

IN BRIEF: The Huntington Audubon Society is holding a series of Audubon Wildlife Tours this year with remaining ones set for Jan. 30 (*Scandinavian Saga*) and April 2 (*Ranch and Range*) at John Glen High School 8:15 p.m. at \$1.50. . . . The Linnaean Society of New York is continuing for a second year its series of beginner's lectures with the following left on the schedule at 7 p.m. at the American Museum of Natural History: Jan. 19, Birds of the Region emphasizing rarities and how to collect and submit records; March 18, The Ornithological Year and May 20, The Role of the Amateur with discussion of ornithological projects, surveys and investigations. . . . The Scarsdale Audubon Society is sponsoring a forum on conservation at 8 p.m., Thursday Jan. 9 in the Greenacres School in Scarsdale and the Federation conservation chairman has been invited to speak on State Conservation Legislation, 1969.
333 Bedell Street, Freeport, N.Y. 11520

FIELD NOTES

The Prairie Warbler in Chemung County: The Prairie Warbler (*Dendroica discolor*) was first identified in migration in a Horseheads swamp by Mrs. Kay Fudge about 1959, and was verified by several others. In 1961 the species was found on May 10 by Mrs. Fudge and Mrs. Mary Smith on the road to Sullivan's Monument on the Newtown Battlefield Reservation near Elmira and observed by nearly all active birders in the Chemung Valley Audubon Society. A pair stayed on this slope, elevation 900-1200 feet, that year and at least one pair has returned each year to this area.

The second location was discovered on May 17, 1962 in a planting of young pines and on adjoining brushy slopes along the Mt. Zoar and Combs Hill Roads which parallel each other along a narrow valley near Southport. The first spring "Prairie" is always reported between May 3 and 10 from either this location or the Newtown Battlefield area. As many as three singing birds have stayed in the Mt. Zoar area during one season. On July 15, 1968 I heard three singing males, saw a pair (male and female), and had a glimpse of two others I thought were immatures.

The third general area is the Comfort Hill Road in the Town of Ashland, also about 900-1200 feet in elevation. Three singing males were found in May 1965 by Mary Smith. The habitat, brushy fields with scattered scrubby pines, is similar to the habitat of the two other locations. The singing birds were 1½ to 2 miles apart, unlike Mrt. Zoar where they were much closer.

On May 27, 1965 Mary Smith and I found a singing Prairie Warbler on a brushy hillside on the Clark Road, Town of Chemung. Because the location was not easily accessible to us, it has not been re-checked. There have also been one or two other reports in mid-May from small reforestation projects near Horseheads which have not been followed up.

It is interesting to note that in nearly every one of the locations there was also a Yellow-breasted Chat in residence. All were on hillsides or hilltops.

Wilifred I. Howard, 610 Coburn Street, Elmira, N.Y. 14904

ED. NOTE: The Prairie Warbler is a rare breeding bird in western New York and the Southern Tier, as indicated by the following references:

Eaton (*Birds of New York*, Part II, 191: 432): "local in distribution. . . . During the last 30 years it certainly has been a rare summer resident in central and western New York."

Reilly and Parkes (*Preliminary Annotated Checklist of New York State Birds*, 1959: 35): "common breeder Long Island, rarer in Hudson Valley; now very rare in remainder of State; formerly widespread."

Beardslee and Mitchell (*Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, 1965, p. 385): "of rare occurrence in western New York. . . only certain breeding record . . . 1904."

A check of *Kingbird* regional reports indicates the following breeding status in this area:

Region 1: no evidence of breeding.

Region 3: only other recent nesting, Connecticut Hill southwest of Ithaca, first nest 1960.

Region 4: first summer record since *Kingbird* began publication, 1967 at Vestal Center—seen carrying food July 4.

Common Raven Observations in Essex County, Northern Adirondacks, Spring and Summer 1968: So far as I can find, no Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) records exist for the Adirondacks in the past forty years or more; so it was with some excitement that Geoffrey Carleton reported a raven on May 27, 1968. He had been climbing and heard the bird at about 2700 feet. On his way down he saw the raven about 75 feet from him. He described the "whooping," the slotted wings and long wedge-shaped tail.

On the very next day, Greenleaf T. Chase, who was unaware of Carleton's report, was checking a nest of unknown origin that had been reported to him in rough territory about six miles from where Carleton spotted the raven. Imagine his amazement when he heard the unmistakable croaking of ravens and saw two birds soaring above the nest site!

On May 29, 1968 I went to check the nest. The day was cold and windy and the storm blew right into the nest cavity where the big pile of sticks was located. The ravens did not move about much, but I could hear them croaking and occasionally see one as it came out for a short flight. Through a 20× scope it looked as if they stood with wings outstretched in order to protect something within the cavity.

On June 1, Carleton reported: "Adults flying around cliff and then standing on rock on top of it; three young standing on ledge in or next to nest, changing positions." On June 2 Gordon Meade "had good look at the ravens."

For various reasons no one of us was able to check on the nest between June 2 and June 14. What dismay when John Bull and Robert Wolk, who drove up that weekend, reported no nest though they had been well briefed where to look—same result on their return visit on June 17!

Elizabeth Anderson and I were unable to get back to the nest site until June 21. The nest was indeed gone—not a stick could we see, as we stood about 400 feet below the nest site. Then we heard a harsh "cr-o-ownk" and saw first one bird, then more. Our detailed notes, taken on the spot, are too long to include in their entirety, but the gist of them is the following:

We arrived at the nest site at 10:30 a.m. and again it was cold; the overnight low had been 45 degrees and it never went over 46 degrees all day. The nest cliff was in shadow but a raven arose from a pondside and swept up to a sunny cliff opposite the nest cliff. Soon we were able to pick out three ravens sunning themselves on a flattish rock slope. Gradually, because of their slightly smaller size, brownish coloration on the neck (well visible with 20× scope and 7× binoculars in the fine light on the sunlit rock) as well as their more awkward flight, it became apparent that two were young birds.

Later they flew back to the nest ledge where they were joined by a second adult, and where they landed in young birches about 100 feet below the nest site. The two young flopped about, begging for food. It was evident that, despite the disappearance of the nest, the ravens had successfully raised two young. When we left the pond at 12:21 p.m. the temperature was 40 degrees and the light excellent.

Robert Hagar saw two adult ravens and two young being fed on June 22. David Young saw four birds which he did not have time to examine closely, on the same day. Hagar again saw four birds on July 16 and heard one calling in a severe storm on August 7.