

Wheatear at Lake Oneida, New York. On the afternoon of 26 Sept. 1972, Mr. Paul Laible of Bridgeport, N.Y., noticed a strange, strikingly white-rumped bird flush from the side of Smith Ridge Road, approximately 2 miles east of Bridgeport, Madison Co. He stopped to investigate and was able tentatively to identify the bird as a Wheatear, *Oenanthe oenanthe*. He contacted Crumb, who notified several local observers including De Benedictis. Attempts by the authors to locate the bird that evening were thwarted by inclement weather and nightfall. The following morning F.G. Scheider located the bird in the same location and it was seen by many other observers, including the authors, during the day. It vanished that night. Photographs, one of which is reproduced opposite, taken by Crumb provide substantial evidence that the identification is correct. Other significant details of the observation are: a small thrush-shaped bird of very upright posture; warm cinnamon buff ventrally, darker brown above and on the face, except for a conspicuous pale superciliary, which was the color of the underparts; rump and basal half of retrices, except the innermost pair, white; rest of tail very dark brown, narrowly tipped with buff; tertials and remiges dark brown, these and the greater secondary coverts broadly and conspicuously bordered with buff. The buff edgings to the flight feathers, especially the retrices, are indicative of the bird's immaturity. The bird confined its activities to two small roadside lawns, feeding actively on exposed ground along the roadside and in driveways, flying to perches when frightened. It associated with no other birds, and was not heard to call by any observer we have contacted. This is the first record from Region 5 and is evidently the sixth for upstate New York.

We know of only the following additional verified upstate reports:

- 1) Junius, Seneca Co., 9 Sept 1872. Specimen, now in Hobart College, collected by C. J. Hamilton (Eaton, E. H. N.Y. State Mus., Mem. 12, Vol. 11:535-536, 1914).
- 2) Rochester, Monroe Co., 1 (? and 2) October 1934. One seen by Howard Miller, Clarence Barg and Dewey Rommell (*vide* R. T. O'Hare, letter, 14 Nov. 1972). Although this report precedes use of any verification system, the observers are known to have been both competent and confident of their identification.
- 3) Piseco, Hamilton Co., 25 Sept. 1963. One seen by D. W. McIlroy, who had seen the species that summer in Europe (details supplied by D. W. McIlroy, *pers. com.*)
- 4) Beaver Island State Park, Erie Co., 25 Sept. 1965. One seen by R. Brownstein, H. D. Mitchell and E. A. Ulrich. Photographs taken by Mitchell are not presently available nor on file with the Buffalo Ornithological Society (*vide* R. F. Andrle, letter, 9 Nov. 1972).
- 5) Two miles west of Hamburg, Erie Co. 27 Sept. 1967. Two seen by T. L. Bourne (details supplied by Andrle, *op. cit.*)

We know of two other probable, but unverified reports. At least 9 occurrences in the New York City area are available (W. A. Farren, *Kingbird* 27:26, 1968; subsequent Region 10 reports). Although usually considered a "vagrant," Wheatears are clearly very rare fall migrants in extreme eastern North America, with records concentrated in the last 10 days of September and the first 10 days of October; one to four are reported annually in *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* at least since 1966. The geographic density of Wheatear records is closely correlated with the density of birdwatchers, as would be expected of a species showing the regular distributional pattern here postulated.

We thank R. F. Andrle, J. L. Bull, D. W. McIlroy, and R. T. O'Hara for supplying us with details of other New York Wheatear records,

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Photo by D. W. Crumb.

Wheatear in flight, Bridgeport, Madison Co., N.Y., 27 September 1972.

Sage Thrasher at Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Co., New York: On 22 October, 1972 a Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) was observed between the Coast Guard Station and the Police Barracks at Jones Beach. I was among a group of ten birders from the Scarsdale Audubon Society to see the bird, four of whom remained to study the bird at length: Breck Carrow, Alan Steinburg, Douglas Maynard, and myself.

We watched the bird for 15 minutes as it flew among a number of scrub pines. The bird usually would perch at the top of a pine, but for a few minutes it was on the ground.

We noted the following field marks (all without reference to a field guide):

The bird's back was brown-gray in color as was its nape and crown. Its underparts were heavily streaked with brown-black streaks all the way to the belly. These streaks did not cover the chin (and middle of upper throat). There was a rather strong orange-buff wash on the flanks. There also seemed to be a very small spot of this wash on the cheeks. The wings were brown-gray and there were two narrow white wingbars present (upper one very small). The tail was identical in color to the wings and back and it showed white corners. These corners could be seen both at rest and in flight but they were easier to see when the bird was flying.

At one time the bird perched very close to a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). The thrasher was about one inch smaller in size and its tail was also shorter proportionately to that of the Mockingbird. The thrasher also held its tail less horizontally (that is, the thrasher's tail was more a continuation of its back while the Mockingbird's was held more at an angle). The bill length of the thrasher appeared to be the same as that of the Mockingbird.

The thrasher also jerked its tail a number of times (about three or four times per minute when perched).

The bird was an immature, judging from its dark eyes.