

between the rocks near shore. Simultaneously 4 Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) hopped from rock to rock alongside the mergansers, feeding on prey flushed by the mergansers. The crows followed the mergansers for about a half a mile and then flew off. There are few references to commensalism between avian species in the literature.

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Great Crested Flycatcher Enters Building Twice: Just before noon on August 29, 1972, I was standing with several official visitors in the entrance hall of the military police guard headquarters at Seneca Army Depot, when I heard a scuffling in the ceiling fluorescent light fixture. Looking up, I was surprised to see a Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) returning my gaze. The bird wasn't exactly tame, keeping 3 to 6 feet away, but otherwise seemed generally unafraid of the half-dozen men in the hallway. I was able to watch it for over 5 minutes, and observed it feeding on the numerous insects attracted to the lights the night before. SFC Kluges, the Sergeant of the Guard, informed me that the door had been open the previous night and all that morning. He had not noticed the bird before.

The schedule of my visitors forced me to leave and prevented my return until much later that afternoon, but SFC Kluges and some of his men developed an interest in the bird. They reported that it remained inside, alternately feeding and resting, and flew out the door about 1:00 p.m. That would seem to be the end of the incident, but about 2:00 p.m. it was back and feeding again. Clearly, it had found the promised land, a sure concentration of insects on the cool day. It remained a little less than an hour, left, and did not return.

Dr. Frederick C. Dittich mentioned the nesting of a Great Crested Flycatcher inside an abandoned building, but entering an inhabited building to feed is not mentioned in Bent or any other literature known to me. It certainly seems remarkable for this or virtually any other species.

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Ash-throated Flycatcher on Long Island, New York: On December 1, 1973, a *Myiarchus* flycatcher with pale breast and belly was discovered by the junior author at Ridge, Long Island, New York. It was observed later that day by the senior author who agreed that the bird was one of the paler western species. It seemed as large as a Great Crested Flycatcher (*M. crinitus*) and the bill appeared completely black. The breast was pale gray shading to near white under the chin. The gray extended partially around the neck forming an indistinct collar separating the brownish head from the olive-gray back. The lower belly was pale yellow. The rufous in the primaries and retrices seemed similar to that of *crinitus*. Compared with illustrations in popular field guides, the bird seemed closer to Wied's Crested Flycatcher (*M. tyrannulus*) than to the Ash-throated Flycatcher (*M. cinerascens*) but no positive identification was attempted.

The bird frequented an area where an extensive overgrown field bordered pine-oak woods and spent much of its time feeding on or near the ground among large dead weeds. It was alert and wary and flew strongly. When disturbed, it flew to the trees but tended to perch low unless alarmed.

The bird was found only once again on several visits during the next few days. Dr. Wesley Lanyon of the American Museum of Natural History was notified and the bird mist-netted on December 5 after unsuccessful attempts to elicit vocalizations by playing tapes of the calls of four possible species. In the field, Lanyon concurred that the bird most nearly resembled *tyrannulus*. In the hand, however, it was readily identified as *cinerascens* by the tail pattern, i.e. with an expanded fuscous area at the tip of the inner web of the outer rectrix. It was also noted that a narrow band of whitish separated the gray of the breast from the

yellow of the belly and that the lower mandible had a small pale area at the base. The mouth lining was flesh colored, paler than in *crinitus*. However, none of these features could be distinguished in the field, even at close range in good light. Identification of North American species of *Myiarchus* is described by Phillips and Lanyon (1970). As Bull (1964) pointed out and our experience confirms, field identification of extralimital individuals of this genus may not always be reliable.

Since continued survival of the bird in the wild was considered improbable and Lanyon had previously maintained members of this group in captivity, the bird was taken to the Kalbfleisch Field Research Station of the American Museum of Natural History and caged with a captive *crinitus* after a series of color photographs was taken. However, it died the first night and the skin has been deposited in the Museum collection. The bird was a female in fully adult plumage with completely ossified skull. Wing length was 97 mm. It weighed 21.7 gm whereas a healthy female would weigh from 25 to 28 gm. Muscle mass was smaller than normal, no fat was present and both stomach and intestines were empty. Numerous *Mallophaga* were present throughout the plumage. A partially healed injury was evident beneath the right wing where several primaries had been damaged.

