



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.

The picture in Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds is identical to the bird we saw (except for the eyes) although our bird had more of the orange-buff wash on the flanks. This is apparently the fourth record of the Sage Thrasher for New York State.

Paul Lehman, 8 Cambridge Ct., Larchmont, N.Y. 10538

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL SEASON

Fritz Scheider

Fall weather promised some respite from the protracted precipitation of the summer. However, fall reneged and the promise was cancelled with moderate rainfall in September, increasing in early October, and heavy precipitation, both rain and snow, thru November. Similarly the latter months of the period were very cold, in some areas achieving record average minimal temperatures. Lakes and rivers in late November were at flood or near flood levels, inundating many choice birding areas. There seemed to be no major movements of landbirds across the state but an early and impressive Canada Goose flight occurred October 7-8 with thousands moving south over Lake Ontario and lesser numbers inland. Apparently this was the exodus from the northern breeding grounds for the majority of the species because no large concentrations were reported thereafter, although small flocks were noted thru November. Unlike Canada Geese, the Brant movement was reduced along Lake Ontario (3,5) and the waterfowl flight in general can only be described as varying from dismal to disastrous with markedly lowered numbers of dabbling ducks in 2,3,5,8, and a reduction in diving ducks that included, not only Redhead and Canvasback (2,3,5,8,9), but the formerly abundant Scaup and Ring-necked Duck. The reduced numbers of Common Golden-eye and Bufflehead may be a function of the lack of freeze-up further north and the only abundant species on Lake Ontario waters were Oldsquaw and Red-breasted Merganser (2,5), both Arctic tundra nesters. Hooded Mergansers like Ring-necked Ducks seemed very low (3,5).

Goshawk numbers increased in 2,5,9, and 10 and reflected the impressive irruption noted at various eastern and central fall flyways. Rough-legged Hawks on the other hand seemed very scarce (2,5,6,8) but scattered birds were reported from open hill country areas to the south (3,4, and 9). Bald Eagles appeared only as scattered singles (2,3,5,6,8,9) and Peregrine Falcons and Pigeon Hawks seemed even scarcer.

American Coot counts seemed particularly low in the central New York marshes (3,5) and no compensatory concentrations were noted in other areas. Shorebird migration contained interesting variety with good numbers of Golden Plover (3), Purple, Baird's, and White-rumped Sand-