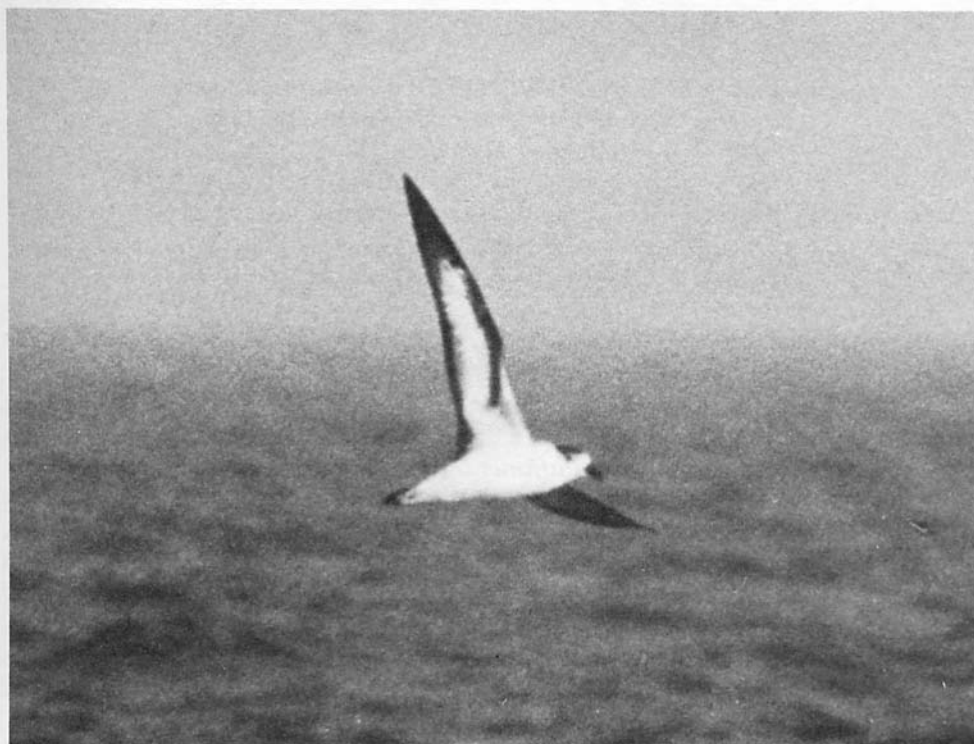


GENERAL NOTES

First Confirmed New Jersey Record of Black-capped Petrel: Aboard the *Miss Barnegat Light*, 86 miles from shore at the edge of the Hudson Canyon at a depth of 90 fathoms in 72°F water temperature, William Hoehne, Wade Wander, and I saw a Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) slice across our chum slick just before sunset on September 16, 1991. Another sighting fifteen minutes later was probably the same individual. The bird was mixed in with quantities of Greater Shearwaters (*Puffinus gravis*) and Cory's Shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea*) as well as over a dozen Pomarine Jaegers (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) that were migrating past the boat. This topped off the day, with over 130 jaegers, 4 of which were immature Long-tailed Jaeger (*S. longicaudus*) and 2 Great Skuas (*Catharacta skua*).

The Black-capped Petrel was obligingly close enough for a quick photograph, making it the first confirmed sighting off the New Jersey coast. At least one previous sighting was made July 25, 1987, at 68 miles out.

— Alan Brady, P.O. Box 103, Wycombe, PA 18980



BLACK-CAPPED PETREL (*Pterodroma hasitata*)
Hudson Canyon, New Jersey, September 16, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady



BAND-RUMPED STORM-PETREL (*Oceanodroma castro*)
Carteret Canyon, New Jersey, September 10, 1990
Photo by Alan Brady

A Band-rumped Storm-Petrel in New Jersey Waters: September 10, 1990. *The Miss Barnegat Light*, out on a tuna trip, anchored up at the edge of Carteret Canyon some 30 miles southwest of Hudson Canyon. This was unfamiliar territory for me; normally the boat fishes on the edge of the Hudson Canyon, where the ocean depth is about 60 to 100 fathoms. At Carteret, which is 90 miles from shore, the depth is 500 fathoms. On this day, the water temperature was 73.1°F.

