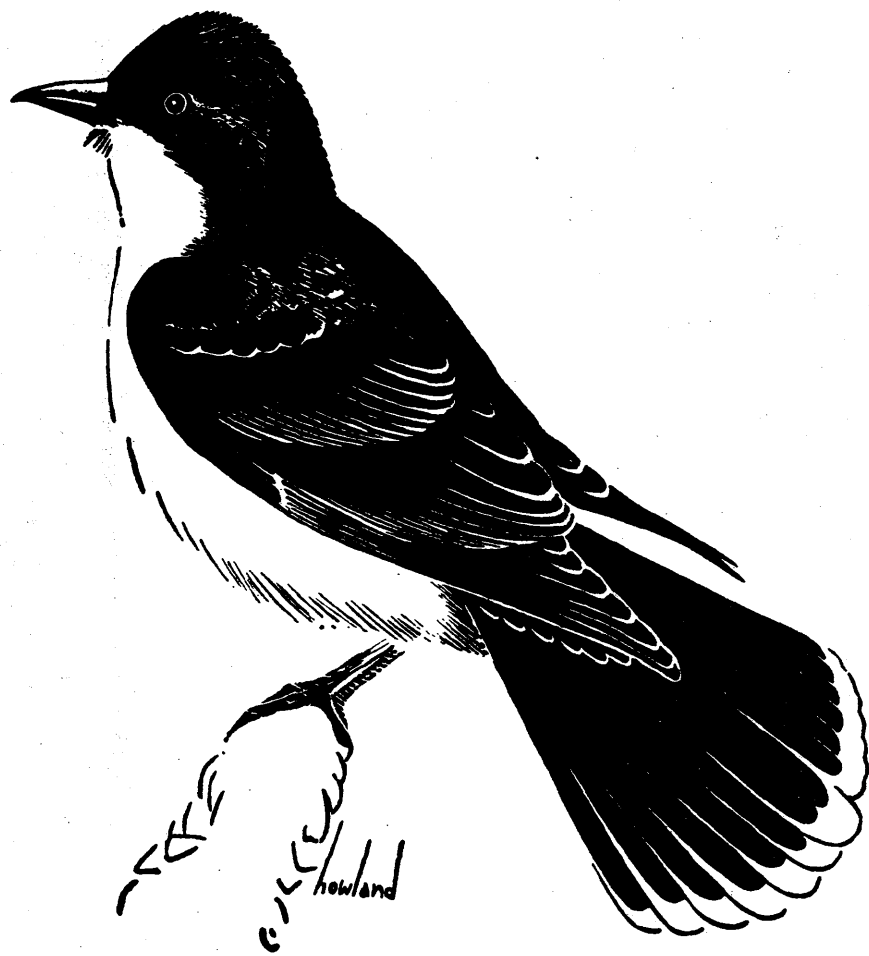


# The KINGBIRD



VOL. XXX, NO. 2

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# The KINGBIRD

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*Highlights of the Winter Season*

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*Painted Redstart*

*Dansville, N. Y.*

*Mike Hopiak, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University*

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES 35. PAINTED REDSTART

ROBERT SPAHN

Charles and Mary Dilgard of Dansville, Livingston Co., have been feeding birds for some forty years. On 14 December 1979, they saw a bird at their feeder that was totally unfamiliar to them. It returned on 22 December, again on Christmas, and daily thereafter. Doing a little research, the Dilgards finally were able to identify the bird as a Painted Redstart (*Myioborus pictus*), never previously recorded in New York State.

They then alerted John W. Brown, who writes a weekly birding column in a Rochester newspaper. On 6 January 1980, Mr. Brown confirmed the identification, photographed the bird, and then, after carefully explaining to the Dilgards the probable response, spread the news of the spectacular visitor. The rest is history, well-documented by local TV and national news coverage.

By 25 January, there had been over 750 visitors signed into the Dilgards' guest book, some from as far away as Chicago. There were many more who watched from their cars and then left. Throughout, the Dilgards were perfect hosts, inviting all in to sit and wait over a cup of coffee, or simply to watch and wait in comfort. Virtually all saw the bird, but on 25 January, the group waited in vain.

The following day, Mary Dilgard found bits and pieces of the bird under some bushes next to the house. Was it the victim of the visiting Sharp-shinned Hawk, or did it fall prey to one of the multitude of neighborhood cats? Whichever, it was a sad ending for this spot of brightness so far from its home range.

The Painted Redstart is actually a Central American and Mexican species. It breeds as far south as Nicaragua, and north into northwestern New Mexico and west Texas. Its winter range is not much different, with sporadic occurrences in southern California and southern Arizona.

The appearance in Dansville is the fifth record east of the Mississippi River. The other four are as follows:

18 Oct. 1947	Marblehead Park, Massachusetts
22 April 1965	Madison, Wisconsin
15 Nov. to 22 Nov. 1970	Cleveland, Ohio
9 Nov. 1971	Ontario, Canada

716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580

## THE SHOREBIRDS OF MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

WALTER E. BENNING

I have birded the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge for twenty-five years, with shorebirds as my special interest. Over the past sixteen years I have kept written records, upon which this paper is based. In all I have recorded thirty-four shorebird species. Four of these, the Killdeer, American Woodcock, Common Snipe and Spotted Sandpiper, are breeding birds, the rest migrants. One additional species, the Willet, has been reported at the Refuge, but has always eluded me—well, maybe next year!

This is not a survey in the conventional sense where the entire area is covered at intervals and counts of each species made every time. It is simply a record of my observations and the number of times each species was seen. I usually made counts, but not always, except when one of the rarer species was present, or when a common species was present in unusual numbers. Table 1 shows the number of days by month and year, on which I visited the Refuge. Table 2 indicates by months, the number of times I found each species present.

The number of species and the abundance of each has varied considerably from year to year. The controlling factor here appears to be the number of acres of exposed mudflats available for the birds' use. Small amounts of mudflats mean relatively few birds and, usually, relatively few species. Extensive acreage, such as when one of the pools is drained, will attract hundreds of birds of many species, including rarities. The ideal condition appears to be a large area of soft mud with many shallow pools of varying depths, and some grassy edges or islands. To keep the habitat in optimum condition, sufficient water must be added periodically, by rain or otherwise, to prevent the mud from drying out. When these conditions have occurred, shorebirding at Montezuma has been fantastic. A dry mudflat becomes an ornithological desert very quickly.

My records and personal impressions would indicate that there has been a decline in shorebirds over the past sixteen years. However, this may be more apparent than real. In the earlier years, management practice at the Refuge was to drain at least one pool in late summer and fall nearly every year, creating ideal conditions for maximum shorebird use. For the past three years no pools have been drained and the water levels have been held high throughout the entire

season. Predictably, with only minimal habitat available, shorebirding has been at a low ebb. Also, during the 1970's I had visited the Refuge on fewer days for two reasons. First, having retired eight years ago, I have had more opportunity to be away from home for extended periods. Second, when at home, I had made fewer visits due to the gasoline situation.

The migration in the fall has usually been more spectacular than in the spring. Again this is directly connected with available habitat. Mudflat areas are generally small in the spring. However, in 1973 the main pool was drained in early May to facilitate repair of the damage stemming from the inundation of the area by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. The response in terms of shorebirds visiting the Refuge was almost unbelievable. Hundreds of birds of eighteen species, including Ruddy Turnstones, a Whimbrel, record numbers of Red Knots, a breeding-plumaged Ruff, and an American Avocet stopped on the journey north showing that, given proper habitat, the spring migration can be as exciting as that of the fall. Spring migrants are usually gone by June 15. After a ten day break, when only the local breeding species are seen, the first trickle of returning birds appears in late June and, if suitable habitat is present, a full-blown southward movement is apparent by early July.

#### **Semipalmated Plover**

Spring: May 4-June 13 with three late migrants on June 19, 1977. Maximum 100 May 30, 1967.

Fall: June 27-Nov. 3. Numbers are heaviest from late July through Sept. and taper off in Oct. Maximum 60 Oct. 5, 1969.

#### **Piping Plover**

This plover, rare at Montezuma, was observed twice, two birds on Apr. 22, 1970 and one on May 2, 1971.

#### **Killdeer**

A common breeder at the Refuge with young appearing the first week in May. Arrives in March and departs in Nov. Earliest date Mar. 5, 1966 and latest date Nov. 29, 1964. Numbers rise rapidly in early July. Maximum 304 July 4, 1967.

#### **American Golden Plover**

Spring: Apr. 13-25 with one late date of May 24. Maximum nine on Apr. 25, 1965.

Fall: Aug. 14-Nov. 15. Maximum 71 Sept. 6, 1965.

Seen every year except 1979. Up to 200 were present during the last half of Sept. 1972, on a plowed field at Evans Corners one mile north of the Refuge.

### **Black-bellied Plover**

Spring: Apr. 16-June 9. Maximum 45 May 22, 1973. None seen in 1970, 1974 or 1978.

Fall: Aug. 6-Nov. 14. Maximum 34 Oct. 2, 1966. Absent in 1977 and 1979.

### **Ruddy Turnstone**

Spring: May 16-June 1. Maximum 19 May 22, 1973.

Fall: Aug. 3-Sept. 29. Maximum 20 Sept. 22, 1975.

This bird of the sandy and pebbly beaches seems out of place on Montezuma's mudflats, yet I have found it in twelve of the sixteen years during the fall, and three years during the spring.

### **American Woodcock**

This species is listed as a breeder at the Refuge on the official checklist. It is undoubtedly more common than my observations would indicate, as my poor hearing does not readily detect the sounds of the nuptial flight. Also my time has been spent largely at the mudflats rather than in the moist brushy areas which the woodcock prefers.

### **Common Snipe**

This is another breeding bird on the Refuge. The earliest spring arrival date is Mar. 21, 1970. The latest departure date is Nov. 14 when 21 birds were still present in 1964 and 17 in 1970. Maximum 55 Aug. 14, 1971.

### **Whimbrel**

Spring: this large shorebird appeared on May 16, 1964, May 19, 1971 and May 29, 1973.

Fall: a single bird July 25, 1971.

### **Upland Sandpiper**

This bird of the short grassy meadows breeds regularly in northern Seneca County, but disdains Montezuma's mudflats. I had one sighting there, in a grassy area on June 19, 1977.

### **Spotted Sandpiper**

This common breeder arrives from Apr. 21 to May 5. While most birds of this species have left by early Sept., a few linger through the month. In 1966, two tarried until the late date of Oct. 10.

### **Solitary Sandpiper**

Spring: May 2-15 with only four sightings. Maximum two May 11, 1969.

Fall: July 4-Sept. 27. Maximum four July 25 and 28, 1965. A regular fall migrant.

### **Greater Yellowlegs**

Spring: Apr. 1-June 14 with most records between Apr. 16 and May 18. Maximum 32 Apr. 16, 1972.

Fall: June 29-Nov. 19. Maximum 122 Oct. 14, 1964.

### **Lesser Yellowlegs**

Spring: Apr. 9-May 30. Maximum 66 May 3, 1969.

Fall: June 29-Nov. 25 with only nine sightings after Oct. 23. Maximum 259 July 30, 1967. Birds which appeared between June 19 and 21 in four different years were probably late spring migrants.

### **Red Knot**

Spring: May 14-30. Seen in three years only. Maximum 29 on May 28, 1967 and 74 on May 21, 1973.

Fall: July 27-Oct. 14. Observed in seven years. Maximum six Sept. 1, 1965.

### **Pectoral Sandpiper**

Spring: Apr. 2-June 11 with most sightings Apr. 9-30. Only three after May 17. Maximum 128 Apr. 27, 1978.

Fall: July 1-Nov. 19 with a noticeable increase in numbers in early Sept. Maximum 207 Sept. 2, 1976.

### **White-rumped Sandpiper**

Spring: May 12-June 9. Normally fewer than ten birds at a time but May 30, 1971 produced an unbelievable maximum of 97.

Fall: July 29-Nov. 21. Maximum 13 Oct. 27, 1965.

### **Baird's Sandpiper**

Spring: I have never found this species in the spring.

Fall: Aug. 25-Nov. 14, except for two very early birds on July 10, 1973 and one on Aug. 4, 1971, and six on the very late date of Nov. 29, 1964. Maximum 13 Sept. 18, 1965.

### **Least Sandpiper**

Spring: Apr. 27-June 2 but mostly after May 8. Maximum 63 May 15, 1971.

Fall: June 30-Nov. 14 with most birds gone by Sept. 30. Maximum 125 July 16, 1971.

A very common peep.

### **Dunlin**

Spring: Apr. 10-June 8 but largely during May. A bird on June 21, 1967 and another on July 1, 1971 were probably very late spring birds as I have not found fall Dunlins until Sept. Maximum 660 May 23, 1970.

Fall: Sept. 3-Nov. 29 with relatively few records prior to Sept. 18.



Maximum 647 Oct. 18, 1969. The most abundant fall migrant, often occurring in large flocks.

#### **Short-billed Dowitcher**

Spring: Apr. 12-June 5 with most sightings May 15-23 and very few later records. Maximum 46 May 22, 1971.

Fall: July 2-Nov. 14. Maximum 220 Oct. 13, 1965.

#### **Long-billed Dowitcher**

A fall migrant only. Aug. 15-Nov. 15 with few records before Sept. 7. Maximum 25 on Oct. 13-15, 1967 and on Sept. 27, 1969.

#### **Stilt Sandpiper**

Spring: only two records, two birds on May 10, 1968 and one on May 6, 1976.

Fall: July 8-Nov. 12 with few observations after Oct. 17. Maximum 69 Aug. 8, 1968.

#### **Semipalmated Sandpiper**

Spring: Mar. 28-June 14 but only four sightings prior to May 10. Maximum an estimated 500 on both May 25, 1966 and May 28, 1969. A bird on June 19, 1977 was probably a late spring migrant but one on June 27, 1971 is hard to place as it was halfway between the last spring and the first fall date.

Fall: July 11-Nov. 7 with most birds between July 17-Oct. 18. Maximum an estimated 1,000 Aug. 9, 1967 and 1,200 Aug. 14, 1975.

#### **Western Sandpiper**

Spring: May 21-31.

Fall: Aug. 15-Sept. 24.

I have observed a single individual of this species but nine times in sixteen years. This hard-to-identify peep is probably not nearly as rare as the above would indicate. If one were to consistently and thoroughly examine all flocks of Semipalmated Sandpipers, one would probably find an occasional Western among them. But, when flocks of Semipalmated Sandpipers number in the hundreds and are constantly on the move, it is a little like looking for a needle in a haystack.

#### **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**

This very rare migrant has appeared only in the fall with one present Sept. 21-23, 1966, two Aug. 24-27, 1975 and one Sept. 12, 1976.

#### **Marbled Godwit**

Has occurred only twice, one bird Sept. 7-16, 1966 and another Aug. 27-Sept. 9, 1970.

### **Hudsonian Godwit**

Spring: two in breeding plumage on May 19, 1974 was my only record.

Fall: July 13-Nov. 1. An almost unbelievable maximum of 40 on Sept. 30, 1967. Normal numbers are one or two. This large shorebird was seen in eleven years.

### **Ruff**

Spring: males in breeding plumage were seen on Apr. 29, 1972 and May 18, 1973. An immature-plumaged bird was noted on May 11, 1974.

Fall: July 2-Sept. 27 in the years 1964, 1965, 1966, 1969 and 1979.

All observations of this Old World bird have been of single individuals only. I first found this species in 1963, the year before these records were started. I saw two distinct birds, one on Aug. 17 and the other on Sept. 6.

### **Sanderling**

Fall: July 14-Sept. 29 and one very late bird on Nov. 2, 1974. This bird of the seashores was seen in eight years but in the fall only. Maximum four Sept. 29, 1965.

### **American Avocet**

I have found this large handsome western bird three times, one Oct. 22-29, 1966, one Sept. 24, 1971 and one May 21-24, 1973.

### **Red Phalarope**

The only sighting of this oceanic phalarope was of a single bird on Sept. 30, 1967.

### **Wilson's Phalarope**

Spring: May 9-June 7.

Fall: June 27-Sept. 27. Most frequent in Aug. Missed entirely in 1979.

### **Northern Phalarope**

Spring: May 29-June 2. Rare in spring. Maximum two May 29, 1968.

Fall: Aug. 13-Oct. 4 with most observations from Aug. 26-Sept. 20. Maximum 17 Sept. 1, 1975.

*R.D. 2, 793 Tyre Road, Clyde, New York 14433*

Table 1 Observation Days

	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
1964	*	9	12	10	10	7*	11	10	12	81
1965	9	10	10	9	15	12	13	11	9	98
1966	14	14	10	9	17	15	20	15	14	128
1967	7	13	10	10	10*	13	15	15	8	101
1968	9	9	12	11	13	9	7	11	7	88
1969	6	11	13	7	11	12	8	10	8	86
1970	4	12	16	12	16	15	13	2*	12	102
1971	4	11	16	9	19	15	7*	11	7	99
1972	*	16	3*	*	*	2*	13	10	8	52
1973	4*	*	11*	9	11	10	10	9	2	66
1974	7	8	11	7	1*	12	11	6	5	68
1975	5	8	14	2*	12	12	15	6	5	79
1976	7	6	11	2*	*	8*	12	4*	6	56
1977	10	9	10	5	12	7	7	7	5	72
1978	*	2*	12	6	8	12	9	5	5	59
1979	5	3*	5*	2*	5	4	4	7	4	39
Total	91	141	176	110	160	165	175	139	117	1274

\* No trips were made to the Refuge for an appreciable number of days due to illness or to being away from home.

**Table 2 Observation Days per Species for the Sixteen Years**

	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Total
1. Killdeer	29	99	145	93	129	128	148	78	50	899
2. Greater Yellowlegs		37	52	5	60	136	140	116	31	577
3. Lesser Yellowlegs		32	60	10	113	113	127	52	4	511
4. Spotted Sandpiper		7	136	88	127	93	44	3		498
5. Pectoral Sandpiper		42	12	2	60	122	104	77	14	433
6. Semipalmated Plover			69	24	37	129	115	32	2	408
7. Semipalmated Sandpiper	2	2	39	12	49	141	107	35	3	390
8. Short-billed Dowitcher		4	22	1	77	100	127	45	12	388
9. Least Sandpiper		3	61	4	94	120	77	17	8	384
10. Common Snipe	3	37	13	5	66	100	95	41	12	372
11. Dunlin		17	87	11	1		41	77	37	271
12. Stilt Sandpiper			2		26	60	59	27	3	177
13. Black-bellied Plover		6	28	4		27	49	39	12	165
14. White-rumped Sandpiper			17	5	1	18	35	27	6	109
15. American Golden Plover		6	1			15	29	22	7	80
16. Long-billed Dowitcher						7	36	28	5	76
17. Solitary Sandpiper			5		26	21	19			71
18. Northern Phalarope			2	2		14	37	3		58
19. Wilson's Phalarope			5	3	6	25	12			51
20. Hudsonian Godwit			1		4	8	14	20	1	48
21. Ruddy Turnstone			12	1		18	13			44
22. Baird's Sandpiper					1	7	14	5	6	33
23. Red Knot			6		1	5	4	3		19
24. Ruff		1	2		5	6	5			19
25. Sanderling					7	4	4		1	16
26. Marbled Godwit						1	14			15
27. Western Sandpiper			2			5	2			9
28. American Avocet			3				1	3		7
29. Buff-breasted Sandpiper						3	3			6
30. Whimbrel			3		1					4
31. American Woodcock		1	1				1			3
32. Piping Plover		1	1							2
33. Red Phalarope							1			1
34. Upland Sandpiper				1						1

THE  
**NORTHERN  
 SHAWANGUNK  
 MOUNTAINS**  
 OF ULSTER COUNTY  
 NEW YORK STATE  
 1978. K. Beard

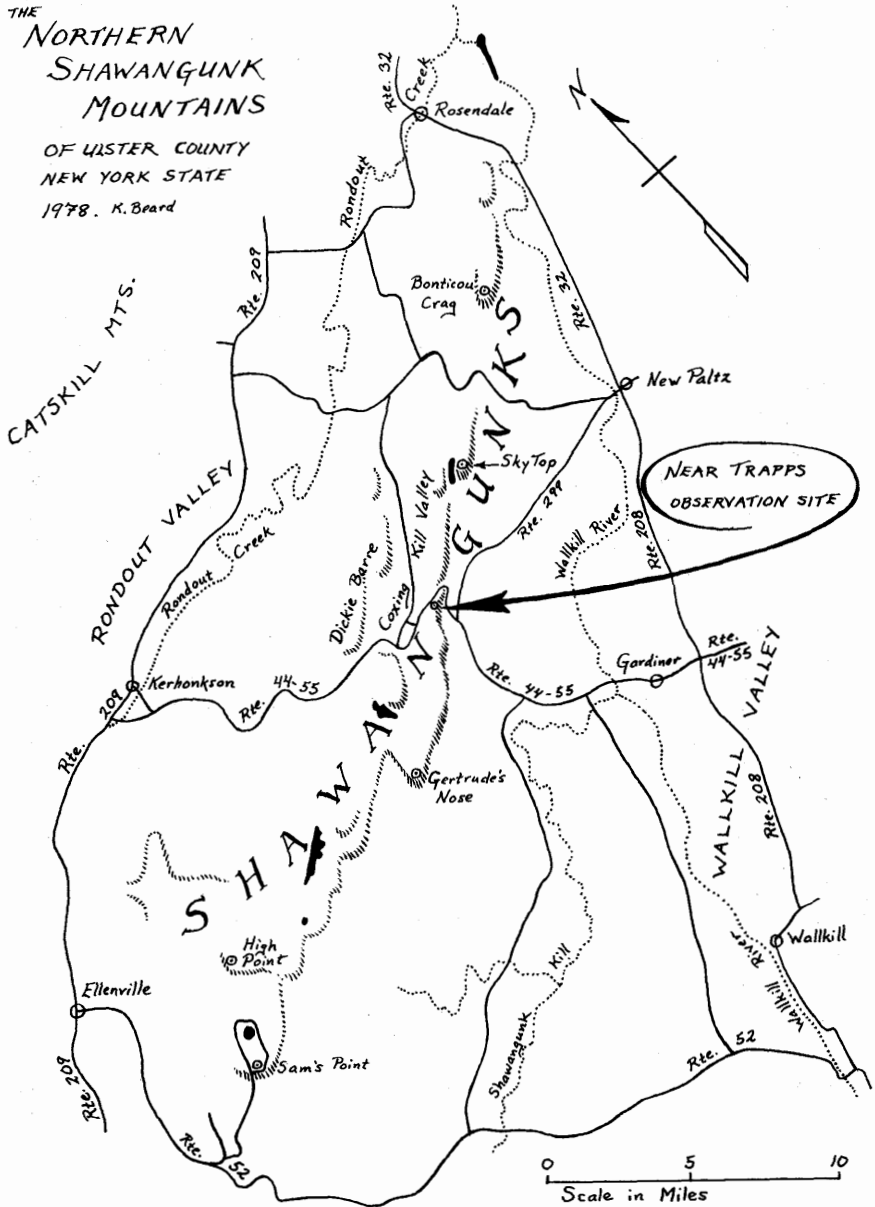


FIGURE 1

## 1979 FALL HAWK MIGRATION AT THE NEAR TRAPPS, SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS, N.Y.

JANET R. CARROLL

Since 1954 official hawk watches have been conducted two days each fall by members of the John Burroughs Natural History Society at the Near Trapps cliffs in Gardiner, Ulster County, New York (see Figure 1). These cliffs are part of a 5,000-acre preserve under the stewardship of The Mohonk Trust. The observation site is the northernmost hawk watch site along the mountain range that includes the Kittitiny ridge. With support from The Mohonk Trust, a daily hawk watch was conducted from 19 September 1979 through 15 November 1979 in order to determine more accurately the extent of the hawk migration over this area.

