

1980 FEDERATION SPRING MIGRATION SURVEY

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During May 1980 over 700 birders, representing 32 clubs or groups, participated in the Federation's seventh annual spring migration survey. The basic pattern of these "Century Runs," or "Big Days" is an attempt to list all the species that can be found during a 24 hour period between May 10th and 31st. Most of them were made on the weekend of May 17-18, plus a pelagic trip on June 7th. Many survey groups noted much better weather conditions as compared with those of 1979. The species count total in 1980 was 274. This compares with 1979's total of 269, and 1976 high of 284 species.

Individual group totals ranged from 48 to 219 with the Rochester area survey again taking the lead. The Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club with 180 species had the second highest count.

Two new species were added to the cumulative total for the seven years, making it 321 species, as the pelagic trip group located 4 Leach's Storm-Petrels, and the Cayuga Bird Club reported a Le-Conte's Sparrow.

Of the species seen on at least half of the previous six counts, 13 were "missed" this year: Red-necked Grebe, Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Whistling Swan, Snow Goose, Rough-legged Hawk, Red and Northern Phalaropes, Great Skua, Glaucous Gull, Short-eared Owl, Connecticut Warbler, and Pine Grosbeak. There were only two reports of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher and Prothonotary Warbler. Continuing evidence comes from the spring surveys of the very precarious status of the Loggerhead Shrike, which has been reported in only four of the years, with a total of only six individuals; this year a single bird was seen in the Rochester area.

Several groups commented on the abundance of spring migrants this year with fine representation of warblers, sparrows and other passerines. As a result many species, such as Orchard Oriole, were found by more groups than in 1979. Fifteen species seen this year but not in 1979 were: Little Blue Heron, Louisiana Heron, Black Scoter, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Spruce Grouse, American Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Wilson's Phalarope, Chuck-will's-widow, Gray Jay, Loggerhead Shrike, Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, and Red Crossbill.

The strong migration also produced a number of noteworthy sightings. Stilt Sandpipers appeared in the Oneida and Rochester areas. A Franklin's Gull, an expanding Fish Crow population and a LeConte's Sparrow were reported by the Cayuga Bird Club. A Kentucky Warbler "invasion" surprised birders from southern to central New York, with a singing male reported by the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society. White-eyed Vireos, some distance out of range, were reported by Cortland County Bird Club and the Rochester group.

The House Finch seems to have almost completed its invasion of the state as it was reported on 26 of the 31 land counts; only the Adirondack and North Country counts failed to report it.

The eighth spring migration survey dates in 1981 will be the entire month of May and the first week of June. As the Atlas Project gets well under way it is possible that 1981 will be the last year in which the Federation's spring migration survey will be held.

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