

GENERAL NOTES

Say's Phoebe at Cape May County Airport: On returning to West Chester, PA. from a trip to Cape May on Sept. 24, 1977, we decided to stop at the Cape May County Airport. It was a cloudy day with temperatures in the 70's and as we drove into the airport, Jim saw a strangely colored bird fly off. Not seeing it again, we continued a little further and walked an area for about twenty minutes. On exiting the airport we spotted a phoebe-behaving bird on some equipment just inside a chain link fence and stopped to look. Closer examination revealed something colored differently than an Eastern Phoebe and a quick look in the field guide identified the bird as a Say's Phoebe. He was hunting along the fence and the equipment behind it. This was at the corner of Yorktown Road and Forrestal Road. We watched it for about twenty minutes and Barry took several pictures.

Around the same time of our sighting, a Say's Phoebe was seen at Oakland Industrial Park in north Jersey by Bill Smith of Holmdel, N.J.

A third observation in New Jersey occurred on Oct. 15, 1977 at Island Beach by Bob Grant. Previously on Sept. 27, 1975 a Say's Phoebe was seen and photographed by Jesse Grantham, Keith Richards, Bill Smith, and others also at Island Beach.

—Barry E. Blust, 500 W. Rosedale Ave., West Chester, Pa. and
James D. Russell Jr., 1377 Old Wilmington Pike, West Chester, PA.

Reverse Movement of Sharp-Shinned Hawk: On October 7, 1976, while bird banding at Island Beach State Park, New Jersey, Charles E. Price and I saw a large reverse flight of Sharp-Shinned Hawks. These birds were first noticed at 0715 AM flying north over the west side of the Island which is about one-quarter of a mile wide at this spot. The Bay, at this point, is approximately three miles wide. Some birds were seen heading for the mainland, but the majority continued North along the Island. The wind was blowing out of the Southwest approximately fifteen miles per hour. Other raptors seen during the day were moving South. These included six Marsh Hawks, two Merlins, one Sparrow-Hawk, and three Ospreys. Not one Sharp-Shinned Hawk was observed heading South. This was the largest flight of Sharp-Shinned Hawks that I have ever seen from Island Beach State Park in the past twenty years.

—J. C. Miller, 1220 Prospect Avenue, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania 19076

Unusual Number of Boat-Tailed Grackles in Delaware: On December 19, 1976, while covering the Little Creek Wildlife State Refuge in Delaware (part of our coverage area for the Bombay Hook N.W.R. Christmas Bird Count) Sam Orr and I observed approximately 3,000 Boat-Tailed Grackles feeding in the tall marsh grasses. To my knowledge this is the largest number of this species seen in the area. The birds were first seen after being flushed by several Marsh Hawks which were hunting over the marsh grasses where the Grackles were feeding. These birds may have been driven north by the cold spell which occurred farther South.

—J. C. Miller, 1220 Prospect Avenue, Prospect Park, PA 19076

House Sparrows Feeding Tufted Titmice: During the Spring of 1977, an unusual occurrence happened along my bluebird trail near my home in Tabernacle, New Jersey. A House Sparrow took up residence in one of the boxes. Their first attempt of the season at nesting failed. Both eggs were found to be bad. Their second attempt succeeded in hatching two young, but they died from unknown causes. This type of failure had also occurred in the previous year.

For reasons unknown to me the distraught House Sparrows then began feeding the six young Tufted Titmice in a box near by. Only the male was seen entering the box with food, although the female was seen in the vicinity carrying food also. The Sparrows seemed to come and go without any interference from the Titmice.

Why they selected the Tufted Titmice box is unknown. There were four other boxes that were occupied closer by (House Wren, Flicker, Carolina Chickadee and White-Breasted Nuthatch).

They fed the Titmice until they fledged, and they went on to nest again for a third time. This time their efforts were rewarded with two young fledged.

—Ken Tischner, R.D. 4, Box 1975, Elm Drive, Vincentown, N.J. 08088

Long-eared Owl Preys on Screech Owl: As time permits I have been conducting a long term study (1962-1966, 1970-present) of the ecology and food habits of owls in central and northern Lancaster County. This has involved ascertaining owl numbers at known roost sites, locating new roosts, and collecting pellets beneath roosts at monthly (or shorter) intervals.

Among an April, 1975 collection of pellets deposited by Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*) in a pine grove near Elizabethtown, I found remains of a Screech Owl (*Otus asio*). Remains were found in one large pellet measuring 70 x 33 mm and weighing 10.5 gm (dry wt.). Remains included the upper culmen, a small portion of the synsacrum, the frontal portion of the cranium, and several feathers suggesting a red-phase coloration.

Although observations of owls preying on other owls are occasionally recorded, I have been unable to find another record of Screech Owls as a prey item for Long-eared Owls in North America. Screech Owl weights average approximately 172 gm as compared to 245 gm for Long-eared Owls (Craighead and Craighead, 1956, *Hawks, Owls and Wildlife*, p. 428), and probably approach the upper prey limit capability of the Long-eared Owl.

