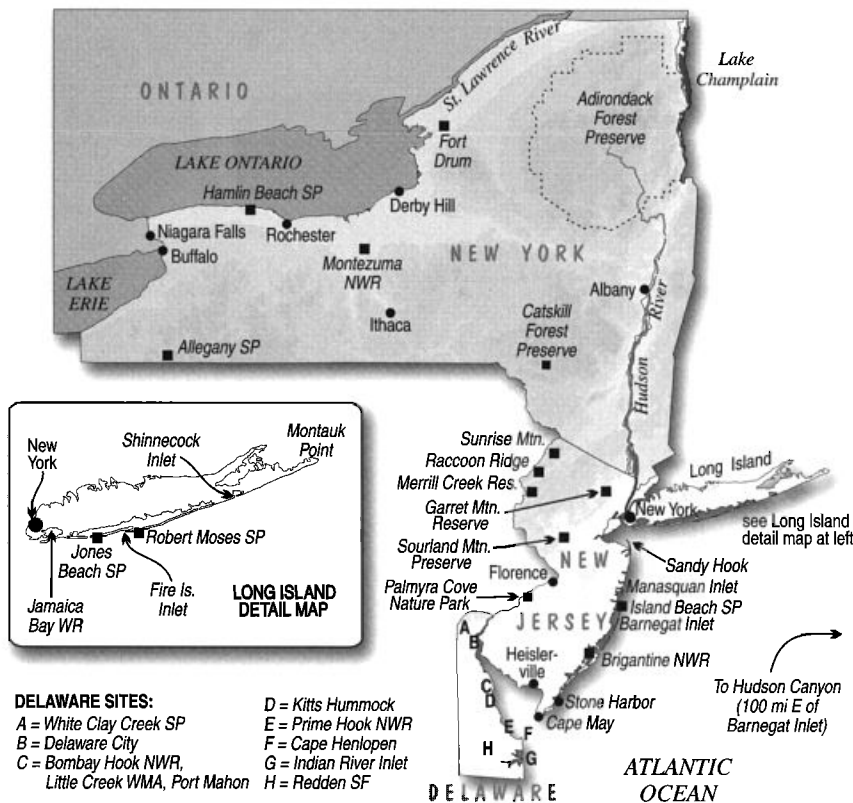


Hudson-Delaware



A wreck of tropical terns and tubenoses in upstate New York, the product of Hurricane Isabel in September, a hybrid *Tyrannus* flycatcher new to science, and an enormous migration of passerines noted across much of the Eastern Seaboard 8–9 November: it was an exciting fall season in Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. Through the period, temperatures were seasonable and precipitation above average. Fewer than usual mudflats were exposed during the fall shorebird migration, especially in Delaware, where shorebird numbers and diversity were down compared to recent years. The hurricane's passage excepted (see the Special Report in this issue), weather conditions for the passerine migration appeared to be favorable, as the monitoring of nocturnal migration suggested. In addition to hurricane highlights came upstate New York's first White-faced Ibis, a Magnificent Frigatebird at Long Island, a Pacific Golden-Plover in New York, and New Jersey's second Allen's Hummingbird. Of continuing interest and concern is the rapid decline of Evening Grosbeak in the East.

Abbreviations: Avalon Seawatch (Avalon, Cape May, NJ); Bombay Hook (Bombay Hook N. W. R., Kent, DE); Brigantine (Brigantine Unit, Forsythe N. W. R., Atlantic, NJ); Cape May (all locations s. of the Canal, Cape May, NJ); Hamlin Beach (Hamlin Beach S.P., Monroe, NY); Jones Beach (Jones Beach S.P., Long I.); Montezuma (Montezuma N.W.R., Cayuga, NY); Niagara R. (Niagara R. corridor between Buffalo, Erie, and Fort Niagara Beach, Niagara, NY).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A staggering 44,309 Red-throated Loons were counted at the Avalon Seawatch (AW). For the 4th consecutive year, Eared Grebes were present at the Batavia W.T.P., *Genesee*, NY through most of the period, with up to 3 observed 15 Nov (GC, DS, m. ob.). Tubenose highlights not related to hurricanes included a White-faced Storm-Petrel (ph. Phil Jeffrey), New York's 7th, plus an Audubon's Shearwater at Hudson Canyon 17 Aug (Paul Guris et al.) and 2 Leach's Storm-Petrels and an Audubon's Shearwater off Barnegat, *Ocean*, NJ 8 Sep (AH). A Delaware pelagic trip 21 Sep tallied 16 Cory's, 26 Audubon's, and 4 Greater Shearwaters (AG); no obvious connection to the hurricane's passage could be made for these birds, though the count of Audubon's was high for the state.

