

Richard Ryan (pers. comm.), Director of the Turtle Back Zoo in West Orange, New Jersey, informs me that no zoos in the Northeast contain Fieldfares and that, to his knowledge, none have been imported into this country for the past 12 years. He also comments that captive *Turdus* thrushes tend either to become very tame or to beat themselves against their cages, thus damaging their plumage.

That this bird may have arrived in the New York region via assisted passage aboard some ship is not an unlikely possibility. For a full discussion of this phenomenon, the interested reader is urged to consult Allan L. Durand's "Land-birds Over the North Atlantic:" Unpublished Records 1961-1965 and "Thoughts a Decade Later" (*British Birds*, 65(10):428-442, 1972).

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Ed. Note: Excluding Greenland, previous published North American records of the Fieldfare include:

1. April, 1978 — collected at Stamford, Connecticut by Schaler, specimen at Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven (J. Bull, 1964 *Birds of the New York Area*. Harper and Row, N.Y.)
2. 8 January, 1967 — seen at Ottawa, Ontario by H. N. MacKenzie (*The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, 82:51, 1968).
3. 30 March — 4 April, 1969 — seen at Bombay Hook NWR, Delaware by N. E. Holgersen, R.P. Teale, and Mrs. D. A. Ward (*Audubon Field Notes*, 23:465, 1969).
4. 1-2 January, 1973 — seen and photographed at St. John's, Newfoundland, locals said it had been present for "about 2 weeks" prior to its discovery by Dr. Howard Clase. A note is in preparation for *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (6 February, 1973, verb. comm., Dr. Howard Clase).

Audubon's Warbler Winters in Chemung County: On November 30, 1972, Mrs. Joseph Long called me to report that a Myrtle Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) had appeared very briefly at her home on the Hendy Hollow Road, Pine City, during a heavy snow storm that day. The bird was apparently hunting for dormant insects in the cracks beneath a roof over-hang outside her kitchen window. Her observation of yellow side patches, yellow rump, white wing-bars, and a general grayish appearance convinced me. Myrtle Warblers have occasionally been reported wintering here in the past.

Though she put a suet under the eaves immediately, it was four days before it appeared again, this time in a nearby tree. After a two-week interval she again caught a glimpse of it flitting about in a large willow near the creek. During the next month, I tried to find the warbler on several occasions but was unsuccessful because of his irregular visits. One day late in February, Mrs. Long called and told me that the bird was appearing quite regularly at her feeder each morning and that she was puzzled because he had a yellow throat and no yellow crown patch, resembling no warbler in "Birds of North America".

On February 27, I studied the bird for about three minutes using 8X binoculars as he ate suet spread on top of a wooden feeder twenty feet away. Although he did not resemble exactly any Audubon's Warbler (*D. auduboni*) pictured in my bird guides, I had no doubt as to the identification, having seen the species before in western Texas. He was gray rather than the brown of the immature, although later in the rain I noted that he had a brownish appearance. He seemed to be an alert young male with very dark vertical breast streaks ending abruptly at the yellow throat. Only a tinge of yellow showed at the back of his crown patch. When he flew a large amount of white was visible in the tail feathers. Before the warbler disappeared ten days later, I observed him many times. At first there was one black spot close to the left side patch, but on the day before he disappeared, all the

streaks had changed to patchy black spots apparently part of the black breast band of the adult male. The double wing bars, too, showed signs of merging, and the crown had an olive cast.

During the mild weather of March 2 and 3, he was constantly circling the old house next door in search of the awakening cluster flies, visible in large numbers inside the windows. On March 8, a warm day with flies abundant outside, his preferred perch became a corner of the porch roof where he would sit and wait for his victim to draw near, dart out and then fly to his favorite lilac or willow again and again. He dined so well that day that I was able to study him for fifteen minutes with a 20-power Balcope while he rested on a nearby branch.

Hendy Creek runs just behind the Long property in a narrow valley with steep wooded slopes and a thick patch of evergreens nearby, affording good cover. These conditions, together with the mild winter and available food, apparently made the location an attractive refuge for this wanderer.

My identification was verified by Noel Cutright and Douglas Kibbe of Cornell University. Chemung Valley Audubon Society members also observed the warbler.

Note: According to Tom Davis (NYC Rare Bird Alert) this is the fourth record of the Audubon's Warbler in New York State.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Maybe things do balance out after all. The recent mild winter with low snowfall and unbelievable warm spells offers a counter to the series of savage winters the state has had recently. The numerous wet, warm spells following each snowfall left minimal snow cover and the numerous comments re this attest to the easier driving and better birding local birders had this past season. A wealth of half-hardies peppered the state with a spotting of Hermit Thrush, a streaking of Brown Thrasher, and an array of sparrows (Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp, and Song) well in excess of the usual wintering numbers. It would have been fascinating to learn what half-hardies stayed in the "banana belt" (southern Region 9, Region 10) of the state but, alas, their reports are unavailable.