

Sabine's Gull at Montauk Point, Long Island: On the afternoon of Nov. 25, 1967 I was birding with Paul Opler and Lee Morgan at the Montauk Point lighthouse just as a light three-day northeast storm began to lift. A strange gull was noticed circling in a leisurely fashion not far offshore for 10 or 15 minutes. Twice it came within 50 yards, allowing us a good look at the dark-banded, slightly forked tail and the conspicuous three-toned wings (black outer primaries, white triangle on middle third of wing, the rest gray). These characteristics led us to identify the bird as a Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) in late second-year plumage. We eliminated the possibility of an immature Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) by the lack of a black nape mark and the absence of brown markings across the gray wings, which also excluded the possibility of its having been a Little Gull (*Larus minutus*). Both Paul Opler and I are previously familiar with Sabine's Gull from pelagic trips off the California coast during April and September.

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ED. NOTE: This is the tenth Long Island record and also the latest by over a month. The previous eight fall records were between Sept. 12 and Oct. 20.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

August 16–November 30

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The Common Egret (also called the American or Great Egret) has had a checkered history in New York State. Eaton (1910) called this egret "an occasional visitant" and listed some 26 records for the state over a fifty year period. Lillian Stoner (*Kingbird* 10:130, 1960) has summarised the history of the species in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys. She noted that the regular occurrences in the late summer and early fall started in the late thirties. On a boat trip from Albany to Kingston Point on September 12, 1948 no less than 239 egrets were counted. This appears to have been the high point in the counts of this species although the discontinuing of the steamer service in 1948 meant that comparable counts were no longer available. Certainly the species declined in the period 1950–1955. Since 1955 the maximum count has been 15 (in 1958) and now only a few individuals are reported annually. A marked decrease has also been noted at Montezuma, although there is little information before 1955. In 1957 it was stated that the "final early fall count showed approximately 100, somewhat below last year's number." The counts for the last few years have been 12–22. Tanghe's seasonal abundance charts of the birds of the Rochester area covering the period 1951–1954 (*Kingbird* 5:69, 1955) shows that the species was a good deal commoner at that period than now. One surprising point is that the upstate occurrences due to post-breeding dispersal have decreased at the time that this egret has become established as a breeding species on Long Island. Although comparable counts from year to year are difficult to obtain there is no sign of a decrease in the breeding population there.

There was a fine flight of both species of kinglet with a peak in late October in most regions. Several of the daily trapping totals at Island Beach, N.J. were higher than any of the daily totals recorded in Bull's *Birds of the New York Area*. The banding stations on Long Island also recorded higher numbers than usual of both kinglets although the numbers were much lower than those at Island Beach. The size of the movement is demonstrated by the fact that I found large numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets in North Carolina at the end of October, when the numbers were still high in New York. In contrast the numbers of warblers and thrushes were considered low in many areas and this was borne out by the banding data from Long Island. Once again the information from these trapping stations is a major part of the report from Region 10.

There was a large flight of Brant along Lake Ontario; 6000 were seen moving from west to east near Rochester on November 4 and 4000 were present at the south-east corner of the lake during late October and early November. The flight of scoter at Derby Hill at the south-east corner of the lake on October 19 was tremendous, 6000 individuals of three species. The scattering of 'inland' records in late October was higher than usual suggesting an overland flight to the Atlantic. As discussed previously in these summaries this appears to be a regular flyway for Brant, scoter, and jaegers.

So far most areas report a poor flight of winter finches. The reason for this can be found in the Adirondack report; the mast and seed crop is termed phenomenal. Hundreds and hundreds of finches were noted around Sabattis and Lake Placid. Most numerous were Red Crossbill, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskin, and Goldfinches. Scheider notes that it was actually one of the heaviest flights of winter finches ever noted in Region 5, but it was virtually confined to northern Herkimer and north-east Oneida counties. In view of the excellent food supply there, it seems to be necessary for the birders to go to the birds in this case.

Rarities included Eared Grebe (2 & 3), Frigate Bird (10), Swallow-tailed Kite (Region 3, probably the first of the century for the state), Sandhill Crane (8), Purple Gallinule (10), a flock of 40 Hudsonian Godwit (3), Lesser Black-backed Gull (3), a count of 11 Franklin's Gulls (1), Little Gull (2 & 5), Western Kingbird (1), Wheatear (1 & 10), and Lark Bunting (10).

It is regretted that only a brief account from Region 1 was available for this summary.

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Abbreviations used in regional reports: arr-arrival, arrived; Co-County; imm-immature; max-maximum one-day count; mob-many observers; Pk-Park; Pt-Point; R-River; Rd-Road.

All numbers given are the number of individuals unless otherwise stated.