

FIELD NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

Loons in New Hampshire and Florida: Good News and Bad. On July 16, 1983, 134 New Hampshire lakes and ponds were censused for the presence of Common Loons, and the data reflect another good year for loon productivity. This year's census was the first to be sponsored by the Loon Preservation Committee of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. The census figures which are collected at the society's headquarters in Concord indicate a total population of 256 adult loons, 65 chicks, and one immature on the lakes and ponds surveyed. These data compare very favorably with a count last year that recorded 257 adults and 76 fledging chicks. These two years represent the highest figures on record for loon productivity in that state.

Robert H. Stymeist
Brookline

In view of the mysterious death last spring of two thousand Common Loons wintering along Florida's Gulf Coast [New York Times, June 28, 1983], any evidence that this species is holding its own on the northern breeding grounds is encouraging news. Examination of the Florida loon carcasses by federal and state researchers of several states revealed emaciated birds with empty stomachs. The loons apparently became too weak to dive for fish and starved to death. The bodies then were found floating on the surface or washed up on the beaches. Tissue tests revealed the presence of viruses, bacteria, and flatworms, but none of the parasites found are known to cause sickness in loons or other birds. Toxicological tests so far have not been completed or reported, but the areas where the dead loons were found were relatively free of pollutants. One of the survivors was still present at Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge through May and into June and apparently doing well. This bird presented an unusual sight at that time of year for residents and visiting birders.

Dorothy R. Arvidson
Brookline

Confrontation at Great Meadows. Great Meadows at dawn possesses an unearthly stillness. On September 5, the quiet was shattered by guttural, strident squawks and croaks suggesting a battle to the death. At the end of the dike in the tall grasses on the right, a Great Blue Heron flailed furiously at a partially hidden American Bittern. The bittern, refusing to move, stubbornly fought back. The heron attacked with increasing vigor and shortly succeeded in driving off the bittern who flapped across the dike to the grasses on the far side. The heron thereupon possessed itself of the bittern's prized fishing spot.

Barbara Phillips
Watertown



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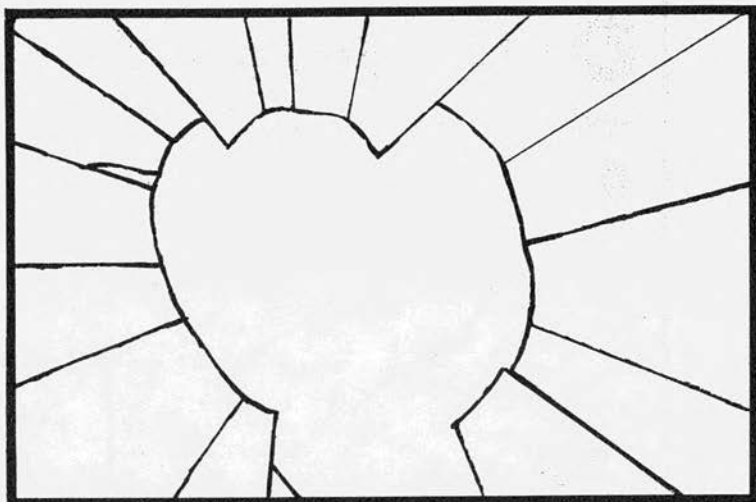
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FIELD NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE



Signature of A Cooper's Hawk. On October 11, 1983, I was to join my parents for breakfast at their home in East Orleans, At 7:30 that morning, my mother heard what she thought was my car door slamming. She came to the back door to greet me, but I had not yet arrived. Instead, she discovered a very different visitor - an immature Cooper's Hawk, flying around inside the screened porch.

Pictured above is a drawing of the window pane through which the hawk came crashing. The window (12 x 18 inches) was at waist height, its position second from the bottom in a series of four such panes that fill in the porch door. The hawk came through the pane with such force that pieces of glass were thrown about fifteen feet to the window sill on the opposite side of the porch. This sill is nearly as high as the pane from which those chips of glass had come.

I'm happy to report that the hawk was uninjured. My parents had terrific views of the crow-sized dynamo before it discovered that my father had opened the ill-fated door. When the bird did see its way to freedom, it wasted no time but flew straight through the doorway and out of sight "like a bullet." When I arrived, my folks were cleaning up the glass. I'd missed the incident but not the excitement it had generated.

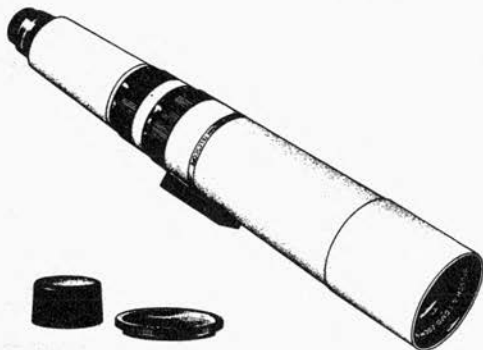
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Upcoming
Screech Owl
Survey

The Field Studies Committee of BOEM announces yet another Screech Owl Survey - the fourth! The project period begins December 2 and ends December 12, 1983. With a little luck one can see over ten Screech Owls in one night and at the same time contribute valuable data to this study. For a description of the project and previous results, see BOEM 10 (5): October 1982. For data forms and instructions or for more information, contact Oliver Komar, 61 Wade Street, Newton, MA 02161, telephone: 332-5509.

FORBUSH BIRD CLUB - WORCESTER SCIENCE CENTER

1984 ANNUAL BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The deadline for entries is March 6, 1984. For an entry form or more information, write or call the Worcester Science Center, 222 Harrington Way, Worcester, MA 01604, telephone (617) 791-9221.

Award ribbons and cash prizes are offered in both professional and amateur categories. Photographs will be judged by a combination of professionals in the fields of ornithology and photography and will be on display at the Worcester Science Center for up to ninety days after March 15, 1984.

This contest is being supported by the Brookline Bird Club and Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts.
