

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 2004

The New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) reviewed 130 reports from 2004, involving 85 separate sightings, and an additional 15 reports from 2003 or earlier. Reports were received from all over the state, with 30 of the 62 counties represented. As usual, three counties dominated the submissions (Monroe 24, Suffolk 15 and Niagara 14), a reflection of the many excellent birding spots in these areas and commensurate number of resident and visiting birders. The overall acceptance rate remains high at 92%. Interestingly, the number of sightings that were documented by more than one submission dropped significantly, from 35% in 2003 to only 27% in 2004. This is unexpected given the ever-faster reporting of rare birds via the Internet and mobile phones. With this in mind, the Committee wishes to stress that all observers, not just the initial finders, are encouraged to submit reports. Receipt of multiple reports provides a fuller account of the sighting and helps to corroborate important details, especially subjective features such as size, flight style and vocalizations. Independent rather than collaborative reports are preferred. A common error is to assume your co-observers will provide a report—all too often they will be thinking the same and as a result no report will reach the Committee. Likewise, it is important not to skimp on the details under the (often mistaken) assumption that the missing information will be provided by others. The number of contributors (a total of 72) was also down slightly from last year. Their names are listed alongside accepted reports as well as at the end of this document, and on behalf of the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA), the Committee wishes to thank all of the contributors for their reports. Where possible, we will include the name of the original finder in the narrative even when they failed to submit a report. Naturally, we would encourage all finders to submit details as a permanent record of their discovery. We also extend our appreciation to the cadre of hard working Kingbird Regional Editors, who have taken pains to encourage the proper documentation of rare birds, and to a number of experts in bird identification who helped in the review process.

HOW TO SUBMIT REPORTS

Advice on how to prepare and submit a report is provided on the NYSARC pages within the NYSOA website:

<<http://nybirds.org/NYSARC/NYSARChome.htm>>

Here you will also find an online reporting form that allows observers to compose a written report and attach up to five digital image files. A list of species requested for review by NYSARC (The Review List) is also provided along with illustrated copies of previous annual reports. The Committee is very

grateful to Carena Pooth (NYSOA Director and Website administrator) for updating and continuously improving the NYSARC web site. Those who prefer not to use the online reporting form are encouraged to send us documentation (written and photographic) via email or regular mail. Reports, as well as any other correspondence for the Committee, should be sent to:

Jeanne Skelly, Secretary for NYSARC
420 Chili-Scottsville Road
Churchville, NY 14428

OTHER COMMITTEE NEWS

Voting on the 2004 reports was finalized at the NYSARC Annual Meeting held in Bay Shore, Long Island on 10 September 2006. These day-long meetings of the Committee are used to finalize second and third rounds of voting, review potential additions to the New York State Checklist, debate other changes to the Review List and attend to miscellaneous Committee business.

HIGHLIGHTS

Accepted reports from 2004 include several important state rarities, the most notable being **Cinnamon Teal** (*Aythya cyanoptera*), **Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*), and **Calliope Hummingbird** (*Stellula calliope*). The Committee also accepted a series of excellent reports documenting a **Black Guillemot** (*Cepphus grylle*) that spent several weeks on Cayuga Lake, one of very few inland records for this coastal species. Among several older reports that were accepted, two provided new additions to the NYS avifauna. A sight report from two experienced observers of a **Band-rumped Storm-Petrel** (*Oceanodroma castro*) observed on the edge of the Continental Shelf in July 1997 brings the New York State Checklist to 467 species. A 1990 report of a **Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*) attributed to the western subspecies *caniceps* represents the first documented occurrence of this distinctive taxon. Unless otherwise stated, each report number (e.g., Cinnamon Teal 2004-9-A/E, below) refers to a single individual bird. The letters following the number indicate how many independent reports were received (five in the example just given). County names appear in bold font, and a few standard abbreviations, consistent with those in *The Kingbird* Regional Reports, are employed to save space.

2004 REPORTS ACCEPTED

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

2004-55-A One, Sulphur Springs Rd, Paris, **Oneida**, 23 Oct (Brenda Best, ph Jody Hildreth)

2004-77-A One, Kings Ferry, **Cayuga**, 31 Oct (Curtis Marantz)

2004-80-A Two, Town of Kendall, **Orleans**, 27 Mar (Robert G. Spahn)

The occurrence of Ross's Goose in the Northeast has increased steadily over the past decade and there are now multiple reports from NYS each winter. Acknowledging this sustained increase, the species has been removed from the NYSARC Review List (NYSARC 2005). Descriptions should still be included with all reports to Regional Editors, and the possibility of a hybrid Ross's x Snow Goose should be carefully considered.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)

2004-11-A Nine, Steiner Rd, Town of Newstead, **Erie**, 6 Mar (William W. Watson)

2004-41-A Two, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, **Genesee**, 30 Oct (Dominic Sherony, Gary Chapin)

2004-44-A One or two, Gypsum Pond, Oakfield, **Genesee**, 16 Nov (William W. Watson)

2004-45-A One, Ring-necked Marsh Overlook, **Orleans**, 16 Nov (William W. Watson)

All of these birds showed characteristics of the nominate subspecies (*hutchinsii*), often referred to as Richardson's Cackling Goose. The bulk of the population breeds in the central Canadian Arctic and uses the Mississippi Flyway to reach wintering grounds in several Mid-West states and Texas. Through careful documentation provided in these reports it has become apparent to NYSARC that this species regularly winters in western NY and elsewhere, sometimes in small flocks. Given the number and spread of reports received, Cackling Goose was removed from the NYSARC Review List in 2007 (see web site).

"Black" Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*)

2004-13-A One, Marine Park, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 14-21 Mar (Angus Wilson, ph A. Wilson)

Careful scrutiny of the large flocks of "Atlantic" Brant (*B. b. hrota*) that winter in coastal NY has revealed small numbers of "Black" Brant, the dark plumaged population that winters along the Pacific Coast of North America and into Baja, Mexico. Brant that show intermediate characters and are of uncertain identity have also been documented in NY, and thus care must be taken to describe or photo-document details of the neck collar, extent of black on the underparts and tone of the upperparts.