A Brown Pelican at DeRuyter Res., *Oneida* 19 Sep could have been connected to *Isabel* (fide D. Crumb), but a few have been found wandering in upstate in fall recently (2002) and in e. Canada in sum-

Steve Kelling

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, New York 14850
(stk2@cornell.edu)

Joseph C. Burgiel

331 Alpine Court
Stanhope, New Jersey 07874
(burgiel@alum.mit.edu)

David A. Cutler

1003 Livezey Lane
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119
(david@dcipaper.com)

Robert O. Paxton

460 Riverside Drive, Apt. 72
New York, New York 10027
(rop1@columbia.edu)

Richard R. Veit

Biology Department, CSI-CUNY
2800 Victory Boulevard
Staten Island, New York 10314
(veitrr2003@yahoo.com)

mer 2003, outside the context of tropical cyclones. American White Pelicans made a superb showing on the coast this season: one in Rochester, *Monroe*, NY 7 Sep (MT), 3 at Slaughter Beach, *Kent*, DE 9 Oct (R. Egbert), 3 at Cape May 31 Oct (MO'B), 6 at Turkey Pt., *Cumberland*, NJ 4 Nov (M. & G. Hoffman), 5 at Cape May 8–9 Nov (m. ob.), with 2 at Brigantine the same day and subsequently 2 there 8–9 Nov and 10 there 12 Nov (Judy Cinquina, m. ob.), 10 at Cape Henlopen, *Sussex* 11 Nov (L. Dumont), and finally, 10 at Cape May and 9 at Brigantine 14 Nov (JG), the latter two groups probably the same birds. A female Magnificent Frigatebird soared over the Fire I. Hawkwatch, *Suffolk*, NY 3 Oct (ph. S. D'Amato, J. Gluth, B. Kurtz, K. Thompson). Some 231,485 Double-crested Cormorants and 37,043 Northern Gannets were counted at the Avalon Seawatch through the end of Nov (AW). Outstanding were the Northern Gannets seen on L. Champlain, *Clinton*, NY on 6, 22, & 24 Nov (David Gusakov, Richard Lavallee, DH, m. ob.). Upstate New York's first White-faced Ibis appeared at Montezuma 27 Sep and remained until 6 Oct, affording great views for many observers (Andrew van Norstrum, ph. Meena Haribal, m. ob.). This constitutes one of few, if any, for the ne. part of the continent in the actual autumn; records known to us span Apr—Aug.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

Observations of apparent Richardson's Canada Goose, which breeds in n.-cen. Canada and winters along the Texas coast, continue to increase through the Region, with a maximum count of 14 observed at the Iroquois N.W.R., *Genesee/Orleans*, NY from mid-Oct through early Nov (WD'A). It is not yet clear that most of these birds have been critically distinguished from Lesser Canada Geese (*parvipes*), a similar race with overlapping range. (Although many Richardson's can be safely told from Lessers in the field, there is some overlap between larger Richardson's and smaller Lessers, and such birds are difficult or impossible to distinguish in the field.) Multiple Greater White-fronted Goose reports were tendered, with up to 4 at Cheektowaga, *Erie*, NY 30 Nov (E. Krawczyk). Up to 6 Ross's Geese were found in Delaware, with 4 at Bombay Hook 1 Nov (MB) and 2 at Broadkill Beach, *Sussex* 1 Nov (Ed Sigda). Noteworthy for the Great Lakes was a Harlequin Duck at Golden Hill S.P., *Niagara* 23 Nov (KF). Through the end of Nov, 150,741 Black and 209,911 Surf Scoters

were counted at the Avalon Seawatch (AW).

