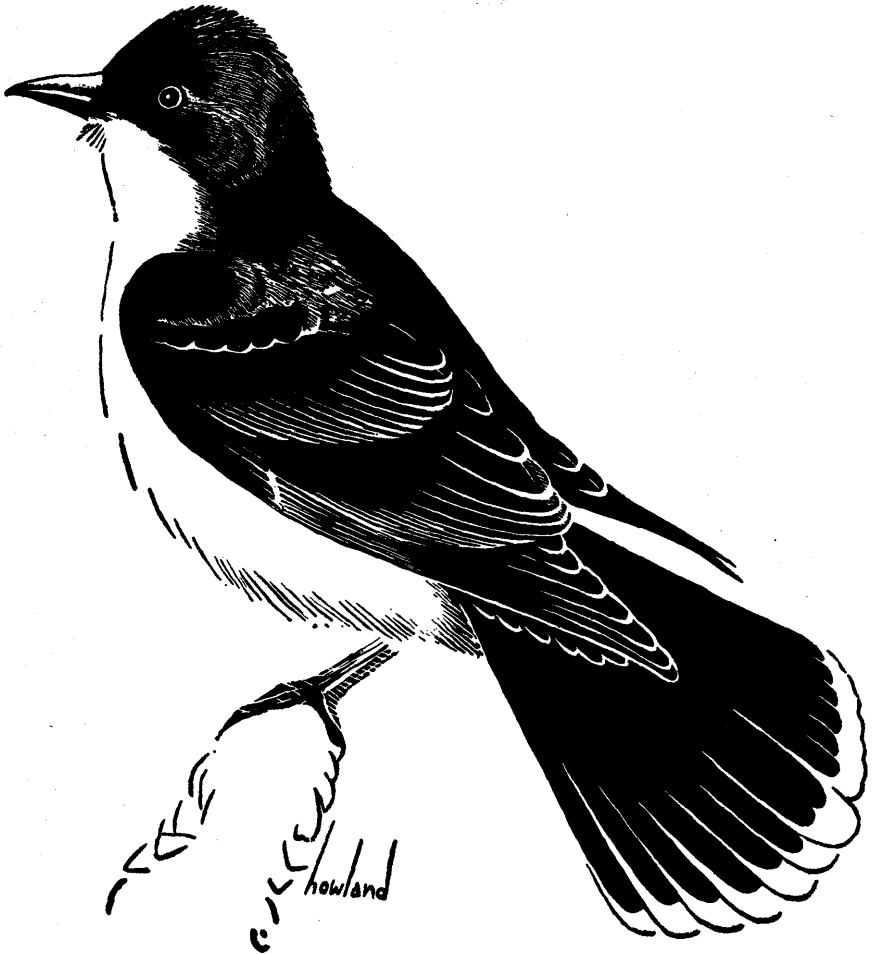


# The KINGBIRD



VOL. XXXIII, NO. 2

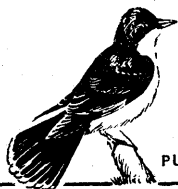
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# The KINGBIRD

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*Co-Editors* – Emanuel Levine and John Farrand, Jr.

