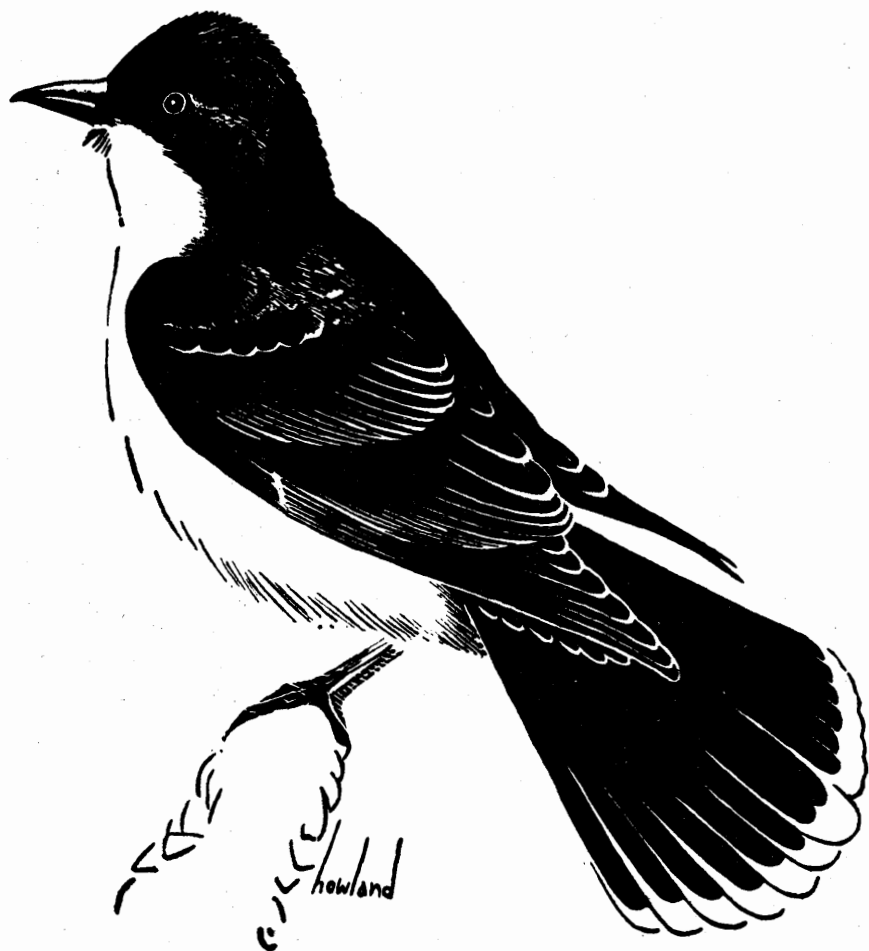


The **KINGBIRD**



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

Highlights of the Winter Season

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Cover Design — Douglas L. Howland



*Ivory Gull, Newburgh, Orange County.
12 January 1981* *Harry Darrow*

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES

39. IVORY GULL

EDWARD D. TREACY

It was about 11 a.m. E.S.T. on Sunday, 11 January 1981, when Brian Schieffer and the writer, just finishing our Federation Waterfowl Count, and Benton Seguin, who was just starting his, independently observed an immature Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) on the Hudson River just off the sewage disposal plant at Newburgh, Orange County. Schieffer and I were on a bluff south of the plant, about a hundred yards back from the river, while Seguin was observing the bird from the edge of the river just north of the plant. Neither party was aware of the other's presence. The writer was familiar with the immature of this species, having observed one being fed by hand at Salisbury Beach, Massachusetts on 2 January 1976. Seguin had studied the species over a period of several days in Iceland and in Alaska. After observing the bird for about a half hour, Schieffer and I left to spread the word, and went to Seguin's home only to find that he was out on the Waterfowl Count. We had no idea he had been observing the same bird at the same moment from another vantage point.

This bird was observed and photographed by many people on the following Monday and Tuesday, 12 and 13 January, but disappeared for the rest of the week, only to return on the following Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, 25-27 January; it was not reported thereafter. The bird showed little fear of man, and allowed people to approach as closely as 20 feet to take photographs.

The A.O.U. *Check-list of North American Birds* (Fifth ed., 1957, p. 229) states that the Ivory Gull breeds north of the Arctic Circle, and is virtually circumpolar. It further states that the species winters mainly over the drift ice south to the northern coasts of North America, and casually to Maine, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey.

Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 288) lists six records from New York State between 1893 and 1964; in his *Supplement to Birds of New York State* (1976, p. 20), Bull adds a seventh record, of an immature at Niagara Falls, Niagara Co., 29-31 January 1973, photographed by William Vaughan. Up to 1981 there has been one additional record, the eighth for the state; this was an immature discovered by Paul Stoutenburgh on 8 February 1976 at Southold, Suffolk

Co.; this bird was found dead on 10 February 1976 by Tom Davis and Davis Finch, and on dissection, proved to be a female (*Kingbird*, vol. 26, no. 2, p. 119; Spring, 1976).

This winter there have been three occurrences of the Ivory Gull in New York State. An immature was seen on 1 January 1981 in the Niagara River Gorge, Niagara Co., by Robert Andrie, Harold Axtell, and others; this bird, the ninth record for New York State, may be the same bird as an immature photographed by M. Gustafson of Cleveland, Ohio, on 22 December 1980 on the Canadian side of the Niagara River Gorge. An immature was also seen and photographed at Charlotte, Monroe Co., at the mouth of the Genesee River, on 21 January 1981 by Mike Davids, Al Kemnitzer, Pat Reister and Kevin Griffiths. The bird at Newburgh thus constitutes the tenth record for the state, and the bird at Charlotte the eleventh. The possibility exists that the same bird may have been involved in more than one of these three occurrences during the winter of 1981.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York

OBSERVATIONS ON A SNOWY OWL AT GREAT GULL ISLAND

MARY H. WINDELS

Although many wintering Snowy Owls (*Nyctea scandiaca*) have been observed for short periods, there is seldom an opportunity to watch the behavior of an undisturbed individual for the greater part of a day. On 20 November 1980, we were able to do this on Great Gull Island, Suffolk County, a research station of the American Museum of Natural History at the entrance of Long Island Sound, about seven miles east northeast of Orient Point, Long Island. The island is half a mile long and one tenth of a mile wide, and is covered with thickets of bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*), open weedy stretches, and the cement earthwork remains of an old fort. The House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) is the only resident mammal.

November 20 was calm and clear. We discovered the owl in mid-morning and watched it at frequent intervals from an observation tower until it left the island at dusk. It was perched near the edge of an extensive cement pavement in the high central portion of the island, from which it could survey all around. It had very little barring, and resembled immature males in the American Museum of Natural History collection.

The bird stayed in the same spot all day and was motionless for long periods. Its eyes were narrowed to horizontal slits, but we never saw them fully closed. On several occasions it was roused by interactions with other birds. When a Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) flitted to the pavement from a bayberry and hopped within a few yards of it, the owl stretched its neck out and watched intently but made no attempt to capture it. It turned its head to follow a flock of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) that swept by several times. Snowy Owls are capable of catching passerines in flight (Forbush, 1927, p. 235), and Gross (1944) reports them taking songbirds in Maine and New Brunswick.

None of the passerines seemed to notice the owl, but at about noon two adult Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*) appeared and harassed it for approximately 40 minutes. They circled above it, calling loudly, then dove at it in turn, sometimes coming as close as five or ten feet. The owl faced them continuously, crouching and gaping its bill as they swooped down. The gulls eventually left, but

returned several times during the next few hours. Gulls will often attack birds of prey; Peterson (1948, p. 117) reports a Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) being mobbed and killed by a flock of gulls.

In late afternoon the owl became increasingly active, and by 1600 hrs. it was raising and lowering its head, preening, and stretching its wings over its back. At this time we also noticed that the owl's eyes had opened wide. At about 1600 hrs. it took a short hop-flight of a few yards and at 1635 hrs., just as the sun set, it took off again and flew to an observation blind on the north side of the island. Soon afterwards, the bird crossed low over the island to a blind on the south side where it stayed until the sky was fairly dark. The moon was full, so visibility was good. At 1700 hrs. it took off again and flew south over the water. About 500 feet from shore it stopped, hovered about 20 feet up, and plunged down close to the surface. There was a duck in the water just below, which dove as the owl came down; it may have been a Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) as there had been some feeding there during the day. The owl, unsuccessful, flew west and hovered briefly over a lobster-pot buoy. Then it flew off low over the waves towards Gardiner's Island, five miles to the south, and we lost it in the dusk. Snowy Owls are known to take ducks along the coast in winter (Forbush, loc. cit.) and also on the breeding grounds (Gross, 1944).

Snowy Owls can hunt by night or by day. Fogden (1973, p. 92) states that they are diurnal by necessity during the Arctic summer, but prefer to be crepuscular; our observations seemed consistent with this; Karalus and Eckert (1974, p. 189), however, report the species hunting by day during a southward irruption.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Joseph DiCostanzo first saw the owl, and both he and Helen Hays, director of the Great Gull Island Project, let me use their field records and gave very helpful advice on this note. Work on Great Gull Island is supported by funds from the American Museum of Natural History and the Linnaean Society of New York.

This is Contribution No. 60 of the Great Gull Island Project.

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NESTING OF RED-TAILED HAWKS AND GREAT HORNED OWLS IN CENTRAL NEW YORK SUBURBAN AREAS

WILLIAM F. MINOR and MAUREEN L. MINOR

INTRODUCTION

For many years we have followed the nestings of Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) in the area to the east of Syracuse, Onondaga County. In most years we kept no records because of the sporadic nature of our observations.

During the winters of 1978-79 and 1979-80 we observed Red-tailed Hawks in the Butternut Creek valley in the Town of DeWitt, just east of Syracuse, and in late February 1980 found that Great Horned Owls were using Nest No. 5 (see Fig. 1). That nest had been occupied by Red-tailed Hawks in 1979 but had produced no young. We expected that at least one pair of Red-tailed Hawks would nest in the Butternut Creek valley in 1980. To our surprise we found three incubating hawks along the valley by mid-April (Nests 1, 2, and 4).

Between mid-March and mid-April we also located three active hawk nests to the north, along Interstate Route 90 (N.Y. State Thruway). Further investigation of nearby areas where Red-tailed Hawks had been known to nest in the past resulted in the location of two more active Red-tailed Hawk nests (Nos. 11 and 12) and two partially active hawk nests (Nos. 3 and 6). In addition we were informed of the location of another Great Horned Owl nest (No. 8).

By 20 April, 1980 we had ten Red-tailed Hawk and two Great Horned Owl nests under observation in this relatively small, generally suburban area. All of the nests were followed and the results are reported below and summarized in Figure 2. The nest locations are shown in Figure 1.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

The area of this report is located in central Onondaga County at the northern edge of the Allegheny Plateau, with the Great Lakes Plains stretching to the north (Storey, 1977). The area covered, including nest locations, is shown in Figure 1. Butternut Creek cuts through a broad valley between two suburban areas to join Limestone Creek south of Nest No. 11. The northeastern section of the

area is drained by Ley Creek, which flows westward into Onondaga Lake. Figure 1 has an area of approximately 72 square miles (186.5 square kilometers). The area of the map does not necessarily include the entire territorial areas of the nesting birds.

METHODS

Ten of the twelve nesting sites were located by observation from nearby highways. In most cases continued observations were made with a 30x telescope from distances of up to 0.3 mile (0.48 kilometer). The ability to observe many of the nests from a distance allowed nearly level views of the nest platforms. We were extremely fortunate in that eight of the nests could still be observed from a distance after the foliage was fully developed. The other four nests (all of the Red-tailed Hawk) required short walks for observation. We were careful in these cases to approach the nests no closer than necessary for the determination of their status.

NESTING AREAS

During the last twenty-five years most of our experience has been with Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owl nesting sites in upland, wooded areas to the east of Syracuse.

Bull (1974, p. 184) states that Red-tailed Hawks "show a preference for patches of woodland in upland, open park-like country," but also breed in the Adirondacks and pine-oak barrens of eastern Long Island where there are openings in the forest.

Hagar (1957), in his study in Madison County, N.Y., stated that it seemed that the Red-tailed Hawks favored the uplands exclusively, and implied that the hawks tended to avoid the lowlands. Hagar's study area is more directly related to the area of the present study than any other of which we are aware. It was made primarily in wooded uplands on the northern edge of the Allegheny Plateau.

It has been obvious to us for many years that both the Red-tailed Hawk and the Great Horned Owl are successful breeders in the lake plains to the north of the Syracuse area. This conclusion is supported for nearby Oswego and northern Cayuga Counties, where the two species are breeding successfully and the Red-tailed Hawk may be on the increase (Smith and Ryan, 1978).

In the small sample of this study the average distance of nesting sites from highways was 0.17 mi. (0.27 km) (0.05-0.5 mi., or 0.08-0.8 km range); this is not unexpected in view of our general method

of searching for nests by driving along the highways.

The average distance (0.2 mi., 0.32 km) of the twelve nests from daily human activity exclusive of roads, was surprising. Over the years we have seen occasional nests near homes and highways, but never such a concentration as we found this year.

In general the nest locations were in mixed second-growth hardwoods, but the individual locations are worth brief descriptions in relation to habitat and probable hunting areas.

Nest 1 — Red-tailed Hawk. At the bottom of a dry mixed hardwood slope above a pond and marshy area; hunting area probably to the northwest and west.

Nest 2 — Red-tailed Hawk. In mixed hardwoods (with mixed white cedar and white pine) just south of an extensive cattail marsh; probable hunting area north and south along the Butternut Creek valley.

Nest 3 — Red-tailed Hawk. In upland mixed hardwoods; most likely hunting area to the south.

Nest 4 — Red-tailed Hawk. In a dead ash in partially drowned wet woods; the Town of DeWitt landfill to the north, and the Creek valley, are the probable hunting areas.

Nest 5 — Great Horned Owl. In a small patch of hardwoods completely surrounded by highways; the DeWitt landfill is the most likely hunting area.

Nest 6 — Red-tailed Hawk. In a large cottonwood, one of a small clump in an old muckland farming area; hunting area in the valley along Route 690 to the east.

Nest 7 — Red-tailed Hawk. In a red maple in a small strip of wet woods south of Route 90; the airbase property and Hancock Airport to the north are the probable hunting areas.

Nest 8 — Great Horned Owl. A most improbable location, less than 100 yards from the back fence of the Employees' Parking Lot of the Syracuse Post Office on Taft Road; the airport and surrounding fields are the most likely hunting areas.

Nests 9, 10, 11 and 12 — Red-tailed Hawk. In contrast to the first eight nests, these four have more hunting territory in the form of surrounding farmland, both in use and abandoned. Nest 12 is in a small strip of wet woods just north of the Old Erie Canal.

Based on our knowledge of previous nesting sites, we suspect that at least two more pairs of Red-tailed Hawks, and an additional three or four pairs of Great Horned Owls, may have nested in the study area in 1980.

NESTING DENSITY

We were initially surprised at the observed density of nesting Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls. Although we have not made an exhaustive search, it seems evident from the literature which we have seen that such a density is not particularly unusual, except in its relation to suburban areas.

The classic study by Craighead and Craighead (1956) reported a nesting density of raptors (five species of hawks and three species of owls) of 1.8 pairs per square mile in southern Michigan. Austing (1964) reported a nesting density of Red-tailed Hawks approaching one pair per square mile in mature oak-hickory forests in Ohio. Hagar (1957) reported a population density of one pair of Red-tailed Hawks per 2.2 square miles in 1952, as a minimum, in central New York State, apparently including a number of pairs for which nesting was not actually demonstrated.

We estimate that approximately 50% of this study area is urban, which would give a nesting density of ten active pairs of hawks and owls in *ca.* 36 square miles (93.2 square km), or one pair per 3.6 square miles (9.3 square km).

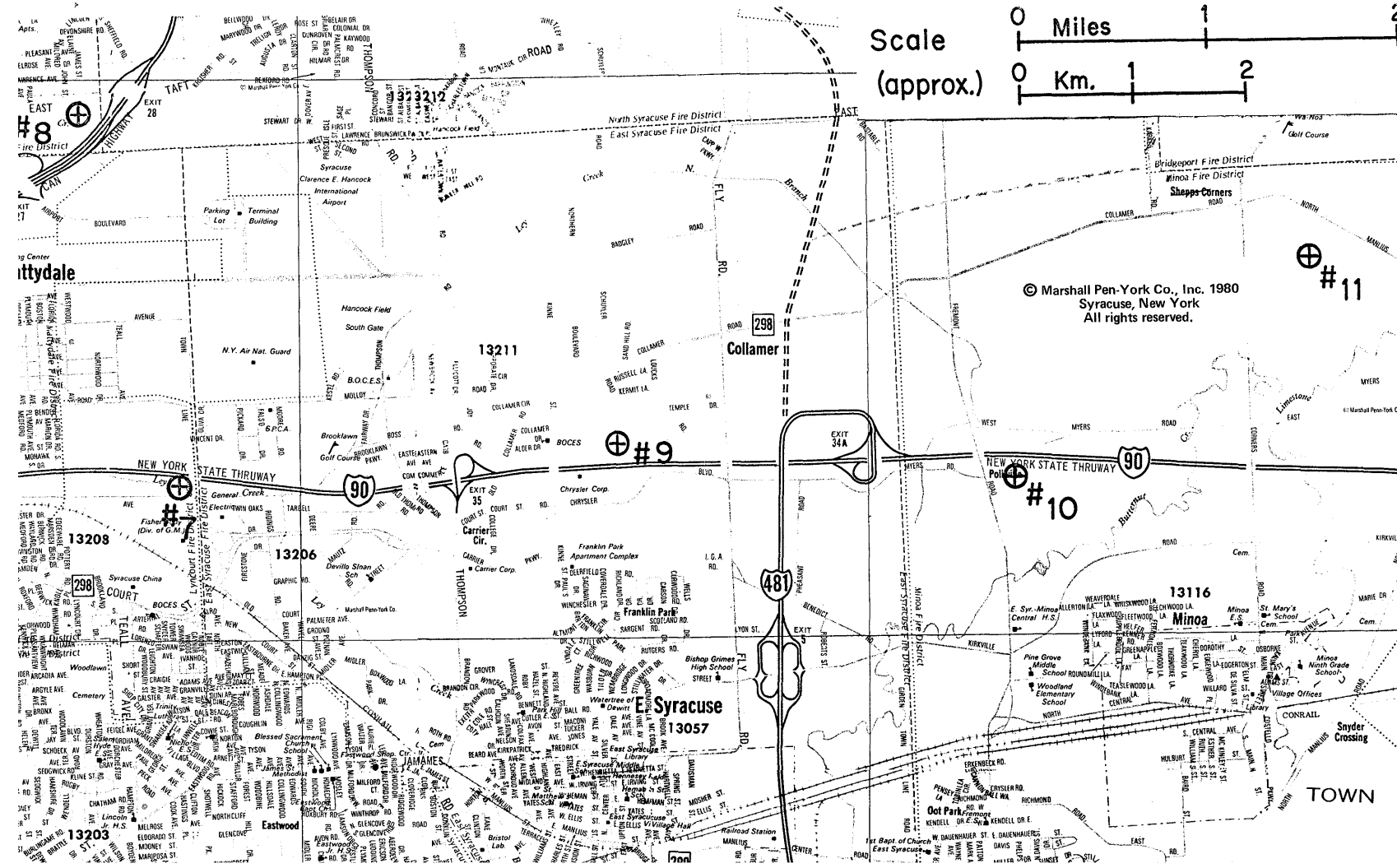
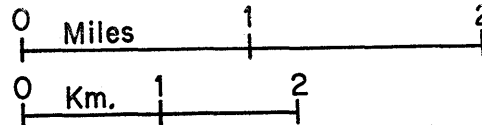
NESTING SUCCESS

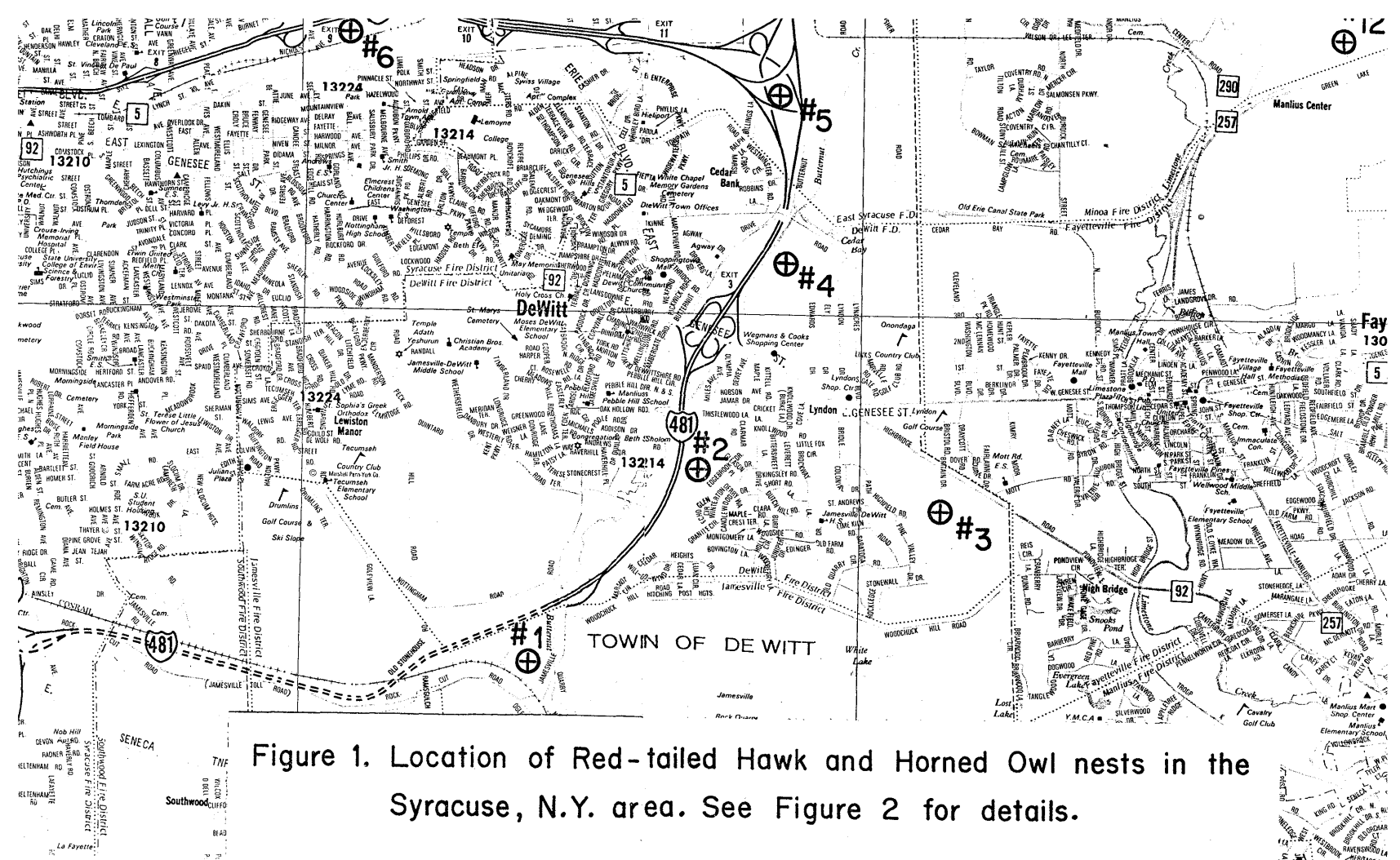
Incubation by the Red-tailed Hawks was first noted on dates ranging from 20 March to 19 April 1980. We were unable to determine dates of egg-laying. We concentrated our efforts on determining the production of fledged young (see Fig. 2), the ultimate measure of nesting success.