Cinnamon Teal (*Aythya cyanoptera*)

2004-9-A/E One male, Priem Road, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 28-30 Mar (William W. Watson, Dominic Sherony, Geoff Buell, Robert G. Spahn, Carolyn T. Cass)

This male Cinnamon Teal, a first for Region 2, was discovered by Geoff Buell. The five reports provided a very good description of the bird but unfortunately no photographs were obtained. Like so many colorful waterfowl, Cinnamon Teal are sometimes kept by collectors, and the Committee carefully considered the familiar specter of an escape. In this case it was felt that the date was

reasonable for a wild bird migrating northwards with Green-winged Teal, perhaps moving up from the Gulf Coast of Texas and Mexico, where the two species might come into contact. The fact that it was present for only two days before vanishing is also consistent with it being a wild bird.

“Eurasian” Green-winged Teal (*Aythya crecca crecca*)

2004-72-A One, Town of Dryden, **Tompkins**, 5-7 Mar & 25 Apr (Jay McGowan, ph J. McGowan)

This Old-World subspecies of Green-winged Teal (and candidate for full species) is consistently less common in central and western NY than down along the southern coast, where a few occur each winter. Excellent diagnostic photos accompanied this report.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2004-1-A/C One male, Sodus Bay, Sodus, **Wayne**, 11 & 25 Jan, 17 Feb (Carolyn Jacobs, Robert G. Spahn, Barbara Herrgesell, ph R. Spahn)

2004-23-A One male, Little Sodus Bay, Fairhaven, **Cayuga**, 2 Feb (Kevin McGann, ph K. McGann)

Although annual, the number of Tufted Ducks observed in NY has decreased somewhat in the past few years. These two reports quite possibly pertain to the same breeding plumaged male.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2004-29-A One, Tiana Beach, Southampton, **Suffolk**, 18 May (Shaibal S. Mitra)

This well-described basic plumaged bird was studied by several observers as it swam on the ocean just east of Shinnecock Inlet. Unfortunately, it was not subsequently relocated.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)

2004-12-A/B One, Wolf’s Pond State Park, Staten Island, **Richmond**, 14 Mar-10 Apr (Angus Wilson, Nikolas K. Haass)

The Western Grebe was first reported on 14 March by Peter Dorosh and is presumably the same individual that had frequented the area in previous winters (see NYSARC 2002-51-A/B and 2003-19-A). The same individual may also be responsible for regular sightings on the New Jersey side of Raritan Bay, a relatively short distance as the grebe paddles.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*)

2004-17-A One adult, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 16 May (Angus Wilson, ph A. Wilson)

This adult was photographed on the north side of the West Pond, where it bathed briefly, having flown in from the adjacent salt marsh. Sightings of White-faced Ibis have become more frequent as ibis populations continue to expand and observers make more effort to search for this western species in the summering flocks of Glossy Ibis (*P. falcinellus*). See Fig. C, p. 49.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

2004-75-A One immature, Weedsport, **Cayuga**, 24 Oct (Glenn Wolford, sketches and field notes included)

A resident of southern wetlands, Wood Stork is prone to periodic incursions into the Northeast, sometimes involving small flocks typically in the late summer and fall. This immature was spotted flying into a small swampy area and convincingly sketched as it probed in the water for food.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*)

2004-60-A One, Devil's Hole State Park, Lewiston, **Niagara**, 31 Oct (Willie D'Anna)

Initially spotted by Dean DiTommaso as it soared over the Niagara River gorge, this well-described adult showed characters of the dark western subspecies *calurus*, which has been documented in NY on occasion, including from hawkwatch sites along the Lake Ontario shore.

Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

2004-18-A One, Derby Hill Bird Observatory, Mexico, **Oswego**, 25 May (Kevin McGann)

Seen as it soared over the hawkwatch site at Derby Hill, this apparent light morph adult was nicely described. Occurrence of this species has become almost annual during the spring hawk flights along the south shore of Lake Ontario.

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2004-81-A/B One, Braddock Bay Hawkwatch, Greece, **Monroe**, 30 Mar (Robert G. Spahn, Carolyn T. Cass)

Enough detail was provided on this notably large falcon moving above the Braddock Bay Hawkwatch to convince the Committee on the identification. Among the features noted were the appropriate size, shape and proportions, especially as compared to a Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*), and a two-toned underwing.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*)

2005-36-A/D One immature, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, **Kings**, 13-23 Oct (Angus Wilson, Sean Sime, Yolanda Garcia, Rob Jett, ph A. Wilson, S. Sime, sketch Y. Garcia)

This confiding Purple Gallinule was discovered by Shane Blodgett on 13 October and provided nice views as it remained in a small marsh in Prospect Park until 23 October. Sadly, feather remains found after that date suggest that it fell victim to a predator. See Fig. B, p. 48.

Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*)

2004-22-A One, Sandy Pond outlet, Town of Sandy Creek, **Oswego**, 21 May (Kevin McGann, ph K. McGann)

This Wilson's Plover was studied through a telescope for just under two hours in the evening of 21 May, the detailed written description supplemented by four

excellent photographs. The plover was discovered by David Wheeler, providing Region 5 with a wonderful first record, but, unfortunately, the bird was not relocated the next day. Wilson's Plover remains a fantastic find in New York State, and especially so far away from the ocean beaches of Long Island. The dark tone of the collar suggests a male, and the very extensive white on the forehead points to the Atlantic and Gulf Coast subspecies *wilsonia* rather than *beldingi*, which is resident in Baja California and western Mexico.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

2004-20-A/C One, Mecox Bay, Southampton, **Suffolk**, 28-29 May (Susan S. Hoffmann, Angus Wilson, Ken Feustel, ph A. Wilson, K. Feustel)