*Highlights of the Season*

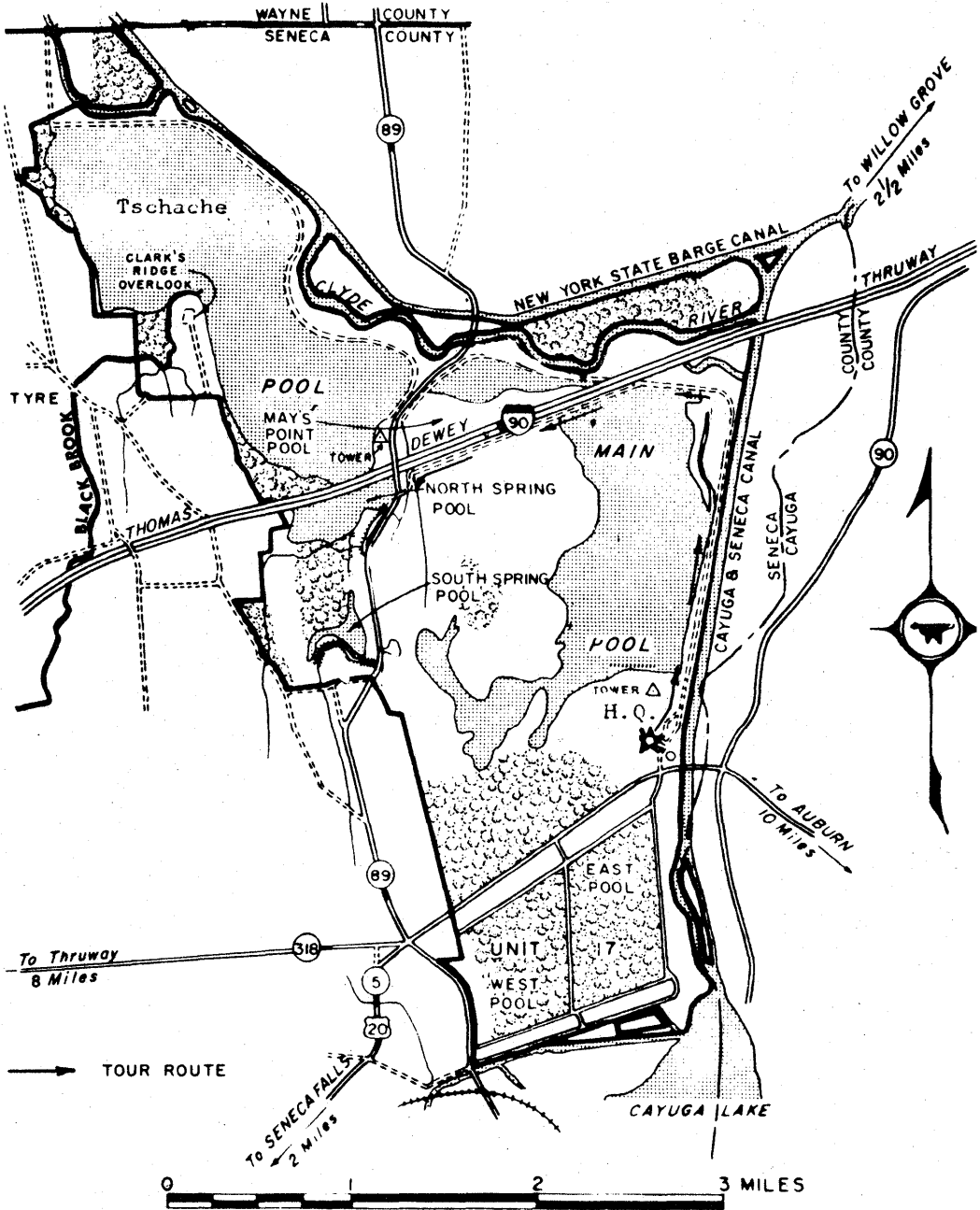
*Editor* – Robert Spahn

*Circulation Manager* – Constance N. Wilkins

*Cover Design* – Douglas L. Howland

# MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK



# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ADAPTATIONS AT MONTEZUMA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR SEASONAL SHOREBIRD USE AND SHOREBIRD VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

WILLIAM HEGGE

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge has been in existence for 45 years. Today, the Refuge hosts over 270,000 human visitors each year. This was not the case as recently as ten years ago, and even less so before then. It is likely that diverse opinions exist among this group of visitors as to what we do in order to accomplish the objectives established for the Refuge.

In most cases, the objectives established for National Wildlife Refuges are broad and variable. In fact, this is generally true because unlike most state wildlife areas, the National Wildlife Refuge System is funded by general tax revenues. This provision requires that National Wildlife Refuges provide an array of wildlife recreation opportunities to the general public which are compatible with the objectives established for each refuge. Normally, wildlife habitat conditions will dictate the extent to which wildlife recreation opportunities can be maintained. In other words, compatibility between wildlife recreation activities and refuge habitat maintenance objectives is necessary to insure that the ecologic values of the refuge are not compromised.

For nearly the first 25 or 30 years of the Refuge's existence, the issue of compatibility was less of a consideration because public use was relatively limited and wildlife interests were poorly defined. As public interest in wildlife resources has evolved, so has public-use policy on National Wildlife Refuges. In essence, public uses that are compatible with refuge purposes are now encouraged and viewed as important avenues for educating the public about wildlife.

Serving the growing interests of visitors engaging in wildlife observation has certainly been an important part of the program at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Interpretive programs have been devoted almost exclusively to perpetuating an understanding of management objectives and refuge purposes. Nevertheless, Refuge efforts have occasionally been deficient in informing the public about programs and changes in programs. A case in point is the reduced level of shorebird viewing opportunities that has resulted from the implementation of several interrelated management practices.

Several problems were recognized in 1979 which forced a reevaluation of the water management program and subsequent availability

of shorebird habitat. Progressive natural and man-induced processes collectively created problems which, if ignored, could have had potentially catastrophic consequences for the impounded marsh ecosystem. These problems, which required us to discontinue the traditional spring-summer water level drawdowns, resulted from the interaction of: (1) impoundment eutrophication, (2) infiltration by Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), (3) the presence of avian disease organisms (i.e., botulism), and (4) an undependable Refuge water supply.

