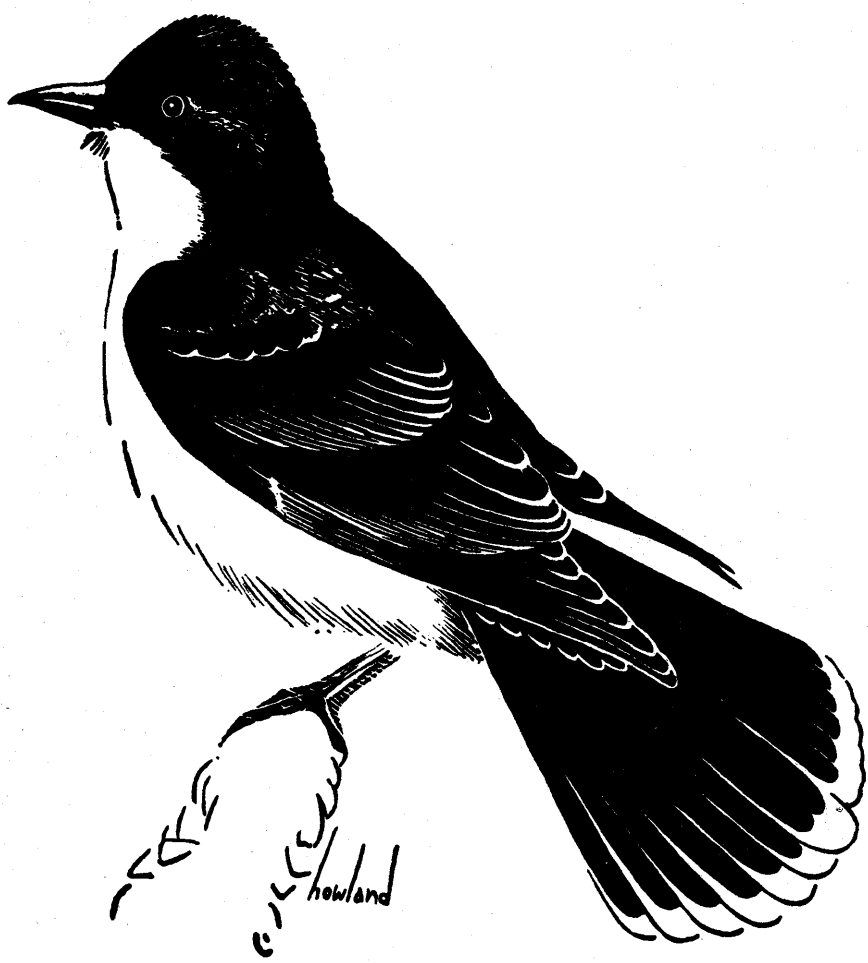


The KINGBIRD



VOL. XXVII, NO. 2

SPRING • 1977

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.

THE KINGBIRD, published four times a year, is a publication of The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., which has been organized to further the study of bird life and to disseminate knowledge thereof, to educate the public in the need of conserving natural resources and to encourage the establishment and maintenance of sanctuaries and protected areas. Individual member's dues are \$8.00 annually. Other membership classes are: Family Membership (\$10), Supporting Member (\$15), or a Life Member (\$150)—“payable over a four-year period in equal installments,” if member so desires. Student membership \$3.00. *KINGBIRD* institutional subscriptions: \$9.00 per year on calendar year basis only. Single copies: \$2.25. All memberships are for the calendar year and begin with January of the year in which the member joins. Memberships beginning after the first of the year include back issues for that year.

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Publication office is 20 Drumlins Terrace, Syracuse, N.Y. 13224.
Second class postage paid at Syracuse, N.Y.



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PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.

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61-116

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It has been brought to our attention that the recently-published *Supplement to Birds of New York State*, by John Bull, contains a certain number of errors in dates, places, numbers of birds, and other details. As a result, the Editors have decided to produce a list of errata, and are asking persons with knowledge of errors in the *Supplement* to communicate them to John Farrand, Jr., American Museum of Natural History, New York, N.Y. 10024. When this list of errata is published, it will be sent without charge to all prior purchasers of the *Supplement*, and will be inserted in each copy of the *Supplement* distributed thereafter.

ATTENTION

The fall Federation pelagic trip listed in *New York Birders* for September 17th should have been listed for September 24th. Please note this change in date.

SIXTY YEARS' OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS AND MAMMALS ON A LONG ISLAND DUCK FARM

LE ROY WILCOX

Having lived all my life, 77 years, on Oceanic Duck Farm at Speonk, Long Island, 70 miles east of New York City, I have made many observations of birds and mammals attracted to a duck farm. Many of these present a real hazard in the raising of some 100,000 Pekin ducks annually.

The farm was founded in 1883 by my father, Eugene O. Wilcox (1854-1926), making it the oldest commercial duck farm in the U.S. and probably the oldest commercial poultry farm in New York State. The Poultry Dept. of Cornell University awarded The Poultry Pioneer Award to me at Cornell on July 20, 1976. This occasion brought back memories of when I was a pupil of Dr. Arthur A. Allen (1885-1964) at Cornell in 1919-1920. He was probably the greatest teacher of Ornithology in the U.S. and he established the first course in Ornithology at any university in the U.S., about 1916.

The two worst predators attracted to our duck farm are Herring Gulls and dogs. Our Pekin ducks are marketed when full grown, at 7 weeks 4 days of age. They are kept upland for the first five weeks and then moved onto water. Dogs, foxes, raccoons and rats are the most numerous predators on our upland ducks, and Herring Gulls, dogs and foxes on ducks on water. The worst are probably Herring Gulls, which kill about \$500 worth of live ducks annually, although dog damage amounts to \$400-500 annually as well. Fortunately, Suffolk Co., through dog license fees, pays us for damage due to dogs.

A farm of this size, with about 9000 ducks on water at all times from April 1 to November 15, attracts Herring Gulls from Moriches Bay, one-half mile to the south. They eat the dead ducks, about 10 to 20 every day, which we gather up early every morning. If there are no dead ducks, the gulls will go after live ducks, pecking at them in the rear until the intestines are exposed and at times dragging along on the ground. Intestines and internal organs appear to be the favorite part of the duck for the Herring Gulls. The gulls have a food call which quickly attracts other gulls to the farm and then it is necessary for the duck farmer to take quick action by shooting under permit, or suffer serious losses.

In recent years, the three nearest nesting colonies of Herring Gulls

to our farm have been a small colony four miles west, at Moriches Inlet, with first nesting there in 1938, and two larger colonies ten miles east at Shinnecock Bay, with first nesting there in 1949. In the last 46 years I have banded 13,644 Herring Gulls and have had 640 recoveries. The young gulls of the year appear on our farm the first week in August, from the colonies at Shinnecock. They quickly learn to eat the ducks. Older non-breeding gulls can be on the farm at any time for the entire season. No adult gulls are found on the farm during May, June and July as they are at their nesting colonies and do not stray very far away during that period. I had always believed that Herring Gulls nested when they were three years old but a few apparently do not. A Herring Gull with band 606-14928 was three years old when collected, but was still not fully adult as there was black on tips of tail feathers. Also a bird with band 676-09245 was four years old and still not fully adult as there was black on tips of tail feathers and some dark on the wings.

It is well known that gulls drop hard clams, mussels, scallops and other shells from a height of 50 feet or so onto hard surfaces such as roads, tennis courts and even flat roofs in order to break open the shells so that they can eat the contents. Not so well known is the fact that on duck farms where breeder ducks are kept for eggs, the Herring Gulls will take the eggs that are laid outdoors and drop them into the water. Upon impact with the water, the egg will break open and the gull quickly dives down to eat the contents. They apparently cannot pierce the hard shells of duck eggs with their bills while the eggs are on the ground. Unlike other poultry, breeder ducks only lay their eggs at night, while they are shut in lighted breeder houses, but an occasional female will lay an egg outdoors after they are let out at 7 a.m. Crows can usually break the eggs with their bills while the eggs are on the ground, but apparently the gulls cannot.

Only in the last six or seven years have Ring-billed Gulls appeared on the duck farms, but they never eat the dead ducks or molest live ducks. Their only interest is to eat duck pellets in the hoppers, eating right alongside the ducks. As soon as I noticed this unusual behavior, I cautioned other duck farmers not to shoot these gulls as they were perfectly harmless.

Grackles are also harmless, and readily eat the flesh from the dead ducks, whose carcasses are picked up daily by a processing plant at Center Moriches. They remove the feathers and use the duck carcass in making a dried meal. We are glad to give these dead ducks away in

order to get them off the farm. Meanwhile it makes a good living for the man who picks them up at the 25 duck farms as the feathers are worth over \$2.00 a pound (it takes four ducks to make one pound of feathers).

We used to have trouble with Great Horned Owls on our farm, but not in the last forty years. The Cornell Duck Disease Laboratory at Eastport, two miles from my farm, had a problem some years ago with a Great Horned Owl taking ducks at night. I set traps for it and finally caught it on July 2, 1961, banded it and released it at Hampton Bays, ten miles to the east. The owl did not come back.

Hawks were never a problem but on occasion eagles were attracted to duck farms. Bald Eagles have been seen on our farm as follows: immatures July 25, 1927, April 2, 1929, June 8, 1929, February 17, 1930, October 19, 1976; adults July 12, 1930, February 20-27, 1932, March 12-30, 1933. Another immature flew over the farm on January 23, 1977. None were ever shot on our farm. An immature was shot on October 11, 1945 on the Hallock farm, adjacent to ours, after it had killed four breeder ducks and partly eaten them. The owner did not know it was an eagle. It weighed 10.75 pounds (length 37.25 inches, wing 25.50 inches, tail 13.50 inches and wing spread 88 inches). Another immature was shot on July 4, 1945 on a duck farm at Moriches. It was a female and weighed 6 pounds 6 oz. (length 35.50 inches, wing 23.50 inches, tail 13.00 inches and wing spread 84 inches). Again it was mistaken for a large hawk. An adult appeared on our farm October 26-27, 1965 feeding on a dead duck and, unlike immatures, it was very wary and left after two days, before I was able to photograph it. Another immature was present February 14-March 11, 1971 on two adjoining duck farms at Center Moriches. I cautioned the owners not to shoot it and it was so tame that I actually walked under the oak tree where it was resting, in order to photograph it. Two Golden Eagles were shot on a duck farm at Flanders in October, 1926.

In the early years we were also troubled with Snapping Turtles killing ducks, but not in recent years, as their numbers have been greatly reduced; we have had no killings in the last 25 years. Fifty years ago they were abundant and very troublesome. As boys we caught them, fed them for some time, then shipped them to market in New York City. A 25 pound turtle can easily pull a full grown duck under water, drowning and then eating it.

Another bird that is very troublesome because of its great num-

bers is the Starling, which eats hundreds of dollars worth of duck feed every year on all the duck farms. Some farmers have used large traps, capturing as many as 5000 in a season. Other farms have played recordings of the Starling's distress call, which has been successful in chasing away at least for one day all Starlings within a quarter of a mile. On our farm we have only used shot guns which usually kept them away at least for one day. I have never tried to trap large numbers for banding except in 1966 and 1968, when I trapped and banded 3000 in August, September, and October of those two years. I have banded a total of 3316. A characteristic of this bird is the fact that very few of the banded birds have ever returned. I was not certain, before banding, whether these birds migrated or simply stayed all year in the 20-mile area where all the duck farms are located. From the table below it can be seen that some left Long Island, travelling as much as 480 miles to the north or 550 miles to the south of Speonk. The following returns are for Starlings banded at Speonk and recovered outside Long Island:

BAND	BANDED	RETURN	DISTANCE
743-85964	Aug. 25, 1966	Mar. 22, 1967	New London, Conn. 48 miles NE
712-66034	Oct. 23, 1966	Jan. 1969	Salisbury, Md. 240 miles S
712-66035	Oct. 23, 1966	Mar. 24, 1969	Wiscasset, Me. 274 miles NE
712-66093	Oct. 26, 1966	Oct. 22, 1967	Johnston, R.I. 92 miles NE
712-66120	Oct. 26, 1966	May 1, 1967	Plainville, Mass. 107 miles NE
712-66095	Oct. 26, 1966	Apr. 1975	Springfield, Mass. 88 miles N
712-66159	Oct. 27, 1966	Feb. 11, 1968	Framingham, Mass. 127 miles NE
712-66215	Oct. 28, 1966	May 9, 1967	Biddeford, Me. 221 miles NE
712-66231	Oct. 28, 1966	Apr. 1968	St. John, N.B. 480 miles NE
712-66262	Oct. 29, 1966	Apr. 8, 1969	S. Carver, Mass. 123 miles NE
712-66297	Oct. 29, 1966	Nov. 22, 1966	St. Pauls, N.C. 550 miles S
712-66383	Nov. 1, 1966	Feb. 20, 1967	Wilmington, N.C. 550 miles S
742-96180	Aug. 8, 1969	Mar. 6, 1973	Litchfield, Conn. 70 miles NW

In addition to all the common birds usually found on farms where there is an abundance of food, a few other interesting birds have appeared, all eating duck pellets at the hoppers. These include a Ringed Turtle Dove on October 9-15, 1966, an Egyptian Goose in November, 1976, and a Lesser Snow Goose which I caught, banded and released on November 3, 1976. Many wild ducks come into the pens, especially Mallards and Black Ducks which come only after dark to eat the pellets, especially in October and November. Both Green-winged and

Blue-winged Teals alight in the duck pens every year, swimming around with the Pekin ducks, but on only one occasion have I seen them eat duck feed. On April 30, 1936, eleven Blue-winged Teals were observed eating duck feed (wet mash) with our breeder ducks. This was before we had pellets and we used a wet mash in open troughs on the ground. By 1941 wet mash had been discontinued and the farms were using dried pellets in hoppers, allowing the ducks to eat at any time of day or night. Instead of marketing ducks at ten weeks of age, the new system of using pellets has enabled us to market the birds at seven and a half weeks.

Some unusual birds have appeared on the farm. A Western Kingbird was caught in a mist net on November 19, 1960, and remained for a week after being banded. Summer Tanagers are not common here but I succeeded in netting a female on October 22, 1960, and an immature male on April 28, 1961; a third bird, an adult male, was banded on May 4, 1972, and was actually caught by hand! My son and hired man were cleaning out a cold brooder house when the bird came inside the building, allowing them to approach to within two feet. A few minutes later I arrived, and the bird actually alighted on my station wagon. I ran and got a scoop net, hoping to capture it as the bird was so tame. It was catching insects on the ground. It alighted three times on the handle of the scoop net. The third time I caught it with my left hand as I held the scoop net with my right hand. It had probably just arrived from the south and was hungry, but I have no explanation for its tameness. It weighed 25.8 grams, with the wing 90 mm. and the tail 67 mm. It reminded me of the eleven Red Phalaropes I have banded on 5 occasions. The most unusual was my first experience with the bird on April 28, 1937 when I banded five of them. I approached so closely to them as they were feeding on jelly fish on shore, that I actually caught two of them with a scoop net. Of seven Dovekies I have banded, I actually caught one on November 3, 1966, with a scoop net as it was swimming under water at Quogue in the canal. Other birds I have caught with a scoop net have been three male and four female Willets, all caught on their nests, as well as a male Clapper Rail on its nest. The tameness of the Summer Tanager also reminded me of the occasion on June 7, 1971, when, with my hands, I actually lifted a female Clapper Rail off her nest with ten eggs, replaced her on the nest, and she remained, something that only happens once in a lifetime. She had just laid her last egg that day, and so had just started incubation.

The eggs hatched 22 days later. I have also touched the back of another Clapper Rail on its nest, but that bird went right off the nest.

Another bird that likes to associate with the ducks is the Common Gallinule. They started nesting on a small island just outside the duck pens on the Hallock farm, which is right next to our farm. A second pair started nesting on our farm in 1929 on an island just beyond our duck pens, about 1000 feet north of the pair on the Hallock farm. I succeeded in banding five young in August, 1929, all caught in a sparrow funnel trap baited with duck feed (wet mash), as I had seen adults and young eating the duck feed in troughs on the ground along with the ducks. In 1933 I banded two adults and four young. In 1936 I banded three adults and seven young. Then in the fall of 1936 a new sand bank about four feet high was built between this island and the duck pens and the gallinules never came back to our farm. One of the adults I banded on August 5, 1936, at Speonk was found dead on September 1, 1937, 4½ miles west of Speonk, just outside the duck pens on an East Moriches duck farm where they nested in 1937. They left the nesting area at Speonk on October 30, 1936, and the earliest seen on the farm was April 24, 1933. It was interesting to watch them get over the three foot two inch wire mesh fence that we use as the outside fence in our duck pens. They did not fly over the fence but approached it, then with their long toes in the wire, and flapping their wings, they walked right up the fence to the top and then jumped down to the water or ground.

Over many years because of the sharp eyes of our Pekin ducks, I have been able to see many birds flying over the farm that I would otherwise have missed. Ducks, because their eyes are set high up on the head, can spot a hawk or other high-flying bird that a human would miss. If they see a high-flying bird, hundreds of ducks will turn their heads to the side and immediately I know by looking up I too can spot the bird.

Of course, most of my banding and observations have been away from the farm. I banded my first bird in 1927, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, caught on the farm in a feed house. Since then I have probably banded more rare and unusual birds than any other bander in New York State, and probably more individual birds than any other bander in the state with a total to date of 130,154, plus another 1,769 banded outside the state.

Oceanic Duck Farm, Speonk, New York 11972

THE BURROWING OWL IN NEW YORK STATE

THOMAS H. DAVIS

The Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) is represented in North America by two widely separated populations. The migratory subspecies *hypugaea* breeds in the western United States east to Minnesota. The supposedly sedentary race *floridana* occurs in peninsular Florida from Alachua Co. southward (Sykes, 1974) to the Bahamas, Hispaniola (Bond, 1971), and Cuba (Garrido and Garcia Montaña, 1975). In 1973, *A.c. floridana* was discovered breeding in Cuba (Bond, 1973).

In New York State the Burrowing Owl has been reported on three occasions:

(1) Griscom (1923) reports a bird that "flew into an uptown house in New York City, August 8, 1875, and was caught alive." He does not state whether the bird was kept as a specimen, and dismisses the possibility that it was a wild bird, stating "this record is so remarkable, that one instantly suspects an escaped cage bird."

(2) Bull (1974) reports a bird of the race *hypugaea* collected on Long Island at Westhampton, Suffolk Co. October 27, 1950, by Art Cooley, and identified to subspecies by John T. Zimmer. Art Cooley (verb. comm.) told me a friend of his shot the bird at a sandy spoil area a quarter of a mile west of the West Bay Bridge in Westhampton, within sight of the barrier beach. This specimen was placed in the private collection of LeRoy Wilcox. However, the specimen is no longer extant, having been stolen along with the entire collection of Wilcox during a vacation absence (Wilcox, pers. comm.).

(3) On October 27, 1976 Steve Kriss discovered a Burrowing Owl at dusk at Cedar Beach, Suffolk Co., perched atop a low post adjacent to a roadway. As Kriss sat in his car studying the bird, it suddenly flew into nearby beach grass, then returned to the post with a prey item, apparently a large insect. Finally, the bird took flight and disappeared over the Cedar Beach pitch-and-putt golf course. Kriss returned to Cedar Beach on several occasions with his friend Bob Leporati to search for the Burrowing Owl, but to no avail. Rather unfortunately, word of the sighting did not spread far.

On December 27, 1976 T. Rodney Gardner, a visiting birder from Pennsville, New Jersey, discovered a Burrowing Owl roosting under the edge of a row of Japanese Black Pine trees growing along the median strip of Ocean Parkway at Cedar Beach. Gardner immediately

notified Robert Arbib at the National Audubon Society, who in turn alerted the local birding community. That afternoon Mike Gochfeld relocated the bird at this spot, due north of the above-mentioned golf course. The bird stood at the edge of the pines, its feathers fluffed out. The temperature was below 30° F., the winds were NW at about 15-20 mph., and the ground was nearly covered by a recent snowfall. The bird flew short distances several times, usually alighting in the shelter of the pines, but twice perched atop high, exposed branches. Photographs were taken by Rod Gardner, Mike Gochfeld, Paul A. Buckley, the author, and others.