Another boat was fishing and chumming the same area and, together with our chum slick, we attracted some 50 Wilson's Storm-Petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*) and an occasional Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*). We noticed another storm-petrel gliding along the edge of the slick 50 yards away and going up the other side away from the boat. Several of these individuals were seen at one time, with an estimated total of 5. All birds were on long glides, with very occasional strong, slow wingbeats. Wings were long and pointed. About one-third of the notched tail showed solid white at the base, with no feet trailing behind. The plumage was black, not brownish as a Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). They were slightly larger than the Wilson's with which they loosely associated, and they never fed or paddled on the water surface as the Wilson's were doing continuously.

Several photographs were made confirming them as Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*O. castro*), a species not previously recorded in New Jersey waters.

— Alan Brady, P. O. Box 103, Wycombe, Pennsylvania 18980

Jaeger Show in Hudson Canyon: On September 16, 1991, in Hudson Canyon, N.J., a jaeger display was held from dawn till dusk. In the first morning light 3 Pomarine Jaegers (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) were circling our boat with 2 Skuas (*Catharacta sp.*) following shortly thereafter. This portended a flight of over 130 jaegers, including several Parasitics (*S. parasiticus*), 4 immature barred-morph Long-tailed Jaegers (*S. longicaudus*), and Pomarines in many interesting plumages.

One Pomarine Jaeger (see photo next page) showed pointed central rectrices as a Parasitic Jaeger, but its large size, large head, robust shape, barred undertail coverts, bill size and color, and the comparison of its photograph with other Pomarines show that the shape of the central tail feathers is not always a definitive identification mark.

— Alan Brady, P.O. Box 103, Wycombe, PA 18980



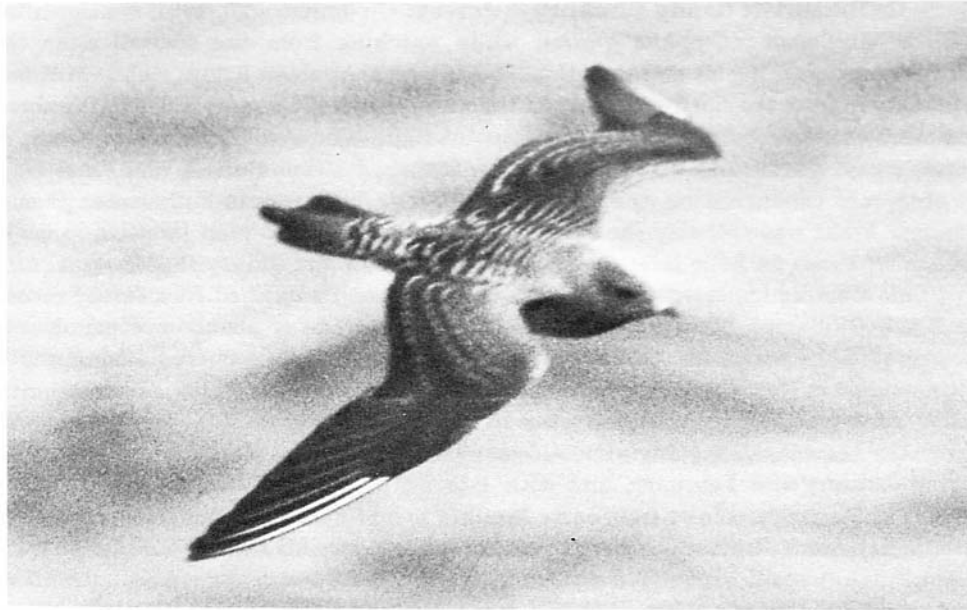
SIX POMARINE JAEGERS (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)
Hudson Canyon, New Jersey, September 16, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady



POMARINE JAEGER (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)
Hudson Canyon, New Jersey, September 16, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady



