

release in the wild and also because seeing falconry in action would make friends for our hawks. I personally feel that the bill should be repealed as it has not been as beneficial as it was hoped and because live traps set to capture hawks for falconry cannot identify species and the personnel assigned to implement the falconry legalization have almost as much trouble with the identification as the traps. If we feel falconry should be prohibited in New York, we will have to gather data so as to convince Senator Smith and others that the bill is not beneficial to anyone but falconers. One of our members, an internationally known expert on hawks, especially falcons and eagles, was refused renewal of his membership in the major U.S. Falconry organization because he pointed out the dangers of legalized falconry and took a public stand against the new federal law. Voices are stifled so that soon the cry of the wild falcon will no longer be heard in the land. The bill introduced by Assemblyman Jerry Solomon which would have made falconry illegal in New York will probably not even be brought up for a vote and if it is, it will be doomed to defeat. We need to convince our legislators with data and other facts — and make our feelings known through letters each to our own representatives in the New York State Legislature.

Perhaps some of you reading this article will have heard of a bill affecting bird life about to be discussed in Albany. Please, if you have thoughts or opinions on such bills, write to: E. M. Reilly, Jr. P.O. Box 21, Old Chatham, New York 12136.

I'll be able to bring some of these up at the hearing in 1975 for general discussion and be better able to take a stand as the Federation representative.

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FIELD NOTES

Possible Suka on Lake Ontario, Monroe County, New York: While sitting in the parking lot at Hawk Lookout in Braddock Bay State Park, Monroe County, N.Y. at the end of the G.O.S. Field Trip on Sunday, Oct. 7, 1973, at about 11:30 A.M., our attention was drawn to a large, dark bird which was flying toward us from across Braddock Bay. At first glance we thought it might be an immature gull, but immediately rejected that because it didn't look right. While close to the size of a very large hawk, it obviously was not that, although at that point the bird was almost directly overhead and began to circle, soaring like a hawk. Although the day was overcast, the visibility was good. Through our binoculars we could see a very large, uniformly dark, gull-like bird with a very heavy, chunky body, large head and bill, and wedge-shaped tail which was quite short in proportion to the length of the wings. There were no protruding tail feathers. Large white patches at the base of the primaries were conspicuous as the bird circled and banked, several times, beating its wings slowly and ponderously once or twice as it completed half a circle. These circles were made almost overhead.

Both underneath and upper wing surfaces were visible as the bird circled, as was the pronounced bend in the heavy wings. One observer commented at that point that the bird was flying like a hawk, but wasn't. The bird, which had been under observation for at least five minutes, had now set its wings and was gliding across Braddock Bay toward the West Spit.

This gave us a chance to check a bird book since, up to this time, we had not taken our glasses off the bird. All the above points of identification were noted previous to consulting the books. A check of both Peterson and Robbins confirmed Warren Lloyd's and Mary Ann Sunderlin's suspicions that this was a Skua. (See Peterson, "A Field Guide to the Birds," pp 7 and 109; Robbins, "A Guide to Field Identification, Birds of North America," p. 130; Shackleton and Stokes, "Birds of the Atlantic Ocean," pp 97 and 99.)

The only bird in the sky at the time we sighted the Skua was a tree swallow, at which the Skua made a rather half-hearted pass. The size comparison was of a swallow and a black-backed gull. At no time did the wings have the slimmer, more streamlined appearance of the Pomarine Jaeger which we sighted later that afternoon at Manitou.

Although we have never seen a Skua before and bearing in mind that the bird has only been seen once or twice previously in this region, we nevertheless believe this bird seen at Hawk Lookout to be a Skua. Our observations were made through 10x50 Bushnell and 7x35 Fuji binoculars. We have consulted a number of authorities including the above-mentioned sources as well as Pough's "Audubon Guides" and Bruun and Singer's "Birds of Europe", Reilly's "Audubon Handbook of American Birds," and all sources seem to confirm our feelings.

The bird was also seen at Hawk Lookout by Lawrence Littlefield and Marguerite Berry.

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Mary Ann Sunderlin, 505 Bay Rd., Webster, N.Y. 14580

Observations on an Adult Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Ontario near Oswego, New York: On December 1, 1973 we were observing gulls from a cliff overlooking Lake Ontario about three quarters of a mile east of the city of Oswego. A brisk wind estimated at 25 miles per hour was blowing off the Lake, apparently creating favorable updrafts along the face of the cliff since a large number of gulls were soaring before us. While scanning these birds in hopes of finding a Glaucous or Iceland Gull, a bird with a light gray band on the back of its neck was spotted about thirty yards away at eye level. Careful scrutiny of the bird with 8x40 and 7x35 binoculars indicated that it had a solid black triangle on the tip, gray mantle and a completely white tail. Tail shape was not noted but the bird's small size and slender wings relative to the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls soaring near it were noted. The bird was immediately called to the attention of the members of the Cayuga Bird Club, many of whom obtained a satisfactory view of the bird although it was by this time fifty to seventy five yards away. This report is believed to constitute the first sight record of an adult Black-legged Kittiwake on Lake Ontario although immatures of this species are rare but regular in occurrence in the area and a previous adult specimen record exists.

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Common Crows as Commensals of Common Mergansers: On 25 July 1973 I saw 13 Common Mergansers (*Mergus merganser*) feeding together on the Beaverkill River near East Branch, Delaware County, New York. Rushing upstream in short spurts against the current, they drove their quarry into the shallow pools