In general, raptor counts were low, but 3 Swainson's Hawks were counted by Cape May's hawkwatch between 20 Oct and 8 Nov, and the count of 1024 Peregrine Falcons (JG) was above average. Rough-legged Hawks began to arrive in the Region in late Oct, with the first reports occurring across upstate New York 25 Oct (KJM, JM). Most impressive has been the recovery of Bald Eagles throughout the Region, best exempli-



It was another "good" autumn for White-faced Storm-Petrels off the Atlantic states, with this bird off Belmar, New Jersey 17 August 2003 adding to one off Massachusetts and at least three off Virginia. This species is probably an annual visitor to offshore waters in the autumn. Photograph by Phil Jeffrey.



Another star of the 17 August 2003 pelagic trip off New Jersey was this Long-tailed Jaeger, here eating a *Polyphemus* moth. Jaegers often hunt small landbirds well offshore, and pelagic flycatching is also a well-known behavior in the smaller species. Photograph by Phil Jeffrey.

fied by the numbers reported in Delaware, where up to 9 imm. eagles summered at Bombay Hook (*vide* AE).

RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Two Purple Gallinules were in New Jersey: an imm. at Cape May 20 Sep found by a visiting Polish birder (m. ob.), and another at the Flemington Marsh, *Hunterdon* 30 Sep–5 Oct (Frank Sencher, m. ob.). The unusually wet fall led to high water levels at most shorebird stopover locations, but there were still several notable observations. Certainly, the season's shorebird highlight was New York's first record of a Pacific Golden-Plover at Mecox Bay, *Suffolk* 1 Sep (Jim Ash, AB, HM). Late for upstate was an American Golden-Plover 9 Nov at the Batavia W.T.P. (MM). American Avocets during the fall period are becoming more numerous in Delaware, where a record-high count of 730

was made at Bombay Hook 14 Sep (AE), with 94 still there 23 Nov (FR). Always interesting away from the Atlantic coast, a Willet at Times Beach, *Erie*, NY 23 Aug was locally rare (Debbie Sharon), but the Willet found at Buffalo 26 Nov+ was extraordinary in that it overwintered (Peter Yoerg, WW). A Whimbrel along Cayuga L. shores, *Tompkins*, NY 19 Sep (A. Farnsworth, m. ob.) was probably grounded by Isabel. The Long-billed Curlew returned to Stone Harbor,

Cape May, NJ 11 Oct+ (JD, DD, m. ob.), and another was found at Toms River, *Ocean*, NJ 25 Oct (G. Wenzelburger, F Lesser, m. ob.). The 16 Hudsonian Godwits at Pt. Breeze, *Monroe*, NY 21 Sep (DT) was a good count. Up to 50 Marbled Godwits were at Brigantine I., *Atlantic*, NJ 23 Sep–23 Nov (Pete Bacinski, m. ob.) provided by far the largest count in the state! A rare inland Purple Sandpiper on Cayuga L. 17 Oct (Tim Lenz) provided only the 3rd local record in 50 years. Where hundreds of Red Knots could once be found along the Delaware shoreline in fall, only single birds were reported this year (AE), but 1182 were tallied at N. Brigantine Natural Area, *Atlantic*, NJ 9 Aug (Mike Shanahan). Unusually early was a juv. Dunlin at Hamlin Beach, NY 29–31 Aug (ph. M. Davids, m. ob.). The only Curlew Sandpiper of the season was found at Bombay Hook 30 Aug (J. Russell), and the only Sharp-tailed Sandpiper—after the run of 4 last autumn—was a juv. at Johnson's Sod Farm, *Cumberland*, NJ 3–5 Sep (RC, m. ob.), the latter a state 2nd. A Red-necked Phalarope at Middle Saranac L., *Franklin*, NY 17 Sep was unusual for the Adirondacks (Nancy Kohlbecker, JP).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCID

Fall Parasitic Jaeger sightings along L. Ontario were exceptional this year, with 21 counted at Hamlin Beach for the month of Sep alone (WS; some of those pushed shoreward by Isabel, surely). A flight of 17 Parasitics at Derby Hill 15 Oct was the best single-day flight since 1983 (BP)! Coastally, 222 Parasitics were seen at the Avalon Seawatch, with a peak of 27 on 13 Nov (AW). Beaches along L. Champlain, *Essex*, NY were very productive in Aug, with up to 6 Little Gulls (MM, Dana Rohleder, J&RH), 1000+ Bonaparte's Gulls, and a locally extraordinary Black-headed Gull (MM, J&RH). Up to 11 gull species were again tallied along the Niagara R. in Nov: the first report of Little Gull was 26 Oct, with a maximum of only 3 on 29 Nov (WD'A). Bonaparte's Gull num-

SA Discovered by Gary Chapin 9 Nov at Leicester, Livingston, NY, a flycatcher first thought to be an odd Western Kingbird in molt was photographed 22 Nov by Jay McGowan, who posted his digiscoped images (<<http://birds.cornell.edu/crows/KingGen.htm>>) and raised the possibility that the bird might instead be a Couch's Kingbird. Tape playbacks of Couch's Kingbird vocalizations in fact elicited a strong reaction by the bird. But even closer scrutiny of this bird, made possible because of the meticulous photographic record generated by numerous birders, revealed that the tail pattern more closely resembled that of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Kevin McGowan then photographed a series of specimens of yellow kingbirds, along with Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, from the Cornell Vertebrate Collections and made them available for all to view on the Web. The images of the bird in question, along with the specimens, allowed detailed comparisons of feather details and led most to conclude that the bird was a probable hybrid Scissor-tailed Flycatcher x Couch's Kingbird, a combination never previously documented. The bird remained until 2 Dec, allowing many observers to view this fascinating individual.

Had it not been for some creative use of new technologies—as well as diligent analysis of museum specimens—a plausible identification of this bird might never have been made. The cross-continental communication about this apparent hybrid was a modern exemplar of cooperative, thoughtful discussion in amateur ornithology.

What appears to be a Couch's Kingbird x Scissor-tailed Flycatcher hybrid frequented Leicester, Livingston County, New York 9 November through 2 December 2003 (here 22 November). The bird might have remained "under the radar" as a Western Kingbird, had it not been for Jay McGowan's photography and pursuit of a more compelling identification. The unusual graduated tail shape shows especially well in this photograph (see the Pictorial Highlights for a color image). Photograph by Kevin McGowan and Jay McGowan.



bers there grew from 4600 on 15 Nov (SK) to 12,000 by 29 Nov (Bruce DiLabio); singles of Black-headed Gull 30 Nov (Kevin McLaughlin) and California Gull in Nov



This late nighthawk discovered by Jim Dowdell at Metuchen, New Jersey roosted locally 1-4 November 2003 (here 3 November). This bird had more richly colored underparts and perhaps a shorter primary projection than thought typical of Common, and although Lesser Nighthawk was eliminated, Antillean Nighthawk has proved difficult to rule out, owing to extensive variation in Common and limited understanding about fall plumages of Antillean. Photograph by Scott Elowitz.

