

GENERAL NOTES

Bewick's Wren at Cape May: On October 13, 1962, I banded a Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) at Cape May Point, New Jersey. The flight of land birds that day was one of the heaviest of the season, with 441 birds being banded at the banding lanes near Lily Lake. The day was partly cloudy, and winds were out of the northwest.

My wife and I were the only ones on hand to see the Bewick's Wren, but I took two close-up colored photographs before releasing it. These photographs have now been seen by many people.

There are several eastern Pennsylvania records for the Bewick's Wren, but there have apparently been no prior records for coastal New Jersey. David Fables (*Annotated List of New Jersey Birds*) cites a Haddonfield record in 1890 by S. N. Rhoads and also a bird seen and heard in Sussex County in April, 1958. There have evidently been no other previous New Jersey records for the Bewick's Wren. — Richard Benedict, 24 E. Front Street, Media, Pa.

Virginia's Warbler at Island Beach: On October 6, 1962, a Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*) was captured, banded, and photographed at Island Beach, New Jersey. The bird was banded by James Richardson of Mendham, N.J., a member of Island Beach Operation Recovery, and it was, of course, well studied by the other banders present. Insofar as I can determine, this is the first record for this western warbler in the eastern United States. This is, however, a record from Ontario, a bird collected at Point Pelee in the spring of 1958 (*Auk*, Vol. 79, p. 715).

October 6 was a successful day in other respects also. The Island Beach Operation Recovery group banded 1,142 birds, including two Orange-crowned Warblers, nine Grasshopper Sparrows, five Dickcissels, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, and a Hooded Warbler. The weather that day was clear, with winds out of the northwest at about ten miles per hour. — Ronald J. French, R.D. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Cedar Waxwings Feed on Winged Ants: On September 13, 1962, at the lookout at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Pennsylvania, Alexander C. Nagy and I observed a flock of 25 Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) in the trees behind us. Shortly before noon a mass of winged ants (*Formicidae*) boiled over the lookout and clustered around the top of a tree near the birds. Almost immediately the waxwings began darting after the insects in flycatcher fashion, plucking the insects from the air and returning to their perch to eat them.

A. C. Bent (*Life Histories of North American Wagtails, Shrikes, Vireos, and Their Allies*, pp. 89-90) mentions this feeding pattern, stating that "the birds appear as adept as the true flycatchers." — Donald S. Heintzelman, 629 Green Street, Allentown, Pa.

Golden-crowned Sparrow at Cape May: While I was conducting a field trip for the New Jersey Audubon Society at Cape May Point, N.J., on Sunday, October 7, 1962, someone called my attention to an unusual sparrow feeding near the edge of the water at the north end of Lily Lake. The bird's immediately evident and conspicuous golden crown with dark borders on either side identified it as a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*). Most of the approximately forty people present had a chance to watch the bird in close range and in good light as it remained in sight for about ten minutes. Later in the morning the bird was seen again at the same spot by another group of observers.

There are several previous records for this western sparrow in the northeastern states. The Fifth Edition of the A.O.U. Check-list cites occurrences in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. The specific Massachusetts record referred to was of one collected at Bedford on January 26, 1928, by Dr. John B. May (Wallace Bailey, *Birds in Massachusetts*, Massachusetts Audubon Society, 1955). There is also a 1955 record from Martha's Vineyard (Ludlow Griscom and Guy Emerson, *Birds of Martha's Vineyard*, 1959) and a 1960 record from Weymouth (*Audubon Field Notes*, Vol. 14, p. 370). There is also a record of a Golden-crowned Sparrow seen at Jones Beach, Long Island, for several months early in 1954 (E. M. Reilly and K. C. Parkes, *Preliminary Annotated Checklist of New York State Birds*, New York State Museum, Albany, 1959). In the current edition of his Eastern Field Guide Dr. Roger Tory Peterson cites (p. 255) a previous New Jersey record, but I have been unable to find any further details, and it must be considered doubtful. — Joseph M. Cadbury, 108 W. Phil-Ellena Street, Phila. 19, Pa.

Great Blue Heron Chases a Herring Gull: On December 29, 1962, at about 3:15 P.M., we were driving in towards headquarters on the dike at Brigantine Refuge, New Jersey. On

our left we saw a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) fly by with something in its bill. Not far behind it was a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*). It appeared somewhat surprising to see a Great Blue Heron chase a Herring Gull, but this proved to be the case. The gull had an eel, about 18 inches in length, in its mouth. The eel was still alive.