The Near Trapps is part of the Shawangunk Mountain range, which extends in a southwesterly direction from its origin in Kingston, New York, to Port Jervis, New York. At the Pennsylvania border it becomes the Kittitiny range. Unique to the Shawangunks is a 20-mile ribbon of sheer cliffs on the southeast side of the ridge. The northwest side slopes steeply toward the Catskill Mountains.

The observation site is located on the shoulder of the crest of the Near Trapps. The view is approximately 280 degrees from west to southeast. To the west and northwest, the view extends across the Coxing Kill Valley to Dickie Barre, a lesser parallel-running ridge. The Catskill Mountains are visible across the Rondout Valley to the north. To the northeast, the crest of the ridge continues across a small gap, and the Wallkill and Hudson River valleys run from the ridge to the east and southeast.

Daily watches were conducted, beginning on 19 September 1979, from 0700 hrs. to 1600 hrs., although members of the John Burroughs Natural History Society had been observing as time permitted since 31 August. Observations continued until 15 November with the hours decreasing from nine per day to seven per day.

Data gathered included number of individuals identified to species, wind speed and direction, sky conditions and temperature. The data were recorded on Hawk Migration Association of North America forms and submitted to them.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show the results of the observations at the Near Trapps. Most of the migrating raptors were observed close to the

ridge using the updrafts created by winds bouncing off the cliffs, or off the northwest slope of the ridge, depending on wind direction. On days when the winds were strong, more activity was seen out over the valleys. These flights were generally at low altitude. On the few very clear days with northwesterly winds, hawks were observed coming south from the Catskills and cutting toward the ridge over Dickie Barre. The hazy conditions that usually prevailed lowered the frequency of observations of this type of flight.

The timing of the migration was consistent with patterns documented at Hawk Mountain (Brett and Nagy, 1973). Limited observation of the Broad-winged Hawk migration indicated a peak from 7 September to 15 September. Clear skies and northerly winds on the 13th and 15th provided the thermals and updrafts necessary to their movement. Red-tailed Hawks were seen throughout the observation period, building up during the middle of October and decreasing the middle of November. The few Red-shouldered Hawk sightings were recorded from 6 October to 10 November.

The major flights of both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were between 1 October and 25 October, dramatically dropping off after the 25th. The peak Sharp-shinned Hawk days were on 4 October and 6 October, both days having gentle easterly winds and clear or partly cloudy skies, and on 13 October, when strong westerly winds and mostly cloudy skies prevailed. Eight Goshawks were seen between 11 October and 12 November.

American Kestrels passed by the observation area regularly, beginning in September and ending on 23 October. Following a day of rain, westerly winds and clear skies brought a high of 54 through on 8 October. Only two Merlins were observed, one on 8 October and another on 15 October. Although a total of 15 Peregrine Falcons were seen, four captive-bred Peregrines were released in the area in August and one sub-adult male and an adult female were in residence, so our sightings were not always of migrants. For this reason, Tables 1, 2 and 3 do not include Peregrine sightings. Of the 15 observations, based on observation date, behavior and the presence or absence of markers, it is estimated that one-half of the Peregrines observed were migrants, and these during the period 27 September through 22 October.

Marsh Hawks were not abundant, but were sighted regularly with the greatest concentration between 6 October and 31 October. While also not numerous, Ospreys were seen from the beginning of the ob-

ervation period until 25 October. Only two individuals were observed from 16 October through 26 October, one of them appearing to have a wing injury. An immature Bald Eagle was seen on 15 October, a mature Golden Eagle was seen on 18 October and one Rough-legged Hawk was seen on 20 October.

Records from previous hawk watches at the Near Trapps showed that sightings of all the above-mentioned species except the Golden Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk had been made in the past.\*

Turkey Vultures were normally not counted, because there is a local population believed to include 13 individuals. The vultures roosted on Dickie Barre and were seen daily soaring up and down the ridge and out over the valleys. On 29 September, however, two groups of Turkey Vultures were simultaneously observed soaring in kettles through the Coxing Kill Valley heading southeast. One kettle contained approximately 75 individuals, the other 15.

The total number of hawks sighted at the Near Trapps for the period 19 September through 15 November was 2,887. For the same period, 19,821 hawks were seen at Hawk Mountain. This clearly shows the limited migration over the Near Trapps; only 14.6% of the total observed at Hawk Mountain. When comparing the same data by species, a disproportionately large percentage of American Kestrels (44.9%), Marsh Hawks (39.1%), and Ospreys (25.2%) were sighted at the Near Trapps (see Table 4).

Comparisons have been made of the number of hawks by species seen at several hawk lookouts at more southern locations along the ridge. The data suggest that more hawks join the ridge as they move further south, gradually building up in numbers (Heintzelman, 1975). If all the American Kestrels, Marsh Hawks and Ospreys seen at the Near Trapps continued to follow the ridge to Hawk Mountain, very few more of these species would have picked up the ridge further south. It seems more likely that at least some of these raptors left the ridge. The Hudson River Valley to the east would seem a favorable alternate route. American Kestrels prefer coastal migration routes and could have followed the river to its coastal terminus. Marsh Hawks use both inland and coastal routes (Heintzelman, 1975) and some of these hawks may have also left the ridge to follow the river to the coast. The Hudson River Valley habitat would also serve the Osprey well.

\* Hawk watch records are held by The Mohonk Trust.



Because of limited observation in the past, it is not known whether this disparity has occurred before, and the small migration over the Near Trapps would bias the present percentage data to some extent. The data suggest, however, the possibility that individuals of these species may use the ridge for only a short distance, then leave it for other routes.

Compared to a major migration observation site such as Hawk Mountain, the Near Trapps is of secondary importance. The site is apparently too close to the northern terminus to have a concentration of raptors like that seen at more southern locations on the ridge. The Catskills to the west and the Berkshires and Hudson River Valley to the east provide alternate migration routes through the area.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks to The Mohonk Trust for supporting this project. Also thanks to Karl Beard and Stacey Pilarinos for editing assistance and to Karl Beard, Chris Davis, Seldon Spencer, Al Brayton and Hans Weber for assisting with the hawk counts.

*The Mohonk Trust, Mohonk Lake, New Paltz, New York 12561*

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TABLE 1. HAWK SIGHTINGS FOR MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1979

S E P T	Wind Speed	Sharp	Red-	Red-	Broad-	Rough	Golden	Bald	Marsh			American	Uniden-	Total	
	Direction (mph)	Goshawk	shinned	Cooper's	tailed	shouldered	winged	legged	Eagle	Eagle	Hawk	Osprey	Merlin		Kestrel
1	No observation														
2	No observation														
3	No observation														
4	No observation														
5	No observation														
6	No observation														
7	4-7 WSW	30	1				107			7	3		10	8	166
8	4-7 N	4	1	4			75			1					85
9	8-12 NNE	2					15								17
10	No observation														
11	8-12 W	1		2			2				2		2	3	12
12	4-7 ENE	1					59								60
13	8-12 NE	6	3	1			282			2	1		3	1	299
14	No observation														
15	13-18 WNW	16		5			154				8		5		188
16	4-7 NE	31		1			113			3	2		8		158
17	1-3 WSW	17	1				28				1		1		48
18	4-7 E	16		2			14						2		34
19	4-10 WNW	40		2			26				4		4	5	81
20	0-7 ESE	20	2	4			68			2	2		6	1	105
21	1-5 SW	2					2								4
22	Rain														
23	3-8 NNE	32	1	9			41			1	3		8	5	100
24	1-5 VAR	25	1	2			27			1	4		1	6	67
25	1-5 VAR	47	2	2			39			4	7		1		102
26	0 None	19	2				15			1	6		8	1	52
27	0-3 SSE	74	1	2			3			3	10		6		99
28	0-3 SE														0
29	Rain														
30	Rain														
TOTALS		383	15	36			1,070			25	53		65	30	1,677

TABLE 2. HAWK SIGHTINGS FOR MONTH OF OCTOBER 1979

O 82 T	Wind Speed	Sharp-	Red-	Red-	Broad-	Rough	Golden	Bald	Marsh	American	Uniden-	Total				
	Direction (mph)	Goshawk	shinned	Cooper's	tailed	shouldered	winged	legged	Eagle	Eagle	Hawk	Osprey	Merlin	Kestrel	Uniden-	Total
1	3-5 VAR		23	1	1		10			1	2			1	4	43
2	Rain															
3	Rain															
4	1-3 SE/SW		192	8	10				1	7			6			224
5	8-12 SSE		53	3	1		1		3	7						68
6	4-7 SE		185	5	5	2	1		8	8			14	1		229
7	1-3 VAR		84	5	3				5	8			25			130
8	8-15 W		138	4	8	4				2	1		54			211
9	Rain															
10	Rain															
11	5-7 SSE/SW	1	29	1	2					2	5					40
12	Rain															
13	7-15 WSW/W	1	227	13	14	3			4	9			14	1		286
14	10-15 WSW/W		14	1	10				1							26
15	8-12 SW		29	1	7	3				1		1		1		43
16	0-3 VAR	1	35	3	23	3				4			1	6		76
17	3-7 ESE/SSW		107	2	26	1				8						144
18	0-5 WNW		47		23	1		1		2						74
19	1-3 E		15		2					2			2			21
20	0-5 NE/SE		48	2	7			1		2						60
21	3-5 SSE/VAR	1	46	1	6	1				3			1			59
22	5-10 ESE		127	3	26					4			1			161
23	7-15 SE/VAR		92	3	11	2				2			2	2		114
24	No observation															
25	10-15 W		4	3	21	3				4					4	39
26	Rain															
27	0-5 WNW		1		2					1						4
28	Rain															
29	3-7 W		3		31					6					2	42
30	1-5 NW				3					1	1			2		7
31	0-5 VAR				31	4				1						36
TOTALS		4	1,499	59	273	27	12	1	1	1	65	49	2	121	23	2,137

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TABLE 3. HAWK SIGHTINGS FOR MONTH OF NOVEMBER 1979

NOV	Wind Speed		Sharp-		Red-	Red-	Broad-	Rough-	Golden	Bald	Marsh		American	Uniden-	Total
	Direction (mph)	Goshawk	shinned	Cooper's	tailed	shouldered	winged	legged	Eagle	Eagle	Hawk	Osprey	Merlin	Kestrel	
1	3-7 SW/SE	1	1		12						1	1			16
2	10-15 VAR		5		3	1					2				11
3	No observation														
4	5-10 VAR	1	1		5	1					1			3	12
5	0-5 SE/VAR	1			32	1								2	36
6	3-5 VAR				26										26
7	5-7 W				20										20
8	0-5 W		2	1	21						2				26
9	Rain														
10	Rain														
11	0-5 NW														0
12	5-10 N	1			16	3									20
13	3-7 NW										1				1
14	10-15 WNW				8										8
15	3-7 W		1		6						2				9
TOTALS		4	10	1	149	6					9	1		5	185

	<u>Hawk Mountain*</u>	<u>Near Trapps</u>	<u>%</u>
Goshawk	40	8	20.0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11,301	1,768	15.6
Cooper's Hawk	377	69	18.3
Red-tailed Hawk	3,408	443	13.0
Red-shouldered Hawk	195	33	16.9
Broad-winged Hawk	3,495	233	6.7
Rough-legged Hawk	4	1	25.0
Golden Eagle	29	1	3.4
Bald Eagle	1	1	100.0
Marsh Hawk	220	86	39.1
Osprey	345	87	25.2
Merlin	61	2	3.3
American Kestrel	345	155	44.9
Total	19,821	2,887	14.6

Table 4. Near Trapps Sightings Expressed as a Percent of Hawk Mountain Sightings for the Period 19 September through 15 November 1979.

\*Unofficial totals for Hawk Mountain supplied by and used with permission of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Kempton, Pa.

## THE 1978-79 GREAT GRAY OWL INVASION IN NEW YORK STATE

ROBERT P. YUNICK

During the winter and spring of 1978-79, the greatest invasion of Great Gray Owls (*Strix nebulosa*) ever recorded in North America occurred in northeastern United States and southern Canada (Vickery and Yunick, 1979). Over 338 reports were gathered. New York had 64 reports (previously reported as 60, but revised based on additional information)—a number that is double all of the reported sightings in the previous century. This paper summarizes these reports and compares this occurrence with the species' past history.

Records of this species in the state stretch back to 1873 (Bull, 1974). In 1971 when a Great Gray appeared at Halfmoon, Saratoga County and its photograph was published as part of the series, "Photographs of New York State Rarities" (Yunick, 1972), I reviewed the previous records, and referred to this bird as the 26th state record. In the interim, six additional records prior to 1971, and one since then have come to my attention. In addition, further checking of earlier records has revealed duplication of two records in the previous count, and these should be deleted; they are: the Painted Post record in the 1957 *AOU Check-List* which is the same as Eaton's (1912) and Wood's (1888) Steuben County record; and the Mt. Sinai record cited by Eaton (1912) and Bull (1964). The additions are: the previously referred to record from Fulton County, cited in the 1957 *AOU Check-List*, actually involved two birds: one on 15 November 1906 and the other on 16 December 1906 (Alexander, 1907). The remaining old records are an 11 April 1873 specimen from Locust Grove, Lewis County (Bull, 1974); a bird near Canastota, Madison County, in 1926-27 (Stoner, 1945); two birds near Pulaski, Oswego County, on 20 January 1962 (Bulger, 1962); and a questionable sighting at Sandy Creek, Oswego County, in February 1962 (Peakall and Rusk, 1962). The new record is of a sighting on 24 January 1978 near Plattsburgh, Clinton County, (Mack, 1978).

These records bring the reported total, prior to this recent invasion, to 31 birds (see Map 1 for distribution). During the ten decades from 1870 through 1969, the number of reports varies from one to four per decade, and has averaged three per decade. Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties, with four reports each, are the counties

where the species has most frequently been reported. With this as background, one can more fully appreciate the scope of this year's invasion, which produced 64 reports in 90 days.

The 1978-79 invasion began with a New Year's Eve sighting just before dusk near Jay, Essex County. Characteristic of about one-third of the Great Gray Owls seen this season, this bird was seen only on that one day, despite efforts to relocate it the following day. On 8 January the excitement shifted to Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, where one appeared and remained for 81 days, the longest recorded stay of any of this year's invaders, and a new state record for length of stay in one location.

Then a sprinkle of owls began to appear in St. Lawrence County in mid-January. By the last third of January, reports of new sightings in two principal areas—the northwestern tier and Capital District—greatly increased in frequency. From 21 January to 28 February, 50 of the 64 sightings (78 percent) were reported. In March, reports of new sightings dropped sharply, and only three birds, all previously reported, lingered into April.

Certain relevant data on the 64 reported sightings are summarized in Table 1. Among these reports, 29 were reported by Chamberlaine (1979, 1979a and pers. comm.), 20 were summarized by me (Yunick, 1979), two were reported by Huggins (1979, 1979a), one by Mack (1979), two by Spencer (1979, 1979a) and ten of them (Nos. 1, 6, 8, 21, 23, 28, 33, 49, 51 and 58 in Table 1) are reported here for the first time, having eluded the normal regional reporting system.

While gathering and verifying these data, I became aware that there might be some duplication of reports in areas of high concentration; that some reports might have been inaccurate, erroneous or incompletely communicated even by experienced observers or reporters; and that some of the rejected reports might have been genuine Great Gray Owls. Therefore, the total number reported here should be regarded as an indication of the order of magnitude of the invasion, and not as an exact count, even though reasonable care was taken to exclude dubious reports and to verify wherever possible any reasonable report that was received.

In the Schenectady area, as Dial-A-Bird editor, I processed reports of over 80 owls and found considerable inaccuracy on the part of the reporting public. Seventeen of the 80 reports were either convincingly described or verified as authentic reports of six other species of owls, swept into the reporting system on the wave of Great Gray

Owl reports. However, over one-half of another 17 reports, which proved to be Barred Owls (*Strix varia*), were originally reported as Great Gray Owls. A picture of a Barred Owl even appeared in a local newspaper misidentified as a Great Gray Owl. Another 28 reports of Great Gray Owls were unverified or unconvincing and were therefore rejected. Finally, 22 reports of Great Gray Owls were accepted as such based on rigorous investigation or verification by photograph, specimen or corroborated sighting. Thus, based on the Schenectady experience, only 22 reports out of a reported total of 55 or 60 were accepted as Great Gray Owls.

In that regard I have also rejected two St. Lawrence County reports. VanRiet (pers. comm.) had labeled both of these sightings as "probable" as opposed to others that he had labeled "positive." Both were rejected because they were not convincingly described by the persons reporting them to VanRiet. They were a bird reported on 9 February in Louisville, described as a fluffy owl seen flying overhead in a barn; and one on 17-18 March in Brasher Center, reported by three non-birders as a large owl on a post. Chamberlaine (pers. comm.) also rejected reports of alleged Great Gray Owls, but the number he rejected is not known.

Probably never before in the state's history has the general public become as involved in an ornithological event as it did in this invasion. The publicity associated with the Long Island sighting (Wheat, 1979) and the extensive television and newspaper coverage in the Capital District and elsewhere produced a great awareness of owls, and led to the large number of reports received by Dial-A-Bird and others. Because of this high level of involvement of persons of varying birding skill, the authenticity of some of these reports is questionable, resulting in the high rejection rate noted above. Despite these inaccurate reports, the extent of public participation was greatly appreciated. It provided expanded reporting that went far beyond what a local community of serious birders could provide.

While the 31 previous reports originated from 16 counties, this invasion involved sightings from 17 counties and expanded the composite total to 24 counties. Among the new sightings, the greatest number originated from Jefferson (16), St. Lawrence (12), Saratoga (8) and Rensselaer and Albany counties (6 each). The composite list is headed by the same counties, with Jefferson and St. Lawrence at 16 each, followed by Saratoga with nine, Rensselaer with seven, and Albany with six. It is interesting that Jefferson County, which had



never before had a Great Gray Owl report, proved to be one of the centers of concentration for the species during this invasion. Its proximity to Amherst Island, Ontario, where an unprecedented total of 34 Great Gray Owls was tallied amid a large number of owls of nine other species, may well have been a factor (see Bell, Phelan and Wypkema, 1979, for an account of this unusual influx on Amherst Island). Depauville, in Jefferson County, also contributed the new state record of four owls seen in one area in one day on 3 and 4 February (Chamberlaine, 1979).

In general, the sightings were concentrated in three areas: Watertown, Massena-Potsdam and Capital District (see Map 2 for distribution). There appears to have been no major range extension of the species within the state, just a tremendous magnification in number of reports over what had been experienced previously. Even the Long Island reports do not represent new territory because of two previous records for that area, the last being at Orient in 1902. Except for the two reports at Oswego, the southern shore of Lake Ontario and the area lying in its shadow to the south was devoid of reports, despite the fact that nine of the 31 pre-invasion reports came from the shore or southward lee of Lake Ontario. Only a single report, the original sighting at Jay, came from Adirondack State Park. The great majority of sighting locations was at low elevations and reasonably close to water (Lake Ontario, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound) or in river valleys (St. Lawrence, Black, Raquette, St. Regis, Mohawk, Hudson).

A new late departure date was established. Bull (1974) reported previous extreme dates of 15 November and 11 April. One of the two Oswego birds noted here stayed until 15 April (Maxwell, pers. comm.), and there was an unverified report, not accepted here, that this bird stayed until 29 April. The latest regional date of which I am currently aware is of a sighting on 13 May of an injured bird at St. Catherine's, Ontario, on the Niagara Frontier (*vide* Buffalo Rare Bird Alert). With an invasion of this magnitude, one would have expected the state extreme dates to be extended by more than just one report. However, the timing of the invasion, and the length of stay of these owls in one place, appeared to affect their departure dates. The length of stay appears to have been related to the physical condition of some of the birds.

As previously mentioned, late January through February was the time of peak reporting activity. The greatest number of reports was received in February, as seen below.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of new reports received</u>
December	1
January	16
February	38
March	9
Total	64

These reports were classified into the following categories:

Alive, reported one day only	19
Alive, reported for more than one day	26
Found dead/injured on date of first sighting	5
Alive, subsequently shot	5
No exact information on length of stay	9

Based on the 26 birds seen for more than one day, the average recorded stay was 16.4 days (range, 3-81). Among the birds that were shot, the average length of time between first report and shooting was 11.0 days (range, 3-20). The average of these two categories and the 19 one-day sightings is 10.0 days (range, 1-81). The observation that about one-third of these sightings were one day only suggests that some of these birds may have been severely food stressed and either expired due to starvation, or had to move on in search of more favorable hunting territory.

Two owls were banded. R. P. Guthrie banded one in Colonie on 25 February (Table 1, No. 52) (Guthrie, 1979), and I banded one on 4 April (No. 64) at Vischer Ferry. The Vischer Ferry bird had an old eye injury which appeared to affect its ability to hunt. It behaved sluggishly, but was able to fly and attacked a mouse-baited trap before being captured by hand in an apple tree. By the following day, it was so emaciated that it could not fly, and it was recaptured and taken to a veterinarian, but did not respond to treatment. It was given to the New York State Museum at Albany. Two other owls, the Cohoes shooting victim (No. 36) and the Pillar Point capture (No. 56), were also treated by the same veterinarian with the intent of returning the rehabilitated birds to Canada by airplane for release. However, their injuries were sufficiently severe that, while both survived, they could not be returned to wild flight.

Other specimens received by New York State Museum were as follows: the North Lawrence bird (No. 4), the Hammond car kill (No. 46), the Saratoga National Historic Park bird (No. 49) and the one found dead at West Sand Lake (No. 50) were received. As of October 1979, these birds had not yet been prepared and logged into the

collection, so that their specimen numbers are not yet available. One of the five specimens is destined to go to Buffalo Museum of Natural Science to augment its collection (Reilly, pers. comm.). The sixth reported preserved specimen was the Centerport casualty (No. 59) that was given to Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary at Oyster Bay (Spencer, 1979a).

Despite the familiarity that many of the state's birders developed with this species during this invasion, it remains to be seen what change will take place in the species' status, if any. For many years this sedentary owl has been regarded as rare, and only when hunting conditions in its normal boreal range are poor does the species visit New York State. As mentioned earlier, reported instances of its appearance have averaged only three per decade prior to this invasion. Most all of the previous reports on its abundance status rate it as rare. Among the earliest was Johnson's (1895) assessment that it was rare and occurred once about every ten years at Boonville. MacArtny commenting to Stoner (1945) in a letter of 1939 covering the previous 60 years of records at Ft. Covington rated the species as a rare winter resident being "seen at various times." Alexander (1907) called it rare and somewhat irregular in eastern New York. Bull (1974) described it as very rare. There is also early documentation that at least some individuals have appeared emaciated as reported by Wood (1888) concerning the bird shot near Painted Post by a chicken farmer.

