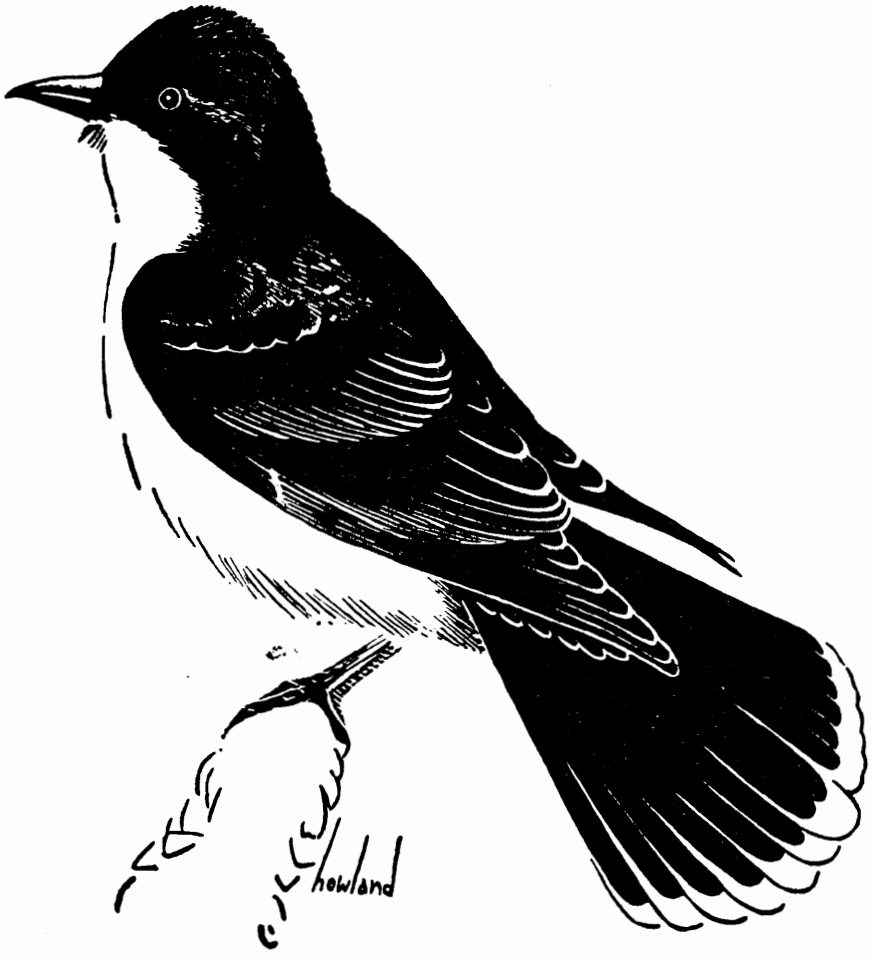


P. 21

The KINGBIRD



VOL. XXVIII, NO. 2

SPRING • 1978

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.

THE KINGBIRD, published four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) 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. *THE 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.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP should be sent to the chairman of the membership committee, Mrs. Myrna Hemmerick, P.O. Box 203, Setauket, N.Y. 11733. Send CHANGES OF ADDRESS to the Treasurer, Mr. John W. Forness, 3086 Haskell Rd., R.D. 2, Cuba, N.Y. 14727. Order SINGLE COPIES, BACK NUMBERS, and REPLACEMENT COPIES from Frederick C. Dittrich, 20 Drumlins Terrace, Syracuse, N.Y. 13224.

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



The KINGBIRD

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

Vol. XXVIII, No. 2

Spring, 1978

65-128

CONTENTS

Baedecker Update	66
Photographs of New York State Rarities	
27. Black Guillemot..... Robert P. Yunick	67
Bylaws of the New York State Avian Records Committee	70
Procedures for Submitting Reports	
to NYSARC and "Want" List..... Paul DeBenedictis	72
Overwintering and Nesting of the Long-eared Owl	
at Muttontown Park and Preserve,	
East Norwich, Long Island.....Allan J. Lindberg	77
Observations on Feeding Ecology and	
Behavior of Common Terns..... Michael Gochfeld	84
Notes and Observations	
Hoary Redpoll in Onondaga County	Dorothy W. Crumb 91
Bill-cleaning behavior in White-winged Crossbills .	Mary Ann Sunderlin 94
Red-necked Grebe Invasion	Robert Spahn 95
Highlights of the Winter Season	Robert W. Smart 97
Regional Reports	100

Co-Editors — Emanuel Levine and John Farrand, Jr.

Associate Editor

Regional Reports — Robert Smart

Circulation Manager — Frederick C. Dittrich

Cover Design — Douglas L. Howland

BAEDEKER UPDATE

The Spring, 1976 issue of *The Kingbird* carried a short article announcing a major publication project: a birding baedeker for the entire state of New York. Since then, considerable progress has been made on this comprehensive guide, with the vast majority of the Federation member clubs participating *via* completed questionnaires detailing various aspects of their favorite birding sites. Although much of the text has already been written and many of the maps have been executed, there is still sufficient time before the planned 1979 publication to submit requested or promised site-questionnaires. If member clubs or individuals wish to submit information on their favored and most frequented haunts, we urge you to send it along without any further delay.

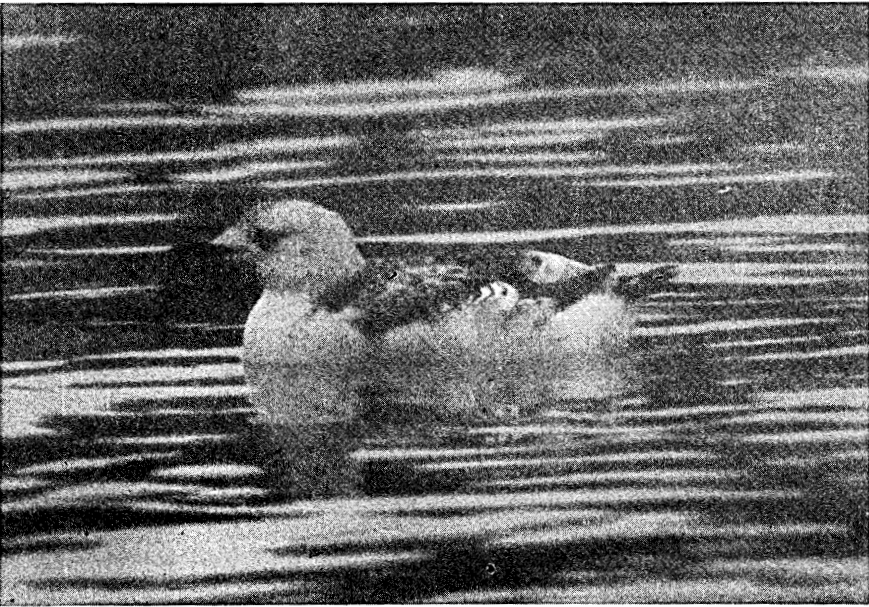
Presently we envision a 300-350 page book describing upwards of 250 specific sites with extensive information on each including directions, seasonal rating, specific "rare" avian specialties, local guides who can be called upon for assistance by traveling birders, full- or 1/2 day-tours prescribing how to bird to best advantage a particularly rich area, and of course, information on available accommodations in or near each site. As this project had its origin as a Federation undertaking, we are especially anxious to have every member club represented. A congratulatory note is due those who have so painstakingly done write-ups of their special places. Every contribution will enhance the value of work.

Susan R. Drennan

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES.
27. BLACK GUILLEMOT

ROBERT P. YUNICK

New York records of the Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*), a species that breeds on islands and coasts of the Arctic Ocean south to Maine and rarely winters beyond its breeding range, are almost exclusively confined to coastal Long Island. Bull (1964, 1974) collectively refers to "more than two dozen occurrences" for Long Island, three of which are specimens, a sight record for Westchester Co. and some unverifiable inland records given by Eaton (1910).



BLACK GUILLEMOT
Westport Harbor, Essex Co.

7 January, 1978

Photo by Ronald P. LaForce

The photograph presented here represents the only published, verifiable proof of an inland record of this species for New York State. This bird was found and identified on 7 January 1978 at the State boat launch site at Westport, Essex Co., on Lake Champlain,

by a group of Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club members consisting of Robert Budliger, William Gorman, Edward Koch, Carolyn and Ronald LaForce, William Lee and Walton Sabin. They called the bird to the attention of Geoffrey Carleton and John Peterson, both of Essex County. The bird remained close to shore until 10 January, at which time the bay froze and the bird disappeared.

In addition to the photograph presented here, taken by LaForce, 35mm color negatives were taken by Koch, and 8mm movie film was taken by Gorman. LaForce shot this picture under total overcast with a 500mm Nikon lens and camera, with a 2X extender at 65 ft. and 35mm color transparency film.

Bull's *Supplement* (1976) notes the presence of three individuals at Montauk, Suffolk Co., from 11 December 1971 to 15 January 1972, not listed in his previous works (1964, 1974). However, he incorrectly refers to these three as the first state occurrence of more than one individual. This Montauk occurrence is the second record of more than one bird, with the first having been of three birds at Jones Inlet on 23 March 1964 (Post and Tudor, 1964). In approximately the past 20 years, *The Kingbird* has listed, in addition to these two sightings of three birds each, the following Montauk sightings: 12 February 1962 (Elliott, 1962); 26 January 1964 (Post and Tudor, 1964); 11 January 1969 (Davis and Morgan, 1969); and 8 December 1973 and 12 January 1974 (McGuinness, 1974).

Inland records for this species are very few. Eaton (1910) refers to a February 1888 Lake Ontario record, and some other vague Lake Ontario records with no details. Beardslee and Mitchell (1965) reported that the 1888 specimen was no longer in existence. Reilly and Parkes (1959) refer to an interior record, without details, and undoubtedly are referring to the lost 1888 specimen. Judd (1907) reports a winter record for Albany Co. without any further comment. None of these represents adequate verification for an authentic inland record, and other than a 30 January 1932 record from Rye, Westchester Co. (Bull, 1974), there are no other earlier acceptable state records outside of Long Island.

Literature Cited

- Beardslee, C. S. and H. D. Mitchell. 1965. *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*. Artcraft Engraving Corp., Buffalo, N.Y.

- Bull, J. 1964. *Birds of the New York Area*. Harper and Row, New York.
- 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, N.Y.
- 1976. *Supplement to Birds of New York State*. Wilkins Printers. Cortland, N.Y.
- Davis, T. H. and L. Morgan, 1969. *The Kingbird*, 19 (2): 129.
- Eaton, E. H. 1910. *Birds of New York*. N.Y. State Museum 63rd Annual Report. Univ. of the State of N.Y., Albany, N.Y.
- Elliott, J. J. 1962. *The Kingbird*, 12 (1): 56.
- Judd, W. W. 1907. *The Birds of Albany County*. Brandow Printing Co., Albany, N.Y.
- McGuinness, H. D. 1974. *The Kingbird*, 24 (3): 166.
- Post, P. W. and G. A. Tudor. 1964. *The Kingbird*, 14 (2): 124.
- Reilly, E. M. and K. C. Parkes. 1959. *Preliminary Annotated Check-List of New York State Birds*. State Education Dept., Albany, N.Y.

1527 Myron Street, Schenectady, New York 12309

BYLAWS OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE

As Passed By The Council of Delegates of the Federation
Of New York State Bird Clubs on Saturday, October 1, 1977

- I. The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, recognizing the proliferation of sight reports of birds in New York State, the increasing dependence on such records due to legal and ethical restrictions on collecting, and the need for documentation and evaluation of such reports, hereby establishes a committee to perform this evaluation to be known as the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC). A "report" as used in this writing, refers to an observation submitted voluntarily to the committee which on being accepted is then referred to as a "record." Non-acceptance does not preclude publication anywhere, anytime.
- II. **Duties and Responsibilities.** NYSARC will:
 - A. Establish procedures for submitting reports to NYSARC.
 - B. Publish a list of species or types of reports which are desired or not desired, as appropriate.
 - C. Prepare reports of its proceedings and publish the results of its work periodically in *The Kingbird*, including rejected reports without identifying the observers.
- III. **Composition.**
 - A. NYSARC will consist of five members appointed by the President of the Federation with consideration of geographical representation. NYSARC will select from among themselves a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. Terms of office will be for five years, but the first committee will have one member appointed to a one-year term, another two years, another three years, another four years, and one for five years.
 - B. The Chairman may appoint a non-voting secretary if necessary.
- IV. **Chairman.**

The Chairman will perform the functions usually associated with such office.
- V. **Members.**
 - A. Each member will separately study the reports received by NYSARC and submit an opinion as to their acceptability. Members will assist the Chairman in preparation of NYSARC reports.

- B. Members will clearly indicate their reasons for acceptance or rejection of each report. Opinions should be frank, unbiased, and professional, based on the member's best judgment. Such opinions will be confidential and not be made public at any time.
 - C. Member's opinions will *not* be discussed with other members until the report has been reviewed by all members of NYSARC.
 - D. Members will not render opinions on their own submitted reports. These will be evaluated by the remainder of the members.
- VI. **Suggested Procedures.** (These are guidelines which, it is hoped, will be followed by the committee.)
- A. The Chairman may assign numbers to each report to replace the observers' names so that each report will be anonymous and thus judged on its intrinsic merits alone.
 - B. **Reports.**
 1. Should be submitted on a standard form. Such forms will be made available to clubs and individuals throughout the state.
 2. Details of reports should be submitted on one or more 8 and 1/2 x 11 inch pages, no more than one report per page.
 3. If available, photographs should be submitted with reports. Photographs should include as much technical photographic data as possible.
 4. If reports are substantiated by tape recording(s) and/or specimen(s), they should indicate where said evidence is deposited.
 5. All reports submitted to NYSARC will be retained by the committee and shall be available for study by interested persons.
 - C. Members may consult other persons who may have special knowledge of the species or individual bird in question.
 - D. **Evaluation of reports.**
 1. Reports substantiated by specimens or tape recordings should be verified by at least one NYSARC member or designate. Primary concern for such will be adequacy or identification and documentation as a specimen or recording taken in New York State.

2. A report is accepted as a record if all or all but one member accept it. If a majority thinks that the bird was incorrectly identified or that the evidence was insufficient for a correct identification, the report is rejected. In all other cases, the report is recirculated to all members along with all comments made on its first review after which a second and final vote will be taken. All reports remain pending until a decision is reached.
3. Decisions of individual members will be confidential within NYSARC. The Chairman will report decisions of NYSARC as a whole.
- E. Records of NYSARC proceedings will be maintained in a standard form to be established by its membership.

VII. Committee Rules.

- A. These bylaws will be reviewed at least annually.
- B. These bylaws may be amended by the Executive Committee of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs.
- C. The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs welcomes and encourages the formation of local records committees by its member clubs to review reports of local interest. However, all persons are encouraged to submit their individual reports to NYSARC.

VIII. Meetings.

NYSARC shall meet at least once a year.

Procedures for Submitting Reports to NYSARC and "Want" List

At the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, the delegates authorized the establishment of a New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) to review ornithological reports of exceptional interest made in the state. Members of NYSARC were appointed by the President in December 1977. Its present membership, with terms of service, are: Robert F. Andrie (5 years), Robert W. Smart (4 years), Kenneth P. Able (3 years), Thomas H. Davis (2 years), Paul A. DeBenedictis (1 year). At its meeting of 12 Feb. 1978, NYSARC elected Paul DeBenedictis as Chairman and Robert Andrie as Vice-Chairman. Charles R. Smith, of the Laboratory of Ornithology, has been appointed Secretary of NYSARC.

NYSARC has established procedures for submitting reports. A standard reporting form (pg. 76) is available from member clubs and from members of NYSARC. The Committee emphasizes that many species can *not* be documented adequately within the space allotted on one side of this form. Therefore, observers are urged to attach as many additional 8-1/2 x 11-inch pages as needed to provide complete documentation. Spacing on the standard form correctly indicates the relative importance the Committee attaches to the information requested. In particular, copies of original field notes are valuable supplements to the standard form. Use of the standard form is not mandatory. Any other form or format (but preferably 8-1/2 x 11) that conveys the information requested on the standard form will be acceptable to NYSARC. Photographs, if available, should be submitted with reports. If other evidence, such as specimens or tape recordings, exists, please indicate where these materials may be examined. Reports submitted to NYSARC become the property of the Federation. Reports will be permanently deposited and made available to qualified investigators at the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. Other substantiating evidence submitted with reports will be deposited in appropriate Cornell University collections, unless specifically requested otherwise. Records that are *accepted* by NYSARC will be published at varying intervals in *The Kingbird*.

Reports should be submitted to:

The New York State Avian Records Committee
c/o Charles R. Smith
The Laboratory of Ornithology
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853

NYSARC will review reports of observations made after 1 Jan. 1978 of:

- 1) any species new to New York State
- 2) any addition to the list of species proven to nest within New York State
- 3) the following birds (some of which are of hypothetical status within New York) from *any* locality within New York State: Yellow-billed Loon; Arctic Loon; Western Grebe; Yellow-nosed Albatross; Audubon's Shearwater; Black-capped Petrel; Scaled Petrel; South Trinidad Petrel; Leach's Storm-Petrel; Red-billed Tropicbird; White-tailed Tropicbird; White Pelican; Brown Pelican;

Brown Booby; Magnificent Frigatebird; Wood Stork; White-faced Ibis; White Ibis; American Flamingo; Trumpeter Swan; "Black" Brant; Barnacle Goose; White-fronted Goose; Fulvous Whistling-Duck; Cinnamon Teal; Smew; Black Vulture; Swallow-tailed Kite; Swainson's Hawk; Caracara; Gyrfalcon; Sandhill Crane; Yellow Rail; Corncrake; Black-necked Stilt; Lapwing; Wilson's Plover; Long-billed Curlew; Eurasian Curlew; Whimbrel (*white-rumped races only*); Eskimo Curlew; Bar-tailed Godwit; Greenshank; "Great" Skua; "South Polar" Skua; Long-tailed Jaeger; Ivory Gull; Thayer's Gull; Mew Gull; Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern; Sooty Tern; Bridled Tern; Sandwich Tern; Common Murre; Common Puffin; White-winged Dove; Ground Dove; Hawk-Owl; Burrowing Owl; Great Gray Owl; Boreal Owl; Lewis' Woodpecker; Gray Kingbird; Scissor-tailed Flycatcher; Fork-tailed Flycatcher; Ash-throated Flycatcher; Say's Phoebe; Black-billed Magpie; Brown-headed Nuthatch; Bewick's Wren; Sage Thrasher; Fieldfare; Redwing; Mountain Bluebird; Townsend's Solitaire; Wheatear; Bell's Vireo; Swainson's Warbler; "Audubon's" Warbler; Black-throated Gray Warbler; Townsend's Warbler; Bullock's Oriole; Brewer's Blackbird; Boat-tailed Grackle; Western Tanager; Black-headed Grosbeak; Painted Bunting; Brambling; Hoary Redpoll; "Spotted" Towhee; Green-tailed Towhee; Lark Bunting; LeConte's Sparrow; Baird's Sparrow; Bachman's Sparrow; Brewer's Sparrow; Harris' Sparrow; Golden-crowned Sparrow; Smith's Longspur; Chestnut-collared Longspur.

- 4) the following species at localities *away from downstate New York* (Long Island and offshore waters, the New York City area; and established nesting areas on the lower Hudson River): any species of albatross, shearwater, petrel, or storm-petrel; Gannet; Great Cormorant; Louisiana Heron; Yellow-crowned Night Heron; Tufted Duck; Common Eider; Black Rail; Purple Gallinule; American Oystercatcher; American Avocet; Piping Plover; Marbled Godwit; Curlew Sandpiper; Gull-billed Tern; Roseate Tern; Royal Tern; Black Skimmer; any alcid; Chuck-will's-widow; Yellow-throated Warbler; Blue Grosbeak; "Ipswich" Sparrow; Sharp-tailed Sparrow; and Lark Sparrow.
- 5) the following species at localities *away from the Adirondacks*: Spruce Grouse; Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker; Northern Three-toed Woodpecker; Gray Jay.

The Committee will also review reports that represent *significant*

deviations from established patterns of seasonal occurrence within New York State. Because such records are difficult to summarize concisely, observers should consult Bull (1974, 1976). Submitted reports not meeting these criteria will be filed without action, or returned to the observer.

The Committee has been requested to clarify boundaries within which New York State records are made. We follow national and state boundaries inland and on the Great Lakes, and extend present legal marine boundaries outward to the 1000 fathom line (approximately 100 miles offshore). The south (west) boundary extends from the Ambrose Lightship along the Separation Zone of the Ambrose-Hudson Canyon Traffic Lane to the 1000 fathom line; the north (east) boundary extends at an angle of 150° (from true north) from a point midway between the east end of Fisher's Island and Watch Hill, R.I., to the 1000 fathom line (Reference: Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart 1108; Approaches to New York). The Hudson Sea Canyon (proper) lies just within the south boundary and Block Canyon is within the north boundary; Cox's Ledge is in Rhode Island waters.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul DeBenedictis, Chairman

Literature Cited

- Bull, J. 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, N.Y. 655 pp.
- . 1976. *Supplement to Birds of New York State*. Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. 52 pp.

There may be records published in *The Kingbird*, either in "Notes and Observations" or in the Regional Reports, that may fall into one or another of the categories established in the foregoing NYSARC report. The publication of such a record does not imply that it has been approved by NYSARC, or even that it has been submitted to NYSARC, as such submission is entirely voluntary and at the discretion of the observer. The Editors urge that records of the kinds described above be submitted to NYSARC, but failure to submit a record to NYSARC does not preclude its publication in the pages of *The Kingbird*. —Eds.

REPORT NO. _____ STATUS _____
For use of NYSARC

NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORTING FORM

This form specifies the most important information that should accompany a report; however, any other form or format that contains this information will be acceptable to NYSARC. Observers are urged to use the reverse of this form or additional pages, but include only one report with this form. Obtain as complete a description as possible during the observation and before consulting a field guide; copies of original notes are welcomed.

NAME OF BIRD _____ DATE _____

Locality (give county):

Time and length of observation:

Light conditions, distance from bird, and optics used:

Description of bird

a) Number, size and shape:

b) Color and pattern, including soft parts:

c) Behavior, including vocalizations:

d) Habitat, including associated species:

Additional comments, including comparisons with other species and observer's experience:

Does any other substantial evidence document this report? _____ If yes, what is it and where is it deposited?

Time and date of writing this report:

Observer(s) (when multiple, each is encouraged to submit an independent report): submitted by _____; and _____

Address of person submitting this report:

Return completed report to: The New York State Avian Records Committee, c/o Charles R. Smith, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853.

OVERWINTERING AND NESTING
OF THE LONG-EARED OWL AT
MUTTONTOWN PARK AND PRESERVE,
EAST NORWICH, LONG ISLAND

ALLAN J. LINDBERG

SUMMARY

In the winter of 1976-1977, a family group of five Long-eared Owls overwintered in Muttontown Preserve.

This report follows this family group, the departure of last year's young, and the commencement of nesting by two adult owls on April 21, 1977. Two young owls were successfully raised.

An analysis was made of 330 winter pellets and 35 summer pellets, and the findings are included in this report.

THE OVERWINTERING OF THE LONG-EARED OWL

On December 12, 1976, while walking through a conifer stand in Muttontown Park and Preserve, I discovered five Long-eared Owls roosting in a Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). This roost was used by these five for most of the period from December 12, 1976 to April 21, 1977.

The roost tree was a Scotch Pine approximately 45 feet tall, with a diameter at breast height of 17 inches. This particular tree was light-starved due to the denseness of the conifer stand, creating a mass of contorted and tangled branches at the top of the tree. This, plus the color of the tree bark, made ideal conditions for the Long-eared Owls to camouflage themselves.

