

**Rare and Uncommon Birds at Branchport, N. Y.—**

**Hesperiphona v. vespertina.** EVENING GROSBEEK.—Eight Evening Grosbeaks were in a locust tree feeding on the seeds, in front of my house, the morning of March 16, 1920, and were seen again farther down the street the same day. Ten Evening Grosbeaks were seen two miles north of Branchport March 17, and four more April 16. On November 17, 1921, after a rainy night, thermometer 46° F, four Evening Grosbeaks were feeding on the seeds of some maples in the street. There were three males and one female and they were feeding quietly for about one-half hour then, with a sudden impulse all flew off southwest.

**Sterna caspia.** CASPIAN TERN.—There is a long narrow sand bar in lake Keuka that extends nearly across the harbor at Branchport. In the spring when the water is high it is broken into several long narrow islands with very shallow water between them. And here the Caspian and Common Terns and Bonaparte's, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls congregate to rest and sleep. My records for Caspian Terns not before reported are: April 23, 1920, five seen; April 28, one seen; May 1, four seen; May 3, one seen; May 9 one seen, the last for 1920. April 23 1921, was cloudy in the morning, thermometer 56° F., one Caspian Tern was seen, April 25 there were fourteen Caspians, the largest number that I ever saw together. May 14 at 7 P. M. I heard the peculiar rasping cry of a Caspian Tern and saw it circling around over the village. It seemed to be excited and flew round and round several times then started off northwestward, then I saw four more much higher up and going in the same direction and the first one joined them as they passed on. The Caspian Tern has been a regular spring visitant at Branchport since 1917.

**Sterna hirundo** COMMON TERN.—The Common Tern has appeared at Branchport regularly every spring since 1917. The records not before reported are, three seen May 10 and three seen May 20 1920. In 1921, a flock of twenty Common Terns came on the lake May 15, there were six or eight May 19, four May 22 and last, a single one was seen May 27.

**Marila collaris.** RING-NECKED DUCK.—May 3, 1900, a flock of Ring-necked Ducks were on the lake at Branchport for several hours and Nov. 11 1921, I saw a single Ring-necked Duck in the harbor.

**Micropalama himantopus.** STILT SANDPIPER.—Sept. 10, 1902, I noted a Stilt Sandpiper feeding with two Yellowlegs on the muddy shore. It stayed on all day and all day the 11th.

**Passerherbulus nelsoni nelsoni.** NELSON'S SPARROW.—Sept. 15, 1921, I flushed a small sparrow from the thick marsh grass and it lit in the cat-tails about two rods ahead. I had a good look at it with eight power binoculars and did not hesitate to name it a Nelson's Sparrow. I had gone on but a short distance when a second one flew up from the grass and lit in the cat-tails giving me a good chance to study it. Oct. 7 and again the 8th I saw a Nelson's Sparrow in this same place. These are my only records of Nelson's Sparrow for Branchport, though I have one spring

and two fall records of the Acadian Sparrow. (The Auk, Vol. XXXVII, p. 307.)

**Phalaropus fulicarius.** RED PHALAROPE.—Oct. 12, 1921, 9.30 A. M. I saw a Red Phalarope with a flock of Pectoral Sandpipers. It was energetic and quick in its movements and soon left the Pectorals behind, taking short runs, wading out in the shallow water and swimming the muskrat runways all the time picking up food. Three hours later it was gone and I did not see it again.

**Xema sabini.** SABINE'S GULL.—A Sabine's Gull shot on lake Keuka at Branchport, Oct. 29 1921. It was an immature bird and the only one seen. There seems to be only one other record of Sabine's Gull in western New York, that of Dr. E. H. Eaton's specimen which was taken on the Montezuma Marshes about the year 1887 (Birds of New York, Eaton, Vol. I p. 137).—VERDI BURTCH, *Branchport, N. Y.*

**A Strange Migration.**—This locality is in eastern Iowa and about 65 miles north of the Missouri line. The weather during the early part of January 1922, had been what one might call "fine winter weather." The temperature had been oscillating between zero and 32° above F. From January 12 to 18 there had been no snow at all and the ground was bare. On the 18th at 3:00 P. M. a very fine snow began to fall. By 9:00 P. M. the ground was covered with about two inches. There was not a breath of air moving. The night was perfectly still, the temperature was 18° F. above and the fine snow flakes continued to descend lazily to the earth.

At 9:00 P. M. small voices began to be heard in the distance towards the northwest. Presently they were overhead and in every direction. Judging by the volume and quality of the sound, the travelers must have been a large concourse of small birds. They were moving in a southeasterly direction. For one and one-half hours I heard their voices, many of them. I could hear them as they were approaching, could hear them overhead and for a considerable distance after they were past. The flight of birds was continuous though many more could be heard at some times than at others. Several thousand birds, at least, must have passed this locality during that time. All these birds seemed to belong to one species. Their note is somewhat like that of the Bluebird but higher in pitch and varied occasionally by a little short trill. I have heard these same voices before in this locality but always in the air, at night, and during migration time in spring or fall but never before, in the middle of winter!

At 10:30 the wind began to moan and sigh in the tree tops and the flight of the birds ceased. Gradually the northwest wind became more boisterous and the temperature fell to 5° F. below zero during the night. Next day was fair and cold.

This peculiar and interesting phenomenon at once raises several important questions. What species of birds were these? Where did they