—Dwight G. Smith, Southern Connecticut State College, New Haven, CT 06515

Black Brant at Brigantine Island: On 4 December 1976, between 1430 and 1530, William Schipper of Moorestown, N.J., and I located a Black Brant at the golf course on Brigantine Island, Atlantic County, New Jersey. The bird was grazing in the company of approximately 200 Atlantic Brant.

The bird was relatively easy to pick out because of its obvious plumage differences. Fortunately it fed with the most aggressive birds in front of the group as they moved along the golf course, which enabled us to view it clearly. Aware of the Black Brant's rarity in the East, William Schipper and I studied the bird for approximately one half hour. The field marks that we noted included the extensive black of the belly and flanks and the larger throat necklace which seemed to have more white than its Atlantic cousin's. The black area seemed in certain lighting to be two-toned, very black in comparison with the black head, neck, and chest of the Atlantic Brant and more brownish in the dark areas of the flanks and belly.

During the course of our observation we approached within sixty yards or so of the bird. In addition to our binoculars, we had a 15X-60X zoom spotting scope.

In the two weeks following its discovery the bird was seen by many observers. To my knowledge the bird was last noted on December 18, when a host of observers made certain that it was tallied on the annual Oceanville (Brigantine) Christmas Count. Shortly thereafter the groups of Brant disappeared from the Brigantine Island golf course.

The Black Brant's status as a separate species had been under fire for some time prior to its official relegation to subspecific status in the Thirty-Third Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (1976, *Auk* 93: 875-879).

Previous known occurrences of the Black Brant in New Jersey are few. There are several 19th century records, but the one collected at Egg Harbor in 1846 is apparently not the type specimen as had been generally assumed (Palmer, *Handbook of North American Birds*, 1976, 2: 255). There was a sight record at Brigantine Refuge several years ago which I do not believe was confirmed in any way.

There have been eight occurrences of the Black Brant in New York State, all but one from Long Island (Joseph Costa and Thomas H. Davis, "Photographs of New York State Rarities," *The Kingbird*, 1976, 26: 183).

I extend my thanks to Dr. Frank Gill and to Messrs Michael Hannisian, Richard Kane, James Meritt, and P. William Smith, Jr., all of whom provided information or otherwise assisted in the preparation of this note.

—Fred Hamer, RD 3, Box 357A, Egg Harbor City, N.J. 08215

Recent Occurrences of the Yellow-headed Blackbird in southern N.J.: The most recent occurrence of the Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) of which I have direct knowledge is that of an adult male which I observed perched on a telephone wire in my backyard June 17, 1977. After uttering several unfamiliar but blackbird-like notes it flew off to the north.

This species is not included in the N.J. Basic Bird List as published in the May 1976 issue of New Jersey Audubon magazine by the Bird Records Committee but in recent years there have been increasing reports of the species and hopefully will eventually be included.

Occasional reports emanate from the Brigantine N. W. Refuge but unfortunately most are not verified. One exception is that of an immature male seen August 13, 1976. Most of the records for 1976 and 1977 have come from the area of Barnegat Light and have consisted of banding records as well as sightings at feeding stations.

In correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Roger Foy of Ship Bottom (active banders on Long Beach Island) they recorded six birds banded between August 11, 1977 and September 29, 1977. The incidence of immature birds of the year has even had them wondering if there's a possibility of nesting in the vicinity.

With an awareness of the difficulty of spotting usually lone birds in flocks of blackbirds perhaps the readership will be able to add to the evidence needed to place this species on the N.J. Basic Bird List.

—James Akers, 209 30th St., Brigantine, N.J. 08203

Mockingbird Attacking Another Species of Bird: It is common knowledge that the Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is an aggressive defender of its nesting territory but perhaps less well known that both sexes establish winter feeding territories which are also zealously guarded. This knowledge, however, did not prepare me to understand the following episode:

About 9:30 AM on November 9, 1976 while on the telephone I glanced out a window to notice a fluttering of wings of a small bird in the corner of my fenced-in backyard. An unusually dark plumaged N. Mockingbird was ferociously attacking something pinned beneath it on the ground. In a minute or two it departed over the fence and I could see no further movement where the activity had taken place.

On closer inspection a few minutes later I discovered a traumatized Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) immobile and breathing heavily. Fearing that the bird was about to expire I decided to let nature run its course before returning several hours later. The bird was still in almost the same position and upon closer examination it appeared that the right eye had been destroyed but the left eye, although bloodied around the lid seemed OK.

The feathers of the head were much disheveled but no breaks in the skin were observed. The temperatures were in the low 40's, the sun was bright and so I returned the bird to its former position. Later in the day I could not find it so surmised that it had recovered sufficiently to leave.

Several weeks earlier I had found another Hermit Thrush dead beneath a window on the opposite side of the house. Close to it was a companion bird apparently keeping a vigil. I wondered later if this might not have been the same bird lingering which put it on a collision course with a territorial Mockingbird.

—James Akers, 209 30th St., Brigantine, N.J. 08203

Fall Nest of Carolina Wren: In October of 1976 two Carolina Wrens were seen feeding at suet bags on the porch of a house in Fort Washington, Pa. near the Wissahickon Creek. At the same time a nest was being built in a small mail basket on the same porch. The Wrens spent the winter there, and were often seen leaving the nest in the early morning. I examined the nest, and found droppings at the entrance hole in late winter.