Based on an assessment of the overall 1978-79 northeastern invasion (Vickery and Yunick, 1979), and on the increasing frequency and extent of recent invasions in the North-Central U.S., Ontario, and Quebec, there may be either an heretofore unrecognized central or eastern Canadian population of this species, or a recent range extension into eastern Canada. In either case, it may well be the beginning of increased incursions into New York at times of northern food shortages. It is a situation which deserves careful watching and documentation. However, every effort should be made to have skilled observers verify reported sightings of this species, because experience forcefully illustrated in 1978-79 that other species are easily confused as Great Gray Owls by some unskilled observers.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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TABLE 1  
NEW YORK STATE GREAT GRAY OWL REPORTS – WINTER/SPRING 1978-79

<u>No.</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Duration of stay</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1	31 Dec	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Lee	Jay, Essex Co.	Seen by Tom and Andy Gardner, reported <i>fide</i> P. and G. Randorff, J. M. C. Peterson
2	8 Jan-29 Mar	81 days	<i>fide</i> Spencer	Lloyd's Neck, Suffolk Co.	Seen by mob
3	9 Jan	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Pierrepont, St. Law. Co.	Seen by D. Hamelin of DEC
4	ca 14-28 Jan	14 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	N. Lawrence, St. Law. Co.	Shot by N. Newton, in NYSM, W. Stone's records place date of death at 1 Feb.
5	mid-Jan	7 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	Winthrop, St. Law. Co.	Seen by Mr. Stanka/Mrs. Streeter
6	21 Jan	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Sabin, Lee	Plattsburgh, Clinton Co.	Seen by M. Stickney of DEC
7	23 Jan	1 day only	Able	Berne, Albany Co.	Seen by K. P. and M. Able
8	23 Jan	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Lee	Essex, Essex Co.	Seen by Mr. Welkirk, reported by J. M. C. Peterson
9	27 Jan-4 Feb	9 days**	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Depauville, Jefferson Co.	Seen by T. Carr and others
10	27 Jan-7 Feb	12 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	Robt. Moses St. Park, St. Lawrence Co.	Seen by J. VanRiet and others
11	29-31 Jan	3 days	Yunick	Rotterdam, Schenectady Co.	Reported to DAB by R. Weber, seen by mob
12	30 Jan-17 Feb	19 days**	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Depauville, Jefferson Co.	Seen by R. Brouse and others
13	31 Jan-19 Feb	20 days**	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Depauville, Jefferson Co.	Seen by R. Walker and others
14,15	Late-Jan to mid-Feb		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Adams, Jefferson Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
16	"		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Rutland, Jefferson Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
17	"		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Three-mile Pt., Jefferson Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
18	"		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	LeRay, Jefferson Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
19	"		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Canton-Waterman Hill, St. Lawrence Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC

20	Late-Jan to mid-Feb		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Colton, St. Law. Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
21	"		<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Poland, Herkimer Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
22	2-22 Feb	21 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Castorland, Lewis Co.	Seen by C. Whitefield of DEC, photographed
23	3 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	Dickinson, Franklin Co.	Seen by R. Smiddy and others
24	3 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Mack	Plattsburgh, Clinton Co.	Seen by C. Mitchell
25	3 Feb-10 Mar	36 days**	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Depauville, Jefferson Co.	Seen by W. Lloyd and others
26	4 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Carthage, Jefferson Co.	Photo by E. Haley, W'town Times
27	5-14 Feb	10 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Luther, Rensselaer Co.	Reported to DAB by H. Draffen
28	5 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Crumb	Fayetteville, Onon. Co.	Seen by S. and D. McCabe
29	6-15 Feb	10 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Henderson, Jefferson Co.	Seen by J. Franke of DEC
30	7-28 Feb	22 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	Helena, St. Lawrence Co.	Seen by R. Cornell, photo verified by VanRiet
31	7 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Rexford, Saratoga Co.	Reported to DAB by J. Young
32	9-16 Feb	8 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine, VanRiet	Massena Springs, St. Lawrence Co.	First seen by R. Brownell, then by M. Dempsey 4 mi. away and believed to be the same bird
33	10 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Crumb	Oriskany, Oneida Co.	Photo by NYS trooper D. Cesari
34	10 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Ft. Edward, Washington Co.	Photo by J. Maston
35	10 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Clayton, Jefferson Co.	Seen by J. Wilson of DEC
36	12-15 Feb	4 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Cohoes, Albany Co.	Reported to DEC and DAB, seen by mob, shot 15 Feb
37	12-16 Feb	5 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	West Sand Lake, Renss. Co.	Reported by Mrs. Sullo to DAB, confirmed by R. Phillion
38	12 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Antwerp, Jefferson Co.	Seen by D. Hurley of DEC
39	12 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Yunick	W. of Ballston Spa., Saratoga Co.	Reported to DAB by Mr. & Mrs. F. Lee
40	13-15 Feb	3 days	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Canton, St. Lawrence Co.	Seen by J. Montan and W. Gordon of DEC
41	15-23 Feb	9 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Halfmoon, Saratoga Co.	Reported to DAB by members of DiStefano family

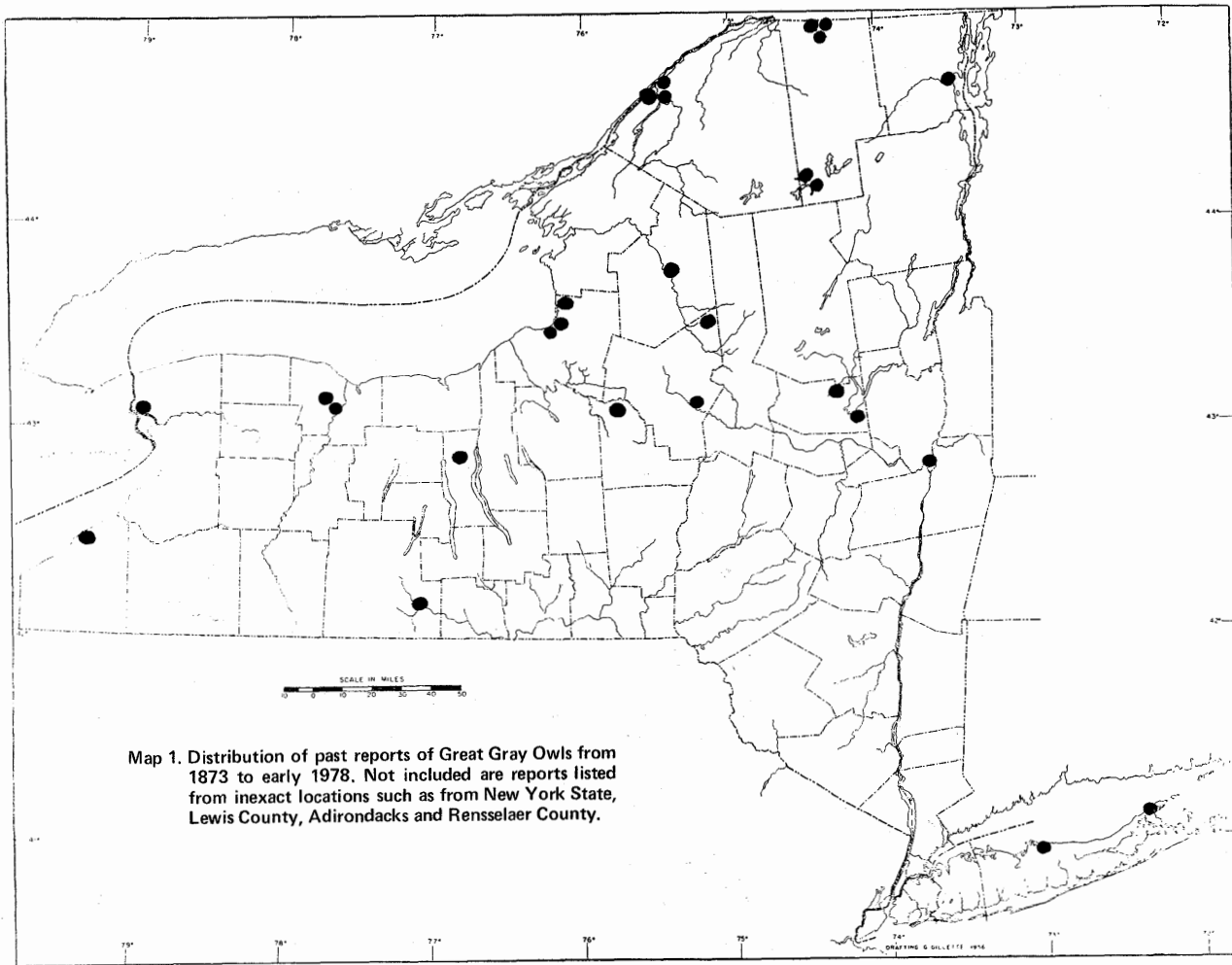
42	ca 1-15 Feb	14 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Rensselaer, Rensselaer Co.	Two birds reported to appear about 2 weeks before 15 Feb
43	ca 1-20 Feb	20 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Rensselaer, Rensselaer Co.	One shot 15 Feb, other on ca 20 Feb. Photo and seen by mob
44	17 Feb-24 Mar	36 days	Crumb, Maxwell, <i>fide</i> Huggins	Oswego, Oswego Co.	Photo by D. Crumb
45	19 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Chaumont, Jefferson Co.	Seen by E. Smith of DEC
46	19 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Hammond, St. Lawrence Co.	Carkill recovered by J. Rogers, given to NYSM, W. Stone's records indicate date of death as 15 Feb.
47	19 Feb	"seen 2-3 days"	<i>fide</i> Sabin	Eagle Mills, Rensselaer Co.	Seen by Clickner family
48	19 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Marx	Vischer Ferry, Saratoga Co.	Seen by P. Cote and 3 others, reported to DAB
49	19 Feb-10 Mar	19 days	<i>fide</i> Gibson, Urbaetis	Saratoga National Historic Park, Saratoga Co.	Seen alive on 19 Feb but not responsive. Found dead 10 Mar. by S. de la Rosa. Delivered by J. Urbaetis to DEC
50	20 Feb	found dead	<i>fide</i> Yunick	W. Sand Lake, Rensselaer Co.	Reported to DAB, specimen to DEC then to NYS Museum
51	Sev. weeks in Feb.	21 days	<i>fide</i> Crumb	Sherburne, Chenango Co.	Newspaper report by B. P. Burt
52	22-25 Feb	4 days	Guthrie	Colonie, Albany Co.	Banded, photo and seen by mob
53	22-24 Feb	3 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Charlton, Saratoga Co.	Reported to DAB by residents of Charlton Rd.
54	27 Feb-15 Apr	48 days	Crumb, Maxwell, <i>fide</i> Huggins	Oswego, Oswego Co.	Photo by D. Crumb
55	28 Feb	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Fargo, Jefferson Co.	Seen by R. Adams of DEC
56	3 Mar	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Chamberlaine	Pillar Pt., Jefferson Co.	Captured and sent to vet by R. and J. Walker
57	8-19 Mar	12 days	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Coeymans, Albany Co.	Reported to DAB by L. Roth, photo by R. Duncan, confirmed by R. P. Guthrie

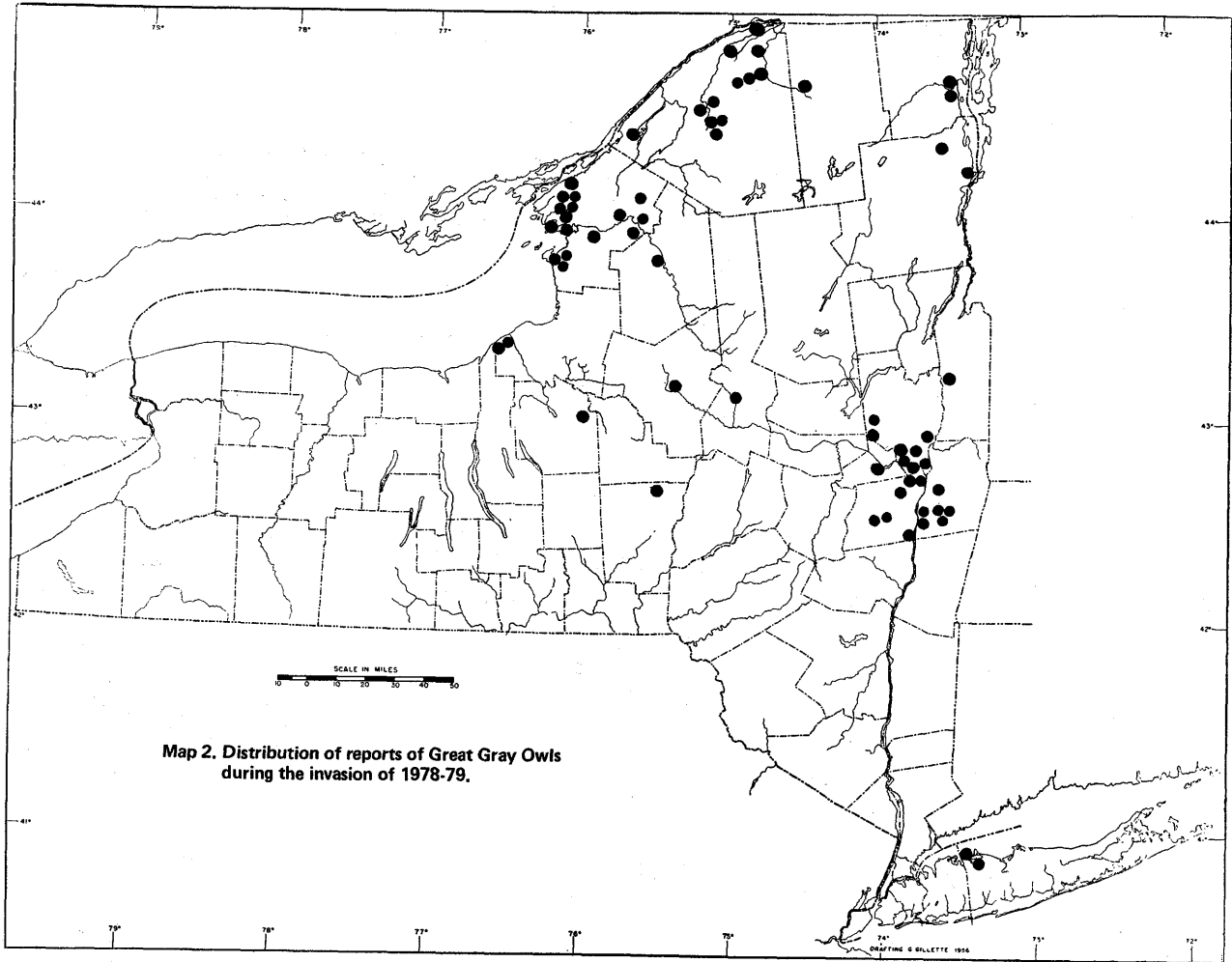


58	9 Mar	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Stone, Cook	Colonie, Albany Co.	Found dead as an apparent car kill by J. Cook, given to W. Stone of DEC, thence to NYSM
59	12 Mar	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Spencer	Centerport, Suffolk Co.	Found dead, specimen to T. Roosevelt Sanc., Oyster Bay
60	16-18 Mar	3 days	<i>fide</i> VanRiet	Stockholm Center, St. Lawrence Co.	Photo by B. Dendler, confirmed by J. VanRiet
61	18-20 Mar	3 days	<i>fide</i> Able	Voorheesville, Albany Co.	Photo confirmed by K. P. Able, bird subsequently shot
62	22 Mar-5 Apr	15 days	<i>fide</i> VanRiet, Chamberlaine	Colton, St. Lawrence Co.	Photo by R. Randall, confirmed by J. VanRiet
63	28 Mar	1 day only	<i>fide</i> Yunick	Clifton Park, Saratoga Co.	Reported to DAB by several observers and State Police
64	30 Mar-5 Apr	7 days	Yunick, <i>fide</i> Palmer, Able	Vischer Ferry, Saratoga Co.	Banded 4 Apr.

Sources: William J. Lee for DAB, Barbara J. Spencer (1979, 1979a), Lee B. Chamberlaine (pers. comm. and 1979, 1979a), J. VanRiet (pers. comm.), K. P. Able for DAB, Ted Mack (1979), Dorothy W. Crumb (pers. comm.), William Gibson (pers. comm.), John Urbaetis of DEC, Gene Huggins (1979, 1979a), Walton B. Sabin for DAB, Robert L. Marx for DAB, Richard P. Guthrie for DAB, G. R. Maxwell (pers. comm.), Ward Stone of DEC, James Cook, Leland R. Palmer and Robert P. Yunick for DAB. DAB=Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Dial-A-Bird telephone answering service, DEC=Department of Environmental Conservation, NYSM=New York State Museum.

\*\* The situation at Depauville was difficult to assess accurately. Based on the reports that there was one bird "a few days before 30 Jan.," two birds on 28 Jan., three birds on 31 Jan. and a maximum of four on 3 and 4 Feb., only four birds were counted. To determine duration of stay, the following information was used: three birds stayed to 17 Feb., two to 19 Feb., and one to 10 Mar. It is not known exactly which bird stayed for each exact period, however, in determining the average, this did not matter.





## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

The weather of the winter of '79-'80 was highly unusual, to say the least. All regions reported temperatures much warmer than usual, at least through mid-January, with snowfall and in most cases total precipitation well below normal, and a very late and short freeze-up compared with normal.

Given these conditions, I am in close agreement with Richard Guthrie of Region 8: "Because of the rather unusual nature of this winter, one is cautioned against drawing any conclusions about the apparent trends in the species reported here." This greatly simplifies my task. Normally one would expect the data base of the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter CBC's) to allow one to make some definitive statements about trends, with much time to be spent sorting through the Regional Editors' analyses for the brightest gems to be included here. In fact, real trends are few indeed, except for those resulting from a very mild winter following on the heels of a warm fall.

The regional reports are generally as one might expect: there are many late dates, many new or seldom recorded winter species, many new high counts for regularly wintering species, and few records for most winter visitors from farther north. In total, at least 221 species were recorded in the state this winter. There are several instances of disparity between reported opinions of the season and actual results. Many observers, particularly feeder watchers, thought birds scarce. Yet several CBC's approached or exceeded record totals for species and numbers of individuals of many species (Regions 1, 2, 7 & 9) and the state waterfowl census in most regions was at a record high. The watershed date for record CBC counts appears to have been December 16 in most regions. Region 10 described the season as "unexciting and lacking in change of pace," yet they recorded 14+ species of shorebirds, 11 species of warblers, and more than 30 records that are new high counts or observations for which there are fewer than ten previous state winter records. In some respects there *was* no change of pace; it seemed like eternal fall with a continuous stream of later and later fall-type records, while those awaiting winter raptors, white-winged gulls, or winter finches met with disappointment in nearly all regions.

If one takes the time to study the regional reports carefully, there

are some signs of possible longer-term trends: the Ring-necked Pheasant continues to decline; the Turkey is spreading through both introduction and expansion; the Red-bellied Woodpecker continues to expand northward and southward into higher country in Regions 3, 5, 6 & 8; the Horned Lark was very low in Regions 1, 3 & 6; the Blue Jay was high in three regions and low in two; Carolina Wrens and Mockingbirds were generally up from the lows of the past few winters; American Robins were plentiful again with a peak of 3450 in Region 5; the House Finch is booming in all regions reporting it; and Tree Sparrows were noted as very low in most regions once again.

In addition to these potential trends, there are numerous interesting observations most certainly related to this winter's weather pattern. Wintering Whistling Swans were low in the normal locales of Region 1 and up in several regions to the east. Canada Geese wintered in good to record numbers in all regions. With most bodies of water staying open very late, most waterfowl species were present in excellent numbers. Diving ducks were noted as arriving late in Region 3 and as scarce in Region 10, presumably due to open water farther north. While White-winged Scoters were low in the usual wintering area off Long Island, an unprecedented 10,000 were reported in Region 2 in early January. All regularly occurring and many rarely recorded waterfowl were reported. Turkey Vultures were reported in record winter numbers with five regions reporting them and with a maximum of 53 in Region 9. Bald Eagles were late gathering at their St. Lawrence River wintering area in Region 6. Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls were both very scarce. White-winged gulls were generally scarce, especially along the coast, but Region 1 reported maxima of 25 Glaucous and 8 Iceland and Region 6 maxima of 35 Glaucous and 7 Iceland. Early December brought a deluge of gulls to Region 2, peaking December 10 with an estimated 195,000, 85% to 90% Ring-billed and the balance Herring, covering the lakeshore from Irondequoit to Braddock bays. While this number dropped (to approx. 85,000 by the Dec. 16 CBC) with time, Little Gull numbers increased to an incredible 61!! by December 28, surely a North American high count. Of this number, only two were immatures. With help from interested readers, the origin of the massive flock of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls may be established in that a substantial percentage were badly oiled. Any nearby oil spills in late November or early December? The Northern Shrike was reported very scarce in all regions in sharp contrast to last winter. The Yellow-rumped Warbler

was the most widespread of the 13 warblers reported; while scarce on the coast, excellent inland counts were 40 and 80+ in Region 2 and 31 in Region 1. There was an unusual report of a completely melanistic House Sparrow from Region 2. Most normally rare winter feeder birds were present in several locations: e.g., Northern Oriole—nine regions, Dickcissel—five regions, Rufous-sided Towhee—six regions, and many others in two or three regions. There were almost no winter finches, though actually all species were reported in small numbers.

The mass of rarities this winter, many first regional or first winter records, is nearly overwhelming. As a stimulation to your reading the regional reports, a *sample* of the best is: Region 1: Sabine's Gull, Common Raven, Northern Waterthrush, and Lincoln's Sparrow; Region 2: Gannet, Black Vulture, Sora, Northern Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Hawk Owl, Tree Swallow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Region 3: Sandhill Crane, King Rail, Hawk Owl, and Fish Crow; Region 4: Golden Eagle, Eastern Phoebe, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Region 5: Barrow's Goldeneye; Region 6: Turkey Vulture, Common Raven, and Varied Thrush; Region 7: Northern Three-toed Woodpecker; Region 8: Green Heron, Pomarine Jaeger, Great Gray Owl, and Gray Jay; Region 9: Broad-winged Hawk, Sora, Lesser Black-backed Gull, House Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Nashville Warbler; and Region 10: Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, American Oystercatcher, Marbled Godwit, Parasitic Jaeger, Black Guillemot, Western Kingbird, "Audubon's" Warbler, and Boat-tailed Grackle. The BOTS award easily falls to Dansville's (Region 2) Painted Redstart, viewed by over 750 birders.

As a one-shot seasonal Highlights Editor, one request, as an aid to future editors, is that, wherever possible, the Regional Editors do a more thorough job of putting their rarer records into historical perspective, e.g., x<sup>th</sup> state or regional seasonal record. This would save much time in highlighting in the face of deadlines.

May the spring be as interesting as this winter.

*716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580*

## REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

One man's food is another's poison, but even so, this season's persistent snow drought was a welcome change from the past three rugged winters. Total precipitation averaged 1.1 in. (2.8 cm) below normal, highway departments realized substantial savings and birding was a breeze—except, of course, for the “out-sight” gasoline prices. Until the final week of January, during which Lake Erie finally froze on the 28th, over three weeks late, the jet stream stayed over Canada, resulting in temperatures above normal by 4<sup>o</sup> to 5<sup>o</sup> F. (2.2<sup>o</sup> to 2.8<sup>o</sup> C). From then until the end of the period, its path was well south of us, reversing from warm to cold and plunging the average reading to 2.7<sup>o</sup> F. (1.5<sup>o</sup> C) below normal.

Variety of bird species was good, with several over-wintering, but total numbers were low, the season being in most cases “rather birdless” (Eaton). At Farmersville Station the Clarks banded 2700 birds in the winter of 1975-'76 but only 900 this season, while Elizabeth Brooks at Alfred Station netted 652 birds four years ago and only 193 this winter. With few exceptions, both field and feeder yielded discouragingly low counts in spite of nearly bare ground, much open water and a fair wild food crop. While acorns and fruits of the box elder and sumac were abundant and squirrels were plentiful, mice and voles appeared infrequently, there were few hemlock or cherry seeds and no beechnuts, wild grapes were soon depleted and rabbits continued scarce.