The Great Horned Owl nests produced five fledged young. Eight active Red-tailed Hawk nests produced 17 fledged young. One downy young disappeared from Nest No. 2, the only loss of young observed. Two Red-tailed Hawk nests (Nos. 3 and 6) had only single birds in attendance and produced no young. All nesting Red-tailed Hawks which we observed had fully colored rufous tails and were therefore classified as adults.

In 1952 Hagar (1957) found 26 pairs of Red-tailed Hawks in his study area, with 17 occupied nests, only ten of which produced young. The hawk nests in this study had a much better success ratio than Hagar observed. Bull (1976, p. 13) states that in 1975 in the Millbrook area of Dutchess County, 27 Red-tailed Hawk nests produced 24 young (no reference given).

Scale
(approx.)





DISCUSSION

The observed nesting density of Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls was not unusual in view of previously reported results. Nesting success, based on active nests, may be slightly better than noted in several previous reports.

What was most noteworthy in our opinion was the proximity of the observed nests to urban and suburban areas, and to major highways. Having spent much time over the years looking for hawk and owl nests where we expected to find them, in upland wooded areas, we were surprised to find such a concentration under our noses—essentially on our way to work from the suburbs.

Good weather during the last three weeks of May was probably a contributing factor to the nesting success. On May 31, a heavy squall line, with wind gusts to 45 mph, hit the entire area, with no apparent damage to nests or young.

The location of seven of eight active and successful Red-tailed Hawk nests in close proximity to wet or marshy areas is of interest. We did not try to make any determination of the territories or ranges of the nesting pairs of Red-tailed Hawks. Various authors have commented that the Red-tailed Hawk is tolerant of adjacent nesters of the same species. This report seems to verify that. Our general impression is that this species is adapting remarkably well to marginal habitat. The availability of good hunting areas may be a controlling factor.

The proximity of so many raptor nests to major highways invites comment. It is obvious that the roadways may have contributed to the hunting ranges of the Red-tailed Hawk. However, they have also cut windows into existing habitat, and the fences along the Interstates tend to isolate the habitat.

The major factors contributing to the success of this study were time spent afield and luck. It is unusual for so many hawk and owl nests to be so easily observable during the later stages of nesting.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to acknowledge a long standing debt to Dr. Walter Spofford, who first introduced us to the nesting habits of hawks and owls. We also acknowledge the help of Dr. F. Scheider, Gerald Smith, and Dorothy Crumb, who encouraged us to prepare this report. In addition, we thank Robert H. Marshall, President of Marshall Pen-York Co., Inc., for allowing us to use his company's map to prepare Figure 1.

FIGURE 2

Nesting of Red-tailed Hawks and Horned Owls near Syracuse (1980)

Nest No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Species ¹	RT	RT	RT	RT	HO	RT	RT	HO	RT	RT	RT	RT
Location ²	N	N	N	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Habitat ³	UW	DW	UW	DW	DW	DW	DW	DW	DW	DW	DW	DW
Date Incubation First Observed	-4	3/20	-5	4/5	2/21	-5	4/20	--	3/20	4/7	4/19	3/27
No. of Fledged Young	2	1	--	3	3	--	3	2	2	2	3	1
Date Young Last Seen on Nest	6/15	6/11	--	6/22	5/8	--	6/22	5/2	6/22	6/22	6/22	6/22

1 RT = Red-tailed Hawk; HO = Great Horned Owl

2 N = nest location new to us; O = previously used nest.

3 UW = upland woods; DW = damp woods, generally small patches of woodland in damp area.

4 nest could not be observed from a distance; no approach possible without flushing incubating bird.

5 unsuccessful nests.

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ATTEMPTED BREEDING BY HOODED MERGANSERS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

MICHAEL S. SCHEIBEL

On 13 May 1980 the writer, J. Michael Laspia and Michael Male secured evidence of the first known breeding attempt by Hooded Mergansers (*Mergus cucullatus*) on Long Island. On several occasions during late April and early May, a lingering pair of "hoodies" was observed frequenting a fresh water impoundment known as the "Sanctuary" on the Mashomack Preserve, Shelter Island. Although the Hooded Merganser is well known as a wintering species at the preserve, late spring and summer records are rare. The Hooded Merganser is reported by Bull (1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 152) as an "uncommon and very local breeder" in the state, where it is found most commonly in the central Adirondacks and the western counties.

The Nature Conservancy's 2,035-acre Mashomack Preserve is situated on the southeastern peninsula of Shelter Island, located between Long Island's north and south forks. A deciduous woodland, consisting primarily of oak, beech and dogwood, surrounds most of the "Sanctuary." However, to the south a large clearing with several buildings lies adjacent to the pond. It was here, among the large widely scattered oaks, that we located the nesting site. During early May, a pair of Hooded Mergansers was observed at least twice in this vicinity, on 3 May perched in an oak, presumably scouting out suitable nesting holes and on 5 May at the "Sanctuary." The author, a fish and wildlife technician assigned to the endangered species unit of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was advised of these repeated observations during early May, and decided to investigate further in the hope of obtaining conclusive breeding evidence for this species. J. Michael Laspia, the preserve manager, and Michael Male, presently filming the Osprey colony at Mashomack, were both residing on the property and thus afforded the opportunity of numerous sightings during the breeding season.

On 13 May, finding an oak about 10 meters west of the "Manor" house with an apparently suitable nest hole, we climbed the tree to investigate. The hole was located on the south side of the tree about 4 meters above ground. The cavity was found to contain six pure white eggs in a down-filled nest.

On the following day, Mr. Laspia was mowing the lawn near the nest tree when he observed the female Hooded Merganser perched at the edge of the nest hole. She was observed again the next day, 15 May, on the "Sanctuary."

The absence of further observations during the ensuing weeks of either adults or young, prompted a subsequent investigation of the nest site in mid-June. At this time only eggshell fragments remained in the nest and the female was apparently no longer in attendance. Given the proximity of the nest tree to the manager's residence, it seems reasonable to assume that if a brood had successfully hatched, it would not have gone undetected. The cause of the apparent failure can only be speculated upon. However, the large population of raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) at Mashomack leads one to suspect predation.

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AN AMERICAN KESTREL KILLED BY ORGANOCHLORINE PESTICIDES IN DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK

WARD B. STONE

On 8 May, 1980 a dead American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) was found near Poughquag, Dutchess County, by children. The bird was given to personnel of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It was placed in a plastic bag and frozen until the carcass was necropsied, upon arrival, at the Wildlife Pathology Unit, on 27 June, 1980.

On post-mortem examination, the bird was found to be an emaciated adult male. There was no evidence of trauma, parasitic infestation, or infectious diseases causing the mortality. The pectoral musculature and testes were atrophied and there was no visible fat deposits. The bird's emaciation, without an obvious underlying cause, suggested organochlorine pesticide poisoning (Sileo *et al.*, 1977; Kaiser *et al.*, 1980). Therefore, the brain was submitted to Raltech Scientific Services, Madison, Wis. for analysis of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides and PCB's (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 1968; Heath and Hill, 1974).

The brain contained the following residue levels (wet weight; parts per million = ppm): p,p' DDT, 16.8; o,p' DDT 0.63; DDD, 4.67; DDE, 110.0; total PCB's, 1.67 and Dieldrin, 4.86. Traces of Lindane, hexachlorobenzene, and Endrin were also found.

Stickle *et al.* (1969) have found that brain Dieldrin levels of 4 or 5 ppm (wet weight) can be fatal in birds. Porter and Wiemeyer (1972) found that two of 14 male American Kestrels died after 14 and 16 months on a diet containing low levels of DDE (2.8 ppm; wet weight); the brains of the birds contained 213 ppm and 301 ppm of DDE but less than 1.7 ppm of combined DDT, DDD and Dieldrin (wet weights). Stickle *et al.* (1970) made an index to aid in determining if brain levels of DDT and its metabolites (DDD; DDE) may be fatal to a bird. In this system 1 ppm of p,p' DDT equals 5 ppm of DDD or 15 ppm of DDE in the brain. Each ppm (wet weight) of p,p' DDT in the brain equals one DDT equivalent. Using this index, our kestrel's brain contained 25 DDT equivalents (o,p' DDT not included). According to Stickle *et al.* (1970) most DDT killed birds have indexes between 20 and 80 DDT equivalents. Therefore, the bird had dangerous levels of both Dieldrin and DDT and its metabo-

lites in its brain, and was judged to have died from the effects of one or both of these pesticides.

Nearly twenty years ago Rachel Carson (1962) warned the public, in *Silent Spring*, about the threat of pesticides like DDT and Dieldrin to birds and other wildlife. In October 1970 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Henry Diamond signed an executive order stopping all uses of DDT and most applications of Dieldrin in New York State as of 1 January, 1971. Nevertheless, this case indicates that these persistent toxicants remain a problem for some bird species, at least locally, and further investigation is needed into the origin of the pesticides, which may have been picked up by the bird outside New York State. However, Hudson Valley orchards are suspected sources because of past heavy applications of both DDT and Dieldrin (Johnson *et al.*, 1976), and further research is needed into the relationship of pesticides in orchards to the health of birds.

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*N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation,
Wildlife Pathology Unit, Delmar Wildlife Resources Center,
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NEWS RELEASE —

COLOR-MARKED BRANT

Wildlife biologists with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have been banding and color-marking Brant on their Long Island wintering grounds. In cooperation with Canadian scientists, they are studying the migration routes to their Arctic breeding grounds. Approximately one thousand Brant have been sprayed this year. The dyed feathers will be replaced during this summer's postnuptial molt.

Any persons observing color-marked Brant should note the following:

- date, time and place
- color and part of body dyed
- number in flock
- age-class (if known) of individual
- age-class composition of flock (if known)

Information should be sent to:

Harold W. Knoch
Regional Wildlife Manager
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Building 40, SUNY Campus
Stony Brook, NY 11794

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Gyr Falcon sighting in Nassau County, L.I.: On 26 January 1981, a white-phase Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) was seen at the Lawrence Golf Course, Lawrence, Nassau County, by Michael Scheibel, Steven Sanford, David Riehlman, and Paul Gaskin, all with the New York State Department of Environment Conservation. Our staff was conducting a trapping operation to band Brant (*Branta bernicla*) on their wintering grounds along western Long Island's south shore. The operation involves "cannon-netting" Brant that are feeding on the closely cropped grasses along various country clubs, parks and golf courses in Nassau County. The banding operation involves the use of silhouette and full-bodied decoys to entice the birds into the trap area.

At approximately 1630 hrs., as we approached the "rig," several Mallards flushed from among the decoys and as they flew off, the Gyr Falcon stooped in chasing the ducks and passed within 25 m. of the observers. The falcon pursued the ducks a short distance and then turned and flew directly overhead, returning in the direction he had appeared from, thus providing us with an excellent view. The falcon was nearly all white below, with noticeably dark-tipped pointed wings that were quite broad at the basal end, giving the bird a very powerful appearance.

The bird then flew to a nearby tree and perched for about ten minutes, affording us time to secure our 7x50 binoculars and approach within 100 m. of the perched falcon. At this point, the nearly all-white breast was clearly visible, and no facial markings were discernible. The bird subsequently flew from the perch and headed southward toward the "back" holes of the golf course. When last seen, the bird was continuing to harass the ducks feeding along the fairway, but was not observed making a kill.

The sighting was reported by Scheibel to the New York Rare Bird Alert on the following day. However, despite the efforts of a number of observers, the falcon was not sighted again for several days. Then on 6 February, the Gyr Falcon was again reported at West End, Jones Beach near the intersection of the Meadowbrook Parkway and Ocean Parkway.

[Eds. note: Some observers were fortunate to view the bird closely enough to see a very distinct dusky moustachial stripe and a dusky stripe through the eye. Those same observers noted the bluish cere and legs which marked this individual as an immature. The latest observation was made on 6 March in the Zach's Bay area of Jones Beach State Park by Kevin Malone. Between the date of its discovery and departure, it apparently ranged from the Lawrence marshes eastward to portions of Jones Beach State Park, and during that time it was seen by dozens of birders. It was seen to take waterfowl, including Brant and Black Duck.]

Michael S. Scheibel, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Endangered Species Unit, Stony Brook, New York

Double-crested Cormorants Breeding at Fishers Island: For many years the Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) has been reported as a summering non-breeder in varying numbers on eastern Long Island. During the spring of 1977 evidence of nesting was obtained off Fishers Island, Suffolk County; this represents the first known breeding in the coastal waters of New York State. The only prior breeding records for New York are from two small islands in extreme eastern Lake Ontario (Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 69; 1976, *Supplement to Birds of New York State*, p. 5).

On 2 June 1977, Noble Proctor (pers. comm.) of Branford, Connecticut, and Fred Sibley of New Haven flew over the north shore of Fishers Island in a helicopter and, on three nearby islets known as the Pine Islands, discovered about 40 nests with eggs. This record antedates by one year the supposed first breeding there reported by Paul A. Buckley (1978, *American Birds*, vol. 32, no. 6, p. 1142). During a visit to Fishers Island in early October 1980, I obtained more recent information from Mr. Edwin Horning, Curator of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum on the island. Mr. Horning was kind enough to furnish me with the details presented here.

Fishers Island lies considerably to the northeast of the tip of Orient Point, and actually much closer to the coast of Connecticut near the Rhode Island border. The three small islets, each of no more than several acres, are misnamed, as there is not a single pine tree on them now, although there might have been some at one time. In fact, there are no trees or shrubbery on these islands, the vegetation consisting of some herbaceous, salt-tolerant plants, and patches of *Spartina alterniflora*. The ground is covered with gravel and many rocks, some of which are boulder-sized. The cormorant nests are situated on the ground among the rocks, but not in the grassy areas. These ground nests are in striking contrast to those of the birds breeding on Lake Ontario, which nest in trees.

On 6 August 1977, Mr. Horning and his son photographed a nest containing three young nearly ready to fledge, near another nest of a recently fledged individual. One nest was located on some wood planking, and still another within an old automobile tire. Most nests were built chiefly of stems and bits of dried seaweed and grasses, a few directly on the rocks and others in the crevices between. According to Mr. Horning, the colony increased in size from 40 nests in 1977 to nearly 100 nests in 1979, with at least 150 pairs present in 1980. Although exact dates were not recorded, the earliest time for eggs were from late April to early June, for nestlings late May, all of June, and exceptionally into July, and for fledglings as early as the middle of July and as late as the first week in August.

Although Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus argentatus* and *L. marinus*) are present on the island, there is no evidence of nesting. The possibility of predation by these gulls on eggs or young of the cormorants should be investigated.

John Bull, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York 10024*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

THOMAS H. DAVIS

This seasonal highlights report will be as brief as the winter of 1980-81 but not as bitter. Statewide temperatures averaged nearly 4° F. below normal from late December through early February. This hard freeze closed most of the state's open waters including the western end of Long Island Sound. Numbers of waterfowl, gulls, and other water birds were low. Yet snowfall was generally light and many "half-hardies" persisted through the season including frugivores and ground-foraging birds. Numbers of American Robins and White-throated Sparrows were especially notable upstate. Mid-February brought a dramatic turnabout in the weather, with temperatures ranging far above normal for the latter half of the month, including several record-breaking highs in the 60's upstate. This sudden warming triggered an earlier than usual migration of waterfowl, raptors, and icterids.

Among irruptive species, only Rough-legged Hawk was singled out for its better than usual to unprecedented numbers—164 individuals registered on the Watertown Christmas Count more than doubles the previous maxima cited in John Bull's *Birds of New York State*, (1974, Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, NY.). A predicted winter finch invasion fizzled. All the winter finches were reported including Hoary Redpoll, but numbers of most species were confined to the vicinity of the Adirondacks, with Pine Grosbeak and Common Redpoll the only species reported in any appreciable numbers. A sprinkling of Bohemian Waxwings brought birds to four upstate regions. Theodore Mack cites the species' appearance in Essex County for the third consecutive winter, and suggests this might be attributed to an extension of the bird's winter range.

Outstanding rarities of the season included a white Gyrfalcon at Nassau County, Long Island and an apparent Boat-tailed Grackle at Rochester. The Gyrfalcon lingered from late January to early March and was a frustratingly difficult bird to locate. It ranged over a series of salt marshes extending over 20 miles by a mile or two in breadth. The bird appeared to hunt a given area for several days then switch to another spot when its prey, mainly waterfowl, grew too wary. The Gyrfalcon was seemingly capable of capturing prey at will and spent most of the daylight hours sitting on the ground or perched

in isolated groves of trees, further complicating efforts to find and observe it.

A large grackle present at Rochester was identified as Boat-tailed, with a full report including photographs to NYSARC. If confirmed, this represents a truly bizarre occurrence, for the species is virtually unknown north of Florida away from coastal salt marsh habitat. Boat-tailed Grackles have been slowly spreading north along the coast this past decade and have possibly bred on Long Island where they remain rare, with an average of three to four reports annually over the last five years.

The highlight of the season was an "invasion" of Ivory Gulls with up to four individuals reported. Immatures were observed in late December at Niagara Falls, mid-January at Newburgh on the Hudson River, and late January at Rochester, and an adult in mid-January at Newburgh. The immatures were noted on non-overlapping dates and all photographed but the photographs have not yet been compared to ascertain whether the same individual was responsible for two or more of the reports. The distribution of these Ivory Gulls and lack of reports from New England suggests these birds emanated from the Hudson Bay region in central Canada.

9446-85 Road, Woodhaven, New York 11421

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

The cold, cold December did "make cowards of us all" and we continued to shake through January into the first week of February, fearful lest this winter be even worse than those such a short time ago. While December temperatures averaged 3.9° F. (2.2° C.) below normal, and Lake Erie froze during the last week, about a week early, the mean for January was 6.1° F. (3.4° C.) below normal. Rivers closed more than usual and ice on Amity Lake measured 22 inches (59 cm.) in midwinter. As the cold finally broke during the second week of February, temperatures to the end of the period brought the month's average to 8.1° F. (4.5° C.) above normal. The drought of summer and fall persisted through January, with total precipitation nearly 2 in. (5 cm.) below normal with little snow except in the snow belt, which had 3 in. (7.6 cm.) above average. When at last relief from the prolonged cold arrived in February, most of the inch-

above-normal precipitation came in the form of warm rains which removed frost from the ground and partially replenished the water table. Ponds began to open and as expected there were ice jams with flooding along some streams. (Weather Data: Wellsville, WIVB-TV Buffalo, Alfred and Olean).

Perhaps because of an excellent wild food supply and low wind velocities, especially in January, many species overwintered, including a few Common Crows and Common Flickers, a horde of American Robins, several Red-winged Blackbirds and an abundance of White-throated Sparrows. The spring migration began one to two weeks early, with an enormous flight taking place February 28th, among which were Whistling Swans, Canada Geese, American Goldfinches and record icterid numbers.

Although Turkeys survived well, they had a difficult time during the extended cold period with some coming for oil seed and oats to a Cattaraugus County feeder. One apparently died from blackhead disease here in January. Pheasants develop a resistance to this disease and through droppings become carriers of the protozoan *Histomonas meleagridis*. As grouse are susceptible to the illness too, stocking of pheasants should be avoided in good turkey and grouse range (Eaton).

Winter positives include 1) about a dozen scattered Great Blue Herons thru the season, 2) many observers still "fond of humble things," grinding out regular reports in spite of the expensive gasoline situation and the drawing power of Super-TV and other sophistications of modern life, 3) slightly better Black Duck numbers, 4) Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks holding steady, a few Red-tailed Hawks all season, an incursion of Rough-legged Hawks and better counts of Marsh Hawks, 5) a good Ruffed Grouse population, 6) a great gull season, including eye-popping upstate Black-legged Kittiwake numbers, 7) regular appearance of the Belted Kingfisher and widespread reports of the Hairy Woodpecker, 8) fair numbers of Horned Larks and continued improvement in the status of Tufted Titmice and Mockingbirds, 9) an invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches and a sprinkling of Brown Creepers, 10) a wintering Brown Thrasher, a few Eastern Bluebirds arriving O.K. and lots of Cedar Waxwings, 11) a fine finch flight—best of "northerns" in three years—now and then a Purple Finch, continued increase of House Finches and a record for goldfinches, and 12) a handful of Rufous-sided Towhees and White-crowned Sparrows with here and there a Song Sparrow.

Negatives for the winter include 1) scarcity of loons and grebes, 2) very few kestrels, 3) low numbers of Ring-necked Pheasants and coots, 4) owls poorly reported (too few owl prowls?) and a poor Snowy Owl year, 5) Carolina Wrens still in trouble, no Winter Wrens and little change for Golden-crowned Kinglets and shrikes, 6) no Yellow-rumped Warblers, 7) almost no Eastern Meadowlarks and only small numbers of Cardinals.

Rarities include Brant, Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Ivory Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Raven, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Warbler, European Goldfinch (escapee?) and Fox Sparrow.

Abbreviations: ACC—Allegany County Census, Jan. 3, of birds outside the Scio Audubon circle; BOS—Buffalo Ornithological Society; CC—Audubon Christmas Bird Census (St.

Bonaventure [StBon hereafter], Dec. 20; Scio, Jan. 3); 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; SPA—State Power Authority.

Contributors: Robert Andrie, Sharon Baumgardner, Esther Becker (EsB), Elizabeth Brooks (EB), Doris Burton, Lou Burton, Donald Clark, Jane Clark, Stephen Eaton, Mary A. Fuller (MAF), Paul Fuller, Helen Graves, Matthew Hotchkiss, Doris Hurlburt, Norman Ives, Ken Johnson (Weather Data, Wellsville); Morgan V. Jones (MVJ), Clarence Klingensmith, Margaret Klingensmith, Erma Larson, Katherine Palmer, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Frances Rew, Ann Scott (AnS), Lillian Simons, Bruce Smalley, James Van Scoy, Regina Van Scoy; and observers: Harold Axtell, Dorothy Danner, Flora Elderkin, Marcy Foster (MF), Mary Jordan (MJ), Harriette Klabunde, Walter Klabunde, Alice McKale, Willard McKale, Fred Meyer ("Bird Notes," *Olean Times Herald*), John Morse, Arthur Schaffner (AS), and Michael Zebehazy.