In mid-April 1977 the Carolina Wrens moved across the porch and built a nest in a Birch bark bird box, by tearing a new entrance near the roof. Early on the morning of May 3rd a pair of House Wrens arrived, and four partially developed eggs and the nesting materials of pine needles and leaves were on the porch floor. However the House Wrens only built a false nest in the box. The Carolina Wrens deserted and reappeared on Nov. 13, 1977 when one fed on the suet. By Nov. 20th the roosting nest had been cleaned out of the droppings and new material added consisting of the outside paper of a bees nest. One Carolina Wren is roosting in it, but on Dec. 23rd two Carolina Wrens were eating suet. Looking in Bent I find no reference to the building of a Fall nest, but they have wintered in old hornets nests. Dr. Sutton could find no evidence of House Wrens molesting Carolina Wrens, only Bewick Wrens.

Bent—Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers, and Their Allies.
Page 210-215.

—Charles A. Wonderly, 451 Flamingo St., Phila., PA 19128

Observation of Black-headed Gull-Laughing Gull Courtship: On 21 April 1977 Bill Schipper and I observed an adult Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) court a Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*). This observation took place between 1400 and 1500 hours and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Our observations were made with 8 x 40 and 7 x 35 binoculars in addition to a 15X-60X zoom spotting scope. The distance that we observed from was a minimum of 35 feet to a maximum of 125 feet.

The locality of the sighting was along the north shore line of St. Georges Thorofare which is bordered on the north by Harbor Beach Boulevard and on the west by Brigantine Boulevard on Brigantine Island, New Jersey.

During the observation period we observed 3 different types of behavior: 1) Feeding in a loose flock of approximately 10 Laughing Gulls of which only 4 individuals seemed to be paired. 2) Aggressive behavior of the Black-headed Gull towards an unpaired Laughing Gull individual. 3) Courtship behavior.

Spanning a distance along the shore line of about 40 meters a loose flock of Laughing Gulls fed on the bare mud and sand. The Black-headed Gull was located centrally in this flock and for the most part stayed within a 2-3 meter distance of one particular Laughing Gull which was not actively feeding.

The above was the situation when we first observed the birds. Approximately 5 to 10 minutes later the aggressive behavior began.

Three or four of the other Laughing Gulls in the flock began advancing toward the inactive Laughing Gull, one at a time. As the first Laughing Gull approached the Black-headed Gull assumed an erect posture with its wrists flared outward, head held high and bill pointing downward. In this manner the Black-headed Gull approached the "intruding" Laughing Gull. The next posture the Black-headed Gull assumed when the intruding gull started to retreat. Starting this second posture the bird lifted its bill and commenced calling, lowering its head and starting to run towards the intruder as it called. When its head was lowered to a point lower than its back and its bill was angled slightly upward the Black-headed Gull would turn away, resuming the first posture when another intruder approached the inactive Laughing Gull. The aggressive behavior continued at least 10 minutes. The call consisted of 8 to 12 ca's or Ka's intermediate in sound between a Fish Crow and the long call of a Laughing Gull. I am not well enough acquainted with most bird calls to describe them very accurately, at best this description is approximate.

After the Black-headed Gull had driven the intruders away for the last time it resumed foraging along the waters edge. Three to five minutes later the Black-headed Gull approached the inactive Laughing Gull and they stood side by side. Immediately the Laughing Gull tossed its head back until the top of its head rested on the top of its back, then it brought its head forward. During this display the bird called, starting the call just before tossing its head. The call was an AH, ah, ah, ah, ah with the accent on the first note. There were three repetitions of the head toss. Then the Black-headed Gull lowered its head, gave several undulations of its neck and regurgitated a piece of food approximately 1" x 3/4". The Laughing Gull immediately seized the piece and swallowed it. The two birds remained side by side for approximately 10 minutes.

—Fred Hamer, 27 W. Elm St., Linwood, N.J. 08221

Pelagic Observation of Red-Breasted Nuthatch: On September 17, 1977 on a Pelagic Trip from Ocean City, Md. a Red Breasted Nuthatch landed on the roof of the cabin of the boat. It fed on a couple of insects or spiders, rested a few minutes, and flew off in an Eastward direction. The captain gave our position as 65 miles from shore. Fred Ulmer and Harry Brown also saw the bird.

—Charles A. Wonderly, 451 Flamingo St., Phila., PA. 19128

Cliff Swallows at Lake Ontelaunee: Those of us concerned for the welfare of birds have been distressed by the continuing decline of many bird populations. The Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) in particular has suffered greatly from changing times. In his *Pennsylvania Birds* (1964) Earl L. Poole recorded the bird's status in the Commonwealth as "uncommon transient and breeding resident, gradually retreating from populous areas." In an earlier work, *A Half Century of Bird Life in Berks County, Pennsylvania* (1947) Poole gives the status of the Cliff Swallow as "a rather rare and local summer resident and uncommon transient."