Until just recently overall peak shorebird numbers and species diversity trends have remained relatively constant on the Refuge. Figure 1, in part, depicts this trend in peak shorebird numbers from 1972 to 1982. Figure 1, a quarterly comparison of peak shorebird populations with water elevations in two primary Refuge impoundments, graphically displays the relationship between complete and partial water level drawdowns and shorebird use from 1973 to 1978. The 1980 drawdown in the May's Point Pool was initiated for dike maintenance purposes, in contrast to drawdown for habitat management during prior years.

Aside from those quarters that exhibit no data, there is a positive correlation between complete or partial water drawdowns and the incidence of peak shorebird use within these impoundments. The cyclical rise and fall of shorebird populations on the Refuge has obviously been due to the presence or absence of shallow water-mudflat interfaces at critical seasons of each year. Beginning in 1980, however, elevated and more stable water levels were instituted within all Refuge pools. Subsequently, shorebird use and viewing opportunities were profoundly affected. The trend line since 1980 would support this conclusion.

In order to grasp the collective impact of this dilemma, a general understanding of the independent conditions now influencing Refuge management decisions is necessary. In its basic sense, eutrophication can be described as the natural enrichment, over time, of inland freshwater lakes and impoundments with sediments and nutrients, thus causing those waters to gradually fill in. Refuge impoundments have been undergoing this process for 45 years, resulting in diminished water storage in refuge pools. As in many managed waterfowl marsh impoundments, water storage was never a serious design consideration when the Refuge dikes were constructed. This factor and the later construction of the New York State Thruway aggravated this condition at Montezuma.

Comparison of the spillway crest elevations and those elevations

of early mudflat exposure for the Main and May's Point Pools is graphically illustrated in Figure 1. This indicates, on average, the limited range at which water depths can presently be adjusted before mudflats are exposed. May's Point Pool, in actuality, reflects an artificially expanded range of water elevations due to the installation of stoplogs above the concrete spillway crest. This modification was employed to provide water coverage over the entire May's Point Pool basin because a greater rate of sedimentation had occurred, and, by blocking gas-exchange pathways to put stress on the invasive Purple Loosestrife plant community. Essentially, the eutrophication process has severely reduced pool-storage capacities, to the extent that any drawdown of water levels during the growing season is a risk because stored water is inadequate for reflooding purposes.

The traditional purpose of spring and summer water-level drawdowns has been to "recharge" the aquatic ecosystems by promoting the growth of emergent plants such as bulrushes, cattails, spike rushes sedges, etc., as well as accelerating the decomposition of accumulated detritus. A secondary stated objective was to enhance shorebird viewing opportunities. It was during a succession of such impoundment drawdowns that the alien and undesirable Purple Loosestrife became established. During the period from 1960 through 1977, periodic drawdowns provided a moist, rich, and otherwise ideal seedbed for the germination of Purple Loosestrife seeds. Mature plants within and bordering Refuge impoundments produced seed on the magnitude of approximately 100,000 per plant per year (Rawinski, 1982). As a result, Purple Loosestrife flourished to such an extent that by 1977 it occupied nearly 35 percent of the area previously supporting other, more desirable, emergent aquatic vegetation.

The origins of this management problem at Montezuma can be traced to the mid-1950's when Purple Loosestrife was not universally recognized as a potentially serious problem. In 1959, Smith noted that drawdowns in pool areas surrounded by this species would result in an invasion of loosestrife with which we could not cope (Smith, 1959). This prediction would have been totally fulfilled had we maintained the traditional drawdown regimen. Dr. Lee Marsh, Chairman of the Botany Department at SUNY at Oswego and an international expert on cattail morphology and behavior, was similarly warning during the 1950's and 1960's that major problems were building on the Refuge (Marsh, 1980-82).

The occurrence of disease organisms within Refuge marshes additionally narrowed our management options with respect to water-level drawdowns. As in most shallow marshes, ecological conditions

conductive to the development of botulism occur during warm, dry seasons in response to the prolonged exposure of mudflats that have heavy loads of organic matter. The decomposition/oxidation of accumulated organic matter within these soils typically provides the anaerobic environment necessary for the growth and toxin-production of the botulism bacterium, a common inhabitant of such soils. This was very evident in 1978 when low water-levels and drought conditions in summer and early fall interacted to produce ecological conditions conducive to the outbreak of botulism; approximately 300 birds are known to have perished during that incident. Because of the inaccessibility of much of the marsh, it is likely that total mortality was two to three times greater than the actual count.

Perhaps the most basic factor influencing the decision to alter the Refuge water regimen was a recognition of the seasonal and ephemeral nature of the Refuge's primary water source—Black Brook. Nearly 75 percent of all the water that circulates (albeit slowly) through the three major impoundments (Tschache, May's Point, and Main Pools) is derived from this stream (Map 1). Understandably then, the frequency and volume of flow within the Black Brook watershed determines, in large measure, the adequacy and constancy of water available for refuge purposes.