That night two inches of wet snow fell, and by morning the temperature had fallen to 21° F. Shortly after dawn the owl was found "huddled" under the pines. It appeared weak, and only flew short distances. It once alighted on Ocean Parkway and promptly closed its eyes! The bird was obviously ailing and a decision was reached to capture it. This was accomplished by Arthur Richard, who simply walked over and picked it up. An immediate examination revealed that "hardened snow or ice had begun to form on the bird's feet and lower tarsi, and it felt extremely emaciated" (Richard). The bird was taken home by Art and Hannah Richard, who are equipped to care for sick or injured birds, especially raptors. Later that day the owl consumed 6 crickets and 4 dead mice. The next day, December 29th, the bird ate 2 more mice and 4 strips of lean beef. The owl's reactions appeared to have returned to normal. The next morning the first pellet was found in its cage. The Richards suggest that this delay in casting a pellet indicates that the owl was even more starved than they had first imagined (see Richard, 1977).

At this point there were two issues concerning the owl—which race was it, and what should become of the bird once restored to health? Arrangements were made to have it brought to the American Museum of Natural History the following Monday for subspecific determination. On December 30th Tony Lauro telephoned me to convey a "growing" sentiment that the bird should be released in the wild in its native habitat, a feeling later voiced by others. Tony suggested that Mike Cooper, a birder holding an airline ticket for Miami January 5th, would be willing to transport the bird. I consulted John Bull and John Farrand, and we agreed that if the owl was identified as the western race *hypugaea* then it should be donated to the Bronx Zoo and not sent further astray. The corollary was understood, were it *floridana* then to Florida it would go.

The Burrowing Owl was examined by John Bull and John Farrand on January 3, 1977. Farrand's comment (*in litt.*) follows:

"The Burrowing Owl from Cedar Beach, which I examined with John Bull . . . was identifiable as a Florida Burrowing Owl, *A. c. floridana*, on the basis of its small size (wing, 166 mm.; tail, 72 mm.), its darker brown upperparts with whitish, not buffy, spots, its whiter underparts, its rather heavily spotted and only very pale buffy under wing-coverts, and its very sparsely feathered tarsi. Taken together, these characters eliminate not only *A. c. hypugaea* of western North America but all other races of the species

"When I got the skins out to look at the differences between *floridana* and *hypugaea*, I was struck by the fact that these are very good races. *A. c. hypugaea* is a bigger, paler and more buffy bird with very densely feathered tarsi. There is no doubt at all that the Cedar Beach bird is *floridana*, much to my surprise."



Burrowing Owl

Cedar Beach,

Long Island

T. H. Davis

December 27, 1976

Arrangements were then made for Mike Cooper to transport the bird to Florida and release it near Miami. At the same time several newspapers were contacted, and human interest photo stories appeared in the *Long Island Press* January 4th, and the *Daily News* and *New York Times* on the 5th. That evening Art and Hannah Rich-

ard brought the owl to Mike Cooper at JFK Airport. Within minutes of Cooper's departure two U.S. Fish and Wildlife special agents appeared, inquiring whether a permit had been obtained to transport the bird interstate. Everyone had neglected to consider this necessity, and the owl was immediately confiscated! With the intercession of Harvey Berman, a National Airlines public relations man, a compromise was reached, and the Burrowing Owl was allowed to fly to Miami where other special agents seized the bird. A follow-up story in the *Daily News* January 6th wryly commented that the owl almost didn't make the flight to Florida since it lacked a permit to "fly"!

On January 6th Paul Sykes was contacted in Delray Beach, Florida. Sykes is an avid birder and is employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist. With his intercession the red tape was soon dispensed with. Later that week the owl was given to Paul and he released it "in good health" in Burrowing Owl habitat on the mainland west of Hypoluxo Island.

DISCUSSION

Disorientation might cause a western, migratory Burrowing Owl to occur in the Northeast, but how a bird of the southern, supposedly sedentary race might reach Long Island is less clear. Newspaper stories referred to above suggested the owl was carried north by auto or train, but this seems implausible. A small, illegal cage bird trade involves only western birds according to Richard Ryan (pers. comm.), and there was nothing about the bird's appearance that hinted at recent captivity.

Paul Sykes stated to me that while Florida Burrowing Owls are considered sedentary, some dispersal obviously does take place. He collected a Florida Burrowing Owl on the Outer Banks of North Carolina at Salvo, Dare Co., on February 14, 1967, that had been present since November 14, 1966 (Sykes, 1974). Sykes' paper cites two other specimens of *A. c. floridana* from outside its normal range, from Alabama and Cuba. He mentions sight reports of undetermined subspecific identity from Virginia and South Carolina both at coastal locations. Two other sight reports were from offshore: a bird boarded a vessel at night just off Cape Henry, Virginia, October 22, 1918, and one flew aboard a boat at 10 a.m. 24 miles east of Cocoa Beach, Florida, July 27, 1972. The latter bird remained aboard until 5 p.m. when the boat docked at Port Canaveral and the bird flew ashore and disappeared. Sykes states that these offshore reports suggest "a possible mechanism by which *A. c. floridana* could readily

reach places along the eastern seaboard of the U.S. far from its normal range. On the southeast coast of Florida the busy coastal shipping lane is within 1-2 km. of shore."

Frederick A. Probst has sent me photographs of a Burrowing Owl taken in June, 1976, at Huntington Beach State Park, South Carolina. John Farrand has examined these photographs and writes: "On the basis of the general coloration and the fact that the tarsi appear largely bare, this bird is almost certainly *A. c. floridana*; it is definitely not the western race *hypugaea*." This additional evidence supports the idea of dispersal by the Florida population.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Assembling this paper brought me in contact with a great number of people, all of whom enthusiastically contributed their time and expertise. Needed documentation was supplied by Paul A. Buckley, John Bull, Art Cooley, Pat Probst, Richard Ryan, and LeRoy Wilcox. Persons who played a role in accounting the history of the Cedar Beach Burrowing Owl included Bob Arbib, Harvey Berman, Mike Cooper, John Farrand, T. Rodney Gardner, Mike Gochfeld, Steve Kriss, Tony Lauro, Bob Leporati, and Art and Hannah Richard. Paul Sykes supplied much background material, as well as being ultimately responsible for the Cedar Beach bird's successful reintroduction to the wild. Frederick A. Probst kindly sent me photographs of the Huntington Beach, South Carolina, bird. My best wishes to that dauntless owl wherever it lives; that bird's appearance on Long Island thrilled many, and was entirely responsible for inspiring this article!

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HAWK MIGRATION AT ONEONTA

PAUL KERLINGER and MICHAEL BENNETT

Hawk migration has been well studied at a number of locations in the northeastern United States. Few spring studies have been attempted, although there have been reports from Derby Hill, Oswego, for over a decade. Fall flights have been observed for many years at places such as Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, and Hook Mountain, Nyack. Much information has been collected at these and other lookouts, but the data are limited in scope. Since it is now known that hawks often migrate along very wide fronts, much remains to be learned about the large areas that have yet to be studied.

In 1976, a hawk migration lookout was established at Franklin Mountain, two miles south of the city of Oneonta, in the town of Davenport, Delaware County (see L in figure). Migration was monitored during both spring and fall.

A total of thirteen species was recorded for the year. The most common species in both seasons was the Red-tailed Hawk (Tables 1 and 2). At most lookouts Broad-winged Hawks are the most numerous migrants. On 26 October, 1231 Red-tailed Hawks were counted from the lookout. This flight was one of the largest reported in the East in recent years for this species. Ten Golden Eagles reported in the fall were also noteworthy.

Many hawks could not be identified to species because they passed the lookout at great distances or were obscured by trees. For the same reasons, and the fact that only one observer at a time was present at the lookout, many hawks probably passed unseen. Casual observations in both spring and fall showed that hawks migrated along at least two north-south ridges to the east of Franklin Mountain. This may indicate that raptors take more than one route through the Oneonta area.

The data included with this paper show that large numbers of hawks migrate through central New York. Just how extensive migration is in New York State and what routes are used is still not known. Field work is badly needed, especially to the east of Oneonta. It is likely that other locations like Franklin Mountain can be found and used to observe hawks migrating through central New York. As these are found a more complete picture of the migration puzzle will be available.



SPRING, 1977

We would like to thank Dr. John New for helpful suggestions and Mr. Sheffield Smith for use of his land.

Dept. of Biology, State University College, Oneonta, N.Y. 13820

Table 1.

SPRING 1976 HAWK COUNT AT FRANKLIN MOUNTAIN

Species	Month				Total
	February	March	April	May	
Turkey Vulture	0	11	36	0	47
Goshawk	1	4	6	0	11
Sharp-shinned Hawk	0	6	44	0	50
Cooper's Hawk	0	1	4	0	5
Red-tailed Hawk	4	17	82	1	104
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	11	21	2	35
Broad-winged Hawk	0	0	65	0	65
Rough-legged Hawk	0	0	2	0	2
Golden Eagle	0	0	1	0	1
Marsh Hawk	0	2	14	0	16
Osprey	0	2	6	1	9
American Kestrel	0	3	7	1	11
Unidentified buteo	9	79	224	10	322
Unidentified accipiter	1	17	113	9	140
Unidentified falcon	0	0	4	0	4
Unidentified hawk	2	38	117	6	163
TOTAL HAWKS	18	191	746	30	985
TOTAL HOURS	8.5	38.5	91	6.5	144.5
TOTAL DAYS	6	15	24	2	47

Table 2.

1976 HAWK COUNTS – AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

SPRING, 1977

Date	Hours	Turkey Vulture	Goshawk	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	Broad-winged Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Bald Eagle	Marsh Hawk	Osprey	American Kestrel	Unidentified	TOTAL
August																
30	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	5
September																
3	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	16
5	4.5	0	0	1	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	28
6	7.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	39	0	0	0	0	1	2	19	62
7	7.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	126	0	0	0	0	2	3	28	160
8	7.0	2	1	1	0	1	0	104	0	0	0	0	1	5	10	125
9	6.5	0	0	4	0	0	0	211	0	0	0	0	5	6	8	234
11	3.0	3	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	22
12	7.0	0	0	24	0	3	0	224	0	0	0	1	2	2	25	281
13	6.5	0	0	27	0	0	0	176	0	0	0	0	2	2	25	232
14	7.0	2	0	10	0	1	0	26	0	0	0	1	3	0	7	50
15	5.0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
17	7.0	4	0	15	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	68
18	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
19	7.5	5	0	43	0	2	0	58	0	0	0	0	5	7	23	143
20	2.5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
21	7.0	0	1	21	0	1	0	67	0	0	0	0	3	9	26	128
22	5.0	0	0	11	0	1	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	35
23	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
24	6.5	0	0	3	0	4	0	24	0	0	0	1	5	0	25	62
25	6.0	1	1	11	0	9	0	25	0	0	0	0	6	3	44	100
26	1.0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
28	3.5	1	0	18	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	4	5	7	42
29	7.0	1	1	71	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	6	8	95
30	6.0	0	0	73	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	1	2	12	105
TOTAL																
	124.5	22	4	339	1	23	0	1200	0	0	0	4	47	67	298	2005

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Table 3. 1976 HAWK COUNTS - OCTOBER

Date	Hours	Turkey Vulture	Goshawk	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	Broad-winged Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Bald Eagle	Marsh Hawk	Osprey	American Kestrel	Unidentified	TOTAL
1	6.0	0	0	58	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	19	86
2	6.0	0	0	59	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	5	77
3	6.0	1	0	46	0	3	2	9	0	0	0	0	1	3	6	71
4	6.0	1	0	55	0	8	0	7	0	0	0	1	2	0	35	111
5	6.0	1	0	19	0	5	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	49
6	3.5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
7	6.0	0	0	13	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	24
8	1.0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	4.5	1	1	32	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	7	51
11	6.5	1	0	9	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	45
12	6.0	1	0	26	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	36
13	4.5	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
14	2.5	0	0	9	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	58
15	6.5	2	0	5	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
16	6.5	1	0	33	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	63
17	7.0	1	0	43	1	73	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	138
18	7.0	0	1	28	0	161	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	200
19	4.5	1	0	2	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
21	6.0	1	3	5	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	6	25
22	5.0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
23	6.0	1	0	0	0	16	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	23
26	7.0	2	1	15	0	1231	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	3	1255
27	6.5	0	1	3	0	79	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	89
28	3.0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
31	2.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	131.5	15	7	471	2	1716	8	32	1	3	0	10	16	33	127	2441

Table 4. 1976 HAWK COUNTS – NOVEMBER

Date	Hours	Turkey Vulture	Goshawk	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	Broad-winged Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Bald Eagle	Marsh Hawk	Osprey	American Kestrel	Unidentified	TOTAL	
1	6.5	0	0	4	0	31	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	8*	49	
2	6.5	0	2	0	0	38	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	6*	50	
3	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
4	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
6	1.0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	
7	4.0	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	37	
8	6.0	0	1	0	0	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	51	
9	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
10	4.0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	
11	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
12	1.0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	
<hr/>																	
TOTALS		32.5	0	4	4	0	158	0	0	1	7	1	4	0	1	23	203
<hr/>																	
TOTALS for 1976		288.5	37	15	814	3	1897	8	1232	2	10	1	18	63	101	448	4649
					18%		41%		27%						2%	10%	

*—One unidentified eagle was seen on each of these days.

SHORT-EARED OWL FOOD ITEMS IN WINTER

MARTIN BORKO

The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) is a nearly cosmopolitan species, occurring on every continent except Australia. Throughout its range it is a bird "preferring open plains, marshes, and sand dunes to thick forests" (C. W. Townsend in Bent, 1938). Godfrey (1966) states that it is a bird "inhabiting open spaces" (not a woodland owl). Bull (1974) states that "marshes, meadows, old fields, refuse dumps, airports, and similar terrain are favored habitats of the largely diurnal Short-eared Owl." Most of my own observations of the species have been made in open areas, usually in early successional fields.

In describing maximum concentrations in inland New York, Bull calls attention to the 40 birds that spent most of February 1969 at the Galesville airport in Ulster County. This site is regularly used by wintering Short-eared Owls, as well as by Rough-legged, Red-tailed, and Marsh Hawks.

During the winter of 1974-1975, 69 owl pellets were collected (39 in January and 30 in March). The pellets were measured and examined for food items. They were collected below Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), some singly, but usually in groups of two to four, somewhere at the base of the tree. The most productive spots were raised mounds of dirt and debris with downed sections of old telephone poles. The mounds were only two to four feet above the general grade, but did provide an unobstructed view in all directions.

All pellets contained only the remains of the Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) except for one that also contained the remains of a young rabbit. Twenty-seven pellets, having a single complete skull and at least eight major long bones, averaged 49.19 mm. by 24.07 mm.; five pellets, containing two skulls and other bones, averaged 68.80 mm. by 26.60 mm. Bull (*l.c.*) states that "if rodents (especially *Microtus*) appear in large numbers these owls are often in evidence and remain as long as this food supply is plentiful." During the winter of 1975-1976, the owls were present until a deep snow made *Microtus* unavailable; following this the owls were not to be found at Galesville.

The section on the food of the Short-eared Owl in Bent's Life Histories (1938) reports on stomach contents and pellet analysis. A staple summer item appears to be insects. In addition to the Meadow

Vole, the following have been reported as food items: White-footed, Pine, and House Mice, Red-winged Blackbirds, juncos, Vesper Sparrows, American Robins, meadowlarks, Snow Buntings, Savannah Sparrows and Water Pipits. Bent also mentions William Brewster's finding of a colony of Short-eared Owls preying upon nesting terns.

The analysis closest to the one reported here was made near Savannah, Georgia, by Ivan R. Tomkins and reported in Bent (1938): "The 50 pellets collected during January and February contained the remains of 34 birds, of 14 identifiable species, and 54 mammals, of two or more species. The 18 pellets collected in the same places during late February and March contained remains of 4 birds and 45 house mice."

The Short-eared Owl appears plastic and opportunistic in its feeding habits. If anyone can supply the author with pellets collected from Short-eared Owls or other positively identified owls in New York State, it would be most appreciated. Please give details as to site and date of collection. There is much to learn about the Short-eared Owl and its habits in New York State.

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Broad-wing Kettle

— Dorothy W. Crumb

TO FIND A FALL HAWK LOOKOUT

DOROTHY W. CRUMB and BELLE PEBBLES

Birders in central New York have no problem finding migrating hawks in the spring. Since most birds of prey don't fly over large bodies of water, Lake Ontario creates a natural barrier. The birds flying north hit the south shore of the lake and turn east to fly around the lake. People stationed at Derby Hill, at the southeast corner of the lake, have three or four months to enjoy this spectacle.

But what happens in the fall, when other areas are reporting large numbers of migrating Broad-winged Hawks? Over Syracuse we sometimes see one or two moving birds, and on unusual winds we might even see thirty or forty. A trip to Hawk Mountain is most enjoyable, but many times observers make the long trip to central Pennsylvania and only see rain or fog.

With the formation of the Hawk Migration Association of North America, this lack of fall birds began to be discussed more often. Reading HMANA reports, seeing dots on the maps where birds were seen in good numbers, proved that there had to be a route through central New York.

A chance look at a book written in 1897 by Rev. J. B. Wicks of Paris Hill created the final push in the right direction. To quote one sentence, "I am told that there are days in the fall of the year when the hawks assemble in such numbers that they are termed 'hawk days'."

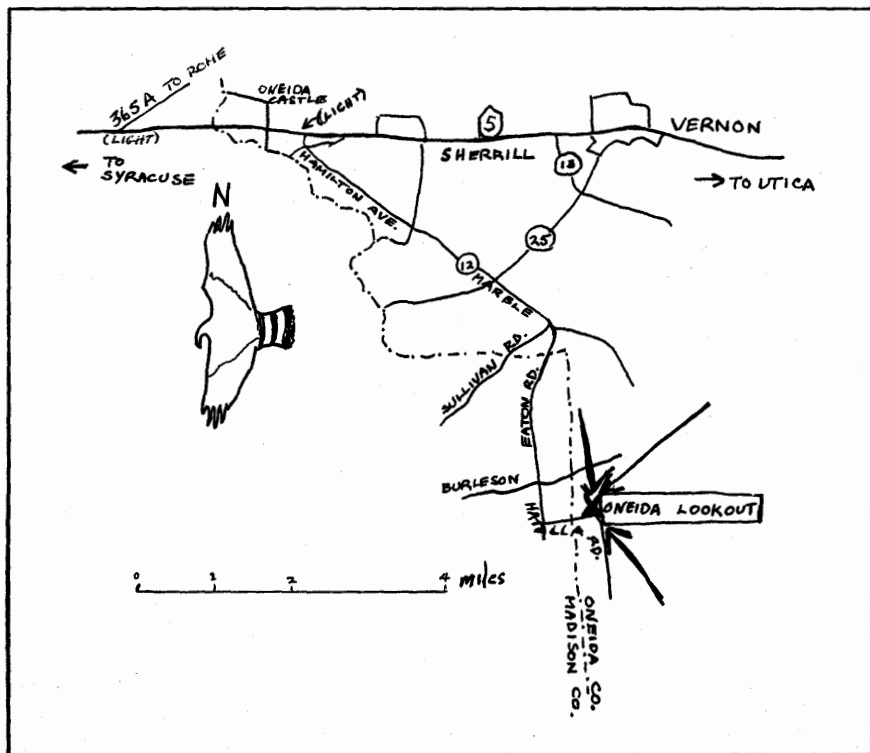
If there were once "hawk days" near Paris Hill, only about 40 miles east of Syracuse, why couldn't we find the spot? The answer must again be the lakes. If southbound birds don't want to fly over the water, they might pass east of the lake and might also want to avoid Oneida Lake which is even further east. Birds from the Adirondacks could easily funnel into the same channel.