The Cliff Swallow was actually a common bird, well distributed throughout the Northeast around the turn of the century. Its decline, in large measure, can be attributed to the disappearance of the old-fashioned unpainted barns which were favorite nest-sites; farmers who simply would not tolerate the nests; interference by house sparrows; small boys with B-B guns; rain-storms which demolish the nests, or excessively dry conditions which cause the nests to fall.

The good news is that the Cliff Swallow has found a haven in the Great Valley of Berks County. And the focus for the bird's dynamic, and indeed dramatic increase, are the two massive, concrete bridges of Lake Ontelaunee. Hidden from view, the birds attach their adobe homes to the under surfaces of the broadly arching bridges. Here the nests are completely protected from prowling mammals, meddlesome men and all the adversities previously mentioned. The cool, perpetually sun-less nest-sites preclude excessive drying and consequent falling of the nests. And the birds have the blessings of the City of Reading!

During the past season I made a number of visits to the Lake, about 300 feet above sea-level and embracing roughly 1,000 acres. Great was my surprise, on May 16, to see hundreds of the swallows darting low over the water, as far as one could see, enjoying the abundant insect resources of the area. A few birds were actively engaged in nest-building, gathering mud from rain-puddles below the spillway.

All of this was enormously exciting and encouraging to me, in view of the scarcity of Cliff Swallows in recent years. In the early 50s I knew of a few colonies along both sides of the Blue Mountain. I well remember a colony of over 100 birds that had become established at a large barn in Dreherstown, in 1952. Two larger colonies appeared to be flourishing on old barns near New Ringgold. Then the birds disappeared.

According to Matthew J. Spence of Reading, who has devoted much time to field studies of birds at Lake Ontelaunee since the early 60s, a few Cliff Swallows appeared at the Lake in late April of 1966. Five pairs built nests, apparently for the first time. In late July as many as 40 birds including young were noted. Many of these lingered well into August.

Almost comparable results obtained from 1967 to 1969. On July 4, 1970 Spence saw about 100 birds at the dam—the first real upsurge in the population. No specific counts are available since 1970, though Spence has recorded Cliff Swallows at the dam through August, and sporadically as late as September 15, 1974. The lack of specific counts is understandable, as we shall see.

My interest—and frustration—was heightened with each visit I made to the Lake, for I found that it was impossible to make a reliable count or to determine what was going on. To gauge the extent of nest-building and activity in general, one had to use a boat! And so I contacted Daniel Kennedy, who is in charge of the Reading Water-Works, and this young man graciously arranged to pilot me in a motor-boat to both bridges so that examination could be made of the entire under surfaces, the many cornices and overhanging abutments to which the nests were attached in rows.

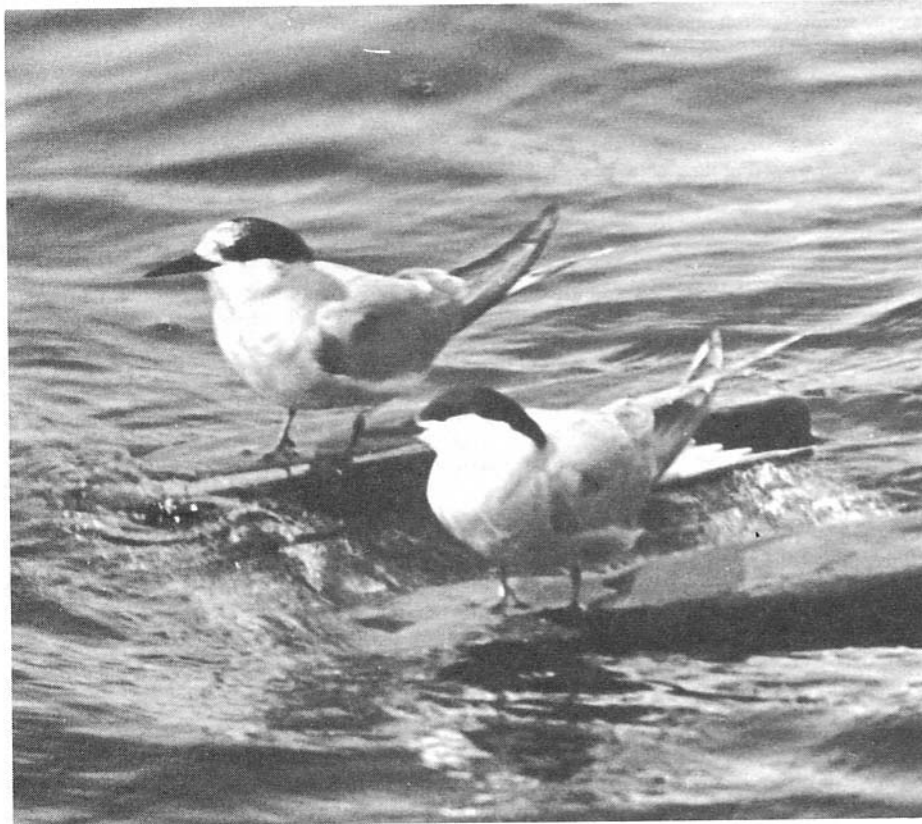
On July 13, under the main bridge (530 feet in length) at the spillway, and over which rumbles the continuous heavy traffic of Rte. 73, we found a thriving community of birds tending 132 nests with young. All but six nests were located on the north side of the bridge. Less than 2 miles to the north, the smaller Lake Shore bridge, carrying very little traffic, had its complement of 50 nests, and here at least 55 young birds were testing their wings or resting on the south-facing overhang. *Hence the 1977 breeding population of Cliff Swallows at Lake Ontelaunee was at least 364 birds*, based on 182 active nests—possibly the largest colony of Cliff Swallows in the Commonwealth!