Winter positives include 1) widespread reports all season of one or two Great Blue Herons; 2) better numbers of the Black Duck and Redhead, and strong spring flight of the White-winged Scoter; 3) a few more accipiters; 4) excellent Ruffed Grouse and Turkey populations and a modest expansion for the Ring-necked Pheasant; 5) a fine larid season—with a new species for Chautauqua County; 6) record count for the Belted Kingfisher, many wintering Common Flickers and the Red-bellied Woodpecker doing very well; 7) high tally for Blue Jays, and adult Common Crows returning early, January 22, to old nesting site (Eaton); 8) thriving Black-capped Chickadees, the Tufted Titmouse doing better, a fair Red-breasted Nuthatch flight, and the Brown Creeper well-reported; 9) a few wintering mimic thrushes, with the Mockingbird making a comeback; 10) a host of robins throughout the season, especially near the Great Lakes, and numerous Cedar Waxwings, 11) a winter record-breaker for the Yellow-rumped Warbler; 12) good reports of the Evening Grosbeak but smaller flocks than usual; 13) continued increase in House Finch numbers; 14) a junco conundrum; and 15) lots of White-throated Sparrows.

Negatives for the winter include 1) scarcity of loons and grebes; 2) a poor flight of Whistling Swans, and not many Common Goldeneyes or Hooded Mergansers; 3) a disappointing Rough-legged Hawk flight, the Red-tailed Hawk population continuing low, and only scattered reports of the American Kestrel and Marsh Hawk; 4) almost no coots; 5) Rock Doves thriving; 6) a poor Snowy Owl year; 7) Horned Larks practically nonexistent; 8) pitiful numbers of Winter and

Carolina Wrens, and Golden-crowned Kinglets; 9) a minuscule shrike flight; 10) the Eastern Meadowlark hardly reported at all; 11) a continued slightly reduced Cardinal population; 12) absence of most "winter" finches, in particular: Pine Grosbeaks, redpolls and crossbills; and 13) very low numbers of Tree Sparrows, only a sprinkling of Song Sparrows, no longspurs, and few Snow Buntings.

The splendid array of rarities and out-of-season birds includes Blue-winged Teal, Barrow's Goldeneye, Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Virginia Rail, Red Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Saw-whet Owl, Common Raven, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Waterthrush, Northern Oriole, Dickcissel, Chipping Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: ACC—Allegany County Bird Club Census, Dec. 29, of birds outside the Scio Audubon Census circle; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Audubon Christmas Census (St. Bonaventure [St. Bon, hereafter], Dec. 15; BOS, Dec. 16; Scio, Dec. 29; H+= Record High, H=Second Highest ever, L=Second Lowest ever, and L=Record Low—or tied for each); GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NC, NP or NS—Nature Center, Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Res—Reservoir; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

Contributors: Sharon Baumgardner, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Lou Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, Betty Compton, John Compton, Mildred Cook, Ed Curtis (Weather Data, Wellsville Water and Light), Stephen Eaton, Mary Forness, David Freeland, Lloyd Fuller, Helen Graves, Harland Hale, Matthew Hotchkiss, Doris Hurlburt, Norman Ives, Clarence Klingensmith, Erma Larson, Frank O'Brien, Katherine Palmer, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Frances Rew, Ann Scott (AnS), Burnadean Stein, Robert Sundell, James VanScoy, Regina VanScoy; and initialed Observers: Robert Andrie, Harold Axtell, Arthur R. Clark (ARC), Harriette Klabunde, Walter Klabunde, Fred Meyer ("Bird Notes," *Olean Times Herald*), Alice McKale, Willard McKale, John Morse, Arthur Schaffner, and David Wilcove.

LOONS—DUCKS: Almost absent this season, only three Com. Loons were noted, all during Dec. in the Niagara Falls area. Grebes, too, were scarce with single Red-necked Grebes at Youngstown Jan. 5, and at Niagara Falls Jan. 20, and the max of Pied-billed, a dismal four at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 5 and 6. Unusual in winter was the imm. Double-crested Cormorant found at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 9. Highest of the few Whistling Swan reports was 12 at Fluvanna Jan. 1. Once more Canada Geese appeared all season with max 4000 at Iroquois NWR Jan. 1-30 (JM) while the wild pair at Farmersville Sta. has now been with the Clarks four years. A Snow Goose (blue morph) was seen irregularly at Iroquois NWR Jan. 8-23 (Olsen, JM). Unusual duck counts on the BOSCC are: Mallard, 1338 (H+); Black Duck, 150 (L-); Gadwall, 78 (H); Pintail, 78 (H); Green-winged Teal, three; Wood Duck, two; **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**, one; and Com. Merganser, 7578, highest since 1970. Other noteworthy duck reports include: Black Duck, appearing all season with max 40 on the Allegheny R. in Dec. and 27 on the Genesee R. in Feb.; Gadwall, two at Goat Island Dec. 3, 30 at Iroquois NWR Dec. 9, up to 11 at Niagara Falls Jan. 1 and 13, and two at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 17; Pintail, max 26 at Goat Island Dec. 3; Green-winged Teal, two at Goat Island Dec. 3, up to four at Niagara Falls Jan. 1 and 13, and one at Scio Jan. 19 and 29; a single **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**, late, at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 6 (FR); a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** at Niagara Falls irregularly Dec. 20 thru Jan. 27 (DF, RA, HA+), and another at Celoron regularly from Jan. 8 thru Feb. (RS, Gagne+); Wood Duck, a male on the Allegheny R. near Portville Feb. 4 and 13 (JV, RV, SE); Redhead, max 50 at Niagara Falls Jan. 1; Com. Goldeneye, as many as 11 on the Allegheny R. (Vandalia to Portville) from late Jan. thru Feb., and six on the Genesee R. at Caneadea Jan. 16; White-winged Scoter, a big flight of 400 near



the mouth of the Niagara R. on Lake Ontario Feb. 15 (HA); Black Scoter, one in Niagara Falls gorge Dec. 3 and 20; Ruddy Duck, max 60 at State Power Authority Res. Jan. 1, two in Niagara gorge Jan. 5 and one at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 19; Hooded Merganser, only 12 totaled from five areas; Com. Merganser, totaling at least 41 on the Genesee and Allegheny Rivers with high counts after Lake Erie froze; and a single Red-breasted Merganser at Celoron Feb. 10.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Once more only a single **GOSHAWK** appeared this winter, on the BOSCC in the Tonawanda area, while the 14 Sharp-shinned and 23 Cooper's Hawks were widespread and usually reported as one to an area throughout the season except for Sharpies which were absent in Feb. Also noteworthy are: Red-shouldered Hawk, one in Wales Feb. 6 (Rosches), unusual in winter; Rough-legged Hawk, almost absent with only ten widely scattered singles reported; **BALD EAGLE**, an adult at Onoville, Cattaraugus Co. Feb. 17 (Woodward, Carlson *vide* RS); and Marsh Hawk, a measly six birds! Because of the mild weather, **VIRGINIA RAILS** tried to winter: one was car-killed on Haskell Road, near Cuba, Jan. 13 (MF), and two were spotted at Iroquois NWR Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 (Olsen). Highest count for the Am. Coot was 14 at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 17, very low. Staying three weeks later than usual were two Purple Sandpipers at Niagara Falls Feb. 9 (RA+) and a **RED PHALAROPE** frequented Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 9 thru Feb. 19 (RS, Sterling, FR+). Interesting from the fine larid season are: Glaucous Gull, no less than 23 along the Niagara R. during Dec. and Jan., and singles at Cuba L. Jan. 4 (AnS) and at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 19 (RS); Iceland Gull, max eight at Niagara Falls Feb. 9; Great Black-backed Gull, 560 (H+) on the BOSCC; **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**, one irregularly in the Niagara Falls area Dec. 24 thru Jan. 1 (HA, RA, HK, WK); Ring-billed Gull, 10,056 (H+) on the BOSCC; Franklin's Gull, one in Niagara Falls gorge Dec. 3 (AS, ARC); Bonaparte's Gull, 8488 (H) on the BOSCC and max 2000 over the Niagara R. Jan. 5; Little Gull, one at Ft. Niagara Dec. 31, four at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 9, and one at Lewiston Jan. 27; and **SABINE'S GULL**, an imm. at Dunkirk Harbor, discovered by B. Chapman Dec. 1 and still there Dec. 2 (RS, Gagne+)-the first record for Chautauqua Co.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Rock Doves numbered 1672 (H+) on the BOSCC. (Think of their food consumption!) As usual, except for the Great Horned Owl, owl reports were few: Screech Owl, ten on the BOSCC, two on the ScioCC+ACC and singles in Amity Twp. Jan. 21 (road kill) and at Farmersville Sta. Feb. 5; Snowy Owl, singles on the BOSCC, at Buffalo Harbor, on Grand Island (same as on CC) and at Wheatfield; Long-eared Owl, now at Somerset Dec. 31 (DF, DW); Short-eared Owl, one on the St. Bon CC and one in Portland Twp. Feb. 29 (DF); and **SAW-WHET OWL**, one on Grand Island Dec. 22 thru 25 (RA+). The Belted Kingfisher numbered 12 (H+) on the BOSCC. The two Red-bellied Woodpeckers on the St Bon CC were found near Allegany near the Allegheny R (SE), an unusual area for these birds, and a Red-headed Woodpecker was sighted on the BOSCC in addition to two at Youngstown Feb. 20 and one in Porter Twp. Feb. 24 (HK, WK+). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was seen in Hume Twp. Dec. 2 and 15 (KP). The count for the Hairy Woodpecker on the BOSCC was only five (tied for lowest in 20 years).

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark numbers were w-a-a-a-y down with max: unidentified subspecies, 10 in Amity Twp. Jan 27; *Eremophila alpestris alpestris*, 13 in Conewango Feb. 17; and *E. a. praticola*, one in Poland Twp. Feb. 10. Noteworthy among the corvids are: Blue Jay, 387 (H+) on the BOSCC; **COMMON RAVEN**, two in Willing Twp. Dec. 28 (Johnson *vide* HG); and Com. Crow, flocks of up to 200 in the Alfred area from mid-Jan. thru Feb. (CK). Two Tufted Titmice appeared on the BOSCC, two on the St Bon CC, three on the ACC as well as 13 birds, total, from seven scattered field reports. While two Winter Wrens were found for the BOSCC and three for the ACC, the only report of the Carolina was one at Shelby Dec. 3 (Schrader). Ten Mockingbirds were counted from six locations, a Gray Catbird appeared on the BOSCC, and single Brown Thrashers were seen on Grand Island Jan. 1 and at Cuba Jan. 16. Max of the many wintering Am. Robins was 164

at Iroquois NWR Jan. 14, while here also four **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS** were found the same day (Olsen). Other than 21 on the BOSCC, one on the St Bon CC and 12 on the ACC, reports of the Golden-crowned Kinglet totaled but 12 birds from four areas, but a Ruby-crowned Kinglet was discovered, over a week late, at Newstead Dec. 9 (AM, WM). The Cedar Waxwing numbered 155 (H+) on the BOSCC. This was definitely not the year of the shrike; there were only two Northern found for the BOSCC in addition to singles from seven scattered locations. On the BOSCC Starlings tallied 96,341 (H).

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** Single Yellow-rumped Warblers were found during the winter at Scio, Belmont, Friendship, Hume Twp. and Ellery Twp. but a whopping 31 were counted in Portland Twp., feeding on bayberries Feb. 17 (AS, ARC)—the highest ever winter flock for our region. A wintering (?) **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** was identified at Tift Farm NC Jan. 5 (Daniels, Karl).

**WEAVERS-SPARROWS:** A partial albino House Sparrow appeared regularly at an Allentown feeder Feb. 1 thru 28 (DH). The Red-winged Blackbird numbered 114 (H+) on the BOSCC. Well observed for about five minutes was a female **NORTHERN ORIOLE** at Greenhurst Dec. 15 (RS). There were single Rusty Blackbirds at Orchard Park Dec. 1-5 and at Limestone Dec. 9, and six at Gerry Jan. 1. A **DICKCISSEL** came to the Holland feeder Dec. 1 where it had been reported in the fall (Beckers). Most observers commented on the small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks compared with some other years, the max congregation being 150 at Friendship Jan. 13 (SB); of the species, tallied were 1152 on the ScioCC+ACC and 33 on the St Bon CC, while winter bandings totaled 54 at Alfred Station (EB), 114 at Farmersville Sta. (DC) and 115 at Limestone (RV). The House Finch broke the BOSCC record with 22 (H+) and tallied 106 on the ScioCC+ACC, while the max other report was 135 at Jamestown Jan. 1 (RS, Gagne). The only Pine Siskin for the season was one at E. Amherst Dec. 8 and Jan. 27 (DF). Noteworthy sparrows include: Rufous-sided Towhee, singles at Kent Switch Feb. 18 (FR, Buck) and at the Nicholson feeder, Wellsville, all season (*fide* NI); an oddball Dark-eyed Junco, banded at Limestone Jan. 3 and at the feeder thru Feb., tentatively identified, with the help of skins from Dr. Eaton of St. Bonaventure, as the subspecies *Junco hyemalis cismontanus*, a western form (RV); Tree Sparrow, 300 (L) on the BOSCC, and an eye-popping 165 at Kent Switch Feb. 18 (FR, Buck), especially with the next highest count 38 at Cuba L. Feb. 9 (SB); a **CHIPPING SPARROW** at Belmont Jan. 2 thru Feb. (DB, LB), banded in Feb. (EB); Field Sparrow, six on the ScioCC+ACC, and singles at Middleport Feb. 9 thru 29, irregularly, and at Orchard Park Feb. 29; White-crowned Sparrow, one at Middleport Feb. 9 thru 29 (Krogs), the only report; White-throated Sparrow, 85 (H) on the BOSCC, with many areas reporting one to four birds wintering; **FOX SPARROW**, one on the BOSCC, first time ever; and a **LINCOLN'S SPARROW**, on the ScioCC, the same bird appearing in Wellsville regularly Dec. 19 thru 31 (EL, DB), and on thru Jan. 17 (EL). Max from the few Snow Bunting reports was 200 at Hermitage Jan. 26 (Barber).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

## REGION 2 – GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

The first half of the winter season was warmer than normal with little snowfall. The remainder saw below average temperatures, though not approaching the severity of the past two winters, and still little snow for the Region. Through

late December, temperatures were well above normal with several days in the 50's. Precipitation was 2.86 in. (7.26 cm), about one-half inch below normal and mostly rain; over one inch of which fell on a green Christmas. Through mid-January most of the major bodies of water remained open and there was little shore ice on Lake Ontario. Total snowfall for the season at that point was only 17.5 in. (44.5 cm). From January 23 to February 18 temperatures stayed below freezing, though never reaching 0° F (-18° C.) February 19-24 brought a warm spell, peaking at 53° F (12° C) on the 22nd. This was followed by the only sub-zero reading of the season on the night of February 28-29, -1° F (-18°C). At season's end, snowfall had reached 51.3 in. (130.3 cm) compared with 110.1 in. (280 cm) for the same period last year. This weather was reflected in high numbers of species on all regional Christmas Bird Counts, excellent variety present in January, and an interesting sprinkling of survivors well through February.

This season provided fun for the listers and counters and abundant challenge for the serious students of population dynamics. It soon became apparent that, in spite of mutterings about scarcity, particularly from feeder-watchers, the warm fall and early winter had left variety and numbers of birds at very high levels, as might be expected. Numbers of species approached or exceeded the highest levels recorded regionally for each month of the season. The two earlier Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's), Dec. 15 and 16, compiled new highs, the latter exceeding by five the highest number recorded over 76 years, previously reached four times. The third regional count, held Dec. 23, fell just short of its high species count for 28 years, but exceeded the old total of individuals by over 20%. In each of the three CBC's, 20-25% of the species were recorded equalling or surpassing previous highs for numbers of individuals, in some cases by multiples of the previous high. As usual, interpretation problems arise in attempts at evaluating the various effects of weather and observer activity. In the CBC cases, the weather was ideal, the dates were about as early as possible, bodies of water were more open than usual, and observer participation was at high average levels. For January and February, species counts are biased to some extent by more intense, friendly listing competition this year than in most recent years. This has resulted in more careful searching of remoter areas and better verification of odd feeder records than would usually be the case.

However, when one finally assesses their long range significance, there are numerous very interesting observations among the season's records. Heading the list, there were three new species added to the regional avifauna in December, plus one on the last day of November, compared with only nine for the rest of the decade. Among these was the famous Dansville Painted Redstart. Additionally, there were three new winter occurrences for the Region. Abundance accolades go to the gulls of early December and the Little Gulls (61!!) of Dec. 28, in particular. No one can recall an influx of this magnitude. Probably of significance in finally establishing their origin, a good percentage—5%+—of the Ring-billed Gulls were badly oiled. These oiled birds were also among the first to depart. Several species were also reported on CBC and state waterfowl censuses at record high numbers, falling off rapidly after the late January freeze. Particularly conspicuous by their scarcity were: Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Shrike, Purple Finch, other winter finches (historically this should have been a "finch" year), Dark-eyed Junco, Tree Sparrow, and Snow Bunting.

Of more positive note again: Carolina Wren and Mockingbird reports were up a bit and there was a drop of 600,000+ in the Rochester CBC Starling count. In this latter case, the roost of the past few winters, a pine plantation, was clear cut in a grid pattern and the birds deserted. During the count, a flight line of about 200,000 Starlings was noted through the south edge of the circle, but the new roost has not been located.

**Rarities:** Gannet, Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Sora, Purple Sandpiper, Northern Phalarope, Red Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Franklin's Gull, Hawk Owl, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Painted Redstart, Northern Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, Savannah Sparrow, and Chipping Sparrow.

**Abbreviations:** BB—Braddock Bay area; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; CL—Conesus Lake; H—Hamlin Beach State Park and vicinity; IB—Irondequoit Bay and adjacent Lake Ontario; MP—Mendon Ponds Park; OB—Lake Ontario near Oklahoma Beach, Webster; and WL—West Lakeshore.

**Observers:** Nina Bailey, Jean Browning, John Brown, Nancy Boudrie, Carolyn Cass, Julie Claffey, Anne Clarridge, Roger Clark, Bill Colman, Helen & Ralph Dakin, Mike Davids, Dan & Fritz Davis, Gertrude Davis, Charles & Mary Dilgard, Frank & Robert Dobson, Jeff & Joan Dodge, Helen Dolan, Jim & Kay Doris, Arlieen & John Foster, Dick Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, Kevin Griffith, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Øivind Jensen, Doug Keim<sup>1</sup>, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Jane Kesselring, James Lenhard<sup>1</sup>, David Levy, Jim & Walter Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Frank & Mary Mattei, Margaret & Robert McKinney, Mike McKeon, Gordon Meade, Hyde Miller, Ann Miranian, Laura & Neil Moon, Jane Morris, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, Chip Perrigo, Mike & Tom Peter, Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Ann & Ray Shea, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Durward & Lillian Skiff, Robert & Susan Spahn, David Spier, Ann Stear, Helen Steinhauser, Alison Steward, Harriet Stride, Allen, Brian, Dan, David, & Grace Strong<sup>1</sup>, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Bill Symonds, Steve Taylor, David, Mike & Tom Tetlow, Betty Wahl, Ann & Joe Watson, Eleanor Weld, Paul Weld, Kinsley Whittum<sup>1</sup>, Alice Wood, and Peter Zachmann. P.O.S. = 1.

**LOONS—DUCKS:** Loons were present well into January with late records: Com. Loon: one IB Jan. 20; and Red-throated Loon: one Webster Jan. 6; and one East lakeshore Jan. 6. Pied-billed Grebe was scarce as usual. Red-necked Grebe was above average with seven late Dec. and early Jan. reports: max three Webster Jan. 1. Highly unusual was GANNET: one imm, H Jan. 4-6 (RDi), found exhausted along shore, died, now in SUNY Brockport collection. The lone Double-crested Cormorant was: Charlotte Dec. 24. There were fair numbers of Great Blue Heron about thru December, but few reports thereafter. A late record was Black-crowned Night Heron: one imm, CL Dec. 2, 6 (RBA). The interesting waterfowl records were numerous: Whistling Swan: max 40 CL Dec.; and Sodus Bay, sporadically thru; Canada Goose: 500-600 BB to Kendall thru, large numbers for winter here; Snow Goose: one Sodus Bay Jan. 1, late; Brant: 5-12 BB thru Dec. 18, late; Mallard: max 2500 Silver Lake Dec. 15; Black Duck: max 400 CL Dec. 23; Northern Shoveler: seven BB Dec. 8 (NH), late; and one Greece Feb. 10 (MD), early; Wood Duck: one MP Jan. (staff); HARLEQUIN DUCK: two H Dec. 1 (MD); and one H Dec. 30 (CP); KING EIDER: one male, two fem. OB Dec. 29-Jan. 22 (CP, RC, MD, mob); White-winged Scoter: 10,000 OB Dec. 31 (FD); 8000+ OB Jan. 6 (mob); Ruddy Duck: 31 OB Dec. 2; and Hooded Merganser: 120 BB Dec. 1; and 234 Sodus Bay Dec. 2 (TT).

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** A very rare winter sighting was TURKEY VULTURE: one Greece

Jan. 28 (DS). A Regional first was **BLACK VULTURE**: one ad. Scottsville Dec. 22 (S. Stokoe, JoB, J&SSk, mob). Accipiter records included only one Goshawk, 23 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 11 Cooper's Hawks in GOS reports, a higher Sharp-shinned/Cooper's ratio than in the past several years. Rough-legged Hawk was very scarce. The Hemlock Lake pair of Bald Eagles wintered. There was also one adult Bald Eagle at Letchworth Park Jan. (ST). Ring-necked Pheasant continued its drop in local CBC reports and general daily records. Representing marsh dwellers were: Virginia Rail: two in each of two locations MP Jan. 12 thru; and **SORA**: one MP Feb. 10 thru (R&SS, photo), a first Regional winter record. Among the shorebirds were: late Killdeer: one Greece Jan. 1; and one Greece Jan. 6; Com. Snipe: two-three Penfield thru (P.O.S.); one Mendon Dec. 23 (DG); and one Rush Feb. 24 (NB); **PURPLE SANDPIPER**: three OB Dec. 29 (ST); **NORTHERN PHALAROPE**: one Charlotte Dec. 9 (MD); **RED PHALAROPE**: one OB Dec. 9-15 (HM, NM, mob); **POMARINE JAEGER**: one Webster Park Dec. 31 (CP, RC, MD); Glaucous Gull: max five WL Dec. 28; Iceland Gull: four records; Great Black-backed Gull: max 772 BB Dec. 10 (RC, PR); **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one ad. Webster Park Dec. 31 (CP, MD, RC), a Regional first, long anticipated; Ring-billed: Max 195,000 WL Dec. 10 (NH); Herring Gull: 20,054 Rochester CBC Dec. 16; Ring-billed: 61,256 Rochester CBC Dec. 16; **FRANKLIN'S GULL**: one imm. IB thru Dec. 16 (mob); and one imm. Sodus Bay Dec. 16 (TT); Bonaparte's Gull: max 3500 East lakeshore Dec. 28 (KG, mob); to 500 IB thru Jan. 20 (mob); and one with black head IB Feb. 23 (JCI); and Little Gull: max 61 IB Dec. 28 (MD, KG, CP, BS, WLi), certainly a North American high count; and 20+ -6 IB thru Jan. 20 (mob). With the maximum Little Gull count, only two imm. were spotted.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS**: Diligent pursuit on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC brought a Great Horned Owl: 20 CL Dec. 23. Other notable records include: eight distinct Snowy Owls, one near the main Rochester Post Office remaining through the season; **HAWK OWL**: one Greece Feb. 6, 14 (HD, *fide* JK), reported from an area where a thorough search was virtually impossible; Barred Owl: one Canadice Dec. 23; and one Sodus Jan. 1, always scarce here; and Short-eared Owl: singles, Avon Jan. 13; and Island Cottage Woods, Greece Jan. 16-21; and a concentration: 1-12 H Dec. 31 thru (R&KB, mob). Red-headed Woodpecker was found in the usual location all winter; max nine Avon Jan. 5; and also: one Ontario-on-the-Lake Jan. 6, an unusual location.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS**: This grouping saw many more interesting winter records than usual, reflecting the warmer weather. **EASTERN PHOEBE**: Seneca Park, Rochester Feb. 18 (MMcK, KD), was very early. A new early spring date for the state was **TREE SWALLOW**: two Kendall Feb. 24 (NH). Among the wrens were: Winter Wren: one Greece Dec. 16 (RS, mob); Carolina Wren: at least five in Webster; two in Penfield; one in Greece; and one on the Conesus-Hemlock CBC; and **LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN**: one-two BB Dec. 16-Jan. 2 (RS, mob); and one Honeoye Lake outlet Dec. 23 (F&RD, RS). Mockingbird seems to be up a bit with at least 25 records thru the season. Gray Catbird: one Brockport Jan. 28 (RC); and one Webster Feb. 17 (MD, KG), were rare finds. A large roost of Am. Robin: max 800 Greece Dec. 16, later dispersed. There were numerous sporadic reports of Hermit Thrush thru the season. **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET**: Island Cottage Dec. 14 (NH, RL); BB Dec. 15 (RS); Honeoye Dec. 23 (F&RD, RS); and Canadice Lake Dec. 23 (A&JF). No. Shrike was very scarce for the entire season, only two reports per month.

