

FIELD NOTES

Great Cormorant at Cornwall-on-Hudson: On October 25, 1969, Mrs. Barbara Merritt of Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York, reported that on October 19 she observed a Cormorant on the Hudson River near her home. She said that she was impressed by the unusually white belly and dark neck of the bird, and believed it to be an immature Great or European Cormorant. Upon report of the bird, Mr. and Mrs. Merritt, Mr. Paul Jeheber and I went to the river and found it on the low pilings where it had first been discovered. All of us are relatively unfamiliar with the species, seeing it only once or twice a year on occasional trips to the New England or Long Island shore. We could tell nothing from the size, but the bird did indeed have a very light belly and dark neck. It was an exact copy of Arthur Singer's illustration in *Birds of North America* by Robbins, et al. (p. 35). It was injured, its right wing drooping in the water. It was unable to fly, but could dive and apparently was successful in capturing food.

The bird disappeared on October 26 and reappeared November 2. While Mr. and Mrs. Merritt were observing it, a gunner in a boat nearby started shooting at it and eventually killed it. The bird was confiscated by the local game warden and eventually sent to the New York State Museum where it was confirmed as an immature male Great Cormorant by Dr. Edgar M. Reilly, Associated Curator of Zoology.

Deed in his *Birds of Rockland County* (1959) mentions several records south of Piermont Pier more than ten years previously and all between October 25 and November 8. Bull in his *Birds of the New York Area* (p. 88) considers these records unsatisfactory. This record is the first inland specimen for the state.

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A Response to Mobbing Crows by an Immature Red-tailed Hawk: Most ornithologists have observed Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) mobbing Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), but few have provided detailed accounts of the interaction, particularly when a hawk attacks the mobbing crows; for example A. C. Bent (1937. USNM Bull. No. 167, p. 160) provides a single sentence of the situation. Thus, the following description is of interest.

The morning of Saturday, 28 September 1968, was cool, clear and bright. At 10:45 while feeding quail in my care at the Poultry Science Farm of Cornell University on Turkey Hill Road, Tompkins County, New York, I noticed an immature Red-tailed Hawk circle slowly over the fields at the edge of a wood-lot about 150 meters west of the pigeon loft. As I watched, two Common Crows flew east from the wood-lot towards the circling hawk. Both crows were giving mobbing vocalizations. The two crows alternately circled above the young red-tail and dived at it. The first crow to dive struck the hawk; the second crow dived, but the hawk dodged to one side, permitting the crow to drop beneath it. Both crows continued their mobbing vocalizations. Each crow again dived at the hawk while its companion circled above it, calling vociferously, and each time one of the crows dived, the hawk managed to avoid being struck by dodging and twisting at the last instant. A third crow appeared over the wood-lot and headed east in the direction of its fellow antagonists. As one of the original crows began its fourth dive on the hawk, the young bird dodged to its left, allowing the attacking crow to pass without contact. The diving crow continued to drop 3-4 meters below the young red-tail as it began to recover from its attempted

strike. The Red-tailed Hawk immediately closed its wings and stooped on the crow beneath it, striking it hard enough to loosen several black feathers. All crows immediately became silent. The crow appeared uninjured from the attack and began flying away from the hawk. The hawk recovered from its strike and began to climb above the attacking crows. The two original crows turned west towards the oncoming third crow, and the three crows met, circled briefly, and flew upwards towards the climbing hawk that was not 10 meters or so above them. Before they were able to reach the hawk's altitude, the hawk began to rock (pitch) left and right by alternatively closing and opening the left and right wings and thereby rapidly descending towards the crows. The three crows turned away from the hawk and flew directly west into the wood-lot's tree canopy. The young hawk did not pursue the fleeing crows, but began circling slowly over the field, moving in a south-easterly direction. This entire sequence of action took place in 4.5 minutes, and the hawk was lost to sight at 11:00.

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1969-1970 Common Murre records from Long Island, New York: On 24 January 1969, an oiled Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) was captured on the beach at Fire Island National Seashore, Suffolk County, by John Aho, Park Naturalist. Robert Budliger verified the identification later that day, and it was released several days later. Aho later informed us (pers. comm.) that he recorded two other Common Murres during late January 1969 at Fire Island. One badly oiled bird was washed ashore dead and the other, also oiled, was sitting on the beach but escaped back into the water before it could be captured.

On 3 January 1970, an oiled Common Murre was found dead, washed ashore, at Hither Hills State Park, Suffolk Co. (Montauk area) by Harold and Charles Wellander. The specimen is now in the American Museum of Natural History collection. This is the second New York State specimen; one picked up dead at Fisher's Island, Suffolk Co. on 12 February 1951 is in the Ferguson collection there (*vide* John Bull).

On 8 February 1970 a lightly oiled Common Murre was found sitting on the sand beach near Montauk Point Lighthouse, Suffolk Co. (see Fig. 1). The finders, P. A. and F. G. Buckley and members of his ornithology class, easily captured it. It was kept indoors overnight, cleaned, and force-fed some sardines. On the following morning, it was shown to T. H. Davis, who also photographed it. It was then released by the jetty at the entrance to Montauk Harbor.

P. W. Post (Photographs of N. Y. S. Rarities. 7. Common Murre. *Kingbird*, 16 (4): 190-191, 1966) summarized the previous N.Y.S. Common Murre records. Ten reports range from 23 December to 4 April; all but a few involve oiled individuals. It is interesting that since 1965 there have been six winter occurrences of Common Murre on Long Island, but only five winter reports of Thick-billed Murres (*Uria lomvia*), supposedly the commoner species despite vernacular names. Almost all records of Common Murre for Long Island are concentrated in late January and February, indicating possible seasonal movement at this time, probably well offshore.

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