It should be noted that very few of the nests were gourd-shaped, as they are at all exposed situations. At Lake Ontelaunee the nests are so ideally sheltered and protected that many completed, active nests were simply cup-shaped.

Checking the swallows on July 30 I was surprised to find not a single swallow at the dam. Only 6 pairs of adults were still tending young in nests under the Lake Shore bridge. Why the extraordinarily early departure? Curiously, despite the protracted tropical heat of the summer of 1977, barn and tree swallows at my farm made similar premature departures.

It gives me great pleasure to report this sanguine turn of events in the fortunes of these charming birds. May their fecundity and good fortune continue; and may their sanctuary-bridges endure! My sincere thanks to Daniel Kennedy without whose help this inquiry would have aborted; and to Matthew J. Spence for the generous use of his notes.

—Maurice Broun, Strawberry Hill Farm, New Ringgold, Pa. 17960



ARCTIC TERNS

Photographed by Alan Brady
Over The Hudson Canyon 5-28-77

Arctic Tern Observation off New Jersey Coast: While returning from Hudson Canyon on May 28, 1977, the D.V.O.C., Uner Club pelagic trip was fortunate to come upon two Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisica*) resting on a piece of driftwood. The sighting was made about seventy miles east of Barnegat Light, in excellent light, and at a close distance. One bird, an adult, had an all red bill, a full black cap, and typically short legs. Even though one long outer tail feather was missing, the opposite remaining tail feather extended about one inch beyond the folded wings. When its wings were raised the thin black leading edge of the first primary could be noted.

The other bird, an immature, had a partial black cap and a black bill with otherwise similar characteristics as the adult. Other sterna type terns have been seen on Hudson Canyon trips, but none well enough for positive identification until this time.

—Alan Brady, Wycombe, Pa.

Unsuccessful Nesting of Lawrence's Warbler in Lehigh County: On 24 May 1976 William Winkelman and I observed an adult male Lawrence's Warbler (*Vermivora lawrencei*) on South Mountain near the city limits of Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. The bird was first discovered on 23 May by Frederic Brock and Bernard Morris. The bird was a persistent singer and it sang a typical Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*) song. A female Blue-winged Warbler was often seen with the bird and it appeared that the two birds were mated. The Lawrence's Warbler permitted a close approach enabling me to obtain many photographs.

The area was along a powerline (elevation approximately 780 feet). The vegetation included many varieties of shrubs and small herbaceous plants, predominately brambles and Bracken (*Pteris aquilina*). There were also many scattered saplings, mostly Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*). The powerline was bordered by deciduous woods. At least forty-one (41) species of birds were nesting or presumed nesting along the powerline and in the adjacent woods.

On 27 May I observed the female Blue-winged Warbler building a nest close to the ground in a small blackberry bush. The nest was composed chiefly of dead leaves and lined with strips of grapevine bark. [I did not observe the Lawrence's Warbler assist the Blue-winged Warbler in the construction of the nest. Instead, the bird perched on a branch above the nest and sang softly.]

On 29 May I visited the site and found that the nest contained one (1) egg. On 11 June, the nest contained three (3) eggs. The eggs appeared light bluish in color, spotted with brown. When I visited the site on 18 June, however, the nest was empty. Also, neither the Lawrence's Warbler nor the Blue-winged Warbler could be found. I was quite disappointed, to say the least.

A bird or a mammal could have been responsible for the missing eggs, though the nest was not damaged. Unfortunately, the Lawrence's Warbler was widely reported and it is possible that someone visited the site and collected the two birds and their eggs. Neither the Lawrence's Warbler nor the Blue-winged Warbler were seen in 1977.

—Richard E. Wiltraut, 54 Pershing Blvd., Whitehall, PA 18052

Late Nesting of Black-billed Cuckoo in Schuylkill County: On 30 August 1978, I found a Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) sitting tight on its frail, saucer-shaped nest of twigs, five feet from the ground in a honeysuckle bush quite close to my home. Incubating a single egg at this late date suggested an unsuccessful previous nesting. I was away from home in early September but all went well with the nesting for on 10 September a fledgling cuckoo, about four inches in length and the strangest-looking bundle of gray down I had ever seen, was sitting in a perpendicular position about twelve inches from the nest. The next morning the youngster was perched a few feet from the nest. But it was gone at 4 p.m., perhaps spirited away by its parents. Bent (*Life Histories*, Bull. 176, 1940, p. 84) gives egg dates of this species as late as 14 September in Michigan.