PARASITIC JAEGER (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)
Hudson Canyon, New Jersey, September 16, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady



LONG-TAILED JAEGER (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)
Hudson Canyon, New Jersey, September 16, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady

Aggressive Behavior Toward Razorbill by Great Black-backed Gull: On January 5, 1992, I joined Alan Brady and members of the Urner Ornithological Club at a location along the Atlantic Ocean about one-half mile north of Sea Girt, New Jersey. One gentleman reported sighting an alcid, which I subsequently picked up in the field of view of my telescope. The bird was about 300 meters offshore and was easily identified with the 40X magnification of my Questar as a Razorbill.

I watched the bird for about three minutes; then I yielded the use of the scope to my nine-year-old daughter. After she had seen the bird, I resumed the observation. When I relocated the bird, it was being harassed by a Great Black-backed Gull. The Razorbill was floating on the water with the gull in flight immediately above it. The gull appeared to be pecking at the head of the Razorbill. The Razorbill had its neck extended and its bill was raised upward. Its wings were flailing in the water. The gull appeared to lower itself on to the Razorbill. At this point, I lost sight of the Razorbill and the gull settled on the water. The encounter that I observed between the alcid and the gull was already in progress when I located them in the scope and lasted for about five seconds. The birders present continued to search for the Razorbill, but it was not seen again.

In a later conversation, Alan Brady related to me that he has watched from offshore fishing boats as gulls have waited for Razorbills to surface. When they have surfaced, the gulls have often tried to harass the alcids in order to gain the food they have secured. Perhaps this was what was occurring in this particular instance.

— Richard C. Bell, 4100 Thistlewood Road, Hatboro, PA 19040

Black Guillemot at Sandy Hook, New Jersey: On January 20, 1991, we identified a Black Guillemot, (*Cepphus grylle*), while watching from the seawall near the southernmost parking lot at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. At about 9:00 a.m., the bird was seen to fly in from the northeast, rest on the water about 150 meters offshore for about five minutes, then fly to the southeast out of sight. The initial fly-by was about 75 meters away. The bird was well seen by Clay Sutton, Patricia Sutton, and Vince Elia; all observers concurred on the identification. The bird was in full winter (basic) plumage. What was probably the same bird was seen at Manasquan Inlet (21 miles to the south) about an hour later, by both Laurie Larson and Sidney Lipschutz, *et al.*

This sighting apparently constitutes the thirteenth published New Jersey record for Black Guillemot. They have occurred on the average of about once per decade according to the literature. Of interest is that this individual occurred during a true "alcid winter" in New Jersey and throughout the middle-Atlantic states. All six Atlantic alcids were reported from New Jersey in the biggest flight since the 1930s, with Razorbills (*Alca torda*), being almost "common" (seen daily) along the Jersey Coast during January and February, and with 1 or 2 Thick-billed Murres (*Uria lomvia*), present at Manasquan Inlet from early January to mid-February. Published records of New Jersey Black Guillemots follow.

PUBLISHED NEW JERSEY BLACK GUILLEMOT RECORDS

DATE	LOCATION	OBSERVER	SOURCE
"prior to 1869" (2)	Egg Harbor	Krider	Stone, 1937
"one picked up dead"	Barnegat Region	Charles Urner	Stone, 1937
Dec. 1898	Delaware River	Charles Voelker	Stone, 1937
Dec. 10, 1929	Cold Spring Jetty	Eliot Underdown	Stone, 1937
Dec. 24, 1933 (2)	Cold Spring Jetty	William Yoder	Stone, 1937
Dec. 27, 1936	Newark Bay	Charles Urner	Fables, 1955
Nov. 26, 1939	Boonton Reservoir	J.M. Cadbury	
		B.C. Hiatt	Fables, 1955
Dec. 27, 1958	Spring Lake (Beach)	Don Kunkle, et al.	Fables, 1959
Feb. 13, 1965	Barnegat Light	Harry Goldstein	
		E. Greaves	<i>Cassinia</i> , 1965-66
Oct. 22, 1974	1½ miles off Thompson's Beach, Delaware Bay	Don Kunkle	<i>Urner Field Observer</i> , 1976
Apr. 23, 1977	Manasquan Inlet	Timothy Koebel	Leck, 1984
Dec. 27, 1986	Manasquan Inlet	J. Springer	
		N. Eickmen	<i>Am. Birds</i> , 1987