LOONS—DUCKS: As usual, winter loons were scarce with the only report one Com. Loon on Navy Island Dec. 7. It was nearly the same pattern for grebes: two Red-necked at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 25; a single Horned Grebe on the ACC at Cuba L. (AnS), that took to the air from solid ice (!), plus max two at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 25 and Feb. 28; and single Pied-billed Grebes at Belfast Dec. 12 and Niagara Falls Jan. 1 to 3, and max four at Dunkirk Harbor Jan. 25 and Feb. 28. Best of a beautiful Whistling Swan flight was 400 at Cuba L. Feb. 28; many arrived over Olean and Salamanca the same day, only four days later than the former earliest date (1976) for Cattaraugus Co. (SE). Canada Geese were reported all winter with max 5000 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 23 and flock after flock passed over the Region in the big Feb. 28 migration; the Clarks at Farmersville Sta. have now had their wild pair in residence five years. Not due until May was the **BRANT** discovered on Grand Island Feb. 26 (AS). Noteworthy duck reports include: Mallard, max 915 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 17; Black Duck, 10 on the StBonCC, max 40 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 17, plus 44 others, total, from four locations; Gadwall, max 20 at Grand Island Feb. 26; Pintail, max 60 at Iroquois NWR Feb. 22; Redhead, one on the ACC and 21 on Grand Island Feb. 26; Greater Scaup, max 1500 at Niagara Falls Dec. 14; Lesser Scaup, one at Navy Island Jan. 3; Com. Goldeneye, six from early Jan. thru the season on the Genesee R., max 13 on the Allegheny R. Jan. 12, and six at Iroquois NWR Feb. 20; a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** at Niagara Falls, staying on from fall thru Feb. (HA, AS, RA+); **HARLEQUIN DUCK**, one at Niagara Falls gorge Jan. 10 (Duncan); White-winged Scoter, singles at Niagara Falls Dec. 14 and at Shadigee Jan. 24; Hooded Merganser, max two at Niagara Falls Dec. 14 and Jan. 3, and max five at Iroquois NWR Feb. 27; Com. Merganser, max 14 on the Genesee R. Jan. 30, max eight on the Allegheny R. Jan. 29, six at Iroquois NWR Feb. 18, and 31 on a gravel pit pond near Allegany Feb. 24; and Red-breasted Merganser, max 150 at Dunkirk Harbor Feb. 14.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Single **GOSHAWKS** were found on the ScioCC, in Allen Twp, during Dec. (Andrews *vide* KP), and in Amity Twp. Jan. 1 (MH). Resident single Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were widespread thru the winter, the sharpies being found in ten locations and the latter in 20. Other notable hawk reports include: Red-tailed Hawk, max of flight, 13 over Evans Feb. 13; Red-shouldered Hawk, one over Pinehurst Feb. 28; Rough-legged Hawk, 15 on the ScioCC where the previous high was five in both 1966 and 1967, ten on the ACC, and two dozen birds counted thru the season from 20 widespread areas; **GOLDEN EAGLE**, one near Andover Jan. 20 and 29 (L. Palmiter); **BALD EAGLE**, one in Friendship Twp. Feb. 27 (Comptons); and Marsh Hawk, one on the ScioCC and 16, total, from nine spots. The only Am. Coot reports were from Dunkirk Harbor with max nine on Feb. 28. A Com. Snipe was spotted along the Genesee R. on the ScioCC (CK), and a Purple Sandpiper was found at Niagara Falls Jan. 10 (Duncan). Our "Gull Capital of the World" boasts some beauties this season, all from Niagara R. gorge unless otherwise noted: Glaucous Gull, max four from Dec. 14 thru Feb. 8 and one at Buffalo Harbor Jan. 25; **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**, one Jan. 1 (RA, HA+), possibly the same bird as seen here in Nov.;

BLACK-HEADED GULL—very rare—one at Black Rock Canal, Buffalo, Dec. 13 (RA+) as well as the next day (AS+); Bonaparte's Gull, max 4000 on Dec. 14; an immature **IVORY GULL**—exceedingly rare—one Jan. 1 (RA, HA+); this bird was photographed by M. Gustafson of Cleveland, O., on the Canadian side of the Niagara R. gorge on Dec. 22, 1980 but not recorded on the U.S. side until Jan. 1; and **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**, 21 imm. at Iroquois NWR Feb. 21 (AS)—an unprecedented number for upstate.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Can it be that our only regional Screech Owls were the singles at Alfred Sta. Dec. 25 and Farmersville Sta. Feb. 6? Few Snowy Owls came south, with singles only at Buffalo Dec. 7, Grand Island Dec. 14 and near Alfred Feb. 14. Although no Long-eared Owls were reported, some of the less common Short-eared were: two on the ACC, one at Clarence Dec. 13 (AM, WM) and three in Sheldon Jan. 11 and 16 (RA+). Noteworthy woodpecker sightings include: Red-bellied, one on the ScioCC, 22 on the ACC and seven, total, from four locations on the Lake Plains in Jan.; Red-headed, nine counted from six areas; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, one on the ScioCC and one in Hume Twp. Jan. 5 to 17; and Hairy, regularly reported and with 16 on the ScioCC, 74 on the ACC and six on the StBonCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Larks appeared in slightly better numbers with max: unidentified subspecies, 100 at Strykersville Dec. 28; and *Eremophila alpestris alpestris*, 29 in Pendleton Jan. 17. Two **COMMON RAVENS** were located near Alfred Jan. 21 (EB, Raynor), and max flocks of Com. Crows were 150 on Dec. 10 and 300 on Dec. 26 near Alfred as well as 100 north of Franklinville Jan. 23. Two Tufted Titmice were counted on both the ScioCC and the ACC while eight other reports noted a total of 14 birds. Single Carolina Wrens appeared in Spring Brook Dec. 4 to Jan. 22, and at Lewiston Jan. 17 and Hamburg Jan. 18, with none showing up in Feb. Seven Mockingbirds, all singles, were noted for the winter, and a Brown Thrasher spent most of Dec. at the Gills' feeder in Olean (FM). Robins, robins everywhere—well almost—were wintering all over the Region, sometimes in huge flocks, particularly on the lake plains, with max: 150 in Alabama Jan. 20, 200 at Wanakah Jan. 3, and 430 on Jan. 10 building to 800 on Jan. 26 at Iroquois NWR. A Hermit Thrush was found at Evangola Jan. 10. Up to five E. Bluebirds possibly wintered at Iroquois NWR, being seen Jan. 24 and 25 and Feb. 25 (JM+), while first arrivals were three at Amity L. Feb. 20 (VP, RP). With four on the ScioCC, 13 on the ACC and one on the StBonCC, other Golden-crowned Kinglet reports totaled ten birds from four locations. Since flocks of the Cedar Waxwing were more numerous than usual with max 160 at Oak Orchard WMA Jan. 8, it is not surprising that a **BOHEMIAN WAXWING** was discovered at Olcott Jan. 17 (AM, WM, Fessler). Single No. Shrikes were found on the ScioCC, the ACC, and the StBonCC and in seven areas on other reports.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Although the Yellow-rumped Warbler was absent, a **PINE WARBLER** visited a Hamburg feeder Dec. 19 to 22 (Brandes)—very unusual for winter.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Highlights from the icterid flight are: E. Meadowlark, singles only at Sturgeon Point and Yates in Jan.; Red-winged Blackbird, max 962 over Pinehurst Feb. 28; Rusty Blackbird, two at Evans Feb. 28, the only report; and Com. Grackle, 15,039 over Evans Feb. 28 (Powers)—a record regional spring flight. Evening Grosbeak numbers varied little from last winter, the max feeder count being 100 at both Holland (EsB) and Wales (Rosche); tallies were 410 on the ScioCC, 889 on the ACC and 47 on the StBonCC; and bandings for the season totaled 203 at Alfred Station (EB), 92 at Farmersville Sta. (DC) and 70 at Limestone (RV). The House Finch continues its take over, tallying 233 on the ScioCC and ACC, and 20 on the StBonCC, with regional max of other reports 70 at Eggertsville during Jan. (AM, WM). Other finch findings of note include: Pine Grosbeak, one on Jan. 19, and 14 on Jan. 21 near Alfred (EB); **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** (escapee?), one at a Jamestown feeder several times Jan. 6 to 23 (FE+); Com. Redpoll, a big flight, with one on the ACC and max 14 at Depew Jan. 5 thru Feb. 28 (Barbers); Pine Siskin, widely reported all season with 56 on the ScioCC and ACC, and regional max 44 at Lewiston during Jan.

(HK, WK); Am. Goldfinch, 1682 over Evans Feb. 28 (Powers)—a record regional flight; Red Crossbill, singles at Eggertsville Jan. 24 (Hulls) and at Pendleton Jan. 25 (AM, WM); and White-winged Crossbill, one at Darien Center Jan. 29 (Harper). A Rufous-sided Towhee wintered at Amity L; singles also were seen in four other areas in Dec., in Elma in Jan. (DD, Forsberg), and at Spring Brook in Feb. (DD), while four appeared in Evans Feb. 1 (Powers). Other interesting sparrows include: Tree Sparrow, max 44 at Amity L. Feb. 5; Field Sparrow, one on the ACC and one at Jamestown Dec. 1 (Beal); White-crowned Sparrow, 26 on the ScioCC and ACC, two at Belmont all season (DB, LB), singles at Little Genesee Dec. 2 (DeGroof) and at Spring Brook Jan. 12 (DD), and two at Jamestown Jan. 3 and 14 (FE); White-throated Sparrow, max of the many wintering, 46 in Evans Feb. 1 (Powers); FOX SPARROW, late; one on the StBonCC and another at Farmersville Sta. to Dec. 14 (DC); and Swamp Sparrow, singles in Alexander Jan. 4 (Seamans) and in Newstead Jan. 11 (AM, WM). A few Lapland Longspurs were identified: five in Amity Twp. Jan. 3 (VP), included on the ScioCC, singles at Iroquois NWR Jan. 5 (Olsen) and in Alabama Jan. 7 (Seamans), and four in Yates Jan. 24 (RA+). Snow Buntings numbered 1324 on the ScioCC and ACC with regional max of other reports 500 near Shadigee Jan. 18 (DH).

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

REGION 2 — GENESEE

ROBERT SPAHN

This winter has been nearly the reverse of last, cold through late January with considerable snow, then moderating to above normal temperatures for the last half of February with no snow. Recapping, we find: December—temperatures 3.7° F (2.0° C) below normal, precipitation 0.14" (.26 cm) below average, and snowfall 31.80" (80.8 cm), 12.8" (32.5 cm) above average; January—8.2° F (4.6° C) below average, precipitation 1.24" (3.1 cm), 1.01" (2.6 cm) below normal, and snowfall 31.5" (80.0 cm), 10.0" (25.4 cm) above average; and February—temperatures about average, precipitation 3.13" (8.0 cm), .71" (1.8 cm) above average, and snowfall 9.3" (23.6 cm), 10.5" (26.7 cm) below normal. The early cold locked up most of the lakes and ponds in a thick layer of ice well before Christmas Bird Count (CBC) time. By contrast, the long warm spell in February opened everything up again, far ahead of normal dates.

The effects of the cold and snow were not as straightforward as one might expect. All the local CBC's recorded numbers of species well below last year, almost entirely due to lack of waterfowl. However, there were still substantial numbers of vagrants and "half-hardies" present right through the season. American Robin and White-throated Sparrow set new highs and maintained substantial numbers throughout. Gulls saw the greatest changes over last year, with this year's numbers below average and far below last year's incredible highs. The winter finches remained present, but only Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin were seen in good numbers.

December climaxed the most fantastic bird-finding year in regional history with 296 species seen and verified. This next year should serve to test the alternate hypotheses, that this was an unusual year in which strange weather patterns

and outstanding luck resulted in a rash of unusual sightings, or a wide variety of species usually rarely reported in the Region are generally present annually and a good number of such may be found regularly by persons choosing to search proper habitats at appropriate times. So far, this year has lent support to the latter hypothesis.

The severe cold served to effectively mask most trends. Water birds were simply frozen out. Positives include the number of "half-hardy" survivors in spite of adverse conditions, an early start to the spring waterfowl and hawk flights, Ring-necked Pheasants up a bit on all CBC's, Red-bellied Woodpeckers increasing, a good winter for Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees, Carolina Wrens surviving thru, House Finches still expanding, winter finches present, and good numbers of Tree Sparrows. On the negative side, there were no loons or grebes after the CBC's, low numbers of wintering raptors, gulls were relatively scarce, and the numbers of winter finches never approached expectations.

Rarities: Harlequin Duck, King Eider, Black-headed Gull, Ivory Gull, Black Guillemot, Barn Owl, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Varied Thrush, Bohemian Waxwing, Boat-tailed Grackle, and Hoary Redpoll.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay State Park; Ch—Charlotte near the mouth of the Genesee River; D—Durand-Eastman Park; H—Hamlin Beach State Park and vicinity; IBO—Irondequoit Bay Outlet; OB—Oklahoma Beach, Lake Ontario just east of Irondequoit Bay; and WL—general west lakeshore.

Observers: Ron & Kay Ballard, Nancy Boudrie, Chris Brothers, Carolyn & Roger Cass, Julie Claffey, Anne Clarridge, Bill Colman, Mike Davids, Gertrude Davis, Fritz Davis, Frank & Bob Dobson, Jeff Dodge, Kay & Jim Doris, Art Eisenberg, John & Arleen Foster, Dick Garnham, Genesee Ornithological Society, David Gordon, Harold Griffin, Kevin Griffith, Robert & Sandra Hazen, Norm Henderson, Øivind Jensen, Allen & Bea Kemnitzer, Bob & Jane Kesselring, Robert & Charlotte Ladwig, Walter Listman, Warren Lloyd, Hayward Madden, Dick Mather, Mary Mattei, Robert & Margaret McKinney, Ann Miranian, Richard O'Hara, Bernie Olin, P.O.S. (Allan, Brian, Dan, David, & Grace Strong, Doug Keim, James Lenhard, & Kinsley Whittum), Pat Reister, Rochester Birding Association, Marge Schmale, Dominic Sherony, Jeanne & Sharon Skelly, Robert & Susan Spahn, Ann Stear, Harriet Stride, Mary Ann Sunderlin, Steve Taylor, Tom, Mike & David Tetlow, Joe & Ann Watson, Paul Weld, Munro Will & Peter Zachmann.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: OB Dec. 21, none later, and no grebes after early Dec. with only Horned Grebes up to that point. Among the herons, only Great Blue Heron was recorded with a handful present thru late Dec. and only one lingering through late Jan. at the Russell Station outlet to Lake Ontario (Greece). Waterfowl were generally out early with the early freezeup. The Jan. waterfowl census found ducks only in a few open patches of river and stream outlets to Lake Ontario and far out on the lake beyond the half-mile or more of shore ice. However, there were a few good late records and the early thaw in late Feb. brought a few exciting early spring returns. Among the interesting records were: Whistling Swan: eight Greece Dec. 7, late; 279 Carlton, 243 Chili, and 224 Hamlin Feb. 28, all unusually high counts for this Region and at a very early date; Canada Goose: 45 Sodus Pt. Jan. 24, the over-wintering max. count; and one albino among the thousands returning to the west lakeshore Feb. 28 (CC); Snow Goose (blue morph): one Letchworth Park Dec. 20 (R & KB), late; and one Kendall Feb. 28 (RS), early; Green-winged Teal: one Hemlock Lake Dec. 28, late; Wood Duck: one Pultneyville Jan. 1, late; Ring-necked Duck: three BB Feb. 28, early; Greater Scaup: max. 700 Ch Jan. 11; Com. Goldeneye: max 1000 east lakeshore Jan. 1; Oldsquaw: max 1000 OB Jan. 1; HARLEQUIN DUCK: one imm male OB thru Jan. 1 (mob); one Pultneyville Dec. 31 (KG); one imm male Russell Station Jan. 9, 11; and one

imm male Ch Jan. 11 (RM), the OB and Russell Sta. birds possibly the same individual, the Ch bird different; **KING EIDER**: one female Ch & IBO Jan. 22 (RS, mob); one female Sodus Pt. Jan. 24 (DS, DT, mob); **EIDER**, sp.: one female Sodus Pt. Jan. 1 (R & MM); and Surf Scoter: one imm male Ch late Jan. to Feb. 15 (mob); and one Troutsburg Feb. 22.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Wintering raptors were generally in relatively low numbers, decreasing through the period. Among the accipiters there were five Goshawks reported, 34 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 16 Cooper's Hawks with the Sharp-shinned/Cooper's ratio changing from 3:1 to 1:3 through the season. Other interesting raptors reported were: Turkey Vulture: one Groveland Feb. 22 (A & JF), very early; Bald Eagle: one sub-ad. BB Feb. 28; and Merlin: one West Webster Dec. 15, killed against a picture window. The spring hawk watch at BB started early with good flights on Feb. 23 and 28 with 112 Rough-legged Hawks and 72 Red-tailed Hawks by month's end. Turkey was reported from known, established locations in Letchworth State Park, Sodus Pt. and near Honeoye Lake. The max number was 15 Letchworth Jan. 30. Ruffed, Grouse numbers were good. Ring-necked Pheasant numbers were up a bit on the three CBC's, but still very low. The only marsh bird was a lone Virginia Rail found Dec. 19 in Mendon Ponds Park, where they usually winter. None could be found in spite of diligent searches later in the winter. Shorebirds were few indeed, represented by scattered, single Killdeer reports in each month; Com. Snipe: one-two Penfield all season at a regular wintering site; and a Red Phalarope: BB Dec. 1 (MD). Gulls too were low, particularly when contrasted with last year's Dec. invasion. The Rochester CBC counts for Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were 628 and 1570 in contrast to last year's 20,000 and 61,000, respectively. White-winged gulls were also few. Only seven Glaucous and six Iceland Gulls were reported. Bonaparte's and Little Gulls moved out about Jan. 1. Other interesting gull records include: Great Black-backed Gull: max 285 IBO Jan. 26; **BLACK-HEADED GULL**: one ad. Genesee R. from Turning Pt. Park to Ch Feb. 3-17 (MD, mob); and **IVORY GULL**: one imm. Ch Jan. 21 (MD, AK, PR, KG—photos), a regional first record. At least, an alcid, **BLACK GUILLEMOT**: OB Dec. 6 (RS, MD), a "flyby," a first for the Region in this century.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: As usual, this group was not very well reported, CBC results showed no obvious major changes in populations. Among the notable owl records were: **BARN OWL**: one BB Dec. 6-7 (JD, RMa, R & CL, mob); **Snowy Owl**: about seven different individuals, only three after Dec.; **Long-eared Owl**: one or two BB Jan. 26-31, one Avon Jan. 25; and three BB Feb. 23; **Short-eared Owl**: seven-13 Avon Jan. 7 thru; and 35 Retsof Feb. 17 (R & KB); and **Saw-whet Owl**: one BB Feb. 24, early. Single Belted Kingfishers were seen at open spots along the lakeshore thru the season. Woodpeckers of special interest included: **Red-bellied Woodpecker** continuing a long-term climb on local CBC's; **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one to two imm Irondequoit Dec. 21 thru; and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: seven scattered records in Dec.; and one imm Irondequoit Jan. 1, 17.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: There were no flycatchers or swallows reported this winter, as should be expected. The **COMMON RAVEN** at Hamlin Beach State Park was spotted Jan. 25 (MD) and Feb. 15 (MD, KG). By late Feb. the spring crow migration was in full swing. The only count reported was Com. Crow: 2000+ (2 hrs.) BB Feb. 28 (RD). Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee showed substantial increases over previous highs on the CBC's, up 84% and 40%, respectively, on the Rochester CBC. With the large number of Black-capped Chickadees, it was not surprising to receive reports of **BOREAL CHICKADEE**: one Webster Park Dec. 13-14 (C & RC, mob); and one H Feb. 21 (MD, KG). Titmice, nuthatches, and creepers all maintained good numbers thru the season. Carolina Wrens were being reported at season's end, in spite of the severe cold. This probably reflects the lack of major storms. Mockingbirds also seemed to fare well. Am. Robin numbers reached new highs on all CBC's. A male **VARIED THRUSH** was found in Irondequoit near D on Dec. 21 (RMa, POS) and remained thru the season to be seen by all active observers in the area. E. Bluebird wintered well in the southern parts of the Region with 11 at Montezuma Jan. 1, 12 at Avon Jan. 20, and 17 at Avon Feb. 17, high counts, and as many as eight being seen

cramming into one nest box at dusk for overnight warmth. Ruby-crowned Kinglet lingered thru the CBC period with one D Dec. 6; and one Greece Dec. 21. **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS** were present, but scarce: three Greece Dec. 13 (MD, KG, mob); one Brighton Dec. 21 (JT); one Hilton Dec. 27 (DS, MT); one to two Webster Park Dec. 29, 31 (MD, KG); and one D Feb. 15, 21 (mob). The Cedar Waxwing peak was 600 D Dec. 29. No. Shrike was very scarce with one BB Jan. 23 thru; and one Parma Feb. 17, being the only reports. Starlings were back in the old roost in Gates, 160,000 Dec. 21, but appeared to abandon it again shortly thereafter.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: The only records in this grouping were of the Yellow-rumped Warblers which typically winter in Mendon Ponds Park. The numbers varied from one to ten with some found by virtually any group birding the proper parts of the park.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Even House Sparrow turned up with an interesting individual, a melanistic bird in Webster Jan. 26 (A & BK). Blackbird records of note included: E. Meadowlark: two to three Avon Jan. 20-27; Rusty Blackbird: six Webster Dec. 21, late; and six H Feb. 28, early migrants; **BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE:** one Greece thru Dec. 8 (mob); and a major push of early migrant Red-winged Blackbirds, Com. Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds during the warm spell Feb. 22-28. Winter finches were all reported, but in small numbers. The most interesting records were: Pine Grosbeak: max. 12 D Jan. 17; **HOARY REDPOLL:** one Spencerport Jan. 25 (R & KB); Com. Redpoll: max 150 Parma Jan. 8; White-winged Crossbill: max 6 Penfield Jan. 31; and Red Crossbill: one Webster Park, H Feb. 15, 28 respectively. Purple Finch was scarce. House Finch is still booming with all CBC's finding new highs. Noteworthy sparrows included: Rufous-sided Towhee: present at several feeders thru the season; Tree Sparrow: 533 Montezuma CBC Jan. 1; and 350 WL Jan. 11; Chipping Sparrow: one Greece Jan. 27, 29 (RD), rare in winter; White-crowned Sparrow: one Penfield Jan. 28; and one Webster Feb. 14, usually scarce in winter; and White-throated Sparrow: max 305 Rochester CBC, five times the previous high over a 77 year history. Finally, thru Jan. there were good sized flocks of Snow Buntings to the west of Rochester with max 500 H Jan. 1; 1030 WL Jan. 13; and 500 Holcomb (SE of Rochester) Jan. 24.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

December and January were extremely cold, the coldest in several years. Frequent below zero temperatures occurred from Christmas into early February with no above freezing weather except for a brief, mild thaw in late January. Snowfall was in small amounts only, but because of the freezing temperatures, it accumulated. Mid-February brought a sudden and dramatic change. For ten days the temperature soared into the forties, fifties and even mid-sixties before settling down to seasonal norms. Precipitation continued light.