NOTES ON BEHAVIOR

The winter of 1976-1977 was a harsh one in the Preserve. From the end of December to the middle of February, there was a cover of snow over most of the fields, which probably made hunting somewhat difficult for the owls. When checking the roost during this time, I observed that on several occasions the owls had dispersed to different areas of the Preserve, probably to hunt over a wider territory with less competition for food. However, when the snow melted between storms and hunting became easier, the owls returned to the Scotch Pine roost. If undisturbed by the weather or man, I think that these owls would use one roost tree for the entire winter, as some books suggest.

On each visit to the roost area, I took note of the positions of the

owls in the tree. Whenever there were five birds in the tree, the same branches were used as perches. Although the birds were not banded to distinguish them, it would appear that each owl returned to the same perch in the roost after a night's hunting.

On all occasions when I observed the owls, I never saw them to be in a hiding pose such as is mentioned by other observers. They sat in a normal position, without constricting their feathers, and just stared at me. Possibly they were secure in the ideal camouflage conditions provided by the roost tree, or they may have become accustomed to my presence.

Although the five owls in the winter roost were quite probably a family group from the preceding year, this could have been proved only by banding them. Assuming, however, that they were a family group, it appeared that the young birds were gradually being pushed out of the roost area as the breeding season approached.

On March 12, 1977, there were four Long-ears in the roost, but for the first time, their pellets were found under other trees within the conifer stand, as if the young were being weaned from the family group and beginning to roost on their own. This is apparently what happened, because on March 23, there were only two owls in the roost. I searched the other conifer stands in the vicinity, but could not locate any of the three young owls.

The male and female owls, which can be told apart by the paler coloration of the male's plumage, remained together in the roost tree until April 19, when only the male could be seen at the roost. During the period between March 23 and April 19, the male and female had always occupied the same separate perches in the roost tree.

THE NESTING OF THE LONG-EARED OWL

On April 21, 1977, I discovered an old stick nest in a White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), 60 feet from the winter roost tree. I looked at this tree from all angles but did not observe any sign of the female on the nest; as a last resort, I kicked the base of the tree twice, and the bird flew off the nest. The male was in the winter roost the entire time.

The nest was located 43.6 feet from the ground in a White Pine with a breast height diameter of 11 inches. The tree was in a five-acre woodlot of mixed White Pine, Scotch Pine, and Norway Spruce, all of approximately the same age.

The nest itself was probably an old crow's nest that had partially broken down. During the first seven days on the nest, the female

and/or the male totally rebuilt the broken section, or approximately one-fourth of the nest size. The repair work was strong enough to last until the young were about three weeks old.

The nest tree was located 300 yards from the nearest human habitation, and 100 yards from a lightly used road. A well-used bridle trail runs alongside the woodlot about 25 yards from the nest tree. Despite the nearness of the nest to these possible sources of disturbance, there seemed to be no effect on the nesting success of the owls. As far as I know, there was no direct intrusion into the woods other than my weekly visits.

Concerning sources of water, the nest was 200 yards from a normally wet meadow, 1/2 mile from a vernal pond, and one mile from a large Red Maple swamp.

The Long-eared Owls had several suitable hunting grounds. In the section of the Preserve where the nest was situated, roughly 150 of the total 275 acres consist of fields and meadows. One 10-acre field is adjacent to the nest-tree conifer stand; another of about 65 acres is 1/2 mile away. Four additional fields are within hunting range.

BEHAVIOR DURING NESTING

For the first 21 to 24 days of the nesting period from April 21 to May 14, corresponding closely to the incubation time, the male remained in the old winter roost. On each of the five occasions when I visited the nest to check for pellets and other debris, the male seemed very alert and watched my actions intently. At no time, though, did he make a sound or display any hostility.

On May 14, the male changed his roost to a White Pine right next to the nest and on a branch level with it. The eggs should have hatched at about this same time, so perhaps this move was to better observe the newly born young owls. The male seemed upset during the three times I was in the area, but did not fly away. Again there was no hostile behavior other than bristling of feathers. At this time, the male must have regurgitated pellets while out hunting or at the old winter roost, as there were no pellets or other signs of his presence below the roost close to the nest. The new roost was maintained for 14 days. After this, the male returned briefly to the old roost, then again changed his habits. Although I was sure he was within the area, I never found a new permanent roost, if indeed there was one.

Once the young owls were out of the nest, the male became exceedingly secretive. The only sightings I had of him were of his leaving the opposite end of the grove as I entered. He would always

head away from the area the young were in, as if to divert attention from them. His roost changed frequently, but would always be within sight of the young, about 150 yards away.

During the nesting period, the female owl was very secretive, sitting quite low and tight in the nest. While sitting, the female seemed to be practically torpid and not easily disturbed. I wondered if she were still in the nest, and it took a few jarring blows to the base of the tree to get her to fly. Even after leaving the nest, she appeared groggy, and did not fly very far. There was no hostile or aggressive behavior other than a strong annoyed glare. There were none of the spectacular defensive displays that some other observers have reported (*i.e.* Bent, pp. 161-3). The female kept up this secretive behavior throughout the nesting period, but as the young owls grew, she sat higher in the nest, making her more visible.

Despite her sluggish daytime behavior, I believe the female came off the nest to regurgitate her pellets, and possibly to hunt. This was evident from the definite lack of pellets or the remains of prey items in or around the nest. It could be assumed from this that the male may share in the brooding and care of the young.

The female stayed in the nest with the two young birds until the repair work gave way and the nest collapsed. The two young birds, now three weeks old, were spilled out of the nest and onto the ground. After this, the female remained close to the young, roosting within 20 to 40 feet of them. Whenever I entered the area, she would fly away as soon as I got within 20 yards. The only indication of hostility was a call of annoyance, a "wuk-wuk-wuk" uttered once. At this stage, the female was noticeably less secretive than the male.

The young owls' behavior changed noticeably with age. When they first fell from the nest at the age of three weeks, apparently unharmed, they were easily approached, and would freeze into a hiding pose. For shelter, they scrambled up into a snag of dead and falling Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), or ran for the thickest cover available. On one occasion, one of the owls ran directly at me, but, realizing I was there, froze until I left the area.

The young birds quickly learned to climb high into the trees. I observed both birds at the approximate age of six weeks, now almost adult in size, some 40 feet up in a Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). At this age, they would sit in a hiding pose on a limb for a few minutes, but soon grew restless and walked or flew clumsily to another tree.

By the age of roughly 7½ weeks, both young birds were flying,

although still rather awkwardly. They now flew off to the other end of the grove as soon as I entered it. My observations stopped at this point, as it became increasingly difficult to keep track of any of the Long-eared Owls, young or adult.

CONCLUSION

Although this is the first recorded nesting of the Long-eared Owl on Long Island since 1944, and in Nassau County since 1939 (Bull, 1964 and 1974), I feel that this species has nested sporadically on Long Island within the past 40 years. This opinion is based on the fairly regular occurrence of Long-eared Owls overwintering in several local regions. At Muttontown Preserve in particular, this owl has previously been observed well into the breeding season. However, owing to its extremely secretive nature, and the widespread popular belief that this species is strictly migratory and only a winter resident, the possibility of its nesting on Long Island has largely been discounted, as have any reports of sightings in the spring or summer. Perhaps with the discovery of this nesting pair, other naturalists will be encouraged to find out more about the ecology of this overlooked woodland owl, on Long Island as well as in other areas of the state.

COMPARISON OF WINTER AND SUMMER PELLETS

A fully definitive comparison of the winter and summer diets of this pair of Long-eared Owls was hampered by the lack of a large number of summer pellets available for analysis. However, based on the similarity of the percentages obtained for the winter and the summer, it is safe to assume that the Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) is the main prey item for Long-eared Owls in this region. The Short-tailed Shrew is second by a far lower percentage. Birds make up a similar portion of the diet.

In the case of rodents, only the skull was used for identification, by dental formula and skull characteristics. This meant that if no skull was found in a particular pellet, the bones were not identified. In the case of birds, the skull, lower mandible, and humeri were used for identification. Pellets obviously containing birds, where these bones were not present, were listed as "Unidentified" bird species. Since I was unable to obtain a book on identification of bird bones, these were identified by Mr. Otto Heck from his own knowledge of the subject of owl pellets.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the pellets of the Muttontown Long-eared Owls is that the Meadow Vole is the main food of this field-hunting bird, all year long. Even in the summer months,

when the Short-tailed Shrew seems to increase slightly in percentage, voles still make up between 85 to 90% of the diet.

Birds seem to be a significant factor in the owls' year-round diet, remaining at more or less a constant percent throughout the year. The results show that one in every 21.6 pellets contained a bird during the winter, while of the 35 summer pellets examined, one was a bird. The winter analysis also included species such as Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*), Least Shrew (*Cryptotis parva*), and Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). These species could also be a portion of the summer diet, but this was unsubstantiated by the few available pellets.

The fact that the Meadow Vole makes up 85 to 90% of the diet of the Long-eared Owl agrees with a study done by the Craigheads in Superior Township, Wastenaw County, Michigan, in 1942. The winter data showed 88.6% of their diet to be *Microtus*, and the summer diet of the same year contained a slightly lower 79.4%.

WINTER PELLET ANALYSIS

The following analysis is based on a family group of five Long-eared Owls, for the winter of 1976-77, from December 12, 1976 until the nest was located on April 21, 1977.

While there was a conservative estimate of over 500 pellets below the roost tree, only 330 of these were examined. In all, 303 prey items were identified.

Species	No. found	% of diet
Meadow Vole (<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>)	273	90%
Short-tailed Shrew (<i>Blarina brevicauda</i>)	8	2.6%
Deer Mouse (<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i>)	4	1.3%
Least Shrew (<i>Cryptotis parva</i>)	1	.0033%
Norway Rat (<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>)	1	.0033%
Birds:	14	4.6%
Sparrow (species ?) — 3		
Cardinal — 1		
Starling — 1		
Am. Robin — 1		
Unidentified — 8		

SUMMER PELLETT ANALYSIS

This analysis is based on the small number of pellets I was able to obtain during the nesting season. Pellets were exceedingly hard to find for several reasons. The ground cover under the male's roost was largely poison ivy, as it was in most of the conifer stand in which the owls stayed. Although the base of the nest tree was free of poison ivy for the most part, there were never any pellets in the immediate vicinity of the nest itself.

The following figures are the result of 35 obviously fresh pellets found in the grove during the nesting period.

Species	No. found	% of diet
Meadow Vole (<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>)	30	85%
Short-tailed Shrew (<i>Blarina brevicauda</i>)	4	11.4%
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	1	2%

LITERATURE CITED

- Bent, Arthur Cleveland, 1938. *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey*, Part 2. Dover Publications, N.Y. pp. 153-169.
- Bull, John, 1964. *Birds of the New York Area*. Dover Pub., N.Y. pp. 274-5.
- 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, N.Y. pp. 334-6.
- Burt, William H. 1964. *A Field Guide to the Mammals*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. pp. 12, 14, 168, 191, 204, pl. 25, 26.
- Connor, Paul F. 1971. *The Mammals of Long Island, N.Y.* Bulletin No. 416, N.Y. State Museum Science Service, pp. 29-33.
- Craighead, John J. and Frank C. 1956. *Hawks, Owls, and Wildlife*. Dover Pub., N.Y. pp. 87-9, 135-6.
- Eckert, Allan W. 1974. *The Owls of North America*. Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y. pp. 72-80.
- Glass, Bryan P. 1951. *A Key to the Skulls of North American Mammals*. Oklahoma State University. pp. 10, 34, 36, 39.

Muttontown Preserve, Muttontown Lane, East Norwich, N.Y. 11732

OBSERVATIONS ON FEEDING ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR OF COMMON TERNS

MICHAEL GOCHFELD

Many field biologists have focused attention on various aspects of the feeding behavior and ecology of terns. Despite the difficulties experienced by terrestrial ornithologists in studying a primarily marine phenomenon, an impressive literature has accumulated on foods utilized, territorial behavior, learning, and capture (Ashmole 1968, Ashmole & Ashmole 1967, Buckley & Buckley 1974, Dunn 1972, LeCroy 1972, Lemmetyinen 1973, Nisbet 1973, and others). There are also numerous studies on the feeding of chicks and their development, topics not considered here.

During studies on the breeding biology of Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) at Jones Beach, Nassau County, I have studied several aspects of the feeding behavior of adult terns. Common Terns capture small fish by diving from heights of from one to about seven meters above the water, often submerging momentarily. The height from which the dive is initiated may increase with the depth at which the fish occur (Dunn 1972). After capturing a fish, a tern either swallows it or carries it in the beak to feed to its young.

I present here observations relevant to the following subjects: social enhancement of feeding, feeding success studies, capture of more than one fish, and transport of fish to the young.

SOCIAL ENHANCEMENT OF FEEDING

Social enhancement refers to improved or accelerated performance of some task by one individual, when other individuals are engaged in the same task. Although ethologists use the term to refer to the stimulation of one individual by the performance of another, (as for example in humans when yawning occurs contagiously), enhancement may also involve improving one's performance by learning how or where others are being successful. Ward and Zahavi (1973) have proposed that aggregations of birds function primarily as "information centers," allowing individuals to locate patchily distributed food. For example, in species that form large nocturnal roosts, birds that have been relatively unsuccessful at locating food the previous day may follow successful birds to good feeding sites the next day. Another example of information exchange in a colony is the dance of the Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*) which conveys information on the

location of food to other members of the hive (von Frisch 1967). Recently Emlen and Demong (1974) have suggested that the lines of adults going back and forth from colony to feeding grounds are important guidelines for recently fledged Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*). They suggest that this is an important selective factor favoring synchrony in swallow colonies, since it is best to fledge at a time when there is a great number of adults moving into and out of the colony for feeding. If information exchange is indeed an important aspect of coloniality, then aggregations of birds should form where food is patchy rather than homogeneously distributed. Moreover, the patchy food source must contain enough food to sustain a large number of individuals; thus Horn (1968) emphasized that coloniality is an adaptive response to the occurrence of an abundant but patchy food source, and he noted that birds in an aggregation would make more efficient use of such a source than if they were uniformly distributed.

On Long Island, Common Terns often feed in large flocks over shoals of fish, and their food can be considered patchy and locally abundant. It is difficult, however, to know whether food is a limiting resource for terns; that is, whether the population size and reproductive success are directly determined by the amount of food available. That populations are limited by food is a basic assumption in many papers on theoretical ecology, but Austin (1946) stressed that this assumption has rarely been documented. There is evidence linking food shortage to starvation or retarded growth of terns in several studies (Austin 1933, LeCroy & LeCroy 1974, Langham 1972, Kremer 1973). Ashmole (1963) has discussed in general terms the role of food as a limiting factor for sea birds.

At Jones Beach, there have been several occasions when a shortage of fish has been evident. In some seasons there are periods of up to three weeks when the birds feed extensively on crustaceans such as various shrimps or Mole Crabs (*Emerita talpoida*), foods which I have found unsatisfactory for sustaining growth in laboratory-reared Common Terns. One can infer that when Common Terns feed extensively on crustaceans it is because fish are scarce or difficult to locate.

If the distribution of fish is patchy and the shoals of fish are mobile and unreliable, terns may have to cover very large areas of sea before finding food. Terns would therefore benefit from the opportunity to judge the success of other birds. Although Common Terns

probably spend much of their time feeding within 4 miles (6.4 km) of their colony sites (Austin 1946), this encompasses an area of about 72 sq. km. A tern leaving the colony site on a foraging trip after spending several hours brooding chicks, must choose its direction correctly if it is to locate a school of fish. If it has an opportunity to observe neighboring terns arriving at their nests with fish, it can simply follow outward the line of incoming terns, eventually arriving at a feeding ground. In a large colony exploiting a localized food source, a continuous stream of birds would be evident. A dramatic example of this was noted at Jones Inlet, Nassau Co., on 29 May 1960, when a constant movement of terns was noted along a line extending from the West End Beach colony, straight out to an area about 3 km. south of the mouth of the inlet. Outgoing birds flew about 5-10 meters above the water, while birds returning with fish flew low (mainly under 5 meters) over the water. I timed the movement of birds, and found about 35-40 birds per minute returning with fish. This feeding area was perhaps not out of visual range of birds leaving the colony, but the observation illustrates that such feeding lines do occur and could assist birds in locating a more remote food source. One should look for such lines in pelagic species, such as the Sooty Tern (*S. fuscata*), that frequently feed many miles from the breeding grounds.

My observations at the Common Tern colony have not demonstrated that departing birds actually do observe and respond to birds arriving with fish. Birds that arrive at a territory with a fish and then leave immediately, presumably retrace the route they have just flown. It would be most fruitful to observe birds that have been on the nest for several hours, for these would benefit most from observing the direction of arrival of successful terns.

FEEDING SUCCESS STUDIES

Beginning with Orians' (1969) comparison of feeding success in adult and juvenile Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), the study of age differences in foraging success has interested several groups of field workers (Recher & Recher 1969, Salt & Willard 1971, Dunn 1972, Buckley & Buckley 1974, Gochfeld MS). Most of this work has involved terns, particularly those species that hold or transport the fish in the bill before swallowing. The prey is thus readily visible and an observer can determine whether a dive has been successful or unsuccessful. Insectivorous birds are much more difficult to study since in many cases the prey disappears almost instantly and is of

such a small size relative to the beak that one has difficulty in seeing whether a capture has occurred.

The following example indicates that one cannot always rely on the external visibility of the prey. On 20 June 1974, I watched Common Terns feeding over a shoal of Sand Launce (*Ammodytes americanus*), about 30 meters off the Jones Inlet jetty. At this close range it was possible to observe their behavior in detail. The birds were capturing fish ranging in length from 4 to 8 cm. While studying feeding success rates, I noted four instances in which terns dove, reappeared with small fish, and then immediately swallowed the fish, even before shaking the water from their plumage. The swallowing occurred less than two seconds after the birds surfaced, and had they been further away, these dives would have been scored by me as failures. The possibility that some captures may go undetected should be considered in any study of feeding success rates.

This observation raises the question of why a few birds swallowed the fish rather than carrying them away. Parent terns that capture a fish stop feeding and carry the fish back to the young. There is some crucial stimulus associated either with the presence of the fish in the beak or the successful capture event that causes the change in behavior. A small fish might be an inadequate stimulus to inhibit swallowing, and the terns I saw swallow fish immediately may simply have captured very small fish. Alternatively they may have been birds without young. Unfortunately, it was not possible to trace these unmarked birds in the milling group of terns to see whether they later left the flock with fish.

CAPTURE OF MORE THAN ONE FISH

Some species, such as the Common Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) carry fish in their beaks and carry several fish at once. Others, such as some terns and all gulls, carry food internally and can therefore transport relatively large quantities and then regurgitate partially digested food for their young. Common Terns do not carry food internally, and generally carry one fish at a time in the bill. This seems a wasteful procedure and probably limits the birds to fishing close to the breeding site. One might predict that selection would favor the transport of more than one fish at a time. Hays *et al.* (1973) discuss such behavior in terns, and note that only 1.8% of feeding visits involved more than one fish (up to nine fish in one case). How such additional fish are captured remains uncertain.

On 20 June 1974, I twice saw adult Common Terns dive with their

bills empty and emerge with two fish. It is likely that the fish were close together and that the capture of two was simultaneous and fortuitous. In each case the birds returned to the colony site immediately. The fish were *Ammodytes* less than 5 cm. in length, and Hays *et al.* (1973) note that when several fish are carried at once they are usually small. My observation of essentially simultaneous capture of two fish does not indicate how a tern might catch as many as nine fish, and a more active process of actually chasing additional fish seems likely. It would be valuable to determine whether any individuals habitually catch more than one fish per foraging trip.

TRANSPORT OF FISH TO THE COLONY

Palmer (1941) noted that Common Terns regularly carried fish to the breeding colony with the head of the fish pointing to the same side. In evaluating cues by which young Common Terns learn to swallow fish head-first (Gochfeld 1975), I examined the constancy of head orientation of the fish carried into the West End colony. On 20 June 1974, I observed 36 arrivals of birds with fish. In 14 cases the head of the fish pointed to the right, in 10 cases to the left, and in 12 cases, the direction was not noted. Two hours later I watched the terns fishing in the inlet, and I noted 119 fish being taken back to the colony. Of these, the heads pointed to the right in 57 cases, to the left in 33 cases, and in an undetermined direction in 29 cases. I compared these two samples in a 2×2 contingency table, and the direction of transport did not differ ($X^2 = .27, p > .10$). With a binomial test the first sample did not differ from equality ($p > .20$) while the second sample did ($p < .02$). Thus even when the birds were feeding over a shoal of fish there was variation in the direction in which the fish were held. Immediately after capture, terns often manipulate the fish so as to grip them behind the head. However, the fact that there was no significant difference between the direction of the fish at the time of capture and on arrival at the colony indicates that the birds were probably not rearranging the fish during transport.

CONCLUSION

These anecdotal accounts suggest several studies that would be useful in determining how terns locate and exploit different prey. Not only do ornithologists have trouble locating feeding grounds, but terns themselves may experience difficulty. It is not known whether they are particularly good samplers, nor even whether they show strong preferences for certain fish, but Austin (1933) and Palm-

er (1941) both remark that *Ammodytes* is the preferred food of Common Terns on the New England coast.

It would be interesting to determine whether flight lines are more likely to form as birds are forced to feed further from their colony sites by a shortage of fish nearby, and it would be valuable to learn whether the use of such lines increases the birds' feeding success. The main limitation at present seems to be our inability to locate and sample the food supply at the time that the birds are exploiting it.

The possibility that differences in tern behavior could be correlated with the species, size, or density of the fish being sought is very attractive. There are many difficulties involved in studying the feeding behavior of marine birds (I.C.T. Nisbet, pers. comm.), but some of the problems do lend themselves well to careful descriptive observations. In many cases it is essential to have birds marked for individual recognition. I have been particularly interested in learning whether the manner in which adults arrive with fish or the orientation of the fish in the bill, influences the ease with which the chick learns to seize and swallow the fish.

LITERATURE CITED

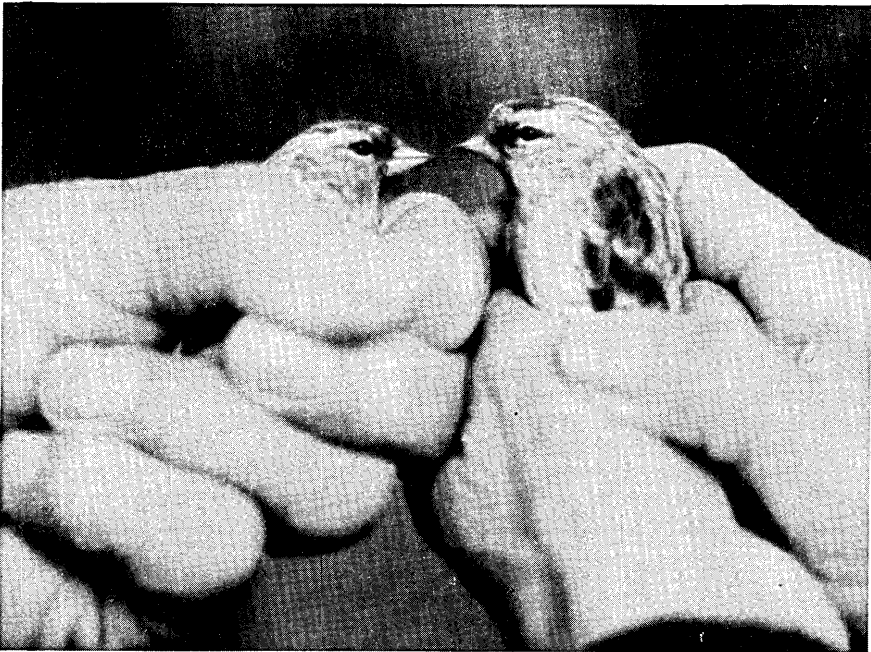
- Ashmole, N. P. 1963. The regulation of numbers of tropical oceanic birds. *Ibis* 103b: 458-473.
- . 1968. Body size, prey size, and ecological segregation in five sympatric tropical terns (*Aves: Laridae*). *Syst. Zool.* 17: 292-304.
- Ashmole, N. P. and M. J. Ashmole. 1967. Comparative feeding ecology of sea birds of a tropical oceanic island. *Peabody Mus. Nat. Hist. Bull.* No. 24, 131 pp.
- Austin, O. L. 1946. The status of Cape Cod terns in 1944: a behaviour study. *Bird-Banding* 17: 10-27.
- Austin, O. L. Jr. 1933. Status of the Cape Cod terns in 1933. *Bird-Banding* 4: 190-198.
- Buckley, F. G. and P. A. Buckley. 1974. Comparative feeding ecology of wintering adult and juvenile Royal Terns (*Aves: Laridae, Sterninae*). *Ecology* 55: 1053-1063.
- Dunn, E. 1972. Effect of age on the fishing ability of Sandwich Terns (*Sterna sandvicensis*). *Ibis* 114: 360-366.
- Emlen, S. T. and N. J. Demong. 1975. Adaptive significance of synchronized breeding in a colonial bird: A new hypothesis. *Science* 188: 1029-1031.