**VIREOS-WARBLES**: Again, a good showing: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 40 MP Jan. 12 (GOS); max 80+ Spencerport Feb. 22 (MD); **PALM WARBLER**: one Pt. Breeze Dec. 30 (J&WLi); **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**: one Silver Lake Dec. 15 (JSK); and one BB Dec. 16 (WLi); and **PAINTED REDSTART**: Dansville Dec. 14-Jan. 24 (C&MD), 750+ others), a new bird for New York.

**WEAVERS-SPARROWS**: Here too we see the effects of an easy winter: melanistic House Sparrow: one Webster Jan. 8 thru (WLi); **NORTHERN ORIOLE**: one to two fem. Dansville thru (C&MD, mob); Rusty Blackbird: four Rochester CBC Dec. 16; one Brighton

Dec. 19-20; and one E. Rochester Jan. 9 (P.O.S.), and Red-winged Blackbird, Com. Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird wintered in typical numbers. Finches were generally scarce, particularly Purple Finch, but still we have: **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**: one imm. male Greece Dec. 16 (RS, BT, SH), a first for the CBC; **DICKCISSEL**: one imm. Webster thru Dec. 15 (R&SS, mob); Purple Finch: 45 Sodus Jan. 6, the only record for the season; House Finch: reports from all over, max. 95 Mt. Morris Jan. 7 (RC, MD, CP); Pine Grosbeak: two H Feb. 17 (RO); and scattered singles for Com. Redpoll and Pine Siskin. Rufous-sided Towhee wintered at several feeders: two Rochester CBC Dec. 16; one Irondequoit Dec. 23 (NH); one fem. Irondequoit Dec.-Jan. (A&RSh); one Mt. Morris Jan. 11 (CP, RC, MD); one Webster Jan. (BW); one H Feb. 20 (JeD); and one Webster Feb. 15 (J&GMcN).

The sparrows were well represented by: **SAVANNAH SPARROW**: one near Clyde Jan. 1 (CS); **CHIPPING SPARROW**: one Greece Dec. 16 (FD); and one Brighton all winter (J&JDo); many Field Sparrows; White-crowned Sparrow: one Webster Jan. 5-21; and two Brighton Jan. 22; and Fox Sparrow: one Letchworth Park Jan. 28 (RC). The peak for Lapland Longspur was 200 H Jan. 3 (KG), a very large flock. Snow Buntings, while here in numbers in October, were very scarce all winter.

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## REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

Until January 20, the period was warm with the temperature often in the forties and fifties and even hitting the sixties on one occasion. Snowfall was very light. Ithaca had the second driest January on record. Except for a warm spell, February 20-24, the weather after January 20 was consistently below freezing but with little snow.

The mildness of the early winter was probably the reason for 1) the lack of birds at feeders both in species and in numbers, although some observers reported a paucity of birds in the field as well. 2) Green Herons, a Sandhill Crane and King Rails at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in December and an American Bittern there in early February. 3) Whistling Swans on Cayuga and Seneca Lakes in February. These may well have been the birds which remained on Sodus Bay until the bay froze over. 4) Record numbers of over-wintering Canada Geese on the Finger Lakes. 5) More Mallards and Black Ducks than usual. 6) Very few diving ducks except for Redheads, until after the colder weather came. 7) almost complete absence of Northern Shrikes.

The common complaint on all the Christmas Counts was the small number of species found. Even with 104 observers, the Ithaca Christmas Count could come up with but 68 species, although several of these hit new highs.

Species which were hard to find were: 1) Rough-legged Hawks; 2) Short-eared Owls which were absent from their usual wintering grounds in Cayuga and Seneca counties; 3) Horned Larks which continue to decline. For the first time the Ithaca Christmas Count came up with none. There were few reports from any part of the Region. Your Regional Editor made two trips during February thru

the heart of the "lark country" in Seneca County where the larks formerly migrated through by the hundreds. One flock of ten plus a few scattered individuals was all he found; 4) Northern Shrikes were very scarce; 5) Almost no icterids after the Christmas Count period until migrants arrived in late February; 6) winter finches were almost a washout. Evening Grosbeaks, the only species seen in any numbers, were very spotty with only Ithaca and some feeders in the Guyanoga Valley reporting any numbers. A few Purple Finches and a single report of Pine Siskins complete the winter finch picture; 7) Tree Sparrows were in greatly reduced numbers with no large flocks; 8) Song Sparrows were less plentiful than usual; 9) Lapland Longspurs were reported only once; 10) Snow Buntings scarce.

Rarities: Mute Swan, Osprey, Sandhill Crane, King Rail, Glaucous Gull, Snowy Owl, Hawk Owl, Fish Crow, Dickcissel.

Abbreviations: Cay-Cayuga; CC-Christmas Count preceded by CC for Central Cayuga Jan. 1, E for Elmira Jan. 1, G for Geneva Dec. 28, I for Ithaca Jan. 1, M for Montezuma Jan. 1 (only that portion which is in Region 3), WG for Watkins Glen Dec. 30; L-lake; MNWR-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen-Seneca; SP-State Park; \* (starred)-details on file.

Contributors and compilers: W. E. Benning; Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen); John Confer; Vernon Dewey (MNWR); Bernice Hilfiker; Wilfred Howard; Herbert and Polly Keating; Malcolm Lerch (Penn Yan); Dorothy McIlroy (Ithaca); Mary Welles (Elmira).

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: five WFC; one Cayuta L Dec. 10. Horned Grebe: 39 WFC mostly on Cay and Keuka Lakes. Pied-billed Grebe: 26 MNWR Dec. 14; 16 WFC. Great Blue Heron: five on three CCs; seven MNWR Dec. 31 with one wintering thru. Green Heron: two late birds at MNWR Dec. 14 (VD). Am. Bittern: an over-wintering bird observed several times in early Feb. at MNWR by the personnel there. MUTE SWAN: one in company with a Whistling Swan Jan. 1-20 CayLSP. Whistling Swan: one MNWR Dec. 10; one CayLSP Jan. 1-9; five Dresden Feb. 2; ten Cay L Feb. 16; eleven Geneva Feb. 18. Canada Goose: over-wintering numbers were much above normal. At MNWR 12,000 Dec. 31, 18,000 Jan 18, 14,000 Feb. 2. The WFC of 38,113 was double last year with nearly 35,000 of them on Cay L. In late Feb. VD estimated 100,000 on Cay L between Sheldrake and Canoga. Snow Goose: one Phelps Dec. 14; twelve MNWR Feb. 15.

Maximum duck numbers at MNWR were as follows:

Mallard	9,000	Jan. 18	Canvasback	10	Dec. 3
Black Duck	1,000	Jan. 18	Greater Scaup	26	Dec. 14
Gadwall	150	Dec. 3	Com. Goldeneye	10	Dec. 14
Pintail	400	Jan. 18	Bufflehead	45	Dec. 14
Am. Wigeon	350	Dec. 3	Ruddy Duck	25	Dec. 14
Redhead	30	Dec. 3	Hooded Merganser	75	Dec. 14
Ring-necked Duck	30	Dec. 3	Com. Merganser	150	Dec. 14

The Jan. 5-13 WFC results were as follows:

Mallard	4,207	Canvasback	881
Black Duck	2,265	Scaup-all	314
Mallard X Black	22	Greater Scaup	195
Gadwall	26	Com. Goldeneye	326
Pintail	1	Bufflehead	253
Am. Wigeon	17	Oldsquaw	2
Redhead	7,044	Hooded Merganser	7
Ring-necked Duck	10	Com. Merganser	27

Wood Duck: an unusual wintertime male was on Canandaigua L Jan. 26. Lesser Scaup: 20 CCCC. Oldsquaw: 16 Aurora Jan. 26. Red-breasted Merganser: one CayLSP Jan. 9; two Aurora; male Elmira Feb. 24.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Goshawk: one Watkins Glen Dec. 29 and one Michigan Hollow Jan. 24 were the only reports. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks: small numbers of both species were widely reported with some hanging around feeders for an easy meal. Record high of seven Cooper's on the ICC. Red-tailed Hawk: 139 reported on five CCs, but some reporters continue to note a diminution of numbers. Rough-legged Hawk: small numbers only. One Romulus Dec. 21; one CCCC; three ICC; one Alpine Jan.-Feb. Marsh Hawk: reported from Elmira, Horseheads, Ithaca, Romulus and MNWR. **OSPREY:** one Six Mile Creek (S. Sabo *vide* DM) for the first Feb. record in the Cay Basin. Am. Kestrel: 59 on five CCs. Like the Red-tail, it is diminishing in numbers. Ruffed Grouse: apparently on its upward cycle; 23 on four CCs. One drummed in answer to owls on the WGCC at 12:10 AM Jan. 1. Ring-necked Pheasant: only six reported in the entire Region. Japanese Green Pheasant: the ICC turned up two birds of this introduced species. Turkey: up to 38 fed in a cornfield near Pine City during Dec.; nine ICC; three Horseheads Jan. 6; seven feeding in a cornfield south of Branchport in late Feb. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one at MNWR Dec. 10 was seen to fly south toward Cay L (VD). **KING RAIL:** two located back in the cattails at MNWR by trappers Dec. 31 (H. Helmar *vide* VD). Am. Coot: WFC 1351 nearly one-half of which were on Keuka L. Killdeer: despite the mild weather few remained in the Region, one Watkins Glen Jan. 7-16 and one Elmira Jan. 8. None were found at their usual winter haunts at Horseheads and Phelps. Com. Snipe: one GCC the only report. **GLAUCOUS GULL:** one Sen L Feb. 19 (C. Rouse). Great Black-backed Gull: 41 reported on four CCs.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Great Horned Owl: 28 on three CCs. Snowy Owl: one south of Ithaca in Dec. and one at the north end of Sen L thru the period. **HAWK OWL:** one Brooktondale Jan. 4, a good report including a sketch by the observer, Karen Allaben-Confer, on file\*. Barred Owl: one Erin Dec. and Jan.; one Sapsucker Woods Jan. 29. Long-eared Owl: one Six Mile Creek Jan. 24 (S. Sabo *vide* DM). Short-eared Owl: a single report from Penn Yan. Belted Kingfisher: the usual few wintered at sheltered locations. Pileated Woodpecker: 14 on the ICC was a new high. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues its slow spread into the southern part of the Region. It was found in four areas at Elmira and at six feeders and three other locations near Watkins Glen. The ICC count of 38 was a record high. Five CCs produced 81 birds. Red-headed Woodpecker: one each on the ECC and CCCC; one at Phelps all winter. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one GCC; one at feeder in Elmira Heights and one at Penn Yan all winter.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: continues to decline. The only CC to report them was Geneva with 28 (See opening remarks). Com. Crow: 1,905 on six CCs with a new high of 610 on the WGCC. **FISH CROW:** three seen and heard over the Vet School at Cornell (D. Phalen *vide* DM). Black-capped Chickadee: The ICC had a record total of 1313. Tufted Titmouse: 116 reported on six CCs with new highs of 10 and 68 on WG and ICCs respectively. White-breasted Nuthatch: ICC had a record 218. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only a few scattered reports. Brown Creeper: five CCs report 33 birds. Carolina Wren: reported from the southern half of the Region only—Wellsburg, Ithaca and Penn Yan. Mockingbird: widespread scattered reports with a record 18 on the ICC. Gray Catbird: the only report was one on the ICC. Am. Robin: 83 on 5 CCs but generally below last year's record numbers of over-wintering birds. Hermit Thrush: one Ithaca Jan. 5. Eastern Bluebird: far fewer reports than last year despite the milder winter. Four to six wintered near Burdette; two Odessa Feb. 5; four Montour Falls Feb. 23. Golden-crowned Kinglet: very scarce but a bit better than last year. Ten on four CCs plus one report from Penn Yan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one each on the ICC and CCCC. Northern Shrike: the only reports were one at Phelps Dec. 20, two on the ICC and one on the MCC.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Orange-crowned Warbler: one at a Yenn Yan feeder early Dec.



Nashville Warbler: one at Penn Yan in Dec. Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: single birds at Big Flats, Ithaca and Phelps with nine on the GCC.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: No. Oriole: one male at Elmira and one in a flock of hundreds of Starlings at Penn Yan Jan. 16. Rusty Blackbird: one Ithaca Jan. 4-5 and two Jan. 6-7. DICKCISSEL: one at Reading Center feeder from late Jan. thru the period. Evening Grosbeak: ICC had 769; ECC 42; up to 70 at feeders in Guyanoga Valley; otherwise very scarce. Purple Finch: scarce; 25 ICC; two ECC; one Watkins Glen in Jan. House Finch: "mushrooming," "ubiquitous," "uncountable" are some of the adjectives reporters are using to describe this burgeoning species. For example, 60-80 at a Seneca Falls feeder seem to be keeping nearly all other birds, except Am. Goldfinches, away; flocks of 60-70 in Penn Yan; 351 on the ICC; 145 on the ECC; 94 on the WGCC; 60 on the MCC and 52 on the GCC. Savannah Sparrow: two CCCC. Vesper Sparrow: one Ithaca feeder Feb. 1. Tree Sparrow: this normally common winter visitor was scarce in all parts of the Region with almost no large flocks seen. Field Sparrow: eight ECC; two each GCC and CCCC; one ICC. White-crowned Sparrow: six GCC. White-throated Sparrow: present but in somewhat reduced numbers over recent years. Fox Sparrow: one Watkins Glen SP Dec. 4-6. Swamp Sparrow: two WGCC; one each on ECC and GCC. Song Sparrow: 35 GCC and 17 ICC but hard to find in many parts of the Region. Lapland Longspur: the only report was two at Ithaca Jan. 20. Snow Bunting: 75 MCC; one Penn Yan report in Dec.; on Dec. 21, as I was driving south of Romulus, I flushed a flock of 31 birds from the roadside. The birds then perched on the telephone wires spaced a few inches apart like so many swallows. In years of birding I have never before observed Snow Buntings perched on a telephone wire.

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## REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

The winter of '79-'80 was outstanding for the lack of snow. One snowfall of four to five inches on December 13 melted off in a few days. The only other significant snowfall, in mid-February, was more persistent, but even so provided only patchy snow cover after a few days. Temperatures were generally mild until the first full weekend of January, when the rivers started to choke up with floating ice, just in time for the Waterfowl Census. There was still some more or less mild weather, off and on, until the last week of January. Then temperatures were generally freezing or below until the end of the period, even dropping below zero a few times. But conditions were never really severe, by comparison with other years, for more than a couple of days at a time.

Almost universally, birders, and the general public, complained about how few birds were around. Winter finches, indeed, were scarce, evidently satisfied with conditions further north. More surprisingly, blackbirds and robins were less common than conditions might lead one to expect. On the other hand there was a rather longer than usual list of sub-hardy species recorded, e.g. a Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, three Rufous-sided Towhees and no less than five Yellow-rumped Warblers. One suspects, but can hardly prove with the data at hand, that the real

problem was dispersal. The lack of snow cover left food more widely available than in other years so there was little need for dependence on feeders and other food concentrations and, therefore, birds were harder to find rather than really scarce. In the writer's own experience, provision of a really favored food supply, i.e. thistle seed feeding started in mid-February, produced a respectably-sized and almost constantly present flock of Am. Goldfinches within a few days, where before that only a very occasional one or two was seen.

The outstanding record of the season was another well-documented Golden Eagle, although one can hope that "rarity" is beginning to be the wrong term for the species. The first winter Eastern Phoebe record since 1953, when the current record keeping system started, must count as the actual rarity of the season.

Abbreviations: BCC—Binghamton Christmas Count, Dec. 30; CCC—Cortland Christmas Count, Dec. 29; DOCC—Delaware-Otsego Christmas Count, Dec. 15; TCC—Tioga Christmas Count, Jan. 1; WFC—Federation Waterfowl Census.

Observers: Cutler and Jeanette Baldwin; Peg Baxter; Don Bement (DB); Les Bemont (LB); Herbert Bennett; Mike and Jean Bennett (M, JB); Reynolds Bennett (RB); Bruce Bozdos; Dorothy Burns; Alvin Carpenter; Sally Carry (SC); Lynn Clark, Mildred Clark (MC); Gail Corderman; Robert Corey; Anna and Marilyn Davis; Louise and Warren Dean; Mary Dobinsky (MD); Sadie Dorber (SD); Diane Drabo; Nancy Durgin; Polly and Earl Getkin; Barbara Gordon; Claire Gottschall; Dorothy Gracey; John Gustafson (JG); Esther Hanley (EH); Hugh Havens; Elva Hawken; Alice Hayes; Meg Horak; Jim and Kathy Hoteling (J, KH); Claude Howard; Larry Huggins (LH); Spencer Hunt; A. and H. Johnson; Paul Kalka (PK); Phyllis Keith; Margaret Layton; Jay Lehman (JL); Leona McDowell; Harriet Marsi (HM); Rick Marsi; Evelyn & Bud Mead; John New; Francis O'Leary (FO); Robert Pantle (RP); Booth Perkins; Pete Petokas (PP); Beverly Prince; James Riley; Robert Saunders; Mary Sheffield (MS); Julian Shepherd; Kenneth Stalter; E. Steinfeldt; Elizabeth Washburn; Anne Whitaker; L. and K. Whitehead; Connie Wilkins; Kathryn Wilson (KW); Tom and Beryl Wilson (T, BW).

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Otsego L Dec. 15. Horned Grebe: one Otsego L Dec. 15. Great Blue Heron: one BCC; three CCC; Feb. 9 Lisle; one Richford Feb. 24. Canada Goose: 150 Delhi Dec. 21 max, but nine other Dec.-Jan. reports of up to 45 birds from Otsego L, Franklin, Truxton, Owego, Windsor and Cannonsville. Mallard: 123 BCC; 81 CCC; 14 TCC; 420 WFC. Black Duck: 33 BCC; 13 CCC; 152 WFC. Pintail: one WFC, Cannonsville Reservoir; the only other report from Owego in Jan. Wood Duck: one Cannonsville Reservoir Jan. 1; no others. Redhead: two CCC, the only report. Ring-necked Duck: four CCC; one TCC. Canvasback: one BCC. Lesser Scaup: one Cannonsville Reservoir Jan. 1. Com. Goldeneye: one CCC; 17 TCC; 15 WFC. Bufflehead: two at Owego in Christmas Count period; no others. Com. Merganser: nine CCC; six TCC; 44 WFC.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: one Portlandville area Dec. 1, flew directly overhead at close range giving good look at facial markings (MD, KW); Feb. 3 Choconut Center (MS); also reported from Owego in Jan. Sharp-shinned Hawk: two BCC; at least nine other reports. Cooper's Hawk: two TCC. Red-tailed Hawk: four BCC; five CCC; nine DOCC; as always, present in small numbers all winter. Rough-legged Hawk: one BCC; six CCC; two DOCC; four Smithville Flats Jan. 27 and three Candor Feb. 2, the best of nine Jan.-Feb. reports. GOLDEN EAGLE: one at Center Village, n. of Windsor, Dec. 23 to 27 (LH, *vide* HM *et al.*)—several observers tried to find the bird Dec. 28, the first sunny day after a string of cloudy days, but failed—confirmation made from good pictures showing gold color of the head and shoulders—also white around rump and tail—several other searches also came up negative. Bald Eagle: one East Branch Delaware River Jan. 8 and two West Branch Dela-

ware River Jan. 10 (SD). Marsh Hawk: one TCC; two Dec. reports from Truxton and Vestal Center. Am. Kestrel: ten BCC; nine CCC; eight DOCC; 11 TCC. Ruffed Grouse: ten BCC; three CCC; four DOCC. Ring-necked Pheasant; two BCC; two in period TCC; only four other reports. Turkey: a flock of up to a dozen seen all period in Delhi area; 25 or more at Coventry Dec. 30. Am. Coot: one CCC; at Owego in Feb. Killdeer: one DOCC; Dec. 16 Owego; two Little York Jan. 12; 50 Cortland Feb. 28. Am. Woodcock: one Candor Jan. 2 (RP). Herring Gull: ten BCC; 70 CCC; four TCC. Ring-billed Gull: two BCC; 53 CCC; one TCC; five Otsego Lake Dec. 15.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: 408 BCC; 99 DOCC; 726 TCC. Mourning Dove: 85 BCC; 14 DOCC; 49 TCC; present in small numbers almost everywhere in the Region all period, the best non-census count 50 at Windsor Jan. 26. Screech Owl: one BCC; one in period TCC. Great Horned Owl: eight BCC; one CCC; one DOCC; one TCC. Barred Owl: one BCC. Belted Kingfisher: one BCC; two CCC; two DOCC; three TCC; three other Jan. reports and three Feb. reports. Com. Flicker: one TCC. Pileated Woodpecker: two BCC; one TCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: two TCC, and present through period; one at Smithville Flats through at least Jan. 26; one Cortland, about Jan. 11. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Truxton Jan. 5, had been there since Nov. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one DOCC, the only report all winter. Hairy Woodpecker: 15 BCC; two CCC; 20 DOCC; 15 TCC. Downy Woodpecker: 47 BCC; 15 CCC; 28 DOCC; 49 TCC.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: EASTERN PHOEBE:** one BCC (PK) at Chenango Valley State Park, description supplied. Horned Lark: 25 CCC. Blue Jay: 106 BCC; 37 CCC; 158 DOCC; 183 TCC. Com. Crow: 442 BCC; 298 CCC; 165 DOCC; 148 TCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 499 BCC; 136 CCC; 261 DOCC; 296 TCC. Tufted Titmouse: 11 BCC; two DOCC; 13 TCC; one Marathon Jan. 15; the usual regulars at Triple Cities and Owego feeders. White-breasted Nuthatch: 64 BCC; 52 DOCC; 33 TCC; usually a very static species, but seemed more common than usual this year. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one BCC; four DOCC; five TCC; continuing reports in Owego but nowhere else. Brown Creeper: 20 BCC; nine CCC; one DOCC; four Norwich Jan. 5. Carolina Wren: Jan. 6 Port Dickinson, the only report all period. Mockingbird: four BCC; one DOCC; one TCC; one Homer Jan. 12. Gray Catbird: one at Vestal Dec. 10 and 11 (T, BW); also reported from Owego in Jan. (RB). Brown Thrasher: one Milford Jan. 25 (EH). Am. Robin: five DOCC; one TCC; six more Dec. reports, two more in Jan. and four more in Feb.—usually one bird and not more than three per report, except eight Homer Feb. 20. Hermit Thrush: one Delhi Dec. 18 (SC). E. Bluebird: one still at Vestal Dec. 5 (J, KH). Golden-crowned Kinglet: four BCC; two CCC; three at Norwich Feb. 16, the only other report. Cedar Waxwing: 43 BCC; 13 CCC; two TCC. No. Shrike: two DOCC; two Portlandville-Oneonta Dec. 1; Dec. 5 Owego; one Delhi Jan. 9; no more Starling: 3553 BCC; 660 CCC; 487 DOCC; 431 TCC.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: one BCC; one at Delhi from Dec. 1 to the end of Feb. (MC); one at Truxton Dec. 15 (FO); one at Oneonta Dec. 16 (M, JB); one at Choconut Center Jan. 26 to Feb. 2 (MS), well-described—fed on suet; seldom reported in the Region during the winter and never that many.

