

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet breeding in Cattaraugus County: In 1972, 1974, and 1976 Robert Sundell found individual (two in 1974) Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*) during June near Red House Lake (elev. 430 m.) in Allegany State Park. No attempt was made to investigate further. On 3 June 1977 he again sighted a Ruby-crowned Kinglet singing in a pine grove on the western shore of the lake. There are other small stands of planted evergreens around the lake, which lies in a valley bordered by deciduous and mixed forest-covered hills rising to about 670 m. above sea level. The following day, I and several others saw and heard this bird in the same location. Returning on 2 July accompanied by my wife Patricia, James Gregory, Marcya Foster and Sister Dorothy McMichael, we again found the kinglet and saw it fly several times with food to a small oval island about 70 m. long containing planted evergreens and some native deciduous trees just offshore on the southwest side of the lake.

After crossing to the island by canoe we located the male kinglet and watched it twice bring food to the same place in the upper branches of a Norway Spruce on the south edge. Ms. Foster climbed the tree and found the nest well concealed among pendulous branchlets under a main branch about 3.6 m. long. It was too far out on the relatively thin branch and too obscured by foliage for her to determine its contents. There were two kinglets present, both quite agitated, the male occasionally singing a low song and circling the nest tree with food. On 24 July, we returned to the island and Ms. Foster retrieved the nest, which was 12.6 m. above ground, 2.3 m. from the trunk, and 1.3 m. from the branch tip. Such a nest site is similar to others described in the literature.

During this last visit we found six Ruby-crowned Kinglets feeding through the pines along the road to the administration building northwest of the island. An adult fed one of the young in this group. Presumably this was the family from the island nest site.

The nest was suspended from at least four branchlets 6 cm. below the main branch, a typical position. When we retrieved it, the nest was somewhat in disrepair and apparently distorted, probably owing at least in part to a severe rain and wind storm which had passed through the area earlier in the month. Therefore, measurements could not be taken, but the nest looked as if it might originally have resembled in shape a characteristic type described for the species.

Exteriorly, it is composed largely of mosses and grass fibers. Insect pupae remains and leaf fragments are also included. The interior is lined with feathers and grass fibers, and the remains of a broken egg are imbedded in the floor. The nest is now in the collection of Buffalo Museum of Science.

This is the first known breeding of the species in the Niagara Frontier Region, the second known nest from New York State, and the first from outside the Adirondacks. Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 444) cites the only pre-

vious nest, one found at Bay Pond, Franklin County, in 1942. interestingly, a second nest of this species was discovered in the Niagara Frontier Region on 11 June 1977 at Windmill Point, a short distance west of Buffalo on the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario. It will be of interest to see whether this kinglet expands its range in New York as has the Golden-crowned, or whether these are merely sporadic extralimital occurrences. If it does, I think it unlikely that it will do so with the rapidity and to the degree that the latter species has. I thank R. H. Zander and H. W. Charnley, Jr., for their analysis of nest materials.

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Hooded Merganser breeding in Schoharie County: On 26 June 1977, William Sharick, a biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, observed a hen Hooded Merganser (*Mergus cucullatus*) with ten unfledged young on Franklinton Vlaie, south of Middleburg in Schoharie County. As this was the first evidence of breeding of this species in Schoharie County (Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 153; Browne, 1975, *N.Y. Fish and Game Journal* 22: 68-70), Sharick notified Stephen Browne, also of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Since Bull (1976, *Supplement to Birds of New York State*, p. 11) called for documentation "in greater detail" for this species, on 5 July 1977 William Corbett and the senior author went to Franklinton Vlaie to observe the brood of mergansers.

We proceeded north by canoe along the west shore of the impoundment, and at 7:05 p.m. we spotted five young Hooded Mergansers scattered in sparse Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) about 50 yards from shore. As we approached, the birds gathered together and quietly preened on open water. There was no hen in sight, and no sign of the other five ducklings reported by Sharick on 26 June. The birds were first observed at about 50 yards with both a 20X telescope and 10X binoculars. As we slowly and quietly approached to within 20 or 25 feet, we could see much detail in the young birds. The narrow, pointed merganser bill was dark below; the upper mandible was orange-yellow at the base. The plumage was white below and chocolate-brown above. The brown wings showed the characteristic white patches when a bird flapped on the water, and the primaries were almost completely emerged from the sheaths. This places the young in Age Class III of Gollop and Marshall (1954, *A Guide to Aging Duck Broods in the Field*, Mississippi Flyway Council, Tech. Sect., 14 pp., mimeo), or about seven to eight weeks old. We watched the birds for ten minutes while they seemingly ignored our presence. Only when we pressed closer than 20 feet did they begin to move slowly away. We finally paddled around the mergansers, toward the north end of the vlaie, and the brood could be seen proceeding southward into drowned vegetation.