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Cassinia. 1967. Volume 49, page 38.
Fables Jr., David. 1955. *Annotated List of New Jersey Birds*. Urner Ornithological Club.
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Leck, Charles F. 1984. *The Status and Distribution of New Jersey's Birds*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
Stone, Witmer. 1937. *Bird Studies at Old Cape May*. Dover Publications, Inc. New York, New York.
Urner Field Observer. 1976. Volume 16, Number 1, page 25. Urner Ornithological Club.
— Clay Sutton, 129 Buck Avenue, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
— Patricia Sutton, 129 Buck Avenue, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210

A Philadelphia Robin Roost: On September 18, 1991, I became suddenly aware of an unusual phenomenon on the 600 block of Fountain Street in Roxborough. I met a neighbor who was sweeping her pavement of dead leaves and bitterly complaining about all the bird guano that befouled the concrete. She complained about the many birds that gathered in her tree every night, but didn't know what they were. I glanced out into Fountain Street and about 20 feet apart were 2 dead American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*), badly crushed by traffic. I asked Mrs. C. how long this had been going on and she said about two weeks. This would bring it back at least to September 4, 1991.

I decided to make some observations that evening and was impressed by the number of robins that poured into not only that tree, a polled American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), but also to several other trees in the vicinity of Fountain and Lawnton streets. The robins shared their roosts with smaller numbers of Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). On the evening of September 20, I watched closely two polled elms (branches truncated allowing masses of suckers to sprout out and cause very thick foliage). These were the trees most favored by the robins and grackles. Between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. (DST), large numbers of robins were coming to these trees, first by twos and threes, and then by the hundreds. They came from the northeast and from the west. The largest numbers came from the west and their flight was erratic, not orderly, and as they approached, the air was filled with birds, reminding me of the bats at Carlsbad Caverns.

The trees already held many croaking grackles well hidden in the dense foliage. The robins also were noisy and made many sounds from a soft *tut-tut-tut* to a scream-like *Seech, each-each-each* that A. C. Bent thought indicated unrest. The grackles quieted down first and by the time it was dark, all were quiet. To walk under the trees later at night you would not think any birds were there, save for the steady patter of their droppings. By October 10, the grackles were gone and by October 12, the robins' numbers were down sharply. At the height of the roosting period (September 18 to October 10) I estimated that the extended roost, embracing about eight trees, contained from 2500 to 3000 robins. By October 24, fewer than a dozen robins appeared in the main roost trees and I considered the roost was virtually finished.

While the two species were sharing the roost it was interesting to note that the grackles were the first to arrive and the last to leave in the morning. At the first glimmer of light in the east, long before sunrise, the robins started to leave the roost.

Roosts of both robins and grackles are well-documented and many were much larger than this one. In *Cassinia* (1906:26-29) Samuel C. Palmer gave a graphic account of "The Concordville Robin and Grackle Roost" and his observations are amazingly similar to mine. Earlier (*Cassinia* 1905:33-39) "A Media Grackle Roost" and "The Overbrook Grackle Roost" were reported on by Sanford Omensetter and C. J. Peck respectively. While no mention of robins was made for the Media roost, the Overbrook Roost definitely contained robins, although the grackles outnumbered them nearly one hundred to one.

— Frederick A. Ulmer Jr., 623 Fountain Street, Philadelphia, PA 19128

Major Offshore Nocturnal Migration of Blackpoll Warblers, Herons, and Shorebirds: At 2:45 a.m., October 15, 1990, on a clear night, over 70 miles east of Barnegat Light, N.J., the *Miss Barnegat Light* on a tuna fishing trip, crossed paths with a major migration of Blackpoll Warblers (*Dendroica striata*), herons, and shorebirds. The birds appeared above, beside, and below the upper deck; some flying only a few feet from the water, giving the appearance of great quantities of leaves blowing before the wind.

