

coming on prematurely because of the storm, and we knew that we should be leaving soon. Assuming that neither we nor anybody else might ever have a chance to see this bird again, we decided to try for a real close-up picture, even if we should frighten the bird away. My son approached to within a few feet before the bird flew a short distance into the wind, and then returned as Carl retreated. For the next half hour, we watched it fly and return, fly and return, sometimes alighting on an ice floe and floating by on the swiftly receding tide, sometimes flying without fear so close to the car that we could almost have touched it. Then the time came when we knew that we must go. As we left, the gull flew back to the ramp where we had first seen it. It was still there when we lost sight of the ramp. We stopped to see a Short-eared Owl in a nearby bush, then headed for home in Rochester, New Hampshire.

I thought of stopping in Portsmouth to ask Leon and Betty Phinney if an Ivory Gull had been reported, but it was dark, cold and stormy, and, as we had missed out noon meal, we were anxious to get home.

The next day, I went up to the Skowhegan, Maine area, and then back to Kittery that evening. Sometime after nine o'clock that Tuesday night, more than a day after we had seen the bird, I called Leon Phinney from a friend's home in Kittery to ask if an Ivory Gull had been reported. He assured me that it had, and I thought it was just "old stuff" to the bird-watching world. Imagine my surprise when I got home to find out that my son had reported it, and that we really were the first to see and identify it!

We went back to see the bird the day before Christmas without any luck, and we assumed it had become refreshed and homesick and had left; but we were very pleased to see it again the next Sunday along with dozens of fine bird-watching people. Meeting them is a joy comparable to seeing the Ivory Gull, and very likely more enduring.

A RARE BIRD INDEED!

A couple of years ago, I remember being fooled on a Christmas Count by a decoy that had gotten loose. Perhaps that is forgivable, but if I'm ever again in the vicinity of Vancouver International Airport, I'll think twice before adding a Peregrine Falcon to my list.

Large congregations of Dunlin gather there during migration, causing a potential threat to aircraft. Though common "scare" tactics failed to disperse the birds, trained Peregrines were effective but expensive.

Yet, most birds are affected by the shape of a predator. Would a falcon-shaped model aircraft work? Robert Randall (right in picture) built such a radio-controlled device. According to Science Dimension Vol. 7, No. 6, "Dunlins, ducks, gulls and geese treated the falcon-shaped model as a potential threat and were effectively dispersed from the area. It still has to be determined if, through repeated exposure to the model, the birds will learn that it is different from a live falcon and not a threat to them."

L. J. Robinson