**WEAVERS—SPARROWS:** House Sparrow: 614 BCC; 493 CCC; 497 DOCC; 805 TCC. Red-winged Blackbird: two BCC; 21 TCC; no others from Dec. 5 to Jan. 28 when one was at Delhi; then none until four Norwich Feb. 23. No. Oriole: one at Preble, in Cortland Co., Feb. 2 (PP), "carefully identified." Com. Grackle: one at a feeder in Norwich through Dec. and Jan.; five other Dec. reports plus one at Smithville Flats Jan. 27 and Owego Feb. 27. Brown-headed Cowbird: 11 BCC; 50 TCC; very few reports after Jan. 1. Cardinal: 132 BCC; eight CCC; 18 DOCC; 62 TCC. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: one Homer several weeks in early Jan. (*vide* JG). Evening Grosbeak: 135 BCC; 305 CCC; 396 DOCC; 183 TCC; still common, in absolute terms, but definitely fewer than in recent years. Purple Finch: four BCC; three DOCC; one TCC; only a half-dozen other reports after mid-Dec. House Finch:

231 BCC; ten CCC; nine DOCC; 60 TCC; 30 to 50 at Norwich during Jan. and Feb. Com. Redpoll: four DOCC; the only report all season. Pine Siskin: one BCC, the only report all season. Am. Goldfinch: 121 BCC; one CCC; 23 DOCC; 256 TCC; present all period but not in large numbers. Red Crossbill: 12 DOCC, the only report all period. Rufous-sided Towhee: one BCC; Binghamton Dec. 19, one Delhi Dec. 13 to the end of Feb. Dark-eyed Junco: 115 BCC; one CCC; 36 DOCC; 170 TCC. Tree Sparrow: 125 BCC; 36 CCC; 67 DOCC; 101 TCC; numbers noticeably down. Chipping Sparrow: one BCC (LB, DB), seen again at feeder the next day then not again before the end of the period. White-crowned Sparrow: two DOCC; one Norwich Feb. 16 (JL). White-throated Sparrow: 12 BCC; two TCC; regulars at several Triple Cities and Owego feeders; six at Norwich Feb. 23. Song Sparrow: 16 BCC; five CCC; seven TCC; only very few other reports. Snow Bunting: 40 CCC, the only report all season.

710 University Ave., Endwell, New York 13760

## REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The winter season can be best summed up as having been very mild for the Region in comparison to the three past winters. The area did not begin to experience winter with any degree of severity until the third week of January. Until that time, the ground remained largely free of snow, along with lakes and rivers remaining free of ice.

The total snowfall for the month of December was 13.8", which is about half the average 26.0" we normally receive during this month, and certainly a big difference from the record 40.9" we received in December, 1978. Snowfall accumulation for January was 24.5", closer to the average snowfall of 26.3", and in striking contrast to the 72.2" we experienced in January, 1978. February's snowfall came to 28.1", slightly above the average 26.9". Total snowfall for the season amounted to 71.5" by the end of February. Temperatures on the average remained mild for the season with record breaking highs occurring on December 11th, 63 degrees F., and on December 12th, 61 degrees F. It was not until the end of February that we began to experience below zero temperatures.

Positives for the winter include: Wintering flocks of Canada Geese resting and feeding in harvested cornfields in the southern highlands; continued expansion of the Red-bellied Woodpecker to the northern and eastern parts of the Region; and range extensions for the Tufted Titmouse into valleys which go into the Tug Hill Plateau and southern highlands from the Mohawk Valley; a very large flock of American Robins roosting in the vicinity of Onondaga Hill; the appearance of Brown Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, Common Yellowthroat and Northern Oriole in the latter part of the season; increased expansion in range and numbers of House Finch.

Negatives for the winter include: No Short-eared Owls, only one Snowy Owl and two reports of the Barred Owl; very low numbers of Goshawk and Rough-legged Hawk; only five Ring-necked Pheasants reported for the period; very low

numbers of the following species: Red-breasted Nuthatch, both kinglet species, Northern Shrike, Evening Grosbeak, Tree Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow and Snow Bunting; and no major winter finch invasion.

Observers: Ben Burt Feeder Survey; Gerald Church (GC); Bob Evans; Shirley Glessner; Gene Huggins (GH); Jay Lehman; Bob Long; B. & S. Peebles; Marge S. Rusk (MSR); Gerald Smith (GS); Mandy Stooks; Jim & Elba VanDresar; Gary Webb.

Abbreviations: FH—Fair Haven; Higma—Howland's Island Game Management Area; LOL—Lake Ontario littoral; LSB—Little Sodus Bay; Oswego CBC—Oswego Christmas Bird Count; OsH—Oswego Harbor; SKCBC—Skaneateles Christmas Bird Count; SyCBC—Syracuse Christmas Bird Count.

Observations for which no observer is listed should be credited to F. G. Scheider.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: one on Dec. 2-13, LOL; Red-throated Loon: two along the LOL near Derby H. Dec. 2-Jan. 20; Red-necked Grebe: one on Skaneateles L. east side Jan. 5 (MSR) and one on SyCBC Dec. 15; Horned Grebe: max 24 along the Oswego R. & LOL Jan. 6; Pied-billed Grebe: max two/day with a total of seven reported for the period; Double-crested Cormorant: two at OsH Dec. 2-Jan. 6 (MSR); Great Blue Heron: one-two/day until Jan. 27 with a total of eight reported for the period; Canada Goose: max 6,305 on Waterfowl Survey Jan. 5 (mob); Brant: two at OsH. Dec. 2-22; Mallard: max 1,275 on Waterfowl Survey Jan. 5 (mob); Black Duck: max 147 on Waterfowl Survey Jan. 5 (mob); Gadwall: max 45 on OsH Feb. 9 (MSR); Pintail: max six at FH & LSB Dec. 2; Green-winged Teal: max five at FH & LSB Dec. 2, with one female along Meadowbrook, Syracuse Jan. 1 (GH); Am. Wigeon: max 19 FH & LSB Dec. 2; No. Shoveler: max seven SyCBC Dec. 15; Wood Duck: one in s. Madison Co. Jan. 6 (GC) and one in Fulton Feb. 9 (MSR); Redhead: max 18 Waterfowl Survey Jan. 5; Ring-necked Duck: max 27 FH & LSB. Dec. 2; Canvasback: max 48 OsH Feb. 10; Greater Scaup: max 609 OsH & FH Feb. 24; Lesser Scaup: max 14 FH & LSB Jan. 20; Com. Goldeneye: max 850 along the Seneca, Oneida and Oswego Rivers Feb. 18; **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: one adult male in the OsH area intermittently from Dec. 22-Feb. 10 (mob); Bufflehead: max 88 OsH area Feb. 9; Oldsquaw: max 157 Waterfowl Survey Jan. 6; King Eider: one female OsH Dec. 22 (MSR); White-winged Scoter: max five Oswego CBC Dec. 16 (mob); Surf Scoter: max three OswegoCBC Dec. 16 (mob); Ruddy Duck: max 223 SyCBC declining to one by Jan. 27; Hooded Merganser: max 56 FH & LSB Dec. 2, declining to two/day; Com. Merganser: max 1,750 OsH Jan. 27 (MSR); Red-breasted Merganser: max 560 LOL Dec. 2 declining to two/day at the end of period.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Accipiters continue to show low numbers as in the previous year. Goshawk: very poor with a total of three for the period; Sharp-shinned Hawk: one/day with a total of 11 for the period; Cooper's Hawk: one/day with a total of 10 for the period; Red-tailed Hawk: max 23 Schroepfel Tn. Jan. 27 (GS); Rough-legged Hawk: max 14 Schroepfel Tn. Dec. 2 (GS); Bald Eagle: one sub-adult bird at OsH and area Feb. 9-26 (mob); Marsh Hawk: max 22 Schroepfel Tn. Dec. 5 (GS), last one Jan. 26; Am. Kestrel: max ten Schroepfel Tn. Dec. 9 (GS); Ruffed Grouse: one to eight/day; Ring-necked Pheasant: only five reported for the Region, still in suburban areas but declining fast; Am. Coot: max 132 FH & LSB Dec. 2, with a max four at the end of period; Killdeer: max five LOL Dec. 2, with one from the Steuben Valley, Oneida Co. Feb. 27 (E. VanDresar); Purple Sandpiper: one at FH & LSB Dec. 2, none afterwards; Glaucous Gull: max five-OsH Jan. 6 (MSR); Iceland Gull: one-two/day LOL Dec. 22 thru the period; Great Black-backed Gull: max 262 OsH Feb. 18 (GH); Herring Gull: max 3,000 Jan. 6 to a max 761 by the end of the period; Ring-billed Gull: max 8,000 Jan. 6 and persisting in good numbers to the end of the period.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 124, an unusual number for the

OswegoCBC Dec. 16 (mob); Screech Owl: one to three/day; Great Horned Owl: one to four/day; Snowy Owl: one near Munnsville thru the period, the only one for the Region (GC); Barred Owl: one along Stone Rd. Oswego Co. Jan. 20 and on the SKCBC Dec. 23; Belted Kingfisher: one-two/day with a notable record of one in Holland Patent, Bob Evans; Com. Flicker: max 20 SKCBC Dec. 23; Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 15 SKCBC (Camillus area) Dec. 23, now found in Holland Patent and in the Sauquoit Valley of Oneida Co.; Red-headed Woodpecker: a total of four for the Region, but only three survived, one imm was eaten by a Sharp-shinned Hawk in Oneida (B. & S. Peebles); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: only two for the Region, one on the south side of Syracuse and one in Ilion; Hairy Woodpecker: max 14 SKCBC Dec. 23; Downy Woodpecker: max 44 SKCBC Dec. 23.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: max 290 s. Madison Co. Feb. 26 (GC); Blue Jay: max 68 SKCBC Dec. 23, not very plentiful; Com. Crow: max 206 Feb. 18; Black-capped Chickadee: max 96 Higma Jan. 1 (mob); Tufted Titmouse: expanding in the last twelve years, an approx. total of 47 birds from 24 different localities ranging as far north as Holland Patent and Sandy Pd. to as far east as the Sauquoit Valley; Red-breasted Nuthatch: one to four/day very scarce for the season; House Wren: one in Fayetteville Jan. 27; Winter Wren: one in the Camillus Valley Dec. 23; Carolina Wren: one at the home of Mrs. Charles Riley DeWitt Rd. Dec. 6 and one in Oneida; Mockingbird: a total of 12 reported for the Region with one in Westernville Feb. 2 (Shirley Glessner); Brown Thrasher: one at the feeder of Mr. Warren Kompe, Mattydale Feb. 3; Am. Robin: an astounding 3,450 roosting on Onondaga Hill the first week of Jan. to a few hundred by the end of Feb (GS); Hermit Thrush: one at FH & LSB. Dec. 2, one on the SyCBC Dec. 15, and one at the home of Susan Blackshaw Feb. 12; Golden-crowned Kinglet: one-five/day LOL Feb. 23; Ruby-crowned Kinglet: only one at Higma Jan. 1; Cedar Waxwing: max 130 FH & LSB Dec. 2; No. Shrike: a total of seven birds for the Region, very, very scarce this winter.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: max three SKCBC Dec. 23; Com. Yellowthroat: one on the SyCBC Dec. 15 and one at Higma Jan. 1.

**WEAVERS—SPARROWS:** Eastern Meadowlark: max seven SyCBC Dec. 15; Red-winged Blackbird: max 201 SyCBC Dec. 15, with one in Holland Patent Jan. 1 (E. VanDresar); **NORTHERN ORIOLE:** one in N.Y. Mills, Oneida Co. (Gary Webb); and one at the feeder of Mr. Warren Kompe Mattydale Feb. 1; Brown-headed Cowbird: max 208 Onondaga Valley Feb. 3; Evening Grosbeak: no exceptional numbers for the period, max 108 in the Rome area Feb. 23 (Shirley Glessner); Am. Goldfinch: max 34 Oneida Feb. 17 (B. & S. Peebles); Rufous-sided Towhee: a total of four reported for the Region, three in Onon. Co. and one in Oswego Co.; Tree Sparrow: max 163 SKCBC Dec. 23 (mob); Field Sparrow: one each from both the SyCBC & SKCBC Dec. 15, Dec. 23; Swamp Sparrow: one/day reported up to Jan. 1, none afterwards; Song Sparrow: max 23 SKCBC Dec. 23 with one to four/day after Jan. 1; Snow Bunting: max 42 s. Madison Co. Jan. 20 (GC).

1000 Crawford Ave., Syracuse, New York 13224

## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE CHAMBERLAINE

The winter of 1979-80 was the mildest seen in a long time. Snow was almost nonexistent by normal winter standards. No major snowstorms were evident except in those sections of Lewis County on the Tug Hill Plateau, and even then the

snowfall did not exceed 40 inches total on the ground at any one time. Our friends to the south in the Oswego County area and Syracuse got more snow than we did and most major storms tracked way south of us.

Temperatures were very undecided and Watertown recorded a 60° F high on December 12th, and people played golf with Christmas presents on December 30. On New Year's Day it was possible to launch a small boat on Lakeview Pond after breaking some rim ice. January 11th it was 53° F in Watertown and 8° F the next day and then 44° F on the 18th. Talk about being fickle—this winter was that. The low for the period in Watertown was about -10° F and no lengthy cold spells were experienced.

Water stayed open late or in many cases never really froze and provided some better than average waterfowl observations for the winter months. Lake Ontario water levels dropped significantly through the period and with low snowfall the spring levels may be very low. Wildfowl crops varied from excellent to fair and birds held back from feeders until late.

Trends for the period which were very evident were as follows: many stay-late or wintering species; few accipiters; more Red-tails than for a long time; fewer Rough-legs around Watertown but more than normal around Massena; increases in Bald Eagles; increases in Marsh Hawks; slight increase in Huns (Gray Partridge); release of female Turkeys in St. Lawrence County; low numbers of Snowy Owls; many Short-eared Owls; low numbers of Northern Shrikes, and winter finches other than Evening Grosbeaks were a disappointment.

Rarities for the period included Red-throated Loon, King Eider, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Common Raven, and the best for last—the third Varied Thrush for the Region. Unfortunately this bird was aware of our Christmas Census and could not be found on that day.

Abbreviations: WCC—Watertown Christmas Census on Dec. 15, 1979; MCC—Massena Christmas Census (American side only) Dec. 27, 1979.

Contributors: Matt Brown; Stewart Brown; Richard Brouse; Carol Budd; Tom Carrolan; Stu Cameron; Lee Chamberlaine; Bill Chaisoon; Frank Clinch; Kenneth Crowell; Buzz Devan; John Green; Chris Handley; Dee Hungerford; Nick Leone; Dot Nagel; David Newton; Terry Perkins; Alex Pfister; Anton Schobel; Gerry Spaziani; Joe VanRiet; Robert & June Walker; Lou Wallace.

**LOONS—DUCKS: RED-THROATED LOON:** one in Lewis Co. found grounded Dec. 13—released the following day on Stillwater Reservoir in Herkimer Co. (T. Perkins), Horned Grebe: one Sherwin's Bay, Dec. 15 (R & J Walker); one Henderson Harbor Jan. 13 (L. Chamberlaine). Canada Goose: 600 Wilson Hill Dec. 9; 1870 WCC; 212 MCC; 190 Massena and vicinity Jan. 6. Mallard: 66 WCC; 77 Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 19—many more than normal wintered in Region. Black Duck: max 90 Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 19; scattered groups on open waters thru. Am. Wigeon: 25 Wilson Hill Dec. 8. Redhead: 560 on ponds at Snell Lock Dec. 2; two all winter below Robt. Moses Dam. Ring-necked Duck: 123 on ponds at Snell Lock Dec. 2. Greater Scaup: 3475 WCC Black River Bay, Pillar Point. Com. Goldeneye: max 422 Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 15. Bufflehead: one thru period Robt. Moses Dam. Oldsquaw: 20 WCC Pillar Point; 60 Henderson Harbor Jan. 1. **KING EIDER:** one imm male Tibbetts Point Rd., Cape Vincent Dec. 23 (T. Carrolan & M. Brown), Com. Merganser: 2400 MCC; Robt. Moses Dam—down to 100 on Feb. 19. Red-breasted Merganser: one MCC Robt. Moses Dam; eight Henderson Harbor Jan. 13.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS: TURKEY VULTURE:** three WCC near Sulphur Springs (F. Clinch & L. Tinney) the first winter record—no doubt due to the very open and mild conditions of the winter to that date. Goshawk: one imm Dry Hill Dec. 16; one MCC. Sharp-shinned: one Dry Hill Dec. 10. Cooper's: one Watertown Jan. 25 (F. Clinch); one around feeder in Henderson Jan. 30 (L. Chamberlaine). Red-tailed: 34 WCC; seven MCC; the most common hawk for the period; one nearly completely white on Route 37 near Waddingham Rd. Dec. 18 & 30 (R. Walker). Rough-legged: four WCC; three MCC. Few seen in Jan. and Feb. **BALD EAGLE:** one imm at Cape Vincent on Dec. 6 flying toward Wilson Bay (J. Spaziani & C. Handley); one, age unknown, South Colton heading SW very fast Dec. 19 (L. Wallace); one adult near LaFargeville Dec. 29 (R. Walker); St. Lawrence River wintering area did not have birds until Feb.—most activity was in the Chippewa Point area and maximum birds were probably six, with one-half being adults (DEC). Marsh Hawk: one WCC; 13 Chaumont Bay area Jan. 6. Am. Kestrel: eight WCC; one MCC; a few thru period but down for the open type winter we experienced. Ruffed Grouse: 11 WCC; seven MCC; Ring-necked Pheasant: one near Perch River Dec. 15 (I. Biggers). Gray Partridge: eight Perch River Village Dec. 3; 11 Perch Lake Road and Dog Hill Road Dec. 5; some slight improvement noted in Jefferson Co. birds—St. Lawrence Co. no birds reported. Turkey: six trap and transfer females released in St. Lawrence Co. Town of Macomb on Feb. 29 where males were released last winter (L. Chamberlaine). Glaucous Gull: max 35 Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 23—unprecedented high (J. VanRiet). Iceland Gull: max seven Robt. Moses Dam Feb. 23. Great Black-backed Gull: six WCC; 15 Henderson Harbor Jan. 13; 300 Robt. Moses Dam Jan. 26—down to 190 on Feb. 23. Herring Gull: 52 WCC; 520 Robt. Moses Dam Jan. 31—down to 250 Feb. 23. Ring-billed Gull: eight MCC Robt. Moses Dam.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Dove: ten WCC; one MCC; five to eight at feeder in Henderson thru. Snowy Owl: one WCC; one Robt. Moses Dam thru; one Three Mile Point Feb. 20; one Gunns Corners Feb. 26; none reported for Jan. and early Feb. Short-eared Owl: one Ashland near Three Mile Bay Dec. 6 (S. Cameron); four Chaumont Jan. 1 (Walker & Leone); nine Chaumont Jan. 6 (Walker & Leone). Com. Flicker: one Pierrepont Dec. 9 (K. Crowell); one Watertown Dec. 14 (F. Clinch); two Watertown Jan. 25 (*vide* F. Clinch). Pileated Woodpecker: spradically thru period. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:** one in Watertown Dec. 1-Feb. 13 (D. Nagle, mob); one female at Henderson feeder regularly—feeds on cobcorn, sunflower seed and cracked corn. A bird was seen here last year on Feb. 25—is this bird a breeder? (L. Chamberlaine). Hairy Woodpecker: 12 WCC; seven MCC. Downy Woodpecker: 27 WCC; ten MCC; some improvement in the Henderson area.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: few in Dec. & Jan.—showing up in late Feb. in very modest numbers. Blue Jay: 82 WCC; 31 MCC; very abundant in Henderson and vicinity. **COMMON RAVEN:** two (one seen and one heard) Joeindian Pond Town of Parishville St. Lawrence Co. (L. Wallace). Com. Crow: many more than normal wintered along the Lake Plain. Black-capped Chickadee: 95 WCC; 118 MCC; superabundant in many areas. White-breasted Nuthatch: 27 WCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one WCC. Am. Robin: two WCC; 18 Robt. Moses State Park Feb. 8; one Brownville Feb. 29. **VARIED THRUSH:** one in Watertown at Carl Bachman residence Dec. 12-Dec. 24 (unfortunately not seen for WCC) identified by Mrs. Bachman and later by several other birders—the *third* recorded for the Region. Cedar Waxwing: 25 WCC; 25+ Henderson Jan. 16 Robt. Moses Park Feb. 8. No. Shrike: one Watertown Dec. 17; one WCC; two MCC; one Point Peninsula Jan. 6; one Canton Feb. 27; none Jan.—very few this winter.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Clayton Dec. 14.

**WEAVERS—SPARROWS:** Red-winged Blackbird: two WCC. No. Oriole: one (not adult male) briefly on suet in Watertown Dec. 14 (F. Clinch). Com. Grackle: one WCC. Brown-headed Cowbird: 112 WCC (R. Brouse); six MCC; two Jan. 29. Cardinal: seven WCC; two MCC; seven in Canton and vicinity thru; three or four wintering in Henderson area. Evening



Grosbeak: six WCC; 490 MCC; few in January increasing thru Feb.—40-60 per day at feeder in Henderson with fewer adult males and then increasing in males to one for every three females and immatures. Purple Finch: a few showing up in mid-Feb. House Finch: ten WCC; two or three but not on a daily basis—Watertown (F. Clinch). Am. Goldfinch: 13 WCC; six MCC; about 20 daily at feeder in Henderson mid-Jan.-Feb. Vesper Sparrow: one WCC Watertown (A. Schobel). Dark-eyed Junco: seven WCC; one Henderson Jan. 4. Tree Sparrow: 48 WCC; two MCC; more than last winter but still low numbers. White-throated Sparrow: seven WCC at feeder in Watertown, one Canton Feb. 23 & 27. Song Sparrow: three WCC. Lapland Longspur: six MCC; one Haverstock Rd. near Massena Feb. 24. Snow Bunting: four WCC; 415 MCC; very few thru Jan. & Feb.