When we first observed the two birds, the gull was no more than about ten feet above the channel next to the dike. The heron was slightly lower than the gull. As the chase continued, the gull flew out over the marsh, increasing its altitude. Their flight at this point became quite erratic, the heron coming up under the gull, extending its neck, the gull turning slightly and going higher, the heron again following and trying to catch up with the gull in both speed and altitude and making stabs in the direction of the gull with its bill. The ability of the heron to maneuver and to keep up with the gull was astounding, but as the gull gained altitude the heron seemed to be losing ground.

At this point another Herring Gull approached and joined in the chase. Now our first gull had the heron below and the second gull above. The gull with the eel suddenly dipped downward. The heron, following, came so close to the ground that it had to land. This seemed to put the heron out of the running as the two gulls continued the chase. The one carrying the eel was forced to the ground, whereupon the heron immediately took off and flew to the spot where the two gulls were located. Both gulls took to the air as soon as the heron arrived on the scene. The first gull dropped the eel, but the second picked it off the marsh as the heron once again came over to where the eel had lain. The eel was exchanged once or twice in this same manner, with the heron still trying to keep up. When a Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) appeared, the eel was dropped and both Herring Gulls flew off. The Black-back landed near the eel but did not attempt to pick it up, even though it seemed to us that it had sufficient time to do so before the heron arrived.

So the heron, after considerable effort and with some patience, finally retrieved the eel. The Great Black-backed Gull stood nearby for a few moments before flying away, and during this time another Great Blue Heron came in and landed. The new heron made no direct attempt to get the eel away from the first heron, but stood watching as the first heron worked on the still-living eel.

This was the state of affairs as we left the area. It would be interesting to know whether the gull had stolen the eel from the heron in the first place, but unfortunately this cannot be answered. — Emmerson Bowes, 315 Bobbin Mill Rd., Media, Pa., and Paul W. Schwalbe, 16 Preston Rd., Media, Pa.

Short-eared Owl Roost at Churchville, Pa.: During the winter of 1962-63 I made several visits to a white pine stand adjacent to the Churchville Reservoir in Bucks County. On the first occasion it was almost dusk, and the ground was covered with about four inches of snow. Seven owls were flushed, and brief glimpses of these birds indicated they were Short-eareds.

From an examination of the roost it was apparent that the birds were perching in the trees and at a height of from four to seven feet.

The following evening I returned to the area about 5:15 P.M., and as the birds left the roost I was able to squeak them in and actually had all seven circling about at one time. On several occasions they made passes at me, coming to within two or three feet. On one such pass I was able to photograph one of the owls. Several of the birds perched in the tops of the pines and repeatedly called a loud "wap, wap," with a pause of about a second between notes.

A week later I visited the roost again. The snow had melted by this time, and only one owl was present. Several days later that bird too had disappeared.

Some time later, a day after a light snowfall in February, six Short-eared Owls were again in the roost and again stayed only until the snow melted. — Alan Brady, Wycombe, Pa.

Yellow-headed Blackbird at Hawk Mountain: My only visit to Hawk Mountain, Pa., in the last two seasons was on Election Day, November 6, 1962. On that occasion my wife and I were fortunately favored with ideal weather and wind conditions.

Until mid-morning small groups of blackbirds were passing over frequently in a due north-south direction. Shortly after 9:30 I put my glasses on one such group as it was approaching the lookout and immediately noticed that one of the lead birds had a completely yellow head. The white wing patches were then evident as the bird flew over at a distance of approximately fifty feet.

Maurice Broun informed me a bit later in the morning that this was a first record for Hawk Mountain, the 218th species of bird to be recorded there.

The day was, incidentally, a success in other lines also. We saw three Golden Eagles, three Goshawks, over 100 Redtails, and almost 500 Canada Geese. The season's total count on Goshawks until November 6 was seven. — James K. Meritt, 809 Saratoga Terrace, Blackwood, N.J.

Black-throated Gray Warbler at Island Beach: While banding at Island Beach, N.J., on September 29, 1962, I caught an immature female Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*). This bird was also identified by many other banders who were present and was photographed prior to its release.

An occurrence of this species at Cape May, N.J., in the fall of 1961 was the subject of a field note by William Russell in the last issue of *Cassinia* (Vol. XLVI, 1961-62, p. 23). The same note listed previous New Jersey records for this western warbler. — John C. Miller, 8428 Lyons Ave., Phila. 42, Pa.