In central New York is a series of north-south glacial hills and valleys. Most of the hilltops are approximately 1400 feet above sea level, with just a few getting as high as 1900+. After studying topographical maps, we decided to explore the area to see what kind of a view was available.

After selecting several spots and eliminating some because of high trees, we had to settle on a time. Through Hawk Migration Association people in Connecticut and the well-published records from Hawk Mountain, it was determined that the second weekend in September should be the starting date.

Then the most important problem—manpower. We called on members of the Onondaga Audubon Society and the Oneida Bird Club. This was when we found that we were a year behind time. Belle and Sheila Peebles from Oneida had the same idea in 1974. After pinpointing on the map places where they had seen concentrations of migrating hawks in past years, they had tried many sites south of Oneida and Sherrill. Hatalla Road, 5 miles southeast of Sherrill, proved to be the best place to see hawks consistently.

This location is 12 miles due west of Paris Hill where Rev. Wicks had lived. It is the ridge to the east of Oneida Creek and west of Sconondoa Creek, rising 500 to 600 feet between them to an elevation of 1420 feet. Except for a woodlot to the southwest, there is an excellent view in all directions.



On the morning of Saturday, September 13, 1975, observers were on hilltops at five- or six-mile intervals, from west of Hatalla Road and east as far as Paris Hill. Tassel Hill, the highest point in Madison County, was also covered even though it was south of other observers.

Naturally, the weather wouldn't cooperate. The winds were from the west and there was some rain. Although there were resident Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels obviously hunting, no lookouts reported migrating birds—with the exception of Hatalla Road with 49.

The next day, without rain and with winds from the north, several of us returned to Hatalla Road to see a total of 560 hawks, 508 of which were Broad-winged Hawks.

This ended most experimentation. All observers wanted to be where the hawks were. On one occasion, when a flock of Broad-wings was seen way to the east, a few of us crossed the Sconondoa Valley to check the next ridge, but couldn't find the birds. They were still being seen from Hatalla Road.

In 1974, the Peebles had not started watching until later in September. Their 10 days of coverage produced 569 hawks. The hill, now called the Oneida Lookout because it is just inside Oneida County, was covered for 15 days in 1975. 1,286 hawks were identified.

North winds in late August and early September, 1976, drew hopeful watchers to the lookout. Although there was some small success, it wasn't until September 12th, on west-southwest winds that the birds put on a show. 2,556 Broad-winged Hawks passed overhead—the thrilling sight we had all hoped for. The flight didn't start until 1:30 in the afternoon and was over at 4:00; two and a half hours of soaring birds that would probably be cheered again and again as they moved south over other observation points.

Complete records for the three years the Oneida Lookout has been covered are as follows:

	1974	1975	1976	1976
	20 hrs.	44 hrs.	30 days 111 hrs.	Peak Days
Turkey Vulture		16	6	3 Sept. 28
Goshawk	2	2	4	2 Sept. 24
Sharp-shinned Hawk	31	197	660	120 Oct. 10
Cooper's Hawk	4	32	21	6 Oct. 10
Red-tailed Hawk	67	196	283	86 Oct. 26
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	18	58	15 Oct. 17
Broad-winged Hawk	381	607	3,053	2,556 Sept. 12
Rough-legged Hawk	5	18	6	5 Nov. 2
Golden Eagle			1	Oct. 18
Marsh Hawk	13	31	61	10 Oct. 10
Osprey	1	6	36	6 Sept. 18 & 21
Merlin			2	1 Sept. 22 & 28
American Kestrel	59	119	133	51 Sept. 28
Unidentified	4	44	125	
Total	569	1,286	4,449	

In addition to the migrating raptors, there were 3,614 Canada Geese, 104 Blue Jays and 324 Common Crows, with 1,551 of the geese going through on October 10th.

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NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Lark Sparrow in Ontario County: On December 3, 1976, a Lark Sparrow was first observed by my father at a feeder at our home in Clifton Springs, Ontario County. The bird had a white throat bordered with black, and bordered again with white, along with a chestnut cheek patch and chestnut crown stripes; between the chestnut cheek and the crown was another creamy stripe, and there was a median crown stripe, also creamy-white. A conspicuous central breast spot was evident, more prominent than that of the Tree Sparrow. The back was grayish, and the tail was rounded, the outer tail feathers being conspicuously white. The bird spent its time (one-half hour observation) either perched in a pine tree or on the feeder eating seed.

According to John Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, pp. 581-582), the Lark Sparrow winters chiefly in the southern United States and south to El Salvador, and very rarely along the Atlantic coast north to southeastern New York. It is a rare but regular fall migrant along the coast, much rarer in the spring, and very rare in the interior. All six birds recorded by Bull from the interior were spring birds. The present record appears to be the first fall or winter Lark Sparrow in the interior of New York State, and only the seventh inland record.

The bird remained in the area for several days, and was last seen on December 11, a day marked by temperatures above 50^o F. (10^o C.), warm breezes, and little or no snow cover. The identification was verified by Cathy Walsh, Matthew Trail and Walter Benning, and the bird was photographed by Paris Trail (photograph on file at the American Museum of Natural History, New York).

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Franklin's Gull on the St. Lawrence River: On 2 January 1977 at Oak Point, St. Lawrence Co., I observed a Franklin's Gull for a period of an hour and a half, while the bird was at rest and in flight. This gull had a uniformly brownish-gray mantle with a trailing wing edge of white. There was a distinct diagonal, white slash separating the brownish-gray wings from black wing tips. The tail was entirely white. The head pattern could best be described as mottled. The black markings and streakings were limited to, but covered most of, the crown and cheek. The black extended right up to a prominent half eye-ring. The occiput, nape, forehead, lore, and chin were white. The lower mandible shape gave the bill a stout or full look, but it was my impression that it was not as stout as that of the Laughing Gull. Prior to these observations a general sense of size was noted. Although it was only in the company of Great Black-backed Gulls, I was able to judge its size directly as four separate Common Goldeneyes passed behind this gull. At this time the gull was resting on the edge of the ice and open water. One goldeneye was the same size as the gull, but the gull was smaller than each of the other three ducks.

To summarize, this was a small, extensively hooded gull with a uniformly

dark mantle that was interrupted by a distinct, diagonal, white slash near the black wing tips.

Previous winter sightings were in the Buffalo area on 26 December 1955 and 23 December 1967. Fritz Scheider observed a gull of this species on 3 January 1960 at Oswego Harbor (Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 284).

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Gull predation on an ant swarm: On September 13, 1976 at approximately 1600, I was driving south over the Captree Bridge which spans Great South Bay, Suffolk Co., when I noticed insects striking my windshield in numbers reminiscent of past trips to the central plains states of North America. When I got off the bridge and headed west on Ocean Parkway along the Jones Beach strip, I found Herring Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls feeding on the flying insects, which by now I had determined to be some sort of flying ant. The aerial hunting technique of the Herring Gulls was notable in that they would circle very slowly through the ant swarm, flare out their wings, drop their tails in a braking action, and then snap at the flying ants with a lunging thrust. Laughing Gulls were now seen flying through the swarm, and together with the Ring-billed Gulls, performed aerial acrobatics in capturing the ants in flight. These two species appeared to be much more adept in feeding than the larger Herring Gulls.

The wind was quite calm at the time and remained so throughout the time period of this field report.

Proceeding west toward Jones Beach State Park, I realized after driving for about one mile and seeing a constant number of insect-eating gulls in the air that I was witnessing an enormous ant swarm whose proportions I had never before seen. The swarm of ants was relatively constant all the way to Zachs Bay, a distance of about 8 miles from Captree. I roughly censused the gulls in relation to the major geographical areas of the Jones Beach strip and the results from east to west are as follows:

	Captree	Oak Beach	Gilgo	Tobay	Zachs Bay	Total
Herring Gull	300	450	250	100	100	1200
Ring-billed Gull	200	150	100	200	200	850
Laughing Gull	200	200	100	200	150	850
	700	800	450	500	450	2900

Large numbers of the swarming ants were evidently falling on the water on the bay side of the parkway, for the gulls were feeding at the surface. The Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were feeding while sitting on the water, but the Laughing Gulls fed by picking the ants off the surface while in flight. As dusk approached, all three species of gulls continued to feed on the swarm on the ground. Whether the ant swarm was descending to the ground or whether the gulls could not see the flying ants in failing light, I could not determine. Several gulls were killed by automobiles while dashing here and there in pursuit of ants,

and the feeding continued until dark.

Several of the ants were collected and sent to the Los Angeles County Museum in Los Angeles, California, where they were identified as *Lasius neoniger* by Mr. Roy R. Snelling of the Department of Entomology, who wrote: "This and related species of *Lasius* are known for the often very extensive mating swarms. These are very common ants in woodland habitats and when all colonies in an area put out swarms at the same time, the result can be spectacular."

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House Sparrow enters abandoned American Robin nest in November: On 1 November 1976 at 16:30 EST I observed a female House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) in and around an old nest of an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). The nest was ca. 3.5 m above the ground in a leafless Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) on the campus of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Livingston Co. The wind was blowing from the northwest between 34-43 KPH and the temperature was near freezing.

When first seen the House Sparrow was in the nest, turning and pressing its breast against the walls of the cup while simultaneously treading in a manner suggesting typical nest building behavior (see e.g., Welty, *The Life of Birds*, 2nd ed., 1975, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia). The bird next hopped to the rim and stabbed its bill repeatedly at the inside of the nest. After entering the nest a second time it began tossing out debris and small sticks with its feet. A passing dog flushed it from the tree. The same or another female House Sparrow, obviously alert, returned to the nest a few minutes later; immediately a second female landed within one meter of the nest and was chased from the tree by the first. Both birds soon returned and one again entered the nest and repeated the shaping and treading movements. The two females remained near the nest until 16:39 EST, when both birds left and did not return.

House Sparrows often construct roosting nests in regions with severe winters and occasionally even breeding nests are built outside the usual reproductive season (Summer-Smith, *The House Sparrow* 1967, Collins, London; Wessels, 1976, *Auk*, 93: 837). House Sparrows build domed nests in cavities (Summer-Smith, 1967), so interest in, and apparent defense of, an open, exposed robin nest in late fall are unexpected. I think the most likely explanation of this behavior is that the females were probably exhibiting behavior usually associated with construction or cleaning of winter roost nests or, less likely, with construction of winter breeding nests, and that they simply misdirected their efforts toward an inappropriate robin nest.

I thank Charles F. Thompson, who also contributed his observations of the sparrows, and Scott M. Lanyon for reading drafts of this note.

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ENGLISH NAMES OF BIRDS

It has always been the policy of *The Kingbird* to use the English and scientific names of birds that are officially recognized by the American Ornithologists' Union, as published in the A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds*, Fifth edition (1957). In the last few years, however, quite a few of these official names have been changed by the A.O.U., the changes appearing in *The Auk*. A certain amount of confusion has resulted, and in order to resolve this confusion as it applies to the Regional Reports, we are listing here all the recent changes of English names that involve the birds of New York State. Readers who do not own a copy of the A.O.U. *Check-list* can refer to *Birds of North America: A Guide to Field Identification*, by C. S. Robbins, B. Bruun and H. S. Zim, and illustrated by Arthur Singer (Golden Press, 1966). The latter book follows official A.O.U. nomenclature, so that questions on names used in *The Kingbird* can be settled by consulting Robbins, *et al.*, and the list given below.

Some of the changes in names are the result of the lumping of certain species; in such cases the old names on the following list are given in quotes. These old names can and should still be used to refer to recognizable subspecies (e.g., "Baltimore Oriole" and "Bullock's Oriole" to refer to the two subspecies of what is now known as the Northern Oriole). Old names not enclosed in quotes have been changed for reasons not involving the lumping of species; such names should no longer be used.

Old Name	New Name
Fulmar	Northern Fulmar
Leach's Petrel	Leach's Storm-Petrel
Wilson's Petrel	Wilson's Storm-Petrel
Common Egret	Great Egret
Wood Ibis	Wood Stork
"Black Brant"	Brant
"Blue Goose"	Snow Goose
Fulvous Tree Duck	Fulvous Whistling-Duck
"Common Teal"	Green-winged Teal
European Widgeon	European Wigeon
American Widgeon	American Wigeon
Shoveler	Northern Shoveler
Common Scoter	Black Scoter
Pigeon Hawk	Merlin

Sparrow Hawk	American Kestrel
Upland Plover	Upland Sandpiper
Knot	Red Knot
“Yellow-shafted Flicker”	Common Flicker
Traill’s Flycatcher	Willow Flycatcher
Traill’s Flycatcher	Alder Flycatcher
Catbird	Gray Catbird
Robin	American Robin
Parula Warbler	Northern Parula
“Myrtle Warbler”	Yellow-rumped Warbler
“Audubon’s Warbler”	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Yellowthroat	Common Yellowthroat
“Baltimore Oriole”	Northern Oriole
“Bullock’s Oriole”	Northern Oriole
“Ipswich Sparrow”	Savannah Sparrow
“Slate-colored Junco”	Dark-eyed Junco
“Oregon Junco”	Dark-eyed Junco

In addition to the above changes, a race of the Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus thayeri*, has been raised to the rank of a full species, to be called Thayer’s Gull.

Details on these and other name changes may be found in the following references:

- A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. 1973. Thirty-second Supplement to the American Ornithologists’ Union Check-list of North American Birds. *Auk* 90: 411-419.
- A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. 1973. Corrections and Additions to the “Thirty-second Supplement to the Check-list of North American Birds.” *Auk* 90: 887.
- A.O.U. Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. 1976. Thirty-third Supplement to the American Ornithologists’ Union Check-list of North American Birds. *Auk* 93: 876-879.

The Editors

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT W. SMART

With one remarkable exception, everyone was in complete agreement about the dreadful winter of 1976-1977. There was cold and there was snow. It is unnecessary to repeat here the horror story that made news headlines and television reports all across the country. It is a wonder that there are any bird reports from the upstate lake-shore areas. That any birding was done at all is a tribute to the hardiness of the local observers; no "half-hardy" status for this group. The one region that did not complain about the winter weather was the one which is farthest Northeast, Region 7. Such comments as "reasonable snow cover," "reasonable temperatures" and "not a bad winter" will sound odd to the birders in Buffalo and Syracuse.

The results of the extreme winter were not, however, as obvious as might be expected. Most regions complained about the lack of feeder birds. On the other hand, there were a remarkable number of late records in December in spite of the rather cold fall. Warblers were well represented with a Palm on Dec. 30 in Region 1 and on Dec. 26 in Region 2; an Orange-crowned on Jan. 8 in Region 2; a Nashville on Dec. 15 in Region 3; Yellow-rumped in Region 6 (no date); Palm in Region 8 on Dec. 2 and a late Northern Waterthrush on a Christmas count in Region 10. A couple of lingering Lincoln's Sparrows and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak also in Region 10 add to this roster. A very well-described Broad-winged Hawk in Dutchess Co. on Jan. 30 convinced even your most sceptical Highlights editor. This scepticism also led him to omit the report of a very possible Gray-cheeked Thrush from Dutchess Co. in early December. The possibility of the northern form of the Hermit Thrush with very little reddish in the tail and a grayish back can not be overlooked.

Nearly every region commented on the disappearance of the half-hardy species during the winter. The gains that we have been reporting for such species as Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren may well have been wiped out. This has long been a pattern for the Carolina Wren in particular at the northern limit of its range, but it had done so well for so many years that one had hoped that the gains were permanent. Perhaps the reports are too pessimistic, for the Region 9 editor reports that they are still doing well and suggests that it is not the cold, but heavy ice glaze which is the prime factor in their survival. In addition to the decrease of landbirds due to the heavy win-

ter, note the drop in waterfowl and larids, particularly in Region 5.

Another area of general agreement was the very poor northern finch flight. Redpolls, siskins, Pine Grosbeaks and both crossbills were generally absent. Evening Grosbeaks were not in the great numbers of some years, but Purple Finches and goldfinches were present in unprecedented numbers at most feeding stations.

With the exception of the Northern Shrike, which made a very good showing indeed, arctic predators were notably absent. Rough-legged Hawks were below normal in numbers and Snowy Owls were very few in most regions. Region 5 reported 5, and the coastal region reported only 4. None of the three rare northern owls were reported.

The problem of wintering accipiters is still with us. I have been taken severely to task for my comments in the past about the relative numbers of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned. This winter, three regions (1, 3 and 6) reported more Cooper's than Sharp-shinned; 5 regions reported the reverse; one region reported none and the other said "usual scattered few accipiters." It would seem that the major body of wintering Cooper's Hawks is in the western part of the state—Region 1 produced well over half of all the individuals reported.

As indicated earlier, the number of rarities was rather limited during the winter. Region 1 produced the usual good gulls including Lesser Black-backed and Black-legged Kittiwake. Region 2 weighed in with very late Red Phalarope and Pomarine Jaeger. In addition to a late Osprey, Region 3 had Lark Sparrow and Brewer's Blackbird, plus a very likely Mountain Bluebird. Region 5 came up with Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider and Harris' Sparrow. Franklin's Gull and Red-necked Grebe were good for Region 6, but the Bohemian Waxwings would have been exciting for most of the birders in the rest of the state. Another late Osprey appeared in Region 7, but the highlight there was an Eared Grebe for a new regional record. The Varied Thrush in Region 8 was particularly gratifying to all those who were frustrated by the bird just across the line in Conn. last winter. Region 10 reported an imm. Sabine's Gull and a Green-tailed Towhee. The large "Whimbrel" reported from Brookhaven seems more likely to have been the European Curlew rather than the European race of the Whimbrel. Both have the white rump but the Whimbrel has strong head stripes and is the same size as the American form.

The BOTS award must go to the Burrowing Owl in Region 10. Full details are given in a separate article in this issue (see pp. 69-73) but the Burrowing Owl on the Jones Beach strip is far and away the best bird of the season.

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REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

The dreadful winter was possibly the most severe in history. Lake Erie froze Dec. 14, a record early. A record one-month snowfall of 60.7 inches (154 cm) for Dec. was broken the next month with 68.3 inches (174 cm). The infamous 5-day "Blizzard of '77," starting Jan. 28, and worse by reason of the 38-inch (96.5 cm) snow cover, not only tragically paralyzed Buffalo and surrounding areas, but decimated wintering bird populations regionally. With smaller lakes already ice-locked in November, the Allegheny and Genesee Rivers closed by mid-January except for a few stretches used by waterfowl until becoming turbid about Feb. 20. December temperatures averaged 5.9° F (3.3° C) below normal and January registered a record 9.7° F (5.4° C) colder than usual. Finally, for the first since Dec. 22, the mercury climbed above freezing on Feb. 9 and the back of the winter was broken. Warmer weather then continued, averaging February temperatures to 1° F (6° C) above normal, and bringing optimistic migrants (Canada Geese, robins, icterids) to revive a winter weary Region.

Positives for the winter include 1) excellent Christmas tally of dabbling ducks, bay ducks, Hooded Mergansers and Ring-necked Pheasants; 2) widely reported small Turkey flocks wintering well on available Red Oak acorns, but some culled to the strongest and fittest by the rugged season (Eaton); 3) fine larid numbers; 4) superabundance of Rock Doves, Mourning Doves and Blue Jays; 5) widespread Red-breasted Nuthatches, Cedar Waxwings, N. Shrikes and Am. Robins, until Feb.; 6) Cardinals thriving well on bounty of wild grapes and feeder fare; 7) good numbers of Purple Finches and Am. Goldfinches.

Negatives for the winter include 1) fewer both field and feeder birds (Bander D. Clark caught 951 *less* this season than in '75-'76); 2) low numbers of wintering ducks and Oldsquaws, White-winged Scoters, and Com. and Red-breasted Mergansers; 3) poor showing of Ruffed Grouse, few Am. Coots, no Com. Snipe; 4) no Snowy Owl invasion; 5) absence of most half-hardies (Tufted Titmice, Carolina Wrens, Mockingbirds) after Jan.; 6) almost no Golden-crowned Kinglets, E. Meadowlarks and winter finches; 7) sharp drop in wintering White-throated and Song Sparrows by Feb.; the persistent cold and deep snow too much for half-hardies.