- Frisch, K. von. 1967. *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 566 pp.
- Gochfeld, M. 1975. Hazards of tail-first fish-swallowing by young terns. *Condor* 77: 345-346.
- . MS Feeding behavior of the Large-billed Tern (*Phaetusa simplex*).
- Hays, H., E. Dunn and A. Poole. 1973. Common, Arctic, Roseate, and Sandwich Terns carrying multiple fish. *Wilson Bull.* 85: 233-236.
- Horn, H. S. 1968. The adaptive significance of colonial nesting in the Brewer's Blackbird. (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). *Ecology* 49: 682-694.
- Kremer, R. 1973. The relationship between clutch size, chick growth, and chick survival in the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). Unpublished M.S. Thesis, C. W. Post College, N.Y.
- Langham, N. P. E. 1972. Chick survival in terns (*Sterna* spp.) with particular reference to the Common Tern. *J. Anim. Ecol.* 41: 385-395.
- LeCroy, M. 1972. Young Common and Roseate Terns learning to fish. *Wilson Bull.* 84: 201-202.
- LeCroy, M. and S. LeCroy. 1974. Growth and fledging in the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). *Bird-Banding* 45: 326-340.
- Lemmetynen, R. 1973. Feeding ecology of *Sterna paradisaea* Pontopp. and *S. hirundo* L. in the archipelago of southwestern Finland. *Ann. Zool. Fenn.* 10: 507-525.
- Nisbet, I. C. T. 1973. Courtship-feeding, egg-size and breeding success in Common Terns. *Nature* 241: 141-142.
- Orians, G. 1969. Age and hunting success in the Brown Pelican. *Animal Behav.* 17: 316-319.
- Palmer, R. S. 1941. A behavior study of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo hirundo* L.). *Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist.* 42: 1-119.
- Recher, H. and J. Recher. 1969. Comparative foraging efficiency of adult and immature Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*). *Animal Behav.* 17: 320-322.
- Salt, G. W. and D. E. Willard. 1971. The hunting behavior and success of Forster's Tern. *Ecology* 52: 989-998.
- Ward, P. and A. Zahavi, 1973. The importance of certain assemblages of birds as "information-centres" for food finding. *Ibis* 115: 517-534.

Department of Biology, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y. 11367

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Hoary Redpoll in Onondaga County: On 13 February 1978, I noticed a very pale redpoll at my window feeder in Jamesville, Onondaga County. At the time, I estimated that approximately 150 redpolls were present at various feeders in my yard. I have often heard the expression "frosty" in connection with the appearance of the Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*), but to me this bird appeared soft gray rather than brown. I had seen three or four birds in the past that I considered to be Hoary Redpolls, and had read all the field guides and articles I could find. From these, I decided that the size of the bill is the most important point. I could stand within 18 inches of the flock and at one point must have been less than a foot from this individual. At no time did I feel positive that the bill was any different from that of a Common Redpoll (*A. flammea*). It might have looked a bit broader where it met the face, and it might have been shorter. With constant feeding movements and nervousness because of two resident predators, it was extremely difficult to make a good comparison. Seeing this bird with a flock feeding in a field or in trees, this could serve as a field mark only after other points had been noted.



*Fig. 1. Comparison of bill shape:
Hoary Redpoll on right, Common Redpoll on left.
15 February 1978* Photo by Dorothy W. Crumb

On 15 February, this individual entered one of my banding traps. In the hand, next to a Common Redpoll, the 1-mm. difference in the bill and the difference in bill shape was readily evident (Fig. 1; see also Yunick, 1967, *Kingbird* 17: 66-68). The under tail coverts on the Hoary were completely free of streaking (Fig. 3). One other thing very noticeable on this bird in the hand was the white feather edgings. These show in Fig. 2 on the primaries and secondaries. The white also extends clear around the ends of the longest tail feathers. This shows particularly on the underside of the feather, but is also apparent from above. Since taking these photographs, I have handled over 150 redpolls, and not one of them has shown white at the ends of the tail, so I don't feel that this was simply a case of one individual without feather wear.

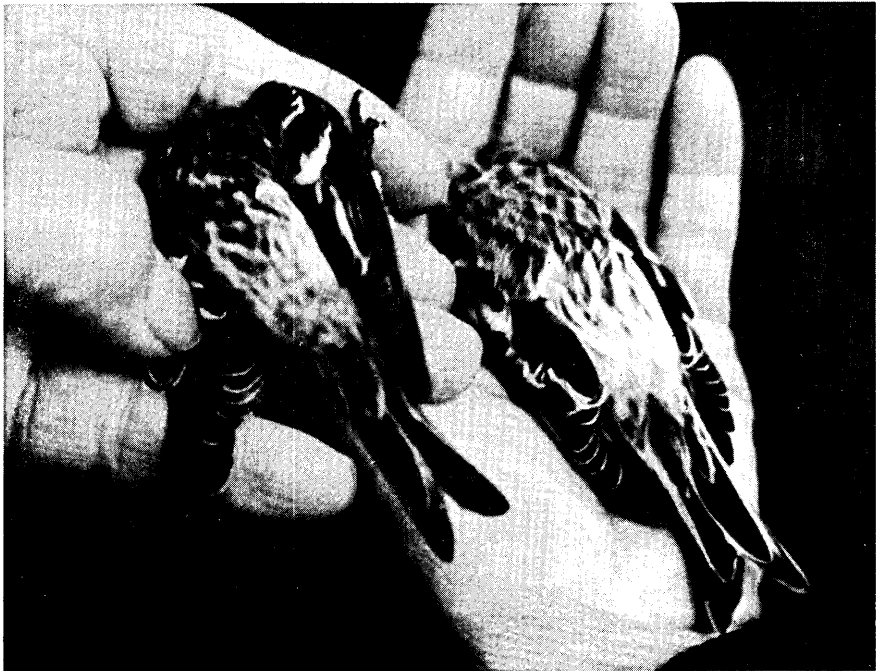
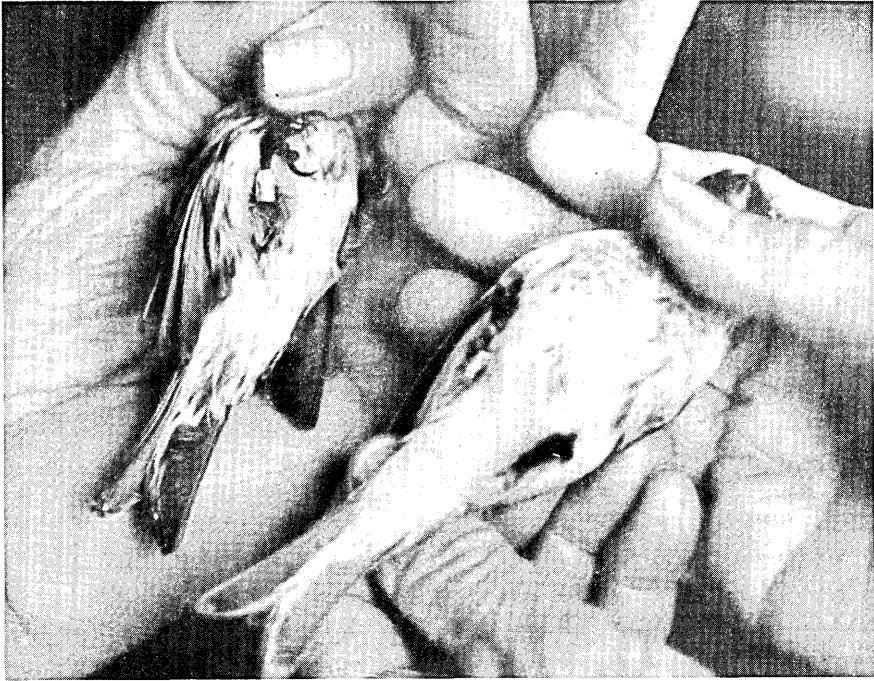


Fig. 2. Comparison of rump:
Hoary Redpoll on right, Common Redpoll on left.
15 February 1978 Photo by Dorothy W. Crumb

Mention has been made in *American Birds* (1974, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 620) of the "pantaloons" effect in the Hoary Redpoll. From close observation of hundreds of Commons at my feeder this winter, I feel that this is a function of cold protection or the way the bird is standing. I watched this Hoary for many days and never thought the "pantaloons" were any longer. Every other Hoary Red-



*Fig. 3. Comparison of under tail coverts:
Hoary Redpoll on right, Common Redpoll on left.
15 February 1978 Photo by Dorothy W. Crumb*

poll that I have seen has been very cooperative, constantly exposing the rump by dropping the wings. This bird did this only occasionally, no more frequently than the Commons.

When looking for a Hoary Redpoll in a flock, look first for a very pale bird, remembering that there can be very pale Commons and very dark Hoary Redpolls. Look for light color around the face, an absence of streaking across the chest, and small, pale streaks on the sides below the wing. Then try for white feather outlines, rump, and under tail coverts. Finally, if you are fairly sure, check the size and shape of the bill if you have a nearby Common Redpoll for comparison.

On 16 March, a second Hoary Redpoll, unbanded, appeared at the feeder. This bird was light brown rather than gray, with heavier streaking on the sides than the first one. It would undoubtedly have gone unnoticed away from a feeder. However, it continually exposed the rump, and had all other field marks. It was still at the feeder on 23 March, but had still avoided the traps.

Dorothy W. Crumb, 3983 Gates Road, Jamesville, N.Y. 13078

Bill-cleaning behavior in White-winged Crossbills: On Sunday, 30 Oct. 1977, the author and Warren Lloyd visited Hamlin Beach State Park on Lake Ontario near the western edge of Monroe County to look for White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*), which had been reported there the previous day. Hamlin Beach has extensive stands of White Pine, which were probably planted in the 1930's, and have now reached a height of 40 to 50 feet. This fall, they were the only conifers with a good crop of cones. The once solid plantings have now been cut for roads and campsites, allowing easy access to the area.

We found a few White-winged Crossbills near Parking Lot Four, but these soon flew southward over the trailer site area. We could hear the birds calling and finally a flock flew over our heads and landed in the nearby White Pines, where they began to feed.

As we followed the birds in their erratic movements, we suddenly came upon a small ash tree, about thirty feet in height, growing next to the road. This was the only deciduous tree in the area and much to our surprise contained a group of about 25 male and female crossbills scattered about its branches. There were no seeds on the tree. All the crossbills were busily engaged in an activity which seemed to involve wiping or cleaning their bills. They paid no attention to our approach as we moved up to within 25 feet.

As we watched, each bird turned its head and wiped first one side of its crossed mandibles on one side of a pencil-sized twig and then the other side on the opposite side of the twig. They kept doing this for the 15 minutes we observed them, moving their heads back and forth, back and forth. The activity always involved alternating from one side of the bill to the other, rather than concentrating on one side for a period of time. Eventually a bird would fly off, but another would take its place.

We have researched A. C. Bent's *Life Histories*, and numerous other sources on crossbills and can find no reference to this kind of behavior. We can only conclude that the birds may have been trying to remove the pine pitch from their bills, as the cones we saw had a great deal of pitch on them.

We watched the birds as stated from about 25 feet and for about 15 minutes. We were able to study them carefully with 7 x 35 and 10 x 50 binoculars. The tree was in full sunshine, with the light behind us, so that we had the best possible viewing conditions. Some birds were at eye-level. It was a rare opportunity to observe these birds under optimum conditions.

We would be interested in knowing if anyone else has observed this behavior.
Mary Ann Sunderlin, 505 Bay Road, Webster, N.Y. 14580

Red-necked Grebe Invasion: The second documented invasion of Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*) took place on Lake Ontario near Rochester, in April of 1977. This was apparently a repeat of a similar occurrence in April 1958 (see H. Miller, "Statistical Summary for 1958," *Goshawk*, Jan.-Feb., 1960; *Kingbird* 8, 46 [July, 1958]; and *Audubon Field Notes* 12, 349 [Aug., 1958].) The peak numbers reported this year were 415 on April 7 and 1210 on April 10. In 1958 the high count was 1100 at Rochester on April 4. The buildup and decrease were gradual, beginning with two on March 25 and ending with three on May 3. All of the April records this year were from the Lake Ontario shore west of Rochester, while the May records and the 1958 peak were from the east shore area.

While the records received indicate an increase through April 10, and then a gradual decrease, the numbers are not really comparable. To my knowledge, only on April 10 did anyone undertake a systematic count. On that day, R. Clark and C. Perrigo counted the birds along the shore from Braddock Bay to Point Breeze, a distance of about 25 miles, and found no grebes east or west of those end points. Other records represented much shorter stretches of shoreline, and often only single observation points. On several mornings from April 9 to 17, I observed and counted 150 to 200 individuals at single locations near Braddock Bay. On these occasions, at 6:30 a.m. the birds were near shore, calling, courting, and feeding, but by 8:00-8:15 a.m., when field trip groups arrived, the birds were largely a mile or more offshore, much to the frustration of many seeking a life bird. This behavior would certainly influence the accuracy of counts.

At this point it is pertinent to examine the idiosyncracies of the demography, topography and birding coverage of this region in an attempt to account for isolated records such as these with no reports from neighboring regions. First, while a very large percentage of the area's active birders live south and east of Rochester, most will drive 30-60 miles to points on the west lakeshore, particularly in spring, rather than 5-10 miles to points on the east lakeshore. This is mainly associated with the geography and topography of the area. To the west, the shoreline is generally north of Rochester, thus birds moving north and east, which is the general spring flow, tend to be concentrated by the bulge of land to the north and by their attempts to travel around the lake with minimum movement southward. Among the results of this are the major hawk lookout at Braddock Bay, a number of "migrant trap" type woodlots in the marshes along the lakeshore, and the many rarities recorded annually. As an additional topographic factor, the western sections are generally low, flat, and marshy near the lake, while to the east there are moderate bluffs, few marshes, and much wooded or planted land. Considering the demography of the region, the east was settled first, with major roads generally set well back from the shore and the intervening land virtually all privately owned. In contrast, the west has several large shoreline park areas and numerous public roads extending to the shore. In both directions coverage is poor at the edges of Region 2 and into the neighboring

regions; there are few records east from Sodus Bay to at least Oswego (about 30 miles) and west from Point Breeze nearly to Fort Niagara (about 45 miles).

Returning to records, it is interesting that the few observers to the east of Rochester find very large concentrations (of extremely variable magnitude) of Common Loons, Red-throated Loons, and, less frequently, Red-necked Grebes, nearly annually, but in very narrow time windows, often less than a week. Thus, if a few key people can't or don't search for birds for a week's time, nearly the entire passage of these species can be missed. Frequently, tremendous numbers are recorded between Webster and Sodus Bay with little spill-over to the west. Note however, on a map that Rochester is set back in a large southerly dip in Lake Ontario so that birds can move east and west from about Hamlin on the west, to Nine Mile Point in Webster on the east, virtually unobserved by observers on the Rochester shore.

Finally, it has been noted by many observers that standing on the bluffs at Webster Park, or at Nine Mile Point in the spring, one frequently sees birds, particularly waterfowl and shorebirds, in large flocks coming from inland and moving up to a mile offshore before turning west. This phenomenon is not typically noted west of Rochester. Possibly related to this is a small farm pond about three miles east of Fairport and about 10 miles south of these shoreline areas, that has consistently produced numerous shorebird records including a Black-necked Stilt and several Ruffs, with no apparent special attractions. Might this track represent some sort of high-density pathway from points south to points north and west on the Great Lakes? Both Red-necked Grebes and Whimbrels, which are more frequently reported in large numbers from the north shore of Lake Ontario or Lake Huron and Lake Erie, respectively, are most frequently reported in any numbers in the spring from the above east lakeshore points.

From the sketchy and questioning nature of these notes, there is obviously much to be learned. At this point I feel that explanations are speculations. Many more detailed observations and possibly even some well-timed, spring "pelagic" trips into Lake Ontario are needed to shed some light on this aspect of spring migration in this region.

Robert Spahn, 716 High Tower Way, Webster, N.Y. 14580

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT W. SMART

For once all the regions in the state were in complete agreement about the winter weather—it was dreadful. December was more or less normal but then the snows came. Inland and coastal storms combined to give the state record snow depths. To compound the difficulties was the extreme cold of January and February with no thaw to diminish the snow cover. In many of the regions the temperature rose above freezing on only two or three days during the two-month period. Birds were concentrated at feeding stations, although one suspects that this is partially due to the concentration of the birders enjoying the indoor warmth rather than braving the elements. Active field work in Region Two produced the best species total for the season in at least five years. About the only positive comment came from Region Ten which reported less harbor freeze-up than last year and, therefore, less waterfowl displacement. Apparently the Brant, however, learned to enjoy the taste of lawn grass, for hundreds of them were feeding on parkway shoulders and golf courses when their normal water habitat was still open.

As always in the winter season the National Audubon Christmas Counts provide much of the data that follows. These counts provide an excellent picture of the local bird populations at the time that the count was taken. Unfortunately the count period is relatively early in the season and does not truly reflect the winter picture. The half-hardy species are still present, but most either move out or die off shortly thereafter; note the decline in Ring-billed Gulls from 3600 to 20 in Region Five. In all too many cases no follow-up counts are taken. It is also remarkable how many rare and unusual species are seen *ONLY* on the count day. One reason for this is the extensive coverage by large numbers of people. Another is, unfortunately, the rather competitive nature of the counts and the resulting over-enthusiasm of some observers. In the following reports the regional editors have, in most cases, accepted the judgment of the local compiler although a few private doubts were expressed. The final decisions, of course, rest with the editors of *American Birds*.

The heavy snow cover provided safety for many of the raptor's prey species. Feeders were plagued, or blessed, depending on your point of view, with numbers of accipiters. Without adding further to my previous comments on identification and distribution, I merely

report the following: one region had no accipiters; in two of the regions the Sharp-shinned and Cooper's were equal in number; in five of the regions the Sharp-shinned outnumbered the Cooper's by a wide margin. The totals for the state cannot be given because Region Nine reported Sharp-shin as "too numerous to record." It is clear, however, that the Cooper's is more numerous in upstate regions than in eastern and downstate areas.

One of the main features of the season was the flight of "winter finches." All of the species made some kind of a showing, although different areas had varying results with individual species. The movements of these birds are confusing and present a real challenge to someone interested in a serious field study. The crossbills are notoriously nomadic and come and go according to the local food crops. Evening Grosbeaks seemed to leave the area during the middle part of the winter and then built up again toward the end of the season. Presumably they had moved further south and were returning, but one wonders why they depart in the first place, with all the free(?) food still available. Pine Grosbeak numbers varied considerably with no observable pattern. Siskins and goldfinches increased steadily during the period. Were they coming into the regions from outside or merely appearing at the feeders as natural food sources gave out? There was very little agreement as to the extent of the Purple Finch flight. The star performer of the group was unquestionably the Common Redpoll. The flight followed the classic pattern of small numbers early in the season and then an explosion in late January and February. Almost certainly this is a result of a southward migration for there were no detectable flights early in the season. Careful observation produced reports of Hoary Redpolls in six regions and an indication of admirable restraint and caution in the identification of this difficult species.

There was little agreement as to the effects of the severe winter on the expanding southern species. Titmice seemed to be well up in most regions and Red-bellied Woodpeckers made a good showing. Mockingbirds were reported down in a number of areas. Reports of Carolina Wrens vary. Region Two reports few losses but Regions One and Five report serious losses. Most regions reported them as "surviving." By the way, note the potential soap-opera situation of the Carolina Wrens in Region Five; tune in next season and see what happens.

Another species of interest is the Varied Thrush, which appeared in five regions with some multiple reports. Dick Guthrie speculates

that perhaps this species is following the pattern of the Evening Grosbeak and becoming established with a small breeding population in the Northeast. I had suggested this a number of years ago in the New Hampshire Audubon Quarterly, because of the concentration of records from the northern areas of New England, and still think that there is a very good possibility of regular breeding somewhere in the northeastern forests, albeit in very small numbers.

Although we had nothing like the spectacular flight of northern owls reported in Minnesota, there are reports of Boreal, Great Gray, and Hawk-Owls. Snowy Owls were very low in numbers again although the Rough-leg flight was excellent. Northern Shrikes were also widely reported.

Nearly everyone commented on the continued population explosion of the House Finch and one editor suggested that careful notes be kept to evaluate the ecological effect that this is having on other species and the local food supplies. Is it in direct competition with the House Sparrow and if so, will the numbers of the House Sparrows diminish? Would this really be a change for the better?

The Turkey population continues to expand in many areas. Care must be taken to resist the pressures to hunt this noble bird during this re-establishment period. Eventually it may once again become a valid game bird but not for a long period of time.

There is little space to comment on much of the interesting data in the following reports and I can only urge that each one be read carefully. A tremendous amount of work has gone into their preparation. A few regional highlights follow:

Region One: A flock of 12,000 Common Mergansers, Parasitic Jaeger on Dec. 1, Barrow's Goldeneye and Harlequin Duck, Bohemian Waxwings. **Region Two:** Gyrfalcon and Peregrine Falcon, Boreal Owl, Eastern Phoebe on Feb. 7, three Yellow-headed Blackbirds, great counts of Snow Buntings with a max flock of 5000 and a day's count of 7500. 50 Short-eared are also impressive. **Region Three:** Osprey Feb. 11 (early or late?), Hawk-Owl, (excellent notes submitted), Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee at a feeder which was the only one reported. **Region Four:** Golden Eagle, Pine Warbler Feb. 6-16. **Region Five:** Eared Grebe, Barrow's Goldeneye and King Eiders, Red Phalarope, Dickcissel and "Oregon" Junco. **Region Six:** Black-legged Kittiwake, increase in Gray Partridge in spite of the winter, 1100 Great Black-backed Gulls, 300 Bohemian Waxwings. **Region Seven:** Lake Champlain area produced 2 adult Little Gulls, Black Guillemot, Great Gray Owl and 200 Bohemian Wax-

wings. In contrast, a hike up Mt. Marcy in February produced zero birds. Also note the impressive Raven counts. **Region Eight:** Note the number of raptors on the Cossackie Flats, Gray Jay, Chipping Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow for the third year (!). **Region Nine:** 55 Turkey Vultures in Dutchess Co., Golden Eagles performing courtship displays in Clove Valley, 200 Laughing Gulls, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker at Vassar College and a Wood Thrush in Rye. **Region Ten:** Pelagic species lead the list. Most remarkable is the Sooty Shearwater and 5 Skuas in February. The Federation pelagic trip produced 83 Razorbills. Also good were Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Western Kingbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lark Bunting and Lark Sparrow.