Under no circumstances has Black Brook historically been a perennial stream. During the last 40 years, however, major land use shifts and stream channelization in the brook and its watershed have produced significant changes. For instance, the frequency of flow in the brook has been reduced and peak seasonal volumes of water flowing into the Refuge increased. In terms of water supply, we now tolerate what can only be described as a feast (late fall to early spring) or famine (summer and early fall) situation. This problem is compounded by the fact that two of the three major impoundments are each 1,300 acres in size.

Table I quantifies the major land-use alterations and developments in the watershed over the past 40 years, alterations which have contributed to the present flow regime in Black Brook.

Table I  
Watershed Land Use and Drainage Developments, Cool, 1980

Pastureland	Cropland	Black Brook - Main Channel	
1938 — 23%	1938 — 51%	Total Length	— 58,000 ft.
1980 — <u>2%</u>	1980 — <u>73%</u>	Length Channelized	— <u>38,000 ft.</u>
-21%	+22%	% Channelized	66 %



The end result of these developments, and certainly several others, has been to cause water in the brook to move with greater velocity through the watershed; without them, water flows would be less erratic and exhibit reduced peak discharges.

There is certainly no guarantee that a botulism outbreak would occur or Purple Loosestrife would expand in the event water levels were lowered—for whatever reason. The probability of their occurrence, however, is sufficiently high to warrant the avoidance of water level drawdowns for at least the near future. On the other hand, one might argue that without drawdowns we are encouraging the development of senescent-degenerative aquatic ecosystems.

Although drawdowns have not recently been implemented, empirical evidence suggests that the aquatic ecosystems are not at equilibrium but in various locations undergoing positive dynamic changes each year. For example, Purple Loosestrife stands have visibly regressed in the Main and May's Point Pools; concurrently, cattails have become reestablished into some zones previously occupied by Purple Loosestrife; and Sago Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), a desirable submergent, has flourished in the Main Pool. This latter occurrence, while beneficial to waterfowl, also provides habitat for insects and fish which are important to grebes, Great Blue Herons, and other waterbirds.

In the long run, the maintenance of diverse wildlife habitats at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge will depend upon our attempts to understand the motivations of those who actively enjoy wildlife, as much as our efforts to comprehend and adapt to the physical resources we manage. Conversely then, it is also the public's responsibility to understand the resource manager's rationale for decisions which ultimately influence public use opportunities. These mutually supportive obligations, in the final analysis, are then absolute prerequisites to the successful achievement of wildlife management objectives.

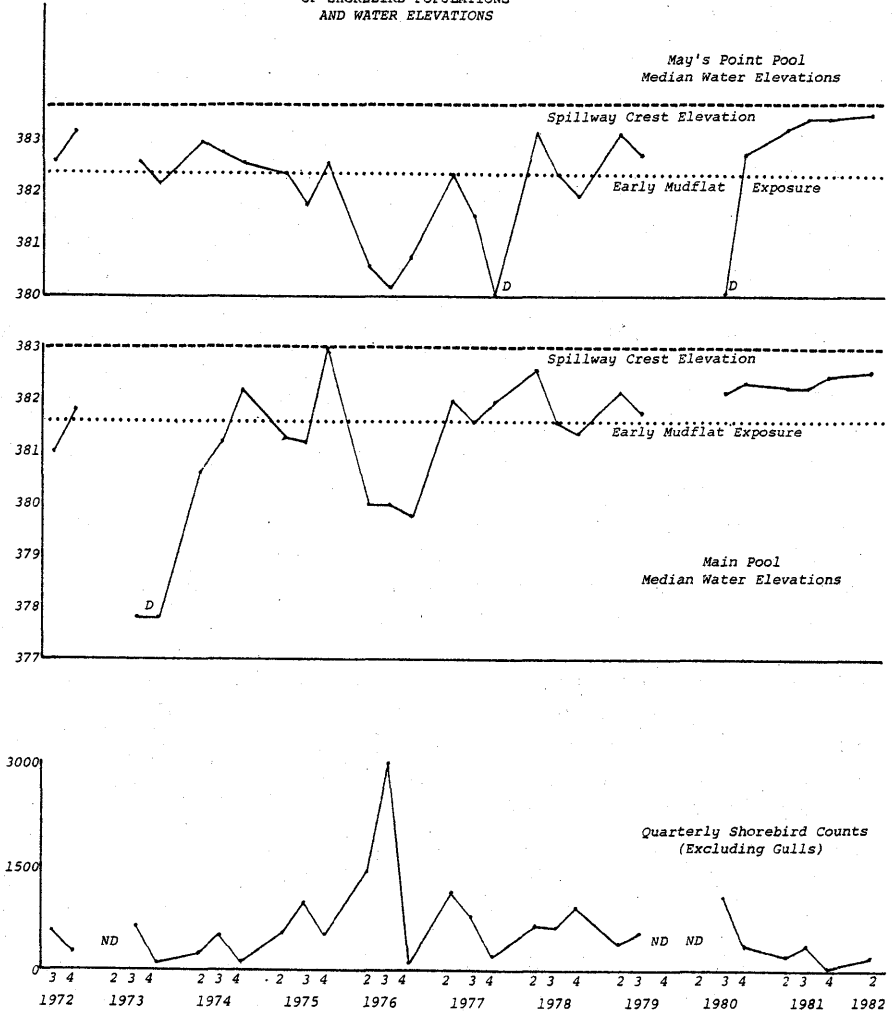
*Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca Falls, New York 13148*

