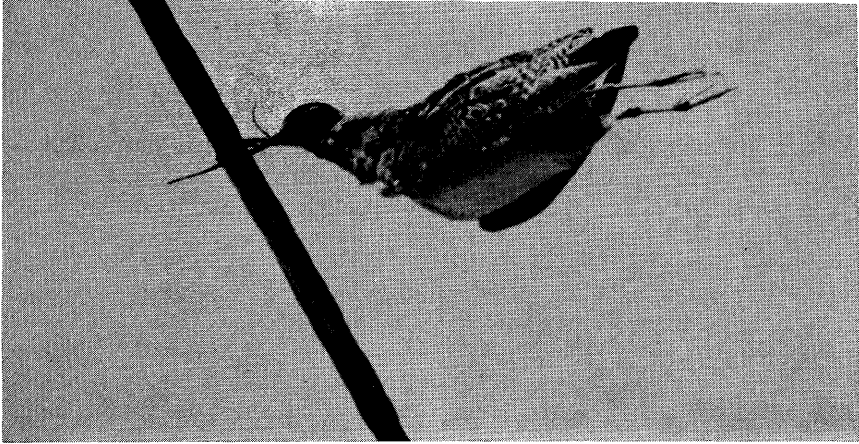


over the road (directly over a highway marker 10.18). The bird was a Common Snipe, *Capella gallinago*.

The Snipe must have been flying directly east. Its lower mandible struck the cable. The bird flipped over the wire and hung there. The point of the lower mandible was still secured in the cable strands, with the bill forming a crook as it went over the wire.

I returned Thursday morning with long equipment to retrieve the snipe. Dorothy Crumb accompanied me and took several photographs. When the bird broke loose, the lower mandible remained in the cable.

C. B. Farnham, Jr., 115 Ames Ave., Syracuse, New York 13207.



Phalaropes Hawking Insects over the Water at Montezuma: While watching swallows, on Sept. 14, 1960 at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, hawking insects following an abundant hatch, I discovered a Wilson's Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) running along a mudflat, visible through the cattails in my 30x Balscope, apparently picking up food and occasionally jumping up in the air a few inches and snapping its bill as though catching an insect. After a few minutes it was joined by six Northern Phalaropes (*Lobipes lobatus*). Suddenly they all started flying low over the water hawking insects. For the next fifteen minutes, until it began to get dusk, there was furious activity as the phalaropes alternately swam, dabbled and spun in the water, and flew twisting and turning in the air, hawking insects a foot or so above the water.

The speed, agility, grace and beauty of the phalarope on the water can be matched in the air when they take to hawking insects.

Walter E. Benning, Clyde, N.Y. 14433

Sabine's Gull at Mecox Bay, Suffolk Co., New York: On August 25, 1970, at Mecox Bay, while looking over a group of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*), I discovered a Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) among them. It was in breeding plumage, with a few flecks of white on its forehead. My attention was first attracted to the bird by the yellow tip on its bill. It stayed on the beach with the terns and permitted close approach. The bird had all field marks — black legs, yellow tipped black bill, hood, white forked tail, and conveniently flexed its wings on the ground to display the spectacular wing pattern. I flushed the bird, and again noted the wing and tail characteristics as it flew about 100 feet and resettled with the terns. There was a SE

storm on August 23, and it is possible that this weather brought him ashore. This is, I believe, the earliest fall date for this gull.

Mrs. Barbara Spencer, 154 Dayton Street, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11579.

Ed. Note: This is apparently the 12th record of this species for Long Island. See *Kingbird* for January 1968 and January 1969 where the 10th and 11th records are reported.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Autumn! Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness – and rarities! A veritable smorgasbord of rarities appeared across the state and a major banquet of same occurred on Long Island (v.i.). Fortunately not only rarities but a whole barn of other migrational data was harvested this season by an ever enlarging corps of birders.

Nearly all sectors agreed that fall was warm and wet with little really cold or snowy weather until late November. Consequently many warm weather waterbirds (herons, shorebirds, terns) and many insectivores, particularly certain flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, and warblers, established late and even record late departure dates. The consensus seemed universal that this was to be a winter without winter finches or Red-breasted Nuthatches, and no other northern landbird incursions, except possibly Northern Shrike, appeared evident. Upstate a universal complaint of high water preceded the apologia for such poor shorebird tallies, but downstate areas did very well, especially in Golden Plover.

Red-throated Loons were reported widely upstate (2, 3, 5, 6, 7) but the Great Lakes' Brant and scoter flights (2, 5, 6) were uniformly poor. Both regions 2 and 5 mentioned very poor numbers of dabbling ducks and of some diving ducks, probably secondary to the early intensive hunting pressure, but spectacular numbers were tallied at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge – the tally of 8000 Blue-winged Teal there may be a state record. Both Scaup species and Common Goldeneye numbers seemed lower when and where noted but this may be the negative side of the very mild weather of the period.

The picture on raptores is mixed; many more Accipters were noted (3, 5, 9) and some impressive Broad-winged Hawk tallies were achieved in Regions 9 and 10. Both Red-shouldered and Marsh Hawks were noted as being almost universally decreased and the total numbers given for Rough-legged Hawks were low (3, 4, 5, 6) although reports were widespread. A few more Peregrine Falcons were noted (3, 5, 6, 9, 10) but the Pigeon Hawk seemed as scarce as or scarcer than ever. Ring-necked Pheasants were definitely decreased in Regions 3, 5, and 9 and so uniformly so that one might question if an epizootic rather than hunting pressure or habitat changes was responsible.