These may not be the items that the regional editors would have chosen to single out, but they seem to be of the widest interest.

As always it is very hard to decide on the BOTS award. This season I have had to give co-awards. On December 13 an exhausted Say's Phoebe was picked up near Ithaca and taken to Cornell. It died soon afterwards and now constitutes the second specimen for the state. There are several valid sight records. On December 8 and again on January 13 an immature Ivory Gull was seen at Hawkins Point, Massena. Excellent field notes were submitted. There are two specimens and several sight records for the state. Except for Niagara Falls, this is the only inland record as far as I know.

The Winter lingers on; Spring refuses to come. Let us all hope that warmth and warblers will soon put an end to this rather dreary period of the year. However, a look at the following records shows that all was not in vain.

Millbrook School, Millbrook, N.Y. 12545

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

What a dreary, elongated winter this was—and the second snowiest on record, its 132 inches (4 m.) topped only by last year's snowfall. Frequent storms characterized December and January, a result of "split Westerlies." This year the prevailing winds divided at the Pacific Coast, one segment to take the more normal path to Alaska and then back across the northern states, and the second to follow roughly our southern border before bending north along the east coast. Although December repeatedly alternated periods of rain and snow, tem-

peratures for the season averaged 4^o F. below normal and persistently held the snow cover. Soon after Lake Erie froze January 9, nearly four weeks later than last year, waterfowl moved in on the Genesee and Allegheny Rivers to stay through February. Following a brief thaw the first week in January, a cold front shocked the Southern Tier and downed an unusually late flight of Horned Grebes. Another blizzard, the last for our region since the northeaster along the coast in February missed us, hit January 27, and from then on, the mercury never rose above freezing. Both December and January were colder than usual, but for February, temperatures averaged 9^o F. below normal, making it the second coldest this century, vying with 1934. Thus the period closed, still thoroughly winterized, with a thirteen-inch snow blanket, most migrants missing, and natives asking, "Is there no end?"

The deep snow discouraged not only Am. Robins and Killdeers but also field birders trying to find them, and forced hawks out of some areas by protecting the proliferating mice. What a heyday the raptors will have next season! Although some Ruffed Grouse and Turkeys were reported killed from starvation or lack of grit, some of the latter were seen feeding on sensitive fern in the Alfred area. The mast crop was poor and sumac fruits were soon nearly gone, but there was a good supply of black birch and conifer seed, with here and there a few *Viburnum* berries.

Positives for the winter include 1) a good representation of wintering ducks; 2) normal numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and an enormous flight of Rough-legs; 3) many, many Turkeys; 4) excellent owl reports in spite of terrible weather; 5) good reports of Belted Kingfishers, Com. Flickers and Hairy Woodpeckers; 6) Horned Larks doing better than for some time; 7) a steady population of Tufted Titmice and Cardinals, thanks to effective panhandling; 8) huge invasions of Red-breasted Nuthatches and Northern Shrikes; 9) drastic thinning of House Sparrows; 10) an excellent flight of most "northern" finches, fine numbers of Purple Finches; and 11) a flood of Am. Goldfinches—these last at Niger-seed feeders sending their benefactors to the poorhouse.

Negatives for the winter include 1) an absence of loons; 2) a scarcity of Goshawks, Sharp-shinned and Marsh Hawks, as well as fewer Am. Kestrels; 3) low numbers of Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants; 4) a poor Snowy Owl flight; 5) few Brown Creepers and almost no Winter Wrens; 6) a dearth of Carolina Wrens and Mockingbirds; 7) nearly no Golden-crowned Kinglets; 8) pitiful numbers of E. Meadowlarks; and 9) no big late winter influx of icterids or other early migrants.

Rarities include Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Goshawk, Parasitic Jaeger, Saw-whet Owl, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, House Finch and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Christmas Census; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; RCC—Regional CC, Dec. 17-Jan. 1, which includes totals of Audubon's CC's from Beaver Meadow, Buffalo (partial), Hamburg-E. Aurora, Jamestown (partial), Oak Orchard Swamp, Scio, St. Bonaventure, plus Allegany Co., outside the "Scio Circle"; SP—State Park.

Contributors: Robert Andrie, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Lou Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, Stephen Eaton, Roseanna Fiegl, David Freeland, Helen Graves, Matthew Hotchkiss, Norman Ives, Douglas P. Kibbe, Clarence Klingensmith, Erma Larson, Katherine

Palmer, Michael Pitzrick, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Ann Scott (ASc), Bruce A. Smalley, Robert Sundell, Joseph Thill, James VanScoy, Regina VanScoy, Sharley Vossler, Larry Wilson, and initialed Observers: Patricia Andrie, Richard Byron, Arthur R. Clark (ARC), Flora Elderkin, Marcya Foster, Jim Gregory, Fred Meyer ("Bird Notes," *Olean Times Herald*), Harold Mitchell, William Rebovich, Frances Rew, Arthur Schaffner.

LOONS-DUCKS: Reported as "crippled" by one unfamiliar with the species, a Red-necked Grebe, downed near Franklinville Jan. 26, was released in open water where it could take off (DC); another accompanied ducks on the Allegheny R. near Vandalia Feb. 17 (SE), and up to four were sighted in Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 11-26 (FR, RS+). Some Horned Grebes, migrating from the n.w. and forced down on Quaker L. early in Jan. by icing conditions, were killed, many with broken bills and all with fractured skulls and other body damage. A post-mortem exam on five found them with up to nearly one-third their weight in fat and one had apparently fed on Chironomid larvae (midges). Of the 53 saved Jan. 12, some were banded by M. Forness and all were released in open water (SE, FM). Rare in winter, a Double-crested Cormorant was found in Buffalo Harbor Jan. 1 (RA+). Great Blue Herons numbered a low 13 on the RCC and only five were reported after Jan. Spicing up the winter season were three Black-crowned Night Herons on the Buffalo CC (2nd time since 1969) and three at Buffalo Jan. 1, 2 (DF+). The only Whistling Swans for the period were a max 21 at Cuba L. Dec. 2, 3, one at Amity L. Jan. 13 and two at Wellsville Jan. 15. An unusually high count for the RCC was 193 Canada Geese. The pair at Farmersville Sta. all winter have adopted the Clarks for over a year now. At least 15 others, as well as a late Snow Goose, wintered along the Allegheny R., feeding in nearby corn fields (SE, JV, RV). Results of the twenty-fourth annual Waterfowl Census Jan. 7-15 show totals of 23,763 individuals and 23 species. (A. Reckhow, compiler). Seen for the 2nd time ever on the count was a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**, in the Jamestown area (RS). High were: 2596 Mallards, 6656 Com. Goldeneyes, 3265 Oldsquaws, and 6045 Com. Mergansers. Low were: 217 Black Ducks, NO Gadwalls, three Pintails, 22 Am. Wigeons, 44 Redheads, 2271 Canvasbacks, 24 White-winged Scoters, two Hooded Mergansers, 56 Red-breasted Mergansers, and four Am. Coots. In addition to up to 39 Mallards wintering on the Genesee and Allegheny Rivers, a pair panhandled all season at Farmersville Sta. Banding Refuge. From few reports of Black Ducks, the regional high count was 50 at Riverside Jan. 5. Other noteworthy duck reports include: Gadwalls: 20 at Cuba L. Dec. 2, 3 and one at Amherst Jan. 22; nine Pintails and a Green-winged Teal at Niagara Falls, Goat Is. Jan. 2; a Wood Duck at Oak Orchard Dec. 28; Redheads: at least a dozen counted from Niagara Falls, Amherst and Celeron during Jan. and Feb.; no less than 33 Lesser Scaups; an ad. male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** at Celeron Dec. 18-25 and there again Jan. 15-22, to be included in both the Jamestown CC, Dec. 18, and the Waterfowl Census Jan. 15 (RS+), probably a first ever for s.w. New York; Com. Goldeneyes: max for the region: 24 on the Allegheny R. Jan. 25; an ad. male **HARLEQUIN DUCK**, observed and photographed at close range in Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 18-25 (RS, Kiblers+); a max 52 White-winged Scoters in Yates-Somerset area Feb. 17; eight Hooded Mergansers for the season; Com. Merganser: in addition to 25 wintering on the Genesee R. and 11 on the Allegheny R., a max 12,000 resting at Dunkirk Feb. 26; and Red-breasted Merganser: max 2,000 at Dunkirk Feb. 19 (FR) (an indication of a cleaner Lake Erie?).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: The only **GOSHAWKS** reported were two on the RCC and one on Grand Is. Feb. 20 (DF). Ooops—more Cooper's than Sharp-shinned Hawks were identified again this winter: 30 Cooper's and 22 Sharp-shins. Veteran ornithologist Dr. S. Eaton notes widespread scarcity of the latter but several Cooper's tending feeders in the Vandalia area. Always uncommon in winter, single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared on the Scio and St. Bonaventure CC's. A fine Rough-legged Hawk flight was marked by 13 on the RCC and at least 27 individuals widely scattered. Four Am. Coots were found at Dunkirk Jan. 15 (FR, Buck), probably already included in the Waterfowl Census above. Rare and late was the **PARASITIC JAEGER** at Buffalo Harbor Dec. 1 (DF). The larid season was enlivened by

single Glaucous Gulls at Buffalo Jan. 7 (HM+) and at Olcott Feb. 25 (DF+), an Iceland Gull at Buffalo Jan. 8 (HM+), and a Little Gull at North Buffalo Dec. 4 (DF+).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Although the only Snowy Owl reports were singles near Hinsdale in Jan., at Wellsville Feb. 11 and at Niagara Falls Jan. 22, energetic birders located six Long-eared and 30 Short-eared Owls, including a high count of 15 Short-ears on Grand Is. Feb. 19. A **SAW-WHET OWL** appeared at Oak Orchard WMA Feb. 21 (WR, Meddaugh). Unusual for the season are the single Red-headed Woodpeckers in Amity Jan. 22 and in Porter Feb. 11, as well as the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Larks seem to be much better off than for some time with max counts 250 unidentified subspecies in Middleport Jan. 2, 60 *Eremophila alpestris alpestris* at Ransomville Feb. 26, and 50 *E. a. praticola* at Riverside Feb. 5, 6. Well reported Tufted Titmice numbered a high 61 on the RCC, but two successive hard winters seem to have been too much for the wrens. For the entire season, one lone Winter Wren was found, on the Jamestown CC Dec. 18, and only four Carolinas were reported. Mockingbirds were scarce too, with just five singles showing up. A Gray Catbird stayed late at Farmersville Sta., until Dec. 6 (DC), and single Brown Thrashers appeared for the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31 and at E. Amherst Jan. 9. Migrating Am. Robins were first seen the last of Jan. and a few more trickled in during Feb. with the max 20 at Lyndonville Feb. 24. Two **VARIED THRUSHES** were spotted at Aurora Dec. 12, 17 (AS, ARC, RA, DF+). Unusual for staying so late were single E. Bluebirds at Amity L. Dec. 3, 4 (VP, RP) and in Hume Dec. 30 (KP, Morse). Eye-popping birding, like good fishing, comes from being in the right place at the right time, when a rare **BOHEMIAN WAXWING** might be seen, like the one at Orchard Park Dec. 28 (Saville) or the two at Hamburg Feb. 5 (RA, PA, MF, RB, JB). Of course, 220 Cedar Waxwings at the latter place (possibly with the Bohemians?) Feb. 5 are not to be ignored.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: A Yellow-rumped Warbler spent all Dec. through Feb. 3 at Farmersville Sta. feeding on suet (DC), and another was seen at Evans Dec. 11 (RA+).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlarks were again in poor shape with only 13 birds reported. Winter is such a dreary season that even a common bird—*any* bird—is a bonus, and yet sometimes we are favored with a smile from Dame Fortune, such as single Rusty Blackbirds at Limestone Dec. 5 and at Tonawanda WMA Jan. 9, or a very late Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the Hamburg-E. Aurora CC Dec. 31. Evening Grosbeaks tallied a high 2739 on the RCC while the season's banding totaled 549 at Alfred (EB) and a low 60 at Farmersville Sta. (DC). There was a new location for the rapidly expanding **HOUSE FINCH**, in Amherst, where three were seen all Feb. (DF+). More of the season's "winter finch" excitement includes: Pine Grosbeaks: 32 on the RCC plus 73 others; **HOARY REDPOLLS:** one on the Scio CC (EB) and one at Eggertsville Feb. 16 (Hull); Com. Redpolls: thicker than flies on a hot summer's day (well, not *quite*) with 620 on the RCC and highest of other reports, 350 at North Tonawanda in Feb.; a mob of Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches, making paupers of Niger-feeder operators (Once begun, the dole *must* continue!); and crossbills: 44 Red and at least 16 White-winged.

Four Rufous-sided Towhees were reported on the RCC, one wintered at Orchard Park and one was seen at Tonawanda WMA Jan. 19. Four Field, nine White-crowned and many White-throated Sparrows were here all season. Staying later than usual was a Fox Sparrow at Farmersville Sta. until Dec. 4 (DC) and a Swamp Sparrow at Amity L. Dec. 6-14. Are Song Sparrows in trouble, or was there just too much snow? Only a low 67 was recorded on the RCC. 'Twas a very good year for Lapland Longspurs with the max of many reports 35 at Shadigee Feb. 25. Except possibly for the hard shelled "bird-lister-only," that whopping count of 1000 Snow Buntings in Kiantone Township Jan. 4 (FE) would have made any ornithophile's day.

ADDENDUM: Results of the 11th annual study of Tower Kills from WGR-TV (Wales),

WKBW-TV (Colden) and WIVB-TV (Colden) show a total of 1397 birds (high) of 50 species, the majority picked up Sept. 21-24, 1977. High counts were: 174 Bay-breasted Warblers, 156 Ovenbirds, 116 Magnolia Warblers, 92 Tennessee Warblers, 84 Swainson's Thrushes and 82 Blackpoll Warblers. A. R. Clark, compiler, notes this is the second occurrence for the Hooded Warbler (two birds), and the third for the Yellow-throated Vireo (one bird). 23 Gray Catbirds on Sept. 22 is highest ever one-day kill for the species. For the last four years, Bay-breasted Warblers have outnumbered Blackpolls, a reversal of the previous seven years. (*The Prothonotary*, BOS publication, Vol. 43 No. 12, pp. 198 ff.)

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

Once again winter's weather has been harsh to the birders, although apparently much less so to the birds than last winter. December began with a cold snap and a heavy snow storm on the 5th, with daily snow to the 11th, then moderated with warm temperatures and occasional rain through the 25th. Following this, the thermometer dropped below freezing, rising above that point only on seven days in January, through season's end. Snowfall reached record levels with major storms, generally accompanied by strong NE winds, on Jan. 10, 14, 18, 20-21, and Feb. 7. Total snowfall was 33 inches (84 cm.) in December, 60.5 inches (154 cm.) in January, and about 40 inches (102 cm.) in February. January temperatures were near normal, much warmer than last year, while February was colder.

A continuing series of rarities in the form of visitors from the north and west kept the observers in the field in spite of the frigid, stormy weather. This combination of many vagrants and very active birding in the region led to the best species counts for the season in at least five years. Several of the species were also recorded in record numbers. On a shorter time scale the weather effects did assert themselves. For example, the Rochester Christmas Bird Count was conducted in the pouring rain with the lowest count in 10 years resulting and with several rarities known to be in the area (seen both before and after) missed during the count period. By contrast, the Little Lakes CBC, 30 miles south, one week later, was conducted in cold temperatures with deep snow but sunny skies, and a near record count resulted.

Winter mortality has not appeared especially great this season, although the prolonged cold and heavy snow cover of February did exact a toll and some sort of thaw by mid-March may be crucial to the survivors, as much of the natural food supply is badly depleted. By late February most of the wintering Great Blue Herons were gone, many of the Greater Scaups gathered at Irondequoit Bay Outlet were dead (this was about 10% of the scaup population and, oddly, apparently nearly all casualties were males), Ring-necked Pheasants were very scarce west of Rochester, Mockingbirds were almost impossible to locate, and there were some reports of numbers of birds dying at feeders, in one case alleviated by providing the birds with grit. On the brighter side, most of the

wintering rarities survived, and most of the reported resident Carolina Wrens made it through the period.

The cold, ice, and snow of February did provide a sharp contrast in the start of spring migration, unlike last year. At the season's end there were few geese reported, most other waterfowl were late, and no hawk flight was noted.

Rarities: Harlequin Duck, Common Eider, Gyrfalcon, Peregrine Falcon, Common Snipe, Boreal Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Varied Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Bohemian Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Hoary Redpoll, European Goldfinch, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; D—Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester; H—Hamlin Beach State Park; IBO—Irondequoit Bay Outlet to Lake Ontario; LO—Lake Ontario; WL—West Lakeshore.

Observers: Walter Benning, Nancy Boudrie, Mike Carlson, Julie Claffey, Roger Clark, Bob & Dottie Coffee, Jerry Czech, Dan & Fritz Davis, Gertrude Davis, Jean & Neil Dilley, Bob & Frank Dobson, Kay & Jim Doris, Michael Ehlers, Robert Fay, June Feder, John & Arleen Foster, Genesee Ornithological Society, David Gordon, Kevin Griffith, Norm Henderson, Sheila Karlson, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Steve Lauer, Jim & Walt Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Frank & Mary Mattei, Bob & Margaret McKinney, Thelma & Joe McNett, Gordon Meade, Barb Molyneaux, Laura & Neil Moon, Jan Morris, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Betty Perrigo, Chip Perrigo, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Allen Shea, Ann & Ray Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Sue Spahn, Ann Stear, Alison Stewart, Helen Steinhauser, Ann, Jim & John Street, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Bill Symonds, Joe & Helen Taylor, Steve Taylor, Philip Teitelbaum, David, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Bill Thomas, Stan & Helen Thomas, Bob Thomen, David Tremmel, Alice & Earl Wallace, Ann & Joe Watson, Eleanor Weld, Munro Will, Doris Wilton, Christopher White, Robert Wisbar, A. Wray, Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: There were the usual scattered loon reports in early winter with the last records: Com. Loon: 1 Ontario-on-the-Lake Jan. 8; and Red-throated Loon: 1 LO, Greece Dec. 3. A single Red-necked Grebe was reported: 1 IBO Jan. 26-31. A lone Pied-billed Grebe was found at Round Pond Outlet among an assortment of other waterfowl Jan. 1-2. A late Double-crested Cormorant lingered into the season: 1 BB thru Dec. 5 (NH, mob). A number of Great Blue Herons attempted to winter with the max 7 Genesee River Dec. 18 during the Rochester CBC and falling to a single in Feb.

Waterfowl counts were generally low and decreasing through the season, though not dramatically. By season's end a number of expected spring migrants were late. Highlights of the waterfowl picture included: a rare winter occurrence of Whistling Swans: 4 Conesus Lake Dec. 4; good late counts of Canada Geese: 150 Kendall Dec. 4; 29 Wayne County Jan. 1; and the first spring migrants 20 Chili Feb. 10, with winter still firmly in control. Other than sizable wintering flocks of Mallards: max 2000 Brighton Jan. 4; and Black Ducks: max 153 Conesus Lake Jan. 1; puddle ducks were reported as only scattered singles and small groups including: Gadwall, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Am. Wigeon, and Wood Duck. The divers showed good numbers of Com. Goldeneyes, White-winged Scoters, and Com. Mergansers and fair numbers of Greater Scaups reported. There were scattered records of the rest of the usual eastern divers with the following of special note: **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: 1 female LO, Greece Jan. 8 (BS); **COMMON EIDER**: 1 IBO Feb. 5-6 (MT, mob), well documented; Black Scoter: 30 H Jan. 1; and Hooded Merganser: 35 Conesus Lake Dec. 3.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Accipiter reports were typical of recent years with records scattered thru the season, concentrating about feeders toward season's end. There were 14 Goshawks, 22 Sharp-shinned, and 30 Cooper's Hawks reported. A single, late Red-shouldered Hawk

was reported: 1 Hemlock Lake Dec. 26 (D, M, & TT). Rough-legged Hawks concentrated in good numbers west and south of Rochester early, decreasing thru the season, with best counts: 19 BB to H Dec. 30 (FD); 17-21 WL Jan. 1-2; and 14 WL Jan. 8. Two adult Bald Eagles were seen on Canandaigua Lake thru Jan. Rare hawk records included a brief pass by a GYRFALCON: 1 gray phase Honeoye Falls Dec. 22 (J&HT); and two PEREGRINE FALCONS, possibly the same bird: 1 imm. Greece Jan. 24 (NH); and 1 imm. Parma (about 8 miles NW) Jan. 27 (FD). Winter shorebirds were represented by two Killdeers: 1 Greece Jan. 28, 30; and 1 Lima Feb. 12, 26; two COMMON SNIPES: 1 Penfield Jan. 16 thru (BoT); and 1 Lima Feb. 12 thru (JF, mob); and lingering Dunlin: last 1 BB Dec. 7. Numbers of gulls wintering in the area were generally low. It was noted that the percentage of Great Black-backed Gulls was high and that of Ring-billed Gulls very low compared with past years. Glaucous and Iceland Gull records were sparse with a few observed along the Lake Ontario shore in Jan. and 1-4 of each appearing thru Feb. at IBO. A possible Mew Gull was observed and described: 1 adult IBO Feb. 10 (MAS), but obviously must remain hypothetical lacking additional corroboration. There were several late records of Bonaparte's Gulls: 14 D Jan. 7; 8 Greece Jan. 8; and 2 IBO Jan. 29. Little Gulls were observed thru Dec. 24 with a very high max 13 D Dec. 4 (B & FD).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: As anticipated, the region's 4th BOREAL OWL was found: 1 D Feb. 4, 6 (CP, WLi, mob, photo KG), with the aid of mobbing chickadees. It was observed by more than 30 birders, managed to hide Feb. 5, then was discovered again Feb. 6 and seen by two more. Following the storm of Feb. 7 the bird was not seen again, much to the frustration of the horde descending the next weekend from all over the northeast and eastern midwest. Other good owl records included: a scattering of single Snowy Owls: Kendall Dec. 23, Jan. 16; Carlton Dec. 26; Hamlin Dec. 30; Monroe County Airport Jan. 7-9; Point Breeze Jan. 13; Clarkson Feb. 3; and D Feb. 16; a lone Long-eared Owl: 1 Hemlock Lake Dec. 26; many scattered Short-eared Owl records of 1-10 birds, but a max 50 Avon Dec. 3 (RBA); and a SAW-WHET OWL frequenting a feeder area: 1 Webster Feb. 5-6 (A & EW, photo PZ). Red-headed Woodpeckers continue thriving along Nations Rd. in Avon: max 12 Avon Feb. 12. A lone Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wintered at a feeder in Irondequoit.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: The lone flycatcher of the season was an EASTERN PHOEBE: 1 Webster Feb. 7 (PZ), possibly swept in from the coast with the massive storm of that date. It was observed, briefly, feeding on pyrocantha berries. Carolina Wrens were reported thru the season from several feeders in Webster, Pittsford, and Brighton. Mocking-birds fared poorly with only 1 reported the last month of the season. Wintering Gray Catbirds: 1 D Dec. 3-18; and 1 Greece Jan. 5-7; apparently succumbed. The fall's VARIED THRUSH was seen by most of the area's birders thru the season, except following major storms: 1 D thru, except Dec. 5-30 and Feb. 7-17. With this bird in Durand were also a sizable flock of Am. Robins and a Hermit Thrush, again all season, though the numbers of robins decreased as the food supply dwindled. Another Hermit Thrush wintered in Mendon Ponds Park. A RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET started the winter: 1 D Dec. 3-24 (GOS). A WATER PIPIT returned very early to a warm seepage area near Lima Feb. 12-thru (J & AF, mob). The invasion of BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS held on into January: 1-4 D Jan. 1-16 (mob); and 1 Parma Jan. 7 (CP). The increasingly rare LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was carefully observed: 1 Webster Jan. 8 (RSp). The maximum count at the local Starling roost was 550,000 Gates Dec. 18 (JSk). Later in the season this roost was nearly abandoned.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Only Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warblers were observed, as usual among the wax myrtle bushes in Mendon Ponds Park: max 12 Mendon Ponds Jan. 7.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: A flock of Eastern Meadowlarks wintered in the Avon area: max 12 Nations Rd. Jan. Wintering YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS were again recorded. It is clear that there were at least 3 individuals, since a male was reported in Gates and a male and female in Irondequoit, simultaneously, during a storm in January. Detailed records received were: 1 male Gates Jan. 14, 18 (B & EM); 1 male Irondequoit Jan. 22

(*vide* MAS); 1 male Chili thru Feb. (RW, mob); the Gates and Chili birds probably the same individual. Feeders in this Chili area were also visited by a mixed flock of Redwinged Blackbirds, Rusty Blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Finches persisted thru the season, but in generally decreasing numbers. The stronghold of the Evening Grosbeaks was in the hills south of Rochester. The House Finch is a thriving resident in several localities in Brighton and Pittsford with scattered reports elsewhere. Pine Grosbeak numbers continued to increase well into February with excellent counts: 36 D Jan. 7; 30 D Jan. 29; 30 D Feb. 5; and max 45 D Feb. 7. Com. Redpolls also increased dramatically, with many feeders hosting flocks of 200+ in Feb. and a max 700 WL Feb. 12 (BD). A long vigil paid off when a **HOARY REDPOLL** appeared: 1 female Webster Feb. 25-28 (A & BK, mob, photo KG), and was subsequently viewed by 52 birders. Another visitor at the same feeder was a **DARK-EYED "OREGON" JUNCO**: 1 Webster Jan. thru (A & BK, mob). Also among the finches, a **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** joined a flock of its American cousins at a feeder in Chili Center; while this is most likely an escapee, it does make a pretty addition to one's feeder contingent. Both crossbills were reported thru the season in decreasing numbers; the peak was in the first fall influx. Other welcome additions to the region's feeders were: **RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEES**: 1 Irondequoit Dec. 10 (RF); 1 West Rush Dec. 1 thru (AW); and White-crowned Sparrows: 6 West Rush Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (AW). A late record was Fox Sparrow: 1 Cuylerville Dec. 17 (MT, MM, BP). Lapland Longspurs were to be found in good numbers in the open fields west of Rochester on the lake plain: max single flock 80 WL Jan. 15 (R & FD): max 300 WL Feb. 12 (BD). Snow Bunting numbers were fantastic: max single flock 5000 Kendall Jan. 22 (B & FD); high counts: 7500 WL Jan. 22 (B & FD); 5000 WL Jan. 24 (KD, mob); 5000 WL Feb. 12 (BD). As testimony to the severity of this season, late February saw flocks of Snow Buntings appearing at feeders.