The south winds accompanying the warm-up brought in migrants—Canada Geese by the thousands, an early flight of Whistling Swans and many icterids. At Elmira on February 28, "the biggest day anyone had ever seen," the geese acted strangely. Many observers noted that instead of going north via Horseheads and the Catherine Valley, which is their normal route to Seneca Lake, they were all going west toward Corning. There was no explanation for this behaviour.

In reading the species accounts below one will note for several species a large percentage of the birds reported on the Christmas Bird Counts came from the Ithaca count. Before assuming that the Ithaca area has a larger bird population, and it well may have, it should be noticed that there were 136 participants on that count compared to six at Watkins Glen and about 25 on each of the others so that the Ithaca circle was very thoroughly covered.

Seasonal positives: 1) an immature Double-crested Cormorant wintering on Seneca Lake; 2) a huge concentration of 25,000 waterfowl on Cayuga Lake Dec. 7 including Canada Geese, Mallards, Blacks, Redheads and Canvasbacks; 3) the heaviest Rough-legged Hawk flight in many years extending to all parts of the Region. The combined tally from the six Christmas Bird Counts was five times that of 1974 which was regarded as an excellent flight year; 4) an increase in Marsh Hawk sightings; 5) good numbers of wintering Common Flickers; 6) high numbers of feeder birds, especially Downy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice and White-breasted Nuthatches; 7) extraordinary numbers of wintering flocks of American Robins, perhaps due to the excellent berry crop; 8) the first winter record of a Swainson's Thrush for the Region; 9) a Pine Warbler near Cayuga Village; 10) an abundance of wintering White-throated Sparrows.

Seasonal negatives: 1) very few Horned Grebes; 2) continued low numbers of scaup; 3) continued scarcity of Ring-necked Pheasants; 4) reappearance of the potentially destructive Monk Parakeet in the Region. This may be regarded as a plus or a minus depending upon your point of view. However, in view of past experience with exotic introductions and with this species' record of feeding on fruit and grain in its native habitat, your Regional Editor is compelled to look upon it as a definite minus; 5) almost no Snowy Owls; 6) very few Northern Shrikes; 7) no Red Crossbills; 8) few wintering Song Sparrows.

Rarities: Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Common Raven, Fish Crow, Swainson's Thrush, Pine Warbler.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CBC—Christmas Bird Count (Central Cayuga Jan. 1, Elmira Jan. 1, Geneva Dec. 27, Ithaca Jan. 1, Montezuma Jan. 1, Watkins Glen Dec. 20); Co—County; L—Lake; MNWR—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SAD—Seneca Army Depot; Schy—Schuyler; Sem—Weekly Cornell Seminars; Sen—Seneca; SP—State Park; WC—Waterfowl Count Jan. 10; * (starred)—confirming details on file.

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

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: CBCs four, were present on Keuka L at Snug Harbor north of Hammondsport all year until the lake froze Jan. 15. Red-necked Grebe: three Cay L Feb. 9. Horned Grebe: scarce with only two reported on the CBCs and two on the WC. Double-crested Cormorant: an imm present on Sen L at Watkins Glen from Dec. 29 thru the period was an unusual winter record. Great Blue Heron: three wintered at MNWR. Whistling Swan: 27 flying north over Watkins Glen on Feb. 28; one unable to fly was found at Horseheads Jan. 20 and is being kept in an open pen but to date has made no move to leave. Canada Goose: counts at MNWR were 15,000 on Dec. 15 and 30,000 on Feb. 28; WC 13,000 on Feb. 28; at Watkins Glen JB counted 36,450 flying north between 9:30 and 12:30 and he states that very heavy flights had been flying since dawn. Snow Goose: one to three were sighted on Cay L all winter; 90 at MNWR Feb. 19 and 300 Feb. 28.

Duck numbers at MNWR as furnished by the personnel there:

Species	Maximum	Date	Species	Maximum	Date
Mallard	25,000	Dec. 15	Ring-necked Duck	55	Dec. 15
Black Duck	5,000	Dec. 15	Canvasback	12	Dec. 15
Gadwall	150	Dec. 8	Greater Scaup	50	Feb. 20
Pintail	200	Dec. 8	Com. Goldeneye	75	Feb. 20
Am. Wigeon	150	Dec. 8	Bufflehead	30	Dec. 15
Wood Duck	4	Feb. 17	Hooded Merganser	75	Feb. 20
Redhead	30	Dec. 15	Com. Merganser	100	Feb. 20

Mallard: CBCs 1,787; WC 3,000. Black Duck: CBCs 605. Gadwall: a few on Sen and Cay Lakes; Geneva CBC 12 and Ithaca nine. Pintail: one at Union Springs all winter; 100 MNWR Feb. 28. Green-winged Teal: one Elmira Jan. 10 (WH). Am. Wigeon: several wintered at Union Springs. Redhead: CBCs 290; WC 600; peak at Watkins Glen 1,000 Jan. 24; 1,500 west shore Cay L Feb. 28. Ring-necked Duck: two on Ithaca CBC and two Cay L Feb. 28. Canvasback: CBCs 290 mostly Geneva and Ithaca; WC 180; 500 Cay L Feb. 1; 60 Sen L off SAD. Greater Scaup: CBCs 26 with 21 at Geneva; 100 Cay L Feb. 1. Lesser Scaup: CBCs 53. Com. Goldeneye: CBCs 590 of which 474 were on the Geneva count. Bufflehead: CBCs 153 with 135 on the CC count. Oldsquaw: 38 on Geneva CBC and two on Ithaca count; eight Sheldrake Feb. 8. White-winged Scoter: two Central Cay CBC; one Watkins Glen Jan. 18. Hooded Merganser: eight Ithaca CBC; female Watkins Glen Dec. 31-Jan. 6. Com. Merganser: CBCs 112. Red-breasted Merganser: eight on Geneva CBC and nine on Ithaca CBC.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: two very early arrivals, one at Cayuta in late Jan. (P. Holt *vide* JB) and one at Lansing Feb. 11 (S. & J. Ayres *vide* DM). Goshawk: four on three CBCs. Sharp-shinned Hawk: CBCs nine; several reports of Sharpies picking off small birds at feeders. Cooper's Hawk: CBCs 13; reported at all Sem; five reports from Schy Co. Red-tailed Hawk: CBCs 284 with 102 from Geneva; an albino was at Ithaca. Rough-legged Hawk: CBCs 84; reported from all over the Region but the heaviest concentration appeared to be in the northern Finger Lakes. With the coming of the mid-Feb. warm weather the numbers dwindled rapidly. Bald Eagle: two adults and one imm at MNWR during Feb. Marsh Hawk: a total of 15 on four CBCs; other reports from Big Flats, Horseheads, Watkins Glen, Ithaca, Sampson SP and MNWR. Osprey: one on the Ithaca CBC but was not seen again. Ruffed Grouse: 34 on five CBCs; appears to be on the high side of its cycle. Ring-necked Pheasant: CBCs 19; reported at all Sem but in low numbers only; one flock of up to eleven was around Phelps all winter. Turkey: Ithaca CBC had 17 and Central Cayuga 7; 40 were found near Buttermilk SP where young were seen last summer; also noted on Connecticut Hill and at Newfield. Am. Coot: four CBCs had 132; 100 plus were on Sen L at Watkins Glen Jan. 23. Killdeer: two Phelps Dec. 27. Com. Snipe: one Phelps Dec. 27. **GLAUCOUS GULL:** an imm at Watkins Glen Dec. 9; an adult on Cay L and a 2nd year bird at the Waterloo dump on Jan. 10 (M. Resch & J. & N. Bandfield)*. **ICELAND GULL:** imm at Watkins Glen Jan. 18; adult Waterloo dump Jan. 10 (M. Resch & J. & N. Bandfield)*. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** one Waterloo dump Jan. 10 (M. Resch & J. & N. Bandfield)*. Herring Gull: CBCs 994 with 555 at Watkins Glen the highest ever for their CBC. Ring-billed Gull: CBCs 990 of which 526 were on the Ithaca CBC. Bonaparte's Gull: Central Cayuga CBC thirteen.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: CBCs 3703. Mourning: CBCs 2992 with 1495 on the Geneva count. Monk Parakeet: a bird which appeared in Elmira Heights last fall and built a "nest," still survives and visits feeders. This is the first bird of this species reported in the Region since 1974. Screech Owl: CBCs 13. Great Horned Owl: CBCs 59. Snowy Owl: one Ithaca Dec. 11. Barred Owl: three on two CBCs. Short-eared Owl: five on two CBCs; ten at Penn Yan; seven MNWR; one Poplar Ridge Jan. 8; two Watts Rd. quarry Sen Co.; two Horseheads Feb. 17. Saw-whet Owl: one Ithaca Jan. 13 and one Malloryville Jan. 19. Belted Kingfisher: CBCs 20. Com. Flicker: 69 on five CBCs; more than normal in the Ithaca and Watkins Glen areas. Pileated Woodpecker: 15 on five CBCs. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 102 on

five CBCs. Red-headed Woodpecker: ten on four CBCs with six on the Central Cayuga CBC; an imm wintered at Phelps. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: three CBCs found six; one Lansing Dec. 29. Hairy Woodpecker: 196 on the CBCs. Downy Woodpecker: 664 on the CBCs.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Eastern Phoebe: one on Trumansburg Rd., Ithaca, on Jan. 30 where the first one always appears. It survived and was joined by a second bird by the end of the period. Horned Lark: 1556 on four CBCs with 94% being found in the northern Finger Lakes. Blue Jay: CBCs 2010. **COMMON RAVEN:** one Sugar Hill, Schy Co Jan. 18 (Art Kopp). Com. Crow: 2466 on the CBCs. **FISH CROW:** the first of the Ithaca birds returned Feb. 3. Black-capped Chickadee: 3113 on the CBCs with 1870 on the Ithaca CBC. Tufted Titmouse: Ithaca had 142 of the 228 birds found on the CBCs. White-breasted Nuthatch: of the 486 found on the CBCs, 284 were on the Ithaca count. Red-breasted Nuthatch: "hard to find" at Watkins Glen but "more than usual" at Penn Yan; 51 of the 67 found on the CBCs were at Ithaca. Brown Creeper: 21 on 4 CBCs. Winter Wren: two on the Elmira CBC; one at Ithaca feeder Jan. 9 and for a few days. Carolina Wren: eleven on the CBCs with two at Elmira, five at Ithaca and two on the Watkins Glen count. Mockingbird: 49 on CBCs with 31 on the Ithaca count. Gray Catbird: five birds found on two CBCs. Brown Thrasher: a bird, which appeared on cold days only, was present at Ithaca from mid-Dec. on. Am. Robin: unusually large numbers for winter all across the Region and often in large concentrations such as the 325 found along one mile of the Watkins-Montour marsh. The CBCs found 601. Hermit Thrush: four on three CBCs. **SWAINSON'S THRUSH:** one well seen and studied Dec. 27 for the first Region 3 winter record (William Benning and WEB)*. E. Bluebird: regular all winter at Watkins where they had an all time high of 22 on their CBC. Also reported from Elmira, Horseheads, Ithaca, SAD, Penn Yan, Buttermilk Falls SP and Newfield. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 43 found on four CBCs. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: single birds on the Geneva and Watkins Glen CBCs. Cedar Waxwing: good numbers with 2519 on the CBCs. No. Shrike: single birds on the Central Cayuga and Ithaca CBCs, one at Aurelius Jan. 24, and one at Elmira Dec. 23 were the only reports received. Starling: not unexpectedly this species topped all others with 13,448 birds on the CBCs.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: three each on the Geneva and Ithaca CBCs, four Cay Marsh Feb. 15; two Union Springs Feb. 22. **PINE WARBLER:** one near Cayuga Village Jan. 1 for a rare winter record (W. Warne)*.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: 14 on three CBCs. Red-winged Blackbird: 2,997 on three CBCs but nearly 2,800 of these were in one large flock south of Waterloo; flocks of 30-600 reported from various areas during the winter. No. Oriole: one at Penn Yan during Dec. Rusty Blackbird: Central Cay CBC had 25 and Elmira two; one Ithaca Dec. 12; 15 Tyre Jan. 21. Com. Grackle: only six on the CBCs. Brown-headed Cowbird: CBCs 174. Cardinal: CBCs 782; some observers felt there were more than usual. Evening Grosbeak: CBCs 1846 with 1496 from the Ithaca count, an area which seems to attract this species more than other parts of the Region. Purple Finch: generally reported as scarce but the CBCs totaled 273 with 219 on the Ithaca count. House Finch: the CBCs, totaling 1227 birds, seem to indicate that Ithaca with 615 and Elmira with 360 are the main centers of population for this increasing species. Pine Grosbeak: eight at Danby Jan. 17; a small flock at Ithaca in late Jan. Com. Redpoll: 317 on five CBCs; reports of small numbers from most parts of the Region. Pine Siskin: 315 on four CBCs; small flocks, up to 30 birds, came to feeders especially in Yates, Schy and Tompkins Cos. Am. Goldfinch: CBCs 1415 with 733 from Ithaca count. Some observers felt that, when the Siskins moved in to the feeders, the Goldfinch numbers dropped. Red Crossbill: no reports. White-winged Crossbill: the only report was of three at Canoga Feb. 14. Rufous-sided Towhee: two each on the Geneva and Ithaca CBCs; one Danby Dec. 13; one Elmira Dec. 27; one Ithaca last week in Feb; one Penn Yan throughout the winter. Dark-eyed Junco: CBCs 1144 with the Ithaca count having 503. "Oregon" Junco: one at a feeder south of Ithaca until Feb. 4. Tree Sparrow: CBCs 2002. Generally this species came back to about normal numbers after last year's low point

but in some areas observers felt they were still low. Chipping Sparrow: three on two CBCs; one at an Ithaca feeder Feb. 9 and 24. Field Sparrow: 13 on three CBCs; one at a Reading Center feeder during Jan. White-crowned Sparrow: eight on two CBCs. White-throated Sparrow: 495 on CBCs with 273 on the Ithaca count; higher numbers than usual everywhere. Fox Sparrow: one Brooktondale Dec. 2-8. Song Sparrow: 133 CBCs; observers comments—"few," "had to be looked for." Lapland Longspur: ten on CBCs of which nine were at Geneva; 17 King Ferry Jan. 10; two Canoga Jan. 25. Snow Bunting: 3125 CBCs well distributed over the Region.

Addendum: the following Elmira records were received too late for publication in the Winter issue (*The Kingbird* Vol. XXXI No. 1) Region 3 report.

Whistling Swan: one Nov. 6. Osprey: one Nov. 7 late. Merlin: one Nov. 3 (Dick Clements *vide* MV). Monk Parakeet: a banded bird built a "nest" in a blue spruce at Elmira Heights. Photographed by Tim Bates. E. Kingbird: a very late bird found by Tim Bates on Nov. 7. E. Bluebird: six on Oct. 22. Black-throated Green Warbler: Nov. 2—late.

Corrigendum: *The Kingbird* Vol. XXX No. 4 under Seasonal Plusses 5) referring to the Osprey nesting at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, the statement is made, "This would appear to be the first successful nesting of the species in central or western New York during this century." I am now in receipt of a communication from Dr. Allen Benton stating that there is a record, probably unpublished, of an Osprey nesting near Cato in Cayuga Co. in 1910.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

LESLIE E. BEMONT

This winter season can be divided into four distinct subperiods on the basis of weather. The first three weeks of December were consistently cold enough to keep the month's two or three inches of snow cover in place without being bitterly cold, but there was little further accumulation. The last week of December and the first two weeks of January brought the really severe weather, several days when the temperature dropped below -10° F. and a couple of moderate snowfalls. The weather from mid-January to mid-February was erratic, the snow melting for a couple of days and then temperatures between zero and ten above for two or three days, then back to melting again before another minor cold snap. The latter half of February was ridiculously warm for the season—50° F. February 16 and 17 and even higher temperatures for much of the rest of the month.

Rough-legged Hawks and Snowy Owls both made good showings, but primarily in the northern half of the Region. However, the Snowy that took up residence at the IBM Owego plant probably got more attention than all the others combined. Northern Shrike numbers were disappointing.

Among the winter finches, Pine Siskins starred, mobbing many feeders in huge numbers and bringing a significant following of Sharp-shinned and/or Cooper's Hawks. Evening Grosbeaks, redpolls and goldfinches were fairly com-

mon, although unevenly distributed. Pine Grosbeaks were present in, for them, good numbers, but primarily in the northern half of the Region. Purple Finches were present in small well dispersed numbers, for the most part, and where seen in larger numbers there is at least the possibility of confusion with the now much more common House Finch. There were only two reports of White-winged Crossbills and no Red Crossbills at all.

The frigid start of the period might lead one to expect few of the "half-hardy" species, but Am. Robins and Cedar Waxwings were present in much larger numbers than usual during the first half of the period and only disappeared after the worst of the cold had passed and the large wild berry crop was depleted. Com. Flickers were also more common than is usual in the Region in winter. There was also a Hermit Thrush, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Brown Thrasher, several Rufous-sided Towhees, two Killdeers and two Com. Snipes. There were almost no blackbirds.

The rarities were an exhausted Gannet, which may more properly belong to Region 8, and two secondhand reports of possible Harris' Sparrows, geographically close enough to suggest they were of one bird.

The first indication that gas prices may limit the quantity of field observations surfaced in the form of reluctance to travel many miles to view probably frozen rivers in the name of the Federation Waterfowl Census. It is true, of course, that the Federation Waterfowl Census is not the most exciting event on the calendar in Region 4, even under the best of circumstances.

Observers: Cutler & Jeanette Baldwin; Don & Judy Bell; Reynolds Bennett; Cheryl Boise (CB); Nancy Brundage; J. Carey (JC); Alvin Carpenter (AC); Jane Chittenden; Mildred Clark; Reeve Clark; Gail Corderman; Anna & Marilyn Davis; James Davis (JD); Mary Dobinsky; Jennie Doig; Sadie Dorber (SD); Dave Fink; Polly & Earl Getkin; John Hanyak (JH); Shirley Hartman; Donald Hymers; Margaret Layton; Jay Lehman (JL); Betty Mabon; Janice Mangan; Harriet Marsi; Andy Mason; Evelyn & Bud Mead; John New; Dan Newby (DN); Robert Pantle; Linda Pearce; Booth Perkins; Peter Petokas (PP); James Riley (JR); Carol Ryder; Robert Saunders (RS); Mary Sheffield; William Stupke; Bill Toner; Elizabeth Washburn; Anne Whitaker; Kathryn Wilson; Tom & Beryl Wilson.

Abbreviations: BCC—Binghamton Christmas Count, Dec. 28; OCC—Oneonta Christmas Count, Dec. 20; TCC—Tioga Christmas Count, Jan. 1; SCC—Sherburne Christmas Count, Jan. 3; WFC—Waterfowl Census.

LOONS—DUCKS: GANNET: an imm in weakened condition landed in a driveway Dec. 9 in Middleburgh (Schoharie Co.) and was taken to the DEC office in Stamford (Delaware Co.)—it was being fed fish, and apparently gaining strength, in preparation for release on Long Island—the bird's picture made page 3 of the Dec. 11 *Oneonta Daily Star*. Great Blue Heron: 2 SCC; three Dec. reports from Cortland Co. and one from Chenango Forks—another Jan. report, from Tioga Co. and one Cortlandville Feb. 12. Whistling Swan: two at Apalachin Feb. 28, but gone the next day. Canada Goose: 94 counted over the city of Cortland Dec. 1 and two groups of 20 each in the same general area Dec. 6; no more until Feb. 14 at Itaska, in Broome Co.; two other reports before a tremendous surge of migrants Feb. 28—it was "many flocks," "flock after flock" and "five flocks in sight at a time" from Vestal Center to Windsor and points between. Mallard: 251 BCC; 30 TCC; 83 SCC. Black Duck: 39 BCC; five TCC; 56 SCC. Am. Wigeon: four North Norwich Marsh Feb. 28. Redhead: one Cortlandville Feb. 6, the only report. Com. Goldeneye: four TCC; 90 WFC. Hooded Merganser: one Owego-Nichols Jan. 10; no more. Com. Merganser: two BCC; 10 TCC; 284 WFC; none after Feb. 14.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: two Windsor Feb. 28 (JR). Goshawk: two SCC; also one Norwich Feb. 15 (JL). Sharp-shinned Hawk: one OCC; two BCC; three TCC; one SCC; fourteen other reports Dec. 30 to Feb. 9. Cooper's Hawk: three TCC; one SCC; eleven others Dec. 19 to Feb. 2. Red-tailed Hawk: two OCC; four BCC; 13 TCC; 14 SCC; six Otsego-Wells Bridge area Jan. 26; numerous other reports. Rough-legged Hawk: one BCC; one TCC; 11 SCC; eleven at Marathon Jan. 18 along Rte. 81 and 6 in the same area Jan. 25; a dozen more reports in Jan. and Feb., most from the three northern counties of the Region. Bald Eagle: eight around Cannonsville Jan. 8 and seven Jan. 12 (SD)—a DEC eagle count coordinator said there was a total of thirteen in the area; an adult at Homer Jan. 1 (PP). Marsh Hawk: one OCC; one TCC; no others. Am. Kestrel: three OCC; eight BCC; seven TCC; two SCC. Ruffed Grouse: one OCC; four BCC; one TCC; 11 SCC. Ring-necked Pheasant: one TCC; three SCC; five at a feeder daily in the Owego area and one to three seen half-a-dozen times in the Preble area during Jan. and Feb.; otherwise no reports. Turkey: six in highway median at Whitney Point Jan. 18; eight at Greene Jan. 31; a flock varying from six to 26 at Delhi during Jan. and most of Feb.; also reported from Vestal Center in Dec. Killdeer: one SCC; one Delhi Feb. 23 (JC). Com. Snipe: one SCC; one at Greene Feb. 1 (JD) and during most of early Feb. until the snow melted—seen easily by a number of people as it fed in the ditch along the road. Herring Gull: seven BCC; one TCC; the usual small numbers patrolling the rivers all winter. Ring-billed Gull: two TCC; one Binghamton Jan. 14; no others.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 117 OCC; 949 BCC; 830 TCC; 470 SCC. Mourning Dove: 151 OCC; 246 BCC; 241 TCC; 472 SCC; 200 at Cortland Dec. 6; common all winter. Screech Owl: five BCC; one TCC; one SCC; also reported from Norwich and Middlefield (Otsego Co.). Great Horned Owl: one OCC; 21 BCC; five TCC; four SCC. Snowy Owl: one TCC, this bird spent all of Jan. and an undetermined part of Feb. hanging around the roof tops, parking lots and surrounding fields of the IBM plant in Owego—seen by many observers, but also missed by many who tried; six other reports from Norwich, Homer, and Middlefield and Westford in extreme eastern Otsego Co. Belted Kingfisher: eight BCC; four TCC; five SCC. Com. Flicker: 11 BCC; nine TCC; one Port Dickinson Dec. 11, in a hole in an apple tree in late afternoon being mobbed by chickadees, a Cardinal and a nuthatch; a dozen reports all season of one or two birds each in Triple Cities area; also two Sherburne Jan. 20. Pileated Woodpecker: one OCC; one BCC; three SCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: Jan. reports from Owego, but no details. Red-headed Woodpecker: one OCC; apparently the same bird, an immature, remained about a month into early Jan. the head color going from "very faint red" to "quite bright red" in that time. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one at Choconut Center Jan. 1 and again Feb. 8 to 10, when it found suet feeder. Hairy Woodpecker: 17 OCC; 19 BCC; 12 TCC; 19 SCC. Downy Woodpecker: 52 OCC; 82 BCC; 52 TCC; 95 SCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 60 SCC; Jan. 18 Owego. Blue Jay: 402 OCC; 678 BCC; 529 TCC; 441 SCC. Com. Crow: 169 OCC; 513 BCC; 362 TCC; 452 SCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 366 OCC; 775 BCC; 240 TCC; 392 SCC; seemed especially common. Boreal Chickadee: one at Binghamton Jan. 3 and 4 and once more a couple of weeks later (AC)—seen at close range from window. Tufted Titmouse: 13 BCC; 12 TCC; reported regularly from several feeders, but only in Owego-Binghamton area. White-breasted Nuthatch: 41 OCC; 94 BCC; 50 TCC; 44 SCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 11 OCC; 24 BCC; 7 TCC; 5 SCC; many more winter reports than usual, of well dispersed single birds. Brown Creeper: two OCC; 17 BCC; two SCC. Carolina Wren: five BCC; reported regularly from Port Dickinson. Mockingbird: 15 BCC; four TCC; Brown Thrasher: one at Kirkwood Jan. 14 (RS). Am. Robin: 550 BCC; four TCC; one SCC; several reports of "hundreds" in various Triple Cities localities with good wild berry crops, until at least Jan. 18—also many reports of one to five birds during that same period; heard singing Feb. 20 Endwell. Hermit Thrush: one Sherburne Jan. 14 (CB). E. Bluebird: eight BCC, split among reports of three different parties; migrants—two at Apalachin Feb. 23. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 15 BCC; one SCC; eight at Walton Feb. 22, the only other report. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Norwich Dec.