This constitutes the second known occurrence and the first specimen from New York State. The first State record was a bird observed and photographed by Sid Bahrt at Larchmont, November 22-24, 1970 (Boyajian, 1971). Five other records from the northeast are known. Specimens were taken in Maryland November 25, 1911 and November 26, 1957 (Stewart and Robbins, 1958). An immature female was mist netted and collected on Block Island, Rhode Island on September 15, 1960 (Baird, 1962). Other New England records are a bird observed on the Isles of Shoals, Maine, September 17-20, 1971 (Finch, 1972) and one photographed at Gloucester, Massachusetts, November 25-December 3, 1972 (Finch, 1973). Note that five of the seven occurrences took place in late November or early December. Two other December reports of *Myiarchus* on Long Island are known (Bull, 1964, 1970) but positive identifications are lacking.

The writers gratefully acknowledge the help of Dr. Lanyon in collecting and identifying this specimen.

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Request for information and comments: On 8 or 10 occasions in the past four years of hand-feeding chickadees, I've noticed an unusual change in behavior. The birds will suddenly leave off skirmishing for position on my hand and fall into a kind of daze, abstractedly gazing off into one corner of the sky. Usually they do this on a low branch but on at least one occasion while still perched on my

hand. In either case they can be fondled, grasped, tweaked and given a thorough examination (things they will not otherwise tolerate) with nothing more than an eye-blink as response. After 3 or 4 minutes they return, as alert self-possessed and rambunctious as before. Nuthatches and Downy Woodpeckers, when they are around, seem to fall into and out of the spell at the same time. I am satisfied they are not watching a predator, as they seem to act differently in that case. Ornithologists I have contacted have not been able to account for this behavior, but mention that it seems similar to the catatonic state which birds sometimes go into when being handled, as during banding. One suggestion was that it may be a similar metabolic mechanism to cope with extreme cold as has been observed in mice and shrews, but my notes do not seem to bear this out. I would be very interested to learn if other readers of the *Kingbird* have made similar observations.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

FRITZ SCHEIDER

December, January, and February produced a mild form of winter but March was a brutal spring with statewide (except Region 9) snow and ice storms and severe freezing in the latter half of that month. Migration, normally picking up in that period, was essentially squashed and attempted migration, particularly of waterfowl, stalled by the miserable weather. The combination of poor cone and seed crops plus limited gasoline for birding produced large numbers of feeder birding reports and the feeder-dependent half-hardies of the season had above average tabulation (q.v.)

The very mild December and January weather probably accounts for the attempted wintering by American Bittern (1,5,6,9) and the above average sprinkling of half-hardy ducks (1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9). A very strong Whistling Swan migration (1,2,3,5 with a stray in 9) was grounded by the severe storms of mid and late March. Redhead and Canvasback presented a mixed bag (no pun intended) with some areas reporting increases, others record lows. Greater Scaup showed reduced numbers where mentioned (1,2,3,5,6). Lake Ontario had a small flight of King Eider (1,2,5) and an array of lingering scoters, as expected mostly White-winged.

Red-tailed Hawk numbers were uniformly increased (1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9) with some areas reporting record Christmas Count tallies; conversely Rough-legged Hawk were quite scarce (1,2,5,6,9) with only Region 3 reporting normal or increased numbers. Ring-necked Pheasant continue to decline in upstate New York (1,5) and the Gray Partridge in the St. Lawrence Valley (6) are still in reduced numbers.

White-winged gulls staged a modest incursion (1,2,5,6,8) with best sites for numbers at the Robert Moses Power Dam on the St. Lawrence