—Maurice Broun, Strawberry Hill Farm, R.D. 1, New Ringgold, Pa. 17960

Purple Martin Roost in Delaware County: On 11 September 1977 I was notified that a large flock of Purple Martins was gathering on a police radio tower in Aston Township, Aston, Pa. Arriving at the site at approximately 6:30 p.m. I estimated between 175-200 martins perched and fluttering about the tower. Additional birds were observed coming in from all directions heading toward the tower, so the number of birds continued to increase.

About ten minutes after my arrival, close to one hundred birds literally erupted from the tower and flew in a rather tight flock toward a thick grove of Norway Maples two hundred yards away. The 30 foot trees were sandwiched between a donut shop and a cluster of houses. The birds circled this grove of trees rapidly, and while circling members of the flock dove into the tops of the maples disappearing immediately. It was very reminiscent of the roosting behavior of chimney swifts circling a chimney or roosting site. Birds which did not join the roost flew back to the tower. By 6:45 martins completely covered the tower (200 birds) with as many circling the tower. From this time until about 7:15 martins periodically erupted from the tower, flew to the maples and circled rapidly while birds dropped quickly into the crowns of the maples. I walked over and stood near the site at this time to see if I could spot any of the disappearing birds. I was surprised not to see any birds, but to witness the arriving birds diving through the leaves and disappearing into the center of the crown of the maples. By 7:15 all the birds had left the tower and were roosting in the maples. I estimated the number of birds using the roost was between 450-500 birds. I have read of other roosts containing up to 10,000 martins, but have never heard of a roost even this small in Delaware County. Other species seen entering the roost were Robin, Starling and Tree Swallow.

—Jesse Grantham, Northbrook Rd., Kennett Square, Pa. 19348

Upland Nesting of Tree Swallows in Southeastern Pa.: The Tree Swallow is known to breed uncommonly along the Atlantic Coast as far south as Maryland. All these reported nestings have occurred in close association with coastal areas and water where natural and artificial nest sites are available. I have observed Tree Swallows nesting at Bombay Hook Wildlife Refuge (Del.), Island Beach State Park (N.J.), Tinicum Environmental Center (Pa.), and at Longwood Gardens (Pa.). All of these nestings were in artificial nest sites i.e. bird houses, set out over water or along the shoreline.

In the summer of 1977 I discovered two pairs of nesting Tree Swallows at Lenape, Pa., approximately 4 miles southwest of West Chester, Pa. Both nests were in bird boxes set atop poles approx. 5' above ground, and in close association with "Backyard suburbia". One of the nest sites chosen was a standard bluebird box in an open lawn situation. The second pair chose a nest site about 75 yds. away, in a brightly colored, rather shallow square nest box. This box was located about 15' from the rear door of a home, with the entrance hole facing the house. The surrounding habitat was neatly mowed, well shrubbed, well tended lawns and gardens, more typical habitat of robins and chipping sparrows. The closest water was the Brandywine Creek, about 3/4 of a mile southwest of the nest sites. Both nests were successful in fledging young.

This is the first instance I have witnessed of the Tree Swallow nesting in suburbia in southeastern Pennsylvania. In the Poconos and the New England states Tree Swallows are common "dooryard" nesting birds.

—Jesse Grantham, Northbrook Rd., Kennett Square, Pa. 19348

Three Black Vultures near Baer Rocks, Pennsylvania: An observation of 3 *Black Vultures* was made at Baer Rocks, on 12 March, by my friend Kenneth Kranick (R.D. 1, Steuben Rd., Bethlehem 18017).

The birds appeared about 1 o'clock, in a small group of turkey vultures, all passing back and forth just over the trees. Ken is a quiet, very modest young man who has been studying spring and fall hawk flights at Baer Rocks for at least 10 seasons. His identifications are more reliable than many of the experts!

On March 16, 1977, in a 2-hr. period I had the good fortune to witness one of the most spectacular overflights of Canada Geese ever. Normally we may see 2,000 to 6,000 geese in a day, passing over our farm, at this season. But on the 16th at least 28,000 geese went over, wave after wave, from 8:20 to 10:22. Not a single snow among them!

—Maurice Broun, R.D. 1, New Ringgold, Pa. 17960

Townsend's Warbler in Burlington County: On December 5, 1977, an adult male Townsend's Warbler in winter plumage appeared at the feeder of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Welch, who live in a wooded area of Southampton Township, near Vincentown, Burlington County, New Jersey.

Mr. and Mrs. Welch are not avid birders, but they were, of course, curious as to the identity of the new arrival. From an illustration in a bird guide Mrs. Welch at first thought the bird might be a Townsend's, but the range given did not fit. The possibility of an immature Blackburnian then came to mind. The matter rested this way for several weeks until Mrs. Welch happened to visit New Jersey Audubon's Rancocas Nature Center on another matter and casually mentioned to Liz and Karl Anderson that she thought she had a Blackburnian Warbler at her feeder. When the Andersons suggested that that was a highly unlikely possibility in mid-winter, Mrs. Welch's curiosity was once more stimulated. An associate at work, Mr. Kurt Jarvis, showed her a bird book with photographs, and she was certain now it was a Townsend's, range notwithstanding. Mr. Jarvis phoned me on February 9, and two days later I went to the Welch's home together with James Akers, John, Mike, and Chris Danzenbaker, and Kenneth Tischner. The bird came in shortly after our arrival, and Townsend's it was indeed.

