

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.