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Figure 1

TEN-YEAR COMPARISON  
OF SHOREBIRD POPULATIONS  
AND WATER ELEVATIONS



## SOME GULL WAYS

WALTER SEDWITZ

"Birds of a feather," well, at times they do not flock together. In this discussion, two allied species, the Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) and the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) are to the initiated quite different from each other, but to the general public they are known as sea gulls. However, by size, habits and subtle markings, the two species are different. Consult any field guide to straighten out this matter. In the past few years, the writer has encountered these two species, both together and separately, in and around Jerome Park Reservoir in northwest Bronx County, New York. Except during the summer months, flocks of Ring-billed Gulls occur, mainly in gray adult phase with a scattering of subadults. And in their company at times, we cannot but notice conspicuous dark first-year Herring Gulls. This fact is more impressive when the birds are seen close at hand on land.

While the two species are rather common birds in the reservoir area through the year, lately the Ring-billed Gull has become the more numerous, except when the Herring Gulls are migrating through, or during interregional shifting, when severe winter weather drives the birds south seeking open water. During the latter moves, Herring Gulls settle on the reservoir waters almost exclusively. Though the Ring-billed Gull also may be found in the reservoir, it is just as commonly seen on land that surround the reservoir, in small to large flocks.

The reservoir, which both species visit each morning, is but a stop-off before the birds disperse to feeding places. A view of the birds in the reservoir in the early morning might give an impression that the two species are mingling, but a careful examination of the flocks is likely to show that haphazard mixing is not the case, and that flocks for the most part are by species. This fact may be ascertained by a close scrutiny of the swimming birds. This separation is more visible and proveable in the winter, when the two species are standing on ice.

After a temporary halt at the reservoir, the birds continue their daily journeys, by several exits from the area. The targets of the moves are the Harlem and Hudson rivers to the west and southwest, the south shore of the Bronx (the western extremity of Long Island Sound), and the great lawns of Van Cortlandt Park. Both species use these paths; the Ring-billed Gull favors the route to the Sound; the

Herring and other gulls go southwest, west and northwest to the estuarine areas.

Within the reservoir, there is a northward movement, from where the birds have landed in the middle. By short and lingering hops, the gulls either fly out to the north or in most cases accumulate on the earth and concrete northern sector of the reservoir that acts as a dam to that low-lying area. At times there may be hundreds of gulls, representative of the species in the reservoir, but usually the two gulls under consideration are the majority. The positioning of the species is not unlike that in the reservoir. The Ring-billed Gulls enjoy the watery edge of the inclined border and—before a woven wire security fence was put in place—the flat top of the section. The Herring Gulls on the other hand, preferred the sloping grassy portion, though some of these larger gulls found the flat top portion to their liking although they remained apart from the Ring-billed Gulls.

From observations both recalled and recorded, I have come to the conclusion that there appears to be a symbiotic relationship between certain age groups of the two species of gulls, that seems to be out of the realm of coincidence. These repeated observations have elicited a feeling, totally anthropomorphic, regarding these closely related species. The matter concerns the dark-plumaged young Herring Gull, which by some signal or action has been found to be unwanted in the company of the grey and white adults. This feeling of alienation is strong enough to drive the less than one-year-old bird out of the flock. It, therefore, seeks refuge in the company of gull flocks of a similar looking, but different species that is less chastising than adult Herring Gulls. Since the Ring-billed Gull is a reduced copy of the larger gull, and, more importantly, is relatively unaggressive, the move is unopposed. Thus, at times in the company of local Laughing Gulls during their season, a young Herring Gull finds a peaceful resting place among the Ring-billed Gulls. However, after the Herring Gulls begin to attain grey feathering, in the second year, this act becomes unnecessary. The dark birds, found often in the dry-land flocks of Ring-billed Gulls, are less obvious in the flocks on the water.