The Welch's preferred that this report not be put on the Hot Line, but a number of other observers were able to see the bird, most from a distance of two or three feet at the kitchen window.

The bird was last seen on February 21. The bird had been present through some of the worst winter weather New Jersey can offer, and its disappearance (or demise) could not be directly attributable to any sudden severe weather change.

During the course of its two and a half month stay the bird was a very regular and dependable visitor. It seemed to prefer peanut butter at the feeder but it would frequently eat suet. It would often stay for rather extended periods in a laurel bush located near the feeder.

The only previous New Jersey record of the Townsend's Warbler would appear to be the bird present at a Princeton feeder from December 23, 1971, to January 15, 1972 (*New Jersey Nature News*, March 1972, p. 42; June 1972, p. 81). This bird was also an adult male in winter plumage. The Princeton bird was seen by many observers during the course of its stay.

John Bull (*Birds of New York State*, 1974) lists six records for New York, all in the southeastern portion of the state. All records pertained to males. None, however, were winter season or feeder reports. More recent New York State records include singles on October 2, 1976, April 15, 1977, and May 11, 1978 (Joseph DiCostanzo, Richard Harrison, and John Biderman, "Photographs of New York State Rarities — Townsend's Warbler," *The Kingbird*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1978). Earl Poole (*Pennsylvania Birds*, 1964) cites one Pennsylvania record, a bird collected in Chester County, near Philadelphia, in the spring of 1868.

—James K. Meritt, 809 Saratoga Terrace, Turnersville, N.J. 08012.

White Ibis in Lehigh County: On 24 July 1977 I observed an immature White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) at Leaser Lake, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. The bird was observed flying over the lake, and all field marks were clearly seen. The bird circled twice, flew off to the east and disappeared.

Trainer and Miller (*A Checklist of Birds of Lehigh County, Pa.*, Allentown, Lehigh Valley Bird Club, 1956 do not include the species in their list of Lehigh County birds, and I could find no other records.) This is apparently the first record of the White Ibis in Lehigh County.

There are at least six previous sightings of this southern species in Pennsylvania since 1950. This record maintains the bird's status as a casual visitor.

—Richard E. Wiltraut, 54 Pershing Blvd., Whitehall, Pa. 18052

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher Breeding in Lehigh County: On 5 July 1977 I observed two adult Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (*Poliophtila caerulea*) building a nest near the top of a tall oak at Leaser Lake, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Later that day I observed two other adult Blue-gray Gnatcatchers feeding young in a nest near the top of another oak. The two nests were approximately a half mile apart.

I have seen this species only once before in Lehigh County during the breeding season (5 July 1975, Leaser Lake) and I could find no other actual nesting records. (Trainer and Miller (*A Checklist of Birds of Lehigh County, Pa.*, Allentown, Lehigh Valley Bird Club, 1956:5) record the species as an irregularly rare migrant in April.) These two nest records document that Blue-gray Gnatcatchers now breed in Lehigh County.

—Richard E. Wiltraut, 54 Pershing Blvd., Whitehall, Pa. 18052

An unusual Nesting of the Mourning Dove: While looking for birds in the Old Fort Mifflin grounds on May 10, 1977, I flushed two Mourning Doves off their nest in an old building. These Doves were using metal ducts up on the walls for a nesting area. One nest was on the second floor and the other on the ground floor. I went into the building looking for a Barn Owl. There was no Owl, but many pellets on the floor. This is the first nest of Mourning Doves found in buildings by me.

—John C. Miller, 1220 Prospect Avenue, Prospect Park, PA 19076

Brown Pelican at Cape May: On January 26, 1977, Richard Bell of Cape May Point, New Jersey, discovered an immature Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus Occidentalis Carolinensis*) on a small island in Lily Lake, at Cape May Point, Cape May County, New Jersey. He saw the bird on the 27th and again on the 29th. Mr. Bell called upon Mr. Ernest Choate and told him that he had seen a pelican at the lake. Mr. Choate then called me on the 28th and told me of Mr. Bell's sighting. I spent the morning of the 29th at the lake but did not see it. That evening I was told that the bird had been seen late in the afternoon. I surmized that it must be coming in to roost on the island for the night. I then called Alan Brody and Jim Merrit about the bird, and we all met at Lily Lake Sunday morning, January 30th. We did not see the bird that day, and it was not seen alive again.

On March 19th, I received a call from Marion Glaspey of the Wetlands Institute at Stone Harbor, that a man had found a dead pelican in his garden. As he was getting his garden ready for planting, he had found a pelican lying by his fence. Since the man lived a quarter mile from my home in Lower Township, I checked it out for her. I found a partially decomposed immature Brown Pelican. I photographed it and then buried it in my yard. This bird had arrived at the peak of the 1977 big freeze. Lily Lake and all fresh water lakes were frozen; the Delaware Bay was frozen, as well, since we had had 50 days of below freezing temperatures. The pelican was surely out of its element here. How long it had survived cannot be accurately determined; but to have found it at all, after a period of 40 days, is amazing.