23 (JL), with descriptive details. Cedar Waxwing: 91 OCC; 1050 BCC; 692 TCC; 120 SCC; best wintering numbers on record, but very few after mid-Jan. No. Shrike: one BCC; one Kattellville Jan. 1 and one two or three miles north of there, at Chenango Forks, Jan. 31; no others. Starling: 143 OCC; 7026 BCC; 761 TCC; 574 SCC; Binghamton count mostly of flock roosting in Court House Square area.

VIREOS-WARBLED: none.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: House Sparrow: 553 OCC; 1011 BCC; 761 TCC; 574 SCC. E. Meadowlark: one TCC, the only report all winter. Red-winged Blackbird: one BCC; only three other winter reports; migrants Feb. 19. Rusty Blackbird: one Port Dickinson Feb. 11; no others. Com. Grackle: one BCC; one TCC; the only winter reports; migrants Feb. 21. Brown-headed Cowbird: 13 BCC; one TCC; a flock of about 20 at Norwich from mid-Jan. thru the first week of Feb. otherwise only very occasional reports of one to four birds from almost all reporting parts of the Region. Cardinal: 34 OCC; 153 BCC; 77 TCC; 55 SCC; one singing Jan. 15 at Hillcrest. Evening Grosbeak: 459 OCC; 233 BCC; 183 TCC; 577 SCC; considerable numbers present away from feeders-absent or only sporadically present at many feeders. Purple Finch: 14 OCC; 88 BCC; nine TCC; nine SCC; small numbers present all season in the Triple Cities area; also reported from Norwich and Oneonta. House Finch: 30 OCC; 889 BCC; 407 TCC; also a flock of about 50 at a feeder in Norwich all season. Pine Grosbeak: 49 OCC; two BCC; 165 SCC; two Norwich Dec. 12, the first of the season; several reports of up to 40 birds from Chenango Co.; six at Delhi Jan. 21; 12 Choconut Center Feb. 22, last date. Com. Redpoll: nine OCC, first date; 315 BCC; 51 TCC; 242 SCC; otherwise only two reports of as many as 30 to 40 birds, but present in scattered small numbers to the end of the period. Pine Siskin: 208 BCC; 195 TCC; increasing thru Jan. to overpowering numbers at many feeders where sunflower seed and/or thistle seed was offered-seemed to almost completely displace House Finches at some such feeders and goldfinches at others, but no instance of displacing both reported. Am. Goldfinch: 58 OCC; 291 BCC; 215 TCC; 95 SCC; present all season in rather large numbers but unevenly distributed between feeders, apparently because of competition with siskins or House Finches. White-winged Crossbill: two OCC; six or more Feb. 21 Windsor (JR); no other reports. Rufous-sided Towhee: two OCC; one BCC, still present at Vestal Feb. 12; one TCC. Dark-eyed Junco: 63 OCC; 327 BCC; 242 TCC; 110 SCC; regular reports all season, mostly small numbers at feeders. "Oregon" Junco: one BCC, the same bird as reported in the fall season and present until at least Feb. 21. Tree Sparrow: 113 OCC; 226 BCC; 225 TCC; 399 SCC; numbers up from last year, but well below peaks of the more distant past. Chipping Sparrow: one at Chenango Lake, east of Norwich, Dec. 23 (DN, described to JL), not seen again. Field Sparrow: one BCC; one SCC; the only reports. HARRIS' SPARROW: Dec. 19 in Norwich, a large dark-headed sparrow with pink bill at feeder (Mrs. Lucy Briggs, described to JH), an inexperienced observer but able to identify bird from field guides later-bird did not return; Jan. 12 five miles n.e. of Norwich-another large dark-headed sparrow at a feeder (described to JL), observer a little more experienced, knowledgeable about common birds at feeder-again the bird not seen again; the two observers did not know each other and the second was not aware of the first's report. White-crowned Sparrow: one Jan. report from Owego, but no details. White-throated Sparrow: 11 OCC; 195 BCC, highest count ever; 75 TCC; 22 SCC; no reports of over ten at a time after Jan. 10, but present at several feeders all season. Swamp Sparrow: two BCC; one TCC; no others reported. Song Sparrow: three OCC; 43 BCC; eight TCC; 15 SCC; possibly migrants Feb. 18. Lapland Longspur: two BCC; probably more common than records indicate but an inconspicuous species in a frequently ignored habitat. Snow Bunting: 50 OCC; 25 BCC; 50 TCC; 27 SCC; of a half-dozen other reports two flocks of approximately 150 each Dec. 15 near West Winfield, but within northern edge of Otsego Co., were the max counts and 25 to 50 at Hillcrest Feb. 16 were the last.

710 University Ave., Endwell, New York 13760

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

PAUL A. DEBENEDICTIS

This report really treats two seasons: the winter 1980-1981, and the last two weeks of February! As heating bills amply attested, the winter 1980-1981 was exceptionally cold from mid-December through mid-February. Most open water was frozen by the time of the Christmas Bird Counts, and Christmas morning saw Syracuse at 22 below. This record low was followed by four new record lows set during January, when temperatures averaged seven degrees below normal. February averaged almost ten degrees below normal in spite of the month's surprising ending. Precipitation was sparse, and at the end of the season snowfall in Syracuse totaled only 68 inches, two feet below normal, and all but about two feet of that was lake-effect snow.

This should have set the scene for a very dull winter, but it was not. Surprisingly large numbers and variety of birds persisted through the winter, and waterfowl concentrations in Oswego Harbor (almost the only open area) were the best in several years. There was an exceptional incursion of Rough-legged Hawks, particularly in Oswego County, but no other raptors were present in above average numbers. Northern Shrikes were scarcer than any winter in the past seventeen years.

Irruptive passerines were conspicuous, but not overwhelming in numbers. It appears that ample wild seed crops kept many of these species from feeders, and numbers are hard to assess. Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches persisted in above average numbers through the entire winter at feeders. Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks and redpolls were widespread but not especially abundant anywhere. Pine Siskins were a little more numerous, but Purple Finches and crossbills were almost nonexistent.

A surprising variety of "half-hardy" species were found, and an equally surprising variety were missed this winter. Enjoying good berry crops, American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were widespread and numerous. Our few Carolina Wrens apparently survived through at least early February. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice, and Mockingbirds were reported widely, but from few new localities, and were joined by a few Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, and Rufous-sided Towhees. White-throated Sparrows actually outnumbered Song Sparrows this winter. Killdeers, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, icterids except perhaps Brown-headed Cowbird, Tree Sparrows, and juncos were scarce, and no Field or Swamp Sparrows were reported by anyone.

The last two weeks of February were a season unto themselves. Suddenly the thermometer climbed, the snow melted and four record high temperatures were set in Syracuse. February 19, 22 and 28 saw the arrival of waterfowl, particularly Canada Geese, in numbers. With exceptionally favorable conditions, Derby Hill produced 701 raptors, mostly Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, among which were record early dates for Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Bald Eagle. Crows, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Common Grackles became conspicuous everywhere, while lesser numbers of Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings, but few other passerines, added to the excitement.

Observers in the Region reported 113 species and 2 hybrids during the winter. By far the most unusual of these was a Pomarine Jaeger, and a probable Hoary Redpoll was also seen. Other notable species reported were: Barrow's Goldeneye, King Eider, Bald Eagle, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Savannah Sparrow.

Contributors: G. Church, D. W. Crumb, R. L. Evans, J. Hanyak, G. Huggins, S. Kahl, D. G. Muir, B. & S. Peebles, M. S. Rusk, F. G. Scheider, G. A. Smith, M. Stooks, E. VanDresar.

Abbreviations: arr—arrival, BBFS—Ben Burt feeder surveys (*vide* MSR), DH—Derby Hill Bird Observatory, LOL—Lake Ontario littoral, Onon—Onondaga, Syr—Syracuse.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: last 20 Dec. Syr. Red-necked Grebe: last 20 Dec. Syr, then one Manlius 20-25 Jan. (DWC, JH). Horned Grebe: last 25 Jan. Oswego. Pied-billed Grebe: no more than two overwintered, low. Great Blue Heron: scattered singles are about normal, and as usual the only long-legged wader found. Mute Swan: one 10 Jan. to 14 Feb. Oswego. Canada Goose: all but a handful gone by mid-Dec., then arr with very large flights (low 1000's) 22 and 28 Feb. Mallard x Gadwall: one Cayuga Lake on 10 Jan. (MSR). Gadwall: less than six overwintered, very low. Pintail: arr 16 Feb. DH. Am. Wigeon: arr 21 Feb. DH. Wood Duck: one persisted 10-24 Jan. on Oswego R. Redhead: only one report of more than ten until return about 19 Feb., low. Ring-necked Duck: one persisted Brewerton to 10 Jan., arr LOL 21 Feb. Canvasback: to 40/day Oswego. Greater Scaup: to 1600/day Oswego. Lesser Scaup: max about six Oswego. Com. Goldeneye: to 700/day Oswego. Barrow's Goldeneye: male Oswego R. 17 Feb. only, species now almost annual. Oldsquaw: to 100/day Oswego. Three to six King Eiders and three to eight White-winged Scoters at Oswego 10 Jan. to 17 Feb., a Surf Scoter with them 10 to 18 Jan. Com. Merganser: to 1900/day at Oswego, very good numbers for recent years.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: two at DH 22 Feb., record early. Cooper's Hawk: arr DH 19 Feb., record early there but the species is regular in winter throughout the Region. Goshawk: only four reported all winter, and scarce in DH hawk flights. Red-shouldered Hawk: one at DH 27 Feb., record early by one day. Bald Eagle: adult, imm DH on 28 Feb., record early. Am. Coot: one-three/day, mostly at Oswego, somewhat low. Killdeer: two Camillus valley in Jan. was only report all winter, very low; only two in Feb. movements at DH. Com. Snipe: one-three/day, about normal. **POMARINE JAEGER:** imm light morph at Oswego 10 Jan., with excellent details by MSR, our first real winter record of a jaeger of any sort. Glaucous Gull: max only five/day, low. Iceland Gull: max only two/day, very low. Great Black-backed Gull: to 300/day at Oswego during Jan. Herring Gull: max about 1200/day at Oswego. Ring-billed Gull: about 4000 at Oswego through Jan., then steady decline to about 500/day at end of Feb.

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: total of five reported, mostly for short stays at any one locality. Short-eared Owl: to 17 in roost town of Hastings through 22 Dec.; single Syr. 20 Dec. Long-eared Owl: one on Shackham Road, southern Onon Co., 17 Feb. only. Saw-whet Owl: single Holland Patent on 24 Jan. (EV). Red-headed Woodpecker: imm at Pennellville 18 Jan. on. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: two Syr on 20 Dec., one persisting through 1 Jan. (GH).

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: arr 5 Feb.; 639 over DH by end of season. Com. Crow: to 50/day through the winter, 22,000 over DH in the last two weeks of Feb. Black-capped Chickadee: to 40/day in casual birding and somewhat higher than average on BBFS. Tufted Titmouse: widespread, up to three/day during the winter. Winter Wren: one Camillus Valley on 24 Jan. was only report. Carolina Wren: all of the six birds on BBFS in early Dec. survived through at least early Feb. Gray Catbird: one Hannibal on 21 Dec. (MSR), another in DeWitt on 3 Jan. (GH). Brown Thrasher: one Holland Patent 4-10

Jan. (RE). Am. Robin: to 930/day southern Onondaga Co., and widespread and somewhat more numerous than usual in the northern part of the county; no influx at the season's end. Hermit Thrush: only three or four reported, somewhat low. Eastern Bluebird: arr DH 21 Feb., first Feb. record for Oswego Co. No. Shrike: six birds reported from four localities, non-persistent, very low.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: "Myrtle" Warbler: two Syr. on 20 Dec., one Nedrow on 24 Jan.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbird: last (except one or two stragglers at feeders) in mid-Dec., then arr 17 Feb., widespread and numerous by 21 Feb.; total of 117,000 seen passing DH between 17 and 22 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: three to five DeWitt through the winter, no migrants yet. Com. Grackle: same story as Red-winged Blackbird, arr 19 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: to 40/day, mostly at feeders, through the winter, and only a small increase during late Feb. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: last Marcellus early Dec. (BBFS). Evening Grosbeak: widespread but only to about 70/day. Purple Finch: singles during Jan. and Feb. were the only reliable reports, now that House Finches are ubiquitous. Pine Grosbeak: mostly reported from the highlands, to about 18/day. Com. Redpoll: to about 100/day, best counts from Pompey township. Hoary Redpoll: one probable (rump not seen) Pompey township, 13 to 30 Jan. (DWC). Pine Siskin: very widespread, to about 20/day; 50% higher on Feb. BBFS than previous record. Red Crossbill: two at DH 23 Feb., only report. White-winged Crossbill: two Pompey 9 Dec., then eight reported from three localities after 14 Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Eaton 18 Dec. to 8 Feb. (GC), four on Jan. BBFS, none in Feb. Savannah Sparrow: one in DeWitt on 31 Dec. (MSR), very late. Dark-eyed Junco: scarce, best counts only 10/day. Tree Sparrow: low, best counts about 60/day. White-crowned Sparrow: adult Oneida 3 Dec. to 15 Feb. (B & SP), imm Syr on 4 Feb. (MSR). White-throated Sparrow: widespread, to 16/day through the winter, highest on BBFS since 1974-75. Song Sparrow: very scarce, no more than 3/day, and just a hint of an influx in late Feb. Lapland Longspur: arr early Feb., about 30 over DH at end of month. Snow Bunting: almost none Dec. and Jan., arr early Feb. and 1223 over DH during the last two weeks of that month.

Corrigendum: Summer 1980 report, Cape May Warbler: Georgetown is in Madison, not Monroe, County.

306 Kensington Place, Syracuse, New York 13210

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

LEE CHAMBERLAINE

Winter of 1980-81 was a strange one indeed. Snowfall was way below normal with even Tug Hill not exceeding the sixty inch mark.

December started out warm and a temperature of 51° F. was experienced on the 8th, but on Christmas Day the official temperature in Watertown was -34° F, which was an indication of things to come in January.

Two words—*bitter* and *cold*—can best describe January. Temperatures of -20° F. to -45° F. were the rule, rather than the exception. Highs for the day got up to anywhere from -20° F. to -10° F. If one took time to figure out the wind chill factor they wished they hadn't since on some days they were in the -60° F. range and caution to protect any exposed flesh was the rule.

February was a complete turn around with spring-like conditions. On February 18th Watertown set a new record with a 57° F. temperature, and on the 22nd of the month it was 63° F. and everyone thought winter was over. Red-wings, geese, and grackles took advantage of the situation and the winter visitors moved back north.

Lake Ontario water levels continued to drop and were very low at the end of the period. The thaw in February resulted in very little rise in water levels and the lack of normal snow may well result in a water problem this summer. The wild food crop was well used up by the end of the period.

Although the weather had its ups and downs, the birding held through the reporting period and some excellent observations were made. Positive trends for the period were: good waterfowl numbers even with the cold weather; extremely high numbers of Rough-legged Hawks; at least seven wintering Bald Eagles on the St. Lawrence River; numerous winter finches and some late "hangers on." Negatives for the period: few Snowy Owls; very few Northern Shrikes; low numbers of cowbirds; low numbers of Purple Finches and Tree Sparrows.

Rarities for this period included: Barrow's Goldeneye; Bald Eagle; Mockingbird; and Bohemian Waxwing.

Contributors: Stewart Brown; Lee Chamberlaine; Kenneth Crowell; Buzz Devan; Tom Goss; Joe Lamendola; Joe VanRiet; Bob & June Walker; and Lou Wallace.

Abbreviations: MCC—Massena Christmas Count, Dec. 21, 1980 American side only; WCC—Watertown Christmas Count, Dec. 20, 1980, center near Brownville; SLR—St. Lawrence River.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: one SLR north of Cornwall Island Feb. 7. Great Blue Heron: one SLR at Hawkins Point till Dec. 13. Canada Goose: 250 WCC; five MCC; migrants arrived in Watertown about Feb. 23. Mallard: 30 Stony Point Dec. 27; 500+ at spring hole on Lakeview W.M.A. Jan. 19; 400 Robt. Moses Dam to Cornwall Island Jan. 14; increasing toward end of period. Black Duck: 100 SLR Hawkins Point, Dec. 20; 300+ at spring hole with Mallards Lakeview Jan. 19; 400 SLR Hawkins Point Jan. 23; 240 SLR Hawkins Point Feb. 7. Gadwall: 17 MCC; last one seen Hawkins Point, Jan. 12. Redhead: one female through period Hawkins Point. Ring-necked Duck: two MCC at Hawkins Point. Canvasback: two MCC; one Hawkins Point Feb. 7; 12 Hawkins Point Feb. 14. Greater Scaup: two Hawkins Point till Jan. 14. Com. Goldeneye: 800 Robt. Moses Dam to Cornwall Island Jan. 14; 245 MCC; 900 Hawkins Point Jan. 30 through Feb. 14, decreasing thereafter. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one female Hawkins Point through period (J. VanRiet). Bufflehead: one female Hawkins Point through period. Oldsquaw: two SLR Coles Creek Dec. 6; 30 Stony Point Dec. 27. Hooded Merganser: three SLR east of Jacques Cartier State Park Dec. 7; three WCC; one Hawkins Point Feb. 14. Com. Merganser: 8000+ Hawkins Point at the beginning of Dec.; 5000 MCC; 4000 Robt. Moses Dam to Cornwall Island Jan. 14; 50 Hawkins Point area Feb. 14. Red-breasted Merganser: max through period of three at Hawkins Point.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Goshawk: one WCC near Watertown; one MCC Robt. Moses Park; one on Iroquois Dam SLR Jan. 9; one Louisville Jan. 20. Sharp-shinned: one near Cornwall Bridge Jan. 9; one adult and one imm at Canton feeder mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. Cooper's: three WCC. Red-tailed: 76 WCC; three MCC; decreasing toward end of period. Rough-legged: 164 WCC unprecedented numbers and decreasing through Jan. with a surge back north in mid-Feb.; max at Massena of six MCC with a few singles at end of period. **BALD EAGLE:** first St. Lawrence River bird, an adult on Dec. 17; four birds (two adults, two imm) SLR Dec. 23; seven birds (three adults and four imm) SLR aerial survey Jan. 20; five birds (three adults, one sub-adult and one imm) SLR Jan. 28; two imm SLR Jan. 31; one adult