This basic-plumaged Bar-tailed Godwit was discovered by Ken and Sue Feustel when they stopped at Mecox Bay to perform a NYS Breeding Bird Atlas survey. A few days earlier, a storm or high tide had opened a channel between the saltwater pond and the Atlantic Ocean, creating an expansive sand flat attractive to migrating shorebirds. In spite of the holiday weekend traffic, at least fifty local birders managed to reach Mecox in time to see the godwit. Unfortunately, the breach to the ocean was only temporary and the flats began to recede as the water level of the pond increased again. The godwit was last seen shortly before dark on 29 May. The whitish underwings and rump were indicative of the nominate subspecies *L. l. lapponica*, which nests on arctic tundra in Scandinavia and Russia and winters widely across western Europe and coastal Africa. Interestingly, a very similar-looking bird was discovered and photographed by Blair Nikula at South Beach, Massachusetts on 5 June 2004 (Feustel and Feustel 2004). This is the sixth record for NY and first since 1985 (NYSARC 1985-18-A). For a full account see Feustel and Feustel (2004). See Fig. B, p. 48.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

2004-16-A One, Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, Benning Marsh, **Seneca**, 7 May (Robert G. Guthrie, ph R. Guthrie)

Two color photographs supported the identification as a Ruff and showed the bird in comparison to a Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*). Although the observer felt that this was most likely a female, some committee members felt that the structure might better fit a basic-plumaged male. Ruff was formerly considered a scarce but regular migrant to NY, but for unknown reasons the species has become significantly rarer in the past 10 to 15 years. In recognition of this change, NYSARC now asks to review reports statewide (see NYSARC 2006).

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*)

2004-58-A One, Chestnut Road, Town of Newfane, **Niagara**, 2-8 Aug (Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna)

This mostly winter-plumaged Franklin's Gull was discovered on 1 August by Jim Pawlicki and remained until the 20th. Identification was established by written descriptions and by photographs taken by Willie D'Anna. The same area of flooded fields also hosted a good variety of shorebirds.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2004-47-A/B One basic, Robert Moses Power Plant, **Niagara**, 7 Nov-12 Dec (William W. Watson, Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna)

In recent years, one or two California Gulls have wintered along the Niagara River, with most sightings coming from the rocks and jetties below the Robert Moses Power Plant as viewed from the Canadian side of the gorge. This adult followed the same pattern during its stay on the river.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

2004-21-A/B Two, Tiana Beach Marsh, Shinnecock Bay, Hampton Bays, **Suffolk**, 31 May (Paul H. Gillen, Jr., Michael R. Wasilco)

This spring date is unusual, as Sandwich Terns are more typical in the latter half of the summer and early fall, often in association with tropical storms, but this sighting might presage a trend towards late spring occurrences as well (one benefit of global warming?).

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

2004-30-A One, Mecox Bay, Southampton Town, **Suffolk**, 28 May (Shaibal S. Mitra)

Careful scrutiny of roosting terns at major tidal inlets along the south shore of Long Island during the late spring and early summer has yielded a number of Arctic Terns, typically subadult birds such as this well-described second summer individual. Small numbers of Arctic Terns nest in Massachusetts and more abundantly in Maine, and thus the scarcity in New York seems surprising but presumably reflects their tendency to migrate well offshore. Elsewhere in NYS the species is exceptionally rare, and all candidates should be rigorously documented.

Black Skimmer (*Rynchops niger*)

2004-69-A One, Westport Marine, Westport, **Essex**, 3 Jul (Matthew Medler)

This is only the eighth record of Black Skimmer away from the immediate coast and is especially notable as it was not directly associated with a tropical storm. Discovered on 29 June, the skimmer was the first for Essex Co. and for Region 7. It remained until 3 July.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*)

2004-49-A/D One, Wells College, Cayuga Lake, Aurora, **Cayuga**, 30 Oct-29 Nov (Scott Haber, Mark Dettling, Jay McGowan, Curtis Marantz, ph J. McGowan)

Initially observed by Marcus Collins, Paul Hurtado and Erin Stephens. These excellent reports were supported by a number of color photos. The observers are to be commended for their careful discussions of the identification, in particular their appreciation of the difficulties in separating basic-plumaged Black Guillemot from its Pacific counterpart, Pigeon Guillemot (*C. columba*). This inland location is sufficiently removed from the Atlantic Ocean and St. Lawrence Seaway that Black Guillemot should not be considered the default

choice. Both Black and Pigeon Guillemots rarely wander significant distances inland from the coast, even after major winter storms, and Pacific species such as Ancient and Long-billed murrelets have occurred in upstate New York.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2004-31-A/B One, Jones Beach West End, Hempstead, Nassau, 25 Aug (John J. Fritz, Joan Quinlan, ph J. Fritz)

Eurasian Collared-Dove was introduced to the Bahamas and has spread rapidly across the southern and western portions of the United States. There are a handful of reports from NYS, and this species was added to the NYS Checklist in 2002 (see NYSARC 2004). It is likely that some of these birds do originate from established populations to the south or west, whereas others may represent more recent escapes (or deliberate releases) from captivity. With this in mind, observers are reminded to document any sightings fully, paying careful attention to the possibility of escapes and other exotic doves.

Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*)

2004-61-A/B One, Owl Woods, Braddock Bay, Greece, **Monroe**, 30 Dec (Jeanne Skelly, Robert G. Spahn, ph J. Skelly, R. Spahn)

2004-71-A/E One, Central Park, New York, **New York**, 19 Dec-13 Jan 2005 (Rex G. Stanford, Nikolas K. Haass, Scott Haber, Yolanda Garcia, Curtis Marantz, ph R. Stanford, sketch Y. Garcia)

2004-83-A One, Wilson-Tuscarora State Park, **Wilson**, 18 Dec (Willie D'Anna, ph W. D'Anna)

The winter of 2004/05 was exceptional for this rarely seen visitor from Canada, and the clustering of dates suggests they arrived in the region at roughly the same time. The Wilson-Tuscarora owl was discovered by Brett Ewald, who found it roosting in the open during the Wilson-Lake Plains Christmas Bird Count. It was seen by many count participants but could not be relocated the next day. This constitutes the third record for Region 1. The Central Park individual was discovered the next day (19 December) by James Demes, who was participating in the Lower Hudson Christmas Bird Count. Initially thought to be the more likely Northern Saw-whet Owl (*A. acadicus*), he went back to the spot later that day, bringing along Peter Post and several other CBC participants, and they quickly re-identified the owl as a Boreal. It roosted in trees near the famous Tavern on the Green restaurant and was seen by an astonishing 1,000-1,500 people during its near month-long stay. Based on size, the bird was tentatively sexed as a female and was seen feeding on rats near the restaurant after nightfall! For a full account see Post (2005). The Braddock Bay owl was discovered by David Tetlow and seen by a number of lucky local birders before it also disappeared. There are around 25 prior records of Boreal Owl for NYS, mostly from the Adirondacks and Lake Ontario Plain (Yunick 1979, D'Anna 1998). The 2004/05 Boreal Owl incursion coincides with one of the largest recorded influxes of northern owls into the Midwest. In Minnesota, more than 400 Boreal Owls were recorded on a single day (reference in Post 2005).

Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*)

2004-43-A One immature, Larchmont, **Westchester**, 4-6 Nov (Andrew Towle, ph Robbie Towle)

This Calliope Hummingbird frequented a feeder at a private residence and was photographed by the homeowners. The Committee is grateful to Paul Lehman for his detailed analysis of the bird, not least because it was photographed at the very house he grew up in! In his comments, Paul drew attention to the white intrusion at the base of the bill that breaks the dark loreal line. This subtle mark appears to be diagnostic for Calliope Hummingbird. Other important field marks included the buffy flanks, small size and single purple gorget feather. This is the first record for Westchester County and Region 9 and the third record for New York.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

2004-56-A-F One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 3-6 Dec (Dominic Sherony, William W. Watson, Jeanne Skelly, Willie D'Anna, Jay McGowan, Robert G. Spahn, ph W. D'Anna, J. McGowan)

2004-66-A/B One-two, Prospect Park, **Kings**, 22 Nov-20 Dec (Rob Jett, Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay, ph Steve Nanz, Sean Sime, R. Jett, S. Mitra)

The Hamlin Beach SP flycatcher was found by David Tetlow and subsequently enjoyed by many local birders during its four day stay; it also provided a first record for Region 2. In Prospect Park an Ash-throated was seen by a throng of birders and well photographed during a 29 day period commencing on 22 November. Interestingly, on 5 December two Ash-throateds were seen interacting together, and there were a few reports of two scattered birds in the park over the next week or so, with the latest of these last noted on 20 December. In addition, another Ash-throated, not sent to NYSARC for review, was reported from Coney Island on the Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count on 18 December.

Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)

2004-64-A One, Bauer Road, Eden, **Erie**, 28 Aug (Michael Zebehazy, stills from video M. Zebehazy)

Initially found by Bob Andrlle. The Committee agreed with the observer's opinion that the bill of this bird seemed larger than expected. However, other aspects of the plumage, including the black tail with white outer edges, seemed most compatible with Western Kingbird, and the observer did mention that the bill size seemed within range of museum skins subsequently studied.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*)

2004-37-A One, Nike Base, Hamburg, **Erie**, 7 Jun (Doug Happ)

This southern plains specialist is very rare in western NY, and this long-tailed, presumed adult individual represents only the third record for Region 1. Unfortunately, it could not be relocated during subsequent searches.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

2004-10-A/B One, Hosmer Road, Hartland, **Niagara**, 27 Mar (William W. Watson, Willie D'Anna)

The careful descriptions adequately ruled out Northern Shrike, the more likely shrike at this early spring date. Loggerhead Shrikes continue to decline in eastern North America and, although once a breeding species, are now barely annual in NY, with most records coming from the western and central portions of the state.

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)

2004-74-A/B One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 4 Dec (Jay McGowan, Robert G. Spahn, ph J. McGowan)

Discovered by David Tetlow and Dominic Sherony whilst searching for the Ash-throated Flycatcher (2004-56-A/F), it was last reported on 12 December. White-eyed Vireo is a common breeder in southern NYS (Region 10 and coastal portion of Region 9) but is very rare statewide during the winter. See fig. C, p. 49.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

2004-42-A/B Three, Hamlin Beach State Park, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 21 Oct (Dominic Sherony, Jeanne Skelly)

2004-48-A/C Three, Stewart Park, Ithaca, **Tompkins**, 24 Nov (Mark Chao, Jay McGowan, Curtis Marantz, ph M. Chao, J. McGowan)

2004-52-A One, Captree State Park, **Suffolk**, 26 Nov (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay)

2004-78-A Four, Lake Road, **Wayne**, 23 Nov (Robert G. Spahn)

Cave swallow is ostensibly a Central and South American species that extended its range into the southern United States during the early 1900's. For unknown reasons, small but seemingly increasing numbers of birds move northwards in mid-to-late fall, sometimes in small flocks. Incursions seem to begin with a movement into the center of the continent, with the birds funneling eastward along the southern shorelines of Lakes Erie and Ontario before percolating down to the coast. The 2004 sightings fit this emerging pattern.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

2004-53-A One, hatch year male, Robert Moses State Park, **Suffolk**, 20-28 Nov (Shaibal S. Mitra, ph S. Mitra)

This cooperative bird was found by Mickey Cashman and enjoyed and extensively photographed by many local birders during its nine day stay. It frequented the western end of Parking Field 5, feeding in plain view along the grassy edges and even on the bare concrete of this spacious parking lot. See Fig. C, p. 49.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2004-70-A/B One Maidstone Park, East Hampton, **Suffolk**, 31 Dec-9 Jan 2005 (Arie Gilbert, Shaibal S. Mitra, ph S. Mitra)

Discovered on the Sagaponack Christmas Bird Count on 19 December by Bryan Pfeiffer. Although elusive at times, the solitaire remained in an expansive stand

of junipers and berry bushes at least until 18 January 2005 and was well appreciated by the many birders having the patience to track it down.

Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*)

2004-85-A One first year female, Robert Moses State Park, **Suffolk**, 16 Jan (Robert J. Berlingeri)

Given the lack of foliage at this time of year and the very cold and windy conditions, it is perhaps not surprising that this Cape May Warbler was observed feeding on the ground rather than in a more typical arboreal context. The observer was initially puzzled by the fact that it appeared to be walking rather than hopping; however, it is known that Cape May Warblers will walk along branches, and this seemingly odd behavior may be a reflection of the desperate conditions. Another Cape May Warbler was reported on the same day from eastern Long Island, but further details were not submitted for review.

“Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata auduboni*)

2004-39-A/B One, Swan Pen, Stewart Park, Ithaca, **Tompkins**, 2 Nov (Jessie Ellis, Curtis Marantz)

Very carefully described by observers familiar with this subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warbler. Once considered a distinct species, “Audubon’s” Warbler breeds in western Canada and the western US as well as northern Mexico, wintering in southern parts of its breeding range and into Central America; it is a quite rare visitor to NY.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*)

2004-84-A/B One male, Cayuga Island, Niagara Falls, **Niagara** 17-18 Dec (Joan Hilts, Willie D’Anna, ph J. Hilts)

While watching Black-capped Chickadees in her backyard, Joan Hilts noticed an unfamiliar bird, which she had the foresight to photograph. Together with husband David, she consulted a field guide and correctly identified it as a Black-throated Gray Warbler. Realizing the significance, Joan contacted Jerry Farrell, who then alerted others. The Black-throated Gray Warbler remained in thick spruce trees until 19 December, providing a third record for Region 1. See Fig. C, p. 49.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*)

2004-24-A Two, Allegany State Park, **Cattaraugus**, 28 Jun (William W. Watson)

2004-35-A One, Chestnut Ridge Park, Orchard Park, **Erie**, 11, 13, & 31 Jul (Mike Morgante)

2004-40-A One, Jones Beach State Park, **Nassau**, 24 Oct (Zubin Haghi, ph Z. Haghi)

2004-59-A One male, Fort Niagara State Park, Youngstown, **Niagara**, 16 May (Willie D’Anna, ph W. D’Anna)

2004-76-A One pair, Allegany State Park. **Cattaraugus**, 5 Jun-18 Jul (Timothy Baird, ph T. Baird)

2004-82-A One, Durand Eastman Park, Rochester, **Monroe**, 1 May (Sandra Hazen)

The number of mid-summer reports is notable and perhaps reflects more comprehensive coverage as part of Breeding Bird Atlas Surveys. Tim Baird discovered a pair of nesting Yellow-throated Warblers near the Administration Building in the Red House Lake section of Allegany SP and witnessed one of the adults feeding a fledgling on 18 July. A pair also nested in Allegany SP in 1984. An unpaired male was on territory at Chestnut Ridge Park, some 40 miles to the north. In Region 10, Yellow-throated Warblers are more frequent in the early spring, so the mid-fall bird from Jones Beach SP is notable; it was discovered on 16 October and remained until 24 October. The frequency of appearances and distinctiveness of this species have prompted NYSARC to remove it from the review list (NYSARC 2006).

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*)

2004-19-A One, Wagner College, Staten Island, **Richmond** 20 May (Howard Fischer)

This Swainson's Warbler was heard singing for about 10 minutes before finally revealing itself to the patiently searching observer. The plumage was well described and ruled out other warblers; however, the song was not described, which would have enhanced the report, as written descriptions of a bird's song can be a key element for identification purposes.

Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*)

2004-38-A One, Central Park, New York, **New York**, 25-26 Oct (Lloyd Spitalnik, ph L. Spitalnik)

This is a late date for Mourning Warbler and raised the possibility of the very similar MacGillivray's Warbler (*O. tolmiei*). The color photographs showed a number of characters that confirmed the identification as Mourning, including the long undertail coverts, character of the eye ring (thin and slightly broken), yellow-tinged throat, and a couple of black feathers on the chest.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*)

2004-63-A One, Setauket, **Suffolk**, 27 Dec (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay, ph S. Mitra)

Hugh McGuinness, Brian Kane, and Peter Scully, Jr. found this Western Tanager at Setauket Mill Pond during the Smithtown Christmas Bird Count. It was seen and nicely photographed by a number of count participants and others during the afternoon but not thereafter.

Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)

2004-57-A/D One, Town of Porter, **Niagara**, 15 Dec-12 Jan 2005 (William W. Watson, Jim Landau, Willie D'Anna, ph Jim Wojewodzki, W. D'Anna)

Discovered by Vicki Rothman on 15 December. Convincing written descriptions were supported by five confirming color photographs by Jim Wojewodzki and two by Willie D'Anna. See Fig. C, p. 49.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus nelsoni*)

2004-34-A One, Amherst Bike Path, Amherst, **Erie**, 27 Sep (William W. Watson)

The description was indicative of the inland-nesting subspecies (*A. n. nelsoni*), and thus presumably represents a migrant en route to its coastal wintering grounds.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

2004-50-A/B One, West Seneca, **Erie**, 14-17 May (Susan M. O'Donnell, Theodore P. Swiatek, ph Willie D'Anna)

Discovered by Theodore Swiatek visiting his backyard feeders, this handsome adult was nicely photographed during its 4-day stay, leaving no doubt as to its identification.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

2004-26-A One male, Tift Nature Preserve, **Erie**, 12 May (Nancy Vigyikan, Paul Vigyikan)

A very fortuitous find of an adult male, this bird was observed for only a short while as it foraged along a trail with a couple of White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), providing Region 1 with its third record.

Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)

2004-28-A One female, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island, **Richmond**, 9 Jul (Edward W. Johnson)

Originally found by Phil Brown on 8 July, this blackbird was nicely described as it fed with Eurasian Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) on the ground at the Cultural Center. Recent summer occurrences of this species in the New York City area represent an interesting new trend.

Hoary Redpoll (*Caduelis hornemanni*)

2004-2-A Nine individuals, Waterville, **Oneida**, 7 Jan-25 Mar (Jody Hildreth, ph J. Hildreth)

2004-3-A One, West Burlington, **Otsego**, 12-30 Jan (Tom Salo, ph T. Salo)

2004-5-A One, Gansevoort, **Warren**, 26 Jan -27 Feb (Barbara Putnam, ph B. Putnam)

2004-6-A One male, Fishers Landing, Orleans, **Jefferson**, 7 Jan (Nick Leone)

2004-8-A One, Route 79, **Broome**, 7 Jan (Dan Watkins)

2004-14-A One, West Burlington, **Otsego**, 21 Mar (Tom Salo)

Jody Hildreth provided a particularly detailed report on the nine individuals visiting his feeders in Waterville, Oneida. This included highly informative side-by-side photographs of Hoary Redpoll and Common Redpoll (*C. flammea*) in virtually identical poses. The Committee also commends Jody for correctly identifying a very pale male Common Redpoll that exhibited several of the field marks usually attributed to Hoary Redpoll. This serves to emphasize the similarities between the two species and the need for multiple positive field marks. See Hildreth (2004) for details. The other Hoary Redpolls were described

with varying degrees of detail but were found to be acceptable. Though Hoary Redpoll outbreaks are cyclical, a sufficient number of reports have been received to document the trend, and therefore Hoary Redpoll has been removed from the NYSARC Review List (NYSARC 2005).