(WD'A, Jean Iron) were typical. By the end of Nov, the Avalon Seawatch had tallied 20,629 Laughing Gulls, 16,640 Ring-billed Gulls, and 7 Black-legged Kittiwakes (AW). Kittiwakes made an outstanding showing along L. Champlain, with 5 seen from Split Rock Pt., Essex, NY 22 Oct (DH, Ted Murin, m. ob.). The only observations of Franklin's Gull came from Delaware, with singles at Bombay Hook 5 Oct (BP) and 12 Nov (ML) and one at Broadkill Beach, Sussex 12 Oct (FR). In Suffolk, NY, a Sandwich Tern at Shinnecock Inlet 20 Sep (HM) and 3 at Mecox Bay 24 Sep (*fide* TWB) were very likely related to the passage of *Isabel*.

Alcids were few: 3 Razorbills were off of Montauk 29 Nov (Brian Kane, HM), and singles flew by the Avalon Seawatch on 11, 23, & 26 Nov (AW). A Black Guillemot, scarcest of all Atlantic alcids in this Region, spent several hours at Manasquan Inlet, Ocean, NJ 24 Nov (BE).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

The explosive range expansion of Eurasian Collared-Dove in North America appears to be skipping the Region: the only report, of a single, came from Sussex, DE (Shelley Lovelace). A White-winged Dove at Cape May 10-11 Nov (Len Kendall et al.) was also the only one reported. A report of White-throated Swift from the Mt. Peter Hawkwatch, Orange, NY 7 Nov has been submitted to the state records committee (Bill Elrick, Judith Cinquina); we will report the outcome of their review in a later report. Pat Matheny and Katy Duffy banded 73 Northern Saw-whet Owls at Cape May in Oct and Nov. A late nighthawk found by Jim and Doyle Dowdell in Metuchen, Middlesex, NJ 1-3 Nov was not conclusively identified to species.

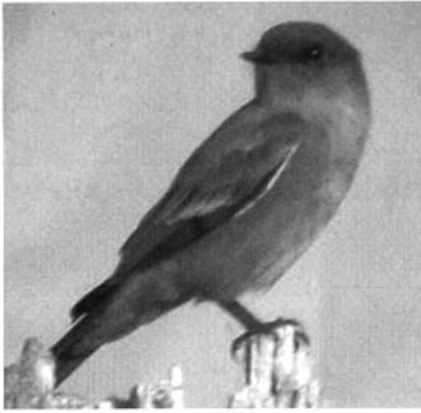
Two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds remained in Cape May through late Nov (PEL et al.). Historically, most Rufous Hummingbirds in the Region have been reported at feeders in late Oct and Nov; part of a more recent late-summer trend was the ad. Rufous Hummingbird at a feeder near Washingtonville, Orange, NY 1 Aug (Rick Horn). Six *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were found in the Region in Nov, among them New Jersey's 2nd Allen's Hummingbird at Cape May 14 Nov+ (Evelyn Lovitz, RC, MO'B, PEL et al., banded by Mary Gustafson). Confirmed Rufous Hummingbirds were at Orient, Suffolk, NY 6 Nov (Ruth Oliva), at Villas, Cape May, NJ 10-22 Nov (J. Dowdell, m. ob.), at Wilmington, New Castle, DE through 23 Nov or so (Jeff Gordon), and at East Hampton, Suffolk, NY 23 Nov (*fide* SS). An unidentified *Selasphorus* was near Delaware City, New Castle 8 Nov (J. Janowski).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Delaware's first record of Say's Phoebe was found at Bombay Hook 1 Nov (C. Tumer, MB, AG), and another was nicely pho-

SA Perhaps also the vehicle for upstate New York's hybrid *Tyrannus* (see S.A. box above), a very strong low-pressure system that moved across the Midwest and East 8-9 Nov brought uncountable migrants to coastal regions of the Northeast and the mid-Atlantic states. This major coastal flight included high counts of mostly typical late-fall migrant passerines such as Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrow. Sparrows were especially diverse in this flight, with 4 Clay-colored, 13 Vespers, and 7 Grasshoppers Sparrows, plus 3 Dickcissels recorded at Cape May 8 Nov (PEL, m. ob.).

