

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

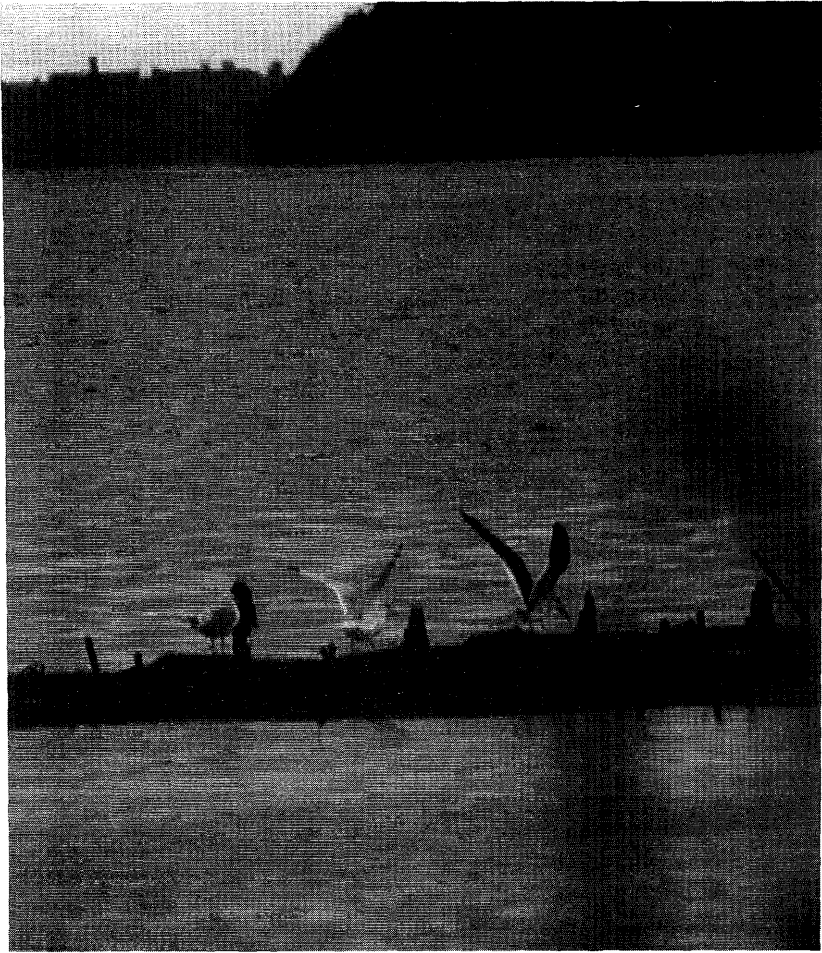


Figure 1. Black Skimmer (right) with gulls, Piermont Pier, Piermont, Rockland Co., New York, 23 November 1992. Photograph by Chuck Harten.

First record of Black Skimmer for Rockland County, New York: On 23 November 1992 at 9:20 AM I observed a Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*) on the end of Piermont Pier, in Piermont, Rockland County, New York. Piermont Pier extends about one mile out into the wide area of the Hudson River known as the Tappan Zee. The skimmer was flying around the southeast end of the pier near an old sunken barge. I

observed the bird through 7X50 binoculars and made the following observations in my note book:

The bird was in adult winter plumage and was quite distinctive. It was all white underneath with a dusky back and upper wings. The long pointed wings were also dark on top, with a white trailing edge. The head was white with a black cap. White ran down the back of its head but was not connected to the black back. The straight heavy bill seemed to have an orange red color but the bird was backlit at this point. The shorter upper mandible could be observed in profile. To clinch the identification, the bird "skimmed" the calm water near the barge.

I returned home and consulted *The Birds of Rockland County and the Hudson Highlands* and its supplement by Robert F. Deed. I also checked with the Rockland County compilers subsequent to Deed and determined that this was a first record for Rockland County. The only record in the area of which I am aware is of a Black Skimmer seen in Croton Bay, Westchester Co., on 30 August 1987. After calling several active Rockland County birders, I returned to the Pier at 11:30 AM with a Canon 35mm camera with a 300 mm lens mounted on a tripod (Fig. 1). The skimmer was still present and was resting on the exposed section of the sunken barge with several Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). The bill and legs color now could be seen clearly. I took several photographs of the bird, which establish the locale as the familiar view from the end of Piermont Pier. Coincidentally, I had observed a late lingering Black Skimmer in coastal Rhode Island a little earlier in the month. This may indicate that skimmers were present in greater numbers than usual for this time of the year.

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