The Blackpolls were identified not only in flight by the ship's running lights, but by four individual birds that briefly rested aboard. Green-backed Herons (*Butorides striatus*) were calling incessantly out in the darkness as if trying to keep in touch with the group. A sight count of 35 of them was made during the entire flight as they entered into the ring of light.

Other larger herons were observed crisscrossing about 20 feet overhead. There were several white herons, Snowy Egret size, as well as other, darker herons. Shorebirds made up a good portion of the flight, with Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) and Lesser Yellowlegs (*T. flavipes*) in groups of 10 to fifteen individuals seen and heard above the boat. Long-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) could be recognized by their "keek" calls as they hovered above with flocks of smaller, unidentified sandpipers.

Blackpolls continued to stream past the boat, flying with several short wing-flaps, then a short glide as they headed into the wind or tacked to one side or the other. They flew with little apparent effort, using the wind to hold them aloft. All appeared strong, vigorous, and purposeful, not lost or exhausted. The wind direction was west-southwest, swinging around to the west after sun-up.

The boat anchored at about 3:50 a.m. at the northwest corner of Hudson Canyon, 72°29' longitude, 39°31' latitude, in 60 fathoms. The air temperature was 64°F, water temperature was 69.8°F.

The bird flight continued until 4:45 a.m., during which time one cuckoo (*Coccyzus* sp.) was seen flying alongside the boat at eye level.

The flight suddenly stopped. In less than a minute it trickled from a full flight to no birds at all. The approximate number of individuals was estimated at 100 birds per minute for two hours, making this a flight of at least 10,000 birds, 90 percent of which

were Blackpoll Warblers. Three Blackpolls died after flying into the superstructure and were saved for later examination.

Weather maps show a cold front advancing off the New England coast on Sunday, October 14. There had been several weeks of southerly winds preceding this date, holding back migrants on the East Coast. After October 15, there were decided changes in migration patterns, with good passerine flights, but no Blackpolls.

Incidental to the flight during these morning hours was a Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) feeding alongside the boat, and 3 Cory's Shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea*) banking past in the glow of the lights.

Several other species seen after sunrise have no bearing on the flight, but are of interest. A Clay-colored Sparrow (*Spizella pallida*) flew aboard 78 miles from shore, and a Wilson's Storm-Petrel was captured aboard after dark on the night of October 15. Sixty-five Manx Shearwaters (*Puffinus puffinus*) were observed during daylight hours.

The massive migration was a fortunate observation that I had never previously witnessed. Visibility was limited to about 25 feet in all directions around the boat. The actual depth and width of the mass of birds would only be speculative.

After checking with observers along the coast, we find no Blackpoll landfall from New Jersey to Florida, nor was any noted in Bermuda. Notes from John Miller (Island Beach, New Jersey), P. William Smith (Florida), and David Wingate (Bermuda) were appreciated. Mark Robbins, of the Academy of Natural Sciences, examined the 3 Blackpoll specimens, all of which had high fat content: 1 adult female at 15 grams; 1 adult female at 18.5 grams; and 1 immature male at 20 grams.

— Alan Brady, P.O. Box 103, Wycombe, PA 19980

Wintering Blue Grosbeak in Cumberland County, New Jersey: During the 42d annual Cumberland County, New Jersey Christmas Bird Count, held January 1, 1992, we located and photographed a female Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) near Dragston in Downe Township, Cumberland County. The bird was found at approximately 2:30 p.m. in a weedy field and watched for almost an hour. The bird was found by Clay Sutton and Tony Ficcaglia, and later viewed by Patricia Sutton, Leslie Ficcaglia, and Linda Ganassi. It could not be relocated three days later.

