

FIELD NOTES

American Avocets in Buffalo Harbor. On the mud flats of Times Beach near the Coast Guard station I discovered five Avocets at noon, August 22, 1972. This species is casual and very rare in Western New York waters. The only other report in the area was a bird reported by Brownstein and Schaffner at Fort Erie, Ontario on August 8, 1964 four miles northwest of Buffalo Harbor. (Beardsley & Mitchell, Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region, 1965)

Photos were taken through a spotting scope at ranges of forty to fifty yards. The birds were seen by other observers for the remainder of the day.

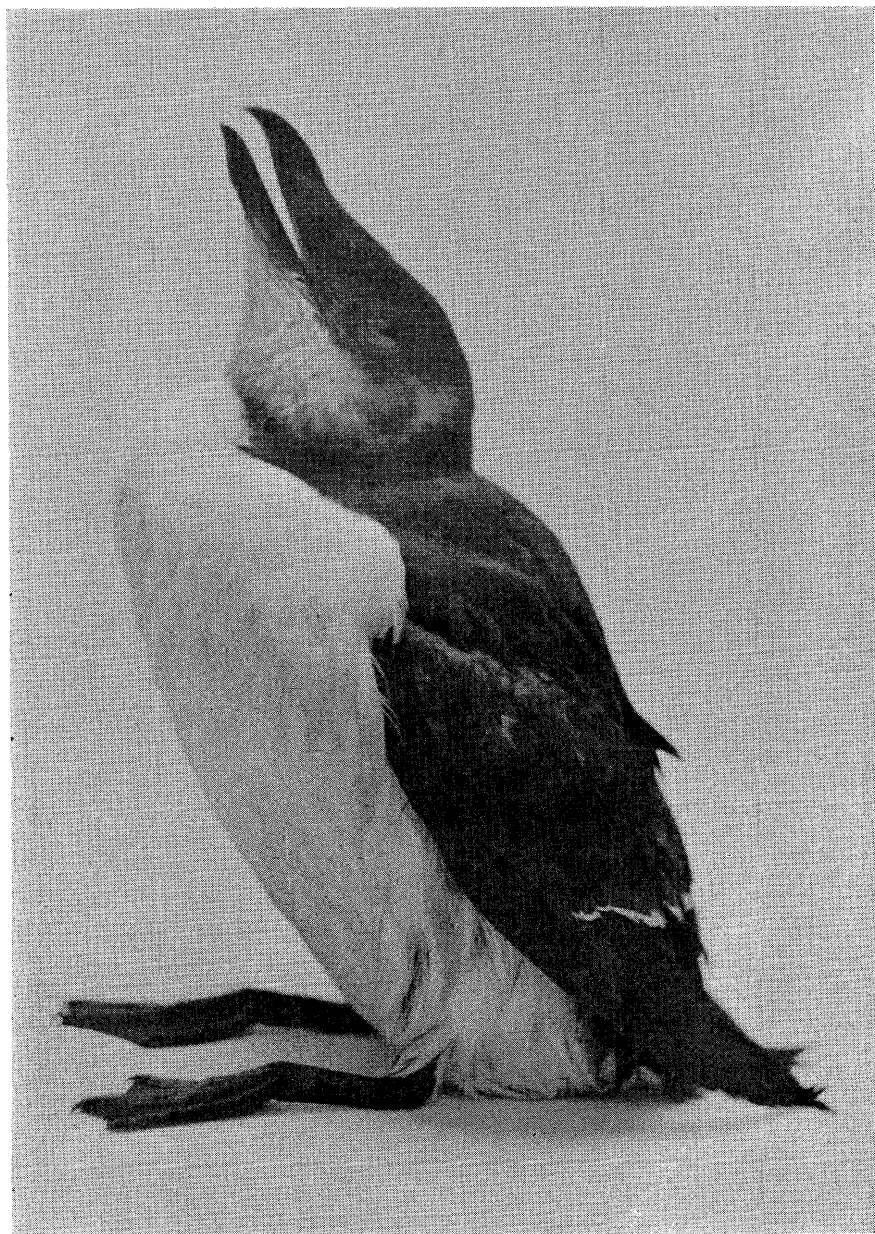


Avocets occur casually in the Northeastern states, so occasional reports of their presence in New York can be expected.