716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

DOROTHY W. McILROY

A quote from Milne's Pooh sums up the winter weather: "The more it SNOWS—tiddely-pom The more it GOES . . . On snowing And nobody KNOWS . . . How cold my TOES . . . Are growing." Dec. and Jan. snowfall was three times normal. Average temperature was normal for Dec., 3 degrees below normal for Jan., and 10 degrees below normal for Feb. Although there was only one substantial snowfall during Feb., on the 5th and 6th, the deep snow cover did not melt at all.

Christmas counts were low in both species and individuals, although new highs were set for several feeder species. Comments indicated that birds were heavily concentrated at feeders—was it the birds or the birders that were concentrated? Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were more conspicuous. The Laboratory of Ornithology received an unusual number of calls from feeder watchers asking how to get rid of these hawks hanging around their feeders. The 12 accipiters (two Goshawks, five each of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's) seen on the Ithaca Christmas Count was an all-time high.

Waterfowl counts could not be taken later than Jan. 8. The Cayuga Lake count was less than half the 1972-77 numbers, mostly because of fewer Canada Geese and Mallards. For Region 3 as a whole the count was not drastically re-

duced, though below all but one of the preceding six years. Montezuma Refuge reported unusually high peak duck counts in Dec. "due, at least in part, to the availability of unharvested flooded corn fields located one mile north of the Refuge on the Seneca River." Peak count Dec. 15 was 35,000 Mallards and 5,000 Black Ducks. The 20,000 Mallards still there Jan. 1 left soon after when the Refuge froze over.

Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches were plentiful at feeders. Scarcity of Dec. reports and low Christmas Count numbers of out-of-season lingerers indicated that most had left early. Very few were seen after early January.

Top rarity was a live, though emaciated, Say's Phoebe picked up near Ithaca Dec. 13 and brought to the Laboratory of Ornithology. It died soon after and the specimen is in the Cornell collection. Other unusual sightings were Bald Eagle, a February Osprey, Hawk-Owl, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Hoary Redpoll, and a winter Savannah Sparrow.

Corrigendum: *The Kingbird* (Vol. XXVIII, No. 1) delete Olive-sided Flycatcher at MNWR Sept. 2.

Abbreviations: CBC—Cayuga Bird Club; CC—Christmas Count—Geneva and Watkins Glen Dec. 31, Ithaca, Central Cayuga and Montezuma Jan. 1, Elmira Jan. 2; WFC—January Waterfowl Count Jan. 8; * (starred)—Details on file.

Compilers and contributors: W. E. Benning, Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen), John & Karen Confer, Nancy Dormart, Bernice Hilfiker, Gene Hocutt (Montezuma NWR), Wilifred Howard, Malcolm Lerch (Penn Yan), Dorothy McIlroy (Ithaca), Mary Welles (Elmira).

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: 1 Keuka L near Branchport Jan. 23 and 30 (ML). Horned Grebe: 35 WFC, lowest ever; during big snowstorm snowmobilers near Pine City found one floundering in deep snow far from water, took it to WH who released it on an open pond. Pied-billed Grebe: 14 WFC, lowest since 1968. Great Blue Heron: 3 Geneva CC, new high; almost no later reports. Canada Goose: 32,000 Central Cayuga CC decreased to 4584 for entire Cayuga L on WFC a week later. Brant: 1 north end Seneca L thru. Snow Goose: 1 blue phase Aurora Jan. 29. Gadwall: 68 WFC, second highest. Green-winged Teal: 1 Ithaca CC, not seen later. N. Shoveler: female Union Springs Feb. 19 (CBC). Redhead: 5599 WFC, low again. Scaup (both species) 1694 WFC, up from 1977 extremely low 192. Com. Goldeneye: 567 WFC, back to average after 1977 low. Bufflehead: 286 WFC, also back to average. White-winged Scoter: female Big Flats Jan. 1 (WH); male (WH) and female (CBC) west side Cayuga L Feb. 19. Ruddy Duck: 1 WFC Cayuga L. Hooded Merganser: 6 WFC, very low. Com. Merganser: 32 WFC, very low.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 3 reports Cayuga L Basin; 1 imm Montour Falls Dec. 1; 1 seen several times making passes at Mourning Doves Big Flats near Elmira Dec. 11 on (T. Bates). Sharp-shinned Hawk: 10 total on 4 CC's; several Ithaca thru; 1 Odessa; 2 reports Watkins Glen; imm found frozen Elmira Feb. 15, their only report; 1 Hammondsport thru. Cooper's Hawk: 10 total on 5 CC's; several reports each month Watkins Glen; several Elmira reports including imm male in MW's barn Feb. 28; several Ithaca thru; at least 6 reports of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's at Keuka area feeders. Rough-legged Hawk: 10 Ithaca CC, second highest ever, fewer later; 9 Geneva CC, new high; not many reports Watkins Glen after heavy snow in Jan.; more than usual Penn Yan area, 1 injured dark phase taken by Cons. officer for recovery. BALD EAGLE: 1 Ithaca CC (D. Brann). Marsh Hawk: about 7 reports during period. OSPREY: 1 Six Mile Reservoir, Ithaca Feb. 11, extremely early (Steve Sabo). * Am. Kestrel: 76 Geneva CC, new high. Ring-necked Pheasant: very low on all CC's. Killdeer: three reports—1 each Elmira and Geneva CC; 1 Ithaca Feb. 8. Ring-billed

Gull: estimated 1000+ resting on Keuka L near Hammondsport Jan. 12 (ML). Bonaparte's Gull: 8 Hammondsport Jan. 12 (ML).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: no confirmed reports. **HAWK-OWL:** 1 Ithaca Feb. 18 (Dan Gray, graduate student under Dr. Cade) seen quite close in good light perched on dead tree, first Cayuga L Basin record.* Barred Owl: only report, 1 calling near Ithaca Feb. 11 (JC). Short-eared Owl: 1 Sheldrake Dec. 15 (WH); arrived at roost north of Penn Yan Dec. 1, early, max 5 (ML); 2 Hammondsport (ND). Saw-whet Owl: 1 calling Ithaca Feb. 5 (JC). Red-bellied Woodpecker: 19 Ithaca CC, nearly double previous high; 8 Watkins Glen CC, new high. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Clyde feeder thru Dec. 26 (WEB); 1 Geneva CC; 2 Central Cayuga CC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Ithaca CC not seen again; 1 Central Cayuga CC; 2 imm Elmira Feb. 14. Downy Woodpecker: 218 Ithaca CC, new high. **NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER:** female Geneva CC (R. Bran, P & M Trail).*

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: **SAY'S PHOEBE:** see introduction, field note to follow. Horned Lark: numbers decreased after heavy snow in Jan. when farmers could not get into the field to spread manure, increased in late Feb. Blue Jay: 502 Ithaca CC, new high. **COMMON RAVEN:** 1 Connecticut Hill southwest of Ithaca Feb. 25, seen and heard (B. Talbot)*. Black-capped Chickadee: 1179 Ithaca CC and 374 Geneva CC, new highs. **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** 1 Trumansburg feeder Dec. 9 thru mid-Feb. (N. Dean). Tufted Titmouse: 57 Ithaca CC, new high; "seems to be increasing" Watkins Glen (JB). Red-breasted Nuthatch: 44 Ithaca CC, new high; good numbers thru. Winter Wren: 2 Elmira CC. Carolina Wren: seem to be surviving the snow and cold surprisingly well, reported Ithaca, Watkins Glen, Elmira and Penn Yan. Gray Catbird: 1 Geneva CC. Brown Thrasher: 1 Ithaca early Dec. Am. Robin: a few reported on 4 CC's, max 23 Reading Center north of Watkins Glen seen each month. Hermit Thrush: 1 at Eldridge feeder, Ithaca Jan. 19 after big snowstorm, not seen again. E. Bluebird: 4 near Watkins Glen Dec. 31; 1 Montezuma CC; 2 Montour Falls end of Feb.; up to 5 Guyanoga Valley near Penn Yan thru. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very scarce; not one report all winter at Watkins Glen though JB has looked for them, first winter none have been seen; 3 Geneva CC; only three reports Ithaca. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 each Ithaca and Geneva CC. Northern Shrike: 5 Geneva CC, new high; five reports Penn Yan; eight other reports.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Few icterids wintered. E. Meadowlark: one Dec. report, 12 Central Cayuga CC, no others. Rusty Blackbird: 1 Montezuma CC; 1 Freeville late Jan. Evening Grosbeak: fair numbers everywhere but not a heavy invasion; 1 with white and yellow plumage, no black, Big Flats Dec. 20 and Wellsburg Dec. 23, both near Elmira. Purple Finch: 37 Ithaca CC, high, but only one other Ithaca report; very few Watkins Glen. House Finch: 94 Ithaca CC, three times previous high; 48 Watkins Glen CC but disappeared from many feeders later; "continues to prosper" Penn Yan. Pine Grosbeak: 27 Elmira CC; reported in small numbers Ithaca, Watkins Glen, Geneva and Penn Yan, max 12. Common Redpoll: 82 Watkins Glen Dec. 12; reported on 4 CC's, highest count 128 Geneva CC; about Feb. began coming to feeders everywhere, flocks of 100+ reported Penn Yan, Elmira and Ithaca. **HOARY REDPOLL:** 1 at Elmira feeder Jan. 17 thru (WH). Pine Siskin: good numbers at feeders everywhere; 304 Ithaca CC, new high. Am. Goldfinch: plentiful everywhere thru; 687 Ithaca CC and 328 Geneva CC, new highs. Red Crossbill: Feb. 9 Ithaca (D. Lee); 25 Watkins Glen Jan. 9, and 10 there Jan. 27 (JB). White-winged Crossbill: a few Ithaca Dec. and Jan.; three reports Elmira Jan. and Feb., max 12. Rufous-sided Towhee: 1 Reading Center feeder thru; 1 Elmira CC and after at feeder. **SAVANNAH SPARROW:** 1 at feeder near Ithaca Jan. 15 thru (W. Dondero)*. Chipping Sparrow: 1 Geneva CC; 1 Dryden Jan. 18 (T. Mills). Field Sparrow: seen on 4 CC's, apparently disappeared about mid-Jan. White-crowned Sparrow: 2 Ithaca CC. Swamp Sparrow: 2 Ithaca CC, 1 Geneva CC, no later reports. Song Sparrow: fewer than usual wintered. Lapland Longspur: 1 Elmira Jan. 24 (WH); 1 Ithaca Feb. 18 (JC). Snow Bunting: scattered flocks thru area; max 700 Ithaca Dec. 21 (B. Howe).

419 Triphammer Road, Ithaca, New York 14850

REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

The weather for the period can be described in one word—snow. In other years we in the Binghamton-Owego part of the Region would read of heavy snow storms in the Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany areas and many times see only a few inches or none at all in our area. This year was different. If it snowed anywhere upstate below the Adirondacks, the Binghamton-Owego area got its share and we even felt singled out on occasion. Temperatures were seldom below zero but were persistently in the teens so that the ground was covered with appreciable amounts of snow all period and in Jan. and Feb. there were two to three undrifted feet on the ground most of the time.

In spite of the snow cover it was a reasonably good year for raptors, mainly Sharp-shins, Red-tails and Rough-legs. Because of food preferences one might expect Sharp-shins to be relatively unaffected by solid snow cover, but not the buteos. The Golden Eagle record, on a Christmas Census yet, was particularly gratifying but it must compensate for the complete lack of Snowy Owls. It has been so many years since any number of Snowy Owls was reported in the Susquehanna Region that we've lost track of where the current year should be in the four year cycle.

Of the winter finches only Evening Grosbeaks and Am. Goldfinches were common all period. Pine Siskins and, more especially, Common Redpolls were scarce in Dec., but became very numerous by the end of Feb. Purple Finches followed the same pattern but never did become particularly common. At Christmas Census time, all observers agreed that natural food supplies were in poor shape. Multiflora rose hips, sumac berries and birch catkins had already been well-worked over and many of the tall field weeds had been bent over and buried by snow. How much of the increase in siskins and redpolls was a move to the feeders where they were seen more regularly and how much a move into the Region? Of the non-feeder frequenting winter finches only Pine Grosbeaks were reported in significant numbers but there were isolated reports of both crossbills.

Titmice, Mockingbirds and a few Carolina Wrens are still hanging on and there was even a Brown Thrasher left after a relatively severe December. The Pine Warbler appeared right after one of the worst storms so may have been blown in against its will, so to speak.

The showcase rarities of the season were the Golden Eagle and apparently two Varied Thrushes, although it is possible both thrush reports were of the same bird.

Observers: Cutler and Jeanette Baldwin (C, JB); Jean Barnes (JB); Dewey Bendle; Reynolds Bennett (RB); Gail Corderman; Betsy Darlington; Anna and Marilyn Davis (A, MD); Louise and Warren Dean; Malcom and Sadie Dorber (SD); Ester Fraats; Polly and Earl Getkin (E, PG); Elva Hawken (EH); Jim and Kathy Hoteling (J, KH); S. Hunt; Martha Knowlton; Alice Kohr (AK); Florence Linaberry (FL); Paula Mallery; Harriet Marsi (HM); Rick Marsi; Peter and Dorothy Martin; Evelyn and Bud Mead; Robert and Rita Pantle (RP); Mary Sheffield (MS); Josephine Tuttle (JT); E. and F. Vermilya; Elizabeth Washburn (EW); Don Weber; Anne Whitaker; Kathryn Wilson; Tom and Beryl Wilson; Mrs. G. S. Wright (GW); Martha Zimmerman; Mary Dobinsky.

Abbreviations: BCC—Binghamton Christmas Census, Jan. 1; Bing—Binghamton; TCC—Tioga (Owego) Christmas Census, Jan. 1; WFC—Waterfowl Census.

LOONS—DUCKS: Horned Grebe: 1 Whitney Point Dec. 12; Bing Jan. 25 and 27. Pied-billed Grebe: reported in Owego area in Jan. and Feb. Great Blue Heron: 1 BCC; also in Tioga Co. in Jan. and Feb. Canada Goose: 45 BCC; a flock of 90-100 at Oneonta Dec. 11; no more before the end of the period. Mallard: 217 BCC; 2 TCC; 328 WFC. Black Duck: 35 BCC; 3 TCC; 75 WFC. Redhead: 3 on Chenango River north of Bing Jan. 15 for WFC. Lesser Scaup: 1 BCC and again Jan. 25; Feb. 26 Owego. Common Goldeneye: 2 BCC; 6 TCC; 27 WFC; conspicuous all Feb. along Susquehanna R. Bufflehead: 3 TCC; next reported Feb. 11. Hooded Merganser: 1 BCC. Common Merganser: 5 BCC; 5 TCC; 19 WFC; more common during Feb. Red-breasted Merganser: 1 Bing, Jan. 11 for WFC (EW), not seen again.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 BCC; 1 TCC; also Jan. 7 at Choconut Center and Feb. 6 at Vestal Center. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 11 reports, best winter total in years. Cooper's Hawk: 1 BCC; 1 TCC. Red-tailed Hawk: 7 BCC; 14 TCC; 20 other reports. Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 BCC (J, KH); the only one. Rough-legged Hawk: 4 BCC; of the 9 other reports, 3 in Milford-Portlandville area Jan. 28 was the best count. GOLDEN EAGLE: 1 BCC (EH, SD), seen at close range under favorable conditions and well-described. Bald Eagle: 1 adult Dec. 29 Owego (JB); 1 Middleburg (actually in Region 8) Jan. 29 (GW), feeding on deer carcass; 1 Hale Eddy Feb. 4 (AK); 1 Cannonsville Feb. 19 (SD). Marsh Hawk: 2 BCC. Am. Kestrel: 9 BCC; 7 TCC. Ruffed Grouse: 21 BCC; 2 TCC. Bobwhite: 2 BCC; another came to a back yard in s. Bing for several days around Feb. 10. Ring-necked Pheasant: 6 BCC, 2 TCC. Turkey: a flock of 38 seen repeatedly on the same hillside near Windsor during Jan. and Feb. and two presumably different flocks of about 17 each seen other hillsides in same general area; a flock of about 25 reported at Willseyville, in n. Tioga Co., Feb. 26; 8 other reports of smaller numbers. Am. Coot: Feb. 20 Owego. Am. Woodcock: 1 on a farm at Greene, in Chenango Co., Jan. 7 (A, MD), not reported again. Herring Gull: 13 BCC; 1 TCC; the usual small numbers present along the rivers all period. Ring-billed Gull: Feb. 26 Owego.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 334 BCC; 465 TCC. Mourning Dove: 134 BCC; 64 TCC. Screech Owl: 2 BCC; 1 TCC; only 3 other reports. Great Horned Owl: 19 BCC. Barred Owl: 3 BCC; 1 Oneonta Jan. 19. Long-eared Owl: 1 Chenango Valley State Park Jan. 2. Belted Kingfisher: 7 BCC; 1 TCC; small numbers present all during the period in Broome and Tioga Cos. Common Flicker: 5 BCC; 1 Choconut Center all period fed on suet; also at Owego and Candor. Pileated Woodpecker: 2 BCC; 1 TCC; 6 other reports. Hairy Woodpecker: 23 BCC; 18 TCC. Downy Woodpecker: 75 BCC; 52 TCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Blue Jay: 467 BCC; 255 TCC. Common Crow: 433 BCC; 275 TCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 651 BCC, a record high; 298 TCC. Tufted Titmouse: 47 BCC; a record high, 33 TCC. White-breasted Nuthatch: 100 BCC; 49 TCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 38 BCC, up from 10 or less for the last 4 years; 9 TCC; regular visitors at half a dozen feeders in Jan. and Feb. Brown Creeper: 20 BCC; 1 TCC. Winter Wren: 1 BCC, no others. Carolina Wren: 2 BCC; 2 TCC; also 2 at a feeder in e. Vestal during Feb. Mockingbird: 10 BCC; reports from Owego and 3 Oneonta localities. Brown Thrasher: 1 BCC (EH, SD). VARIED THRUSH: a brightly colored male bird at Endicott Dec. 10 and 11 (*vide* HM, FL); about 10 miles west, at Owego Dec. 20 (C, JB) to Jan. 2, apparently another brightly colored male bird came to chopped apple, raisins and dried currants and was seen by many observers. Am. Robin: 2 BCC; Dec. 6 Owego; Feb. 15 Cannonsville. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 13 BCC. Cedar Waxwing: 12 BCC; 20 TCC. Northern Shrike: 1 Endwell Jan. 24; 1 Milford-Oneonta area Jan. 28; Candor Feb. 10; no others. Starling: 3972 BCC; 1015 TCC.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: Jan. 7 Bing (HM). Pine Warbler: 1 at Conklin, s.e. of Bing, Feb. 6 to 16 (*vide* EH, SD), came regularly to feeders to feed on "remains of sunflower seeds and on suet."

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: House Sparrow: 706 BCC; 616 TCC. Redwinged Blackbird:

1 BCC; 1 TCC; 3 other reports. Common Grackle: 1 BCC; 3 Whitney Point Dec. 4; Oneonta Feb. 23; no others. Brown-headed Cowbird: 130 BCC; 4 TCC. Cardinal: 219 BCC; 89 TCC. Evening Grosbeak: 444 BCC; 260 TCC; regular at many feeders but numbers down from previous 2 years. Purple Finch: 3 BCC; 7 TCC; a couple of regular visitors to a feeder in Oneonta all month were the only Dec. birds reported but more frequent reports of small numbers came from all over the Region Jan. and Feb. House Finch: 249 BCC; 95 TCC; obviously increasing in Oneonta, too. Pine Grosbeak: 7 BCC; 18 TCC; no more reported until Jan. 28 but 40 Milford Feb. 18, feeding on maple buds, sumac and apples, max of 10 reports Jan. 28 on. Common Redpoll: 64 BCC; small numbers at Vestal and Endwell during Dec. with many stripped birch catkins suggesting larger numbers, not really common until Jan. 24, but then everywhere. Pine Siskin: 57 BCC; 34 TCC; not many in Dec., becoming more common in Jan. and thru Feb.—more common than redpolls in Dec. and Jan. but considerably less common than redpolls in Feb. Am. Goldfinch: 266 BCC; 183 TCC; also increasing in numbers as the season progressed. Red Crossbill: 1 BCC; 25 Gilbert Lake State Park, n. of Oneonta, Feb. 4; the only reports. White-winged Crossbill: 5 BCC; 1 Vestal Center Jan. 14; also reported from Owego area during Jan., but no others. Vesper Sparrow: 2 TCC (RP). Dark-eyed Junco: 302 BCC; record high; 154 TCC. Tree Sparrow: 507 BCC; 200 TCC. Field Sparrow: 1 or 2 Oneonta until Dec. 21 (RW); 1 Unadilla until Jan. 7 (JT); Jan. 4 Owego (RB); Apalachin Jan. 5 and 11 (P, EG). White-throated Sparrow: 49 BCC; 17 TCC; 1-4 at a number of different Triple Cities area feeders all season. Fox Sparrow: 1 BCC; at Vestal Center until Dec. 9. Swamp Sparrow: 1 BCC. Song Sparrow: 19 BCC; 6 TCC. Snow Bunting: Dec. 19 Owego; Jan. 11 Chenango Bridge; max 200 Milford area Jan. 28.