To help visualize what occurs in the foregoing paragraphs, it might be helpful to describe the appearance of a first-year Herring Gull. The normal plumage of a fully grown young bird of the year is a dull ash-brown, making it the darkest overall gull in our region. In contrast, all of the plumages of the Ring-billed Gulls in our area when they arrive from northerly breeding sites contain some traces of tan, grey or black and white, never the somber shades of the larger gull.

Since the tan, greyish-white Ring-billed Gulls predominate locally, the striking contrast of a yearling Herring Gull catches the observer's eye immediately. Not only does the dark plumage make the birds conspicuous, but to the practiced eye, the height, bulk and long black bill make the birds stand out from the more delicate Ring-billed Gulls.

When you find an accumulation of gulls at the northern sector of the reservoir, they almost invariably have originated from the flocks sitting on the water in the middle of the reservoir. In entering the reservoir, from whatever direction, the gulls land on water approximately in the median area of the reservoir. After a period of time, the resting gulls either fly out or by small progressive flights gather at the north end of the reservoir. Several times I have witnessed the entire evacuation of birds from the reservoir in a matter of moments, with the motives unknown or unseen. But generally, the gulls leaving do so along specific exits.

While the Herring and other large gulls depart to the rivers to the southwest and west, the Ring-billed Gulls use two routes from the reservoir. In one, the birds go to the south and southeast, to the Harlem River and the south shore of the Bronx; or they accumulate on the north side of the reservoir and may be seen from Van Cortlandt Park, volplaning down from the heights where the reservoir is located to the broad fields of the Parade Grounds of Van Cortlandt. At this locale they rest, preen and feed, near the busy thoroughfare of Broadway.

The Ring-billed Gull is a more terrestrial bird than any of our local gulls, preferring at times areas around shopping malls, picnic recreation grounds, and any open, traffic-free park lands. Lack of water in these situations, other than puddles after rain, does not inhibit them at all, even when the lots are full of cars, trucks and pedestrians. Here, the Ring-billed Gull has a wide choice of foods and is unhindered by the larger bolder species. Competition for food might consist of smaller birds such as the European Starling, House Sparrow or Rock Dove. Feasting on discarded foods and other refuse, the Ring-billed Gull acts as a scavenger and thrives in this milieu. We have witnessed an increase of this species in the last several decades, abetted in part by the winter survival, which is directly related to the constant supply of food available. One is always pleasantly surprised at the tameness of the Ring-billed Gull. A good example of this may be seen at Rockland Lake, Hook Mountain State Park, where along the lake's parking areas, visitors feed water birds. At one's feet may be Mallards, Muscovy Ducks and Ring-billed Gulls as tame as barnyard fowl.

This trust in humanity does not extend to our other common gulls. Although the Herring Gull has been part of our coastal civilization for centuries, no such trust is evident. Great Black-backed, Laughing and Bonaparte's Gulls are even more cautious than the Herring Gulls, preferring to keep a safe distance from humans. Their favorite habitats have wide, open escape routes, even in the best of feeding places.

Incidentally, I have noted, especially in winter, American Crows attacking single low-flying Ring-billed Gulls, giving the gull a worrisome time. I also have a recollection of a passing Rock Dove, which, as it flew over a Ring-billed Gull, stooped predaciously, eliciting panic maneuvers in the unoffending gull.

*525 West 235 Street, Bronx, New York 10463*

## THE 1982 FALL SHOREBIRD SEASON AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

THOMAS H. DAVIS

Thirty-four species of shorebirds were noted at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens County, during the period 26 June to 24 October, 1982. I visited the Refuge 37 times during this period and endeavored to census every species present on nearly every trip, to note the arrival dates of adults and juveniles of 17 migrant species, and to add to my photographic collection.

I have previously published a description of my techniques, census areas, shorebird historical data, and National Park Service management policy in *The Kingbird* (32: 85-96, 1982). One additional area surveyed this year, labeled "F" on Table 3, includes the north shore of the West Pond and adjacent salt marsh. This *spartina* salt marsh attracts the largest concentrations of roosting birds in the spring when the grasses are dead and flattened. Over 4000 shorebirds gathered here at high tide on 23 May, 1982. This area was surveyed with disappointing results, a maximum of about forty birds was noted in four visits.

Owing to the lack of rainfall, the water level of the East Pond was about three to four inches lower than in recent years. Whether this affected the September and October totals is difficult to say. What does affect the late September and October totals are strong northerly winds and the hawk migration. The high winds that often accompany cold-front passages lower the number of birds roosting at the East Pond. They probably take shelter in salt marshes scattered about Jamaica Bay. On windy days those birds roosting at the East Pond tend to concentrate along the north side of the pond and at a cove near its southwest corner, both areas sheltered from the wind.