Rarities include Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake and House Finch. Addenda from the fall are Mute Swan, Goshawk, Hudsonian Godwit, Parasitic Jaeger, House Finch and "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Christmas Census; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NP or NS—Nature Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional CC, Dec. 18-Jan. 2, which includes totals of Audubon CC's from Beaver Meadow, BOS, Hamburg-E. Aurora, Jamestown, Oak Orchard

Swamp, Scio, St. Bonaventure plus Allegany Co. (outside "Scio Circle"); SP—State Park.

Contributors: Robert Andrle, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Lou Burton, William Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, John Compton (JCM), Ed Curtis (Weather Data, Wellsville), Stephen Eaton, John Forness, Mary Forness (MFr), David Freeland, Helen Graves, Matthew Hotchkiss, Michael Pitzrick, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Ann Scott (AnS), Robert Sundell, Joseph Thill (Weather Data, Buffalo), Helen Thomas, James VanScoy, Regina VanScoy, Ed Wilmot (Weather Data, Rossburg), Larry Wilson; and initialed Observers: Harold Axtell, Lorry Chapman, Flora Elderkin, Harriette Klabunde, Walter Klabunde, Erma Larson, Alice McKale, Willard McKale, John Morse, Frances Rew.

CORRIGENDUM: In *The Kingbird* Vol. XXVI, No. 4, Fall 1976, p. 213, the line, "a rare 'LAWRENCE'S' at Onoville and another at S. Valley June 24, 26 . . ." should read: "a rare 'LAWRENCE'S' at Onoville in S. Valley Township, Cattaraugus Co., June 24-29 (RS,RA+)." There was but ONE adult male "Lawrence's" Warbler in breeding plumage, not two. Also, the date range is extended as a result of the bird being spotted again by three veteran observers June 29 (*vide* RS). My thanks to Bob Sundell for correcting this important record.

LOONS—DUCKS: The Com. Loon was unreported except for one arr at Tonawanda Feb. 21 (DF). Verified as over two weeks early was a Red-throated Loon at Olcott Feb. 26 (DF). Although 3 Red-necked Grebes at Dunkirk Feb. 13 (RA+) and one at Youngstown Feb. 26 (DF+) survived the winter, the 3 individuals picked up in Cattaraugus Co. Feb. 2, following the blizzard, all died (JF,MFr); the loss is "probably tip of iceberg" for this Blue List species (SE); the fate of one at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 23 (FR+) and another grounded at Hamburg Feb. 7 (RA) is unknown. A Great Blue Heron was found dead at Scio Jan. 4 (RP,VP) and only 2 others were reported from the Region after mid-Jan.

Spotted over Elton were 27 Whistling Swans Dec. 1 (DC) and first spring arr was one over Scio Feb. 5 (VP). 154 Canada Geese on the BOSCC were very unusual; a pair wintered at Farmersville Sta (DC) and max of a widespread movement beginning Feb. 24 was 2000 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 28 (Olsen,JM). 5 Snow Geese ("Blues") arr at Iroquois NWR Feb. 27 (JM).

Numbered on the RCC were: Mallards, 1450 (high) and Black Ducks, 591. Of the latter (not all hybridized with Mallards yet), a max 20 wintered on the Allegheny R near Olean (SE+) and 80 were counted at Frewsburg Feb. 13 (RS+). Pintails tallied 27 (high) on the RCC and a single was sighted on the Chadakoin R, Jamestown, Jan. 4 and Feb. 1-28 (RS+). Rare in winter, a N. Shoveler appeared on the BOSCC. A Wood Duck was seen on the Allegheny R Jan. 9, 14 (SE,JF,MFr) and a second arr at Iroquois NWR Feb. 24 (Olsen).

Redheads tallied 180 (high) on the BOSCC with other reports: 70 at Grand Is. Jan. 8 (DF) and max 18 arr at Celoron Feb. 20, 28 (RS,FE). Canvasbacks numbered 7785 (high) on the RCC, and 9 arr at Celoron Feb. 27 (RS). A few Lesser Scaups were noted: 23 (high) on the BOSCC; one at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF); 11 at Grand Is. Jan. 8 (DF); and one at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 27 (AM,WM).

Com. Goldeneyes were well reported: 5886 on the RCC (highest ever); 1700, Wilson-Lyndonville Dec. 12 (DF); 1000 at Ft. Niagara Jan. 5 (HK,WK); max 45 wintering on the Allegheny R Jan. 20 (JF,MFr+); max 5 wintering on the Genesee R Feb. 6 (RP,VP+); and 250 arr at Celoron Feb. 24 (RS).

On the BOSCC were: Oldsquaw, 105 (low) and White-winged Scoter, 2 (low). Noteworthy merganser reports included: Hooded, 23 (high) on the RCC; one on the Allegheny R Dec. 9 (RV,JV) and 6 there Jan. 30 (JF,MFr); one at Jamestown Jan. 4 (RS); and one near Dunkirk Jan. 23 (RA+) and Feb. 27 (AM,WM); Common, 3870 (low) on the BOSCC, with max of wintering birds Jan. 21-Feb. 22; 36 on the Allegheny R (JF,MFr+), 6 on the Genesee R (VP+) and 25 at Onoville (RS+); Red-breasted, 66 (low) on the BOSCC, max 7 on the

Allegheny R Jan. 30-Feb. 12 (JF,MFr+), max 3 on the Genesee R Jan. 12-Feb. 9 (MP,VP, RP), and 2 at Celoron Feb. 20 (RS).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Single **GOSHAWKS** were seen in two Allegheny Co. locations irregularly all season (VP,DB,LB). On the RCC, 12 Sharp-shinned and 26 Cooper's Hawks were tallied. Outside census days, cautious, veteran observers came up with our usual winter story: more Cooper's than sharpies: a total 7 Sharp-shinned from 7 locations, and 19(!) Cooper's, including one found dead, from 17 areas. Single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared on the Allegheny Co. CC and in 5 other reports. Rough-legged Hawks numbered 10 on the RCC, with other reports of a total 21 birds from 14 locations. An adult **BALD EAGLE** was found at the Allegheny Reservoir, 2 mi. north of Onoville Feb. 13 (RS,Beal+). Only 3 Marsh Hawks were reported in addition to singles on the Scio and Allegheny Co. CC's.

Am. Coots for the season were 2 on the Jamestown CC, 2 at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 16 (RS,Reckhow), and 5 arr at Celoron Feb. 28 (FE), with nary hide nor hair of the usual hundreds on Chautauqua L in Dec. 4 Purple Sandpipers appeared at Niagara Falls Jan. 6, and 3 were there Jan. 8 (HA,Happ). A single winter Dunlin stopped at Cuba L Dec. 27 (AnS).

Highlights of the larid season were: Glaucous Gull, 7 (high) on the BOSCC plus one at Dunkirk Jan. 8 (FR,Buck) and again Feb. 13 (RA+), plus one at Buffalo Harbor Jan. 8 (RA+); Iceland Gull, 3 at Dunkirk Jan. 23 (RA+); Great Black-backed Gull, 370 on the BOSCC, highest ever; **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**, 1 imm at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Dec. 10 (DF); Herring Gull, 21, 264 (high) on the RCC; Ring-billed Gull, 20,000 at Dunkirk Harbor Dec. 26 (RS,FR); 2 late Franklin's Gulls at Porter Ave., Buffalo, Dec. 10 (DF); a Little Gull at Lewiston Jan. 9 (AM,WM); and an adult **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The only Snowy Owl reports were singles on the BOSCC, in Amity Dec. 12 (VP,RP), and at Buffalo Harbor Jan. 8, 9 (RA+). A Long-eared Owl appeared on the BOSCC and 2 Short-eared Owls were found in Clarence Jan. 6 (DF).

Com. Flickers tallied 63 on the RCC, highest ever; several appeared in Jan. but only 2 in Feb. Good reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers include 2 at feeders near Allegheny in mid-Dec., suggesting a possible new nesting area in the Allegheny R valley (SE). A total of 8 Red-headed Woodpeckers were found in four locations. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker appeared on the Scio CC. Holding its own fairly well here is the Hairy Woodpecker with 238 on the RCC, of which only 7 (low) were found for the BOSCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Larks numbered 148 on the RCC (270 in '74; 169 in '75). On the RCC, Red-breasted Nuthatches tallied 34 (with other reports finding a total 22 in 16 areas), and Brown Creepers, 57 (high). 8 Winter Wrens on the RCC was also high but only two others were reported: singles at Alfred Dec. 24 (HT) and at Celoron Feb. 20 (RS). A Brown Thrasher wintered on the Haskell Rd., near Cuba, thru Jan. 10 (JF,MFr).

2 Hermit Thrushes were seen in Almond Dec. 11, 14 (Gibson *vide* EB). Single E. Bluebirds arr near Scio Feb. 18 (Compton) and near Cuba Feb. 27 (JF,MFr).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warblers appeared as: 5 on the RCC, and singles near Alfred Dec. 12 (EB), and at Alden Jan. 1 (Wolfling). A very late Palm Warbler was identified at Wellsville Dec. 30 (EL).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Virtually unreported were E. Meadowlarks: 16 on the RCC plus singles at 2 locations. First icterid influx began Feb. 13-28 with max: 170 Red-winged Blackbirds in Amity Feb. 26 (VP), 9 Com. Grackles at Cuba L Feb. 27 (AnS), and 50 Brown-headed Cowbirds at E. Amherst Feb. 25 (DF). A max 2 Rusty Blackbirds wintered at Belmont, increasing to max 4 arr here Feb. 27 (DB,LB).

Max flock of Cardinals was 11 at Scio Jan. 12 (MP,VP). A **DICKCISSEL** appeared at

Cuba L Dec. 1-8, Jan. 21 (AnS). Only 449 Evening Grosbeaks were on the RCC (2158 in '75) while the season's banding totaled: 271 at Alfred (EB) and only 45 at Farmersville Sta. (DC). 63 HOUSE FINCHES were reported from 7 locations, including a new area: 2 at Alfred Feb. 27, 28 (LC). Noteworthy winter finches were: Com. Redpoll, at Williamsville 20 on Dec. 14 and one on Jan. 20 (DF), and at Cheektowaga 3 on Dec. 31 (DF); Pine Siskin, 2 at Youngstown Jan. 9 (FR,Buck), and 6 at Oakland Rural Cem. Feb. 26 (DF+); and White-winged Crossbill, 5 at Wilson Dec. 12 (DF).

Winter Rufous-sided Towhees were: 2 males near Vandalia all season (SE), and singles near Cuba Dec. 10, 25 (JF,MFr), in Canaseraga Jan. 1-31 (A. New) and near Cuba L Jan. 7-31 (Pettit *fide* AnS). Non-feeder-sustained sparrows virtually disappeared in Jan. However, 3 White-crowned were at a Belmont feeder all winter (DB,LB), while at least 43 White-throated were taking hand-outs in 17 areas. Notable from the RCC were: Field Sparrow, 24 (16 in '74); Swamp Sparrow, 15 (high); and Song Sparrow, 172 (high). A very early Chipping Sparrow arr at Orchard Park Feb. 19 (Zablotny). Lapland Longspurs were scarce: max 44 in Pomfret Dec. 28, Jan. 16 (RS+), 30 at Yates Jan. 23 (AM,WM), and 3 at Cambria Jan. 26 (HK,WK). On the RCC, Snow Buntings tallied 1760; max Southern Tier report was 400 along the Allegheny R Feb. 5 (RV,JV); max from the northern counties was 350 at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF).

ADDENDUM: From the Oct. 10, 1976 Regional Census, compiled by B. Lown, noteworthy nos. are compared with former Oct. counts as H+=highest ever, L=low, F=first ever, OD=occurrence outside usual dates. Total was 174 species with 106,233 individual birds. Significant are: Green Heron 3 (L), Great Egret 1 (H+), MUTE SWAN 1, Whistling Swan 1 (OD), Canada Goose 13,383 (H+), Brant 13 (OD), Gadwall 82 (H+), GOSHAWK 2 (H+), Rough-legged Hawk 1 (OD), Ruffed Grouse 26 (L), Ring-necked Pheasant 45 (L), Am. Woodcock 10 (L), Red Knot 3, HUDSONIAN GODWIT 1, PARASITIC JAEGER 3 (H+), Brown Creeper 33 (L), Carolina Wren 15 (H+), Gray Catbird 32 (L), Brown Thrasher 3 (L), Swainson's Thrush 6 (L), Loggerhead Shrike 3, Magnolia Warbler 9 (L), Pine Warbler 3, E. Meadowlark 262 (L), Evening Grosbeak 4, HOUSE FINCH 27, Rufous-sided Towhee 63 (L), Savannah Sparrow 23 (L), Henslow's Sparrow 1 (F,OD), "OREGON" JUNCO 1, and Tree Sparrow 7 (OD).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION TWO – GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

The first two months of the season continued the trend of the fall—record cold. In addition, snowfall was recorded for 66 straight days beginning Dec. 6. The total was approx. 80 in. (203 cm) thru the season. From mid-December to early February the thermometer did not reach as high as freezing. By mid-January, nearly all bodies of water in the area were completely frozen with the exception of Lake Ontario which was littered with floating ice. The blizzard of January 28 was followed by high winds for over a week which left large drifts along most roads, greatly restricting birding. The weather broke the second week of February with gradual warming and thawing thru the end of the month. The last weekend of the month saw most open ground bare while 12-18 in. (30-45 cm) remained in wooded areas and drifts to 10 ft. (3 m) lined some roads.

Paradoxically, in spite of the very cold fall and early winter, there were many reports of half-hardy species attempting to winter over, and numbers of species reported to local clubs

were nearly average each month. In contrast to this, many observers noted a general lack of numbers of individuals of small passerine species both at feeders and in the field, which was borne out in the Christmas counts and in feeder reports. With the thawing of late February the geese, ducks and hawks returned with, again, near average arrival dates.

Major positives for the season were, in addition to rarities, a good influx of N. Shrikes, a large concentration of Short-eared Owls in Avon, excellent numbers of Lapland Longspurs, and early Canada Geese in large numbers.

On the negative side were a lack of Rough-legged Hawks, only one Snowy Owl, and a near total absence of winter finches except for flocks of Evening Grosbeaks in the Finger Lakes part of the region.

Rarities: "Richardson's" Goose (sub spec.), Harlequin Duck, Common Eider, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Chipping Sparrow.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock's Bay, CL—Canandaigua Lake, IB—Irondequoit Bay, LO—Lake Ontario, MP—Mendon Ponds, PB—Pt. Breeze, SB—Sodus Bay, WL—west lakeshore.

Observers: Ron & Kay Ballard, Harry & Gretchen Beaver, Roger Beebe, C. & S. Bennen, Nancy Boudrie, Julie Claffey, Roger Clark, Anne Clarridge, Bob & Dottie Coffee, Jack & Joyce Connors, Jerry Czech, Michael Darcy, Gertrude Davis, Jean & Neil Dilley, Bob & Frank Dobson, Kay & Jim Doris, Joan Esley, John & Arlene Foster, J. Richard Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, Ed Greco, Kevin Griffith, Tom & Marian Griswold, Olive Hoffman, Scott Kampmeier, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, John Koopmans, Steve Lauer, Gwen Leighty, Dorothy Leuze, Jim & Walt Listman, Warren Lloyd, Haywood & Emily Madden, Frank & Mary Mattei, Gordon & Jim Meade, Bob & Margaret McKinney, Joe & Thelma McNett, Laura & Neil Moon, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Chip Perrigo, Betty Perrigo, Vivian Pitzrick, Neil Prosser, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Al Shea, Ray & Ann Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Bob & Sue Spahn, Ann Stear, Helen Steinhauser, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Bill Symonds, Bill Talpey, Steve & Camille Taylor, David, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Stan & Helen Thomas, Betty Wahl, Earl & Alice Wallace, Eleanor Weld, Robert White, Munroe Will, Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: There were no Com. Loons and only 1 Red-throated Loon reported for the season: Webster Park Dec. 5 (AK). Red-necked Grebe was again scarce: 1 Summer-ville Feb. 10 (RO,JCL,RG+).

Canada Geese returned in large numbers in late Feb.: max 7021 Chili Feb. 27 (J&SS). A single female CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis hutchinsii*) commonly known as Richardson's Goose, which dropped out of a flock of geese was treated for an injured wing and remained at the farm of EG in Clarendon thru the season. Photos have been taken. The only Brant: 3 IB outlet Jan. 11 (J&TM) were found during the annual duck census.

While most ducks were pushed out early by the cold, there remained good numbers of Com. Goldeneye and scattered scoters of all three species. HARLEQUIN DUCK: 1 Pt. Breeze Dec. 13 (RC,BSy); 1 LO Feb. 10 thru (KG,mob). In addition there were 2 reports of COM. EIDER: 1 female BB Dec. 18 (WLi); 1 female SB Feb. 12-19 (D,M&TT); and King Eider: 1 imm. male LO Dec. 19 (G&JM,R&SS,J&AF).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Accipiter reports were the usual scattered few each month. While Rough-legged Hawks were few, record numbers of Red-tailed Hawks were reported: max 97 Little Lakes CBC Dec. 26. Lakeshore hawk migration was noted starting Feb. 19 with a good movement of Red-tailed, Rough-legged, and Marsh Hawks Feb. 26-27.

Wintering Virginia Rails: 2 MP Jan. 8 (GOS,RBA Trips) at a spring where they often have wintered, succumbed when it froze in mid-Jan. Am. Coot massed in good numbers: 700 CL Dec. 15 (RO), until that too froze.

The only shorebirds of the season were Com. Snipe: 1 Seneca Park Dec. 19 (TT,MMA) and RED PHALAROPE: 1, LO near BB Dec. 4-9 (WLi,R&SS+). There was a single report of a very rare winter POMARINE JAEGER: 1 BB Jan. 1 (WLi).

The normal scattered reports of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were received each month and good numbers of Greater Black-backed Gulls were seen: max 250 IB Feb. 19 (CP,RC,BSy). Bonaparte's Gulls departed in early Dec. and only one Little Gull was reported: 1 SB Jan. 9 (MAS+).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: The season's lone Snowy Owl was found on the ice CL Feb. 4 (RO). A single Long-eared Owl was sighted at Avon Jan. 9 (J&AF). Short-eared Owl flocks occurred in at least two places: max 8 Hamlin Dec. (RC,BSy); max 52 Avon Jan. 8 thru (mob).

A few Belted Kingfishers could be found until the Jan. 28 blizzard. Resident woodpeckers were in very good numbers and a few Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported. Red-headed Woodpeckers could be found in one location: max 8 Avon Jan. 3 (J&AF).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: The cold and snow seemed to take its toll of half-hardy species as numbers of Carolina Wrens, Mockingbirds, Am. Robins, and Hermit Thrushes decreased through the season. No less than 6 RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS were reported at the start of the season: 1 Wyoming Valley Dec. 18 (JS,KG); 1 Letchworth Park Dec. 18 (R&KB); 1 Greece Dec. 19 (CP+); 2 Hemlock Lake Dec. 26 (SK+); 1 Conesus Lake Dec. 26 (RC,BSy). None was reported in Jan.

The Starling population in the Gates roost was estimated at 325,000 on Dec. 19.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Warblers provided several of the best seasonal records. Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 30 MP Jan. 8 (GOS,RBA). ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 1 MP Jan. 8 (CP,RC); well-documented, probably of the western race, near the spot of a late Nov. report of two. Com. Yellowthroat: 1 Brighton Dec. 4 (J&ND); at a feeder. Almost incredibly, PALM WARBLER: 1 Geneseo Dec. 26 (J&WLi); found at a feeder during CBC.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: To continue the record for feeder birds, the following lingered with man's aid: 1 each, male and female YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD appeared within a few miles of the large Gates roost: Chili Jan. 10, 22 (GL), (photographed). Rusty Blackbird: 2 Livonia Dec. 13 (HM). N. Oriole: 1 Livonia Dec. 21-24 (HM). Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 Brighton Dec. 5-12 (J&ND). RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE: 1 Conesus Dec. 26 (CP,AS); 1 Webster Feb. (E&AW). CHIPPING SPARROW: 1 Rochester Jan. (J&JC); 1 Rochester Dec. 19 (CBC). White-crowned Sparrow: 10 Walworth Jan. (JE+); 2 Lima Jan. (J&AF).

