



Figure 1. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher along Nine Mile Point Road, Town of New Haven, Oswego County, New York, 28 May 1994. Photograph by M. A. Koeneke.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES 61: SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER

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On 28 May 1994, at approximately 6:30 PM, I had just arrived home when Mary Dreiling, a fellow birder from the Onondaga Audubon Society, knocked at the door and said: "I assume you've seen the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher down the road." Suffice it to say the old adage of "never assume..." came immediately to mind and the ensuing conversation (where, when, etc.) led me quickly to my binoculars and Mary's car. A scant 2 minutes later, we were 0.3 mile south of my house on Nine Mile Point Road, Town of New Haven, Oswego County, observing an adult Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*)! The bird was perched on the east side of the road on a barbed wire fence which runs parallel (north-south) to Nine Mile Point Road. I had previously seen Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Texas and had no difficulty confirming Mary's identification. This individual exhibited a full-length tail with darker tips, salmon-red underwings, dark upper wings contrasting with a pale gray back, and pale gray head with a black eye line. The salmon color was visible above the "shoulder" when the wings were folded, resembling an epaulet. The bird occasionally flew up to flycatch insects, landing along the fence line, on guy wires supporting a telephone pole, or on a small dead branch in the pasture. We watched the bird for approximately 10 minutes before leaving to call the Syracuse Rare Bird Alert and grab a camera. Returning to the site, the bird was still in the same area feeding as before. The bird did not appear disturbed by the activity of the ensuing photo session (Fig. 1) or the feeding of an Eastern Kingbird nearby. However, two Barn Swallows feeding and flying close by did seem to make the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher agitated. When the Barn Swallows approached in flight, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher would flutter its wings and appear to be ready for immediate flight, then would settle down again when the swallows flew past. The bird remained for another 15 minutes or so, until it flew west across Nine Mile Point Road and disappeared from view at approximately 7:10 PM. Other birders looking for the bird that evening and the following morning went unrewarded. The bird was not seen again.

According to Bull (1974), Scissor-tailed Flycatcher ranges primarily from the south-central United States, breeding northeast into western

Table 1. New York State records of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

1939	11 June	Sag Harbor, L.I.
1940	23 Nov	Gilgo Beach, L.I.
1945	07 May	Rye, Westchester County
1947	12 Jun	East Hampton, L.I.
1952	18 May	Rochester
1956	04 Nov	Tomhannock Reservoir
1957	21 May	Riverdale, Bronx
1959	20 May	Prospect Park, Brooklyn
1960	30 Oct-07 Nov	Atlantic Beach, L.I.
1964	11 May	Short Beach, L.I.
1965	27 May	Quoque, L.I.
	11-16 Sep	W. Gilgo Beach; Tobay Sanctuary, L.I.
1969	16 Oct	Jones Beach, L.I.
1973	16 Jun	Manorville, L.I.
	24-25 Oct	Yaphank, L.I.
	28 Oct	Massapequa, L.I.
1978	22-27 Oct	Howard Beach, Queens
1979	18 Sep-03 Nov	Sandy Creek
1980	28 May	Tobay Sanctuary, L.I.
	30 Jun-04 Jul	Fort Tilden, Queens
	14 Jun	Manorville, L.I.
1982	02 Jul	J.F.K. Airport, Queens
1983	31 May	Gilgo Beach, L.I.
1984	02-05 May	Locust Valley, L.I.
	18 Sep	West Meadow Beach, Setauket, L.I.
1985	18 Jun	Washington, Dutchess County
	28 Jul	Mohawk River - Herkimer/Little Falls
1986	05-09 Oct	Fort Tilden, Queens
1988	04 June	Ellicott
1990	09 May	North Norwich, Chenango County
1991	19 Oct	Robert Moses State Park, L.I.
	16 Jul	North Manhattan
1992	21 May	Gilgo Beach, L.I.
	22 Oct	Robert Moses State Park, L.I.
1993	12 Jul	Eastport, L.I.
1994	28 May	New Haven, Oswego County

Missouri. They winter chiefly in Middle America, but small numbers are regular in southeastern Florida. They are recorded during migration in the east, north to southern Canada, especially in recent years. Examination of Regional reports in *The Kingbird* led to a compilation of 35 records for Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in New York State since the first in 1939 (Table 1). Twenty-eight of these records were from Region 10. Of the remainder, Regional records were geographically diverse, including Rochester, Sandy Creek, Herkimer/Little Falls, Chenango, Ellicott, Rensselaer, and Washington. The 28 May 1994 sighting in Oswego County was the second record for Region 5; the first record was from Sandy Creek in 1979.

The seasonality of records for Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in New York State was first compiled by Peter Post (1966) and is updated here. From *The Kingbird* Regional records, 13 sightings occurred from September-November and 23 sightings from May-July. The earliest record was 2 May; the latest 23 November. Also of interest is the fact that of the 23 sightings from May-July, only one bird was sighted on two consecutive days; all other sightings were of one day's duration. Conversely, in the fall, five observations lasted for more than one day including one record (Sandy Creek) in which the bird stayed for 46 days!

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LITERATURE CITED

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