The hawk migration, especially that of the Peregrine Falcon, exerts a strong influence on the number of birds roosting at the East Pond. When the first southbound Northern Harriers and Merlins appear in early September, the shorebirds begin to grow nervous and flighty, often peering at the sky, taking flight at the approach of these hawks but usually returning to the same spot. The appearance of Peregrine Falcons in late September alters some shorebirds' roosting habits altogether, especially those of the Black-bellied Plover. This fall, numbers of Black-bellieds ranged from 490 to 780 birds during the period 22 August to 19 September. The season's first Peregrine Falcon was noted 20 September, with several more during the following week;



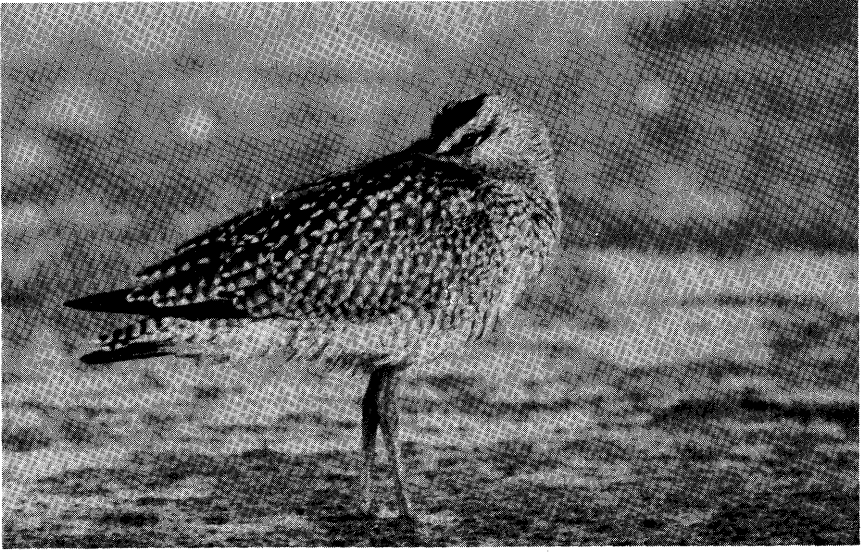
on the next weekend (25-26 September), not a single Black-bellied was observed! Apparently the Black-bellieds shifted to a new roosting location elsewhere at Jamaica Bay (see below). Numbers at the East Pond were erratic after 19 September. A vivid example of the Peregrine Falcon's influence on roosting population was obtained the weekend of 16-17 October. On the 16th a Peregrine was observed hunting at the East Pond and only 135 shorebirds of 11 species were noted; on the 17th the Peregrine was not seen and 257 individuals of 15 species were tallied.

On 23 October 1597 shorebirds of five species were discovered roosting east of the railroad tracks at the base of a bridge ¼-mile north of the northeast corner of the East Pond. When flushed, these birds flew across Grassy Bay to roost at the mouth of Bergen Basin and along the southwest shoreline of JFK Airport. These roosting places at the periphery of Grassy Bay afford greater visibility to the horizon, giving shorebirds earlier warning of a falcon's approach. Grassy Bay is heavily disturbed by pleasure boaters until early September (D. Riepe, verb. comm.). Further investigation is needed to determine its significance to roosting shorebirds and whether some species shift to this location in response to migrant hawks.

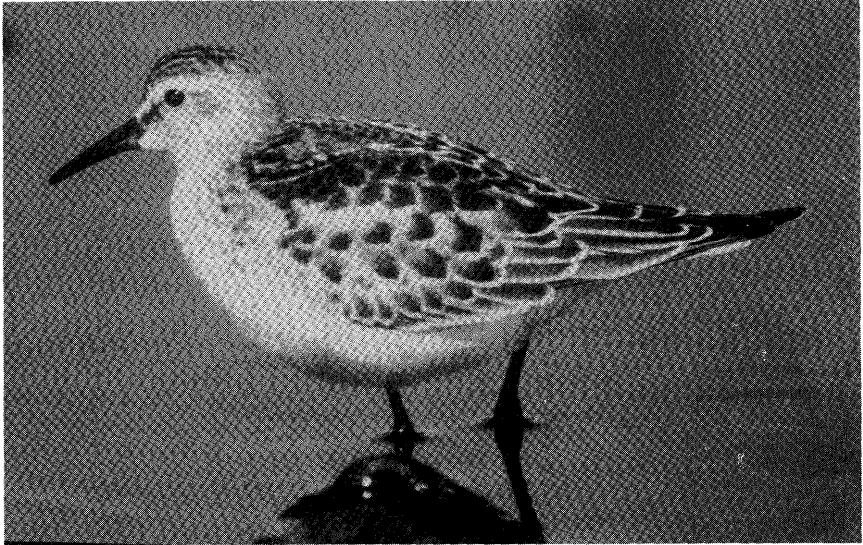
#### Comparisons With 1981

This season's species total was two less than last year's yet the species diversity was greater from late August through early October (see Table 1). This difference of up to five species per half-month period was due to the greater frequency of occurrence of less-common species, including American Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Lesser Golden-Plover, Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Willet, and Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes. The peak count of 27 species 18 September would be an enviable day's total at any North American location, and it lacked American Woodcock and several other species. Given exceptional circumstances, 30 or more shorebird species might be observed in a day at the Refuge!