The area House Finch flocks are doing well with max: 12 Highland Park Dec. (mob); 21 Brighton Jan. (J&ND).

Wintering open field birds were good with max: Lapland Longspur: 75 Kendall Dec. 24 (CP,RC) and Snow Bunting: 1000 Kendall Dec. 5 (B&FD).

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Robert Spahn has succeeded Richard O'Hara as Regional Editor for Region 2. We wish to thank Dick O'Hara for the excellent coverage he has given to Region 2 for the past several years. - The Editors

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

The extreme cold of the fall season continued into December with the average temperature much below normal, especially the daytime readings. A brief respite in mid-month melted much of the snow cover, but, new snows almost daily along with constant sub-freezing temperatures until early February resulted in a heavy snow cover. The average temperature for January was 12.97 degrees F (-10.6° C) at Ithaca, the lowest ever recorded for the month. Frequent high winds, particularly on January 28th, added to the problem for both men and birds. February brought thaws and about average temperatures. The winter's precipitation expressed as inches of rainfall, not snowfall, was below normal.

The cold fall probably moved most of the half-hardies out. A few remained to be tallied on the Christmas counts but most of these disappeared with January's severe onslaught. A constant complaint was that few birds could be found in the field or even at the feeders after the January 28th blizzard.

But there were bright spots. It was a good year for N. Shrikes and Snow Buntings. Many Yellow-rumped Warblers stayed at least until January. December brought an Osprey, an Eastern Phoebe and a Nashville Warbler. Three western species, Lark Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird and a possible Mountain Bluebird, all appeared in the Clifton Spring-Newark area.

Other than a fairly good number of Evening Grosbeaks, the northern finch flight was poor. There was a small, spotty influx of Purple Finches and a very few Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins but no Pine Grosbeaks or crossbills. Increased feeding of thistle seed brought in more American Goldfinches or, at least, made them more visible at feeders.

The warm days of late February brought 7,000 Canada Geese to MNWR with Snows the next day and many flocks of icterids. On Feb. 27th migrating geese were everywhere in the Region. Brubaker tallied 15,175 going north over the Seneca Lake Valley between 10 and 11:45 A.M.

Rarities: Osprey, Iceland Gull, Common Raven, Mountain Bluebird (unconfirmed), Nashville Warbler, Brewer's Blackbird, Lark Sparrow.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CC—Christmas Count preceded by CC for Central Cayuga Jan. 1, E for Elmira Jan. 1, G for Geneva Dec. 18, I for Ithaca Jan. 1, M for Montezuma Jan. 1 (Region 3 portion only), WG for Watkins Glen Dec. 26; SP—State Park; Sen—Seneca; WFC—January Waterfowl Count but without returns from Seneca Lake; * (starred) details on file.

Compilers and contributors: Walter E. Benning, Michael Braun, Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen), James Gibson (Ithaca), Robert Gustafson (MNWR); Bernice Hilfiker, Wilfred Howard, Malcolm Lerch (Penn Yan), Donald Walters, Jeffery Walters, Mary Welles (Elmira).

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: 4 reports; max 5 Cay L Dec. 5. Red-necked Grebe: 1 MNWR Feb. 24 thru. Horned Grebe: 66 WFC low. Pied-billed Grebe: 31 WFC. Great Blue Heron: several in Dec. but few after Jan. 1. Whistling Swan: 3 Branchport early Jan. Canada Goose: 7113 WFC. Mallard: 2378 WFC; unusual raft of 5000 Cay L off Sheldrake Feb. 27. Black: 686 WFC. Gadwall: overwintered on Cay and Sen L; max 28 at s end of Sen L. Jan. 16. Pintail: 30 MNWR Feb. 26. Green-winged Teal: 1 Branchport early Dec.; 1 CCCC. Am. Wigeon: 19 Long Pt. SP Dec. 10; 10 CCCC; 4 WGCC. Wood Duck: 3 ICC. Redhead: 6939 WFC; 10 on Canandaigua Outlet near Clifton Springs in Feb. for the first time in several years. Ring-necked: 4 WGC; 3 Horseheads Feb. 24. Canvasback: 553 WFC. Greater Scaup: 325 GCC low. Lesser Scaup: 41 WFC low. Com. Goldeneye: 292 WFC. Bufflehead: 84 WFC. Oldsquaw: 8 GCC. White-winged Scoter: 4 Watkins Glen Jan. 30 (JB). Ruddy Duck:

4 Dresden thru Jan.; 2 CCCC; 6 GCC. Hooded Merganser: 35 WFC. Com. Merganser: 180 GCC; 150 MNWR Feb. 28. Red-breasted Merganser: 18 GCC; 10 WFC.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Hawks: Goshawk: 1 GCC; 1 ICC; 1 report each in Jan. and Feb. Penn Yan. Sharp-shinned: 1 all winter picking off birds at feeder Clyde; 2 GCC; 3 ICC; 2 MCC; 1 Elmira Jan. 1. Cooper's: 10 specific reports spread over the Region plus "many reports at feeders—Odessa, Watkins Glen." Red-tailed: while still commonly seen, numbers probably were down; comment by MW, "No reports after extreme weather"; 1 seen taking a crow near Clifton Springs (JW). Red-shouldered: 1 ICC. Rough-legged: not a heavy flight year with most reports from Penn Yan-Watkins Glen-Elmira area; 8 WGCC. Marsh: with several birds overwintering in Seneca, Schuyler and Yates counties and singles reported from MNWR, Ithaca and Elmira; there may be reason for cautious optimism here. **OSPREY:** 1 Ithaca Dec. 5 (JG)* very late. Am. Kestrel: 35 GCC. Ruffed Grouse: increasing Penn Yan (ML); 4 each GCC and ICC. Ring-necked Pheasant: 31 MCC. Turkey: 8 ICC. Am. Coot: 883 WFC. Killdeer: 2 Phelps Dec. 18 and Jan. 8; 1 Camp Dittmer Feb. 27. Com. Snipe: 1 ICC. **ICELAND GULL:** 1 Sen L Feb. 11-13 (Betty Strath). Great Black-backed Gull: 14 ICC; 1 wintered at Watkins Glen, the first in several years. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls: 300 of each fed at Waterloo Dump.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 343 ECC; 302 MCC; numbers seemed to go down Jan.-Feb. Barred Owl: 1-2 Sapsucker Woods early Jan. Long-eared Owl: heard along 6 Mile Creek early Jan. (S. Sabo). Short-eared Owl: 2 at former roost near Hall; 5 each at Yerkes and Watts road roosts in Sen Co. Saw-whet Owl: 1 heard along 6 Mile Creek (S. Sabo). Belted Kingfisher: 4 ECC; 3 ICC; 2 GCC. Com. Flicker: 17 GCC. Pileated Woodpecker: 2 ICC; 1 GCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: the spread of this species in recent years from its traditional stronghold in the Clyde River-Montezuma Marsh area is illustrated by the CCS; 16 MCC; 14 GCC; 10 ICC; 1 ECC. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Penn Yan; 1 Reeder's Creek Dec. 4-Feb. 13. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Clifton Springs Dec. 4-23; 1 ICC; 1 Elmira Jan. 2. Hairy Woodpecker: regarded as scarce by some; max 56 ICC. Downy Woodpecker: possibly down; 115 ICC; 87 GCC; 71 MCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Eastern Phoebe: Probable immature Ithaca Dec. 19 (C. Felton) very late date. Horned Lark: normal to below; 283 GCC. **COM. RAVEN:** 3 Monterey Feb. (JB). Com. Crow: migrating MNWR Feb. 27. Black-capped Chickadee: 562 ICC. Tufted Titmouse: 40 ICC; 22 ECC; 9 GCC; 3 MCC. White-breasted Nuthatch: down. Red-breasted Nuthatch: scarce. Brown Creeper: best reports are from protected areas. Winter Wren 1 report ECC. Carolina Wren: good reports to Jan. 1, i.e., 11 ICC, few thereafter; 4 survived at Penn Yan and 2 at Interlaken Beach and 1 at Sheldrake in ravines. Mockingbird: 1 each Clyde, Clifton Springs, Reeder's Creek and 2 Ithaca. Gray Catbird: 1 wintered Burdett. Brown Thrasher: 2 at Ithaca feeders. Am. Robin: few wintering. Hermit Thrush: 1 Camp Dittmer Jan. 2; 1 Ithaca Feb. 1-7 no details; 1 Pine City Jan. 10. **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** a good description of a bird at Newark Jan. 15 (BK) but, in the absence of a photograph or specimen, it remains unconfirmed. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 26 ICC; 17 MCC; 10 GCC; 1 at Penn Yan feeder thru Feb; 1 eating suet at Clifton Springs Jan. 7-16. N. Shrike: invasion year; widespread.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: **NASHVILLE:** 1 Elmira Dec. 15 (WH)*. Yellow-rumped: 48 GCC very high; 7 ICC; 3 WGCC with 1 thru Feb. 2; up to 12 Camp Dittmer thru Jan. 15.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: 50 Elmira Dec. 3; 9 ECC; otherwise scarce. Red-winged Blackbird, Com. Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird: few wintered; migrants Feb. 24 on. Rusty Blackbird: 5 MCC; 6 ECC. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** 1 Clifton Springs late Dec.-Jan. 20 (M. Smith, JW)* good descriptions submitted by both. Cardinal: excellent numbers. Evening Grosbeak: moved into Ithaca late Dec. with 901 ICC; by mid-Jan. widely spread in small flocks. Purple Finch: good numbers Penn Yan, Clifton Springs fewer elsewhere. House Finch: 1 at Waterloo feeder, a new location. Common Redpoll: 45 CCCC; 8

ICC; 2 Big Flats; 1 report Penn Yan. Pine Siskin: 3 ICC; 1 ECC; 1 report Penn Yan. Am. Goldfinch: many everywhere. Rufous-sided Towhee: 3 ICC; 1 CCCC. LARK SPARROW: 1 Clifton Springs Dec. 3-12 (DW,JW)* photographed. Dark-eyed Junco: (Slate-colored) 259 ICC; 177 ECC; 120 GCC; (Oregon) 2 ECC. Tree Sparrow: one of the few birds readily found in the field during the period. Field Sparrow: 2 MCC; 2 ECC; 1 CCCC; 3 reports Penn Yan. White-crowned Sparrow: 3 ICC; 1 MCC; immature thru Feb. Penn Yan. White-throated Sparrow: 36 GCC; 28 ECC; 123 ICC; 1 MCC; a few at feeders thru Feb. Swamp Sparrow: 7 ICC; 6 WGCC; 1 GCC. Song Sparrow: 31 ICC; 26 MCC; 12 GCC; 12 ECC all very low; few at feeders. Lapland Longspur: 7 MCC; 6 ICC; 1 GCC; scattered individuals in Jan. Snow Bunting: 516 CCCC; 151 WGCC; 130 ECC; 65 GCC; 51 ICC; many large flocks reported including 200 Watkins Glen Feb. 21, 500 Elmira Jan. 21, 2000 near Yellow Tavern in Sen Co (P. Trail) and a mind boggling flock of 3000-5000 which stayed around Hall for several weeks (ML).

R.D. 2, Clyde, New York 14433

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY for LESLIE BEMONT

By the first weekend in December, the pattern for our record cold winter had already been set. The first of many sub-zero nights occurred Dec. 2. After that it was just more of the same. Ice quickly sealed lakes and ponds. Late fall migrants evacuated the area without delay.

Even the swift-flowing Susquehanna River, which generally outruns attempts to top it with an ice cover, was about 95% frozen from early January until the ice started to break up the last weekend in February.

However, (and this was a high point of a dull season!!) the few open channels of the river evidently offered a haven to Redheads, seldom seen in this area. About 100 were reported wintering during February at various localities along the river. Higher numbers of goldeneye and scaup also were counted. Mallards and Common Mergansers wintered in normal numbers. Only Black Ducks seemed down.

Reports of Great Blue Herons, unusual here after late fall, persisted through early January in widespread areas of the region.

Low hawk counts could be attributed to the continuous snow cover which blanketed fields from mid-December until mid-February. The area escaped heavy snow storms but it snowed a little every couple of nights, and there was no thaw. Even the few American Kestrels which usually remain through the winter apparently took off for easier hunting.

Noteworthy sightings for the season included Horned Grebe, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Also in defiance of the severe winter, many less hardy species tested their ability to survive, and apparently succeeded! Mockingbirds, robins, Carolina Wren and Tufted Titmouse were reported throughout.

Purple Finches were at feeders in record numbers, arriving in early January. Otherwise it was a poor year for wintering finches. There were only single reports for Pine Grosbeak, Redpoll, siskin and crossbills. Evening Grosbeak moved in later than usual but quickly built up numbers.

White-throated Sparrows were common at feeders but Song Sparrows were scarce.

It was an excellent year for Snow Buntings. A record 500 were reported on the Oneonta Christmas Census; 275 on the Tioga Census and reports of flocks continued throughout period.

Observers: Cutler and Jeanette Baldwin, Jean Barnes, Les Bemont, Reynolds Bennett, Helen and Allen Carpenter, Bill Chittenden, Mildred Clark, Gail and Warren Corderman, Anna and Marilyn Davis, Clare Gottschall, A. Hayes, Elva Hawken, D. Hempel, Claude Howard, Don Huntington, Cindy Kirch, Jo Koenig, M. Little, Florence Linaberry, Peter and Dorothy Martin, Harriet Marsi, Rick Marsi, Evelyn and George Mead, Jim Mead, Jeanette Merrill, Mary Ann Middleton, John New, Rita and Robert Pantle, Chris Rounds, Robert and Jeanne Saunders, Robert and Mary Sheffield, Fred Shuler, K. Stalter, Ed and Frances Vermilya, Elizabeth Washburn, Donald Weber, Ruth and Sally White, Beryl and Tom Wilson, Kathryn Wilson, Irene and Wayne Wright.

Abbreviations: Bing—Binghamton; BCC—Binghamton Christmas Census Dec. 26 (official count); BCC No. 2—Binghamton Christmas Census Jan. 2; OCC—Oneonta Christmas Census Dec. 18; TCC—Tioga County (Owego) Christmas Census Jan. 1; WFC—NYSFBC Census.

LOONS—DUCKS: HORNED GREBE: 1 Oneonta Jan. 18, found floundering in snow after blustery winds, not near any open water. Recovered quickly and survived 6 weeks, first in the John New's bathtub and then in fish tank at Oneonta State University on a diet of "minnows from the bait shop." Pied-billed Grebe: 1 TCC, 1 Chenango Bridge Feb. 26. Great Blue Heron: 5 WFC. Canada Goose: 25 TCC, 50 Bing. Jan. 27 and Feb. 27.

Mallards: 99 BCC, 31 BCC No. 2, 6 OCC, 112 WFC. Black Duck: 21 BCC, 30 BCC No. 2, 6 OCC, 7 WFC, 5 Delhi Feb. 15. Wood Duck: 2 BCC. Redhead: 1 WFC, 25 wintered month of February Susquehanna River at Unadilla, 10 (all males) wintered at Wells Bridge, 54 "counted in river Vestal to Nichols" Feb. 23 (EW *et al.*), 11 highest of several Bing. reports for February! Scaup sp.: 5 Bing. Jan. 31 and Feb. 18, 5 Lounsberry thru Feb. Common Goldeneye: 33 WFC, 40 Vestal to Nichols Feb. 23, highest of Feb. reports. Bufflehead: 2 Oneonta Feb. 12, 1 Bing. Feb. 23. Common Merganser: 9 BCC, 5 BCC No. 2, 23 WFC, 6 Oneonta Feb. 12. Red-breasted Merganser: 1 Owego in January, 3 WFC, 1 Bing. Feb. 20.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 BCC and BCC No. 2. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1 BCC, 2 BCC No. 2, 1 OCC, 1 TCC. Cooper's Hawk: 2 BCC, 1 Owego Jan. Red-tailed Hawk: 4 BCC, 1 OCC, 5 TCC, no other reports until mid-Feb. Rough-legged Hawk: 2 OCC, 1 Sherburne Jan. 24, 1 (dark phase) Johnson City Jan. 22 "hovering over open field enclosed by clover leaf interchange of Rt. 17—busy traffic didn't disturb it at all" (LB), the only reports. Marsh Hawk: 1 Oneonta Dec. 26. Merlin: 1 TCC. American Kestrel: 6 BCC, 3 BCC No. 2, 3 OCC, 2 Otego Jan. 15, no February reports. Ruffed Grouse: 3 BCC, 7 BCC No. 2, 2 OCC. Ring-necked Pheasant: 2 BCC, 1 Delhi. Turkey: 6 BCC, 20 Delhi during February "in back of the school. Children put out feed and, with school staff, watched birds early morning come to it from perches in the trees." American Coot: 2 Bing. Feb. 2, five other reports. American Woodcock: 1 Greene all of February (A&MD), 1 Bing. Feb. 28. Herring Gull: 19 BCC, 8 BCC No. 2, 2 TCC, 11 WFC. Ring-billed Gull: 6 BCC, 3 TCC, 12 Bing. and 10 Lounsberry Feb. 23. Gulls (sp) 20 Otego Lake Dec. 4.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 99 BCC, 28 BCC No. 2, 57 OCC, 28 TCC, 27 Oneonta Feb. 12. Screech Owl: 2 BCC, 1 Vestal, January. Great Horned Owl: 4 BCC, 2 TCC. Barred Owl: 1 BCC. Belted Kingfisher: 1 BCC, 3 BCC No. 2, 1 Wells Bridge Feb. 12, 1 Bing. Feb. 23. Com. Flicker: 1 Bing. in December and January, three localities. Pileated Woodpecker: 1 BCC, 1 TCC, 1 Delhi Feb. 13. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 TCC. Hairy Woodpecker: 20 BCC, 17 BCC No. 2, 29 OCC, 12 TCC. Downy Woodpecker: 36 BCC, 41 OCC, 21 TCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 30 Franklin Feb. 24, "several" Port Crane Feb. 25, only reports. Blue Jay: 399 BCC No. 2, 394 OCC, 261 TCC. Common Crow: 274 BCC, 244 OCC, 149 TCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 213 BCC, 265 OCC, 157 TCC. Tufted Titmouse: 8 BCC, 15 TCC, daily Bing. reports thru period, 3 Owego observers made Jan. reports, 1 Franklin Feb. 22. White-breasted Nuthatch: 34 BCC; 33 OCC; 25 TCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 6 BCC, 4 OCC, 3 Oneonta Feb. 19. Brown Creeper: 8 BCC No. 2, 8 OCC, 3 TCC. **HOUSE WREN:** 1 Goodyear Lake Dec. 5 "observed several minutes around boat dock" (I&WW). Carolina Wren: 3 BCC, 1 OCC, reports from Bing., and Owego thru period. Mockingbird: 8 BCC, 1 OCC, reports thru period from Bing. Choconut Center, Oneonta, Otego, Delhi.

Am. Robin: 2 BCC, 3 OCC, 1 TCC, single reports throughout. Hermit Thrush: 1 BCC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 9 BCC, 15 BCC No. 2, 17 OCC, 2 Bing. Feb. 13, only reports. **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET:** 1 OCC. Cedar Waxwing: 18 BCC, 71 BCC No. 2, 1 OCC, 6 Bing. reports in Feb. Northern Shrike: 1 BCC, 1 Jan. 15 and Feb. 12 at Otego, 1 Burlington Flats "took small birds near Dowdall feeder" thru period, single birds also at Owego and Delhi. Starling: 4190 BCC, 362 OCC, 283 TCC.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 Vestal Dec. 9, 27, 31 (GC), 1 Vestal throughout, 2 on Feb. 11 (B&TW).