Paul M. Benham, 112 Linden Avenue, Kenmore, New York 14217

A Razorbill near Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. On 5 November 1972, an immature Razorbill (*Alca torda*) was found by Mr. Chuck Gallo near the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca County, New York. The bird was swimming in a small drainage ditch on the Jackson muckland less than one mile south of the New York State Thruway and less than one mile east of the Refuge. When it was approached, the bird attempted to dive in the few inches of water in the ditch.

The bird was caught by hand and taken to Mr. Reynolds Martz, who lives north of the Refuge, and placed on a small pond used by captive waterfowl. The bird reportedly dived repeatedly in this pond but whether the bird obtained food was not determined. On 9 November, the weakened bird was removed from the pond by Refuge personnel and taken to Refuge headquarters where photographs were taken. Although attempts were made to force-feed the Razorbill with minnows, it was dead the next morning. When skinned, the alcid was found to be in a very emaciated condition; there was no evidence of gunshot wounds. The mounted specimen will remain on display in the headquarters of the Refuge.



Taken by V. A. Dewey at Montezuma N.W.R., 9 November 1972.

This represents the first confirmed Razorbill record for New York State at an inland locality (Bull, in press). Although Eaton (1910) lists two Razor-billed Auks (Razorbills) taken on Saratoga Lake, New York, on 26 November 1893, details and specimens are not available for his record.

In Pennsylvania, Wood (1967) mentions a Razorbill collected in Luzerne County, in northeastern Pennsylvania, before 1902. The Razorbill recording attributed to Pennsylvania on "A Field Guide to Bird Songs", a record in the Peterson Field Guide Series, is from an oiled bird found and captured at Barnegat Light near Beach Haven, New Jersey, and then transported to Pennsylvania where a tape was prepared three hours later.

Bent (1919) states that there are no Razorbill records for the Great Lakes west of Lake Ontario and discredits records from Michigan. Four accounts from the 1800's of Razorbills found near the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario have been published. The earliest record mentions a Razorbill taken near the western end of Lake Ontario in November of 1871 (Macoun & Macoun, 1909). Between 1889 and 1893 there are three published reports: Toronto Bay, one bird taken 10 December 1889 (Thompson, 1890); St. Lambert in the vicinity of Montreal, four birds observed with one immature taken 10 November 1893 (Wintle, 1895); and Hamilton Bay, one male taken 9 December 1893 (Maughan, 1898). The observation that two of the Lake Ontario records and the Saratoga Lake record are from the same year, 1893, is interesting. Macoun and Macoun (1909) also state that there was a large migration of Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) in 1893 on Lake Ontario. An account was recently published in *American Birds* (1972) of another Razorbill record from Lake Ontario. The bird was seen at Hamilton, Ontario, 12-31 March 1972. Again, there are two reports in one year for a bird species that rarely occurs inland.

The Razorbill breeds as far south as southern New Brunswick, Canada, and winters south to Long Island, New York; rarely to New Jersey, and is casual farther south along the coast. The bird's appearance in central New York was not preceded by a major storm nor strong northeasterly winds.

LITERATURE CITED

- Bent, A. C. 1919. In: Life Histories of North American Diving Birds. U.S. Natl. Mus., Bull. 107:208.
- Bull, J. (in press). Birds of New York State. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. Doubleday and Co.
- Noel J. Cutright. Dept. of Natural Resources, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and Vernon A. Dewey, Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Box 232, Seneca Falls, New York, 13148.
- Eaton, E. H. 1910. In: Birds of New York. Univ. State New York, Albany. Vol. 1:110-111.
- Goodwin, C. E., and R. C. Rosche. 1972. In: Ontario-Western New York Region. Am. Birds 26(3):598.
- Macoun, J., and J. M. Macoun. 1909. In: Catalogue of Canadian birds. Gov. Printing Bur., Ottawa. p. 27-28.
- Maughan, J., Jr. 1898. Rare birds taken at Toronto. Proc. Can. Inst., New Ser., Vol. 1:2.
- Thompson, E. E. 1890. Razor-billed Auk at Toronto. Proc. Can. Inst., Third Ser., Vol. 7(1889-1890):200.
- Wintle, E. D. 1895. Unusual occurrence of Razor-billed Auk at Montreal. The Can. Rec. Sci. 6(5):247-248.
- Wood, M. 1967. In: Birds of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania State Univ. Coll. Agric., University Park. p. 53.