

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1981

A total of 81 reports representing 50 records of birds was reviewed by the New York State Avian Records Committee during 1981. This represents a slight decrease from the previous year. Of these reports, 35 were accepted, two were thought to pertain to escapes from captivity, nine were not accepted, and four are still pending.

As in past years, the quality of documentation submitted to the NYSARC remains the primary deficiency in reports not accepted, and is sometimes marginal even in reports which are accepted. In general, descriptions are least adequate when a common species is seen under exceptional circumstances. Observers tend to emphasize only field marks in their reports. The NYSARC greatly values a complete description of all features noted during an observation. A full description is highly desirable even when photographic specimen or other material evidence accompanies the report. Use of the proper names for plumage, body parts and pattern is most helpful to the NYSARC; these names appear in the introduction to all popular field guides. Emphasis on field marks should be deferred to a discussion of the observation. This discussion should stress how the bird was distinguished from similar and more likely species, rather than merely present a list of field marks. More casual reporting is justified only when so many well-documented reports exist that the species is no longer considered a great rarity within New York State.

We also remind observers that use of the reporting forms, available from the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850, is not a requirement for submitting reports to the NYSARC. Each year the NYSARC receives well-documented reports whose format is only coincidentally the same. The reporting form is intended primarily to remind observers what information the NYSARC desires to consider when it evaluates a report. We also urge contributors to submit dark (preferably typed in black ink) originals of reports; several reports submitted this year are delayed because copies made from copies and circulated within the Committee are so light as to be unreadable.

We regret to report that the pressure of other duties has forced Charles R. Smith to resign as Secretary of the NYSARC. We extend our fullest appreciation to Dr. Smith for a job well done. Dr. Smith continues to support the Committee by making the Laboratory of

Ornithology available as a central receiving point and repository for reports submitted to the NYSARC. The Committee is most pleased to welcome John Confer as the new Secretary of the NYSARC. Communications to the NYSARC should be sent to:

Dr. John Confer, Secretary
New York Avian Records Committee
c/o The Laboratory of Ornithology
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850

As in past years, only contributors are acknowledged in the summary of reports, regardless of the number of observers. The term "substantiated" means that material evidence accompanies the written documentation.

1981 ACCEPTED REPORTS

LOUISIANA HERON (*Hydranassa tricolor*). 1981-20-A,B adult 23 Apr and two 24 Apr, town of Greece, Monroe Co. (RGS, KG). An upstate New York record.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nyctanassa violaceus*). 1981-13-A adult 3 July, El Dorado Beach Sanctuary, Ellsburgh township, Jefferson Co. (GAS). An upstate New York report.

FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna bicolor*). 1981-4-A-F one 9 Apr, Cruger's Island, Dutchess Co. (FG, MEVW, JWK, MCK, MWY). 1981-27-A one (?immature) 3 Sept, town of Greece, Monroe Co. (RGS). These represent the 12th and 13th records from New York State, of which five are from upstate New York.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*). 1981-6-A three adults 3 Apr, Biddlecum Marsh, town of Phoenix, Oswego Co. (DWC). 1981-7-A banded adult 10 Apr, Pools Brook Marsh, town of Manlius, Onondaga Co. (DWC). 1981-8-A adult 18 Apr, Beaver Lake, town of Lysander, Onondaga Co. (JH). All showed the characteristics of the pink-billed race *frontalis*. Although this species is no longer on the list of species to be reviewed by the NYSARC, these reports were received before that list was revised. These reports support our earlier assessment of the status of this species within New York State.

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*). 1981-37-A,B. One 1 Nov, Minnewaska State Park, Ulster Co. (MCK, JWK). An upstate report, rather late in the season.

GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). 1981-3-A immature "white morph," 2-8 Feb, Lawrence, Nassau Co. (THD); photograph on file. This is the first substantiated record from New York State since 1965.

- SANDHILL CRANE** (*Grus canadensis*). 1981-16-A-C adult 28 Mar, Hamlin Beach, Monroe Co. (AW, AC, CC). 1981-21-A adult 23 May, town of Carlton, Monroe Co. (RGS), photograph on file. These are the 16th and 17th state records. It is possible that a single individual persistent during the spring along the southeast corner of Lake Ontario is responsible for these and for other reports of Sandhill Crane submitted to the NYSARC since 1979.
- BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*). 1981-14-A adult 5 June Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk Co. (PAB). This is the second documented spring record from New York.
- SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris acuminata*). 1981-12-A adult 18-24 July, Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co. (THD). Full details of this first state record appear in *The Kingbird* 31: 198-201; 1981.
- BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** (*Tryngites subruficollis*). 1981-49-A one 1 Nov, Hamlin, Monroe Co. (MD). This appears to be the first November record from New York State.
- CALIFORNIA GULL** (*Larus californicus*). 1981-34-A-C adult 15 Oct to 2 Nov, Rockland Lake State Park, Rockland Co. (JH, REL, DWC), photograph on file. This appears to be the same individual first found in 1978. It was reported (usually without documentation) from 4 Oct to 17 Dec 1978, 11 March 1979, 3 Oct to 7 Nov 1979, 26-29 Mar 1980, early Sept-Dec 1980 and early Oct 1981 to 12 Feb 1982 at the same locality.
- THAYER'S GULL** (*Larus thayeri*). 1981-17-A immature 21-22 March, outlet to Irondequoit Bay, Monroe Co. (MAS). Birds in immature (usually Basic I) plumage appear to predominate in New York away from the Niagara gorge and vicinity.
- SABINE'S GULL** (*Xema sabini*). 1981-28-A,B immature 8-15 Oct, Sandy Pond, Oswego Co. (FGS, REL). No longer listed for review during the fall period; this report was received before the species was reevaluated.
- IVORY GULL** (*Pagophila eburnea*). 1981-1-A-C immature 11-20 Jan, Newburgh, Orange Co. (EDT, KMcd, MB, MCS), photograph and details in *The Kingbird* 31: 63-64; 1981. 1981-15-A immature 21 Jan, mouth of Genesee River, Monroe Co. (AK), photograph on file. These are the 11th and 12th state records. No documentation for a reputed second bird at Newburgh was seen by the NYSARC.
- COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*). 1981-41-A,B adult 19 Dec, Montauk, Suffolk Co. (SRD, KCP). This bird, in delayed alternate