710 University Ave., Endwell, New York 13760

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

FRITZ SCHEIDER

Deep snow, cold nights, gray days, no birds, and damn near eternal—that about sums up the winter of 1977-78 in Region V. Record-breaking snowfall and unremitting cold combined to make this season a rerun of that last awful winter—1976-77. A brief warm spell in early December gave way to sub-zero degree weather in the first week of the month and both Sandy Pond and Oneida Lake were frozen over by December 8. The local Christmas Bird Counts managed to collect enough half-hardies and winter finches to make a decent showing, but by late December the deepening snow and advancing ice portended another ferocious winter. January fulfilled all signs and portents—72.2 inches of snow, only two days above freezing (both early in the month), and day after day of northerly gales. February maintained the severe winter pattern and by late February bird life away from feeder-supported populations was negligible. The deep snow covered the rodent population so thoroughly that the numbers of even such tough species as Rough-legged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel declined. Heaven knows how much subnival rodent damage the local farms and orchards will show come spring. The field birds (Horned Lark, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting) also evacuated the area as their food supplies became snow-covered; the local accipiters became conspicuous (and notorious) by haunting feeding stations for prey.

The ice build-up on Lake Ontario achieved an arctic magnificence and im-

mensity. By late February there was no open lake water available anywhere between Sandy Pond and Fair Haven, and as of mid-March there had been no change whatever in that condition. Another marked die-off of Greater Scaups and White-winged Scoters, primarily from starvation, in the hot water pool in Oswego Harbor and the open water areas of the Oswego River attests to the severity of the icing conditions; Greater Scaups were noted scraping algae off dam surfaces to sustain themselves in late February.

Coupled with this crippling ice heritage and the deep snow has been a virtual dearth of winter woodland birds (woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, and kinglets); a five hour snowshoeing hike thru Selkirk Shores State Park on February 26 yielded eleven birds—not species, but eleven individual birds. The few pine and spruce cones, the berry bushes, the weed seeds (where exposed), even the despised staghorn sumac heads, have all been stripped and this nadir of sustenance probably explains the scarcity of almost all birds away from feeders.

The period's paucity of positives provides proof of the punishing winter, thus—1) a small flight of King Eiders; 2) a variety of accipiters, conspicuous because of attendance at feeders; 3) a fine incursion of Rough-legged Hawks, subsequently reduced by deep snow; 4) above average numbers of wintering Killdeers and Common Snipes; 5) a concentration of Great Black-backed Gulls; 6) further spread of Red-bellied Woodpeckers; 7) an irruption of Northern Shrikes; 8) an abundance of Evening and Pine Grosbeaks and White-winged Crossbills in early winter and of Common Redpolls in late winter; and 9) continued expansion of the local House Finch population.

However, the litany of losses lengthens—1) a paucity of loons and grebes; 2) few waterfowl after the severe icing; 3) nearly complete loss of half-hardy waterfowl and marked losses in some populations of even hardy species (Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter, and Red-breasted Merganser); 4) very low numbers of Ring-necked Pheasants; 5) a mingy flight of white-winged gulls; 6) a very poor Snowy and Short-eared Owl winter; 7) a dearth of almost all woodpeckers, the Red-bellied Woodpecker excepted; 8) a paucity of small land birds in the woodlots; 9) further losses of those few Carolina Wrens that survived the winter of 1976-77, the local population now being about as sound as a Confederate dollar; 10) virtually complete loss of half-hardies (Hermit Thrush, Winter Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler) and marked reduction in some of the tougher members of that group (Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, American Robin, White-throated and Song Sparrows); 11) very poor counts of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos and Tree Sparrows; 12) scant numbers of wintering Horned Larks and Snow Buntings; and 13) absence of Purple Finches and nearly complete loss of locally wintering Golden-crowned Kinglets.

Rarer species for the season include Eared Grebe, Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider, Red Phalarope, Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Dickcissel, Hoary Redpoll, and Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco.

Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; BBFS—Ben Burt Feeder Survey (100 reports/month).

Observers: K. Coyle, D. W. Crumb, P. A. DeBenedictis, B. and D. DeSimone, T. Dittrich, D. E. Emord, S. Glessner, M. Grant, G. Huggins, S. Kredel, D. Kriesberg, R. Leski, Sr.,

R. Leski, Jr., D. G. Muir, M. B. & S. Peebles, P. Radway, T. Riley, M. S. Rusk, F. G. Scheider, G. A. Smith, C. G. Spies, M. Stooks, J. & E. VanDresar, C. Wernick.

Compiler: G. Huggins.

Please have spring material (1 March 1978-31 May 1978) in by 7 June 1978.

LOONS-DUCKS: EARED GREBE: one carefully studied Dec. 18 Onondaga Lake, the seventh local record but the fourth from Onondaga Lake, all in late Dec. Mallard: even this brave bold anatid declined this winter—1069 on 1978 NYS Waterfowl Census compared to 1205 last year. Black Duck, however, remained about the same—176 in 1977, 161 in 1978. A few Gadwalls wintered at Syracuse (seven), Oswego (four), and Skaneateles Lake (two). Aside from two Northern Shovelers at Oswego and an American Wigeon at Camillus, both records in Dec. and three erratic Pintails at Caughdenoy thru Feb., winter dabbling duck watching was zilch. Tremendous reductions or losses occurred in the wintering diving ducks—Greater Scaup numbers went from 1000 on Jan. 22 to 350 on Feb. 25; Bufflehead from 90 Jan. 22 to 45 Feb. 25; Oldsquaw, one of the hardiest of winter ducks, from 75 Dec. 18 to 30 Feb. 25; Common Merganser from 450 Jan. 22 to 70 Feb. 9 to none Feb. 25; Red-breasted Merganser from 75 Dec. 8 to six Feb. 25, all at Oswego Harbor or the adjacent river and lakeshore. Only the local Common Goldeneye population seemed sustained (150-300/day) thru the winter. Redhead: 118 on NYS Waterfowl Census; 350 on Feb. 25 Caughdenoy-Brewerton are almost certainly early spring migrants as only 20 were there in late Jan. Canvasback: extraordinarily scarce—completely missed intraregionally on NYS Waterfowl Census and the high for the period is a skimpy 30 Feb. 12 at Oswego Harbor. Rarer ducks for the season include **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**—adult male at Oswego Dec. 18 thru period, a second male at Caughdenoy Feb. 25-26 and a female Jan. 21 at Fulton; multiple sightings of **KING EIDER** were noted along the Lake Ontario littoral thru Dec. with the winter max six Feb. 9 at Oswego Harbor.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Totals of reported winter accipiters are Goshawks five, Sharp-shinned Hawks 19 (high), and Cooper's Hawks ten (low); many noted hunting at feeders. Red-tailed Hawk: 69 Oneida CBC Dec. 31, a very good count; sharp drop thru Jan. to low numbers in Feb.—Feb. max only 16 Feb. 25 in southern Oswego Co. Rough-legged Hawk: max 15 Jan. 4 east of Oneida Lake; down to five-seven/day by late Feb. and then only on the Ontario Lakeplain. First returning migrant raptors were an ad Goshawk and two Rough-legged Hawks Feb. 26 (late) Derby Hill—there is hope! Ring-necked Pheasant: very scarce—max only 12 Dec. 17 Syr.; reported in lower numbers (one-six/day) in late Feb. Residual fall shorebirds in the period were a lingering Dunlin and four **RED PHALAROPES** at Sandy Pond Inlet Dec. 4. More wintering Killdeers and Common Snipes were reported with the maxima seven Killdeers near Elbridge and seven Common Snipes near Camillus, both sightings on Jan. 29. No returning shorebirds had been reported by Feb. 28. White-winged gulls staged a desultory flight with some Oswego River winter trips producing only one or none of the two regular species—max are four Glaucous Gulls Dec. 18 and seven Iceland Gulls Feb. 9, both Oswego River and Harbor. Great Black-backed Gull: a persistent high population thru the winter at Oswego Harbor—250 Jan. 8 and 220 still present Feb. 25; their main food seemed to be the numerous dying Greater Scaups, White-winged Scoters, and Red-breasted Mergansers. Herring and Ring-billed Gulls: like the diving ducks, these species had tremendous attrition thru the winter—3500 Herring Gulls Dec. 18 were reduced to 550 by Feb. 25; the Ring-billed Gull population declined even more dramatically—3600 Dec. 18 to 20 Feb. 25, all Oswego River and Harbor, the only remaining open water areas.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: SNOWY OWL: five singles—Fabius, Fair Haven, Kirkville, Oneida, and Syracuse Airport—only the last persisted. Short-eared Owl: scarce—singles only at Oneida and Holland Patent. Almost matching it for scarcity are the three Long-eared Owls—singles at Oswego (dead), Syracuse, and Oneida. Common Flicker: nine noted thru Dec., only one in Feb.—scarce at onset of winter, actually rare at its terminus. Woodpeckers seemed surprisingly scarce with the majority of reports of even the usually common Downy Woodpecker and the ubiquitous Hairy Woodpecker coming from feeding stations. The high

single-day field count in Feb. for Hairy Woodpeckers is only four and for Downy Woodpeckers only five—mighty thin. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continued expansion—feeding station reports reflect progressive eastward spread with less obvious spread northward; reported as far east as Earlville in Madison Co. and West Winfield in Herkimer Co. and numbers increasing and progression eastward along the south shore of Oneida Lake (Brewerton to Bridgeport to Lakeport) has not been matched by similar advances along the north shore of the lake where the species is still very, very scarce.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Black-capped Chickadee: Feb. max 28 (very low) Mapleview Feb. 25. Tufted Titmouse: total of 23 for the period—up a little and apparently surviving because of feeders. Carolina Wren: one each at Sandy Pond in Jan. and at Clinton Feb. 15—?? did they survive—and will they find each other?? Golden-crowned Kinglet: max two Dec. 4 SSSP and two Shackleton Point Dec. 17; none reported in Jan. or Feb.—amazingly scarce. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** singles only Dec. 3 Pleasant Point (J. Kidney), Dec. 4 Phoenix, Jan. 7 Lakeland—not much of a flight. Northern Shrike: an excellent flight but some diminution of numbers with the deep snow of Jan. and Feb.—totals are Dec. 30, Jan. 22, Feb. 13; no evidence of a return flight in late Feb.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped “Myrtle” Warbler: a single Jan. 1 Howland’s Island area deserves credit for persistence but not for wisdom.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Cardinal: 323 on Dec. BBFS is a record for that month; concentrations at feeders noted—24 in Pompey, 20 plus in Camillus; interesting is the continued expansion in Oneida Co.—79 on the Kirkland CBC, 64 on the Oneida CBC. **DICK-CISSEL:** a female present from early Dec. to Jan. 15 Syracuse (PAD), the first local record since 1972. Evening Grosbeak: a good early flight—25-110/day in Dec., 100-150/day in Jan., down somewhat in Feb.—12-69/day. Purple Finch: the phantom of the winter—alleged to be widespread at feeders but the only reports creditable are one Clinton Dec. 15 and two Big Moose Dec. 4—otherwise undetected. House Finch: expanding explosively—123 on Jan. BBFS; such reports as 33 in Jan. in Iliion and 65-75 thru the winter at Syracuse attest to their increase here—and their hardiness. Pine Grosbeak: fair flight with counts of six-20/day; max 98 Feb. 11 near Rome (SG, SK); in late Feb. the flocks were often over 50% adult males. Common Redpoll: small numbers in early winter (three-100/day) with much larger numbers in Feb. when reported in the hundreds at many feeders. **HOARY REDPOLL:** singles at Rome Feb. 9-11 (SG, SK) and Feb. 13-20 Pompey (DWC). White-winged Crossbill: 35-75/day in spruce plantations at Phoenix and Pennellville in Dec.; very scarce in late Jan. and nonexistent in Feb.—probably moved on when the scant local cone crops had been exhausted. Dark-eyed Junco: extraordinarily scarce thru winter—30 plus/day in Dec., ten plus/day in Jan., three-five/day in Feb., this even at feeders. **DARK-EYED “OREGON” JUNCO:** a superb male of this form late Dec. thru period at Pennellville (M. Woolley). Tree Sparrow: counts of 50-150/day thru Dec.; Feb. max however, only 52 Feb. 19 Oswego and nearly unreported away from feeders in that month. Attrition in the wintering sparrows was tremendous, sic—White-throated Sparrow 31 individuals in Dec., 19 in Jan., 14 in Feb.; Swamp Sparrow eight individuals in Dec., three in Jan., none in Feb.; Song Sparrow, 55 individuals in Dec., 21 in Jan., eight in Feb.

114 Rockland Drive, North Syracuse, New York 13212

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

The winter of 1977-78 was more severe than the previous one—even with the

1977 blizzard, Winter held off until December on the lake plain and then came overnight with snow depths of as much as 12 inches in the first week of December. The Adirondacks and Tug Hill portions of the Region started winter in mid-November and Tug Hill snowdepths were 60+ inches at the end of the period.

Temperatures were mild for December. January provided much snow with colder temperatures and February provided little snow and extremes of cold—minus 24° F (-31° C) was not uncommon in the Watertown area for the low. The high for the period would be 38° F at Watertown.

Although the weather was severe, the weather was a little more bearable with the bird life that was around. A look at the unusual and trends has encouraging parts and discouraging parts. Waterfowl in general were encouraging with two unusual species, Barrow's Goldeneye and King Eider.

Hawks showed much improvement, particularly the accipiters and the Bald Eagle sightings were an added bonus.

Gulls were very much in evidence, particularly along the St. Lawrence River. Excellent observations of Ivory Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake were recorded.

Ravens and Bohemian Waxwings cooperated for some observers, but the winter finches were a joy to all.

Obvious trends during the period were (1) increase in Gray Partridge despite two bad winters, (2) Hairy Woodpeckers and Downys in variable numbers in different ecological zones, (3) White-breasted Nuthatch very scarce.

Contributors: Dick Brouse; Lee Chamberlaine; Kenneth Crowell; Marge Rusk; Gerry Smith; Joe VanRiet; Bob and June Walker.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: 1 near Thousand Isl. Bridge Feb. 14. Canada Goose: 1100 Massena Dec. 3; down to 12 Massena Dec. 28. Black Duck: 310 Dec. 3. Gadwall: 4 Massena Dec. 28, 1 1000 Isl. Jan. 1; 1 Robt. Moses Dam Jan. 18. Pintail: 1 Galop Isl. Feb. 23. Green-winged Teal: 1 Massena Dec. 28. Am. Wigeon: 10 Dec. 3. Redhead: 3 Robt. Moses Dam Dec.-mid-Jan.; 1 pair same location mid-Jan. thru. Canvasback: 2 SLR Cornwall Isl. Feb. 11; 4 Squaw Isl. Feb. 15; 2 Squaw Isl. Feb. 24. Greater Scaup: 4300 Pillar Pt. Dec. 3. Lesser Scaup: 1 1000 Isl. Jan. 1. Com. Goldeneye: max 1026 Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 26. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one adult pair plus 1 imm male Ransome Rd. Robt. Moses Dam thru (VanRiet, Smith, Maxwell, mob). Bufflehead: scarce this year—1 Robt. Moses Dam thru. Oldsquaw: 110 max Pt. Peninsula Dec. 3. **KING EIDER:** 1 imm male Pillar Pt. with scaups, close to shore Dec. 3 (Walkers). Hooded Merganser: 6 1000 Isl. Jan. 1; 1 Robt. Moses Dam Jan. 2-5. Com. Merganser: 4000 Robt. Moses Dam Dec. 1 to 102 Feb. 25. Red-breasted Merganser: 1 or 2 till Jan. 25; 1 Cornwall Isl. Feb. 25.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: 1 Massena Dec. 28. Sharp-shinned: 1 Robt. Moses Park Jan. 15; 1 Coles Crk. Jan. 19; 1 Jacques Cartier Park Feb. 12. Cooper's: 1 Henderson Dec. 4 & Feb. 4; 1 caught Starling and ate in full view on Feb. 5 (Chamberlaine); 1 additional bird Watertown killing homing pigeons on Feb. 25, caught, banded, and released in Henderson area (Chamberlaine). Red-tailed: 40 Watertown Dec. 17; 18 lake plain Jan. 29 (Rusk). Rough-legged: 46 Watertown Dec. 17; 5 Massena Dec. 28; 23 lake plain—more common in So. Jefferson—8 dark phase Henderson in one field Feb. 4. **BALD EAGLE:** 1 imm Deferiet on Black River Dec. 27-29—probably the bird later found shot on Oneida Lake?; 1 imm Chippewa Pt. in Feb. (Smith); 1 adult Oak Pt. Feb. (Smith); 2 imm vicinity American Isl. Feb.; adult and imm Jan.-Feb. north of Galop Isl. (Smith). Marsh Hawk: 3 Sulphur Springs Dec. 3; 2 Pt. Peninsula Dec. 3; 2 Watertown Dec. 17; some improvement. Am. Kestrel: 6 Sulphur Springs Dec. 3; 10 Watertown Dec. 17; 2 Massena area thru. Gray Partridge: im-

proved—59 Watertown Dec. 17; 49 (3 coveys) lake plain Jan. 29; 8 Pt. Peninsula Feb. 18. Turkey: 17 (5 toms, 12 hens) released on Fort Drum thru. Glaucous Gull: 14 (2 mature) Hawkins Pt. Jan. 12—down to 4 Feb. 25. Iceland Gull: 14 Massena Dec. 28; 18 Hawkins Pt. Jan. 12 down to 5 Feb. 25. Great Black-backed Gull: 5 Watertown Dec. 17; 1100 Massena Dec. 28; 38 Massena Feb. 25. Herring Gull: 863 Massena Dec. 28 down to 25 Feb. 26. Ring-billed Gull: 39 Watertown Dec. 17; 18 Massena Dec. 28 down to 1 Jan. 8. **IVORY GULL**: 1 imm Hawkins Pt. Dec. 8 (VanRiet); 1 imm same location Jan. 13 (VanRiet); good description and comparison with other gulls. **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**: 1 imm Hawkins Pt. Dec. 2 (VanRiet); 1 imm same location Dec. 24-28 (VanRiet, mob).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 6 Watertown Dec. 17; 10 per day Henderson feeder thru. Screech Owl: 2 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Massena Dec. 28. Great Horned Owl: thru. Snowy Owl: none reported. Barred Owl: DeKalb Feb. 11 & 19 (Crowell)—seldom reported. Short-eared Owl: 1 Mansville Feb. 27 (Brouse). Belted Kingfisher: 2 1000 Isl. Jan. 1; 1 Eisenhower Lock beginning of Dec. Pileated Woodpecker: 1 Massena Dec. 28; 1 Robt. Moses Park Jan. 14. Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 imm wintering in Massena area at feeder (mob). Hairy Woodpecker: 12 Watertown Dec. 17; 7 Massena Dec. 28; more common than Downy—St. Lawrence Valley (Smith); down in Henderson area (Chamberlaine).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 85 Watertown Dec. 17; 16 Massena Dec. 28; some improvement. Blue Jay: 66 Watertown Dec. 17; 89 Massena Dec. 28; numbers in Henderson area up. **COM. RAVEN**: 1 near Tupper Lake Hamilton Co. Whitney Park Jan. 19 (Chamberlaine). Com. Crow: 99 Watertown Dec. 17; 17 Massena Dec. 28; 152 Madrid Feb. 17; more than normal wintered this year. Black-capped Chickadee: about the usual numbers. White-breasted Nuthatch: very scarce—11 Watertown Dec. 17; 7 Massena Dec. 28. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 2 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Massena Dec. 28. Brown Creeper: 1 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Massena Dec. 28. Am. Robin: 5 Watertown Dec. 17; 12 Waddington Jan. 7-20; 1 Ogdensburg State Hospital Jan. 7; 2 or 3 wintering Robt. Moses Park thru. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: 11 north of Massena Jan. 8 (Smith). 12 Feb. 4; 1 Feb. 18, 300 Feb. 21; 100 Feb. 22, 60 Feb. 23—all Dry Hill (Walkers). Cedar Waxwing: 35 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Robt. Moses Park Dec. 25—no others reported. Northern Shrike: 8 Watertown Dec. 17; 7 Massena Dec. 28; less common than last year St. Lawrence Valley (Smith), more common in Henderson area than previous two years—an imm killed an Am. Goldfinch in trap Jan. 15; an adult attempted to kill Tree Sparrow in trap Feb. 2. Starling: have been food base for Cooper's Hawks in Henderson area; 1050 Watertown Dec. 17; 632 Massena Dec. 28 down to 442 Feb. 24; up in St. Lawrence Valley.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Redwinged Blackbird: 1 Massena Dec. 17; 1 Potsdam feeder Dec. 24; 9 Jan. 29; 2 Pierrepoint Feb. 11. Com. Grackle: 1 Pt. Peninsula Dec. 3; 1 Henderson Dec. 4; 1 Potsdam Dec. 24; Massena Dec. 17. Brown-headed Cowbird: 21 Henderson Dec. 6; 2 Watertown Dec. 17; 5 Pierrepoint Dec. 26; 1 Massena Dec. 28; 4 Feb. 18. Cardinal: 10 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Massena Dec. 28; 1 Norwood feeder thru; few singles near Morris-town. Evening Grosbeak: 125 Watertown Dec. 17; 58 Massena Dec. 28; 10 to 30 per day Massena thru: 100 daily Dry Hill thru; less common than Pine. Purple Finch: 14 Watertown Dec. 17; none thereafter. Pine Grosbeak: 28 Watertown Dec. 17; 58 Massena Dec. 28; a major invasion in Jan. with 40 to 150 per day—most in eastern section of Region at higher elevations, Feb. showed a decrease but still 20 per day. Com. Redpoll: 42 Watertown Dec. 17; 82 Massena Dec. 28; up to 40 daily Henderson Feb; 20 daily Feb. Dry Hill. Pine Siskin: 7 Watertown Dec. 17; 2 Massena feeder Feb. 18. Am. Goldfinch: 35 Watertown Dec. 17; 22 Massena Dec. 28; 16 Henderson Feb. 13; 20 Henderson Feb. 20; 10 daily Dry Hill end of period. White-winged Crossbill: 70 Watertown Dec. 17; 1 Henderson feeder thru; 2 to 4 per day sheltered areas near feeders St. Lawrence Valley. Tree Sparrow: scarce—168 Watertown Dec. 17; 30 Massena Dec. 28; very few thereafter; 70 banded thru—should be hundreds. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 Colton Dec. 19 (Crowell). White-throated Sparrow: 3 Watertown Dec. 17. Song Sparrow: 2 Watertown Dec. 17. Lapland Longspur: 4 Watertown Dec. 17. Snow Bunting: scarce—278 Watertown Dec. 17; 137 Massena Dec. 28; 8-10 per day Feb.

Box 139, Henderson, New York 13650

Ivory Gull—Details by observer J. VanRiet

Seen from Hawkins Point Overlook Massena Dec. 8, 1977. 4:00-4:10 P.M. Clear sky, setting sun.

Immature bird—compared to Ring-billed Gulls, among which it was flying, it appeared to be smaller. Its wingbeat was faster, it moved faster. Wings and tail narrower. Wingtips more pointed.

