the Jefferson county population may represent a fairly recent range expansion, the nearly thirty year history of the Kingston, Ontario population suggests that these birds may have been present for at least one to two decades. Competent and active field birders are in short supply in northern New York and many of the best sites for Prairie Warblers, such as Limerick Cedars and Chaumont Barrens are areas unlikely to attract birders. It is likely that these factors, combined with insufficient atlas coverage, were responsible for the previous lack of information on this population.

Northwestern Jefferson County contains a number of species, primarily plants but also birds including Clay-colored Sparrow, exhibiting western affinities. Recent work by several botanists, primarily at Alvar sites have found populations of plant species rare in New York State but more widely distributed farther west. It is interesting to speculate that similar intensive avian field work in this poorly studied area may result in species such as Western Meadowlark and Clay-colored Sparrow being more widely reported. The presence of a substantial breeding Prairie Warbler population in this region may support Bull's (1974) suggestion that this species is invading New York from the west.

Current data suggest this Prairie Warbler population is closely tied to habitats in Alvar communities. Given the slow rate of natural succession at these sites and intense interest in their observation it is likely suitable nesting habitat will be available to Prairie Warblers here for some time to come. Hopefully increasing interest on the part of birders will result in more information on this and other locally distributed species in the bird-rich but observer-poor areas of northern New York.

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Late Nesting of Black-backed Woodpecker: On 26 Aug, 1988, Kathryn McIntyre and I were birding on a lumber road between Big Moose Station and Stillwater, Herkimer County. My attention was called to a swampy hemlock area by loud "pic" culls and a noisy assortment of rattling cries. The last sounded like young woodpeckers. We soon located two adult Black-backed Woodpeckers (*Picoides arcticus*) and at least three, possibly four young. I could see three juveniles at one time and was hearing the same noises coming

from a tree off to the right. The two adults were approximately the size of a Hairy Woodpecker with the back and upper wings shiny, solid black. The female had a plain black crown. The male had a yellow patch on the crown. Both birds had a white line above a black mustache, white belly and black and white barring on the sides. The three visible young resembled the adults but didn't appear as shiny. They were actively begging food and we saw the male pass food several times. It was difficult to see the female through the branches. Bull (1974) gives fledgling dates of 20 June to 23 July. Beehler (1978) lists egg dates through 19 June. Fledged young still being fed on 26 August may represent a late nest record for New York State.

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Unusual Hunting Posture of a Red-tailed Hawk: On June 12, 1985 I observed an adult Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) quartering over a large field. The bird was flying at a height of 50 m. The weather was cool and the winds were out of the southeast at 10-15 mph. The hawk circled the field three times and then began to hover at a distance of 350 m from my observation point. It held this position for 30 seconds. The hawk again flew the width of the field and back to the original hovering location. It then began to drop very slowly to the ground. Its head was held down as if hunting and its descent was totally vertical. The wings, between the body and the wrist, were held up at a 5-10 degree angle. The hand was held down at a slightly greater angle and the wing tips were at an even greater angle downward. The overall impression of the hawk as it was dropping was that of a parachute, with its wings "billowing" against the wind. It took the Red-tail approximately 15-20 seconds to descend out of view from a height of 50 m. Two minutes later the bird ascended, with no apparent prey, and flew out of view. Hunting methods previously described for the Red-tailed Hawk have included hunting from a perch, from a soaring position and by quartering flight over a field in the manner of a harrier (Bent 1937, Fitch 1946). Observations have also been made of Red-tailed Hawks hunting from a hover and kiting position (Bent 1937, Austing 1964). The hawk is described as plummeting toward the earth with pulled back wings. Brown (1976a), has depicted the Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) descending from a hover quite slowly with partly closed wings. He states that as it approaches the prey the hawk raises its wings above its head and quickly plunges to the earth. Brown has also used the term parachute to depict the descent of a hawk on its prey. He describes the hawk as dropping with its wings held upward and at the