SLR Feb. 6; one adult SLR Feb. 27 (all S. Brown); VanRiet saw on SLR one adult and one imm at Blind Bay on Dec. 26; again VanRiet saw one imm at Robert Moses Park on Dec. 28 and Jan. 1. A three-year old imm female was found dead on Atlantis Island in Chippewa Bay SLR Jan. 10—carcass was turned over to DEC for environmental contaminants. Cause of death may have been starvation? (S. Brown). Marsh Hawk: two WCC; one male Pillar Point Feb. 15. Am. Kestrel: six WCC; fewer than normal in Jan. and Feb. Ruffed Grouse: seven WCC; two MCC; fairly common through period. Ring-necked Pheasant: seven WCC—more overwintering than normal. Gray Partridge: 207 WCC; eight MCC; five to six coveys for the period in Massena area—increase; excellent numbers in Jefferson Co.—DEC trapped and transferred 92 birds to Ontario Co. DEC Region 8. Turkey: two birds near Pope Mills Dec. 6; 25 birds near Redwood, Jan. 5 (*vide* J. Lamendola). Glaucous Gull: two at the beginning of Dec. to a max of 42 on Dec. 26—decreasing to three at end of Jan. at Robert Moses Dam. Iceland: one at beginning of Dec. to max of 10 on Dec. 24—last two were seen on Jan. 12—all at Robt. Moses Dam. Great Black-backed: max in Massena of 1000 through Dec.—700 through Jan. and down to 40 the middle of Feb. Herring: 2000 through Dec. with max numbers of 50 in Jan. and six in Feb.—in Massena. Ring-billed: ten WCC; in Massena 2000 at the beginning of Dec.—departed Hopkins Point on Dec. 21 and returned early with three on Feb. 22. Black-legged Kittiwake: one last seen at Hawkins Point on Dec. 3 (J. VanRiet).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 114 WCC; small flocks through in Henderson; not a single bird for the period in Massena; one Pierrepont Feb. 20. Screech Owl: at two locations in Massena; one bird (gray phase) rehabilitated and released—banded after collision with car (L. Chamberlaine). Great Horned Owl: increased calling as nesting season approached. Snowy Owl: very low this year; one MCC; one Pamelia Dec. 23; one Point Peninsula Jan. 13; one Cape Vincent Jan. 15; two Chaumont and Point Peninsula Feb. 15. Barred Owl: one SLR Coles Creek, Dec. 27 (J. VanRiet); two Upper and Lower Lakes Feb. 26 (J. Brady); seldom reported. Short-eared Owl: seven WCC. Com. Flicker: one WCC (A. Smith). Pileated Woodpecker: one in Massena Feb. 27; frequent in Canton and vicinity. Red-bellied: one adult male in Henderson at feeder through. Red-headed: one WCC near Perch River (S. Brown & R. Wakefield). Hairy: 15 WCC; 11 MCC. Downy: 31 WCC; ten MCC.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 64 WCC; one MCC. Gray Jay: three regularly South Colton at feeder (L. Wallace). Blue Jay: 115 WCC; 51 MCC. **COMMON RAVEN:** two Pierrepont Feb. 18 (K. Crowell). Com. Crow: 167 WCC; 26 MCC; regular throughout winter in Pierrepont—unusual; more than normal wintered on the lake plain. Black-capped Chickadee: 174 WCC; 191 MCC; very abundant at feeders in Henderson and Pierrepont. White-breasted Nuthatch: 21 WCC; ten MCC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one WCC; four Pierrepont Feb. 14 and 15; a few at feeders in Massena area which is more than usual. Brown Creeper: two WCC; one Canton Feb. 14. **MOCKINGBIRD:** one WCC near Depauville (L. Chamberlaine). Am. Robin: three WCC; two MCC; one in Pierrepont until Jan. 15; two Canton Feb. 22. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** one to nine at Pierrepont Dec. 1 & 7 (K. Crowell); 12 Massena Dec. 19 (J. VanRiet); three MCC. Cedar Waxwing: 46 WCC; 22 MCC; 30 Stony Point Jan. 12. No. Shrike: three MCC; one near Watertown Dec. 22; one Robt. Moses Park Feb. 22; very few and far between. Starling: 1841 WCC; 179 MCC; 600 Massena Dump Dec. 24; numbers in Henderson and vicinity are down from previous years.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: no reports.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: E. Meadowlark: two WCC; one Massena Dec. 23. Red-winged Blackbird: one male WCC; returning Watertown Feb. 22; returning Massena Feb. 27. No. Oriole: one found dead Canton Dec. 16 (K. Crowell). Com. Grackle: five WCC; four Canton Feb. 22. Brown-headed Cowbird: one WCC; two MCC; nine Massena Dec. 24. Cardinal: 26 WCC; two MCC; at three locations in Massena area—a slight increase. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: one female Pierrepont Dec. 8 (K. Crowell). Evening Grosbeak: 234 WCC; 257 MCC;

increasing toward end of period. Purple Finch: three Stony Point Jan. 12; very few and very scattered. House Finch: seven WCC. Pine Grosbeak: five Stony Point Dec. 7; 37 WCC; 40 MCC; ten to 20 per day Massena; frequent in Pierrepont groups of three-101; 30 Stony Point feeding on red cedar berries with Evening Grosbeaks. Com. Redpoll: 200 in Massena Dec. 13; 40 WCC; 35 MCC; unusually abundant in Canton and vicinity; 45 overhead at Henderson Jan. 25; 50 Massena Feb. 22. Pine Siskin: 20 MCC; a few at feeders in Massena area through the period; very few in Henderson and vicinity. Am. Goldfinch: 34 WCC; 31 MCC; abundant throughout area of Canton and Pierrepont. Common at feeders in Henderson and vicinity. Rufous-sided Towhee: one WCC, a male at feeder near Watertown (L. Grant). Dark-eyed Junco: 20 WCC; two MCC. Tree Sparrow: 186 WCC; 35 MCC; two to four per day in Jan. decreasing in Feb. White-throated Sparrow: 18 WCC; one all winter at Dry Hill. Song Sparrow: three WCC. Lapland Longspur: one WCC (R. & J. Walker); one MCC. Snow Bunting: 679 WCC; 100 MCC; 50 to 60 per day through Jan. and none in Feb. in Massena area.

Box 139, Henderson, New York 13650

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

THEODORE MACK

We had two periods of extreme weather conditions this winter. January was bitterly cold, while February was ridiculously warm. Lake Champlain was completely frozen over on January 14 which is the earliest date for this since the winter of 1900. December was cold also, with -33° F. Dec. 20; -33° F. Dec. 25; and -35° F. Dec. 26. A Taylor minimum-maximum thermometer registered 12 January days at -20° F. or colder at Paul Smiths.

February was unusually warm, or at least about ten days of it were. Temperatures at Paul Smiths were well into the forties and bare ground was to be found in areas outside the mountains. The sudden runoff caused considerable flooding at lower elevations where temperatures were in the fifties.

The chief effect of the prolonged extreme cold was to keep waterfowl out of the interior of the Region because even the rivers were heavily iced over. (Pickup trucks were driving on the Saranac River near Redford.) One Christmas count was sabotaged by the extreme condensation from relatively warm Lake Champlain water in contact with frigid air. The Plattsburgh count missed some common species because of this heavy fog.

The chief effect of the warm period in February was to open up water for waterfowl. Most land birds seem to be more oriented to migrate in relation to the length of daylight in 24 hours or to some other factor than warmth. This is fortunate because February and March did become more normal. Some species such as Red-winged Blackbirds did make earlier than usual appearances, however.

Contributors: Dirck Benson; Mary Benson; John Bruce; Rex Brugul; Francine Buckley; Paul Buckley; Geoffrey Carleton; Bernard Carmon; Karl Cerasoli; Greenleaf T. Chase; Linda Curtin; Chris Davis; Charlie Delehanty; George Dremeaux; Myra Dremeaux; Mark Gretch; Robert Hagar; Arnold James; Elspeth Johnson; Paul Koehler; Harold Klein; Bruce Landon; Connie Landon; Gary Lee; Margaret McKinney; Robert McKinney; Norman Mason; Brad

Paye; Ray Payson; John Peterson; Don Timmons; Jan Timmons; Jan Tryziak; Armand Vaillancourt; Maurice Villeneuve; Julia Woodard.

LOONS-DUCKS: A Great Blue Heron was at Horseshoe Lake Dec. 7 (MV) and another was seen thru the first week of Dec. at Paul Smiths (CL). 75 Canada Geese were on Lake Champlain Dec. 6 near Rouses Point and 15 were flying past. 72 were on the Plattsburgh Christmas count. One was headed south over Tupper Lake Dec. 23. About 23 Mallards were on the Little Chazy River Dec. 14. The Essex Co. survey of L. Champlain on Jan. 11 yielded 110 Canvasbacks while about 12 of this species were at Rouses Point Feb. 15 with groups of two to three scattered south to Ausable Pt. Feb. 28. The only Greater Scaup reported were two Jan. 11 on the Essex Co. waterfowl count. Fair numbers of Com. Goldeneye were on L. Champlain, the high being 82. Two stayed on a bit of open water in the Raquette R. at Tupper L. until Dec. 25. Four returned to the same reopened spot Feb. 19. M. & R. Mc had a good find with two Hooded Mergansers at L. Abanake near Indian L. Feb. 27 along with 12 Com. Mergansers. They were also fortunate to see an otter on the ice at the same lake. Four Com. Mergansers were at Tupper Feb. 22 and Champlain had good numbers with 149 at Plattsburgh Dec. 20.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: EJ & JP had three species of migrating hawks Feb. 22 at Discovery Mountain including two Red-tails doing display flights. Goshawks were reported from Paul Smiths, Gabriels, Moose River Plains, Tupper Lake, and about everywhere else. Mrs. Delehanty had her usual Sharp-shinned Hawk chasing feeder birds in Jan. and Feb. A few were in the Champlain Valley. A Cooper's Hawk was at Chapel Pond Jan. 25 (BC). There was a Red-tailed Hawk at Moose River Plains and three were tallied at E'town on the count. This was a flight year for Rough-legged Hawks but their numbers thinned suddenly as winter became more severe. One Dec. 3 at Tupper Marsh and another there Dec. 22 were unusual because of the inland location (CD). Twelve were seen on the Plattsburgh Christmas count while E'town only had one on theirs. An adult Bald Eagle was at Whallon's Bay of L. Champlain Jan. 7-9 (BP, EJ, JP, AJ). CD had one at Tupper Dec. 11 and one returned Feb. 27, the earliest she has had. Mark Gretch had a possible Gyrfalcon in Champlain Township Dec. 21. He reports it with some reservation because, as he states, 1) "I have never seen one before," 2) raptor coloration varies extremely, 3) "I do not consider myself an expert in raptor identification." His bird was robust, being the size of the Rough-legged Hawks in the area at the time. Tail was shorter and chunkier than that of a Goshawk. Color was uniformly gray above with light mottling in breast as opposed to barring. There was no blackish crown and underparts of tail lacked conspicuous bars. It stayed about some silos and tried unsuccessfully three times to take pigeons. It had a slow wing beat but traveled fast. There were three and possibly four Gyrfalcons at Ottawa this winter. Perhaps it was a flight year and this bird was part of it. Two Am. Kestrels were at Plattsburgh Dec. 20. Clinton Co. has them all winter. Gray Partridge were seen in groups of two to ten from Cooperville to Pt. au Roche (MG). Six seen at Westport Jan. 23 added a new species to the Essex Co. species list. A few Great Black-backed Gulls were along Lake Champlain as long as there was open water. 14 were at Plattsburgh Dec. 20. A single Herring Gull spent Feb. 19 at Tupper Lake.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: MG reports good numbers of Mourning Doves in Clinton Co. with 20 in one flock feeding in corn Dec. 6. RP had one Screech and five Great Horned Owls Dec. 20 at Plattsburgh. A gray phase Screech Owl died at Willsboro Jan. 6. One of this species was at Wadhams (LC). A Snowy Owl was seen at Lake Placid near the Heart Lake Road Jan. 13 (RB). A Short-eared Owl at Essex on Jan. 7 was seen by several people. A Saw-whet Owl was calling at Paul Smiths Feb. 17 and another was calling at Chasm Falls in Feb. (JT). A few of both Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen. C. Davis found a No. Three-toed Woodpecker off the Averyville Road at Lake Placid Jan. 3 and RH found a female at Chubb R. Jan. 24. A male was at the Chubb Feb. 1 (DB, MB, GTC).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: John Bruce found an early E. Phoebe Feb. 22 at Crown Point. Horned Larks were abundant in Champlain Townships of Clinton Co. all winter. They

appeared in Gabriels in late Feb. which is early. Gray Jays were at Moose R. Plains. Blue Jay: max 35 screaming in alarm over a dead jay at the foot of a tree Jan. 10 (CD). Com. Ravens were widespread and really an every day bird from Moose R. Plains and Indian L. to the Union Falls Flow. There was a very strong influx of Black-capped Chickadees that stayed all winter. Boreal Chickadees were easy to find. White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches were about equal in numbers even in the deep forest. This is unusual. Two Mockingbirds were seen on the Dec. 20 Plattsburgh count. They are to be expected there. Am. Robin: two Dec. 20 at Plattsburgh; one Dec. 27 at E'town; three Macomb Park in Clinton Co. Jan. 17 with the first migrants there the third week of Feb., along with Red-wings and Grackles. Bohemian Waxwings were reported at least ten times. CD had a single bird at Tupper L. Dec. 16. Clinton Co. had a few. The last was a flock of 44 at Westport Jan. 24 (FB, PB). This species is expected in winter at Ottawa. They have been at Essex three winters so this may be indicative of an extension of the winter range. 24 Cedar Waxwings were seen on Dec. 20 at Plattsburgh. Five No. Shrikes were reported including one at Tupper and one at Saranac L. JP banded two.

VIREOS-WARBLES: no reports.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbirds were found on the Christmas counts. The first migrants were early. Ten arrived at Bay Pond near Paul Smiths Feb. 19. Within two days the species was seen in many areas as a migrant. Two Rusty Blackbirds were at Plattsburgh Dec. 20 (HK, PK); one at Lake Placid Dec. 25 (BC); and two were at Wadhams Feb. 19 (LC). There were a lot of Clinton Co. Brown-headed Cowbirds all winter. Purple Finches were elsewhere for the season. Plattsburgh had 85 House Finches Dec. 20, indicating a successful range expansion. Pine Grosbeaks were still around at the end of Feb. A Hoary Redpoll was at a Westport feeder with about 30 Com. Redpolls Feb. 8 (MD, GD). Another was at E'town Jan. 18-19 (JT, DT); one at Moriah Jan. 19; four at another feeder in E'town Feb. 4 (GC, EJ). Thousands of Com. Redpolls reported from Whallonsburgh Feb. 12 by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. Pine Siskin numbers increased rapidly toward the end of Feb. Both crossbills were at the Chubb R. but very scarce elsewhere. CD had ten White-winged Crossbills at Saranac L. Feb. 4. A few Field, White-throated, and Song Sparrows wintered at feeders, as did a Fox Sparrow at Tupper L. MG reports lots of Lapland Longspurs Dec. 21 to Jan. 10 in Clinton Co. It was a good Snow Bunting season.

Paul Smiths, New York 12970

REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

BILL COOK

It was the coldest Christmas on record in Albany, -17° F. followed by a mid-winter heat wave in February. Residents of Fulton County near Johnstown greeted Christmas day with December's minimum temperature of -31° F. The coldest day of the period was still to come as the mercury hit -40° (that's the point where fahrenheit and centigrade are equivalent) on January 13 in Cambridge, Washington County. But February changed all that. Warmth arrived early in the month, (53° F. at Albany on February 2) and lasted until nearly March. The maximum temperature for the period was 70° F., set at higher elevations in Columbia and Schoharie Counties around February 19. A 66° F. reading at Albany on that date beat the old record by eleven degrees.

As one contributor describes it, this winter contrasted "record heat and cold; drought and flood; and a drought at feeders in the face of what earlier had the makings of a heavy winter finch invasion." (RY).

In December snowfall quickly exceeded last year's total accumulation, but then it stopped. However, what had fallen remained. Persistent low temperatures prevented melting and, in addition, froze the river to a depth of sixteen inches, according to Hudson residents. Then, in the midst of a drought year, the third wettest February ever recorded at Albany, coupled with abnormally high temperatures, released ice-laden flood waters in rivers and streams throughout the area. The last few days of February began a return to winter cold and drought.

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) participants suffered inhospitable bitter low temperatures during late December and early January. Yet CBC activities did produce a few species that would otherwise not have been reported during the period. These were Great Blue Heron, Gadwall, Red-bellied Woodpecker and White-crowned Sparrow.

Christmas Bird Counts also emphasized the presence of several species lingering through the winter that should have vacated. Carolina Wren, Gray Catbird, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Bluebird and Rusty Blackbird normally winter south of our area. There is speculation that "hardy" populations of some of these species will spread their winter range northward.

Frequently joked about, and often worried about—well it finally happened. Two participants in the Schenectady CBC working on opposite sides of the Mohawk River with tape recordings were delighted to call up a Screech Owl, from the other bank, of course. It didn't occur to them that they were responding to each other's tapes, for some time, until one hapless lister set up his scope to catch the other in re-wind. He kept his discovery secret until reporting time when the explanation for such cooperative owls was shared. By the way, amidst all the ruckus, a genuine (maybe) Screech Owl joined in the chorus and was tallied in the count.

Feeder specialties this year include Debbie Shaw's Rusty Blackbird in East Greenbush and the return of two Field Sparrows to Bill Gorman's feeder also in East Greenbush. This is the sixth year in a row that a Field Sparrow has wintered at his feeder.

The severe cold of December and January had several major avian consequences. Waterfowl and waders were scarce or nonexistent. Most winter finches flew over our area. However, there were notable local invasions of some species. Among the northern invaders were Snowy Owls, a Glaucous Gull or two, a Common Raven, large numbers of Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. The chickadee invasion, measured by seed consumption at Jenny Lake (RY), was nearly double the previous record set in '78-'79 for eleven years of study.

Bald Eagles made an impressive opening for the New Year as they gathered at infrequent open waters in and around Region 8. Another raptor that found refuge from the cold, in human company, was a Barred Owl. Following the high winds and extreme cold of January 10-11, a janitor at Bethlehem H.S. in Delmar discovered the owl in a protected courtyard, perched in a mountain ash. On a

negative note, observers mention lower numbers of American Kestrels than normal.

Woodpeckers seem to be on the upswing in our area. Reports of Pileated Woodpeckers have increased significantly. Reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are also notable for the winter season. With seven of nine of New York woodpeckers and six of eight New York owls, these two orders were well-represented in the 97 species that were recorded in Region 8 this winter.

A report of a Lesser Black-backed Gull is being filed with the NYS Avian Records Committee. There has only been one previous record of this species in Region 8. The bird was observed flying, standing on ice and swimming in the Hudson River at New Baltimore, by Andrew Guthrie on February 17.

With the spring breeding season upon us, the Atlas project for recording evidence of breeding birds is getting underway for the second of the five years of the effort. Help is desperately needed in the northern counties of our Region. Warren, Washington, Fulton and Montgomery counties went practically untouched last year. Even common species have yet to be atlased in these areas, so birders in these counties are urged to contact Regional Co-ordinator: Dick Guthrie, Box 46, New Baltimore, NY 12124; 518-756-9094.

Contributors: V. & B. Able, Dean Amadon, S. Anderson, Roberta Bernstein, George Bowman, Rachel Brody, William Brooks, Arlene & Tom Brown, Bob Budliger, Bill Cook, Juanita Cook, Will Craik, R. Dodd, R. Drowne, Kate Dunham, Peter Feinberg, Barbara & Hugo Gardina, Bill Gorman, Elisabeth Grace, Andrew Guthrie, Richard P. Guthrie, Philip Ingalls, Carol Kirk, Ron & Carolyn LaForce, B. Laros, Bill Lee, Sam Madison, E. Mansell, Charles Mason, Roger Menges, James Mesick, Sherrie Orne, Tom Palmer, Anthony Passero, Elsie Powell, Jon & Sue Powell, Walt Sabin, Debbie Shaw, Janet Silvernail, Jim Swozzo, M. & B. Ulmer, Elizabeth Walsh, Tommy Williams, Robert P. Yunick.

LOONS-DUCKS: A Horned Grebe was grounded by the fog on Dec. 29 in the vicinity of Schenectady. It was banded by Bob Yunick and released near some open water on the Mohawk River. Three Great Blue Herons were reported on two separate Christmas Bird Counts: Kinderhook Cr. Dec. 20; two Troy Jan. 3. Canada Geese were well-represented on Christmas Bird Counts, not reported in Jan. but observed returning north through Catskill Feb. 28. A SNOW GOOSE was spotted among a large flock of Canada Geese in an open field by Peter Feinberg for the Chatham CBC Dec. 20; another was seen returning north through Catskill Feb. 28 (EW). Mallards and Black Ducks could be found through the winter where open water and food were available. GADWALL: one found on Hudson R. Troy CBC first count record Jan. 3 (RG). Wood Duck: Columbia Co. Feb. 28. Com. Goldeneye: Troy CBC Jan. 3; New Baltimore Feb. 17-28. Com. Merganser: Troy CC Jan. 3. New Baltimore Feb. 14-21.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Three reports of Turkey Vultures this winter: one in Leeds Feb. 15; two in Col Co Feb. 21-22. Goshawks were reported four times through Dec. and Jan. 2, showing up on two CBC's. The same was true for Sharp-shinned Hawks except that three of the four were on CBCs, and two more reports were received for Feb. from Col Co. Cooper's Hawks doubled the accipiter count with *ten* reports. Perhaps this high number is due to repeated observations of the same birds and/or "half-hardy" individuals that probably left during January's numbing cold. A female was captured inside a service station in Ravena on the morning of a CBC day but unfortunately outside the count area. It was banded and released at dawn Dec. 29 (RG & BC). Red-tailed Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks have been reported in excellent numbers thru the winter. Red-shouldered Hawk: Albany Co Feb. 3

(PF). **BALD EAGLE**: Troy CBC Jan. 3 (SM), Schodack Jan. 5-17, Blenheim-Gilboa Jan. 3-Feb. 1, New Baltimore Jan. 23. Marsh Hawks were seen regularly by several contributors thru the winter. Am. Kestrels, although always present, were noted to be less numerous or even scarce by two contributors (RY & RG). Ruffed Grouse reported in average numbers thru the winter. Bobwhite: Old Chatham Jan. 2 (WC). Ring-necked Pheasants were recorded on two CBCs as well as numerous other reports. Turkeys were also recorded on the Greene Co and Chatham CBCs along with four other Columbia Co reports. The only "shorebird" reports were of a Killdeer in Schuylerville Feb. 18, and an Am. Woodcock near Lake Taghkanic Feb. 27. A **GLAUCOUS GULL** was seen at Cohoes Falls Jan. 12 (RG) and Jan. 23 (PF). There were fifteen reports of Great Black-backed Gulls thru the winter while the usually abundant Herring and Ring-billed Gulls seemed to disappear around CBC time as ice locked up the Hudson River. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: New Baltimore Feb. 17 (AG).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Doves and Mourning Doves reported in large numbers as usual. Over 300 for each on Greene Co. CBC. Mourning Doves were "singing" during the mid-winter "heat wave" in Schenectady Feb. 17 (RY). The Cocksackie Barn Owl is still in residence. Screech Owl reports confined to a Rexford road kill Feb. 14; and several called out for CBCs in Greene and Schenectady Cos. Great Horned Owl: eleven reports; one on a nest in Clarksville Feb. 11 (CM). The **SNOWY OWL** invasion resulted in ten reports from Albany, Schenectady, Fulton and Washington Cos. thru Feb. 11. A Barred Owl found shelter from extreme cold (-20° F.) and high winds between wings of the Bethlehem H.S. Jan. 10-12 (BB); another was recorded near Old Chatham Dec. 17 (KD & EG); and another from Charlton Feb. 18. Short-eared Owl: nine max Cocksackie Flats; two other reports from Albany Co Jan. 29-Feb. 1 (JS). Belted Kingfisher: eight reported thru Dec. 29. Com. Flickers reported in good numbers wintering in Columbia, Greene and Montgomery Cos. Pileated Woodpeckers, with more than fifteen reports, seem to be increasing in numbers. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER**: Ghent Dec. 20-22 (B & HG). **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER**: Lake Taghkanic Jan. 28 (A & TB). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: New Baltimore Dec. 24 (AG); Coeymans Feb. 4 (TW). Downy Woodpeckers outnumbering Hairy Woodpeckers by about four to one at feeders and in the field.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: up to about 600 at the Cocksackie Flats where they gather at manure spreads thru the winter. Blue Jays and Com. Crows in usual numbers, 401 and 243 respectively on the Greene Co. CBC. **COMMON RAVEN**: Spier Falls Feb. 21 (RY). A record invasion of Black-capped Chickadees at Jenny L., 228 banded by RY Dec.-Feb. There seemed to be lower numbers of Tufted Titmice, with only 29 on the Greene Co CBC Dec. 29. White-breasted Nuthatches, although common at feeders, were reported scarce at Jenny L. where a Red-breasted Nuthatch invasion resulted in 57 banded by RY; ten on the Greene Co CBC is notably high. Brown Creeper: appeared on at least three CBCs with 28 more reports thru the winter. Wren reports totaled three: a Winter Wren in Schenectady Dec. 18, one **CAROLINA WREN** in Colonie Dec. 19, and another wintering in New Baltimore. Mockingbird: numbers staying about even (49 Greene Co CBC). **GRAY CATBIRD**: three winter individuals: Chatham CBC Dec. 20, Greene Co CBC Dec. 29, Old Chatham Jan. 12 (EP). Brown Thrasher: two Schenectady CBC Dec. 20. Am. Robin: wintering numbers in the thousands at roosts on the Cocksackie Flats and near Olana, Columbia Co, late Dec.-early Jan. Hermit Thrush was amazingly common this winter with thirteen individuals on area CBCs. E. Bluebird: high numbers on Chatham CBC: two New Baltimore Dec. 25, two wintering near Cornwallville, three wintering in Clarksville, Golden-crowned Kinglet: six reports thru, Cedar Waxwing: large flocks wandering through area. No. Shrike: two of the four sightings on CBCs, three in Dec., one on Feb. 1. Starlings in large flocks throughout the area as usual.

