

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Gray Partridges in Essex County: The European Gray Partridge (*Perdix perdix*) was introduced into New York State between 1927 and 1932, when thousands of birds were released in Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Franklin and Clinton counties (John Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 203); until recently, this was the only part of the state in which this species could be found. According to records of the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the first release in Essex Co., just to the south, took place in April 1967, when 170 adults, reared on a game farm, were released near Whallonsburg in the Town of Essex. A second release, of 140 adults, was made in April 1968 about a mile south of the original site. None of these birds was seen after March 1969, and the releases were considered a failure. Geoffrey Carleton (1980, *Birds of Essex County*) does not list the species as occurring in the county.

On 23 January 1981, six Gray Partridges were observed feeding and resting in oat stubble on the Marsh Farm, south of the Village of Westport. As I was confirming the presence of these birds, a neighbor stopped and informed me that she had first seen 14 birds around Thanksgiving, 1980. At the same time, the owner of the Marsh Farm remembered seeing one of the partridges killed by a large hawk, allegedly a Red-tail.

It is difficult to explain the sudden appearance of these birds. It is possible that they represent an expansion of the population in Clinton County, some 25 miles to the north. It is also possible that they have recently been released by some unknown person or group, or that they are survivors from the group thought to have disappeared in the 1960s. According to Vermont Fish and Game officials, no Gray Partridges exist in Panton or Ferrisburg, towns in Vermont that lie directly east of Westport.

The author wishes to thank Environmental Conservation Officer David C. Scudder for bringing this matter to his attention.

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