Noticed this bird by its whiteness and by a smudge on the front part of its small head. It had a dark eye and a small dark bill. Followed the bird with a 20 power Balscope. It settled on the water and drifted along for 1/4 mile. It rose and returned within about 80 yards. As it banked at that distance, rows of spots were visible on the upper wing. Too far to see any tailband.

Jan. 13, 1978. 4:00-4:15 P.M. Fog off water. Light snow.

Looking over a flock of gulls (Great Black-backed, Herring, Iceland and Glaucous) resting on the ice-edge between the Dam and Hawkins Point, a small white gull was seen with a 20 power Balscope. It had a dark smudge on the head which was accentuated by a small dark bill and dark eye. Dark tips on primaries running along the bird.

As this bird was only barely visible and it was snowing, I approached the flock. The Ivory Gull flushed last. It flew over Hawkins Point Overlook, made a turn and flew over at a height of less than 30 feet. It was smaller than an Iceland Gull. Noticed spots on the upper part of the wing, dark tips on the primaries, also dark tips on the tail. Narrow pointed wings. Tail almost square, not fanned out much.

Two dark spots on the body where the feet were tucked in. The rows of spots on above birds were not nearly as dark as shown in Robbins "Birds of North America."

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE D. MACK

This was a cold winter for the inland region. There were two days in January that were above freezing, but none in February. February's coldest day at Paul Smith's was -40° F. Many days were -30° F. or colder. Any day with a low of -20° F. or warmer was a decent bit of weather. The cold combined with snow seems to drive birds out of the area. Obviously, waterfowl must retreat to Lake Champlain, if open water exists there, or else go further south, but the passerines seem to be driven out as well. The Adirondack area is not so vast that most birds can't fly out if lack of food and cold feet so indicate. This seems to be exactly what most of them did. Perhaps birds wintering in more northern areas do not have as easy a choice. One day in February, Gary Randorf climbed Mount Marcy and returned without once seeing or hearing a single bird. Several others had similar days. At the start of winter, Common Redpolls passed southward with few lingering. By late February flocks of this same species had returned as afternoon temperatures became more reasonable.

Lake Champlain characteristically had the most unusual species. The presence of a rather stationary flock of over 200 Bohemian Waxwings was noteworthy but overshadowed by the Great Gray Owl and Black Guillemot sightings. Two adult Little Gulls and a Glaucous Gull were new species for the Essex County list.

Abbreviations: E'town--Elizabethtown; FCBC--part of the Ferrisburg, Vt. Christmas Bird Count is in our region; Platts--Plattsburgh; Tupper--Tupper Lake; valley refers to the Champlain Valley.

Contributors: Bartlett Bailey, Isabelle Bailey, Russell Bailey, Geoffrey Carleton, John Dann, Charlie Delehanty, Robert Hagar, Courtney Jones, Esther Ann MacCready, Betsy MacMillen, Dan Nickerson, Ray Payson, John (Mike) Peterson, Jerry Rosenband, Steve Sanford, Wayne Scott, Carole Slatkin, Pat Tabor, Maurice Villeneuve, Phil Warren.

LOONS--DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: 1 late bird North West Bay of Lake Champlain Dec. 17 (FCBC). Canada Goose: 9 Tupper L. were probably local birds (CD); 350 Essex thru mid-Jan. fed in corn fields. An artificial open area in ice at Ticonderoga had on Feb. 16 2 Canada Geese, 20 Mallards, 45 Black Ducks, 1 Pintail, 3 Wood Ducks, 2 pair of Hooded Mergansers, and 12 Common Mergansers (BM). A female Wood Duck was at Ausable Point Dec. 15 (PW). Canvasback: max 49 at Platts. Phil Warren says the flock of 2000 seen the previous four years did not show. Hopefully they are in good health elsewhere. Redhead and Oldsquaw were noted.

HAWKS--ALCIDS: a Red-shouldered Hawk seen during the E'town CBC period in mid-Dec. and one in Essex Jan. 2 (DN) were out of season. Good numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and excellent counts of Rough-legged in the valley. Platts had 17 Rough-legged on their Christmas count; 3 were seen on the E'town Christmas count; and 1 at Tupper (CD), both being unusual locations as was 1 at Malone Dec. 22 (RH). Bald Eagle: 1 Keeseville Jan. 23 (JD, CJ); 1, perhaps a fourth year bird, Ausable Point Jan. 28 was eating a fish (PW); another was reported from Wilmington Jan. 30. Hungarian Partridge: 9 Malone Dec. 23 (RH). American Coot, a late bird Essex Jan. 29 (mob). GLAUCOUS GULL: 1 at North West Bay Dec. 17 (WS, PT) was new for Essex County list as were 2 adult LITTLE GULLS Dec. 20 at the same place and carefully studied by GC. A healthy winter-plumaged BLACK GUILLEMOT was photographed Jan. 7 at Essex (Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, GC, JP). This is a bird not expected away from the ocean. It remained until Jan. 10.

PIGEONS--WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 50 Essex all winter (Lester Sweatt) must be some sort of North Country maximum for winter. Screech Owl: 1 Essex Dec. 24 was photographed (JP, CS, GC, EM). GREAT GRAY OWL: 1 Platts Jan. 24 (Harold Lieberthal). Seen at 20 feet, so large size, yellow eyes, lack of ear tufts and black chin seen clearly. On Jan. 28 what was probably the same bird was seen at Essex for a five minute close look (BB, IB, RB); a nice find! Short-eared Owl: 1 Platts Dec. 17 (RP, PW). Saw-whet Owl: 1 Lewis Feb. 23 (Peggy Basile). Belted Kingfisher: 1 Westport until Jan. 9 (GC, JP). Common Flicker: 1 Essex thru Dec. (JR, CS). Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker: a female Chubb River Dec. 24 (Larry Master) and a male there Dec. 26 (JR, CS).

FLYCATCHERS--STARLINGS: Gray Jay: a few Brandon; 3 Tupper Dec. 4 (MV). Common Raven: Paul Bishop is doing a study of New York ravens. He has listed 340 sightings from 100 locations. Many are from the southern Finger Lakes and Catskills. He reports more than 14 young were fledged in the Adirondacks last season. Tufted Titmouse: GC had 2 at E'town in Nov. They rarely stray from the valley. Hermit Thrush: 1 Lake Alice Dec. 3 (PW, RP, SS). Water Pipit: 1 Saranac Lake Dec. 1 was very late (CD). BOHEMIAN WAX-WING: Essex had up to 155 and Platts up to 225 for over a month. The Essex birds ate cherries while the Platts flock dined on buckthorn (*Rhamnus*) berries which many other birds do not like. Northern Shrike: everybody saw one or more. JP banded one Feb. 25 that was dining on banded chickadees. Another shrike was banded the same place (Essex) Feb. 28 unless they know how to remove bands, which they may.

VIREOS--WARBLERS: Addendum to previous reporting period--CONNECTICUT WARBLER at E'town Sept. 23 (GC). Complete eye-ring clearly seen.

WEAVERS--SPARROWS: Redwinged Blackbird: 4 (2 injured) Tupper Dec. 1 (CD). Brown-headed Cowbird: 3 Tupper thru Dec. (CD). Any inland blackbird is a good find in this region in winter. Cardinal: many in valley and still at least 3 at Tupper (MV). Evening

Grosbeak: Ruth Meier's max of 30 all season was more than most people had. They were scarce. Purple Finch: absent. They are erratic. House Finch: PW still has 7 at Platts. Pine Grosbeak: everywhere. PW found 206 Jan. 15 in Clinton and Essex Counties. **HOARY RED-POLL**: PW at Platts on Jan. 29 saw a male redpoll with almost no streaks on flanks, a plain rump tinged with pink, and bird was so chunky that wings did not cross over the back as in the companion Common Redpolls. Common Redpolls increased dramatically in the interior during late Feb. Crossbills were very scarce. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 very late bird Platts Dec. 21 and 22 (William Kreuger). Tree Sparrow: scarce. Lapland Longspur: 1 Westport Dec. 17 (FCBC); 4 Malone Dec. 22 (RH); 1 Wadhams Dec. 31 (GC).

Paul Smiths, New York 12970

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

RICHARD P. GUTHRIE

The winter of '77-'78 set in with more than 15 inches (39 cm) of snow falling the first two weeks of December and a record low temperature of -6°F (-21°C) on the 12th. Although the temperatures moderated somewhat, the snowfall continued its preponderous way through the season with an excess of 33.2 in. (84.3 cm) over the normal of 43.2 in. (109.7 cm). An absence of a real thaw and regular snowfall kept the ground covered through the period.

Reports received were thin, as might be expected from a rather routine winter. This however gives us an opportunity to recapitulate the status of winter residents. The most comprehensive mechanism for this review is the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count, six of which were conducted in this region as follows:

Date	Count Name	County	No. Species
12/17	Schenectady	Schen.-Albany	58
12/17	Chatham	Columbia	53
12/26	So. Rensselaer	Rensselaer	51
12/28	Coxsackie-Athens	Greene	58
12/29	Ft. Plain	Montgomery	35
12/31	Troy	Rensselaer	57

Evident from a review of the Count tallies are a few revelations of interest (which we may have been supposing all along). To begin with, the recent colonists from the south, *i.e.* Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, and Mockingbird, are firmly entrenched. The House Finch, another recent immigrant, has also successfully established itself in the area. Others such as the Carolina Wren have survived the recent harsh winters only in a few sheltered areas. Other attempts at northward movement such as that of the Red-bellied Woodpecker, have not been successful yet. Finally, this winter proved to be a bit too severe for the half-hardies, most of which were poorly represented on the counts; the majority disappeared as the season progressed.

Of particular interest to many is the continued good showing of most raptors, and especially Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. The Coxsackie Flats, an area about 2 miles (3.2 km) wide by 10 miles (16 km) long, once again supported

a truly impressive raptor population through the season. Four (at least) species of owls and seven species of hawks were sustained through the winter, indicating a high rodent supply there again this year. Locally, this has not been a particularly impressive winter finch year. In fact, some say had it not been for the redpolls, late as they were in getting here, this might have been a very dull year. Of course there were the Pine Grosbeaks and crossbills, here and there, but there just weren't enough to go around. The redpolls, however, were everywhere by the middle of January. Hundreds visited feeders throughout the area, delighting all and setting the stage for the inevitable quest for (and rumors of) a Hoary or two. None emerged, alas. Once again, the Region had a Varied Thrush, this one spent most of the winter at a feeder in Glens Falls, visiting daily and being photographed almost as often. It is intriguing to speculate upon whether the Varied Thrush, based on its repeat performance over the last ten years or so, may be expected to become established somewhere in the northeast somewhat as the Evening Grosbeak did a few decades ago.

Contributions were received with thanks from: K. Able, D. Allen, D. Ayres, V. Bingman, A. & T. Brown, J. Bush, P. Connor, J. Cook, B. Coyne, J. Davis, K. Dunham, P. Feinberg, B. & H. Gardina, E. Grace, R. Guthrie, N. Hanse, P. Kerlinger, C. Ketcham, R. LaForce, B. Laros, W. Lee, S. Madison, R. Marx, W. Sabin, N. Scholls, T. Smith, L. Thomas, R. Yunick, E. Mansell, T. Palmer, K. McDermott, E. Reilly.

LOONS-DUCKS: BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: 1 imm Ft. Plain CC (D. Ayres). Canada Goose: 65 Cox CC. **BRANT:** 2 Cohoes Jan. 22 (V. Bingman). Mallard: total of 5 CC's 270. Black Duck: total of 5 CC's 386. **GREEN-WINGED TEAL:** 1 Troy CC. **NO. SHOVELER:** 1 Cox. Jan. 22 (VB). Wood Duck: 2 Schen. CC; 1 Troy CC. Common Goldeneye: 5 Cox. CC. Common Merganser: 20 Cox. CC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: TURKEY VULTURE: 1 Schen. CC (new for count). Goshawk: 1 Schen. CC; 1 So. Rens. CC; scattered reports thru period. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 10 total of 4 CC's; 4 other reports Jan. & Feb. Cooper's Hawk: 5 total of 3 CC's (incl. 3 Schen CC). Red-tailed Hawk: 324 total of 6 CC's (incl. 67 Cox. CC). Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 Chatham CC. Rough-legged Hawk: 84 total of 6 CC's max 29 Cox. Flats Jan. 28. Bald Eagle: 2 (1 ad, 1 imm) Saratoga Co. Dec. & Jan. (Les Thomas); 1 ad Dec. 18 Hoosic River at Eagle Bridge (J. Davis); 1 ad Dec. 29 Blenheim, Schoharie Co. (K. McDermott). Marsh Hawk: 5 on 2 CC's; max 8 Cox. Flats Dec. 3. **OSPREY:** 1 Chatham CC (KD & EG). **PEREGRINE FALCON:** 1 Cobleskill, Schoharie Co. Feb. 24 (D. Crumb). American Kestrel: 96 total of 6 CC's. Ruffed Grouse: 32 total of 4 CC's. Ring-necked Pheasant: continuing decline—10 total 4 CC's. Turkey: increasing nicely; 1 Chatham CC (new for count); 5 Watsonville, Schoharie Co. Jan. 1; 53 in 1 flock Ghent, Col. Co. Feb. 26 (RLaF). Killdeer: 1 Troy CC. Common Snipe: 1 Schen. CC. Glaucous Gull: 1 Troy CC (at Colonie Dump at Crescent). Iceland Gull: 2 Troy CC (also at Colonie Dump). Great Black-backed Gull: 3 Cox. CC; 1 So. Rens. CC; 14 Troy CC. Herring Gull: 215 total of 5 CC's (incl 141 So. Rens. CC). Ring-billed Gull: 159 on 3 CC's.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: most reports suggest a banner year; 1,327 total of 6 CC's, also good numbers at many feeders. **BARN OWL:** 2 Cox. CC (RPG). Screech Owl: 4 Cox. CC & 3 two other counts. Great Horned Owl: 5 total 3 CC's. Barred Owl: unusually high number of reports; 1 each Cox. & Ft. Plain CC's. 4 other reports Jan. & Feb. incl 1 found dead Washington Co. (JD). Short-eared Owl: 2 Cox. CC & thereafter; 1 Albany Dec. 22 (TP). Belted Kingfisher: 9 total of 5 CC's; also 8 Kinderhook Jan. 8 (E. Reilly). Common Flicker: 31 on 3 CC's; also 1 West Berne late Jan.-early Feb. Pileated Woodpecker: total 10 on 5 CC's. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Hudson Falls Feb. 9 (A&TB). Hairy Woodpecker: 181 total of 6 CC's. Downy Woodpecker: 356 on 6 CC's.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 778 on 5 counts (none on Ft. Plain)

also 34 banded Cox. Flats (RPG). **GRAY JAY:** 1 imm. Dec. 23 Lk. Luzerne, hit window, stunned and recovered (Les Thomas). Blue Jay: 1,810 on 6 CC's (max So. Rens. 526—what luck). Com. Crow: 2,177 six CC total. Black-capped Chickadee: 1,927 the total of the six CC's (max 533 So. Rens.). Tufted Titmouse: 175 total of 5 CC's; not reported on Ft. Plain CC. White-breasted Nuthatch: 334 from 6 CC's. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 78 on 5 CC's incl. 41 on Schen. CC; "modest influx at Jenny Lake" (RPY). Brown Creeper: 27 total of 4 CC's; max Schen. with 18. Carolina Wren: a few still persist with 2 on Schen. CC & 2 Cox CC. Mockingbird: total 89 from all 6 CC's incl 1 from Ft. Plain and they're right proud of it, too. Gray Catbird: 1 each Schen. CC and Cox. CC. American Robin: ranged from 100 Schen. CC to only 1 Troy CC and none for Ft. Plain and So. Rens. CC. **VARIED THRUSH:** 1 male seen almost daily Dec. 3 thru Feb. 6. Glens Falls (R&HG). Eastern Bluebird: only reports are 7 Chatham CC and 4 New Scotland Jan. 24 (RP). Golden-crowned Kinglet: 1 each Schen. and So. Rens. CC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 2 Schen. CC. Cedar Waxwing: 24 Schen. CC, 10 So. Rens. CC, and 20 Catskill Jan. 2. Northern Shrike: a very good year with each CC reporting at least one and Ft. Plain three and numerous scattered reports throughout the period. Starling: nearly 43,000 reported on 6 CC's with So. Rens. tallying more than 32,706 of them.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 Cox. CC (EG & KD); 1 Ft. Plain CC.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: House Sparrow: 3,229 total 6 CC's. Eastern Meadowlark: 20 Chatham CC, 3 Cox. CC and 1 Troy CC. Redwinged Blackbird: scarce with only report of 14 at Cox. CC. Com. Grackle: unusually high with nine reported on the 6 CC's. Cardinal: 518 total of 6 CC's. Evening Grosbeak: relatively mild with 1,977 from the 6 CC's. Purple Finch: even milder with only 67 from the counts. House Finch: a total of 268 from the 6 CC's (incl 27 from Ft. Plain) reflect the skyrocketing population explosion this species is undergoing. Pine Grosbeak: unevenly distributed but more numerous on the later CC's with a total of 138 on 5 of the 6 counts (none on Ft. Plain). Com. Redpoll: definitely an invasion year however late in arriving; a few scattered reports until mid-Jan. (74 on 4 CC's), then very numerous and widely reported. Pine Siskin: a reverse of the latter; numerous early, then scarcer after late Dec.; 106 on 5 CC's (absent on Cox. CC). Am. Goldfinch: reported somewhat scarce by some observers, however a respectable total of 1,197 on 6 CC's. Red Crossbill: 14 Schen. CC; also 12 at Albany—mid-Feb. White-winged Crossbill: 10 Schen. and 20 Chatham CC's. Savannah Sparrow: 1 Lk. Luzerne Feb. 1 (LT) unusual for inland locale. Dark-eyed Junco: 762 from 6 CC's. Tree Sparrow: 1,356 total of 6 CC's. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** 4 Ft. Plain CC (D. Ayres). Field Sparrow: 6 reported on 5 CC's. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 mid-Feb. report. White-throated Sparrow: 330 total of 6 CC's incl. 80 Schen. and 85 Cox. CC. Fox Sparrow: 3 reported Jan.-Feb.; 1 Chatham CC. **LINCOLN'S SPARROW:** 3rd consec. year on Chatham CC at Ghent (BHG). Swamp Sparrow: only reports: 7 So. Rens. CC and Dec. 24 Tibley Lk. (TP). Song Sparrow: 91 total of 6 CC's (max 38 Schen. and 20 Cox.). Lapland Longspur: 2 each Cox. and Troy CC's also 3 banded Cox Flats (RPG). Snow Bunting: 200 So. Rens. CC; also 200+ late Jan.; 1 banded. Remember Dial-a-Bird (518) 377-9600.

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

REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

Most authorities agree that the winter of 77-78 has been one of the worst on record. Although there were few extremely low temperatures, the thermometer was well below freezing for most of the period. The Mohonk Weather Station

showed an average temperature for December to be about 3° F below the 80-year normal; January 4.2° F below, and February 5.9° F below. The first snows of December remained thru the period to be superimposed by excessive snows in January and February. There were three major storms within nine days in January, and several smaller flurries brought the total for that month to 34.6 inches, the fourth highest over the past 80 years. February added another 17 inches. Lakes were largely open for the Christmas counts but were iced over for the Federation Waterfowl Count January 8. Some of the higher ponds had almost 2 feet of ice by the end of the period. The intense cold of last year was moderated in February with a complete thaw by the end of that month. Not so this year. At this writing in late March, lakes are still heavily iced.

In spite of the weather, it was a birder's paradise. That long hoped-for phenomenon occurred—a "winter finch year." Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, both Red and White-winged Crossbills and even Northern Shrikes came south; some in unprecedented numbers. Accipiters haunted and hunted at many local feeders, and Cooper's Hawks were reported in unbelievable numbers considering their scarcity on migration. Goshawks are now regular in much of the region. Christmas counts were reporting record numbers of species and individuals. Most of the good finds were species that could be expected. Rarities and accidentals went almost unreported. A record number of reports were received and processed; 17 in all, and 5 Christmas counts.

Contributors and observers cited: Martin Borko, Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Stan DeOrsey, Florence Germond, Thelma Haight, Fred Hough, Mary and Jim Key, Mabel Little, Helen Manson, Ken McDermott, Al Merritt, John C. Orth, Eleanor Pink, Forrest and Aline Romero, Benton Seguin, Selden Spencer, William and Trixie Strauss, Otis Waterman, Hans Weber, Berna Weissman.

Abbreviations: BX—Burroughs Xmas Count, Ulster Co. Dec. 17; PX—Peekskill Xmas Count, N. Westchester, Dec. 17; PCX—Putnam Co. Xmas Count Dec. 31; RX—Rockland Xmas Count Dec. 18; WX—Waterman Xmas Count, Dutchess Co., Dec. 30; FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count, Jan. 7-15; PL—Playland, Rye; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye.

