

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.

I have now received three additional reports of single ravens seen elsewhere in the Adirondacks since that date.

In a little pamphlet "Birds of the Adirondack Area" written not too long before the above observations were made, Geoffrey Carleton says, in speaking of the boreal species: "The rarer of the above species are handicapped by the isolation of the Adirondacks from other northwoods areas because of the St. Lawrence and Champlain valleys. By contrast, species in New Hampshire, from the White Mountains north, have a source of resupply in the continuous northwoods forests extending all the way through northern Maine to the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec. Thus, the Common Raven is making a comeback in northern New Hampshire but not, so far, in New York."

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ED. NOTE: Published records of the Common Raven in the Adirondacks in recent years are indeed scarce. DeKay (*Natural History of New York, Zoology of New York*, Part II, Birds, 1844: 134) had listed the raven as "rare in the State, except in the northern district, where I have noticed it to be common and where it breeds." No specific county or record was mentioned. About 70 years later, Eaton (*Birds of New York*, Part I, 1910, p. 13 and Part II, 1914: 212, 213) listed it among resident species breeding "in the colder districts, mostly in the Adirondack region" and stated that "a few are seen in the western Adirondacks, especially in the northern portions of Hamilton and Herkimer Counties, the southern part of St. Lawrence County and the eastern portion of Lewis County. In this part of the North Woods the Raven still breeds but in constantly diminishing numbers." He mentioned several seen at Mt. Marcy by Verplanck Colvin on Oct. 23, 1875 as "stragglers." Eaton also reported in his survey of birds of the Mt. Marcy-Ausable lakes region in 1905 (*Op. cit.*, Part I: 45-47) that "No ravens inhabited this region" and that the Supt. of the Forest Preserve told him that ravens were seen there "only in late fall and winter and he had seen only two within 15 years."

Three more recent sightings of ravens in the Adirondacks by Greenleaf Chase have been published, two sightings probably fall migrants:

Three Sept. 24, 1951 near Harrisville, county not stated but it would be either St. Lawrence or Lewis [*Kingbird* 1(4): 103, Oct. 1951].

One in early April 1952 at Sable Mt. near Loon Lake fire tower, Franklin Co. [*Kingbird* 2(1): 16, April 1952]. This probably is the same one mentioned in *Audubon Field Notes* 6(3): 188, June 1952, as seen in early March 1952 in the central Adirondacks by Mr. Chase.

One at Saranac Inn, Franklin Co. about Oct. 15, 1954 [*Kingbird* 4(4): 113].

Dr. Walter Spofford has in his unpublished notes a record that Greenleaf Chase saw ravens in March, 1960, at the same place where this year's nest was found. On April 23, 1960 he and Mr. Chase checked this cliff which had been a regular nesting site of Peregrine Falcons. No raven was seen but the male Peregrine was there, the last year it was present as far as Dr. Spofford knows.

In view of the quotation from Geoffrey Carleton on the isolation of the Adirondacks from a resupply of ravens, the gradual spread of their nesting as documented in *Audubon Field Notes* is of interest:

1963—return of Common Ravens to Mts. Washington and Lafayette in N.H., pair at each in June "joined by 2 or 3 others, probably their young, by the end of July" [*Op. cit.* 17(5): 451, Oct. 1963].

1964—"three ravens photographed in and about nest in late May" in the Passaconaway valley, N.H. [*Op. cit.* 18(5): 497, Oct. 1964].

1965—nest with four young in old quarry at East Burke, Vt. [*Op. cit.* 19(5): 520 and 529, Oct. 1965].