



*Ivory Gull, Newburgh, Orange County.
12 January 1981* *Harry Darrow*

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

39. IVORY GULL

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It was about 11 a.m. E.S.T. on Sunday, 11 January 1981, when Brian Schieffer and the writer, just finishing our Federation Waterfowl Count, and Benton Seguin, who was just starting his, independently observed an immature Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) on the Hudson River just off the sewage disposal plant at Newburgh, Orange County. Schieffer and I were on a bluff south of the plant, about a hundred yards back from the river, while Seguin was observing the bird from the edge of the river just north of the plant. Neither party was aware of the other's presence. The writer was familiar with the immature of this species, having observed one being fed by hand at Salisbury Beach, Massachusetts on 2 January 1976. Seguin had studied the species over a period of several days in Iceland and in Alaska. After observing the bird for about a half hour, Schieffer and I left to spread the word, and went to Seguin's home only to find that he was out on the Waterfowl Count. We had no idea he had been observing the same bird at the same moment from another vantage point.

This bird was observed and photographed by many people on the following Monday and Tuesday, 12 and 13 January, but disappeared for the rest of the week, only to return on the following Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, 25-27 January; it was not reported thereafter. The bird showed little fear of man, and allowed people to approach as closely as 20 feet to take photographs.

The A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (Fifth ed., 1957, p. 229) states that the Ivory Gull breeds north of the Arctic Circle, and is virtually circumpolar. It further states that the species winters mainly over the drift ice south to the northern coasts of North America, and casually to Maine, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.

Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 288) lists six records from New York State between 1893 and 1964; in his *Supplement to Birds of New York State* (1976, p. 20), Bull adds a seventh record, of an immature at Niagara Falls, Niagara Co., 29-31 January 1973, photographed by William Vaughan. Up to 1981 there has been one additional record, the eighth for the state; this was an immature discovered by Paul Stoutenburgh on 8 February 1976 at Southold, Suffolk

Co.; this bird was found dead on 10 February 1976 by Tom Davis and Davis Finch, and on dissection, proved to be a female (*Kingbird*, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 119; Spring, 1976).

This winter there have been three occurrences of the Ivory Gull in New York State. An immature was seen on 1 January 1981 in the Niagara River Gorge, Niagara Co., by Robert Andrie, Harold Axtell, and others; this bird, the ninth record for New York State, may be the same bird as an immature photographed by M. Gustafson of Cleveland, Ohio, on 22 December 1980 on the Canadian side of the Niagara River Gorge. An immature was also seen and photographed at Charlotte, Monroe Co., at the mouth of the Genesee River, on 21 January 1981 by Mike Davids, Al Kemnitzer, Pat Reister and Kevin Griffiths. The bird at Newburgh thus constitutes the tenth record for the state, and the bird at Charlotte the eleventh. The possibility exists that the same bird may have been involved in more than one of these three occurrences during the winter of 1981.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York