

## **PREDICTIONS OF SPECIES TO BE ADDED TO THE NEW YORK STATE CHECKLIST**

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A decade ago, five active birders in the State were asked to forecast what ten species were most likely to be added to the New York State checklist, as well as what five species might be found to breed in the State for the first time (Able 1983). Now, roughly ten years later, I thought it would be interesting to examine those predictions, and then ask the same crew to repeat the process and give us their further prophecies. One of the original quintet was Tom Davis, who passed away several years ago. His spot is filled by his close friend, Tony Lauro.

### **HISTORICAL REVIEW OF NEW YORK STATE CHECKLIST**

In his two volume monograph, E. H. Eaton (1914) acknowledged 411 species. However, John Bull (1974) applied both more rigorous standards for acceptance of records as well as subsequent taxonomic changes, and accepted only 366 species as of 1914. Since Bull's book is accepted today as the definitive work on the subject, we start with a baseline number of 366 species.

Between 1914 and 1974, an additional 44 species were added, bringing the total to 410. The 1976 supplement to the book added three more species, raising the total to 413. The New York State Checklist created by The Federation's New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) in 1989, and updated in 1991, contains a total of 438 species. Actually, 26 species were added between 1976 and 1989, because the NYSARC does not recognize Monk Parakeet as established in New York, whereas Bull did. This accounts for the discrepancy of one bird.

Since 1991, three more species have been added: Roseate Spoonbill, Spotted Redshank, and Slaty-backed Gull. That brings the official total to 441. Additional candidates are under review as of this writing.

### **HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BREEDING SPECIES**

As to the breeding avifauna of New York State, Eaton (1914) recognized and Bull accepted 190 species as of 1914. Subsequent discoveries (Bull 1974) brought that total to 229, and three more species

**Table 1. The 1981 predicted additions to the New York State Checklist of Birds (Able 1983).**  
**P. A. Buckley      T. H. Davis      P. A. DeBenedictis      R. O. Paxton      K. P. Able**

The predicted next ten additions to the New York State list

|                               |                               |                               |                            |                            |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Mew Gull</i>               | <i>Mew Gull</i>               | Groove-billed Ani             | Rufous Hummingbird*        | <i>Mew Gull</i>            |
| <i>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</i> | <i>Rufous-necked Stint</i>    | <i>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</i> | <i>Spotted Redshank</i>    | <i>Rufous-necked Stint</i> |
| Western Wood-Pewee            | <i>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</i> | <i>Rufous-necked Stint</i>    | <i>Mew Gull</i>            | Rufous Hummingbird         |
| <i>Spotted Redshank</i>       | Black-browed Albatross        | Black-tailed Godwit           | Common Ground-Dove         | Black-tailed Godwit        |
| Great-tailed Grackle          | Garganey                      | <i>Vermilion Flycatcher</i>   | <i>Rufous-necked Stint</i> | <i>Spotted Redshank</i>    |
| <i>Rufous-necked Stint</i>    | Virginia's Warbler            | Hammond's Flycatcher          | Black-tailed Godwit        | <i>Ross's Gull</i>         |
| Harcourt's Storm-Petrel**     | <i>Little Stint</i>           | Harcourt's Storm-Petrel       | Hermit Warbler             | Great-tailed Grackle       |
| Ross's Goose                  | <i>Ross' Gull</i>             | Band-tailed Pigeon            | Black-chinned Sparrow      | Common Ground-Dove         |
| Lazuli Bunting                | Black-throated Sparrow        | Lazuli Bunting                | Hammond's Flycatcher       | <i>Rock Wren</i>           |
| Ancient Murrelet              | <i>Spotted Redshank</i>       | <i>Reddish Egret</i>          | Sprague's Pipit            | Prairie Falcon             |

The predicted next five documented breeding species in descending order of likelihood.

|                               |                           |                            |                          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| White-faced Ibis              | <i>Wilson's Phalarope</i> | <i>Boat-tailed Grackle</i> | Royal Tern               |
| <i>Wilson's Phalarope</i>     | <i>Blue Grosbeak</i>      | Black-necked Stilt         | <i>Blue Grosbeak</i>     |
| Black Vulture                 | Royal Tern                | Yellow Rail                | Lesser Black-backed Gull |
| <i>Blue Grosbeak</i>          | Manx Shearwater           | Royal Tern                 |                          |
| <i>White-winged Crossbill</i> |                           |                            |                          |
| Brewer's Blackbird            | Black Vulture             | Manx Shearwater            | Horned Grebe             |

\*The NYSARC considered a *Selasphorus* hummingbird discovered by Geoffrey Carleton (*Kingbird* 31:3) to be indeterminate as to species; Rufous Hummingbird currently is under review based on several subsequent reports.

