

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

ADDITIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN CHECKLIST AND A CHANGE TO THE NYSARC REVIEW LIST

To streamline the review process, the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) publishes occasional short notes announcing new additions to the New York State Avian Checklist. Full details of the records will appear in the appropriate Annual Report, as is customary. Reports from 2007 provided four additions to the New York State Checklist, namely **Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*, based on the individual discovered near Montauk, Suffolk Co. on 18 Nov and continuing into 2008, **Western Reef-Heron** *Egretta gularis* based on the bird that frequented Coney Island Creek, Brooklyn, Kings Co. from 9 Jul into Aug, **Cassin's Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans* from the 13 Oct sighting in Montauk, Suffolk Co., and **Scott's Oriole** *Icterus parisorum* from the bird found in mid-town Manhattan, New York Co. on 4 Dec and continuing into 2008.

The Committee also voted to accept a '**Yellow**' **Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis/flava* that was photographed at Plumb Beach, Brooklyn, Kings Co., on 7 Sep 2008. This is the first accepted record of any wagtail for NYS and is apparently the first 'Yellow' Wagtail for eastern North America. In 2004, the American Ornithologists' Union split Eastern Yellow Wagtail *M. tschutschensis*—the form breeding in North America and likely occurring as a vagrant along the Pacific coast—from the Yellow Wagtail *M. flava* but in doing so created a severe identification challenge. After careful review, NYSARC considered the details of the Brooklyn bird insufficient to distinguish between the two species at this time but was convinced that this was indeed one of the two closely-allied species. With these inclusions, the NYS list stands at 475 species.

Ten years ago, **Cave Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva* was an extreme rarity in the Northeast, with only a handful of records from NYS. Since then birders have witnessed a remarkable, and still largely unexplained, change in the pattern of post-breeding dispersal, with scores of birds moving into the region in the late fall (late-Oct into Dec). In reality, a Cliff Swallow *P. pyrrhonota* at this time would be significantly rarer. Consequently, NYSARC will no longer review reports of Cave Swallow from this period. Sightings from other times in the year (Jan-early Oct) should be documented in full and submitted to the Committee.

New York State Avian Records Committee: Angus Wilson (Chair), Jeanne Skelly (Secretary), Jeffrey S. Bolsinger, Thomas W. Burke, Willie D'Anna, Andrew Guthrie, Shaibal S. Mitra and Dominic Sherony.