2004 REPORTS ACCEPTED BUT ORIGINS UNCERTAIN OR UNNATURAL

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

2004-51-A One, Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, **Seneca**, 11 Nov (William W. Watson)

2004-68-A Seven, Morristown, **St Lawrence**, 10 Oct (Robert E. Long, ph R. Long)

The exact status of Trumpeter Swan in NYS remains uncertain, but the continued reporting of these attractive swans is helping NYSARC keep track of the population both in terms of nesting events and the wanderings of marked birds. It is believed that all originate directly or indirectly from a combination of the Ontario introduction project and unauthorized releases by an aviculturist in Wayne Co. At this time, it is not clear that the NYS population is able to sustain itself without being supplemented by birds from additional introductions. For an excellent summary of Trumpeter Swans in NY and in the northeast, see Sherony and Bolsinger (2007). Also see NYSARC 2007 regarding our policy on addition of exotic species to the NYS checklist.

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

2004-4-A/B One adult gray phase, Sodus Point, Sodus, **Wayne**, 21 Feb-1 Mar (Barbara Herrgesell, Dominic Sherony, ph D. Sherony)

This adult female was discovered on 20 February by Mike Tetlow. Subsequent observers noted that it sported a metal US Fish & Wildlife Service band and after recapture was determined to be an individual that had been impounded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and later re-released into the wild. Although the specific details remain sketchy, the Committee was informed that this Gyr Falcon had been captured illegally in Jefferson Co. NY. Given the lack of substantive evidence for the location of the original capture and concerns that the subsequent behavior of the bird was unnaturally influenced by its exposure to humans, the Committee decided to place the reports in this qualified category. The identification is not questioned.

2004 REPORTS ACCEPTED IN REVISED FORM

Albatross species (*Thalassarche* sp.)

2004-25-A One, 1 mile SE Moriches Inlet, **Suffolk**, 23 May (Michael R. Wasilco)

Submitted as a Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*), this smaller albatross briefly visited a chartered fishing boat that was relatively close to shore. Unfortunately, the observer did not have optics on hand but was able to get clear general impressions of the bird with the naked eye. It is known that one or more Yellow-nosed Albatrosses have been occurring in the western Atlantic each year (perhaps the same bird(s)?), often being sighted from land or even, occasionally, overland. The description of the bill and white head is certainly consistent with Yellow-nosed Albatross; however, the Committee was concerned that other smaller albatross species, notably Black-browed Albatross (*T. melanophris*), could not be firmly excluded.

“Solitary” Vireo (*Vireo [solitarius] sp.*)

2004-62-A One, McIntyre Road, Fort Edward, Washington, 19 Dec (Barbara Putnam) Any “Solitary” Vireo observed in the winter months is worthy of very careful scrutiny and documentation. This bird was submitted as a Blue-headed Vireo (*V. solitarius*), the seemingly most likely candidate. After discussion, the Committee concluded that at such an extreme date other possibilities needed to be firmly ruled out. Although the Committee agreed that the description of plumage coloration adequately excluded Plumbeous Vireo (*V. plumbeus*), the possibility of Cassin's Vireo (*V. cassinii*) could not be safely excluded, and it seems prudent to record this as a member of the “Solitary” Vireo species complex.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

2004-27-A One, Allegany State Park, Cattaraugus, 21 Nov (Timothy Baird, ph T. Baird)

Originally submitted as a Dark-eyed Junco, possible “Oregon” Junco (*J. h. oregonus*). This very interesting bird was seen feeding with about 20 “Slate-colored” Juncos (*J. h. hyemalis*), and in the photos provided, showed an extensive blackish hood, clearly demarcated from the much lighter gray-brown back color and white underparts. The flanks were light gray, and thus various aspects of the color pattern did not conform to a typical “Oregon” Junco. After researching the Dark-eyed Junco complex, the Committee felt that this bird was best left as a Dark-eyed Junco of undetermined subspecific origins. See Fig. C, p. 49.

2004 REPORTS WITH NO DECISION RENDERED

Tufted Duck hybrid

2004-79-A One, Braddock Bay Marina, Monroe, 8 Apr (Robert Dobson)

This good report provided a complete description of a male *Aythya* duck that strongly resembled a Tufted Duck (*A. fuligula*) but was submitted as a Tufted Duck hybrid. Some aspects of its appearance suggested to the observer that it might be a hybrid of uncertain combination, with one possibility being Ring-necked Duck (*A. collaris*). Unfortunately, no photographs were obtained, and

the Committee felt that the description lacked sufficient detail to speculate further on its parentage.

Northern Parula x Cerulean Warbler hybrid

2004-33-A/B One hybrid, Vanderbilt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, Dutchess, 4, 6, & 21 Jun (Carena Pooth, Rodney Johnson)

A most interesting bird, showing plumage characters of both Northern Parula (*Parula americana*) and Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) and singing a predominately Parula song. Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the attention to detail in these reports, including subtle distinctions in bill shape, tail length, overall proportions and other field marks. However, the Committee felt that without DNA evidence, it would not be possible to confirm the lineage of this bird, although the hypothesis seems correct. For a full description of this event, see Pooth and Johnson (2004).