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: 20 Cooperstown Dec. 14 (MK), 1 BCC No. 2. Red-winged Blackbird: 1 BCC, 2 TCC, no others until first migrants Feb. 26. Northern Oriole: 1 Bing. Dec. 22. Common Grackle: 2 BCC No. 2, no others until Feb. 27. Brown-headed Cowbird: 17 OCC, 1 TCC, 28 Bing. Jan. 25, 30 Oneonta Feb. 28 highest count. Cardinal: 69 BCC, 123 BCC No. 2, 76 OCC, 82 TCC. **ROSE-BREASTED GROSB-EAK:** 1 female Delhi Dec. 6 (MC). Evening Grosbeak: 158 BCC, 507 BCC No. 2, 300 OCC, 317 TCC. Purple Finch: 6 BCC, 15 OCC, really moved in after Jan. 6—reports of up to 20 daily at feeders in Oneonta, Norwich, Delhi, Bing. House Finch: 52 BCC, 2 OCC. Pine Grosbeak: one report, Owego, January. Common Redpoll: 20 Delhi Jan. 26. Pine Siskin: 6 BCC No. 2, only report. American Goldfinch: 156 BCC, 167 BCC No. 2, 33 OCC, 116 TCC, good counts all period. White-winged Crossbill: 20 Bainbridge Dec. 25, only report. Rufous-sided Towhee: 1 Bing. until early January; 2 Oneonta thru period (E&FW). Savannah Sparrow: 1 TCC, also Owego, January. Dark-eyed Junco: 83 BCC, 70 OCC, 97 TCC, good counts thru. Tree Sparrow: 266 BCC, 108 OCC, 222 TCC. Field Sparrow: 1 BCC, 4 Oneonta Dec. 5. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 Bing. Dec. 4, 5, 11 (M&RS). White-throated Sparrow: 52 BCC No. 2, 12 OCC, 3 TCC, several feeder reports throughout. Song Sparrow: 14 BCC No. 2, 5 OCC, very few reports. Snow Bunting: 30 Oneonta Dec. 1, 33 BCC No. 2, 500 OCC, 275 TCC, 50 Norwich Jan. 18, 25 Meredith Feb. 11 and 26.

7 Hubbell Ave., Oneonta, New York 13820

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Frigid, fierce, formidable, ferocious, foot-deep, frosty, and forever—thirty-one miles of ice from Derby Hill to Fair Haven—four hundred plus inches (10+ m) of snow in the Tug Hill Plateau—out-of-sight heating bills—the worst winter in two hundred years—and you can have it! After early December the ground snow just got deeper and deeper—no thaw, no melt, no compaction, no let-up. By mid-January the half-hardies were either snowed under or frozen out, the duck and gull numbers dropped precipitously, and we still had the longest

month of the year—February—to go. The intense cold (greatest known temperature decrease locally recorded for any winter), the fierce winds, and the rising ground snow drove out the residual raptors, the field birds that attempted to persist, and even reduced to scarcity that toughest of citizens, the Common Crow. All-day birding trips might yield only sixteen to eighteen species for the day; in the Adirondack sectors, even less.

Syracuse received 142 inches (361 cm) of that white manna of skiers and Pulaski and Oswego even more than that. The highways in and out of Syracuse were frequently closed by falling or drifting snow; many birders stated they had little to report because they could not get out and about. The poor birding conditions, the execrable weather, and the lack of any significant flights of more northern avifauna made the '76-'77 winter memorable—negatively. No wonder the first Red-winged Blackbirds in late February were greeted with the enthusiasm one normally reserves for Goshawks, Golden Eagles, and godwits. And with luck and a prolonged thaw, the Tug Hill Plateau might be rediscovered by late June or early July.

Positive trends: 1) increased numbers of accipiters, frequently at feeders; 2) more wintering Great Black-backed Gulls; 3) better numbers of wintering Mourning Doves, probably secondary to both changing farm practices and more feeders; 4) greater numbers of wintering Blue Jays; 5) good tallies on wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches; 6) an upsurge in Mockingbirds; 7) excellent numbers of wintering American Robins and Cedar Waxwings; 8) a fine irruption of Northern Shrikes; 9) an increase in Cardinals; 10) a strong but late movement of both Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches; and 11) the return of migrant hawks and Common Crows at Derby Hill in late February—there is hope.

Negative trends: 1) severe attrition in waterfowl numbers; 2) reduced counts of most species of wintering hawks and owls; 3) a miniscule flight of white-winged gulls; 4) a marked fall-off in the common wintering gulls, secondary to both severe icing and widespread dump closures; 5) a paucity of winter woodland residents—most woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, and White-breasted Nuthatches; 6) a nearly complete loss of the local Carolina Wren population and a drop in Tufted Titmouse numbers; 7) nearly total loss of wintering half-hardies, particularly those dependent on seeps, springs, and running water; and 8) a winter finch flight marked by more non-observations than observations—they were mighty scarce this winter.

Rarer birds this winter: Brant, Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider, Peregrine Falcon, Common Redpoll, and Harris' Sparrow.

Abbreviations: CC—Christmas Counts; DH—Derby Hill; L—Lake; Pt—Point.

Compilers: G. Huggins, L. Leidwinger.

Observers: D. Ackley, G. Church, D. Crumb, B. and D. DeSimone, T. Dittrich, G. Huggins, L. Leidwinger, B. and S. Peebles, J. Propst, T. Riley, M. Rusk, F. Scheider, G. Smith, M. Stooks, and E. VanDresar.

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: singles at Oneida (crash landed on a local street), Feb. 12-14 Oswego Harbor, and Oneida River Feb. 26-28. BRANT: a single bird attempted to winter Dec. 19 thru Jan. 8 at Oswego—it didn't make it. The winter attrition in waterfowl numbers was most impressive and this for virtually all species except the hardy Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Common Merganser—*sic*, Mallard 460 Jan. 15 Webster Pond at Syracuse, then down to 200 in February there; Black Duck: 80 Jan. 15, 50 Jan. 20, then less than 20 in Feb., all Webster Pond; Gadwall: 33 Jan. 8 Oswego Harbor, down to two Feb. 12 same place. A single Pintail at Caughdenoy and a male Wood Duck at Oswego round out the surviving dabbling ducks. Redhead: best numbers in a decade—1024 on Skaneateles L Jan. 15 (M. Rusk, T. Riley) and 400 thru Feb. at Caughdenoy, Oneida River, the latter perhaps birds frozen out of Skaneateles L which was icebound in Feb. Greater Scaup: 1500 in early Jan. down to 550 by Feb. 12, 350 by Feb. 27, all at Oswego; hundreds of dead

birds picked up by C. G. Spies showed severe emaciation and/or gull-attack damage. Common Goldeneye: good numbers despite the horrendous winter—550 Jan. 8 Oswego to Nine Mile Pt., 210+ Oswego Feb. 26. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: a single male at Oswego Jan. 8-Feb. 5 and an elusive but different male at Phoenix Jan. 23-Feb. 5. **KING EIDER**: five individuals Dec. 19 at Oswego; down to one immature male there Jan. 16, none thereafter. White-winged Scoter: 52 Jan. 8 Oswego to Nine Mile Pt., down to 12 Feb. 5, to one Feb. 21, both counts at Oswego. Common Merganser: early poor numbers (740 Jan. 8 Oswego) rose to 1025 Feb. 21 Oswego Harbor, one of the few ducks that increased at all this winter.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Sharp-shinned Hawk: increased number for this season (normally an uncommon to rare bird in winter)—13 for the winter with almost half noted plugging feeders. Cooper's Hawk: 11 individuals, widely scattered, again like the Sharp-shinned noted harrassing feeding station birds. Red-tailed Hawk: numbers low for the winter, probably secondary to deep snow covering rodents—max 14 Feb. 2 Clay area; first notable DH flight 160 Feb. 27. Red-shouldered Hawk: only report is one Jan. 2 Oneida CC, none otherwise, and none in the late Feb. raptor movement on Feb. 27 DH. Rough-legged Hawk: winter max five (four light morph, one dark morph) Dec. 5 Pulaski area; restricted numbers (one-three/day) thru Jan. and Feb. until first flight DH (31 birds) Feb. 27; first migrant Rough-legged Hawk is one dark morph Feb. 12 DH—what an optimist! Marsh Hawk: last noted one Dec. 18 Clay Swamp—unreported until return flight in late Feb. with 23 Feb. 27 DH, and two Feb. 28 Eaton. American Kestrel: low numbers thru winter (two-five/day), particularly low in early Feb.; like the accipiters, many reported frequenting feeding station sites. A single **PEREGRINE FALCON** Dec. 11 near Eaton (G. Church) is the only rare raptor for the winter. American Coot: max 22 Dec. 19 Oswego; down to 12 by late Feb., with most of the losses as fodder for the omnivorous Great Black-backed Gulls there. Shorebirds attempting to winter—max six Killdeer and three Common Snipe Dec. 26 Skaneateles CC—present into early Jan. but none reported after late Jan. White-winged gulls—a miserable flight, incredibly poor considering the severity of the winter—three Glaucous Feb. 12 and three Iceland Jan. 8, all at Oswego are the winter high counts; the lack of open water and the covered and/or discontinued dumps probably explain the poor numbers although it may have been a scant flight anyway. Great Black-backed Gull: 300 Jan. 8-16 Oswego Harbor—apparently most surviving on a combination of available fish and dying waterfowl as almost no dump usage was noted for this species this winter. Herring Gull: a profound fall-off thru the winter—1721 Dec. 19, 1200 Jan. 8, 1000 Jan. 16, 500 Feb. 3, 450 Feb. 21, 35 Feb. 27; the Ring-billed Gull showed even sharper decline—3300 Jan. 8, 3000 Jan. 16, 50 Feb. 3, 15 Feb. 12, all figures from Oswego Harbor, the only available open water.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 476 on B Burt Dec. Feeder Survey, the highest Dec. tally ever; numbers persisted thru Jan. but some drop in Feb. with the severe cold and deep snow; the increased wintering numbers are probably a function of increased food supply secondary to corn-farming coupled with inadequate harvesting of same this past fall; field counts six-45/day; courtship activity noted in mid-Feb. (either immensely hopeful or incredibly sexy). Snowy Owl: five individuals for winter—Syracuse Airport (two), Deansboro, Clay, and Sherrill; oddly none reported from Ontario Lakeplain sites. Uncommon owls are a Barred Owl Dec. 19 near Fulton, a Short-eared Owl also Dec. 19 near Hannibal, and Saw-whet Owl Jan. 24-27 Wampsville (B. and S. Peebles). Common Flicker: fair numbers in Dec.—4-7/day—but only singles noted in Feb. Red-headed Woodpecker: one persisting Feb. 10-20 Lairdsville (M. Stooks). Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers: very scarce thru the winter—max 17 Hairy and 31 Downy Dec. 26 Skaneateles CC; all woodpeckers very scarce in the Adirondack sector with five Hairy and no Downy there Feb. 13.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Blue Jay: an excellent wintering population—40-80/day in the field and a whopping 663 on B. Burt's Feb. Feeder Survey, the highest tally ever. Common Crow: steady decline thru Jan. and early Feb. to frank scarcity (6-10/day) in mid-

Feb.; a huge upsurge in late Feb. with 995 Feb. 26 and 7000 Feb. 27 both counts at DH. Tufted Titmouse: a bit scarce this winter—max four Oneida CC Jan. 2. White-breasted Nuthatch: frankly scarce thru winter—counts of 16-32/day in Dec. but a sharp fall in numbers thru Jan. extending into Feb.—tallies only 1-11/day. Red-breasted Nuthatch: winter numbers up and widely so, just the reverse of the White-breasted Nuthatch—70 Dec. 5 and 22 Dec. 16 at Fabius, 26 Dec. 11 Big Moose, and 70 Feb. 13 Old Forge. Carolina Wren: a weather-induced crash—from 25 birds in Dec. to two in early Feb.; I have no idea how many, if any, will make it thru to spring—if spring makes it thru to here. Winter Wren: singles in Dec. but none in Jan. or Feb.—the rough weather literally wiped them out. Mockingbird: 14 birds noted thru winter, the majority surviving well in multiflora rose or privet hedges in the protected valleys east and west of Syracuse. American Robin: large numbers wintered in protected wooded and Buckthorn scrub areas south of Syracuse with the max 220 Jan. 20 S Onondaga, rather surprising in view of the severity of the winter. Hermit Thrush: six individuals reported thru Christmas Count period; none known to survive thru Feb. Cedar Waxwing: large tallies but scattered—120 Rice Creek Jan. 8, 100 Jan. 13 Fayetteville, 180 Feb. 6 Split Rock near Camillus—like the robins, feeding primarily on the enormous local crop of Buckthorn. Northern Shrike: a heavy irruption—17 on Oneida CC, reported widely thereafter with 20-25 individuals/month noted; extensively reported molesting small birds, particularly House Sparrows, at feeders, rather like the Willie Sutton approach to bank robbery.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: five Dec. 19 Oswego CC; checked for thereafter but none detected.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Virtually all the common black icterids noted in December but only a few Brown-headed Cowbirds and a few feeder-fixated Red-winged Blackbirds survived into Feb.; first major wave of Red-winged Blackbirds Feb. 26-28 with "thousands" Feb. 27 at the Seneca River flats. Cardinal: numbers increasing, e.g., B. Burt's Jan. Feeder Survey the best tally ever (379), probably a combination of real increase and feeder concentration because of deep snow and cold. Evening Grosbeak: small flocks (10-62/day) thru Dec. and early Jan.; however, a marked incursion in late Jan. and early Feb. with 1729 on B. Burt's Feb. Feeder Survey—feeder counts went from 10-12/day to 75/day in some areas near Utica. Purple Finch: rather scarce in Dec. but a heavy Jan. and Feb. incursion with 301 on Jan. and 724 on Feb. B. Burt's Feeder Survey; field counts, however, much, much lower—only 10-15/day. Pine Grosbeak: flocks of six to 35/day in northern Oneida and central Herkimer Co.; smaller groups as far afield as Fair Haven (nine), Phoenix (eight), and Waterville (eight); certainly not a heavy influx this winter. **COMMON REDPOLL:** very, very scarce—max five near Pompey Jan. 16 (L. Liedwinger); reported on only one of seven Christmas Counts. Pine Siskin: like redpoll, very scarce—1-5/day—and only from Adirondack and sub-Adirondack areas. American Goldfinch: large numbers (20-40/day) at feeders thru winter; peculiarly attracted to Niger Thistle feeders; field feeding by this species non-existent as virtually all weed seeds remained snow-buried. The only Red and White-winged Crossbills were from the Adirondacks—four Reds Jan. 8 and 22, two White-winged Jan. 8 and 22, all from Big Moose area—not a heavy flight, for sure. Dark-eyed Junco: plentiful in Dec. (16-24/day) but a sharp drop in Jan. with the deep snow; only 1-5/day at feeders thru Feb. Tree Sparrow: scarce thru winter—counts of 100+ only from various Christmas Counts, scarce thru Jan. and even more scarce in Feb. **HARRIS' SPARROW:** an immature male singing Feb. 2-24 at Camillus (R. Roberts), the third local record. White-crowned Sparrow: three singles at feeders, at least two survived the winter. White-throated Sparrow: high numbers (100) in Dec. at feeders, a modest fall in Jan., and then an upsurge (173) in Feb. as birds congregated at feeders to survive. Profound attrition noted in wintering Song and Swamp Sparrows, *sic*—Swamp 20 in Dec., one in Jan., one in Feb.; Song 89 in Dec., 22 in Jan., one in Feb. Snow Bunting: counts of 140-600/day Dec. thru Feb.; some return (flocks of 60-100) noted along L Ontario in the last week of Feb.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

Winter of 1976-77 will be long remembered in Region 6. All weather factors were extreme—snow, ice thickness, low temperatures and wind. The Blizzard of 1977 will live in the minds of north country residents for years.

I would suspect losses to the birdlife from the blizzard would be high, since for a four day period nothing could move, much less fly. The grounding of the two Red-necked Grebes attests to the severity of the storm.

Trends which bear some watching are decreases in Hairy Woodpeckers and White-breasted Nuthatches.

Rarities for the period were Red-necked Grebe, Franklin's Gull, Short-eared Owl, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah Sparrow and a Chipping Sparrow.

Contributors: Tom L. and Cathy Carrolan (TLC); Lee B. Chamberlaine (LBC); Frank A. Clinch (FAC); Gerald A. Smith (GAS); Dick Ulman; Joe A. VanRiet (JAV); Robert and June Walker (RCW).

Abbreviations: ED—Eldorado Shores; MCC—Massena Christmas Count Dec. 24 American side; Pt.P—Point Peninsula; RMPD—Robert Moses Power Dam; WCC—Watertown Christmas Count Dec. 18; WICC—1000 Islands Christmas Count Jan. 2 Wellesley Island and American side.

