

Owls normally nest in extensively wooded areas in mountainous country although they have been found breeding in the dense pine barrens of New Jersey and Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The habitat surrounding the Saw-whet's nest at Tobay is low, coastal scrub. The box is located on the edge of one of the many mosquito control ditches in the vicinity of the observation tower. Low reeds (*Phragmites communis*) are in the immediate foreground and medium-sized Bayberry bushes (*Myrica pensylvanica*), Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*) and High Tide (*Baccharis halimifolia*) form a background. About 100 feet north of the box are the salt marshes adjoining South Oyster Bay. Nearby nest boxes are occupied exclusively by Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*). These swallows have been seen chasing the owl when it left its nest for short periods early in the day.

The only other definite breeding record in our area was a nest with five eggs at Miller Place, Long Island in 1879 [Bull, 1964, *Birds of the New York Area*: 277]. A young Saw-whet Owl with traces of juvenal plumage was found at Quogue Beach, Suffolk Co. on July 21, 1966 [Kingbird 16(4): 244, 1966]; possibly a pair bred that year in the Long Island pine barrens. Both the above records followed big winter flights. The wintering Saw-whet Owl population last winter was about normal in numbers.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING SEASON

April 1—May 31

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"Things ain't what they used to be". This is the standard lament of the old-timer but many birders seem to be making this comment. One can see it expressed in many regional reports, most clearly in that of Region 10 whose editors cannot be classed as old-timers. Davis and Post mention the possibilities for the low numbers of warblers and vireos—weather, pesticides, and habitat destruction. On the last mentioned it should be remembered that destruction of wintering habitat south of the border may also be of importance. They also mention on the positive side that radar shows that large migrations of birds are passing unseen. Radar is a useful way of studying migration, it can monitor flights on a hundred mile front at one time and is virtually independent of weather; whereas the visible record is often the result of abnormal migration. Anyone interested in this fascinating field should read Eastwood's book "Radar Ornithology". However it should be remembered that quantitation of flights is rough and species identification is almost impossible. A preliminary analysis of the breeding bird survey recently issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service for 1966-67 covers 29 species. In general the figures show a fairly stable population, with the increases balancing the decreases, and most changes are not statistically significant. All three warblers studied show small decreases. Although these decreases are not significant for the one year period under study it will be interesting to watch long-term trends. The value of this survey will increase from year to year.

Although probably due to poor conditions for observing migration rather than to a real scarcity of birds, all regional editors agreed that no major waves of warblers were observed. Besides the lament on the poor showing of warblers and vireos one experienced observer who spends much time in the field commented to me that the arrival of warblers was later than it used to be. I wondered if this impression was correct. Using the data from her home region—Region 5—I calculated the average date for the peak number for nine species of warblers for the period 1955–58 and 1965–68. The figures showed no change for two species, earlier in the second period in one case, and in six cases it was earlier in the fifties. I also looked at first arrival dates and found that in two-thirds of the cases the arrival dates were earlier in the late 1950's than they are today. A more detailed analysis would be necessary to prove Jean Propst's point but it is an intriguing idea. Possible explanations would include climatic changes and delay in the onset of the migratory urge due to decreased hormone levels caused by increased breakdown by pesticide-induced enzymes. This latter possibility has been examined elsewhere (Peakall, *Atlantic Naturalist* 22: 109, 1967) and cannot be discussed in detail here.

The continued observation of a large number of migrating hawks along the shores of Lake Ontario has been not only a joy to observers but a comfort in view of the continued scarcity of breeding hawks in the state. Thus it is disturbing to read in the Region 5 report that the numbers were lower this year despite good coverage and good weather conditions.

Record appearances of scoters, together with some Ruddy Ducks, in Regions 3 and 4 can be correlated with a heavy movement of scoters along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario; although peak counts at the western end of the lake occurred earlier. High counts of Canada Geese were noted at Montezuma and Oak Orchard. A steady increase of this species over the last decade has been noted in the Atlantic Flyway on the wintering grounds counts.

The nesting of the Raven in the Adirondacks is the first nesting record in the state for many years. Eaton (1912) refers vaguely to nesting in the north country but gives no details. There has been an expansion of the range of this species in Vermont and New Hampshire since the late 1950's so that this interesting record is not completely unexpected.

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

All numbers given are numbers of individuals unless otherwise stated.