

**LEWIS' WOODPECKER
IN RICHFIELD SPRINGS, OTSEGO COUNTY**

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Around 10 June 1997, James Kurkowski spotted a strange bird eating seeds at his feeder at 12½ Church Street, Richfield Springs. With the help of his daughter, Patsy Beebe, he was able to identify it as a Lewis' Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*). Kurkowski knew no one who was involved with birding, so was unable to notify anyone of his discovery. Beebe mentioned it to a delivery man on 19 June and he notified his cousin, Steve Hall, a birder. Hall identified the bird early in the morning on 20 June and quickly spread the word. David Cesari and his wife Candis immediately drove over with camera equipment. He photographed the bird (Figure 1) and watched it on the ground picking up seed that had dropped from the feeder. It also drank from the birdbath and sat around on the fence and in a birch tree. The Cesaris and four members of the Kurkowski family watched the bird from 10:00 to 11:30 am when the Cesaris left. The bird was still in the yard, not the least bit wary of the people or the car entering or leaving the yard. David Cesari submitted a photo of the woodpecker to NYSARC.

Later in the afternoon, other birders began to arrive until at least 25 people were present. They showed up again the following morning, but the bird never returned.

This is the first photographed record of Lewis' Woodpecker in New York State. Bull declared this species "hypothetical", citing one seen and described, but not photographed, at the Swope feeding station, Ossining, Westchester County from 27 October to 6 November 1954. It was this record that was eventually accepted by NYSARC in 1996.

LITERATURE CITED

- Bull J. 1974. [Lewis' Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*). In: *Birds of New York State*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. p 355-356.
- NYSARC. 1996 Dec. Report of the New York State Avian Records Committee 1994. *Kingbird* 46(4): 296-302.

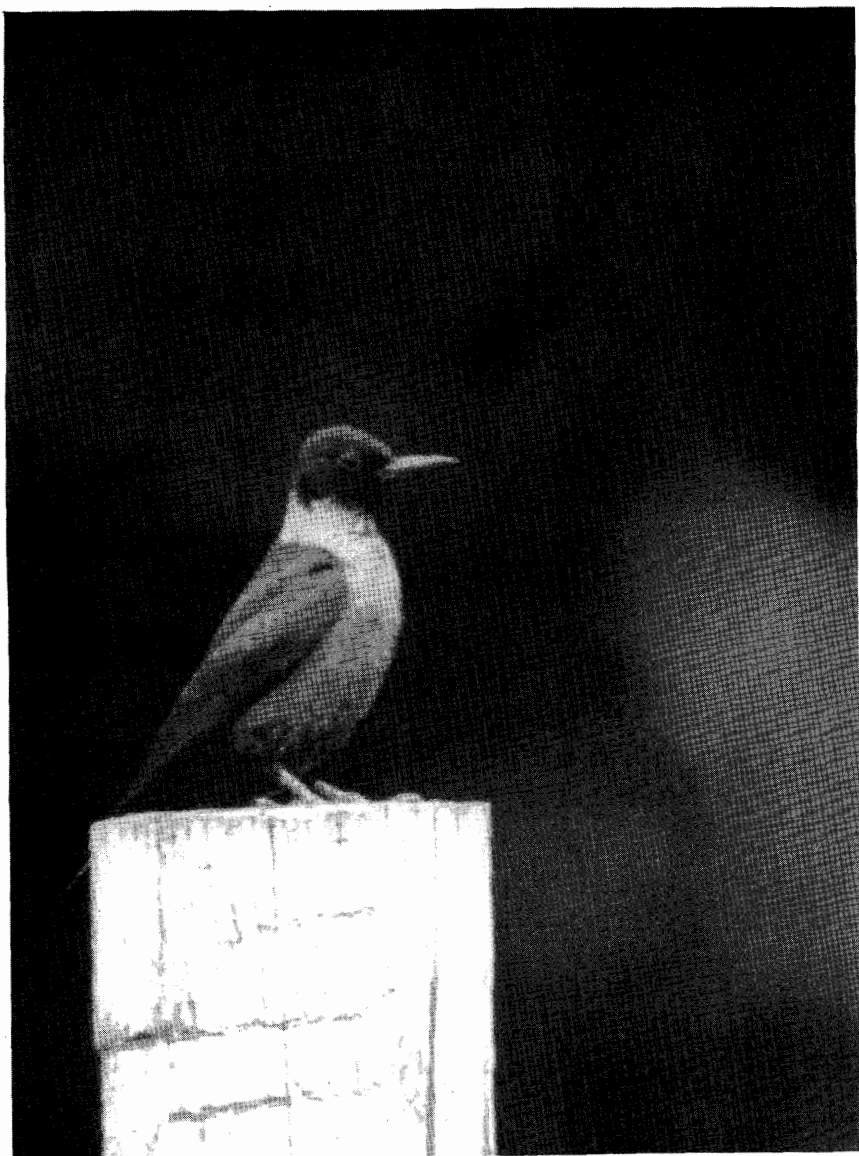


Figure 1. Lewis' Woodpecker photographed by David Cesari on 20 June 1997 in Richfield Springs. The photo was taken from 30 feet with a Nikon F4S camera, through a 500 mm lens, using Fujichrome Sensia film at f-4.

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