LOONS—DUCKS: RED-NECKED GREBE: 1 N of Oak Point Feb. 11 & 12 (TLC,GAS, RCW); 1 near Watertown grounded Feb. 7 released St. Lawrence Co. (LBC); 1 grounded near Sandy Crk Feb. 8 banded and released Dexter (LBC). Great Blue Heron: 1 Oak Point Jan. 9 (TLC & GAS); 4 instances of wintering birds (immatures) being found in poor condition and having to be destroyed (LBC). Canada Goose: fewer than normal wintered. Mallard: 90 max RMPD Dec. 12; others wintered in spring areas. Black Duck: 30 Tibbets Pt. Dec. 12; 180 max Oak Pt. Dec. 22; 50 RMPD MCC down to 15 Feb. 26 (JAV). Gadwall: 3 RMPD MCC. Am. Wigeon: 3 RMPD MCC. Redhead: 3 RMPD Feb. 10. Canvasback: 11 max N of Oak Pt. Greater Scaup: 270 max Pt.P Dec. 5; 380 Tibbets Pt. Dec. 12; 22 N of Oak Pt. Feb. 8. Com. Goldeneye: 910 RMPD MCC; 421 Oak Pt. Jan. 9; 295 RMPD Jan. 17; 80 RMPD Feb. 4. Bufflehead: 3 ED Dec. 5; 4 Oak Pt. Dec. 22. Oldsquaw: 16 Pt.P Dec. 12. Hooded Merganser: 6 WCC (FAC). Com. Merganser: 3300 RMPD MCC down to 75 by Feb. 26; 2300 N of Oak Pt. Jan. 16 down to 165 by Feb. 12; 320 Iroquois Dam Feb. 19. Red-breasted Merganser: 5 N of Oak Pt. Dec. 22; 2 near Chippewa Bay Feb. 12.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 WCC Dec. 18; 3 Oak Pt. Jan. 17 (GAS); 2 Stony Pt. Feb. 10 (GAS); 5 other individuals seen at various locations. Sharp-shinned: no reports. Cooper's: 1 imm Brownville Feeder off & on Jan. 4 thru (TLC). Red-tailed: 44 WCC Dec. 18. Rough-legged: 72 WCC Dec. 18. **BALD EAGLE:** 2 ad N of Oak Pt. Jan. 17 (TLC & GAS); 1 ad Deferiet Feb. 3 (Dick Ulman) height of blizzard; 1 imm Gallop Island Feb. 10 (GAS). Marsh Hawk: 1 WCC Dec. 18. American Kestrel: 10 WCC Dec. 18; 2 Millens Bay Rd. Dec. 12. Ruffed Grouse: 4 WCC Dec. 18. Gray Partridge: none seen in Massena area for one year (JAV); 3 PP Feb. 12; 8 Cape Vincent Feb. 19; 7 near Sackets Harbor Feb. 23 all (TLC). Glaucous Gull: 24 Dec. 25 down to 6 by Feb. 20 (JAV); 4 Oak Pt. Jan. 2; 2 Wellesley Is Jan. 16; 2 Oak Pt. Jan. 16; 4 RMPD Jan. 17. Iceland Gull: 9 imm RMPD Dec. 25 down to 2 by Feb. 26; 2 Oak Pt. Jan. 2; 1 N of Oak Pt. Jan. 9; 3 RMPD Feb. 10. Great Black-backed Gull: 1300 Dec. 25 down to 16 by Feb. 26 (JAV); 361 Oak Pt. Jan. 2; 12 N of Oak Pt. Jan. 16; 1 imm N of Cape Vincent Feb. 13. Herring Gull: 210 max ED Dec. 5; 400 max Oak Pt. Dec. 22; 6 max RMPD Feb. 8. Ring-billed Gull: 3 WCC Dec. 18; 4 Oak Pt. Dec. 22;

1 RMPD Jan. 17; 3 all winter RMPD (JAV). FRANKLIN'S GULL: 1 Oak Pt. Jan. 2 (TLC); notes to Editor.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 105 WCC Dec. 18; 6 MCC. Screech Owl: 1 WCC Dec. 18; 2 MCC. Great Horned Owl: 2 WCC. Snowy Owl: very few this winter; 1 RMPD thru; 1 Cape Vincent thru; 1 Chaumont thru. SHORT-EARED OWL: 1 WCC Dec. 18 (TLC); 2 Pt. Salubrious thru (TLC). Belted Kingfisher: 1 in Jan. Com. Flicker: 1 male Brownville Feeder Feb. 18 thru. Pileated Woodpecker: 1 WICC Jan. 2. Hairy Woodpecker: 9 WCC Dec. 18; 6 MCC Dec. 24; numbers seem down from previous years (LBC). Downy Woodpecker: 19 WCC Dec. 18; 20 Massena Dec. 24.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 40 max. Blue Jay: 75 WCC Dec. 18; 79 MCC; more numerous than usual (LBC). White-breasted Nuthatch: 7 WCC Dec. 18; 8 MCC; not in usual numbers (FAC). Red-breasted Nuthatch: 3 WCC Dec. 18; 4 MCC. Brown Creeper: 3 WCC; 1 MCC. Am. Robin: 18 Dry Hill Dec. 14-16 (RCW); 11 Baggs Corners Feb. 13 (TLC). Golden-crowned Kinglet: 9 WCC. Cedar Waxwing: 6 WCC; 11 MCC. No. Shrike: 6 WCC; 4 MCC; many others observed—good year. BOHEMIAN WAXWING: 12 WICC (JAV).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: 1 Dry Hill feeding on flies under eaves of house (RCW).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbird: 2 WCC. Com. Grackle: 1 WCC. Brown-headed Cowbird: 4 WCC; 4 MCC. Cardinal: 24 WCC; 3 MCC. Evening Grosbeak: 2 WCC; 63 MCC; numbers building in Jan. thru. Purple Finch: 4 WCC; about 40 daily at feeder since Feb. 7 (RCW); 36 max at feeder Brownville Jan. 22-Feb. 6 (TLC). Pine Grosbeak: 6 WICC; 3 Raymondville Jan. 24. Am. Goldfinch: 9 WCC; 11 PP Feb. 12; 16 max at feeder Brownville thru (TLC). RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE: 1 WICC. SAVANNAH SPARROW: 1 PP Dec. 5 (TLC). Dark-eyed Junco: 3 WCC. CHIPPING SPARROW: 1 WCC. White-throated Sparrow: 3 WCC; 2 daily in yard Jan. 6 & Jan. 13; 1 N of Oak Pt. Jan. 9. Lapland Longspur: 1 WICC; 3 near Watertown Jan. 23; 1 Feb. 13. Snow Bunting: 785 WCC; 213 MCC; 12 Brownville Feeder Jan. 29; 160 max Cape Vincent Jan. 16; 310 max Baggs Corners Feb. 17; 500 Pt.P Feb. 28.

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REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE D. MACK

This was not a bad winter for this region. Snow depth was reasonable with 32 inches (81 cm) being the maximum at one time in my Paul Smiths yard. We were spared the deep snows people suffered near the Great Lakes. Temperatures were reasonable as well. 22° F (-5.5° C) seemed to be the only temperature available much of the time. If Newcomb was coldest in the nation with -15° F (-26° C) or thereabout on a few days, it certainly is a vast improvement over -43° F (-41° C) that Newcomb and Saranac Lake shared last year along with so many -20° F (-28° C) or colder days. (Last year it was -25° F (-31° C) on the Plattsburgh Christmas Bird Count compared with plus 20° F (-6.7° C) this year.)

We did have a run of over 50 days with the temperature not reaching 32° F (0° C), but it still was not very cold. This did result in the omission of the traditional January thaw. The result was more heating degree units needed for people with resulting increase in fuel expense, or more time in the wood pile for some of us. Birds probably were not affected.

February was milder than normal with a nice slushy thaw.

Birds seemed to enjoy a good season here. Hordes of red and black spruce cones were still available at the end of February. The most common bird would be Purple Finch in most of the region. It was also a good Snow Bunting year. Notable was the Bald Eagle, late Osprey, and good numbers of Lapland Longspurs. Eared Grebe was a new record for the region.

Observers: DA—Deborah Anson; CD—Charlcie Delehanty; ECBC—Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count; FCBC—Essex County portion only of Ferrisburg, Vt. Christmas Bird Count; RH—Robert Hagar; EM—Esther MacCreedy; M&RM—Margaret & Robert McKinney; BM—Betsy MacMillan; DN—Dan Nickerson; JP—John Peterson; AP—Alan Pistorious; JR—Jerry Rosenband; SLCBC—Saranac Lake Christmas Bird Count; CS—Carole Slatkin; PT—Pat Tabor; PW—Phil Warren.

Abbreviations: NWBay—North West Bay of Lake Champlain; Platts—Plattsburgh; Ti—Ticonderoga; TupL—Tupper Lake.

LOONS—DUCKS: On Christmas Eve a Common Loon was seen with a Red-throated Loon on NWBay (DN). Red-necked Grebe: 4 NWBay Dec. 7 (PT); 2 same place Dec. 18 (FCBC). Horned Grebe: many. EARED GREBE: 1 NWBay Dec. 18 (DA,PT) with details to FCBC compiler. This is a regional record. Pied-billed Grebe: 1 NWBay Dec. 30 (JR,CS). Great Blue Heron: 1 ECBC Dec. 18; 3 NWBay Dec. 19 with one lingering to Dec. 25 (AP); 1 Ti Jan. 22 (*vide* BM). American Wigeon: a male Whallon's Bay Dec. 30-Jan. 1 (JR,CS). Wood Duck: 1 La Chute Feb. 6 (BM). Redhead: 1 NWBay with Canvasback Dec. 25 (EM, JP, JR, CS). Canvasback: max 1870 Platts Dec. 18 (PW). Common Goldeneye: 62 ECBC Dec. 18; 14 Lake Abanake Feb. 12 (M&RM). White-winged Scoter: 1 Port Henry Dec. 5 (EM, JP). Hooded Merganser: 1 NWBay Dec. 5-27 (many); 2 ECBC Dec. 18; 1 Whallon's Bay Dec. 30-31 (many). Common Merganser: 4 in Saranac River at Saranac Lake all winter (RH); 7 Lake Abanake Feb. 12 (M&RM).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: several from Paul Smiths to Lake Abanake and Champlain area. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 1 TupL Dec. 22 (CD); 1 Essex early Feb. (John Parke); 1 imm Essex Feb. 10-26 at a feeder (EM, JP). Cooper's Hawk: not reported. Red-tailed Hawk: a few Champlain Valley. BALD EAGLE: 1 imm carefully studied Wickham Marsh at Clinton-Essex County line on Lake Champlain Jan. 9 (PW). OSPREY: 1 late bird Westport Dec. 2-24 (PT). American Kestrel: a few Champlain Valley. Glaucous Gull: 1 Platts Dec. 18 (PW). This is rare but not a first record for region. Increased observers should produce many more records of white-winged gulls. Bonaparte's Gull: 100 Westport all of Dec. (PT).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: more than usual wintering at feeders; 1 SLCBC Jan. 2; 2 Gabriels all winter (Dave Young); max 30 Essex all winter (Phoebe MacDougal). Screech Owl: 1 in a garage and had to be released Platts Dec. 21 (Bill Kreuger) and seen hunting House Sparrows since. Great Horned Owl: several in Champlain Valley. Short-eared Owl: 2 Chazy Landing Jan. 2 (PW, Hal Klein). Saw-whet Owl: 1 Westport being scolded because he was an owl by Red-breasted Nuthatches Dec. 26 (ECBC). Belted Kingfisher: 1 Essex Jan. 6 (Isabelle Bailey). Common Flicker: 1 Essex Feb. 12 (DN).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Common Raven: several from Hurricane Mtn to Lake Placid and 2 St. Regis Mtn. at Paul Smiths all winter (many). Boreal Chickadee: 3 ECBC Dec. 26; 8 SLCBC Jan. 2; plus usual places. Red-breasted Nuthatch: numbers began to increase TupL Feb. 27 (Ruth Meier). Winter Wren: 1 Keene Dec. 24 (DN) is a good find. Brown Thrasher: 1 SLCBC Jan. 2. American Robin: 12 FCBC Dec. 12; 3 ECBC Dec. 26; 32 Essex Dec. 29 (EM, JP); 26 Essex Feb. 12 (DN); 1 TupL Feb. 18 (R. Godin, R. Brousseau). Cedar Waxwing: several Essex all winter (many). Northern Shrike: 18 reported from Indian Lake to Essex including one that hit a window at Wadhams while carrying a Tree

Sparrow, yet soon recovered his senses as well as supper (Teresa Anson).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 Essex all winter; another same place Dec. 28-Jan. 3 (JP).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbird: 1 Dec. 8 Lake Placid (Mary McKinney); 1 Dec. 27-Feb. 13 TupL (CD); 1 SLCBC Jan. 2. Common Grackle: 3 ECBC Dec. 26. Brown-headed Cowbird: 72 SLCBC Jan. 2; 9 TupL Feb. 20 (CD). Cardinal: 2 ECBC Dec. 26; 77 SLCBC Jan. 2; 2 Indian Lake Feb. 12 (M&RM). Evening Grosbeak: none on FCBC Dec. 18 but ECBC Dec. 26 had 478 and SLCBC Jan. 2 had 741, both counts being record highs. Purple Finch: most common winter bird with 1033 on SLCBC Jan. 2. Pine Grosbeak: fairly common in flocks of 7 to 9. Common Redpoll: only 2 or 3 reports and these were traveling. Pine Siskin: 110 ECBC Dec. 26. Red Crossbill: 6 ECBC Dec. 26; 14 SLCBC Jan. 2; 2 Ray Brook Jan. 21 (RH); 6 Feb. 5 Piseco Lake (Dorothy McIlroy). White-winged Crossbill: 3 SLCBC Jan. 2; 2 St. Armand Jan. 23 (Jean Demottos). Dark-eyed Junco: 109 ECBC Dec. 26; plus a few TupL to Saranac L. Chipping Sparrow: 3 all winter except Christmas count day (RH). White-throated Sparrow: many all areas; 25 SLCBC Jan. 2; 9 Essex Feb. 22 (JP). Song Sparrow: 1 TupL all winter (CD); 2 ECBC Dec. 26; 1 SLCBC Jan. 2; 2 Jan. 26 Saranac Lake (RH). **LAPLAND LONGSPUR:** 1 Essex Dec. 31 (JR,CS); 35 Platts Jan. 3 thru period (PW).

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REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

RICHARD P. GUTHRIE

This report represents a "changing of the guard" for the Hudson-Mohawk Region. Gladys Snell, who has devoted much time and energy in compiling these reports over the last few years, is following her doctor's advice and is cutting back on some of her many involvements. I am sure that the many who have benefited from Gladys' tenacious devotion to these reports will join in extending many thanks to Gladys for a job well done.

The winter of 1976-1977 will stand out in the record books because of its prolonged periods of below normal temperatures. A record -1°F (-17.5°C) on Dec. 3 caused an early freeze over most streams and ponds and much of the Hudson River. The January mean temperature was 6°F (3°C) below normal with a minimum reading of -15°F (-29°C) on the 28th. February was closer to its normal mean temperature. A slight thaw on Feb. 10 thru 14th re-opened much of the Hudson. However, lakes and reservoirs remained frozen thru the period.

The wild food crop this winter was abundant, with some berries remaining on shrubs thru the season. Winter finches were few and far between for most species except for Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks. The Purple Finches started out slowly but by the middle of January were at everybody's feeders. Wintering raptors continue what appears to be a long-term increase in populations. An astounding 150 Red-tailed Hawks were tallied on five Christmas Counts. A few interesting half-hardies remained thru the winter.

Rarities of the season include: Mute Swan, Brant, Barn Owl, Varied Thrush and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: ADBC—Allen DeVoe Bird Club; CC—Christmas Census; Col Co—Columbia County; HR—Hudson River; Cox-Ath—Coxsackie-Athens.

Contributors: Ken Able, Arlene & Tom Brown, James Bush, Juanita Cook, Paul Connor, Jeff Davis, Peter Feinberg, Mabel French, Ron LaForce, Bill Lee, Bob Marx, Tom Palmer, Walt Sabin, Robert P. Yunick, Richard P. Guthrie, Barbara & Hugo Gardina.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: 1 thru Jan. 11 Stephentown and Jan. 25 Ghent (BHG). **MUTE SWAN:** 1 Cohoes Falls Jan. 2-late Feb. (R. Phillion). **BRANT:** 2 HR at Hudson Dec. 18 (ATB). **SNOW GOOSE:** 16 HR at Hudson Dec. 18 (ATB). **Pintail:** 1 Cohoes Feb. 21. **WOOD DUCK:** 1 thru HR at Castleton (JC). **Redhead:** 1 Cohoes Falls Feb. 21 (PF). **Ring-necked Duck:** 4 HR Feb. 27. **Canvasback:** 80 Cohoes Falls Feb. 9 (KA). **Bufflehead:** 2 Cohoes Falls Feb. 9 (KA). **White-winged Scoter:** 1 Cohoes Falls Feb. 9 (KA). **Hooded Merganser:** 1 Castleton Feb. 27 (JC).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: 1 Catskill Feb. 12 (early) (JB). Only 4 Goshawks reported: 1 Troy CC Jan. 2, 2 Amsterdam CC Jan. 2, 1 Freehold, Greene Co. Feb. 18. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 8 reported on four CC's incl. 4 Cox-Ath CC Dec. 27. **Cooper's Hawk:** three widely scattered Jan. reports. **Red-tailed Hawk:** 150 reported on five CC's incl. 50 So. Rensselaer CC Dec. 26. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 24 Cox-Ath CC Dec. 27. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** 1 So. Rensselaer CC. **Marsh Hawk:** thru max. 16 Coxsackie Flats Dec. 19 (RPG). **Common Snipe:** 1 Troy CC Jan. 2.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: numbers well up (1300+ four CC'S). **BARN OWL:** 3 poss. 4 reports (one found dead) (RPG&KA). **Screech Owl:** 6 Troy CC Jan. 2, 7 found dead on road, scattered locations (all gray phase). **Snowy Owl:** only 3 reported. **Barred Owl:** 1 Ballston Spa Jan. 30. **Short-eared Owl:** 2 Cox. Flats (Cox-Ath CC) Dec. 27. **Belted Kingfisher:** 1 thru Castleton (JC). **Common Flicker:** 13 reported incl 5 Troy CC. **Pileated Woodpecker:** 5 Amsterdam CC Jan. 2, **Hairy Woodpecker:** 103 total four CC'S. **Downy Woodpecker:** 270 total four CC'S.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Eastern Phoebe: 1 Buskirk, Washington Co. Dec. 28 (JD). **Blue Jay:** 572 So. Rensselaer CC Jan. 2. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** very few reports outside of CC's, 19 Troy CC Jan. 2. **Winter Wren:** only three reports, last Jan. 5 Buskirk (JD). **Carolina Wren:** 3 reports thru. **Mockingbird:** thru max. 20 So. Rensselaer CC Dec. 26. **Gray Catbird:** only report-1 thru Dec. 29 Buskirk (JD). **Brown Thrasher:** 1 Troy CC Jan. 2. **VARIED THRUSH:** 1 Dec. 24 thru at least mid-Feb. St. Johnsville (Folmsbee feeder). **Hermit Thrush:** 11 reported from scattered locations. **Eastern Bluebird:** 16 reported thru. **Northern Shrike:** 7 reported thru.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 8 reported, thru Jan. 6. **PALM WARBLER:** 1 near Amsterdam Dec. 2 (TP) a very late date. **Common Yellowthroat:** 1 Schenectady CC Dec. 18.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Eastern Meadowlark: 50+ Coxsackie Flats, thru. **Northern Oriole:** 1 Schenectady Jan. 6 (Ellis feeder). **Rusty Blackbird:** 6 Schenectady CC Dec. 18; 7 W. Crescent Jan. 10 (RPY). **Cardinal:** thru. 485 total of four CC's. **Evening Grosbeak:** thru. 1,555 So. Rensselaer CC. **Purple Finch:** 11 Schenectady CC Dec. 18; 59 So. Rensselaer CC Dec. 26; 164 Troy CC Jan. 2, increase continued thru January. **House Finch:** 78 Schenectady CC; 28 So. Rensselaer CC 13 Cox-Ath CC. **Pine Grosbeak:** a few scattered reports of single birds, max 7 Lk. Luzerne, Warren Co. Jan. 20. **Common Redpoll:** only reports: Dec. 2 Cohoes; 9 So. Rensselaer CC; 5 Amsterdam CC Jan. 2. **Pine Siskin:** only a few small flocks reported from scattered locations. **Rufous-sided Towhee:** 4 reported, late Dec-early Jan. **Savannah Sparrow:** three Jan. reports, 1 banded at Schenectady (A. Schroeder). **Vesper Sparrow:** 1 Castleton Dec. 1-2 (JC); 1 Troy CC Jan. 2. **Field Sparrow:** 1 E. Greenbush Dec. 2 thru; 1 So. Rensselaer CC Dec. 26. **White-crowned Sparrow:** 1 Loudonville Dec. 18 (MF); 3 Schenectady CC Dec. 18; 2 Troy CC Jan. 2. **White-throated Sparrow:** 274 total of four CC's. **LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** 1 thru, Ghent, at feeder (BHG,mob). **Swamp Sparrow:** 21 total of four CC's. **Lapland Longspur:** 6 on-and-off thru, Coxsackie Flats. **Snow Bunting:** 979 total of four CC's; max 500 Amsterdam Jan. 12.

Visitors to the Albany area are reminded of the Dial-A-Bird messages of latest birding information (518) 377-9600.

P. O. Box 46, New Baltimore, New York 12124

REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

This was one of the coldest seasons on record with below freezing temperatures through most of December and all of January. The latter month brought the lowest temperatures in years, with higher elevations below 0°F (-17.7°C) most of the month. February brought a warming trend, and by mid-month the lower Hudson was almost free of ice. Snow came to stay on Dec. 25, and was frequently added to thru January. The ground did not clear until late February.

The biggest news of the period was the oil spill of Feb. 4, when a barge carrying 2.5 million gallons of No. 6 heavy fuel oil struck a rock just south of Conn's Hook in the Hudson R. (3 mi north of Bear Mt.). Over the next 4 days 420,000 gallons of its cargo spilled into the ice-choked river. Tides carried the oil several miles upstream, and the natural flow of the river carried it south past N.Y.C. to coat the outer beaches of Long Island. Its total damage to wildlife will never be fully known. Several hundred birds were observed to be affected by the oil. Of the 70 taken to the Hi Tor Animal Shelter and cleaned, many of the larger waterfowl, swans and geese, were found to be suffering from malnutrition. This was probably due to the very hard freeze for more than a month before. About 12 Herring Gulls and 20 female Common Mergansers were observed oiled as far north as Cornwall Bay, Feb. 12 and several oiled Herring Gulls were seen Feb. 25 as far away from the river as Rondout Res. some 40 miles from the scene of the spill. The ice was probably instrumental in preventing even greater destruction since much of the oil was kept in midstream and might have affected even more birds had it invaded shallows. Most of the oil was far downstream when a mid-Feb. thaw released the ice from shore and allowed some of the oil to get at some of the dabblers. Hopefully more information will be received for publication in future issues.