- plumage, is about the 19th record from New York.
- BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides arcticus*). 1981-48-A male 26 Sept, Hamlin Beach State Park, Monroe Co. (SH). Early for bird far removed from a nesting area, but this is the more frequent of the two three-toed woodpeckers under such circumstances.
- SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*). 1981-38-A-E one 9 Nov to 20 Dec, Baltimore Woods, Marcellus, Onondaga Co. (DWC, JH, REL, FGS, PDeB), photographs on file, specimen to American Museum of Natural History. Full details of this seventh state record appear in *The Kingbird* 32: 147-148; 1982.
- WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*). 1981-31-A,B one 27 Sept, Cruger's Island, Dutchess Co. (JWK, MCK). This is the 20th state record; prior records are summarized in *The Kingbird* 31: 122-125; 1981.
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER** (*Dendroica dominica*). 1981-22-A adult 3 June, High Peak Recreation Club [Atlas block 5690B] Essex Co. (TRD). Seen briefly at a time when late spring migrants are possible, this bird was not described in sufficient detail to suggest its racial affinities.
- TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Dendroica townsendi*). 1981-9-A adult male 29 Apr, Hempstead Lake State Park, Nassau Co. (THD). This is the tenth record from New York.
- SCARLET TANAGER** (*Piranga olivacea*). 1981-46-A winter plumaged bird 10 Dec, Mendon Pond Park, Monroe Co. (RGS). This upstate winter record appears to be the first December report of a Scarlet Tanager from the state.
- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*). 1981-11-A,B female 19 May, DeWitt, Onondaga Co. (DWC, FGS). An upstate report of a species far more regular on Long Island.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*). 1981-42-A immature male 16 Dec, Greece, Monroe Co. (RGS). An early winter report from upstate New York, where this species occasionally persists at or near feeders. The NYSARC will not review any further similar reports of this species.
- LARK SPARROW** (*Chondestes grammacus*). 1981-29-A adult 8 Sept, town of North Elba, Essex Co. (JMCP). Details of this upstate record appear in *The Kingbird* 32: 29; 1982.
- BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). 1981-5-A-C as many as seven males and four females 2-9 Apr, town of Hamlin,

Monroe Co. (FGS, DWC, RGS), photograph on file. 1981-35-A,B ?immature male 22-24 Oct, Liverpool, Onondaga Co. (FGS, DWC). photograph on file. 1981-42-A immature or female 7 Nov, Parma, Monroe Co. (MD). Birds in the spring flock showed sexual chasing and nest-building behavior but evidently departed before actually nesting. These are the seventh through ninth records from New York.

BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus major*). 1981-26-A female with two dependent young 18 July, Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co. (THD), details appear in *The Kingbird* 31: 214; 1981. This is the first evidence of actual nesting by Boat-tailed Grackles within New York; nest(s) were found in 1982. Reports of this species from Long Island no longer will be reviewed by the NYSARC.

HOARY REDPOLL (*Carduelis hornemanni*). 1981-2-B,C one 13-14 Jan, Upton, Suffolk Co. (GSR, TL). 1981-50-A one 13 Jan, Pompey township, Onondaga Co. (DWC). This is about the number of reports expected in a moderate redpoll incursion year.

1981 REPORTS: IDENTITY ACCEPTED, ORIGIN UNCERTAIN
BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*). 1981-30 19 Sept, Brad-dock's Bay State Park, Monroe Co.
EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*). 1981-18 1-6 Apr, Centereach, Suffolk Co.

1981 REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (*Nyctanassa violaceus*). 1981-24 21 June, town of Pompey, Onondaga Co.
WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*). 1981-36 24 Oct, Black River Bay, Jefferson Co.
GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*). 1981-40 20 Dec, Henderson Harbor, Jefferson Co.
CALIFORNIA GULL (*Larus californicus*). 1981-45 29 Dec, Montauk, Suffolk Co.
ROSEATE TERN (*Sterna dougallii*). 1981-19 17 Apr, town of Greece, Monroe Co.
ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Vermivora celata*). 1981-23 5 June, Mt. Pisgah, Franklin Co.
CONNECTICUT WARBLER (*Oporornis agilis*). 1981-25 5 June, Mt. Pisgah, Franklin Co.

LeCONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammospiza leconteii*). 1981-33 10 Oct,
town of Genoa, Cayuga Co.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*). 1981-10
9 May, near Wanakena, St. Lawrence Co.

In addition to these records, reports of Semipalmated Sandpiper (early), Lesser Black-backed Gull (upstate), Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, and Tennessee Warbler (?nesting upstate) were received and filed without formal review.

Our previous tally of New York's birds includes the Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*). Data from the Breeding Bird Atlas indicates that this species was exterminated as a nesting species by the Department of Environmental Conservation before it had time to become established unquestionably within the State. We delete it from the State List. With the addition of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper this year, the total list remains 423 species.

Respectfully submitted,
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