The bird was initially identified as the (slightly) more expected Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) due to the fact that the flank feathers obscured the chestnut wing bar during most of the time the bird was viewed. The large conical bill and buffy coloration were clearly noted. The bird was quite tame and actively fed on weed seeds while being observed.

As neotropical migrants, few Blue Grosbeaks remain in the United States in winter. Only on Gulf Coast Christmas Counts are they regularly recorded, and only in small numbers. While an extensive literature search was not conducted, to our understanding, this is the first time a Blue Grosbeak has been tallied on a New Jersey CBC. The sighting came during a mild winter, following a record mild fall season, and at a time when numerous lingering species were found on New Jersey CBCs. We thank Richard Crossley for reviewing and identifying the numerous photographs we took of this wintering Blue Grosbeak.

— Clay Sutton, 129 Buck Avenue, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
— Patricia Sutton, 129 Buck Avenue, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210



BLUE GROSBEAK (*Guiraca caerulea*)
Near Dragston, New Jersey, January 1, 1992
Photo by Alan Brady

Red Crossbills in Cumberland County, New Jersey: During April and May of 1991, up to 10 Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) were seen and heard flying over pine-oak forest in Peaslee Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Bevan WMA. At both locations they seemed to be wandering widely, often very high, and were not observed every day, despite searching. All observations except one were between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m.. The only afternoon sighting was of 3 birds, 1 drinking from a puddle in a dirt road; this bird appeared to be an immature male changing into adult plumage. None of the others were aged. The two locations where observations were made are about 11 miles apart in Maurice River Township (Peaslee) and Downe Township (Bevan), Cumberland County.

The sightings are detailed as follows. In Peaslee WMA, on April 17, a flock of 10 Red Crossbills was seen flying over, followed by a single individual about one-half hour later. On April 18, 4 were seen and heard flying over, and a flock of unknown size was also heard overhead on two occasions. In addition, 1 or 2 individuals were heard in flight. On April 19, none were heard, despite extensive coverage of the area. On May 13, an immature male (mentioned above) drinking from a puddle flew to a nearby treetop, where 2 others were perched.

In Bevan WMA, on Ackley Road (Route 718), one mile west of Route 555, 1 Red Crossbill was heard and seen on May 7. On May 8, none were seen, but on May 9, 3 were seen and heard flying over, and about one hour later several more were heard flying over. Red Crossbills were reportedly still in this area in early June, according to personnel from the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife.

Additional sightings by other observers are also noteworthy. On April 11, 1991, (six days before the initial sightings above) Robert Barber picked up (and retained as a specimen) a road-killed immature male Red Crossbill (going into first breeding plumage) on the Port Elizabeth-Tuckahoe Road (Route 548, Weatherby Road), Cape May County, about 1 mile east of the Cumberland County line, which is 1 mile east of the southern boundary of Peaslee WMA. On July 30, 1990, Jim Dowdell both heard and watched a Red Crossbill about 1 mile farther east on Weatherby Road, a sighting which establishes the presence of Red Crossbills in the area over eight months prior to the series of 1991 sightings.

While Red Crossbills are sometimes known to linger and breed far south of their normal range after winter invasion years, the above sightings are not linked to any known winter invasions (the last one being in 1981-1982). While nesting has been confirmed at a few locations in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, in Ocean and Burlington counties (Leck, 1984), this is the first time spring and/or summering birds have been reported from Cumberland County. However, both Bevan WMA and particularly Peaslee WMA contain vast acreage of classic Pine Barren pitch pine/oak forest, and breeding might well be possible in these areas and should be looked for in the future.

These sightings occurred while censusing passerines for the Endangered and Nongame Species Project of the New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife. I thank Clay Sutton for encouraging this article and for his review of the manuscript.

References:

Leck, Charles F. 1984. *The Status and Distribution of New Jersey's Birds*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

— Fred Mears, 1737 Star Avenue, Villas, NJ 08251



NORTHERN HAWK OWL (*Surnia ulula*)
Near Lookout, Pennsylvania, March 1, 1991
Photo by Alan Brady