

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

To the Editors,

Some comments regarding the Summer 1977 issue:

- (1) The Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Sandy Pond, Oswego Co. May 28-30, 1977, cited in DeBenedictis' "Notes and Observations" and Scheider's regional report was *not* the first spring record for New York State. A May 18, 1974 sighting at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co. by Charles F. Young was published in *The Kingbird* 24: 161.
- (2) Robert Spahn's Region 2 report cites a maximum of 1210 Red-necked Grebes April 10 at "WL" (West Lakeshore area). This count is unprecedented in New York State, exceeding any previous maximum by far, a fact that is not mentioned, nor is this extreme number mirrored by counts from other regions bordering Lake Ontario. Further, I am left wondering *exactly what area* is represented by the term West Lakeshore—were there birds distributed along 10, 20 or 40 miles of shoreline?
- (3) The highlighted Baird's Sandpiper cited in Walter Benning's Region 3 report is included without the date or any details. John Bull's *Birds of New York State* recognizes no spring reports, citing the lack of specimen (or photographic) evidence to support such claims. Surely this bird deserved to be reported with some detail or in the "Notes and Observations."
- (4) The highlighted European Wigeon and Sandhill Crane cited in Theodore Mack's Region 7 report are included without mention of date or place!

The varying styles of the regional reports leave a lot to be desired; there ought to be more standardization, more "readability." The Region 6 report reads like an incomprehensible computer printout—PRWMA, WHWMA, ULLWMA, etc. I suggest that PRWMA (Perch River WMA) be referred to as Perch R., WHWMA (Wilson Hill WMA) as Wilson Hill, . . . The introduction should spell out terms used, including the town or county in which the areas are situated. I do not suggest that locality abbreviations be eliminated, but merely curtailed, and reserved for widely-known areas such as MNWR (Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge), JBWR (Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge). When an observer's name is cited three or more times it should be initialed, preferably including the middle initial. When an observer's name is spelled out in the report it should include only the first

initial. Whenever a rarity has been photographed this should be stated, including the photographer's name. If the photo has been filed at some institution, mention this also—John Bull maintains a New York State rarities photo file at the American Museum of Natural History.

In 1961 Sally F. Hoyt stated that “in general, the Regional Editors will give a reason for most items they include—which enables a reader from another region, another part of the country, to see the significance of the mention of a species” (*Kingbird* 11: 181). Please inform me then what is significant about three Surf Scoters at Elmira April 28th? Was this early? late? a high count? unprecedented? or what?! Was the Ruby-throated Hummingbird May 14 at Owego noteworthy?

Finally, the reporting seasons for *The Kingbird* reports should coincide with *American Birds*, making life simpler for contributors and compilers alike.

Sincerely,
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