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker in Lehigh County: On December 29, 1962, at Trexlertown, Pennsylvania, I discovered a male Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) feeding on dead pines in a small pine woods. The bird was very tame and allowed me to approach within ten feet. On the following day I again found the bird in the same woods and took several Kodachromes to establish the record, which, to the best of my knowledge, is the first for this species in Lehigh County. — Donald S. Heintzelman, 629 Green Street, Allentown, Pa.

Audubon's Shearwater at Barnegat: On September 15, 1962, I observed an Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) about two hundred feet off the lighthouse jetty at Barnegat Inlet, New Jersey. The bird remained at approximately the same spot during the entire two-hour observation period. I was well aware of the possibility of Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*), but the bird's small size and dark feet (seen once when a launch's wake literally threw the bird off the water) ruled out that species. Nearby Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) afforded size comparison.

The bird appeared very sick as it was just barely able to avoid powerboats and totally unable to hold its own in food fights with Laughing Gulls. I noticed the shearwater's inability to hold its head erect, a factor which reminded me of botulism-affected ducks. I can only conclude, in view of the mild weather preceding the observation, that this or some other disorder was responsible for the occurrence of this pelagic species along the New Jersey coast. — William Russell, University of Pennsylvania, Phila., Pa.

Bake Oven Knob Migration Observations: For a total of twenty days between September 7, 1962, and November 23, 1962, I made a series of observations on migrant hawks, and other birds, at Bake Oven Knob, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Table One presents the results of the hawk observations.

Table 1

Species	1962 Total
Turkey Vulture, <i>Cathartes aura</i>	47
Goshawk, <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	13
Sharp-shinned Hawk, <i>Accipiter striatus</i>	280
Cooper's Hawk, <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	18
Red-tailed Hawk, <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	733
Red-shouldered Hawk, <i>Buteo lineatus</i>	31
Broad-winged Hawk, <i>Buteo platypterus</i>	2606
Golden Eagle, <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	4
Bald Eagle, <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	3
Marsh Hawk, <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	47
Osprey, <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	110
Peregrine Falcon, <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	5
Pigeon Hawk, <i>Falco columbarius</i>	3
Sparrow Hawk, <i>Falco sparverius</i>	69
Unidentified hawks	60
TOTAL	4029

Other interesting species also observed during this period include: Double-crested Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax auritus* (three on Oct. 14); Snow Goose, *Chen hyperborea* (one on Oct. 7); Ruffed Grouse, *Bonasa umbellus* (present all season); Pileated Woodpecker, *Hylatomus pileatus* (two present all season); Olive-sided Flycatcher, *Nuttallornis borealis* (one on Sept. 15); Evening Grosbeak, *Hesperiphona vespertina* (six on Nov. 23); and Pine Siskin, *Spinus pinus* (25 on Nov. 23).

The Double-crested Cormorants apparently constituted a first autumn record for Lehigh County. Trainer and Miller (*A Checklist of the Birds of Lehigh County, Pa.*, Lehigh Valley Bird Club, 1956) list the species only as a rare April transient. I know of no other autumn records since publication of that checklist.

The record of the Snow Goose was unusually early. In fact Dr. Earl L. Poole informs me that the earliest previous autumn date for this species in the state was October 10 (Editor's Note: This Snow Goose passed over Bake Oven shortly after noon, and about 7:15 in the evening a Snow Goose was observed coming in with Canada Geese at Cambridge, Maryland, by Harry Armistead. It would appear indeed quite possible that it was the same individual). — Donald S. Heintzelman, 629 Green St., Allentown, Pa.

Probable Breeding of House Finches in Pennsylvania: On June 17, 1962, an adult male and an adult female House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) appeared at the home of George Perley in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. The two adults fed many times that day at the sunflower seed feeders. For the next several weeks, however, only the male came several times each day to feed. Efforts were made to follow the bird to a nesting site, but these were unsuccessful.

On August 6 the male brought three young to the feeders, and for the next eleven days these four birds were often seen there. The adult male was not seen after August 17, but the three young continued to be present several times each day until early in September. Unfortunately, Mr. Perley was stricken with a serious illness about the middle of September, and thus no further observations could be made.

I know of no prior breeding records of the House Finch in Pennsylvania. — Raymond J. Middleton, 131 N. Whitehall Rd., Norristown, Pa.