2003 REPORTS ACCEPTED

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*)

2003-86-A One specimen, Cassadaga, Chautauqua, 2 Dec (Allen Benton, ph A. Benton)

This adult was shot by a hunter, Joseph McQuiggan, who, upon inspection, realized that its small size and the heavy concentration of warts around the base of the bill would make it a Ross's Goose. He called Allen Benton, who confirmed the identification and provided the Committee with a narrative of the event and a definitive photo of the head of the bird.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

2003-87-A One male, Oswego Harbor, Oswego, 14 Dec (Kevin McGann)

A good, complete description of a male in almost full breeding plumage, a sight that is becoming less common in NY for as yet to be understood reasons.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

2003-90-A One, Cayuga Lake at East Varick, Seneca, 28 Apr (Jay McGowan, ph J. McGowan)

This Pacific Loon in complete or near-complete alternate plumage was studied for almost an hour and carefully photographed by Jay McGowan. Two or three Common Loons (*G. immer*) were also present, providing good perspective on size and structure.

Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*)

2003-91-A One adult, Myers Point Town Park, Lansing, Tompkins, 13 May (Jay McGowan, ph J. McGowan)

The excellent description and color photographs clearly establish the identification as a Franklin's Gull coming into alternate plumage. The partial cap suggests this bird might not be a full adult. Although a common migrant through the Midwest, Franklin's Gull is quite rare in NYS, especially over the past 10 years or so, and few sightings are as well documented as this bird.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*)

2003-92-A One Grand Island, Erie, 6 Dec (Susan M. O'Donnell)

A decent description was received for this solitaire, enjoyed by participants on a birding visit to Grand Island. Also present there the following day, this solitaire provided Region 1 with its second record.

Hoary Redpoll (*Caduelis hornemanni*)

2003-88-A One male, Newcomb, Essex, 22 Dec (William Raup, ph W. Raup)

This reasonable description, missing a couple of key field marks but accompanied by two photographs illuminating some of the pertinent characters separating Hoary from Common Redpoll (*C. flammea*), was deemed, after discussion, to be acceptable by the Committee.

2002 REPORTS ACCEPTED

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)

2002-95-A Two, Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, Seneca, 6 Oct (Jay McGowan, ph J. McGowan)

These two pelicans were nicely photographed both in flight and as they loafed and fed on a pond at the Refuge. This species has developed a pattern of regular appearances in the northern portion of NYS, and NYSARC review is now required only for downstate occurrences (NYSARC 2006).

King Rail (*Rallus elegans*)

2002-96-A/B One, Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, Seneca, 2 Jun (Jay McGowan, Matthew Medler, ph Matt Victoria)

This King Rail was found on 2 June and remained until at least 24 June, usually requiring some patience before it would come into view in the heavily vegetated marsh it frequented. Photographs by Matt Victoria were included with report 2002-96-B.

Painting Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

2002-93-A One male, SW shore of Seneca Lake, Watkins Glen, Schuyler, 14-16 May (Robert C. King, Jr.)

This unmistakable adult male, well photographed while visiting private feeders for a three day period, provided a first record for Schuyler Co.

2001 REPORT ACCEPTED

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

2001-84-A One juvenile, Cutchogue, Suffolk, 23 Sep (Shaibal S. Mitra, Patricia Lindsay)

Although Ruff is the most frequently encountered Old World shorebird in eastern North America, it is a remarkable fact that only 1-2% are juveniles. By comparison, juveniles make up a higher percentage of sightings on the west coast and in Alaska. The prevalence of adults in both spring and fall on the east coast supports the theory that many Ruffs cross from West Africa to South America during their southbound migration and then travel north into the United States and Canada the following spring. West coast birds are presumed to have traveled directly from their Siberian breeding grounds and follow a more typical Asiatic-vagrant pattern of adults in mid/late-summer followed by juveniles in the fall. The recent decline in sightings of Ruff in the East has prompted the Committee to raise the species to full review status (NYSARC 2006), and thus this careful documentation of a juvenile is especially valuable.

1997 REPORT ACCEPTED

Band-rumped Storm Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*)

1997-74-A One, pelagic south-southeast of Montauk Point, 13 Jul (Paul A. Buckley, Richard R. Veit)

Submitted more than seven years after the event, this report is definitely a case of "better late than never." This storm-petrel was observed from a research ship stationed on the Continental Shelf to the east of Hudson Canyon (39° 46' 59.78" N, 71° 16' 59.81" W). The proximity to extremely deep water is appropriate for this cryptic species. The bird was not photographed, and the identification relies entirely on the written description provided, especially the comparisons to accompanying Wilson's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*). The observers noted that the majority of the Wilson's were in molt (appropriate for July) and that the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel was in fresh plumage. Key features that were noted included its tendency towards shearwater-like glides, slightly larger size compared to other storm-petrels, tendency to hold its wings on a horizontal rather than in 'V' profile whilst pattering, relatively longer wings that swept back at the carpal, and apparent absence of yellow foot webs. Band-rumped Storm-Petrels breed on several islands in the eastern Atlantic, including the Azores, Canary Islands, Salvage Islands and Madeira, and range across warm waters of the central Atlantic into the Gulf Stream and Gulf of Mexico. Occurrence of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel in NYS pelagic waters has long been predicted, most likely over very deep water and during the warmer months. Sightings are regular off North Carolina, with a handful of reports along the

Continental Shelf as far north as Massachusetts. Searching appropriate habitat in NYS waters is relatively difficult because of the distances involved. We hope that this first state record will encourage future dedicated pelagic excursions to range into appropriate areas and, with luck, to obtain photographic documentation of the species.

1990 REPORT ACCEPTED

“Gray-headed” Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis caniceps*)

1990-38-A One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 24 Nov (Dominic Sherony)

This very interesting 1990 Dark-eyed Junco report, involving a race of what was previously considered a separate species, Gray-headed Junco, was originally submitted to the Genesee Ornithological Society’s records committee but not to NYSARC. The original submission was more recently provided to NYSARC along with comparative notes added by the observer regarding his subsequent observations of “Gray-headed” Juncos in the southwestern US. Key field marks mentioned in the description of this bird, observed at Hamlin Beach in a flock of “Slate-colored” Juncos (*J. h. hyemalis*), included an all pinkish-white bill, a rich rusty brown back, and a uniform light gray coloration throughout the underparts, among others. The field marks seemed conclusive enough to the Committee to indicate this subspecies and rule out both a more southern race of “Gray-headed” Junco (*J. h. dorsalis*) and a possible hybrid with the former “Pink-sided” Junco (*J. h. mearnsi*), also lumped into the Dark-eyed Junco complex. This constitutes a new Junco form for NYS.

REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

Some reports are not accepted by the NYSARC for various reasons. The most frequent is that the material submitted to the Committee was considered insufficient or too vague to properly document the occurrence and/or eliminate similar species. Simply stating the species and location of the bird(s) is almost without exception not enough for acceptance. Likewise, saying that it looked just like the illustration in the field guide is unlikely to be sufficient. Records are never rejected because the observer is unfamiliar to the Committee or has had records rejected in the past. Every effort is made to be as fair and objective as possible, but if the Committee is unsure about a submission, it tends to err on the conservative side, preferring not to accept a good record rather than validate a bad one. All submissions, whether accepted or not, remain in the archive and can be re-evaluated if additional substantive material is presented. The Secretary or Chair can advise on whether the new information is sufficient to warrant

re-evaluation by the Committee. Descriptions prepared from memory weeks, months, or even years after a sighting are seldom voted on favorably. The Committee cannot overstate the importance of taking field notes of uncommon or rare birds while the bird is under study or, if this is not possible, immediately afterwards. It is very helpful to include a photocopy of your field notes with the report. This helps the Committee to know what was seen at the time of the observation, before field guides or other sources of information were consulted. Field sketches, no matter how crude, can be extremely useful in illustrating what you saw. Lastly, when writing a report, it is very important to explain how you settled on the identification. What did you see or hear that clinched the identification for you? This vital aspect of a good report is frequently omitted. Providing a detailed answer to this question will greatly enhance the report and further improve your birding skills.

2004 REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)

2004-46-A Three, Verona Marsh, Verona, **Oneida**, 14 Nov

2004-67-A Six, Batavia Water Treatment Plant, Batavia, **Genesee**, 27 Nov

Although these may well have been Cackling Geese, the descriptions were insufficient to firmly rule out the possibility that these were simply small Canada Geese *B. canadensis*, which are known to occur because of insufficient nutrition as chicks or fledglings.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

2004-73-A One, Tri-cities Airport, **Broome**, 9 Sep

The report indicated a *Calidris*-type sandpiper in basic plumage, but the brief description did not adequately rule out Dunlin (*C. alpina*); females of the Hudson Bay subspecies *hudsonia* can appear very long-billed and might be confused with Curlew Sandpiper. In addition, key field marks to distinguish a Curlew, such as a white rump and longer legs, were not noted.

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

2004-15-A One 2nd winter, 6 ½ Station Road, Goshen, **Orange**, 10 Apr

Though the description was suggestive, some aspects of this immature gray-mantled gull did not fit with expectations for California Gull, including the width of the dark tail band, and other critical details were missing, such as eye and leg color and comparative shade of gray on the mantle. For difficult identifications of immature gulls at unexpected locations, a full suite of field marks and, ideally, a good series of photographs are really needed to support the identification.

Razorbill (*Alca torda*)

2004-54-A/B One, Hamlin Beach State Park, Hamlin, **Monroe**, 2 Dec

In what must have been an extremely frustrating experience, two skilled observers studied this distant sleeping water bird for at least 45 minutes. The bird raised its head only once during the entire observation period, and the observers were forced to use deductive logic to narrow down the possibilities based on the few details they could see. Ultimately, the Committee was not convinced that this interesting bird could be identified with certainty as a Razorbill, a very unusual species away from a marine habitat. Some members felt that Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) might fit the description better, whereas others were not convinced this was necessarily an alcid. Stumbling blocks included the unexpectedly large size compared to Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*), the relative shortness of the tail, and the fact that the bird's head was folded back rather than simply retracted in typical alcid style.

Northern Hawk Owl ((*Surnia ulula*)

2004-65-A One, Town of Richfield, **Otsego**, 21 Dec

Though a distinctive species, the description submitted was insufficient for this bird to be identified with any certainty.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*)

2004-32-A One, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, **Queens**, 1 Sep

This bird was observed very briefly and noted for its long dark tail. Unfortunately, the brief details do not firmly establish that this was a flycatcher rather than an exotic such as a male Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*). For instance, a small red spot noted on the dark head seems inconsistent with Fork-tailed Flycatcher.

Hoary Redpoll (*Caduelis hornemanni*)

2004-7-A One or two, Morris, **Otsego**, 11-24 Feb

Birders need to be aware that some Common Redpolls (*C. flammea*) are paler and will stand out in a flock. Thorough study and the observation of several field marks are usually needed to identify a Hoary Redpoll.

2003 REPORT NOT ACCEPTED

Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*)

2003-89-A One, Lake Ontario at Derby Hill, Mexico, **Oswego**, 1 Dec

An intriguing report and appropriately labeled by the observer as "a possible Arctic Loon," realizing that it was not seen well enough to definitively rule out other loons and confirm a first NYS record. The loon was first seen swimming some 200-300 yards away. The conditions on the lake were very windy with estimated 6-8 foot waves! The observer moved to consult a field guide and call

the attention of another birder but on return was unable to relocate the bird. The true status of Arctic Loon on the Atlantic coast of North America is not well understood, as most reports turn out to be other loon species. For more information on this identification challenge see Birch and Lee (1997).

2002 REPORT NOT ACCEPTED

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

2002-17-C One, Ripley Hawkwatch, Erie, 11 Apr

This report was originally submitted to the Buffalo Ornithological Society and not forwarded to NYSARC in time to be reviewed together with the initial reports (2002-17-A/B). Collectively, the observers describe a very interesting pale *Buteo*-type hawk that was studied as it passed over the Ripley Hawkwatch but unfortunately was not photographed. The new report is a welcome addition to the archive but, after careful consideration, did not sway the Committee towards acceptance of this bird as the first state record. See NYSARC 2004 for further details and reasoning behind the decision.

CONTRIBUTORS

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SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE:

Angus Wilson (Chair), Jeanne Skelly (Secretary),
Jeffrey S. Bolsinger, Thomas W. Burke, Andrew Guthrie, Steve Kelling,
Shaibal S. Mitra and Dominic Sherony.

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