—Keith A. Seager, 278 Fishing Creek Rd., Cape May, New Jersey 08204

Albino Red-headed Woodpecker in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: On Sunday, 16 October 1977 at about 1300 h the junior author observed a white woodpecker searching for food on a dead limb of a red oak (*Quercus rubra*) near his home on Peach Lane, Ronks, Pennsylvania. Almost immediately he alerted the senior author. We were able to observe the bird for about 30 minutes. At first it was not apparent what species of woodpecker we were observing. After a few minutes of seeing it in different positions, we decided that it was an immature Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*). The bird had a dirty white head, lighter than a normal immature. The back and breast were completely white and there were alternating black and white spots in the primaries. The upper tail coverts and outer tail feathers had normal coloration. The bill and eyes were black.

The bird was seen mostly in oak (*Quercus* sp.), hickory (*Carya* sp.) and tulip trees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) searching for food on dead branches at height of 10 to 15 m. It was in the company of Downy Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos pubescens*) and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius*), sometimes feeding quite close to one another on the same branch. We made the observations with 7 x 50 and 8 x 40 binoculars. The sky was completely overcast and a light drizzle began while we were watching the bird.

Ross (Cassinia, no. 47, 1963) wrote a report entitled "Albinism Among North American Birds." In this report he listed one pure white specimen, one partially white specimen, and three sight records of almost pure white Red-headed Woodpeckers. He noted that among the woodpeckers albinism occurs most frequently in the Common (Yellow-shafted) Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*).

—Robert M. Schutsky, Ichthyological Associates, Inc., P. O. Box 12, Drumore, PA 17518 and Tom D. Denlinger, Peace Lane, R. D. #2, Ronks, PA 17572.

White Fronted Geese in Eastern Pennsylvania: On the morning of 16 June 1977 two White Fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*) were observed on a pond at Dorney Park near Allentown in Lehigh County. They were observed as part of a regular count of waterfowl being done for the city. The birds were swimming together in the company of numerous Mallards and Canada Geese. Their habit of "tipping" to feed revealed the bright orange legs of the adult birds. Further observation revealed the pinkish-orange bill with a surrounding white patch and the black speckling of the breast.

During the afternoon the birds were observed by Tom Mather and Dr. Carl Oplinger of Muhlenberg College. Mr. Mather did get several photographs of the birds. They were observed regularly until 7 July 1977 after which only sporadic checks were made. They have been seen on several other nearby ponds since including a sighting on 25 October 1977.

The timing and locations (an amusement park and city park ponds) would seem to indicate birds of domestic origin. The Dorney Park Zoorama and the Trexler-Lehigh Game Preserve reported no escapees during the period. Game preserve officials told me that a Pennsylvania State law requires the hind toes of geese and ducks to be clipped if owned by a farmer, etc. Close observation of the birds while "tipping" indicated that this has not been done.

White Fronted Geese sightings in Eastern Pennsylvania have been quite rare in the past. A specimen was taken by Charles Voelker on the Delaware River in 1877 (Poole, Pg. 17, 1964). A. C. Bent (Life Histories of North American Wildfowl, Vol. 2, Pg. 189, 1925) states that the birds are "everywhere rare in the Eastern half of the continent" but does not mention any sightings in Pennsylvania. Frank C. Bellrose (Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America, Pg. 103, 1976) adds that birds seen along the Atlantic Coast are probably of the Greenland race (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) and that they have been seen less than 25 times in the last 100 years. The "Audubon Field Notes" occasionally reports birds seen in Delaware (Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Refuge) and Maryland but not Pennsylvania. In 1977 there were two sightings of White Fronts in Eastern Pennsylvania. One occurred at Greenlane Reservoir in Montgomery County and was seen by Bernie Morris, Frank and Barbara Haas, and Keith Richards from 19 to 22 March 1977. Another bird was seen by Phyllis Hurlock on Icedale Lake in Chester County on 28 April 1977.

Observation alone cannot tell us whether the birds in Allentown are of wild or domestic origin. The times and places of observation would immediately indicate domestic birds to most observers, however, the option of wild birds being present must not be overlooked. Other rather unusual, wild species of waterfowl have been seen on these same ponds in the past including Whistling Swans, Snow Geese, Shovelers and even a European Widgeon. Birds flying overhead are attracted by the abundance and easy accessibility of food from public feeding. When talking of strays, White Fronted Geese seen in this area have certainly strayed farther from their normal range than a Snow Goose or a Whistling Swan, therefore their origin is much more suspect. However, the regular sightings in surrounding states and the relative increase in sightings in Eastern Pennsylvania in the past year, as compared to previous times, indicates that wild birds do occur in the area regularly. The fact that the two birds in Allentown have moved from pond to pond during their stay may indicate that they are of wild origin. Domestic birds tend to stay in the same place as evidenced by other waterfowl in the area.

The chances of the birds in Allentown being wild are just as good as the chances that they are of domestic origin. It is impossible to say for sure.

—Terry L. Master, 1860 South Second Street, Allentown, PA 18103 (215) 797-3463