Box 139, Henderson, New York 13650

## REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE D. MACK

This was a remarkable season for lack of snow and the presence of reasonable temperatures. At the last week of February there was only an inch or two of snow at Paul Smiths. Temperatures were cold enough to build up a good ice cover on lakes and ponds but in the afternoons one could expect 20° to 25° F. Some people joked about the possibility of a heavy black fly hatch at Lake Placid during the Olympics. The Olympics did have the effect of keeping several local enthusiasts employed up to seven days a week and thus not available to note birds. Three of these people worked nights, seven shifts a week and slept days so few February reports were possible for them.

Birds were rather hard to find. Feeders did not seem to attract much in most instances. Perhaps the light snow cover made natural food more readily available than usual, so that birds were there but not concentrated near towns and feeders. Several people said Blue Jays were scarce. True, but you could find one or two in deep woods such as the headwaters of the Chubb River where one would ordinarily not expect this bird in midwinter. They were there, but spread out thru the woods due to the mild season.

Winter finches were primarily represented by Evening Grosbeak, American Goldfinch, and Purple Finch in that order of abundance. There were three Christmas counts during the period. The Saranac Lake count had a record 38 species including Brant, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, and Tufted Titmouse.

Contributors: Deborah Anson, Geoffrey Carleton, Bernard Carvan, Charlie Delehanty, Richard Guthrie, Robert Hagar, Elspeth Johnson, Heidi Johnson, Heather Knott, William Lee, Ted Mack, Margaret and Robert McKinney, Karen Mout, John Parke, John (Mike) Peterson, William Peterson, Gary Randorphan, Walt Sabin, Carole Slatkin, Pat Tabor, Donald Timmons, Janice Timmons.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: Lake Champlain had two mid-Dec. birds. BC spotted one flying over Keene Dec. 18. A Com. Loon remained at Little Clear Pond at Saranac Inn, keeping a 50 to 75 foot area free of ice at the outlet by the hatchery. A Red-throated Loon was at Westport Jan. 6 (EJ, HS, HK, JP, WF). One of the counts turned up a Red-necked

Grebe Dec. 15 on Champlain, always a good find. The same count had two Horned Grebes while six were on Champlain Jan. 6. A Pied-billed Grebe was at Westport in early Jan. (EJ, DT, JT). Canada Goose: max 1360 on Champlain Dec. 15; 18 Tupper Lake Dec. 18. JP spotted a Brant at Lake Flower in Saranac Lake Dec. 30. It stayed most of the winter, with a mixed flock of ducks, and became very tame. Two Mallards were at Tupper Lake Dec. 13, and one was at Indian Lake Feb. 9. The New York State Waterfowl Count at Champlain turned up over 500 Canvasbacks, a Greater Scaup, six Oldsquaws, and 495 Common Mergansers. A Black Scoter and two Hooded Mergansers were on Champlain Dec. 15. One Hooded Merganser was at Tupper Lake Dec. 6. Four Com. Mergansers were still at Indian Lake Feb. 10. Two Red-breasted Mergansers were at Tupper Lake Dec. 7 (CD). These are not to be expected away from Lake Champlain.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: J Pa had two Goshawks flying north over Essex Feb. 21 and one was seen on the Elizabethtown count Dec. 22. The Saranac Lake count had a Sharp-shinned Hawk Dec. 30. Champlain Valley had regular reports of Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. A Rough-legged over Keene Dec. 18 was unusual away from the lake (BC). GC saw an imm. Bald Eagle at Westport Jan. 21. Several Marsh Hawks lingered in the Champlain Valley. Gary Randorph saw one at Essex Feb. 14. Six Ring-necked Pheasants spent the winter at a Tupper Lake feeding station. An Am. Coot was at Westport Dec. 9 to Jan. 6 (PT).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: The Elizabethtown count had 14 Mourning Doves and a count in the Champlain Valley had five. A Great Horned Owl was seen several times at Tupper Marsh and one was seen on the Saranac Lake count. A Belted Kingfisher was seen at Plattsburgh in late Jan. (TM). A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was at Chubb River Swamp Jan. 20 (RG, EJ, WL, JP, WS). A Northern Three-toed Woodpecker was seen upriver Dec. 30 on the Saranac Lake count, near the Chubb.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: WP had a Boreal Chickadee at a Bloomingdale feeder Jan. 20. Others were seen in the usual places. Five Tufted Titmice were reported from the Champlain Valley and one was at Lake Placid for the Saranac Lake count. 21 Brown Creepers were also listed for that count. A Winter Wren was seen on a Champlain Valley Christmas count Dec. 15. Am. Robin: Elizabethtown Christmas Count Dec. 22 had one and the Champlain Valley had 50 in Jan.; one was at Tupper Lake Dec. 10 (CD). Essex had one flock of Bohemian Waxwings Feb. 1-3 (J Pa). 25 Cedar Waxwings were recorded on the Saranac Lake count. A total of four Northern Shrikes were noted with Bloomingdale, Tupper Lake and Elizabethtown reports included in this total.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: The three Christmas counts each had at least one Red-winged Blackbird and two were at Tupper Lake Dec. 14. Two counts had one Com. Grackle each. Brown-headed Cowbird: 58 at Tupper Lake Dec. 10 being reduced to four by Jan. 14. The Saranac Lake count had 17 Dec. 30. The three Christmas counts recorded ten Cardinals and three wintered at Tupper. Pine Grosbeak: seven on the Saranac Lake count and six at Indian Lake Feb. 9 (R McK). Redpolls were absent. Pine Siskin: seven on the Saranac Lake count: 30 at Paul Smiths in Jan.; one Indian Lake Feb. 9; and four all winter at Tupper. Red Crossbill: scarce but a few at most inland areas at some time during the winter. White-winged Crossbill: about the same frequency as the preceding species; singing males at Chubb River Jan. 3 (KM, JP, JR, CS) and one singing male Indian Lake at Parkerville Road Feb. 9 (MR McK). A Vesper Sparrow was a good find at Westport Dec. 15 (GC). A few Dark-eyed Juncos were at feeders. On Feb. 10 PT recaptured a Tree Sparrow that had been banded March 18, 1977 at Wadhams. A Chipping Sparrow was at a Moriah feeder Dec. 8-11 (GC). White-throated Sparrow: one Saranac Lake Count and one all season at Tupper Lake (CD). Song Sparrow: one Dec. 15 on the Ferrisburg count and one at Tupper thru Feb. 8 (CD). Tupper Lake and Paul Smiths had Snow Buntings as did most areas.

Paul Smiths, New York 12970

## REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

RICHARD P. GUTHRIE

This has been the sort of winter that must have had some bird seed salesmen wishing that they had stayed with shoes. Mild temperatures, bare ground, open water, and plentiful wild food left little incentive for birds to take the human handouts. Some did, of course, such as the Field Sparrow that returned to the Gorman feeder in East Greenbush for the fifth consecutive year (assuming it's the same bird), and this time brought a companion! This year's list of "half-hardies"—that is, otherwise migratory species that occasionally remain into the winter—is exceptional. Ordinarily we have a few species each winter such as a Common Yellowthroat or Brown Creeper now and then—but this was a banner year! We seemed to have all of them. In addition, the open waters of the larger lakes and the Hudson, Mohawk and Hoosic Rivers resulted in unusually high numbers of waterfowl, including some species not expected here in the winter.

An extremely dry trend dominated the weather scene through the Region this winter. Less than one inch of precipitation fell over much of the area each month. The temperatures averaged above normal with a few plunges to near zero, and few reports of below zero.

Because of the rather unusual nature of this winter, one is cautioned against drawing any conclusions about apparent trends in the species reported here. We can note, however, the continued increase in Turkey population numbers and distribution. The Carolina Wren seems to be rebounding from its latest crash, while the Winter Wren remains hard to find. With the possible exception of the accipiters, the hawk numbers were noticeably down, while the reports of owls increased.

One hundred and eight species were reported through the period. Obviously, because of limited space, we cannot offer detailed accounts of each species, much as we'd like to. The following is a sort of tracking of species of special interest or those indicating subtle or obvious trends, and of course the unusual numbers or dates along with rarities for the Region.

Highlights for the period were: Green Heron, Brant, Bald Eagle, Pomarine Jaeger, Great Gray Owl, Gray Jay, Dickcissel, and Chipping Sparrow.

Abbreviations used here are: HR—Hudson River, MR—Mohawk River, TomRes—Tomhannoc Reservoir, Chat—Chatham, NB—New Baltimore, Cox—Coxsackie, ColCo—Columbia County, and CC—Christmas Count. Christmas Counts held were: Schenectady—Dec. 15, Chatham—Dec. 15, Salem—Dec. 16, So. Rensselaer—Dec. 22, Fort Plain—Dec. 23, Catskill-Coxsackie—Dec. 27, and Troy—Dec. 29.

Contributors: B. & V. Able, D. Amadon, Doug Ayres, Arlene & Tom Brown, Bob Budiger, Jim Bush, Paul Connor, Bill Cook, Juanita Cook, Nancy Dennis, Rena Dodd, Kate Dunham, Delores Ferrer, Peter Feinberg, Barbara & Hugo Gardina, M. & A. Giddings, Elisabeth Grace, Andrew Guthrie, Richard P. Guthrie, Philip Ingalls, Irene Irwin, Chris Ketcham, Mike Kurt, Ron & Carolyn LaForce, Arthur Long, Betty Laros, Carrie Martin, Elsie Powell, Ed Reilly, Alice Ross, Walt Sabin, Debbie Shaw, Larry Trinault, M. & W. Ulmer, Tom Williams and Bob Yunick.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** Com. Loon: SoRens (1st occurrence) & Troy CC. Horned Grebe: Dec. 15 MR Colonie. Pied-billed Grebe: Dec. 16 ColCo. **GREEN HERON:** one Chat. area Jan. 21 (ER). Canada Goose: 2000 Troy CC; thru Feb. 14 TomRes; 1800 Chat. CC. **BRANT:** seven Troy CC; 35 HR at Castleton in flock of Canada Geese Jan. 9 (JC). Snow Goose: Dec. 10 thru Feb. 21. Mallard: 654 Troy CC; 317 Chat. CC. Black Duck: 205 Troy CC; 57 Chat. CC. Pintail: one Troy CC thru Jan. 6; Jan. 18 Hudson, Wood Duck: two HR at Port of Albany on the SoRens. CC. Bufflehead: one Jan. 6 HR at Ft. Miller. Hooded Merganser: one Salem CC. Com. Merganser: 63 Troy CC; 14 E. Greenbush Jan. 9.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Turkey Vulture: Dec. 21 Hudson (A&TB). Goshawk: five reports Dec. 29 thru. Sharp-shinned Hawk: ten reports excluding some possible duplications. Cooper's Hawk: four reports thru period. Red-tailed Hawk: 131 total three CC's. Red-shouldered Hawk: one Chat CC. Rough-legged Hawk: numbers way down. **BALD EAGLE:** one ad, Feb. 23 HR at Four-mile Point. Marsh Hawk: thru max nine Cox Flats Feb. 23. Bobwhite: 16 Chat. CC. Turkey: 43 Chat. CC; lesser numbers, widely reported thru period. Virginia Rail: one Ghent Jan. 6 (B&HG). Am. Coot: one Salem CC; two Troy CC and one at NB Jan. 1 & 20. Killdeer: four Chat. CC and one Cox Flats Feb. 23. **POMARINE JAEGER:** one imm HR at Waterford Dec. 29 & 30. Photographs compared to specimen series at American Museum of Natural History (RPG *et al.*). Iceland Gull: one Troy CC; also Jan. 8 MR at Colonie.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Dove: 568 Chat. CC; 392 SoRens. CC. Screech Owl: 14 reported incl. one taking mice from NB feeder nightly. Great Horned Owl: 25 reported incl. seven SoRens. CC. Barred Owl: three reports. **GREAT GRAY OWL:** one Jan. 21-22 Carmen, Schen. Co., photographs (LT). Short-eared Owl: Feb. 10-23 Cox Flats max six. Saw-whet Owl: one found dead Rensselaer (PC). Belted Kingfisher: numerous reports thru Feb. 1, max five SoRens CC. Com. Flicker: many thru period, max 12 Chat. CC. Pileated Woodpecker: at least 15 reported. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 Chat. CC (DA). Red-headed Woodpecker: Dec. 6, 8 & 12 ColCo (KD). Hairy Woodpecker: 46 SoRens. CC; 21 Chat. CC; 18 Troy CC, rather high numbers. Downy Woodpecker: 101 SoRensCC; 59 Chat. CC; 28 Troy CC.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: scattered flocks, max 540 Chat. CC. **GRAY JAY:** five reports as follows: Dec. 9 Troy; Dec. 21 Glenville; Dec. 30 Niskayuna, Jan. 4 Delmar, Jan. 25 Clifton Park, each bird was reported at a feeder and staying less than 30 minutes. Blue Jay: wide disparity—304 SoRens. CC, while only 33 on the Catskill count. One lucky feeder in Schenectady had 20 visiting to help them dispose of all that sunflower seed. Black-capped Chickadee: despite some reports of few at feeders, the SoRens CC had an impressive 561 and Troy 308. White-breasted Nuthatch: the SoRens CC had 108 equaling the total of all the rest of the counts. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one each Chat. and SoRens CC's. Brown Creeper: widespread and frequently reported; 26 reported, max six NB Jan. 26. Winter Wren: one Dec. 22 Glenmont, only report. Carolina Wren: five widely scattered reports. Mockingbird: 89 reports. Gray Catbird: one Chat. Dec. 10 (KD). Hermit Thrush: one Feb. 4 Chat. (KD). E. Bluebird: a refreshing 44 reported; a good omen? Golden-crowned Kinglet: Chat. Dec. 23 (DA); Hudson thru Jan. 19. No. Shrike: one each Jan. 1 Stoney Creek & Ft. Plain Dec. 23, quite a contrast to last year's plethora of reports.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: at least 11 reported thru Feb. 24. Com. Yellowthroat: two Collins Lake, Scotia Dec. 15.

**WEAVERS-SPARROWS:** E. Meadowlark: widespread, max 60 Feb. 19 Castleton. No. Oriole: one Dec. 17-19 Schenectady. Cardinal: 314 reported. **DICKCISSEL:** one at feeder Dec. 16 Salem, Washington Co. (RPG *et al.*). Evening Grosbeak: generally scarce with spotty distribution, good numbers from CC's, max 137 SoRens CC. Purple Finch: even scarcer, max 21 Chat. CC. House Finch: 590 reported incl. 209 Chat. CC and 107 Ft. Plain CC. Pine Grosbeak: only four reported. Pine Siskin: one Ft. Plain CC. Red Crossbill:

six Stoney Creek, WarrensCo. Jan. 1 (RPY). Rufous-sided Towhee: two reported, one Jan. 5-Feb. 17 Schen. and one Dec. 15-Feb. 27 Meutzekill, ColCo. Savannah Sparrow: two Feb. 13 Cox Flats. Vesper Sparrow: one Feb. 20 Colonie, only report. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** one at feeder Jan. 5 thru (DS). Field Sparrow: two at the E. Greenbush feeder where one has wintered the last five years (BG). White-throated Sparrow: 222 reported. Swamp Sparrow: three SoRens. CC. Song Sparrow: 118 reported. Lapland Longspur: only four reported. Snow Bunting: 138 reported monthly from ColCo.

Remember "Dial-a-Bird" (518) 377-9600.

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

## REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

It seems strange to think of this as a winter report. Where was the winter? Temperatures rarely went below freezing, and never approached 0° F. About two inches of snow fell Dec. 19, and that was it until Feb. 16, when about four inches fell. A one inch deposit on Feb. 22 finished the season. Precipitation was so scarce that a serious drought could occur this summer if spring rains don't make up the loss. For the first time in history, hiking trails in Palisades Park were closed in winter due to dryness. The New York Weather Bureau was quoting snowfall for the season in the amount of 8.2 inches when the average is about 30.3 inches. Lakes and streams were completely open until Dec. 31, when shallower ones froze. Most were open for the entire Waterfowl Count period producing record counts. The Hudson finally froze Jan. 31, but was open again by the end of the third week of February.

The mild weather and open water encouraged most species of waterfowl to remain rather than migrate for the season, and the lack of snow provided excellent food for many of the passerines, so much so that feeder counts were at an all time low. Winter finches were nonexistent, except for a few Evening Grosbeaks, and one report of four White-winged Crossbills. Birders who took to the field on Christmas Counts were well rewarded. Most counts broke records in numbers of species and individuals. The Federation Waterfowl Count was the biggest ever. The 14,862 individuals counted was four times larger than the previous high of 3,684 set in 1970, and the 25 species found surpassed the 21 species record set in 1965. Of course we will never know how much the mild weather and open water affected the count, or did the excellent coverage this year play a bigger role?

Several observers commented on the abundance of local hawks, and surmised that lack of competition from absent wintering northern visitors might have had some effect.

Contributors and observers cited: Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Stan DeOrsey, Ken McDermott, John C. Orth, Eleanor Pink, Benton Seguin, Dr. John Tramontano, Ed Treacy, Berna Weissman.

Abbreviations used, and Bird Counts cited: CB—Cornwall Bay; CP—Croton Point; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; BCC—Burroughs Christmas Count, Ulster Co. Dec. 22; BWC—Bronx-Westchester Christmas Count, Dec. 23; FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count, Jan. 6-13; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count, Orange Co., Dec. 15; PCCC—Putnam Co. Christmas Count, Dec. 29; PkCC—Peekskill Christmas Count, Dec. 15; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count, Dec. 23; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count, Dutchess Co. Dec. 29.

**LOONS—DUCKS:** Com, Loon: one CB Dec. 18; none from Ashokan where they are often found in winter. Red-throated Loon: one at CB Dec. 1, 8, six off Rye on BWC. **RED-NECKED GREBE:** two Ashokan Dec. 9-31, one on BWC off Milton Pt. Horned Grebe: 10 on FWC, one or two birds reported from four different areas, Max 40 Ashokan Dec. 31. Pied-billed Grebe: 67 on FWC, with 59 of them in West. Great Blue Heron: 25 at PL thru Dec., inc to 32 by Jan. 26. Mute Swan: record high of 182 on FWC, first time on WCC, six birds. **WHISTLING SWAN:** four at Amawalk Res. Dec. 11. Canada Goose: 7,184 on FWC was six times prev high of 1974. Numbers peaked in Dutch Feb. 10 with 4,477 at Armenia. Brant: eight over Garrison on PCCC were quite unusual, 14 off PL Jan. 1 were more normal. Snow Goose: more than usual, max 16 CB Jan. 20, one or two at four other locations. Gadwall: 31 on FWC, prev high three in 1979. 11 on Croton R. Jan. 12, and 25 on Rockland L Jan. 1 are unprecedented numbers. Pintail: max 20 CP Dec. 17. Green-winged Teal: always rare in winter, one on FWC, two on PkCC, and one on Rio Res. Jan. 8. Wigeon: 46 on FWC, 30 at PL thru Jan., 84 in Rye area on BWC. No. Shoveler: nine on FWC compared to three in 1965, ten on Rockland L. Jan. 1. Wood Duck: reported from three locations thru period, the usual one or two birds at each. Redhead: always rare, one CB Dec. 28 inc to three by Jan. 29 (BS), one near Kingston Pt. Dec. 23. Ring-necked Duck: three CB Jan. 27 were quite unusual there at that time. Canvasback: BW reports fewer on lower Hudson than in past years, but not true up-river. Max 800 at CB Feb. 27, groups of 20 to 200 at several locations, 1400 on FWC, prev. high 507 in 1975. Oldsquaw: one on Hudson at Lent's Cove on FWC, another at CB Jan. 27. White-winged Scoter: two at Haverstraw on RCC were the second record for 33 counts, Black Scoter: five CB Dec. 14. Ruddy Duck: one of the few species down on the FWC with only eight birds, seven of them in West., max 14 near Castle Pt. Dec. 1. None reported from Tappan Zee where a few years ago they wintered by the hundreds. Hooded Merganser: 124 on FWC, 98 of these on the Westchester Reservoirs. Prev. high 81 in 1958. Com. Merganser: 1,845 on FWC, prev. high in 1957 was 1,372. Max one locale was 400 CB Jan. 25. Red-breasted Merganser: two CB Dec. 17, one at CP Jan. 13.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Turkey Vulture: more than ever before in winter. Max 53 near Quaker Hill, Pawling Dec. 18, 45 there Jan. 2, three still there on Jan. 8. Scattered reports of individuals from elsewhere in Dutch. Began returning to Region third week of Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one or two birds reported from each county, most wintering at feeders, feeding upon those who fed. P. French lost most of his many Cardinals to one of this species at his home in New City. Cooper's Hawk: at least one reported each month thru period. Red-tailed Hawk: in exc numbers thru period, max 51 on MCC. Pairing off by end of period. Red-shouldered Hawk: one on PkCC and another at Rye Nature Center from Jan. 11 on. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** one on PCCC; no details (Michael Gochfeld). Rough-legged Hawk: far fewer than usual. One Feb. 18 near Wallkill, one CP Jan. 22, and one in the Napanock-Wawarsing area Jan. 3, 10, one in Dutch Jan. 12. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** a pair of adults found Feb. 3 on Stillwell Res. USMA by James R. Treacy were identified by EDT, and observed daily for a week by mob. Last obs Feb. 15 and 22. Another found dead at Hawthorne Traffic Circle, West, Jan. 7 (Tom Carrolan), and another at Tamarack Swamp, Dutch Jan. 1 (Czecher Terhune). Marsh Hawk: a male at Galeville Airport Jan. 13. Am. Kestrel: exc numbers thru period, 38 on MCC. Bald Eagle: 3 reports from West, and a few elsewhere. The max was a whopping 28 produced by an aerial survey done by the NYSDEC from Port Jervis along the Neversink to the Sull Co. reservoirs on Jan. 15, 21 were ad and seven imm. Bobwhite: none this season. May be gone from the area. Turkey: continues to

inc. One at Saugerties Jan. 25 was quite east of the usual concentrations in Ulst. Clapper Rail: one rem at MC thru Dec. 23. SORA: an unusual record of one at Bedford, West, on the Greenwich Christmas Count of Dec. 16. Am. Coot: 20 at Iona Dec. 1 and 40 at CB Jan. 10. More than 350 wintered on Rockland L. Black-bellied Plover: one at PL Dec. 24. Iceland Gull: one second-year bird at CP Jan. 15, and another across the Hudson at Grassy Pt. Jan. 28. LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: one L. DeForest Jan. 10 was the third record for Rock and the first this year. Laughing Gull: unusual in winter, three reports, one at George's I. in the Hudson on PkCC, one at MC Dec. 9 and one at Piermont Pier was the third record for a RCC in 33 counts. Bonaparte's Gull: 37 at CB Jan. 12, and seven at Piermont Pier on RCC.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Barn Owl: one on PCCC was the only report. Screech Owl: tape recorders in the field have made a great difference in reporting this species. RCC produced 16 thru its use. Short-eared Owl: one Rye on BWC was the only report. Failed to appear at Galeville Airport where they have often wintered in large numbers. Saw-whet Owl: one at Rye Nature Center was captured and treated for an eye infection that had left it virtually blind. It was released in good condition Jan. 12. Com. Flicker: sev. reported reg. in Dutch. Pileated Woodpecker: missed on WCC for the third year in a row. Indicates suspected loss in numbers in the past few years may be true. Red-bellied Woodpecker: usual few birds at suet feeders, no change in numbers. Red-headed Woodpecker: wintered in usual places, one in New Rochelle on BWC and another at Bedford Hills feeder all winter. One imm. at Pearl River dur Jan. was coming into adult plumage. Hairy Woodpecker: rep low in West., only eight on PCCC which had 30 in 1978.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: EASTERN PHOEBE:** one at MC Dec. 1, 2. Blue Jay: most obs felt numbers very low. WCC had 77, usual avg. is 200 or more. Com. Crow: Alice Jones reports between 2,000 and 2,500 at mid-Hudson Roost. Fish Crow: a few more than usual, seven on RCC was their sixth record in 33 years of that count. Two at Highland Falls Dec. 2 and one there Jan. 27. One at Vassar Jan. 11 and another Dutch record Jan. 26. Black-capped Chickadee: numbers up on most counts. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only report from BCC which had five in the Ashokan-Hurley area. HOUSE WREN: one at Ardsley on BWC remained thru mid-Feb., one at MC thru Dec. to Jan. 27. Winter Wren: only report, one on BCC. Carolina Wren: should not have trouble surviving this mild winter. The several reports thru Feb. would indicate this is true. LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN: one at CP Dec. 12-15. Mockingbird: cont to inc. Gray Catbird: one at Marion VanWagner's feeder in Pleasant Valley thru entire period. Brown Thrasher: one remained at MC thru Jan. Eastern Bluebird: better numbers than in many years, esp east of the Hudson. 35 on PkCC and 24 on WCC were unusually high. The latter count usually avges four. Golden-crowned Kinglet: missed completely on WCC for the first time. Cedar Waxwing: 373 on PkCC was unusually high. Many reports thru Dec., but scarce thereafter. No. Shrike: one Rondout Res. Jan. 6 and again there on Feb. 25. Starling: ab 10,000 roosting regularly on Mid-Hudson Bridge.