VIREOS-WARBLED: The only warbler species reported in the Region this winter was, as might be expected, the Yellow-rumped Warbler, with six reports thru Jan. 25.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: House Sparrow: numbers remain high thru the winter; large flock at Port of Albany, 621 on Greene Co CBC. E. Meadowlarks remained in the area thru the winter: 45 on Greene Co CBC Dec. 29, Col Co Jan. 6-23. Red-winged Blackbirds, Com. Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds reported at feeders in small numbers thru the winter months; 24 max for Cowbirds at Colonie Dec. 13. Mild Feb. weather brought back grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds to Schenectady at mid-month, about two weeks early (RY). **RUSTY BLACKBIRD:** two Selkirk Dec. 27 (RG), East Greenbush Jan. (DS). Winter Cardinal numbers seem to have been up, a carry-over from abundant numbers in autumn (RY). Winter finch numbers never materialized as expected. The following CBC numbers may indicate relative frequency: Cardinal 123, Evening Grosbeak 342, Purple Finch 7, House Finch 169, Pine Grosbeak 40, Com. Redpoll 12 (found feeding on birch seeds more often than at feeders), Pine Siskin, one, appeared to go south abundantly, but very few stayed locally (RY), Am. Goldfinch 95, probably more abundant than that number indicates. Only two reports of Red Crossbills for the period, from Jenny Lake: one Dec. 6, three Feb. 28. Rufous-sided Towhee: one from Greene Co CBC Dec. 29. Savannah Sparrow: two Greene Co CBC Dec. 29. Dark-eyed Junco: numbers were good, 243 on Greene Co. CBC. Tree Sparrow: wintered in good numbers in most areas. Field Sparrow: Schenectady CBC Dec. 20, Greene Co CBC Dec. 29, Delmar mid-Jan. (BB); East Greenbush thru (BG). White-crowned Sparrow: Ghent Dec. 20 (SO), Greene Co CBC Dec. 29 (AG). White-throated Sparrow: successfully wintered in good numbers; 249 Greene Co CBC. Fox Sparrow: appeared on at least three CBCs; not reported in Jan., reappearing Feb. 1-8 in Old Chatham (KD & EG). Swamp Sparrow: recorded on at least three CBCs in numbers as high as five; and Jan. 16-Feb. 21 in Ghent (B & HG). Song Sparrow: wintered in usual numbers; 20 on Greene Co CBC. Lapland Longspur: five min. wintered with at least 500 Snow Buntings on the Coxsackie flats manure spreads.

Remember Dial-A-Bird for Hudson-Mohawk area bird news at 518-377-9600.

Columbia-Greene Community College, Box 1000, Hudson, New York 12534

REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

December 1980 was the driest on record, and very cold. Temperatures averaged 2.6° F. below average, rarely getting above freezing, and often going to 20° below zero in the northern portion. January averaged 6° F. below average, with precipitation of only .35 inches. February temperatures moderated by mid-month, and about six inches of warm rain removed most of the ice by month's end.

The lack of snow cover was blamed for the dearth of winter finches at feeders. Most were off feeding on the abundant weed seeds and fruit exposed upon the ground. With the exception of the crossbills, most species were reported, but in low numbers. A phenomenal number of "half-hardies" are recorded in the report, belying the nomenclature by having survived such low temperatures.

The deep freeze of December and lack of coverage in three counties reduced the high count of 14,000 individuals of 25 species counted last year on the Waterfowl Count in mid-January, to only 5,000 individuals of 12 species. The latter number of individuals was still twice the usual average count of individuals.

The Waterfowl Count bonus was the Region's first record of Ivory Gull, the details of which are in the report. Other rarities included are: Double-crested Cormorant, Golden Eagle, unusual numbers of Bald Eagles, Osprey, both "white-winged" gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snowy Owl, House Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Swainson's Thrush, several species of warblers, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Contributors and observers cited: Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Peter Der-ven, Jack Focht, Paul & Thelma Haight, Fred Hough, Mary & Jim Key, Ken McDermott, Frank Murphy, Stan DeOrsey, Jack Orth, Eleanor Pink, Brian Schiefer (BSc), Victor Schwartz, Benton Seguin (BSe), Selden Spencer, John Tramontano, Edward D. Treacy, Otis Waterman.

Abbreviations used: BMCC—Bear Mountain Christmas Count, Jan. 6; CB—Cornwall Bay, FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count Jan. 11; JBCC—John Burroughs Christmas Count, Dec. 20; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count Dec. 20; PL—Playland, Rye; PP—Piermont Pier; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count Dec. 21; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count Dec. 27.

LOONS—DUCKS: Loons: TB reports both species continued their winter decline of the past several years in the marine areas of West. There were only four Com. Loons reported there in Dec., and one in Jan. Three reported on RCC was only the second time for that count in 32 years. Red-throated Loon: one was found by Helen Manson in a small creek in Dutch. The bird was bloody-toed from attempting to fly from frozen ground. It was captured and released in the Hudson R. slightly the worse for wear. Red-necked Grebe: only report, one Ashokan Jan. 23. **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**: rarely reported in winter anywhere, and especially inland. One near Newburgh Jan. 19 (BSe). Great Cormorant: in usual winter numbers near PL, as many as 25 there thru period. Great Blue Heron: wintered in more than usual numbers considering the intense cold of the period. Several reporters speculated they were living on small mammals; fish being unattainable. Waterfowl: down from highs of last year, but still good. Withdrew completely from most areas to open water of lower Hudson and returned with the thaw in late Feb. Canada Goose: max 1200 at CB Jan. 1. Brant: 45 at PL Dec. 28 continued tendency of last few years to winter on L.I. Sound off West. Snow Goose: two in Rye Jan. 3. Gadwall: two at MC Jan. 3, left only to return Feb. 14 with the thaw. Pintail: one reported at Verbank dur Jan. Blue-winged Teal: one at PP Dec. 19, was unusually late. No. Shoveler: four at RL on RCC inc to 47 on Dec. 19. A male at Stissing Jan. 9 and 13. Wood Duck: at least three were wintering in Rock. Redhead: one late bird at PL Jan. 1, and two at MC Dec. 28, Ring-necked Duck: seven on Rye L. during Jan. Canvasback: increasing to new highs reminiscent of the 1950's. 340 on the Hudson at Stony Pt. Dec. 18; 427 on RCC was the highest number for that count since 1959. 728 on MCC was the highest for that count. Lesser Scaup: 40 at PL Feb. 28. Com. Goldeneye: 45 off PP Jan. 6 was the largest flock on Rock in recent years. Ruddy Duck: one Dec. 8 CB, and two Feb. 26 Orange L. Com. Merganser: continues to increase in winter. More than 900 on Cross River Res. Dec. 7. 800 on the Hudson off Stony Pt. Jan. 19 was the best count there since 1955. 450 at Ashokan Feb. 28 was the high for that location. Red-breasted Merganser: seven on RCC was the eleventh time for that count, and one on Hudson off Dutch on WCC was the first in 23 counts.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: more wintering birds than ever before. Single birds and small flocks of four or five reported from all areas thru the period. Usual excellent numbers by mid-March. Goshawk: more than ever before in winter. Single birds reported in almost every county. Sharp-shinned Hawk: five reports of birds working feeders. Cooper's Hawk: three reports. One observed circling over a feeder in Newburgh, apparently checking it out for prey. Could it be that these accipiters can be conditioned to the presence of feeders? Red-tailed Hawk: excellent numbers: about 60 on WCC which usually averages about 35. Red-shouldered Hawk: several reports of single birds. Rough-legged Hawk: present

in unprecedented numbers. Ten on WCC which usually averages an occasional single bird. Four wintered on the Harriman estate in Orange. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: an adult at CB Jan. 25 (BSe). Two at Thompson Pd., Dutch Jan. 4. One Dec. 31 at Clove Valley was still there for WCC, a first for that count. **BALD EAGLE**: three birds on ice flows near Iona I. Jan. 23 reminded birders of the old days when a dozen or more could be seen there and farther south to the Jersey line. Birds were said to have been there for several weeks. Two adults were at Bashakill Dec. 13, and an imm was at Newburgh Jan. 24. The DEC census on Feb. 17 revealed at least 30 birds along the Delaware and Neversink Rivers. At least four ad and two imm were in the Rondout Res. region for most of the period. Marsh Hawk: more than usual, with one or two observed wintering in each county. **OSPREY**: an extremely late bird at CB Dec. 24 and again Dec. 28 (BSe). Ruffed Grouse: RCC had a new high of 19. Ring-necked Pheasant: five males and twelve females spent Dec. near Stissing, Turkey: continues to spread thru Dutch. Reported as close as two or three miles from P'kpsie; max 30 at Forestburgh, Sull Jan. 11, and another 30 Jan. 5 near Wassaic. Clapper Rail: one at MC Jan. 1. Ruddy Turnstone: one at Milton Pt. Rye Jan. 11 inc to three Feb. 1. Am. Woodcock: displaying at MC Feb. 22. Early!! Two at Blue Chip Farm Wallkill Feb. 24. Spotted Sandpiper: one PP Dec. 10 a new late date. The old one was Nov. 23, 1969. Purple Sandpiper: about 150 at Milton Pt. Rye on Feb. 1. Gulls: a survey in Rock on Dec. 18 revealed 20 Great Black-backed at Rockland L. and 40 in the Haverstraw Stony Pt. area. 300 Herring Gulls were also at the latter location, with about 3000 Ring-bills. "White-winged" gulls: one Glaucous and one Iceland Gull were repeatedly found at the Haverstraw landfill near the Hudson thru Feb. (EDT). A Glaucous was at Ashokan Feb. 14, a first record for that county (FM). Another was at New Harnburgh Feb. 1, and on the Hudson just below P'kpsie Feb. 15. A first year Iceland was at Rye L. Jan. 26, 27. Another was at Newburgh Jan. 18. California Gull: the Rockland L. bird returned in Oct. and Nov., and made the RCC for the second time. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one Rye L Jan. 26 was a different bird than the one in Mamaroneck Harbor Dec. 28 thru Jan. 1 and again Feb. 13 thru 15 (TB). Bonaparte's Gull: six at PP Dec. 18, 16 CB Dec. 3. **IVORY GULL**: 1 imm obs on the Hudson R. at Newburgh sewage disposal plant discovered by BSc and EDT, and simultaneously but independently by BSe, who also reported an adult there. The latter bird was seen only by BSe, but the imm was studied by many observers on Jan. 11-13, and again on Jan. 18-20. Many photos were taken, some as close as 20 ft.

PIGEONS--WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: exceptionally high numbers thru period. MCC had a record high of 1093. Screech Owl: RCC had second highest count of 13. Great Horned Owl: good numbers. Seven reports in Dutch dur Dec. Most were calling and may well have been nesting by end of period. **SNOWY OWL**: one standing beside the Palisades P'kway just south of the Nanuet exit Feb. 4, another on a church roof in Newburgh Jan. 11, and two Dutch records: one Dec. 30 and the other Jan. 17. Barred Owl: a good find any time and place in the area, especially so in Rock where one was found by PD and VS at Palisades Jan. 7. Long-eared Owl: one Jan. 21 at Stewart Airport remained there thru period. Waterman Club reports five in Dec., three in Jan. and one in Feb. Short-eared Owl: nine spent Jan. on the former Buttonwood Tree Farm property at Hamptonburgh (Fred & Wava Abbott). BSe had 11 at Galeville Airport Feb. 24, and there were reports of as many as 20 there. Saw-whet Owl: one dead in the road near Stonykill, Dutch in Feb. was the only report. Common Flicker: more winter records than usual. Pileated Woodpecker: incredible as it seems, it was missed on the BMCC, WCC and only one on the MCC. Meanwhile RCC had a record high of ten. Their previous high was six in 1978. Red-bellied Woodpecker: now out-numbers the Red-headed in most of the latter's territory. Reported at many suet feeders in the area. Mentioned by at least six reporters.

FLYCATCHERS--STARLINGS: Horned Lark: most reports from Dutch. Several flocks of more than 200 reported there each month. Fish Crow: one can hardly spend a day along the Hudson R. and not see or hear several. EDT reports a roost of several dozen near St. Francis Hosp., P'kpsie Jan. 9. Black-capped Chickadee: MCC had a record high of 494. Red-breasted Nuthatch: coming back to usual numbers from lows of recent years. 14 on WCC

was unusually high. Brown Creeper: more than usual. M, JK note a good movement on Feb. 26, 27. **HOUSE WREN**: one near Goshen Dec. 20, unusual in winter (Roger Robb). Carolina Wren: in good numbers thru period, withstood the -20° F. temp. in the northern part. **LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN**: also rare in winter. One at MC Jan. 1 (TB). Mockingbird: a new high of 112 on MCC. Gray Catbird: three together near Goshen on MCC was most unusual. One on RCC. Brown Thrasher: several reports of single birds that made it through the winter. Am. Robin: flocks of 30 to 40, and many reports of single birds. Max 350 Feb. 12 near P'kpsie. Hermit Thrush: max four on Bronx Westchester CC. Several other reports of single birds. **SWAINSON'S THRUSH**: on BMCC, Phil Meisner and Jack Focht carefully studied one at L. Sebago, the fourth winter record for Rock. E. Bluebird: at least 20 wintered along the nest box trail in Clinton Corners. Most CC reported their numbers up. MCC had a record high of eight. Golden-crowned Kinglet: none on RCC or BMCC. Only one on MCC, seven on WCC and nine on JBCC were a bit more hopeful. Cedar Waxwing: usual small flocks reported, but max 350 Jan. 16 at Vassar College. Another group of 107 at Mountainville, Jan. 1. Starling: more than 11,900 on RCC with one roost near Tappan Zee Bridge containing more than 10,000.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: John LeMaire had an unmistakable bird near his home in Suffern Dec. 18. Yellow-rumped Warbler: six reports and several of these were of multiple birds: three at Stony Pt. Park Jan. 19, eight on RCC was their best since 1963, six on MCC, four at Crugers I. Dutch, six reports from Dutch in Dec. Palm Warbler: two at MCC on Dec. 13. Com. Yellowthroat: one at Orangetown on RCC was the third record for that count.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: one at Trailside Museum, Bear Mt. Pk. Jan. 13 frequented a feeder for about one hour and then disappeared, well observed by Mark Reynolds who found it, and Jack Mead, the park Naturalist. Red-winged Blackbird: many reports and some sizeable flocks in the southern part of the Region. Migrants everywhere by Feb. 21. No. Oriole: at least two reports, one at a Port Chester feeder from Nov. thru Jan. 7, and another wintered at a Newburgh feeder. Brown-headed Cowbird: anywhere from one to one hundred reported by many, but max was more than 5000 at Stissing Dec. 12 (P, TH). Cardinal: back to normal numbers of several years ago, 267 was the highest on RCC since 1962. **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**: a male at the feeder of Ev Rifenberg at Woodstock Dec. 10. Evening Grosbeak: usual small scattered flocks reported thru Region. Max about 70 near L Tiorati Jan. 6. 29 on JBCC was unusually high. Purple Finch: 12 near Rye Nature Center and 20 at a feeder in Clinton Corners were winter residents. House Finch: a record high of 467 on MCC, 472 on JBCC. Most other counts had unusual highs. **PINE GROSBEAK**: only report eight near Woodstock Jan. 10 (FM). Com. Redpoll: a few small flocks and several single birds reported, mostly at feeders. Largest flocks were 35 at Cross River on Jan. 17; 50 near Watch Tower Farms, Wallkill Feb. 14; and 55 feeding on white birches off Rt. 28 in the Town of Ulster Dec. 10. Pine Siskin: more than 100 in hemlocks at Frost Valley Dec. 27. Four other reports in Dutchess Dec., three in Jan. and three in Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: at least a dozen reports, too many to repeat here. Most were single birds at feeders. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: two at MC Jan. 2. Tree Sparrow: well reported from most areas with numbers low. Exception was MCC where a record high of 699 was reported. Field Sparrow: max eight on Mine Rd. USMA Jan. 17. White-crowned Sparrow: two on MCC were the only report. White-throated Sparrow: below usual numbers. RCC had 100 which was one-third their usual count. Fox Sparrow: ten at Rye Nature Center, and 14 at MC Jan. 24 were max. Lapland Longspur: at least four wintered at Blue Chip Farm, Wallkill, and 22 at Warren Sod Farm near Pine Island Dec. 14. Eleven birds were reported from the Blue Chip-Galeville region Jan. 31. Snow Bunting: max 250 at Stewart Airport Jan. 25 were flying along the main runway when the plane carrying the returning hostages touched down. 400 at Ashokan Feb. 14 may well have been migrating.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 – MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

Early December's relatively mild weather was broken abruptly by the arrival of extremely cold and bitter weather on Christmas Day with 0° F. temperatures or lower, and strong NW winds. January remained cold. Bays and harbors were frozen over, as was Jerome Reservoir; the Hudson River was clogged with ice, and Long Island Sound at the narrow western end appeared frozen to the Westchester shore. The normal mean temperature in January in the city is 32.2° F. The mean this year was 26.3° F., four degrees below average. Precipitation was far below normal, with only half an inch during January. Snow cover melted or blew off before Brant were seriously stressed. After a brief cold snap, February was six degrees warmer than average, with a mean temperature of 39.3° F. Precipitation was twice the average with six inches recorded. The third week of February was like April with temperatures ranging as high as 68° F. Signs of the coming breeding season were observable by the end of January and into the first days of February as Cardinals, House Finches, titmice, and Horned Larks were singing, and Herring Gulls in full breeding plumage were paired off on their breeding grounds.

Christmas Count Highlights

For the fourth straight year the Montauk count was highest in New York State, with 130 species plus "Ipswich" Sparrow, a total achieved three times previously in 1971, 1978, and 1979. The Montauk participants were celebrating the 50th count anniversary, but had to be satisfied with tying the previous high. A female Barrow's Goldeneye was new to the count. Of interest were a Willet, two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, a Razorbill, a Dovekie, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, and two Yellow-breasted Chats. 458 Black-capped Chickadees was a record high. Birds missed by counters included regulars such as American Woodcock, Brown-headed Cowbird, Barn Owl, Long-eared Owl, and Black-crowned Night Heron. So it would seem that the 130 barrier can be broken—maybe next year. The compilation of 50 years of count data is a credit to Ben Trimble and Bob Paxton, co-compilers of the count, and serves as a valuable reference to reduce extravagant interpretations about trends and populations.

The next highest count in Region 10 belonged to Central Suffolk with 125 species, plus "Ipswich" Sparrow, an amazing total considering the day was their coldest yet with temperatures ranging from -1° to 10° F. The total was their fourth highest ever, and the best since 1975. The rarest species was a Short-billed Marsh Wren. Other uncommon species included Great Cormorant, Snow Goose, Wood Duck, Goshawk (third time), Greater Yellowlegs, Laughing Gull, Saw-whet Owl (second time), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Cedar Waxwing, Red Crossbill and Lapland Longspur. Missed species included Red-throated Loon, Bald Eagle and Rusty Blackbird. This count has now seen 197 species over 28 years. Fifty species have occurred every year and 22 were missed only once or twice. At the other extreme, 39 species were found only once or twice.

The Captree count totaled 116 species plus "Blue" Goose. Lincoln's Sparrow was new to the count. A near record high of 484 Black-capped Chickadees was found. Of interest: Merlin, Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Iceland Gull.

The Southern Nassau count tallied 115 species in bitter, windy weather. Included were a Merlin, two Iceland Gulls, and a Water Pipit. Common and Red-throated Loons were missed.

The Northern Nassau count was uneventful with an average total of 103 species plus "Blue" Goose. Of interest were three Pine Grosbeaks, the only ones reported this winter, a Cooper's Hawk, two Red-shouldered Hawks, Merlin, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Chipping Sparrow and a Northern Oriole. Also noteworthy was the absence of loons, Redheads, scoters, Clapper Rail, and most shorebirds; 909 Black-capped Chickadees were found on this count.

Brooklyn counters found 103 species including two Red-necked Grebes, immature White-fronted Goose, Peregrine Falcon, a chat, and two Orange-crowned Warblers.

The Queens count totaled an average 102 species including an adult White-fronted Goose, four Snowy Owls, Lesser Yellowlegs, dowitcher sp., Peregrine, Glaucous Gull, and Eastern Phoebe.

Staten Islanders found 90 species including seven Rough-legged Hawks, a Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Eastern Phoebe, and a Northern Oriole. Over thirty-three thousand Herring Gulls were counted. A count of 95 Purple Sandpipers exceeded the sum of all of the other counts manyfold.

Gyr Falcon

Without a doubt the bird of the season was the immature white-phase Gyr Falcon first found January 26 at Lawrence by Mike Scheibel. For full account, see "Notes and Observations," page 82.

