

ROSS' GOOSE ADDED TO NEW YORK STATE LIST

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On the evening of Sunday, 13 March 1983, I received a call from Mary Key of Red Oaks Mill, Dutchess Co., telling me that Dorothy Fleury and Mary Yegella, two of her fellow birders in the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, had earlier that day found what they believed to be a Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*). The bird was seen about 2 p.m. EST on a small pond called Round Pond in the hamlet of Sharon Station near Amenia, NY. It was in the company of two first-year Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*), about 3,000 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*), and a variety of ducks and gulls. In the flock also were two Greater White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*), in itself a great find. After an hour or so they left to spread the word, and returned a half hour later with Trixie Strauss, Florence Germond and Ted Mills who corroborated the find. Upon my arrival at 10 a.m. the next day I found Ms. Yegella, Jim and Mary Key, Trixie Strauss and Florence Germond already there. They had observed the bird standing on the ice and swimming in the water of the pond less than one hundred yards away. Through their 20-power telescopes they had observed the principal identifying features: the warty protuberences at the base of the bill, and the absence of "grin marks" on the bill that a Snow Goose would have shown. At my arrival, the bird was already grazing in the corn stubble on a hillside on the opposite side of the pond, about 200 yards away. As I studied the bird through my 25-power lens, I was immediately struck by its diminutive size. It was at least a third smaller in every way than the Snow Geese that walked beside it. It minced along on its short little legs, taking two or three steps to each one of theirs. At that distance I could not see any of the finer details mentioned before, but in every other way it appeared to be an adult Ross' Goose just like those I had seen in February 1977 at the Salton Sea in California.

The bird was gone the next day, 15 March, but before it left it was seen by many other birders, among them: Ken Able, Walt Sabin, Eleanor Pink, Alice Jones, Helen Manson, Thelma Haight, Otis Waterman and Vaughn Morrison.

In his article in the winter 1983 issue of *The Kingbird* entitled: "Trends in the state list of New York birds," Ken Able and four other prominent New York State birders predicted the next ten additions to the New York State List in order of their likelihood. Only one,

Paul Buckley, mentioned Ross' Goose, ranking it eighth in probability. Recent changes in the movement of the species might have caused the others to give it more serious consideration. Until this decade the species was unknown east of the Mississippi. According to the Fifth Edition of *The A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds* (1957) it was known to breed on the Arctic shores of central Canada (discovered in 1940), and to migrate southwest over the Rockies to winter in the central valley of California. It was accidental as far east as North Dakota and Louisiana. Then, in the March 1982 issue of *American Birds*, three occurrences in the northeast were reported: two birds were at Cap Tourmente, Quebec, on 3 Oct 1981; an adult was at Bombay Hook, Delaware, from 28 Oct to 14 Nov (a first for the state); and another was at Blackwater Refuge, Maryland, 27 Nov to 6 Dec (also a first for that state). Then, in the May 1982 issue of the same publication, two more occurrences were reported: the first Virginia record was an adult at Back Bay Refuge from 29 Dec 1981 to 9 Jan 1982, and the first North Carolina record was found at Bodie Island (not far from Pea Island) on 30 Dec 1981. The March-April 1983 issue reported Ross' Geese once again at Cap Tourmente, Quebec in October 1982. This totals six occurrences reported in the year October 1981-October 1982.

It seems only probable that individuals will turn up elsewhere in the northeast, and birders in our neighboring states would do well to look for them as welcome additions to their lists.

LITERATURE CITED

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