**VIREOS-SPARROWS: ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** one first obs at MC Nov. 19 was there thru Dec. 9. NASHVILLE WARBLER: one in Rye Nov. 3, 4 was followed by a much later bird on Dec. 2. Yellow-rumped Warbler: many reports from one to a few birds; two on MCC; at least three in Millbrook, Dec. 11; and five on WCC. Four different reports in Dutch at different locations thru Jan., two different reports of as many as four birds there in Feb. PALM WARBLER: one at MC Dec. 2. Eastern Meadowlark: continues to diminish as farm land disappears. Missed completely on WCC. Red-winged Blackbird: a small flock wintered at CP. Returning on Feb. 24. NORTHERN ORIOLE: two Oran reports: one Goshen and one Middletown were still present at the end of the period, one at Pkpsie Feb. 4-13. Rusty Blackbird: ab 10 wintering near Stissing. Com. Grackle: the usual few flocks wintering. Migrants obs Feb. 23, in good numbers by end of period. Cardinal: rep low in Dutch, but usual to better numbers elsewhere. DICKCISSEL: a male wintered at a feeder in Westtown, Oran. First obs Dec. 1. Evening Grosbeak: good numbers of Oct, petered out

to only a few small flocks, mostly in Ulst. House Finch: numbers off at feeders, probably foraging in the snowless countryside. Am. Goldfinch: most obs report numbers down. Only 47 on WCC which usually averages 150. White-winged Crossbill: only winter finch reported—four in Garrison Dec. 27. Did not stay for PCCC (Ralph O'Dell). Rufous-sided Towhee: more reports than usual, all at feeders. Ab a dozen birds scattered through region. Tree Sparrow: only 63 on WCC which usually averages ab 400. Field Sparrow: only three on RCC compared to 75 in 1974. White-crowned Sparrow: one at MC Jan. 1 was noted there thru month. White-throated Sparrow: ab one-third of usual numbers at Dutch feeders. Fox Sparrow: sev reports of wintering birds east of the Hudson in Dutch, Putn, and West. In all about a dozen birds. Lapland Longspur: two near Middletown at Warren Sod Farm. Dec. 2 was the only report. Snow Bunting: only report 150 at Warren Sod Farm Dec. 2.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

## REGION 10 – MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

The winter was relatively mild and snowless, with good weather conditions through the Christmas count period. Blossoms appeared in December on winter jasmine and persisted through January, until a cold snap discouraged them toward the beginning of February. At that time there was some freezing of shallow salt water areas. Strong northeast winds and high tides combined to cut a new inlet through the barrier beach just east of Moriches Inlet in mid-January. Heavy snowstorms passed to the south of us as semi-arid conditions developed. A drop to 10<sup>o</sup> F or lower on February 29 produced the coldest day of the season as March came in like a polar bear.

The season lacked excitement and change of pace as far as birds were concerned. Apart from scattered reports of some late-lingering individuals and the overwintering of some species, including at least fourteen species of shorebirds, most expected winter movements did not materialize. There were no "winter finches," few "white-winged" gulls, no feeder rarities, and sea and diving ducks were in low numbers. Apparently waterfowl and smaller birds felt little pressure to move south as far as our area.

### Christmas Count Highlights

The Montauk count Dec. 15 tallied 130 species, one shy of the count record. (Although both totaled 130 species, the present count included Rock Dove.) While winter finches were absent, shorebirds filled in the gap. Turkey Vulture and Willet were new to the count, while Parasitic Jaeger and Western Kingbird had been reported only once before. Also of interest were two Yellow-breasted Chats. The absence of a Bald Eagle was unusual for this count. One generally winters on Gardiner's Island.

The Quogue-Watermill count, also held on Dec. 15, totaled 111 species including a first record of American Oystercatcher. Of interest were kittiwake, Laughing Gull, Black-headed Gull, and all three accipiters.



The Captree count, Dec. 16, located 113 species, none new to the count. European Wigeon, Peregrine Falcon, and three Red-necked Grebes were noteworthy.

Central Suffolk counters found 118 species Dec. 26, the lowest for the area since 1969. Shorebirds were in good numbers with a Short-billed Dowitcher found for the first time, Willet and Marbled Godwit for the second time. Other uncommon species included kittiwake, Blue-winged Teal, Cooper's Hawk, and Northern Oriole. The most notable absence was the Sanderling, usually one of the most common shorebirds in the area.

The Northern Nassau count Dec. 29 totaled 107 species, about average for that area. New to the count was Turkey Vulture, possibly the same individual seen at Montauk two weeks earlier. An Orange-crowned Warbler was found for the second time, having last been reported in 1957. Sanderlings were absent from this count also. Of interest were two Goshawks, nine Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Rough-legged Hawk and a Merlin. Blue Jay numbers showed a sharp drop.

Unverified count totals for other areas include Southern Nassau 110, Queens 105, Brooklyn 114, Lower Hudson 128, and Bronx-Westchester 103.

#### *Geese versus Golf*

Large flocks of Canada Geese, occurring both winter and summer in suburban areas, create some problems when their habits conflict with the wishes of some of the residents. Glen Cove's newly elected mayor sided with the gun and golf crowd when he permitted local hunters to attempt to shoot some of the 400 geese which gather on the fairways and greens of the municipal golf course. Protests from the neighbors ended this "sporting" event with only two or three casualties (all geese). During the uproar and publicity that followed, the mayor was quoted as saying that only the geese ended up happy. The golfers were mad that more geese weren't shot, and the other groups were very vocal in their condemnation of his actions.

#### Notes on Feeding Behavior

Art Cooley noticed an interspecific feeding association between Bonaparte's Gulls and Red-breasted Mergansers at Shinnecock Inlet. The gulls followed the mergansers and sought food at the point where the mergansers emerged from a dive. Apparently small items were stirred up by the submerged mergansers. On the Connetquot River, Cooley saw three Mallards, a drake and two hens, diving for food. The birds stayed down 30 to 45 seconds during each dive.

Positive seasonal features included good numbers of Hooded Mergansers and Oldsquaws reported by several observers. The Fish and Wildlife Waterfowl survey found the numbers of Brant up with a good proportion of young birds present. "Myrtle" Warblers were abundant along the beaches. Mild conditions permitted half-hardy species to survive the winter and helped establish new winter records for several species.

Species in low numbers included loons and grebes, Great Blue Herons, scoters, scaup, and most small land birds. Northern finches were virtually absent, and Blue Jays scarce.

Rarities were few: Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Guillemot, and Boat-tailed Grackle.

Contributors and initialed observers: Robert Adamo, Albert M. Bell, Ralph Cioffi, Barbara H. Conolly, Arthur P. Cooley, Mike Cooper, Thomas H. Davis, Stephen B. Dempsey, Aline Dove, Frances File, Paul Gillan, Sol Hait, William Lamoureux, David Larsen, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Alan Lindberg, Glenn Quinn, Gilbert S. Raynor, Barbara J. Spencer.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** Loons and grebes were rather scarce this winter in general. Two Red-necked Grebes Jan. 13 at Montauk were a good find (AJL). Eighty Great Cormorants Feb. 17 was a good concentration at Sands Point where they winter regularly (GQ). Green Herons lingered for the Brooklyn count Dec. 15, the Staten Island count Dec. 16, Southern Nassau Dec. 30, and one was at Jamaica Bay Jan. 6 (J. Ash, D. Riepe). A Snowy Egret was a rare mid-winter find Jan. 23 on the Forge River in Moriches (GSR, RA). Louisiana Herons were still present Dec. 15 at Jamaica Bay (W. Reilly *et al.*), Dec. 16 on Ward's Island (J. Machado *et al.*). Five Glossy Ibises stayed for the Brooklyn count Dec. 15. A high count of 22 Whistling Swans was present Dec. 1 at Hook Pond (DL, GSR, G. & M. Dremeaux). Seven remained Jan. 12 (GSR); five were still there Jan. 23. By Jan. 27 the five birds had moved to Mecox Bay where they remained through the period. Also on Jan. 27, two whistlers were seen flying over Sands Point (GQ). Several Blue-winged Teal lingered: one evaded the N. Nassau count but was present in Manhasset on Dec. 30, as well as before the count day (PG). Another was reported from Easthampton Jan. 16 (RA), four were found on the Central Suffolk count Dec. 26. Drake European Wigeons were reported from several places with at least two wintering in the Mecox region. One seen Dec. 1 at Hook Pond (G. & M. Dremeaux), was still there Dec. 12 (MC). Another was in Baldwin Dec. 29 to Jan. 19 with many observers, and seen again there Feb. 3 (SBD). A bird was at Mecox Jan. 13 (AJL), at East Moriches Jan. 14 to 16 (GSR); two were at Mecox Feb. 23. A female **TUFTED DUCK** was seen by many people in the Central Park reservoir Dec. 30 to Jan. 13. Mecox Bay came up with a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** on Jan. 12 (J. Ruscica, J. Clinton *et al.*). Oldsquaws were present in good numbers in the Fire Island Inlet area. Two female Harlequin Ducks were at Montauk Dec. 15, while a single bird was seen at Shinnecock Inlet Jan. 1 (GSR). Common Eiders were present in low numbers at Montauk with 16 to 20 birds reported. A few King Eiders were present also. Scoters numbered in the low 1000's at Montauk compared to more than 50,000 present during the past two colder winters. Hooded Mergansers seemed in good numbers in suitable locations. Six Common Mergansers were at Hempstead Lake Feb. 18 (GSR); the same observer reported single birds at Ridge Dec. 26, Montauk Jan. 16 and 23, and Feb. 18 at Jamaica Bay.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** A Turkey Vulture present at Montauk Dec. 9 to 15 (MC *et al.*) may have been the same bird seen Dec. 27 at Hempstead Lake (SBD), and at Mill Neck Dec. 29 (O. Dunning *et al.*). Reports of Goshawks seemed few this year. One wintered in the Sands Point area (M. Crandall *et al.*) while another was found at Jones Beach during the S. Nassau count. Sharp-shinned Hawks were plentiful on the N. Nassau count Dec. 29 with nine found. Single birds were seen in several locations during Dec., and one was at Muttontown Jan. 3 (AL). Cooper's Hawks were reported from Muttontown Dec. 24 (AL), from Southampton Dec. 15 (J. Hastings). Rough-legged Hawks were not much in evidence this winter. An individual was seen sporadically in the Montauk area, one was in Southampton Jan. 13 (APC), and another was seen at Muttontown Jan. 3 and Feb. 12 (AL). A Bald Eagle was reported at Shinnecock Inlet Dec. 14 (DL), and an immature was at Jamaica Bay Feb. 8 (W. Friton). Several Peregrine Falcons were reported: one Dec. 16, on the Captree Count, two Dec. 30 on the S. Nassau count, another bird was reported wintering at a Staten Island dump (C. Ward *et al.*). A maximum of four Merlins was present Dec. 30 for the S. Nassau count with individual birds reported on several other counts. On Jan. 11 a dead Merlin was picked up

in Jamesport; the specimen was taken to the Quogue refuge (AD). An American Oystercatcher was found on the Quogue-Watermill count Dec. 15. Perhaps the same individual was located Jan. 1 and 27 at Shinnecock (GSR) and observed by others through the period. Several Ruddy Turnstones wintered at Jones Inlet where they would be found with some regularity. A Whimbrel was present Jan. 19 to Feb. 10 at Jamaica Bay for a first mid-winter record (R. Cook *et al.*). Three Willets were found on the Central Suffolk count, and one remained Jan. 1 in East Moriches (GSR). A single Willet was present in Acabonack Dec. 15-Feb. 17, a first mid-winter record (J. Ash, R. Kelly *et al.*). Scattered Greater Yellowlegs wintered on Long Island. More unusual were several Lesser Yellowlegs present through Dec. Two were at JFK airport Dec. 15, three same day were found on the Brooklyn count, and three were present Dec. 30 on the S. Nassau count. A maximum of 200 Red Knots were present at Jones Inlet Jan. 6 where they were associated with 300-400 Dunlin (R. Paxton). Ten Red Knots were at Shinnecock Dec. 15 (GSR). Four Purple Sandpipers were unusual at Sands Point on Long Island Sound Feb. 17 (GQ), although they occur regularly on the Westchester side of the Sound. The largest flock of Purple Sandpipers wintered at Jones Inlet where 35 to 50 could be found. A late Short-billed Dowitcher was located at Moriches Inlet Dec. 26 (DL). Several reports of Marbled Godwits were received involving at least two individuals. One bird was present at Jamaica Bay until Dec. 15. Another, found Dec. 26 at East Moriches, was present to Dec. 29, and Jan. 1 (GSR) and Jan. 22 (RA). Two Marbled Godwits roosting on rubble, and later standing on the ice of a small pond in Merrick, along with some misbegotten ducks, Canada Geese and Ring-billed Gulls, were a curious sight Feb. 17-23, and established a first mid-winter record (T. Zwarico, BJS *et al.*). At least 14 species of shorebirds were reported locally in Feb. The blunt central rectrices of a light phase Pomarine Jaeger were observed Dec. 2 at Montauk. Another jaeger species was seen at a distance the same day (BJS). A light phase adult Parasitic Jaeger was present at Montauk Point from Dec. 1 (GSR, DL) to Jan. 15, a first mid-winter record (BJS, BC). The now fully adult Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides kumlieni*) returned to winter for the third year at the Jones Beach restaurant. Two adult *kumlieni* were seen at Montauk Jan. 15 (BJS, BC, S. Melum) where an adult and an immature Iceland Gull were found Feb. 9 (GSR, RA, DL). Fewer Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen this winter than in recent years. An adult was present to Jan. 1 at Montauk Point, and an adult was seen at Riis Park Dec. 23 (P. Bernath). A Black-headed Gull was reported on the Quogue-Watermill count Dec. 15. Possibly the same bird, an immature, was seen Jan. 13 at Shinnecock Inlet (APC). Immature Little Gulls were noted Dec. 8 at Shinnecock Inlet, Feb. 18 at Jones Inlet (GSR, RA, DL) and Christmas day at Captree (AJL). Single adults were noted at Montauk Point, Fire Island Inlet Jan. 19 (BJS), Captree Feb. 17 (AJL, SBD). Black-legged Kittiwakes were present in varying numbers at Montauk Dec. 1 through Jan. 23, with several hundred or more present in the area the day of the count, Dec. 15. A record date for Forster's Tern was established Feb. 3, at Plum Beach Brooklyn (T. Stiles, A. & H. Richard). One or two *Sterna* terns were reported in that vicinity during the previous two weeks. A late Common Tern was seen at the fishing station at Jones Beach Dec. 9 (EL). An adult Sooty Tern was found dead Dec. 23 at Cedar Beach; the specimen was sent to the American Museum of Natural History (W. Wilkins). As previously reported, a BLACK GUILLEMOT was seen Dec. 1 at Montauk Point (M. Cashman) where two had been seen the day before. Two Razorbills Dec. 15 at Montauk Point were the only other alcids reported (K. Able, P. A. Buckley).

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Two pairs of Mourning Doves apparently took advantage of the mild weather and nested early. A pair of birds were feeding two small young during Jan. in East Northport (F. Margiotta) while a nest with two "feathered young" was observed Feb. 14 on the Queens College campus (F. Purnell). Barred Owls wintered in unusual numbers in the metropolitan area. Up to three were seen at the Bronx Botanical Gardens (S. Hait *et al.*), another was about five miles away at Pelham Bay Park, while two more wintered in Central Park, pleasing many observers. Long-eared Owls were sparsely reported.

One was at Muttontown Jan. 13, Feb. 16 (AL). Short-eared Owls also seemed scarce this winter. Two were observed Feb. 9 at Sagaponack (GSR). A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen at a feeder on Shelter Island Dec. 28 (GSR). A Western Kingbird Dec. 10 at Sands Point was new for that location (BJS). Another was found Dec. 15 at Montauk Point (BJS, GQ). Eastern Phoebes were found on several counts: one Dec. 16 for Captree, one Dec. 29 for N. Nassau, and three Dec. 26 in Central Suffolk. The late date for a phoebe was set Feb. 3 in Montauk (J. DiCostanzo *et al.*). A very late *empidonax* species was located in Alley Pond Park Dec. 15 (H. Freeman *et al.*). Meager details and the late date suggested that the bird might be of western origin, but specific determination was not made. A late Barn Swallow was seen at Jamaica Bay Dec. 15 (W. Reilly *et al.*). Five Carolina Wrens were located on Shelter Island during the Orient count (GSR). This number cannot compare to the larger population on nearby Gardiner's Island, yet seems to show renewed strength for this species. A Brown Thrasher wintered in Sea Cliff at a feeder (AMB). Another was seen in Sands Point Jan. 27 (GQ). Three Eastern Bluebirds were seen Dec. 7 in Manorville (GSR). The only N. Shrike reported this winter was present Dec. 10-11 in Kissena Park, Queens (W. Astle).

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Late lingering and overwintering warblers provided some interest in an otherwise dull season: a late Black-and-white Warbler was in Hewlett Harbor Dec. 2 (R. Sloss). Orange-crowned Warblers were found Dec. 29 in Port Washington (BJS, BC), and Jan. 20 at Tobay (AJL). A Cape May Warbler was at Tobay Dec. 2 (EL). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was at a feeder in Smithtown from Nov. 18 to Mar. 9 eating peanut butter mixed with suet and wheat germ, cranberries and bananas (N. Sloane). Another was at the Montauk dump Dec. 1 (DL). An "Audubon's" Warbler was carefully observed Dec. 12 in Babylon (K. Malone). A Pine Warbler lingered for the Montauk count Dec. 15. A maximum of seven Palm Warblers was found Dec. 30 on the S. Nassau count. An Ovenbird overwintered in Southold, present Jan. 7-Mar. 16 eating seed on the ground (V. Moore). A Common Yellowthroat was found Feb. 9 in Easthampton (GSR). Two Yellow-breasted Chats were found Dec. 15 on the Montauk count. One lingered until Feb. 3 (J. DiCostanzo, *et al.*). A female American Redstart lingered to Dec. 9 at Bridgehampton (J. Ash).

**WEAVERS—SPARROWS:** A Northern Oriole was at a feeder in Williston Park from Jan. 13-20 (R. Rosenberg). A female **BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE** was associated with Redwings at Oakland Lake, Queens Dec. 15-22, with many observers. "Ipswich" Sparrows, which are so different behaviorially from Savannah Sparrows, are still found along Island beaches: six were found on the Captree count Dec. 16, four were seen on the Central Suffolk count Dec. 26, one was at Montauk Dec. 1 (GSR), and stayed for the count Dec. 15, another was seen at Jan. 13 in Mastic, and at Jones Beach Feb. 18 (GSR). Three Vesper Sparrows were found for the Captree count, one on N. Nassau, and a Vesper was at Shinnecock Dec. 15 (GSR). A Lark Sparrow was seen at a feeder in N. Babylon Feb. 16, and remained through the end of the month. Four White-crowned Sparrows were observed Jan. 16 at Mecox and one in Easthampton Feb. 9 (GSR).

A correction: In the summer 1979 report, the Black-headed Gull reported should be a Lesser Black-backed Gull. The bird was in sub-adult plumage, possibly approaching its third winter.

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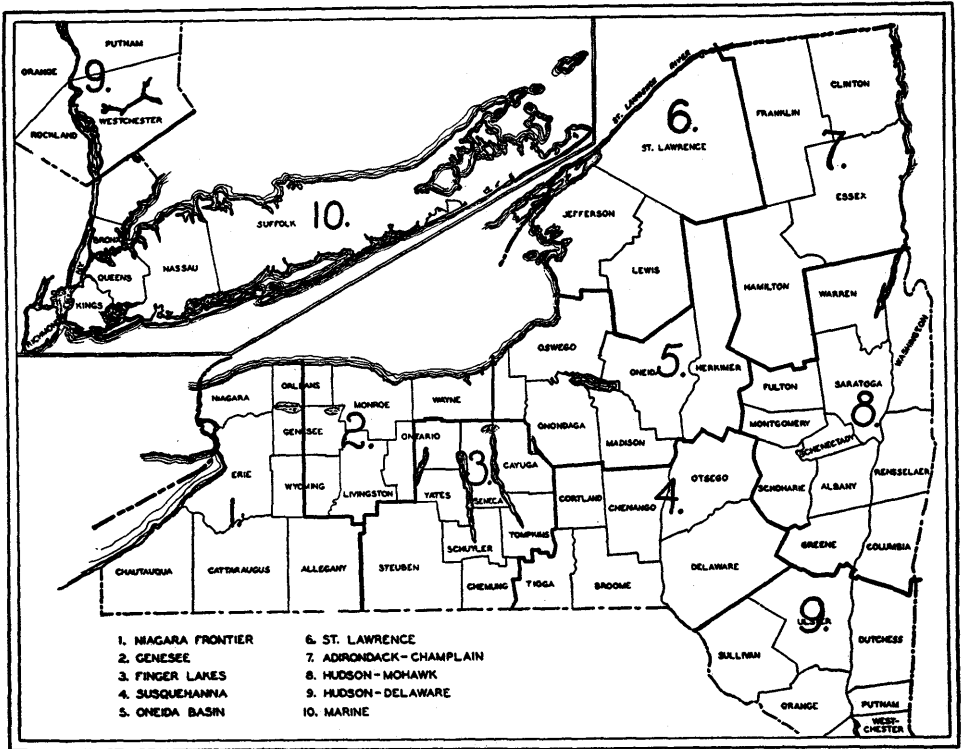
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Deadline is March 7

Spring Season: March, April, May

Deadline is June 7

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Deadline is September 7

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