LOONS—DUCKS: Common Loon: Scattered reports of 4 birds in Dutch and Sull thru Jan. Red-throated Loon: 1 Dec. 24 Cornwall Bay (BS). 2 off Rye Dec. 26. Horned Grebe: 5 on FWC was highest ever. An unusually high 50 on BX at Ashokan (AB). Great Blue Heron: 12 at PL thru Dec. SNOWY EGRET: 1 at PL thru Dec. 26, their first Dec. record. Mute Swan: max 84 on FWC. 79 of them on Croton R. below Croton Falls (ML). WHISTLING SWAN: 1 Sylvan L. Dutch Dec. 14 (HM, FAR). Canada Goose: Dec. numbers unprecedented. 5000 in the Millbrook-Amenia area of Dutch. 1354 on RX was record high that count. Snow Goose: more than usual, 1 on WX and scattered individuals on 6 reports thru period. Mallard: 1442, a record on RX. 100-200 at Verbank in manured fields thru period. Gadwall: 1 on RX was fourth time in 30 counts. Pintail: 1 Rockland L. into Jan. Green-winged Teal: 1 on RX, second time that count. 1 Iona I. Dec. 26 (BS). Blue-winged Teal: 1, RX, third time that count. Am. Wigeon: 14, Iona I. Dec. 3 (BS). N. Shoveler: 2 on RX, fifth time that count. Wood Duck: 2 Feb. 11, Fishkill (MJK). Redhead: 5 Rudd Pd. Nov. 14-20, and 7 Abels Nov. 13. Ring-necked Duck: 35 Dec. 4 and 1 Dec. 27 Amenia (WTS). 216 West Branch Res., Putn on FWC (ML). Canvasback: max 300 Dec. 9 Cornwall Bay. Greater Scaup: max 17 Kiamesha L. Dec. 4. Lesser Scaup: 4 on Bronx-Westch. Christmas Count Dec. 26 at Irvington; 3 Rock L. Jan. 5. Common Goldeneye: 1 on RX was very low. 30 Mongaup-Rio Dec. 17. Oldsquaw: 1 Abels near Moor's Mills Nov. 13 (HM). White-winged Scoter: 1 Dec. 17 Newburgh (BS). Black Scoter: 15 at Newburgh Dec. 17 (BS). Ruddy Duck: very low on RX, only 2. Hooded Merganser: none on FWC where they have

been reported 22 out of 24 years. Decreased at PL from 30 on Dec. 4 to 6 on Dec. 26. Common Merganser: 140 at Rondout R. Jan. 3. Red-breasted Merganser: 1 male Feb. 13 Wappingers Cr. (MJK), 2 Cornwall Bay Dec. 4 (BS).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: wintered in good numbers. 53 at Quaker Hill roost Dutch Dec. 18 (JMK). A few persisted thru end of period. Obs in small number elsewhere. Accipiters: all three species wintered in unprecedented numbers. Goshawk: appeared on 9 reports thru period. Sharp-shinned Hawk: too many to report. Almost every report had one or more. Several remained for long periods near feeders where they fed on small birds. Cooper's Hawk: appeared on 6 reports including PCX. 1 remained at Cornwall at Al Merritt's feeder where it was observed taking Cardinals, siskins, 1 catbird and House Sparrows from Jan. 16 to Feb. 19. Another was at the Haight feeder at Stissing taking birds daily. Observed "crawling through bushes" in search of prey (TH). Most birds observed by competent birders for long periods of time, often at very close range. Red-tailed Hawk: 70 on WX doubled the previous high in 1974. An albino at Verbank seen regularly again this year. Rough-legged Hawk: numbers good. 5 in Dutch dur Dec. and at least a dozen there in Feb. 2 black-phased birds at Galeville Airport, Walkkill. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** 1 near L. Sebago Jan. 11 (Walter Lehnes). Absent from the Stissing Mt. area for second year, but 2 were in residence in Clove Valley Dutch, from late Jan. thru Feb. One obs dropping stick from on high and retrieving it before it hit the ground. 2 at MC Nov. 13 about 1/2 hr. apart (TB, *et al.*). Bald Eagle: a study group believes that about 30 wintered in the Rio-Mongaup area. Max obs there was 10 (6 ad and 4 imm) Jan. 7 (ET). Merlin: 1 obs at 10 ft. at Wappinger's Falls Dec. 11, eating a Starling (Tom Storey). Another at Accord Dec. 30 (FH). Ruffed Grouse: wintered in good numbers esp in Palisades Interstate Park. Bobwhite: only reports in recent years from Dutch. 11 there Dec. 14 (FAR). Turkey: 14 at Alligerville, Ulst Dec. 31. 20 near Fowlerville, Sull thru Jan. Sull Audubon had 59 on Christmas Count Dec. 17. Clapper Rail: 2 MC Dec. 26. Virginia Rail: 6 on PCX, unprecedented number for region in winter. Am. Coot: very low numbers everywhere. Only 3 on FWC compared with 105 last year, and 163 the year before. Killdeer: 120 in one pasture at Walkkill Nov. 23 (HW). Ruddy Turnstone: 3 on rocks off Rye Dec. 26. Am. Woodcock: 1 for fifth time on RX. Common Snipe: more than usual, 5 on RX and several others reported. Greater Yellowlegs: 4 at PL on Dec. 4. Purple Sandpiper: 30 PL Dec. 26. Dunlin: 66 at MC Dec. 26. Glaucous Gull: 1 for second time on RX. 2 imm and 1 ad at Croton Pt. Dec. 28 (Bill Howe). Iceland Gull: 1 second year bird Croton Pt. Jan. 9 (BW). 1 Rondout R. Feb. 22 was first Sull. record (MB). Laughing Gull: 200 on RX was unprecedented for that date and location. Bonaparte's Gull: 1 Yonkers Dec. 26 was only report.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Ringed Turtle Dove: 2 at New Paltz feeder Feb. 26 (AB). Screech Owl: 25 on PX and 21 on PCX were unusually high. No other count comes close. They must have a special technique. Barred Owl: 2 dur Dec. and Jan. in Palisades Park. 2 more from Dutch and 1 from Oran. Long-eared Owl: 3 on WX at Vassar Farms. Remained thru Jan. Short-eared Owl: max of 6 at Galeville Airport, Walkkill in Dec. Reduced to 2-3 in Jan. and none after heavy snows. Saw-whet Owl: 1 near Island Pd. Dec. 16 had a dead Chipmunk propped nearby (Robert Speiser). Pileated Woodpecker: generally scarce, but an unusually high count on PCX of 8. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues to increase—on at least 6 reports and 2 Christmas counts. Coming regularly to feeders in Dutch thru period. Red-headed Woodpecker: only 1 reported, eating from suet bag Town of Crawford, Oran Jan. 29. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: a few. Of 2 at Accord, 1 was killed striking a window. Downy Woodpecker: 105 on WX, usual avg. 75. Numbers good all over. **BLACK-BACKED THREE-TOED WOODPECKER:** 1 Vassar Campus Nov. 15 (A. Scott Warthin).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Eastern Phoebe: a late bird from Dec. 4-6. Horned Lark: 300 Jan. 15-22 Pine Plains (FG). Blue Jay: appeared normal, but WX had 341 when avg is 230. **COMMON RAVEN:** 2 at very close range seen and heard over Doubletop Mt. in the Catskills Dec. 28 (Brad Snyder). Com. Crow: more than 3000 in Hudson St. Hospital roost. Fish Crow: in addition to the usual few wintering at Poughkeepsie, others were found at Newburgh and Highland Falls. Obs on RX, PX and PCX. Black-capped Chickadee: 404

on WX which usually avg 300. Numbers normal elsewhere. Red-breasted Nuthatch: unusual numbers of last fall at Vassar persisted with 26 there on WX. Usually averages 1 or none. An unusual 17 on PX; FH had as many as 6 at his feeder at Accord at one time. Brown Creeper: numbers down. Carolina Wren: presumed kill of last year did not materialize. Numbers good thru region and period. At least 5 reports from Dutch in Feb. Gray Catbird: 5 on PCX and 5 in Rye Dec. 26. Brown Thrasher: 1 near Wappingers in Feb. and 2 at Rye Dec. 26. Another at Wurtsboro Dec. 17. Am. Robin: excellent. Flocks up to 100 in Dutch thru Jan. Flocks of 40-50 Dec. and Jan. in E. Ulst. **WOOD THRUSH**: 1 on RX well described by P. French, a very experienced birder. Hermit Thrush: 5 on PX, 1 Eldred Dec. 2 (Alice Jones), 1 Feb. 10-20 near P'kpsie (MJK). Eastern Bluebird: 12 wintered in Dutch and 8 were at Sleepy Hollow Cem. N. Tarrytown Jan. 30. Numbers inc by end of period. Kinglets: both species very scarce everywhere. N. Shrike: missed on RX but most other counts had at least one. Many reports from entire region thru period. Best numbers in memory. Starling: thousands roosting on Mid-Hudson Bridge, P'kpsie, and on the west end of Tappan Zee Bridge.

VIREOS-SPARROWS: ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 2 omitted from fall report. 1 MC Nov. 5 and another there Nov. 25 (TB). **COM. YELLOWTHROAT**: 1 on PX. E. Meadowlark: numbers very low. Only 1 on WX, absent from most other counts. Max 38 Depot Hill, Dutch (HM). Redwinged Blackbird: a few winter reports but no flocks thru end of period. Late returning. Rusty Blackbird: a few wintered near Stissing. Common Grackle: very late return. No Feb. flocks. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 Wurtsboro Dec. 17-18 (MB). Evening Grosbeak: large flocks of fall gave way to few winter residents. Max 45 thru Feb. at Mohonk feeder (Don Theis). Purple Finch: numbers down, max 30 near Washingtonville Dec. 21 (BS). House Finch: a veritable explosion, record numbers everywhere. 324 on WX which had its first in 1965. Only 209 that count last year. 250 in one field at Walkkill Dec. 3. We must look for ecological effect of this marked increase. Pine Grosbeak: many reports of small flocks thru entire region for period. Max 47 near Rondout R. Feb. 4 (AB). Common Redpoll: many reports after mid-January. First Dec. 17 in Oran (BS). Max 100 Jan. 1 Goshen (BS). **HOARY REDPOLL**: 2 at feeder of John Gee at Rye. Arr Feb. 24 and remained into Mar. (mob). Pine Siskin: similar to C. Redpoll, most feeders have 40 or more thru end of period. Am. Goldfinch: numbers excellent. RX had a high of 486. Crossbills: both species on most Christmas counts, small numbers but widespread and continuous thru period. Rufous-sided Towhee: at least 5 reports of wintering birds across north part of region. Vesper Sparrow: app on RX for 4th time. White-crowned Sparrow: up to 3 wintering at Amenia again this year (WTS). 4 on WCC and 1 at Newburgh Dec. 17. White-throated Sparrow: a record high on RX of 485, numbers high everywhere thru period. Fox Sparrow: 3 Jan. reports in Dutch. Song Sparrow: PX had an unusual high of 163. Lapland Longspur: 2 near Millerton and 3 at Verbank from Feb. 11-20. Single birds reported at Blue Chip Farm, Walkkill, in late Jan. Snow Bunting: usual scattered reports of a few birds. Max 500 daily at Amenia thru Feb. More than 350 near Walkkill Jan. 29.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

After a benign December which permitted most Christmas counts to proceed without too much discomfort on the part of observers, the weather *was* the news during January and February. January 13th, freezing rain coated trees and wires producing extensive damage. On the 20th, 17 inches of snow dropped on

top of the ice. On February 6th came the "neutercane." Neutercane? Weathermen explained that this hurricane with snow was a huge cyclonic coastal storm with an eye much like a hurricane, except it did not originate in the tropics. Two more feet of snow and severe beach erosion resulted. January was the wettest on record with 11.2 inches of precipitation instead of the normal three. February averaged 6° F below normal with the temperature going below freezing on 27 of the month's 28 days. In all, 59 to 69 inches of snow fell during the two months depending on where the yardstick was standing, compared to the norm of eight inches in each month.

While snow cover brought lingering land birds to feeders, waterfowl suffered less displacement this winter than last year, because harbor freezing was not so extensive. The cold February delayed the return of the early migrants expected mid-month, with no widespread movement noted through the period.

Learned adaptive behavior, apparently in response to last year's coastal freeze-out, was shown by hundreds of Brant feeding inland on parkway shoulders, golf courses, and sod farms even prior to the snowfall. Starvation did not appear to be the motivating force for this change in habitat as birds trapped by Department of Environmental Conservation biologists were "husky and healthy." It seems that pulling lawn grass is easier than pulling underwater eel grass.

Interesting, and perhaps unique, feeding behavior on the part of the immature Bald Eagle which wintered on the North Shore was described by Mill Neck Warden Bob Hornosky. The eagle was observed to "tread" with its feet in shallow water at low tide for eels still semidormant in the mud. When the bird encountered an eel with its feet, it seized and carried off its prize.

Christmas counts found wintering land birds generally scarce, with the exception of the Montauk count where Gardiner's Island provided a haven for semi-hardy species as well as waterfowl. Comparison of the contribution of Gardiner's Island to the whole Montauk count for several species illustrates the ratios: Carolina Wren 31/32, (down from 70 in 1974), Gray Catbird 14/16, Rufous-sided Towhee 20/23, Field Sparrow 55/61, and Swamp Sparrow 17/18. Montauk reported its third highest count with 123 species. Central Suffolk, with 118 species plus "Ipswich" Sparrow totaled their lowest count since 1969. Orient, 94, and Northern Nassau with 107 were lower than the past several years, yet about average over a 10 year period. New to the Montauk count was a Yellow-breasted Chat, new to Orient, Brant and a Murre (sp. ?). A high count of 818 House Finches on the Orient count is the latest figure in a steady progression from 7 birds in 1967. While the southern Nassau count was also lower than recent years, it had four new count birds in Louisiana Heron, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel and Lark Sparrow.

The Federation pelagic trip February 19th traveled 40 miles south of Montauk aboard the Viking Star, and reported ten Gannets, four Iceland and one Glaucous Gull, and 311 Black-legged Kittiwakes. 83 large alcids, probably all Razorbills, were seen 30 to 35 miles out at a water depth of 30 fathoms.

An unprecedented February Sooty Shearwater was reported 75 miles south of Long Island flying in the wake of a Russian cutter. Observer Blair Nikula, in the area for three days aboard a Coast Guard cutter, also reported three to five Skuas, and a total of approximately 2500 Gannets. Alcids and fulmars were ab-

sent south of Long Island, although present east of the Cape.

Winter positives include: 1) good numbers of most waterfowl, 2) an excellent flight of redpolls, siskins, and crossbills, 3) good numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks and Marsh Hawks on Christmas Counts, 4) continued increase of Tufted Titmice, Cardinals, and House Finches in Suffolk County, 5) good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Winter negatives: 1) many small land birds in low numbers, even common species such as junco and Tree Sparrow, 2) Brown Creepers, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, and towhees nearly absent in most areas, 3) loons and grebes low, 4) Snowy Owls exceptionally rare, 5) Little Gulls scarce, 6) some Barn Owl mortality (at least four picked up dead in Suffolk County).

Rarities include: Sooty Shearwater, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lark Bunting.

Abbreviations: Tobay—JFK Wildlife Sanctuary, Jones B.—Jones Beach State Park, R. Moses—Robert Moses State Park, Muttontown—Muttontown Preserve, CC—Christmas Count, Hemp. L.—Hempstead Lake State Park.

Initialled contributors and observers: Jim Ash, Albert M. Bell, Thomas W. Burke, Ralph Cioffi, Thomas H. Davis, Stephen B. Dempsey, Fran File, Robert Giffen, Anthony J. Lauro, Alan Lindberg, Gilbert S. Raynor, Paul Stoutenburgh, Alvin Wollin.

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: three Dec. 17 Montauk CC, one Jan. 12 Montauk (GSR). SOOTY SHEARWATER: one Feb. 2. 75 miles south of L.I. 39° 54.5' N, 71° 32' W. (B. Nikula). Common Egret: two Dec. 20 Jones B. (AW) were late, as were Snowy Egrets: one Dec. 18 Southampton on the ice with gulls at a nearly frozen pond, and one Jan. 28 in a marsh in Riverhead (GSR). Also late leaving were Louisiana Herons reported, one Dec. 24, at Tobay (AW) and one Jan. 2 at the Lawrence Marsh (H. Hirshbein), and the two Glossy Ibises reported Dec. 10 at Tobay (O. Dunning), and one Jan. 2 on the S. Nassau CC. A flock of 6 Whistling Swans wintered in the Mecox Bay area as did a maximum of 4000-5000 Canada Geese. Two FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCKS stayed at Hemp. L. to Dec. 4. Single Common and King Eiders Dec. 26 reported on the Central Suffolk CC were rare for the area. 200+ Common and 8 Kings wintered at Montauk where they are more regular, as did a female Harlequin Duck. Two pairs of Harlequins were present during Jan. and Feb. at Shinnecock Inlet. A drake BARROW'S GOLDENEYE was located Jan. 7 at Napeague Harbor by a party working on the waterfowl survey (GSR). Eight Common Mergansers were found at Manorville Dec. 26 (GSR).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Sharp-shinned Hawks were present in Suffolk in the best numbers in years (GSR) with more than ten reports. Single Cooper's Hawks were seen in Orient Dec. 28, and in Brookville where an individual wintered in the area (B. Conolly, S. Melum, AL) as did a Goshawk. A Red-shouldered Hawk wintered at Muttontown (AL). Rough-legged Hawks were present throughout the region in near normal numbers. Marsh Hawks seemed more numerous than in recent years with 37 reported on the Central Suffolk CC. Several Merlin reports came in from various localities; three wintered along the Jones B. strip (C. Ward). A sub adult GOLDEN EAGLE was seen Dec. 11 at Hemp. L. (J. Ash). An immature BALD EAGLE was first reported Jan. 15 in Mill Neck by Jim Madden. It remained in the area through the period, enjoyed by many observers. A very late Osprey was seen at R. Moses Dec. 13 (JA). Wintering Common Gallinules are uncommon: one Feb. 28 in Riverhead (R. Adamo). Four American Oystercatchers remained until Jan. 14 and one until Feb. 5 at Jones B. Eight Am. Golden Plovers lingered to Dec. 15 and Jan. 13 at JFK airport (S. Chevalier), while a Whimbrel found Jan. 2 on the S. Nassau CC at Jones B. (H. Pemberton) was a first record for January. Two Willets were last seen Dec. 18 at Amityville (AJL). A single Northern Phalarope seen Dec. 1 in Jones Inlet was very late (JA). Three to five

Skuas were observed Feb. 2, 75 miles south of L.I. (B. Nikula). Single Glaucous Gulls were reported from Shinnecock Jan. 7 and from Montauk Jan. 7 and Feb. 11 (GSR). One Iceland Gull (Kumlien's) was in residence at the restaurant at Jones B. (AJL). Others were reported from Shinnecock Dec. 10, Moriches Inlet Dec. 26, Dec. 31, and Montauk Feb. 11 (GSR). Last fall's large numbers of kittiwakes persisted at Montauk through late Dec.; 2000 Dec. 17 (THD), 130 Dec. 31, 200 Jan. 7, and one Jan. 12 (GSR). Four kittiwakes were seen Dec. 26 at Moriches Inlet (GSR). Black-headed Gulls were seen Dec. 20, one at Jones B. (AW), and one Dec. 26 at Moriches Inlet (CC). Perhaps the same bird was reported Feb. 19 at Westhampton. Single Little Gulls were reported on the Central Suffolk CC Dec. 26, and on the Captree Count Dec. 18. In recent years Little Gulls have not been too hard to locate in large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls in the various inlets, but they were scarce this year. Single Razorbills were reported Dec. 17 (THD, TWB), and Dec. 31 (GSR) from Montauk. Up to 83 were seen Feb. 19 on the Federation pelagic trip 35 miles south of Montauk.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Muttontown Preserve is a consistent wintering place for Long-eared Owls with up to 12 present this year (AL). Four Long-ears were present in Port Washington Jan. 21 (B. Forquer) where they probably hunt over the controversial local dump. Short-eared Owls were reported in about normal numbers from suitable localities. Snowy Owls were scarce along the beaches, but single birds were reported Jan. 2 at Orient Pt. (A & F Bisk), Jan. 29 at Mecox (JA), and Feb. 13 and 18 at Muttontown (AL).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Two Western Kingbirds lingered until Dec. 4 at R. Moses; one was seen Dec. 11 at Montauk (M. Cooper). Carolina Wrens were scarce but several maintained themselves at feeders. A Tree Swallow was seen Jan. 18 in Rockville Center (AW). At least three Eastern Bluebirds were reported from Southaven Jan. 23 and from Brookhaven Feb. 20. A Northern Shrike remained at Montauk until Dec. 4 (JA); one was in Mastic Dec. 26 (CC) and an immature was present at Jones B. Feb. 20-25 (J. Bull). Several Loggerhead Shrikes were reported: one to Dec. 17 at Montauk, one Dec. 17 N. Nassau CC, and one Dec. 18 JFK airport (JA).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: A late Pine Warbler was present at a suet feeder in Shinnecock Hills Dec. 18 (GSR). Einging Com. Yellowthroats were found on the Orient, Montauk and Central Suffolk CCs.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Several Northern Orioles wintered at feeders in Suffolk County. An outstanding feeder bird was the immature male **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** at the Otero feeder in Centereach from Feb. 19 through the period for a fourth winter state record. A second individual (female) was seen once accompanying the male at a later date. Jan. 18 a Dickcissel appeared at the Rowley feeder in Brookhaven and was present for about a week. Perhaps the prize feeder bird was the male **LARK BUNTING** first seen by Bob Benjamin in Elwood Jan. 14, and viewed by many through the period. Common Redpolls were widely reported from mid-Jan. through the period. The largest flock numbered 300 in mid-Feb. at Gilgo. Pine Siskins were also present throughout in good numbers. Red Crossbills were reported from a number of localities, among them 36 Dec. 24 R. Moses (THD) 17 Feb. 17 Muttontown (AL) 50 Feb. 18 Gilgo (GSR). There were scattered reports of White-winged Crossbills including 15 at Oyster Bay (B. Forquer) and a flock of 125-150 at Gilgo until late Feb. One Lark Sparrow remained until Jan. 8 at Hemp. L. (SBD). Another was also seen Jan. 8 at Mattituck (R. Tuthill). A Clay-colored Sparrow was found Dec. 10 at Montauk (GSR).

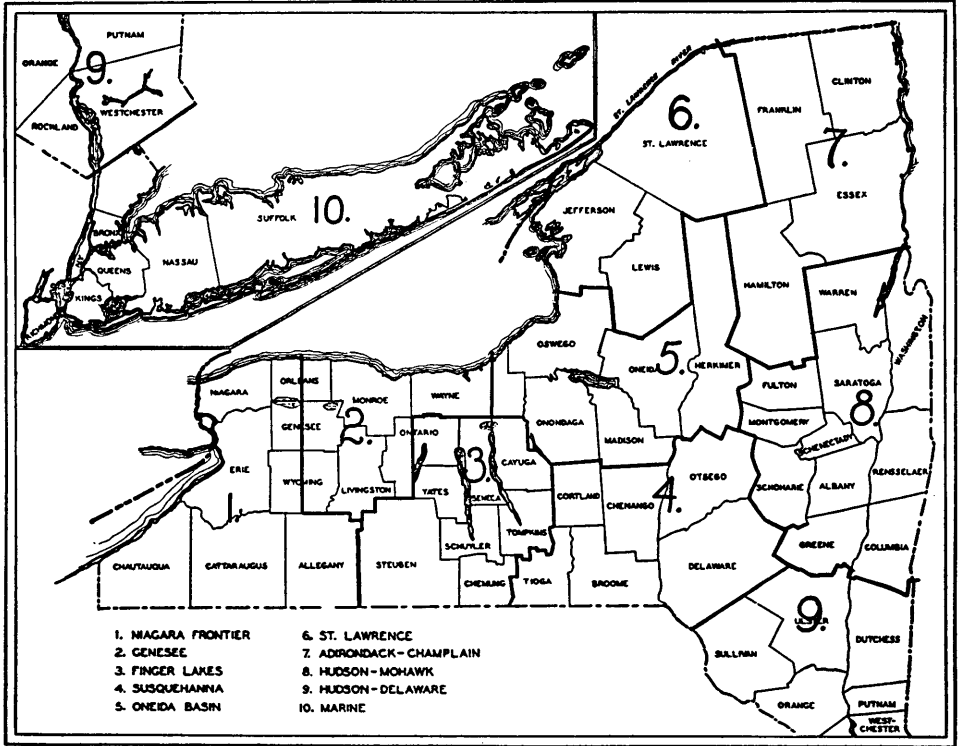
154 Dayton Street, Sea Cliff, New York 11579

[Eds. Note: Tony Lauro, either by himself or in conjunction with Barbara Spencer, has been Region 10 editor since July 1975. He now finds himself unable to continue in that capacity.

Barbara Spencer, who herself had to bow out about a year ago, has graciously consented to step in again.

Thanks, Tony, for a great job.]

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

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.

1978 Officers

President

Stephen B. Dempsey 533 Chestnut St., West Hempstead, N.Y. 11552

Vice-President

Alice D. Jones Knolls Road, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601

Corresponding Secretary

Martin Borko Box 511, Wurtsboro, N.Y. 12790

Recording Secretary

Dee DeSimone 6 Bristol Rd., Clinton, N.Y. 13323

Treasurer

John W. Forness 3086 Haskell Rd., R.D. 2, Cuba, N.Y. 14727

Co-Editors of THE KINGBIRD

Emanuel Levine, 585 Mead Terrace, South Hempstead, N.Y. 11550

John Farrand, Jr., American Museum of Natural History, New York, N.Y. 10024

Appointed Committees

Publicity: Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr., 333 Bedell St., Freeport, N.Y. 11520

Membership: Myrna Hemmerick, P.O. Box 203, Setauket, N.Y. 11733

Publications and Research: Robert S. Arbib, Jr.,
226 Guion Dr., Mamaronek, N.Y. 10543

Bibliography: Sally Hoyt Spofford, Box 428, Etna, N.Y. 13062

John J. Elliott Memorial Committee: John L. Bull, Eugene Eisenmann,
John Farrand, Jr., Emanuel Levine, Joseph W. Taylor

Elected Committees

Auditing: Irving Cantor, Donald Clark

Nominating: Allen Benton, Chairman; Richard A. Sloss, Ronald LaForce