

REPORT OF 1978 FEDERATION SPRING MIGRATION SURVEY

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The 1978 spring migration survey participants located a total of 283 species and two warbler hybrids. This total is higher by 12 than last year's survey but is still three short of the 1976 record high of 286. Thirty-two of the surveys were spread over the May 6-21 count period and a pelagic trip on June 3 was also included. Although several groups did not report the number of individuals participating in their counts, it is estimated that well over 600 people took part in the thorough coverage of the state, with a total of 29 groups reporting. The combined survey of the Genesee Ornithological Society and Rochester Birding Association again reported the most species (215). Other groups reporting very high counts were the Buffalo Ornithological Society (199) and the Onondaga Audubon Society (176).

Groups from more southern portions of the state reported an excellent migration of warblers, but migration seemed somewhat delayed in some northern counties. Nevertheless, many organizations continue to add species to their cumulative lists and set new high count totals for their areas. Seven additions were made to the state list which now stands at 310. The first Golden Eagle was reported by the G.O.S.-R.B.A. group which also reported the Sandhill Crane (a species which has shown a remarkable increase in numbers in the eastern part of its range in recent years) and a Thayer's Gull. The pelagic trips turned up new count species in Pomarine Jaeger, Arctic and Royal Terns. Finally, a female Wilson's Plover was seen and photographed on Staten Island, New York City.

As in past years, lingering winter residents added to the migration count total. Tree Sparrows and Fox Sparrows were noted again as was the first White-winged Crossbill since 1975.

Raptors were well reported, with Bald Eagles appearing in two areas and a Peregrine Falcon sighted in the Rochester area. Several other noteworthy sightings were made including a King Rail in Dutchess County, a first for the May count there; two groups reported the Purple Gallinule at Jamaica Bay. The count's second American Golden Plover came from Queens County, and a Hudsonian Godwit was reported for the second time by the Rochester groups. This was

a good year for gull sightings, with two Iceland Gulls appearing (one from Long Island and one from the Rochester area), a Glaucous Gull in the Rochester area, and a surprising Franklin's Gull in Orange County. Both three-toed woodpeckers were located this year. "Misses" included King and Common Eiders, Merlin, Spruce Grouse, Black Rail, Stilt Sandpiper, Red and Northern Phalaropes, Parasitic Jaeger, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-throated and Kentucky Warblers, Western Meadowlark, Blue Grosbeak, Red Crossbill and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Probably the most significant "miss" was the Loggerhead Shrike, a species which has been disappearing from the state even during the short lifespan of this count, with only five individuals in five years in the entire state, and this year not even one was found. Another species which deserves concern is the Common Nighthawk which was reported on 16 of the 31 non-pelagic counts. This sighting frequency is a slight improvement from 1977 but numbers are still low. Sighting frequency of Vesper Sparrows declined further this year with only 13 of 31 groups reporting the species, and even those were very small numbers of this once common species.

Several compilers commented on the heavy migrant waves, especially of warblers, on the nights of May 12 and 19th. In the Rochester area on May 13th veteran birders felt they had not seen such a flood of warblers in many years—"The trees and shrubs were alive with them." By the next day many had moved on. In Dutchess County there was a similar situation on the 13th.

The spring migration survey can help provide continued monitoring of the changing status of these and other species, including those with expanding ranges such as the Turkey, Mockingbird and House Finch.

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