Federation Pelagic Trip

The winter pelagic trip December 6 aboard the Finback I proceeded to a point 40 miles off shore south of Montauk Point. Species encountered included 25 Gannets, 500 Black-legged Kittiwakes, seven unidentified alcids, three Dovekies, one Black Guillemot near the point, and two Snow Buntings (one 40 miles from shore).

Rarities for the season include: White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Gyr Falcon, Thayer's Gull, Black Guillemot, Hoary Redpoll, Harris' Sparrow. Positive notes for the season include: Buffleheads in good numbers, Red-shouldered Hawks in better numbers than in recent years, Red-tailed Hawks in good numbers, interesting white-winged gulls, good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks, a good show of Snowy Owls, and large numbers of Black-capped Chickadees on the counts. Negative aspects of the winter include: loons and grebes very scarce, all scoters in small numbers, Great Blue Herons low, Tree Sparrows scarce in some regions, Pine Siskins largely absent after vast numbers passed along the beaches last fall, crossbills almost unreported, few Evening Grosbeaks, eiders in low numbers, Black-billed Plovers low, small land birds generally low in Suffolk County, Winter Wrens scarce, Saw-whet Owls suffered road kills along Jones Beach with a minimum of eight found, and two killed by larger predators.

Contributors and observers: George Bouquio, Ralph Cioffi, Arthur P. Cooley, Dorothy W. Crumb, Thomas H. Davis, Stephen B. Dempsey, Aline Dove, Frances File, Paul Gillen, William Lamoureux, David Larsen, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Alan Lindberg,

Lois Lindberg, Hugh Pembleton, Glenn Quinn, Sheila Rosenberg, Herbert Roth, Gilbert S. Raynor, Michael Scheibel, Lore J. Schore, Walter Sedwitz, Barbara J. Spencer, Al Wollin.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon numbers seemed very low everywhere except in the Montauk count circle where 91 were found. This number is less than the mean (130) for the last 20 years (range 11 in 1965 to 455 in 1967). Red-throated Loons also seemed low. The Montauk tally of 16 is below the 20 year mean of 30 (range 3 to 101). Two Red-necked Grebes were found on the Montauk count; one was at Shoreham Jan. 19, three at Mecox Feb. 28 (DL). While Horned Grebes seemed scarce elsewhere, the Montauk count found 222, the second highest tally (max 2000 in 1957). Pied-billed Grebes were sparingly reported. Five were in salt water near Lawrence in Jan. Great Cormorant numbers vary considerably (0 to 357 at Montauk over 20 years). This year's total of 59 was below average. Twenty-six were found on the N. Nassau count, about average. A single Double-crested Cormorant was on the Montauk count. On Dec. 2, on a SE wind, 500-600 Gannets were moving west, working off Shinnecock Inlet. Great Blue Herons seemed fewer in number this winter, yet data from N. Nassau showed 14, within the five year range of 11-20. Similarly the Montauk number, 15, was within a ten year range of 7 to 40. Black-crowned Night Heron was missed on the Montauk count yet appeared in average numbers elsewhere. A late Snowy Egret was present Dec. 1 at Southampton and Dec. 2 at Jones Beach (GSR). A total of 968 Mute Swans was located on the Central Suffolk count (369 last year), 56 in N. Nassau (55 last year), and 74 at Montauk, its highest count (45 last year). This species seems to be exploding in Suffolk county. Do Mute Swans from Connecticut winter in Suffolk County? Brant seemed present in numbers similar to recent years. The previously reported immature **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** lingered at Jamaica Bay until Jan. 2. An adult **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** was present among a flock of feral Canadas in Lake Success Dec. 20-21 (J. Pion *et al.*). Race was not determined as descriptions of bill color differed. Scattered reports of Snow Geese in small numbers were received. Mallards appear to remain in stable numbers on all counts. Black Ducks continue to outnumber Mallards in C. Suffolk (3414 to 2970). Two Blue-winged Teals on the C. Suffolk count were good finds. Wintering drake European Wigeons were reported from Lawrence (two), Rockville Center Jan. 15 (AW), Hempstead Lake, Babylon Jan. 17 (K. Malone), and Jamaica Bay. A female was seen at Lawrence Jan. 28 (THD *et al.*). 112 Am. Wigeons in N. Nassau was low, although within a ten year range (110-631). 88 Redheads at Fort Pond Feb. 7 was a good count (*fide* L. Shore). A peak count of 1168 Canvasbacks at Jerome Res. Dec. 7 gradually dwindled to 217 Jan. 28 (WS); 2209 were reported on the Queens count, 908 on Captree. 29 Lesser Scaup in C. Suffolk was a good number; one to 18 over the winter at Jerome Res. represents a reduction over recent years (WS). A high count of 902 Com. Goldeneyes was found in N. Nassau. Three female **BARROW'S GOLDENEYES** were reported: one was at Montauk Dec. 20-Jan. 25 (P. Buckley, K. Able, BJS *et al.*), one Jan. 19 at Jones Inlet (B. Benjamin), and a different bird there Jan. 25 (SBD, S. Schiff). Only four Harlequin Ducks were reported: a drake flew by Democrat Point Dec. 28 (K. Malone), another drake was at Montauk Point Jan. 11, and a female was at the Point Jan. 15-Feb. 21 (BJS, B. Benjamin *et al.*), a female at Long Beach Feb. 16 (P. Gillen), and a female at Lawrence marsh (O. Dunning). Com. Eiders were scarce at Montauk this winter; 26 were on the count. Seven King Eiders were present. 20 Com. Mergansers at Lawrence Jan. 28 was a good concentration.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: A single Turkey Vulture was studied in Syosset Jan. 19 (C. Brogan). Three Goshawks appeared on the N. Nassau count, about average. Sharp-shinned Hawks were widely reported: *nine* on the Montauk count was high, two were in N. Nassau, seven in C. Suffolk, and three at Captree. Scattered reports of single birds were also received. A Cooper's Hawk wintered in Muttontown (K. Stier, W. Patterson) where they are present in the breeding season. One Cooper's was at Manorville Feb. 22 (GSR). Rough-legged Hawks were present in higher than usual numbers throughout the Region. A max of seven Dec. 20 on the S.I. count, up to six wintered along the Jones Beach strip, several wintered around Montauk, and scattered reports came from Nassau and Suffolk. Red-shouldered Hawks were

more widely reported than in recent years: two on the N. Nassau count, one S.I., one Captree, one in Sands Point Jan. 25 (BJS), one along the Long Island Expressway in Nassau Feb. 28 (GSR), and one at Jones Beach Dec. 21 (EL). 25 Marsh Hawks were found on the S.I. count, 19 at Montauk, about average. A Golden Eagle wintered on Shelter Island at the newly established Mashomack Preserve, an area not too accessible to the public. A Bald Eagle in second or third winter plumage wintered in the Mill Neck area (R. Sabin *et al.*). The imm white-phase GYRFALCON first seen Jan. 26 was last seen Mar. 6. It was most frequently seen on the Lawrence marsh in part because that spot was most accessible to birders. The gyr ranged east to Jones Beach, and was seen at a number of locations between the two points. It lived handsomely, dining on waterfowl including Brant, Black Ducks, and teal. Among spin-off sightings by hopeful gyr watchers was a Beluga Whale in Jones Inlet Feb. 28 (BJS). Several Peregrine Falcons wintered in the Region: one was seen Dec. 19 at Willowbrook S.I. (B. Paul, H. Jenkins); probably the same bird was found the next day on the S.I. count. Single Peregrines were seen Dec. 20 on the Queens count and the Brooklyn count. An individual was present in the Lawrence marsh and Long Beach area during Feb. Merlins were well represented on counts: four were in C. Suffolk, one Captree, and one N. Nassau. A Merlin was seen Jan. 10 at Mecox (DL), and at least one wintered at Jones Beach. A Merlin took a Mourning Dove at a feeder in Southold Jan. 23 (*vide* A. Dove). Bobwhite numbers seemed better in C. Suffolk with 237 on the count, after several low years. Similarly N. Nassau found 71, comparable to figures five years ago. 17 Turkeys were found on the Captree count, all in Connetquot; 55 were on Gardiner's Island, and two on Shelter Island Jan. 21 (GSR). Three Virginia Rails on the Montauk count was better than usual. Seven on the C. Suffolk count were good. The only Sora reported was seen Dec. 21 at Jones Beach (EL, C. Ward). 34 Ruddy Turnstones on the Montauk count was their second highest tally; 38 were on the S.I. count. Jan. 25 ten were present at the west end of Jones Beach (*vide* L. Schore). A Willet appeared on the Montauk count for the second year in a row. A sprinkling of Greater Yellowlegs wintered: two in C. Suffolk, one Jan.-1 at Eastport (GSR), one in Hempstead Harbor (B. Forquer). A Lesser Yellowlegs was found Dec. 20 at JFK Airport (S. Chevalier, A. & H. Richard). Five Red Knots were seen Dec. 13, and three Dec. 20 at Shinnecock (GSR). There were five Purple Sandpipers at Montauk, and 150 were at Great Kills mudflat Jan. 3, and 130 at Jones Beach west end Jan. 25 (*vide* L. Schore). Two Long-billed Dowitchers were at Lawrence Feb. 6 (W. Reilly *et al.*). A dowitcher sp. was found at Atlantic Beach on the Queens count. A Marbled Godwit lingered until Dec. 29 at Jamaica Bay (P. Buckley). A Red Phalarope among Sanderlings was carefully studied Jan. 24 at the "Sore Thumb" near Oak Beach (A. Townsend). Single Glaucous Gulls were reported on the Montauk count (first year), from Noyak (second year) Jan. 21 (DL), Great Kills mudflat Feb. 16 (GB), one was at North Sea Jan. 21 (GSR), and Jones Beach Feb. 21 (GSR). A second year Glaucous was at Jamaica Bay Feb. 28 (R. Hines). The "Kumlien's" Gull returned this winter to the restaurant at Jones Beach for the fifth winter. Iceland Gulls were also noted on S.I.: two (one adult, one imm) at the Muldoon Ave. landfill Jan. 10 (H. Fischer, GB & B. Bouquio), a first year bird Feb. 7 at Crooke's Point, and a second year bird Feb. 22 at Great Kills. A second year bird was seen at Atlantic Beach Feb. 28 (R. Hines). A first year THAYER'S GULL was carefully studied at False Point, Montauk Dec. 7, by two observers, one experienced with *thayeri* in the middle west. Distinctions from *Larus glaucooides kumlieni* were verified at the AMNH. Details to NYSARC (BJS, P. Snetsinger). The only other record of Thayer's Gull on Long Island appears in *Audubon Field Notes*, Vol. 23, No. 1, as a "probable." However, one of the observers, Paul Buckley, has retracted that record, observing that the bird was probably a dark-pigmented *kumlieni* (pers. comm. to THD). An adult and an imm Lesser Black-backed Gull were found Dec. 20 at Montauk (P. Buckley, K. Able). A second winter Lesser Black-back was seen at Sea Cliff Jan. 24 (BJS). Over 33,000 Herring Gulls were reported on S.I. where landfill operations attract them. N. Nassau had 11,000 again a dump was the major attraction; 8000 were on the Montauk count, 5000 at Captree, and 9000 on the C. Suffolk count. 4586 Ring-billed Gulls were found on the N. Nassau count, almost double the previous high count. An imm Black-headed Gull at Shinnecock

cock Inlet Dec. 6 (DL) was the only report. Little Gulls were reported Dec. 5 at Jones Inlet (*fide* THD), and at Jones Beach Feb. 28, an adult (GSR). A single Laughing Gull was found on the C. Suffolk count, the only report. Only 104 Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on the Montauk count, far below the 1000-2000 on the last three counts. Black-legged Kittiwake tends to be a "feast or famine" bird with many years with no reports on the count. One late Black Skimmer was seen Dec. 15 at Jamaica Bay (W. Reilly *et al.*). One Razorbill was seen on the Montauk count; a badly oiled individual was found at Shinnecock Jan. 21 (DL, GSR). A Dovekie on the Montauk count and three on the Federation Pelagic trip Dec. 6 were the only reports. A first winter Black Guillemot was seen by a pleased crew of birders on the Finback I Dec. 6, and also was reported from shore (M. Cashman).

PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS: Several Barn Owls wintered along the Jones Beach strip; one was seen Dec. 2 at Cedar Beach (GSR, DL), one at Tobay Feb. 14 by the same observers. One was on the Captree count, and one on S.I. These numbers are about average for the Region. Wintering Screech Owls were seen sunning themselves in a hole in a tree at Cutchoque Jan. 22 (A. Dove) and Sands Point Dec. 29 and later (BJS). Another was seen near a feeder at Centereach at 10:30 PM. The owl flew to a spruce tree and captured a roosting House Sparrow (A. Otero). A gray phase Screech Owl was unusual Feb. 17 at Cold Spring Harbor where gray phase has been reported previously (S. Yeaton). Ten Screech Owls were located on the C. Suffolk count, thirteen on N. Nassau. At least two wintered at Muttontown Preserve (AL). Great Horned Owls maintained their numbers in N. Nassau with 12 reported on the count. A single individual was seen at Manorville Dec. 10, and two were on Shelter Island Dec. 29 (GSR). Five were found on the Captree count. Snowy Owls were reported regularly along the beaches this winter with a max of three at JFK airport; two or three were in the Mecox-Shinnecock region and several in between for a total of about nine along the south shore. A few reports from the center of the island were received: one Feb. 21 in Westbury (C. Undborg), and one in Williston Park Jan. 10 (R. Rosenberg), another Snowy was seen in Mill Neck Jan. 4 (*fide* H. McClure). Long-eared Owls were reported with about the usual frequency. Seven were at the Muttontown Preserve Dec. 27, and five from Jan. 22 to Feb. 10 (AL). Long-ears bred here a couple of years ago. Three Long-ears were at Pelham Bay Jan. 10 (W. Reilly *et al.*); three were in a pine grove near Lawrence marsh. Pellets picked up here revealed two chickadee skulls and two Cardinals' (SBD). Wintering individuals at Cedar Beach and along Jones Beach were variously reported. One Long-ear was in Alley Pond Park Feb. 17 (J. & J. Latil). Short-eared Owls were seen with some frequency with reports from Jamaica Bay, Lawrence and Jones Beach. Eight were found on the S.I. count. Saw-whet Owls wintered at Jamaica Bay and Jones Beach. A high count of four Jan. 4 was found at Jones Beach (W. Reilly *et al.*). A Saw-whet at Shinnecock Dec. 14 was in a less usual locality (GSR). Judging from road kills, (eight to ten), Saw-whet Owls must be quite numerous along the beach or else have a very high mortality rate in that location. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were present in greater numbers than usual: three distinct individuals were seen in Mattituck Dec. 17, Dec. 30, and Jan. 15 (A. Dove). Single sapsuckers were seen on the majority of counts. Several other scattered reports were received.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: E. Phoebees were found on the Queens and S.I. counts, both on Dec. 20. 39 Horned Larks were present for the N. Nassau count, a high for that area; 44 were found in Queens, 249 in C. Suffolk, and 57 on S.I. Numbers seemed better than usual. A **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** was an exciting find Dec. 31 in Old Bethpage (AJL). Black-capped Chickadees evidently had a good year. A record 484 were on the Captree count, 508 on Montauk and 909 N. Nassau. All were high counts except for N. Nassau which had 925 in 1975. Tufted Titmouse numbers jumped to ten birds at Montauk as this species moves eastward. The previous "high" was two birds last year; two single occurrences were listed prior to that. N. Nassau had 112 a high, Captree 71, 52 in C. Suffolk, and 37 on S.I. 57 Red-breasted Nuthatches on the Montauk count was a very high count, far exceeding last year's total. Other counts had average numbers. 40 Brown Creepers on the C. Suffolk count was a very high number. In comparison N. Nassau saw five, Montauk three, Captree

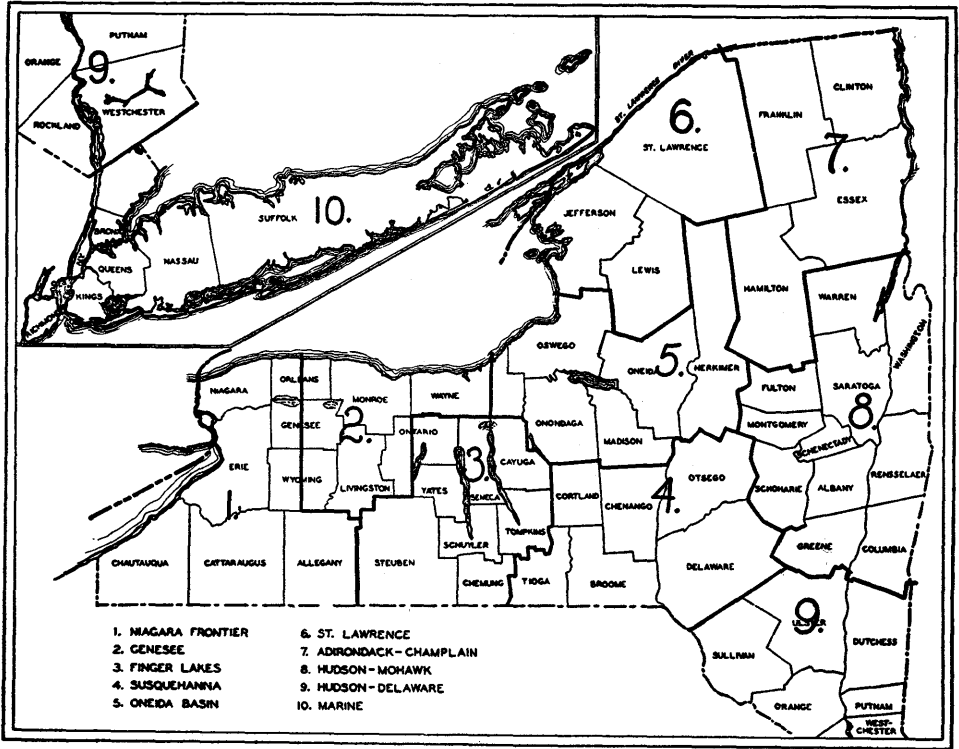
16, and S.I. three. Winter Wrens seemed scarce this winter: eight on the N. Nassau count was the biggest concentration. 30 Carolina Wrens were on Gardiner's Island for the Montauk count, fewer than in recent years, but still the greatest concentration in the Region. Five were in N. Nassau, five on S.I. and eight in C. Suffolk, numbers that seemed about average. 15 Carolinas were found on Shelter Island Dec. 29 (GSR). Three Long-billed Marsh Wrens were located, one at Montauk Point Dec. 7 (F. Scheider), one on the N. Nassau count Dec. 28, and one in Sand's Point Jan. 25 (G. Quinn). The only Short-billed Marsh Wren was found on the C. Suffolk count Dec. 26 at Westhampton Beach (DL). An imm No. Shrike was seen at Muttontown Jan. 20-23 (K. Stier, W. Patterson). Gyrfalcon seekers saw another No. Shrike at Lawrence marsh Feb. 14. A Loggerhead Shrike was sighted at JFK airport Feb. 22 (A. & H. Richard).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Two Orange-crowned Warblers were highlights of the Brooklyn count Dec. 20. A high count of 8672 Yellow-rumped Warblers were on the Captree count. Elsewhere they appeared in average numbers. A late Ovenbird was present Nov. 15-Dec. 4 in Central Park (P. Tozzi *et al.*), and at a small park on 48th St. E. of Broadway on Dec. 12 (H. Tretault *et al.*). Three Com. Yellowthroats remained for the Montauk count. One was seen in C. Suffolk, and one at Captree. Two Yellow-breasted Chats were found on the Montauk count, one in Brooklyn, and a chat lingered at Pelham Bay Park until Dec. 20 (*vide* I. Cantor).

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Two No. Orioles lingered for counts: one on S.I., the other in N. Nassau. The latter bird was present at a feeder in Roslyn from Dec. 12 (H. Roth) while the S.I. bird alternated between two feeders during Dec. and Jan. (*vide* GB). 16 Rusty Blackbirds were at a feeder in Glen Cove Nov.-Jan. (AL, LL). Brown-headed Cowbirds numbered 340 in a large flock in Riverdale Dec. 4 (WS); 156 were found on the S.I. count. This is one species that arouses dubious emotions when large numbers are reported. Cardinals sometimes exhibit the flocking behavior familiar in other finches: 26 were in one group in Glen Cove Jan. 8 (AL, LL). The only Dickcissel reported was a male seen Feb. 4 at a feeder in Manhasset (P. Gillen). Evening Grosbeaks were present in small numbers at feeders in Dec. but had largely disappeared as the winter went on. Purple Finches were very sparingly reported in twos and threes throughout the season. The only Pine Grosbeaks were three found in Muttontown Dec. 27 (J. Rinaldo). A **HOARY REDPOLL** was carefully studied Jan. 13 at Brookhaven Lab while it was feeding on weed stalks with Song Sparrows (DL, GSR *et al.*). Details to NYSARC. Four Com. Redpolls were found Dec. 7 at Montauk (DWC *et al.*), 11 were on the Bronx count Dec. 28, ten showed up in Port Washington Feb. 5 (B. Forquer). Scattered small numbers and single birds were also reported. Pine Siskins present in the thousands along the beaches in the fall moved on with few remaining for the winter. Four Red Crossbills on the C. Suffolk count Dec. 26 and four on the Orient count Dec. 29 (GSR) were the only reports. White-winged Crossbills went unreported in a sparse winter finch year. "Ipswich" Sparrows continue to be reported from the beaches in the usual modest numbers. Two Vesper Sparrows were found on the Montauk count, and one on C. Suffolk. This species seems very reduced in transit as well as a breeding bird. Two Chipping Sparrows were present at a feeder in Sands Point for the N. Nassau count, and remained after that date. An apparent imm **HARRIS' SPARROW** appeared at a feeder in E. Islip Jan. 8 where it was compared with English Sparrows, Fox Sparrow, and Hermit Thrush. The bird was photographed, but unfortunately the slides did not turn out and positive confirmation was lost (D. House). A Lincoln's Sparrow, rare at this season, was seen Dec. 20 at Heckscher Park (R. O'Mally). Lapland Longspurs were present in unusual numbers in a flock of 120 Jan. 4-18 in East Rockaway (R. Arbib, THD *et al.*). 17 were at the west end of Jones Beach Dec. 7 (DWC), and a flock of five at Halsey Pond Jan. 2 (G. & M. Dremeaux). Other scattered reports of single birds were received.

154 Dayton Street, Sea Cliff, New York 11579

REPORTING REGIONS



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

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February

Deadline is March 7

Spring Season: March, April, May

Deadline is June 7

Summer Season: June, July, August

Deadline is September 7

Fall Season: September, October, November

Deadline is December 7

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