But more spectacular still were the great numbers of American Robin, which were estimated at 500,000 birds at Cape May (PEL) and 500,000 on sw. Long I. (Angus Wilson). At Cape May, the "wall of American Robins as seen from the Cape May hawkwatch extended from the lighthouse out over the ocean and from tree line to as high as could be seen—a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle" (JG). About 75,000 robins were noted at Cape May on the next day, 9 Nov (PEL), and several ended up in the United Kingdom afterward, e.g., one in Wales 10 Nov (*Birding World* 16: 462-463). Just before this front—and probably moved into the Region by the southwesterlies that preceded it—single Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, a Red-eyed Vireo, and a Scarlet Tanager appeared at Cape May 7 Nov (*fide* PEL). Other late birds located 8 Nov included a single Cliff Swallow (m. ob.) and Chestnut-sided Warbler (George Myers); these birds could easily also have arrived on the southwesterlies.



Delaware's first record of Say's Phoebe was found at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge on 1 November 2003. The month of November appears to be the peak period for many vagrant flycatchers in the East. Photograph by Ed Sigda.

tographed at Brigantine 1 Oct (ph. P. Sanders, P. Simpson). The only Regional report of Ash-throated Flycatcher came from Cape May 10 Nov (JB, Hank Burk). There were at least 11 Western Kingbird sightings in the Region, all coming from New York and New Jersey, with most reports after mid-Oct.

Northern Shrikes arrived unusually early, with the first report from Iroquois N.W.R. 18 Oct (MM). While not as dramatic a number as last year's 50 Cave Swallows, at least 21 were seen in the Region. Most reports came from the hawkwatch platform at Cape May, including the state's first Oct record on 29 Oct (MO'B); other reports were of one at Jones Beach, Suffolk 9 Nov (Al Wollin, Matt Bayer), one at Culver's Lake, Sussex, NJ 10 Nov (Tommy Sudol), and 5 at Hamlin Beach 24 Nov (DT, BS). Three Brown-headed Nuthatches were seen at the n. limit of range at Big Stone Beach, Kent, DE 11 Oct (AE). The Region's only Varied Thrush was a one-day wonder in Central Park, New York City 24 Nov (B. McPhillips, J. Kamlet).

Early warbler migration was uneventful through the Region, which undoubtedly means it was good for the birds, though especially low counts on the coast of Tennessee Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler continue long-term negative trends for both species, and Blackburnian Warbler was also noted as being very scarce coastally, as at Cape May. Early-season highlights included a Golden-winged Warbler 11 Sep at Hockessin, New Castle, DE (ML), single Black-throated Gray Warblers at Cape May 6 (MO'B et al.) & 16 Sep (Leslie Coley), and 4 Connecticut Warblers banded at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory between 27 Aug and 5 Oct (R. McKinney), part of a very good flight of the species in the Region as a whole. Later in the season, large flights of Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen coastally, with high counts of 59,000 on 3 Oct and 70,000

on 19 Oct at Cape May (MO'B et al.). Orange-crowned Warbler was also noted in higher-than-average numbers on the coast of New Jersey.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

Le Conte's Sparrows made appearances at Sandy Hook, Middlesex, NJ 28 Oct (Stuart Malmid et al.) and at Cape May 15-17 Nov (Joe Palombo, m. ob.) but not in Delaware, where annual in recent years. The Region's dozen Lark Sparrows included totals of 5 at Cape May and 2 at Sandy Hook, plus New Jersey singles at Island Beach S.P. 20 Sep (fide LL) and Lincoln Park 14 Oct; others in the Region were singles 15 Sep at Jones Beach, NY (JG), 27 Sep at Woodland Beach Wildlife Area, Kent, DE (Kurt Schwarz, AG), and 8 Oct at Indian R., Kent, DE (Marshall J. Iliff). Typically rare before mid-Oct, an early Fox Sparrow was at Lakeside Beach S.P., Orleans, NY 28 Sep (S. & T. O'Donnell). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Orient Pt., Suffolk, NY 21 Aug-23 Sep (A. Bisk), with others at Pt. Au Fer, Clinton, NY 18 Sep (Gilles Perreault), Salem, NJ 19 Oct (AE), plus 2 at Port Penn, New Castle, DE 24 Nov (Don Gardner). A Brewer's Blackbird spent 15-16 Nov at Cape May (RC et al.).