\*\*The English name of Harcourt's Storm-Petrel was changed to Band-rumped Storm-Petrel in 1983.

**Table 2. The 1992 predicted additions to the New York State Checklist of Birds, in descending order of likelihood (DeBenedictis lists in AOU Check-list order).**

| K. P. Able                                                  | P. A. Buckley            | A. J. Lauro            | R. O. Paxton           | P. A. DeBenedictis     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| The predicted next ten additions to the New York State list |                          |                        |                        |                        |
| Little Egret                                                | Black-browed Albatross   | Little Egret           | Ancient Murrelet       | Band-rumped            |
| Storm-Petrel                                                |                          |                        |                        |                        |
| Garganey                                                    | Little Egret             | Garganey               | Black-tailed Godwit    | Black-tailed Godwit    |
| Black-tailed Godwit                                         | Garganey                 | Pacific Golden-Plover* | Hammond's Flycatcher   | Brown Noddy            |
| Common Ground-Dove                                          | Common Ringed Plover     | Black-tailed Godwit    | Virginia's Warbler     | Common Ground-Dove     |
| Great-tailed Grackle                                        | European Golden-Plover** | Brown Noddy            | Eurasian Kestrel       | Groove-billed Ani      |
| Mongolian Plover                                            | Black-tailed Godwit      | Common Ground-Dove     | European Golden-Plover | Hammond's Flycatcher   |
| Anna's Hummingbird                                          | Long-toed Stint          | Lewis' Woodpecker      | Black-throated Sparrow | Virginia's Warbler     |
| Ancient Murrelet                                            | MacGillivray's Warbler   | Carolina Chickadee     | Hermit Warbler         | Cassin's Sparrow       |
| Groove-billed Ani                                           | Shiny Cowbird            | Shiny Cowbird          | Shiny Cowbird          | Black-throated Sparrow |
| Brown Noddy                                                 | Great-tailed Grackle     | Common Ringed Plover   | Lewis's Woodpecker     | Shiny Cowbird          |

The predicted next five documented breeding species.

|                          |                         |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Black Vulture            | Brown Pelican           | Great Cormorant    | Black Vulture      | Black Vulture      |
| Brewer's Blackbird       | Sandhill Crane          | Little Gull        | Summer Tanager     | Yellow Rail        |
| Royal Tern               | American Pipit          | Black Vulture      | Wilson's Phalarope | American Avocet    |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | Brewer's Blackbird      | Carolina Chickadee | Royal Tern         | Royal Tern         |
| Fox Sparrow              | Yellow-headed Blackbird | Pine Grosbeak      | Brewer's Blackbird | Brewer's Blackbird |

\* *Pluvialis fulva*

\*\**Pluvialis apricaria* (Greater Golden-Plover)

were added in the Supplement (Bull 1976), for a grand total of 232. The official New York State Checklist as revised in 1991, includes 239 nesting species, several additions the result of the breeding bird atlas field work, and also differs from Bull's total in not including Monk Parakeet. Since then the NYSARC has vetted nesting records of Merlin and White-winged Tern. Therefore, the grand total of breeding species is now 241, with others under consideration by the NYSARC.

## PREDICTIONS

Table 1 lists the predictions that appeared in Able (1983). Those names which appear in italics were added to their respective New York State lists in the past decade. A total of 28 species was forecast to be added to the State checklist. Of these, 11 predictions were realized. Twelve species were anticipated as future breeding species and five subsequently were documented to nest within New York State. Thus, our seers scored roughly 40 percent in both categories.

It is also interesting to note that four species which were not on anybody's list were added, which really should not be a surprise. They were White-tailed (Black-shouldered) Kite, Azure Gallinule, White-winged Tern, and Cave Swallow.

Table 2 is the list of current predictions of both the next ten probable additions to the State Checklist and the next five probable new breeding species. With the exception of that from DeBenedictis, who refused to specify a sequence, all lists are in descending order of likelihood.

The Federation's official New York State Checklist as of 1991 is available either through the Crow's Nest Bookstore at the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, from American Birding Association Sales, or from the author.

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## LITERATURE CITED

- Able, K. 1983. Trends in the State List of New York Birds. *Kingbird* 33:6-12.  
Bull, J. 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, NY.  
\_\_\_\_\_. 1976. *Supplement to the Birds of New York State*. Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. 52 pp.  
Eaton, E. H. 1914. *Birds of New York. Part 2*. New York: University of the State of New York.