Most area Christmas counts did well with clear weather and numerous participants. Most counts experienced record Red-tailed Hawks, Goshawks and Hermit Thrushes. The latter was probably an echo of the big fall migration.

Northern Shrikes were present in most areas as were Yellow-rumped Warblers. House Sparrows have most reporters speculating on the reason for their steady decline. Turkey Vultures and the common blackbirds were returning by the last week in February. Northern finches went entirely unreported with the exception of Evening Grosbeaks in small numbers thru the period, and Pine Grosbeaks only once or twice.

Contributors and observers cited: Gene Brown; Martin Borko, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Valerie Freer, Florence Germond, Jim and Mary Key, Ken McDermott, Al Merritt, John C. Orth, Benton Seguin, John Tramontano, Otis Waterman.

Abbreviations: The first four or five letters of each county, CB—Cornwall Bay; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; BCC—Burroughs Christmas Count, 12/26; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count, 12/19; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count, 12/26; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count, 12/27; FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count, 1/9.

LOONS-DUCKS: Common Loon: sev scattered reports on open water dur Dec., max 5 Rye Dec. 26. Horned Grebe: several stranded on land; 2 along highways in Oran and 1 at a Sull hotel. The former were released in good condition, the latter died. Great Blue Heron: sev wintering along L.I. Sound, very few elsewhere. **GREAT EGRET:** 1 lingered at MC thru Dec. 12. Black-crowned Night Heron: 12 at PL early Dec., reduced to 2 by month's end. **WHISTLING SWAN:** at least 3 calling over Newburgh Feb. 25 at 5 a.m. (BS). Canada Goose: usual few wintering in open water. Local birds returned with the first thaw in mid Feb.; no major flights noted. RCC had 870, 300 over previous high of 1975. Brant: 4 at PL Dec. 26. Snow Goose: 1 Port Chester Dec. 30 (Kath. Bregman). Pintail: 1st 2 Rock L Feb. 28 (GB). Green-winged Teal: 1st 3 Feb. 28, Rock L. **BLUE-WINGED TEAL:** first time on RCC, a male on Hackensack R below L DeForest Dam. Am. Wigeon: 8 on FWC; 15 Iona Is Dec. 6. Wood Duck: 2 FWC; 1 Fishkill Jan. 23. Redhead: more than usual; first 4 Rio Res. Jan. 30 (KM); max 12 Rondout Res. Feb. 12 (Art Gingert). Ring-necked Duck: missed on FWC, probably due to poor West coverage; first 3 CB Feb. 25. Canvasback: FWC had 1/5 usual number; max 300 at MC Jan. 8. Oldsquaw: 2 Rondout Res. Dec. 28 were unusual. White-winged Scoter: second record for FWC; 1 at CB, 2 there Feb. 25 (BS). Ruddy Duck: only 1 on FWC; 2 doz at PL thru late Dec. Hooded Merganser: also missed for first time on FWC; max 25 on PL Dec. 5; first returns were 1 Feb. 23 and 5 Feb. 28 on Hudson in Dutch. RCC had unusual high of 22, 5 times the previous high in 1957. Red-breasted Merganser: on FWC for third time, 8 CB.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: 1 Pound Ridge Jan. 27; residents arr Feb. 25-27 in most areas. Goshawk: more winter reports than ever before; from 1 to 3 on all Christmas Counts, and several others thru season. Sharp-shinned Hawk: the usual few wintering. Cooper's Hawk: 1 Jan. 14-15 Amenia. Red-tailed Hawk: broke most Christmas Count records: 39 on RCC, 44 on WCC, 59 on MCC. Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 PL and another at MC in late Dec.; the latter remained thru mid Jan. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** has been reported in winter several times before, but reports usually rejected. This season 1 was well-observed and properly documented at Indian L. Dutch on Jan. 30 (Art Gingert). Rough-legged Hawk: scarce; max 4 at Galeville Airport thru Jan. and Feb.; scattered individuals elsewhere. Bald Eagle: usual wintering birds at Sull Reservoirs; 8 ad at Rondout Jan. 22, and 2 ad and 3 imm at Mongaup-Rio on Jan. 8. Scattered singles reported along the Hudson thru period. Marsh Hawk: more than usual; singles in most counties; max 3 Galeville Airport Dec. 11. Merlin: 2 west Oran reports in Dec. (no details). Am. Kestrel: 23 on RCC was twice previous best count. Turkey: 1 Feb. 5 near Stissing Mt. (Thelma Haight). Clapper Rail: 2 at MC thru Dec., reduced to 1 in Jan. and none after Jan. 8. Am. Coot: 76 on RCC was their lowest since 1969. Iceland Gull: only report 1 imm at Wappingers Cr. and the Hudson Feb. 28. Bonaparte's Gull: 95 on RCC was the 4th time in the past 4 years, none before.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 201 on RCC was low, 164 on MCC was high. Short-eared Owl: at least 12 at Galeville Airport thru mid Dec.; heavy snows of late month drove them out; none there Dec. 29. Saw-whet Owl: only 1 Feb. 14-16 Fishkill (Tom Storey). Belted Kingfisher: 13 on RCC tied last year's all time high. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 5 on WCC and 2 on RCC. Several others reported thru season. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 imm Sylvan L Dutch from Dec. 15, 1 ad Dover Plains Jan.; usual Oran birds reported. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Cornwall thru period.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Eastern Phoebe: 1 on BCC; 1 Stissing Dec. 16-19 (Thelma Haight). Horned Lark: more birds than usual; max 100-300 in Dutch thru period. Common Crow: an estimated 8000 at Hudson River State Hosp. Dutch roost in Feb. Fish Crow: usual few in Dutch; at least 3 at Newburgh in Feb. White-breasted Nuthatch: 35 on RCC was lowest since 1969. Carolina Wren: more than usual thru period, indicates that cold is not the main factor in their cycle, and that probably ice glaze may be. A male and female survived the January sub-zero weather at Highland Falls from Dec. 25-Feb. 10. Long-billed

Marsh Wren: 1 at MC was last observed Dec. 12. Mockingbird: MCC 106, RCC 170, more than twice their previous high. WCC on WCC. First on any count in 1951. Gray Catbird: 1 Dec. 14-Jan. 11 at Cornwall. 7 on RCC. Am. Robin: unusually high numbers, second only to last year's high; sev flocks in Dutch and Ulst averaged between 200-500 thru period; 218 on RCC and 577 on WCC. The RCC count was just under previous high and the WCC count was twice prev high. Hermit Thrush: RCC had 14, twice prev high; 4 on WCC was a record; 8 in Dutch dur Jan. Others were reported from most areas every month. Water Pipit: 1 or 2 Dec. and Jan. in Dutch. Northern Shrike: an excellent year; reported from most areas; 1 at Cruger's I. seen thru period. Starling: an extremely large roost of more than 10,000 on Mid-Hudson Bridge, pk. in Jan.; the 3506 on RCC was lower than usual.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: many thru period; BCC 8, MCC 3, RCC 5, WCC 7.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: House Sparrow: many reporters feel numbers definitely reduced; 297 on RCC was the lowest since 1948. Numbers in 1960's avg 1200. Red-winged Blackbird: a few scattered reports thru period; numbers arr Feb. 25 in most areas. Rusty Blackbird: several reports in Dec. and Jan.; 121 on RCC was a new high. Common Grackle: a few thru winter; fall birds lingered thru Dec. 25.; spring birds returned en masse Feb. 25-26. Cardinal: RCC had 227, a good comeback from lows of the past several years; WCC had 212 with a usual avg of 100. DICKCISSEL: 1 Dec. 25-27 near Stanfordsville (FG). House Finch: RCC'S 190 was an all time high; MCC 52, WCC 209; continues to increase. Pine Grosbeak: 1 Slide Mt. Jan. 8 (Al Brayton); another, a dead female, found at Rio Res same date (Pete Both). The only flock was 18-20 at Monticello Jan. 20. Am. Goldfinch: 180 on RCC was well up from the low of 88 in 1975. Rufous-sided Towhee: 2 Dutch in Jan.; 2 males at Gardiner Ulst thru early Mar. Dark-eyed Junco: numbers up on RCC to 531, best since 1972; 900 on WCC was well above their usual 300. White-crowned Sparrow: 3 wintered Amenia and another 1 at Wawarsing. White-throated Sparrow: 445 on RCC; 362 on WCC; well above avg for each count. Fox Sparrow: several reports of wintering birds at feeders. Snow Bunting: flocks of 300-500 in Dutch thru period; several reports of smaller flocks elsewhere.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 - MARINE

ANTHONY J. LAURO

The winter season was, of course, bitterly cold with the combined December-January temperature range the coldest since the winter of 1917-1918. The average temperatures were: Dec. 29.9° F (1.2° C), Jan. 22.1° F (-5.5° C), Feb. 33.5° F (8° C). The average rainfall in inches was 2.29 (5.8 cm) for Dec., 2.25 (5.7 cm) for Jan., 2.51 (6.4 cm) for Feb.

After at least 8 years of relatively mild winters, record low temperatures in January applied severe survival pressures to the avifauna throughout the region.

Although high mortality would seem to be likely with such temperature ranges as experienced, this observer believes that the loss was surprisingly low. In the area extending from Jamaica Bay to the Shinnecock Inlet, the count of dead waterfowl was about 1,000 birds, ± 250. Black Duck and Brant accounted for about 75% of the total mortality. Most mainland Long Island ponds and streams froze over, thereby causing widespread displacement of species to habitats not normally associated with that species, i.e., pond ducks to

bays and ocean and bay ducks to the ocean. This displacement severely affected feral pond ducks from mainland Long Island. The Brant population largely vacated the region in mid-January and the birds which remained could be seen feeding on grass along parkways, golf courses and interior farm areas.

The day *after* the *extended* hunting season ended, Long Island hunting associations called for a major feeding program to save the starving waterfowl. The hue and cry was taken up by the media and the outer beach areas of Long Island were soon inundated with well-meaning folk loaded down with white bread, Oreos, bagels and popcorn which they tossed out to rafts of Greater Scaup and stray groups of Brant. The waterfowl wisely ignored this gastronomic onslaught but the gulls waxed famously on the offerings. Indeed, the gulls had a banner winter; not only feeding on the aforementioned tidbits, but also on the dead waterfowl and the corn placed by the hunting groups. Those groups were chagrined at the Brant's unwillingness to feed upon their corn which, however, was taken by the Black Ducks and undoubtedly helped some survive.

The ice cover broke up in mid-February and with the exception of the Brant which never seemed to reappear in "before-freeze" numbers, most *wild* populations returned in normal numbers to normal feeding habitats.

Some heron mortality was recorded by David Martin who found several dead Great Blue Herons and American Bitterns in the Jones Beach area marshes.

Passerines were also severely affected and their disappearance from the region can be attributed to both displacement and/or death. Yellow-rumped Warblers were very scarce and only a few warblers were reported on Christmas counts. Fran File of Deer Park has nurtured a few Northern Orioles through past winters at her feeders. This year's oriole died. Spring breeding censuses will perhaps tell how "southern" species such as Cardinals, Mockingbirds and Carolina Wrens fared.

Winter finches were spotty with scattered reports of a few Evening Grosbeaks and with several reports of good numbers of Purple Finches at feeders. A few Common Redpolls were reported from the Jones Beach area but few crossbills and no Pine Grosbeaks, or Pine Siskins.

Rarities for the period include a probable "European" Whimbrel, Sabine's Gull, an incredible Burrowing Owl, and Green-tailed Towhee.

Observers: JA—Jim Ash, THD—Thomas H. Davis, AJL—Anthony J. Lauro, GSR—Gilbert S. Raynor.

LOONS—DUCKS: Both Common and Red-throated Loons were scarce this year with most records coming from Eastern L.I. where THD noted a strong flight of Red-necked Grebes with a maximum of 5 at Montauk on Feb. 19. Six Whistling Swans (mob) were noted feeding in the fields around Mecox Bay from Dec. 18 through the end of the season. Three European Wigeons also wintered in this area through the season. The perennial Tufted Duck returned to Ward's Island Dec. 16 (J. A. Machado *et al.*) and W. Sedwitz had a pair at Jerome Reservoir on Feb. 9. Harlequin Ducks were reported at Shinnecock Inlet Dec. 11 (pair) and a single bird was seen at Montauk Jan. 8 (GSR). JA *et al.* found a drake **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** on Feb. 4-12 at Shinnecock. An awesome mixed flock of about 20,000 scoters was present at Montauk during the period but eiders were scarce with only 2 King and 5 to 10 Common counted.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: An immature and an adult Goshawk wintered in the JBSP area (mob). Bill Paterson had a Red-shouldered Hawk at Muttontown Preserve through the period and the Southern Nassau Count turned up 2 in the Lawrence area on Jan. 4. An immature **GOLDEN EAGLE** turned up at Connetquot River State Park Dec. 25-Jan. 4 (G. Bergin *et al.*). 2 subadult Bald Eagles were found in Woodhaven Cemetery by J. Capit-

lupo *et al.* early Jan.-mid Feb. Another immature Bald Eagle was shot by hunters in Dec. in the Southampton area and widespread publicity in the media plus an offer of a reward led to the arrest of the culprits shortly thereafter. Merlins were almost common this winter as at least 8 birds were reported. C. Ward had the only report of a Peregrine Falcon, Freeport, Feb. 4. A late flock of 22 Am. Golden Plovers was seen at JFK Airport on Dec. 7 by A. & H. Richards and GSR had a late or early (take your pick) Piping Plover on Jan. 8 at Shinnecock. A large WHIMBREL seen at Brookhaven on Dec. 27 by P. Puleston *et al.* was identified to be the European race. No head-stripping was seen at close range, but bill, size and white rump would seem to indicate the Eurasian form. White-winged gulls were present in small numbers with Glaucous and Iceland Gulls most common in the Shinnecock area. The LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL reported last fall by B. Spencer lingered at Hempstead Harbor until Jan. 6 when the freeze caused the bird to disappear. Another one was reported in subadult plumage at Sagaponack Pond on Feb. 27 (JA). The winter freeze also drove out the 2 to 3 Black-headed Gulls which had been frequenting the Zach's Bay area. THD had an adult at Shinnecock on Jan. 22 and B. Dieterich another on Feb. 12 at Flushing Meadow Park. A late, immature SABINE'S GULL was discovered feeding with Bonaparte's Gulls on Dec. 4 at Democrat Point (AJL, B. Dieterich, R. Kelly). Up to 2,700 Bonaparte's Gulls with 4 Little Gulls wintered at the Fire Island Inlet. Although the Cape Ann to Cape Cod area had a major flight of alciidae this winter, few birds reached our area. With the exception of a flock of 38 Razorbills seen at Montauk Jan. 23 (THD *et al.*) the other sightings of Razorbills were spotty, i.e., 1, Jan. 8 Montauk (GSR), 5 Jan. 16 Montauk (J. Gee *et al.*), 1 Jan. 22 Montauk, 4 Feb. 20 Montauk (THD). Massachusetts had "hundreds" of Thick-billed Murres this year. Our area reported one, seen on Dec. 24 at Moriches Inlet (GSR). This leads us to the best story of the period: On January 8, Harvey Richardson and Susan Rackett reported a COMMON MURRE at Brookhaven Lab and I quote, "The bird was discovered staggering across a roadway and dove headfirst into a snowbank when approached. It seemed very weak and had a slight scrape on one wing but otherwise was alert and in good condition. There had been a big wind storm the day before. It was released in a pond at the Lab and was sighted for several days afterward."

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: On Dec. 27, 1976, T. Rodney Gardner discovered a BURROWING OWL at Cedar Beach, Long Island. It was seen by numerous observers until the next day, when it was captured to keep it from starving. For the full story see page 69 of this issue. Snowy Owls were scarce this year and widely distributed: Jan. 9 Great Kills Park, S.I. (W. Flamm); Jan. 12 Greenport (G. Rackett); Jan. 25 Flushing (W. Douzak); Jan. to Feb. Bellport (*vide* A. Cooley). Saw-whet Owls were also scarce with only 3 reported from the Jones Beach area. 8 sightings of Short-eared Owls were reported, all from the south shore of L.I.

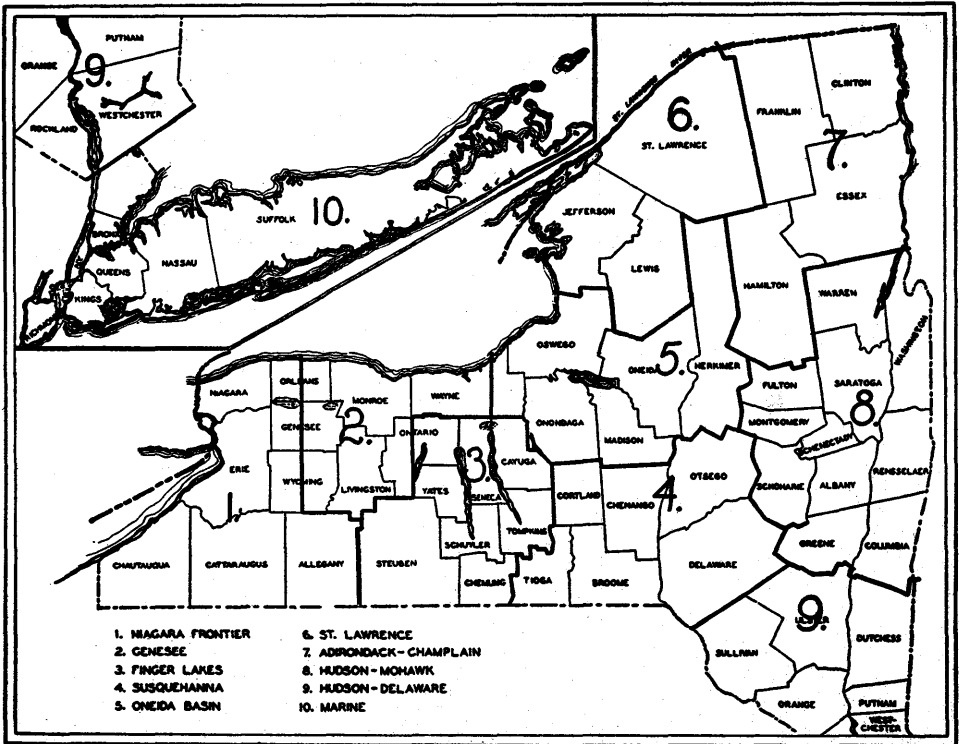
FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: There were 22 scattered reports of Eastern Phoebe during the period, all in December. B. Spencer had a Loggerhead Shrike on the Northern Nassau Count in late December.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: The Northern Nassau C.C. also turned up a very late Northern Waterthrush (J. Doran). Except for Yellow-rumped and a few Com. Yellowthroats, this was the only warbler reported.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak lingered at a feeder from Dec. 14 to Dec. 21 in Babylon (J. Smith, F. File) and a Blue Grosbeak amazed observers (A. Dignan) at a feeder in Freeport Jan. 7-13, reportedly the first January record for the area. The first Long Island record of GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE also showed up at a feeder in Wading River, Dec. 8 to Feb. 21 (R. Adamo *et al.*); recognizable photo by THD. J. Stoneck had a Grasshopper Sparrow on Jan. 10 at Great Kills, S.I. and AJL had a LINCOLN'S SPARROW at The Springs on Dec. 18 along with B. Lauro, F. File.

9 DeSoto Road, Amityville, New York 11701

REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. IV Nos. 1 and 2

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February
Deadline is March 7

Spring Season: March, April, May
Deadline is June 7

Summer Season: June, July, August
Deadline is September 7

Fall Season: September, October, November
Deadline is December 7

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