Five Pine Grosbeaks were observed at Nun-da-ga-o Ridge, Herkimer, NY 31 Oct (John & Patricia Thaxton), harbingers of a decent winter finch year, at least upstate, though both crossbills were notable for their near-absences. While Purple Finch reports from breeding areas in the Adirondacks were few and far between, their numbers were notable as migrants in Oct and Nov. Especially impressive were the 775 Purple Finches counted over Cape May Pt. 15 Nov (MO'B). Pine Siskins were numerous in the Adirondacks near Keene Valley, Essex, NY in late Aug, with several hundred banded at Wesley Lanyon's station through the month. Coastal areas also had good Nov flights of siskins. The first Common Redpoll report was from Cape May 16 Nov (MO'B), and the first sizeable flock was 75 at Lakeside Beach S.P., Orleans, NY 22 Nov (KF). Evening Grosbeak numbers continue to plummet, with few reports of flocks numbering greater than 5. As recently as four years ago, flocks of 40-60 birds were widely reported.

Undocumented reports: We received reports with-

out details on several other species of potentially great interest in the Region this season. These will be published in Addenda in future columns, should documentation be forthcoming.

Contributors (subregional compilers in bold-face): **Deborah Allen** (Central Park, NYC), **Robert Andrie** (Buffalo), **Maurice Barnhill**, **Tom W. Burke** (New York RBA), **Gary Chapin**, **Richard Crossley**, **Willie D'Anna** (WD'A), **Tom Fiore**, **Andrew Ednie** (Delaware), **Bill Elrick**, **Kurt Fox**, **John Fritz**, **Don Gardner**, **Anthony Gonzon**, **Kevin Griffith** (Genesee Region, NY: 61 Grandview Lane, Rochester, NY 14612), **John Gluth**, **Jason Guerard**, **Mary Gustafson**, **Lee Harper** (St. Lawrence, NY: 58 Old River Road, Massena, NY 13662), **Judy & Roger Heinz**, **Armas Hill**, **David Hoag**, **John Janowski**, **Bob Kurtz**, **Meta Little**, **Laurie Larson** (New Jersey), **Paul E. Lehman** (Cape May), **Shelley Lovelace**, **Kevin McGann**, **Kevin J. McGowan**, **Jay McGowan**, **Hugh McGuinness** (E. Long I., NY: P.O. Box 3005 Southampton, NY 11969), **Matt Medler**, **Mike Morgante** (Niagara frontier: 45 Olney Drive, Amherst, NY 14226), **Michael O'Brien** (MO'B), **Bruce Peterjohn**, **John M. C. Peterson** (Adirondack-Champlain region, NY: 477 County Rte 8, Elizabethtown, NY 12932), **Jack Passie**, **Gerard Phillips**, **Bill Purcell** (Oneida L. Basin, NY: 281 Baum Road, Hastings, NY 13076), **Frank Rohrbacher**, **Sy Schiff** (Long I., NY: 603 Mead Terrace, S. Hempstead, NY 11550), **Bob Spahn** (Genesee Ornithological Society, Rochester), **Dominic Sherony**, **Pat Sutton** (Cape May Bird Observatory), **William Symonds**, **Dave Tetlow**, **Mike Tetlow**, **William Watson**, **Andy Wraithmell**, **Will Yandik** (Hudson-Mohawk region, NY: 269 Schneider Road, Hudson, NY 12534), **Robert P. Yunick**. 🐦



Delaware's first documented record of Lark Sparrow was established on 27 September 2003 at Woodland Beach Wildlife Management Area. The species is annual in small numbers on the coasts of neighboring states, so this bird's confirmation in Delaware was expected. Photograph by Anthony Gonzon.