than a Herring Gull's; size the same as the Herring Gulls; the head and ventral parts white (i.e. typical adult plumage); bill yellow (and I thought I could see a red spot near the tip); eye color not really discernable at that distance but appearing the same as that of the other species on the breakwater; feet pink, the color of a Great Black-backed's or Herring Gull's; pattern of primaries with some white posterior edging, but not well seen as the bird was only observed perched.

It was not the Ithaca Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus* - cf *Kingbird* Winter season Region 3 reports, 1964-67) as that individual (which I had seen

just 15 days before) had yellow feet and some dark head markings.

No attempt was made to flush the gull to observe the mantle pattern in flight, as I hoped it would remain on the breakwater until another observer had seen it. At about 4 P.M. on the same day David Peakall found the gull still on the breakwater (I had not remained to show it to him) and noted the same characteristics as I had. There were no further sightings of the bird.

Since foot color of the adult Lesser Black-backed is variable in winter (cf. Peterson, R. T., et al, *A field guide to the birds of Britain and Europe*), this note seems warranted as the bird's appearance in every respect was that of an adult *Larus fuscus*.

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Goshawk Attacks Covey of Gray Partridge: On 5 January 1967 near Philadelphia in Jefferson County while I was watching a covey of nine Gray Partridge (*Perdix perdix*) as they moved from the side of a road into an open field, a Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) flew towards them. Usually when flushed a covey of Gray Partridge will all fly together in the same direction. As the hawk approached these, each one flew in a different direction, except one which remained "frozen" in the snow. This flying in different directions by the partridges was rewarding, for the hawk seemed puzzled, banking one way and then another and ending up with no partridge. A lot of action in just a few seconds. The hawk then flew toward a small stand of trees and shrubs. Ahead of it two frightened cottontails scrambled in a hasty zig-zag retreat.

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Small Black and White Shearwater off Long Island: On 2 January 1967, about five miles south of the Jones Beach tower, Nassau Co., I observed a small "black and white shearwater." It was about 12:30 P.M., the sea was fairly calm, and there was little wind. The bird, somewhat smaller than a Bonaparte's Gull, approached within 75 feet and was observed in good light through 7×50 binoculars for 10–15 seconds before it disappeared behind an adjacent fishing boat. Size comparison was made directly with Herring Gulls, and the more distant Bonaparte's and Great Black-backed Gulls and Kittiwake.

The bird flew with rapid alcid-like wingbeats, interspersed with short periods of stiff-winged, tilting glides. It was sharply patterned black above and white below. The undertail coverts appeared white, but my view was most fleeting. Foot color was not noticed. The well-seen bill was typically tubinareform, but proportionately short. The wings were long and narrow, but not proportionately as long as the other shearwater species with which I am familiar. These include Sooty, Greater and Cory's Shearwaters, and more limited contact with the Manx Shearwater and the Fulmar. I am also quite familiar with grebes, "black and white" ducks and all the Atlantic alcids.

This observation fits rather well the description and picture of the Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis*) given by Post in the *Kingbird*, 14(3): 133–141, July 1964. The time of year alone seems to rule out Audubon's Shearwater (*P. lherminieri*), although there is a late November report of the Manx Shearwater (*P. puffinus*) from Massachusetts (Post, *in press*). However, due to my shortage of experience with this difficult group and the fact that I was unable to determine the foot color or note the white inner webs of the primaries, I prefer to leave the identification as simply a "small black and white shearwater" of the genus *Puffinus*. Incidentally, no other form of Procellariiform from more distant places, other than races of the three species mentioned above, seems close enough to this bird's appearance to cause possible confusion.

Richard Ryan, Director, Turtleback Zoo, West Orange, N.J.

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