The adults and juveniles of most migrant species arrived a week or more later than usual (see Table 2), and there was a tendency to linger later in numbers. This probably reflects a late nesting season in the Arctic, not the absence of meteorological conditions that favor migration. In describing the 1981 migration at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (*loc. cit.*) I expressed surprise at the low ratio of juveniles to adult birds and cited several possible explanations. In subsequent conversations with Brian Harrington of Manomet Bird Observatory, Massachusetts, he stated that shorebirds are rather long-lived birds, offsetting their poor average annual production of juveniles. Indeed,



*Whimbrel*                      *Juvenile*  
*12 Sept 1982*                      *Jamaica Bay*                      *Tom Davis*



*White-rumped Sandpiper*                      *Juvenile*  
*4 Oct 1981*                      *Jamaica Bay*                      *Tom Davis*

R. B. Clapp, M. K. Klimkiewicz, and J. H. Kennard (*Journ. Field Ornith.* 53: 81-124, 1982) cite longevity records of 12 years and a month for a Semipalmated Sandpiper and 11 years and 3 months for a Least Sandpiper, both small-sized migrant species.

Several species of shorebirds were noted in lower numbers than last year, all but one breeding exclusively west of Hudson Bay. They are: Western, White-rumped, Pectoral, and Stilt Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitcher. A number of species, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Red Knot, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and Willet, were noted in increased numbers this year. The numbers of American Oystercatchers (219 birds on 26 dates this year compared to 40 birds on nine dates last year) and Willets (63 birds on 28 dates this year against nine birds on eight dates last year) probably reflect increases in local breeding populations. Two other uncommon species registered marginal increases: Lesser Golden-Plover (33 birds on 14 dates this year against 19 birds on eight dates last year) and Whimbrel (12 birds on seven dates this year against two birds on two dates last year).

#### Selected Species Accounts

**American Avocet:** Two or three birds noted, an adult male 10-21 August (same bird throughout?) and an adult female 27 August-2 October.

**Black-bellied Plover:** Individuals noted prior to 31 July were non-breeding summering birds.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** Only one individual, a fading adult 28 July-12 August.

**Dunlin:** An extremely small-sized fading adult studied by the author and other observers 4-5 September; its body size was between that of Western and White-rumped Sandpipers. This bird's small black belly patch and heavily streaked throat suggested it was the race *schinzii*, found breeding in Iceland and Europe. One observer commented that had this Dunlin been in winter plumage he would likely have identified it as a Western Sandpiper! The author once before saw a similar bird at Jamaica Bay on 9 July 1978, a very early date for this species.

**Ruff:** Females noted 30 June (J. Blass) and 10 July (M. Sohmer, B. Baker)—same bird?

**Hudsonian Godwit:** The season total was about eight individuals.

**Marbled Godwit:** The season total was four individuals.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** The season total was three to five individuals.

9446 85 Road, Woodhaven, New York 11421

TABLE 1. SPECIES DIVERSITY

(American Woodcock is understood to be present throughout the season whether observed in a given period or not)

Period	Late June Early July	Late July	Early Aug.	Late Aug.	Early Sept.	Late Sept.	Early Oct.	Late Oct.
Number Visits	6	6	5	3	5	4	4	4
Total Species	13	24	25	29	31	30	26	19
1981 Totals	14	25	25	26	26	27	23	21

TABLE 2.  
1982 Arrival Dates of Adults and Juveniles Plus Four Year Average Time of Arrival

	1982		Average Time of Arrival	
	Adult	Juv.	Adults	Juveniles
Plover, Black-bellied	7/31	9/11	3rd or 4th week July	1st or 2nd week Sept.
Golden-Plover, Lesser	8/14	9/11	2nd or 3rd week Aug.	1st or 2nd week Sept.
Plover, Semipalmated	(7/ 9)	8/22	2nd week July	2nd or 3rd week Aug.
Yellowlegs, Greater	(6/30)	8/15	4th week June	3rd week Aug.
Yellowlegs, Lesser	(6/30)	8/ 1	4th week June	1st or 2nd week Aug.
Turnstone, Ruddy	(7/21)	8/28	4th week July	4th week Aug.
Knot, Red	(7/22)	8/22	3rd week July	4th week Aug.-1st week Sept.
Sanderling	(7/22)	8/28	2nd or 3rd week July	4th week Aug.
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	7/10	8/14	4th week June-1st week July	2nd week Aug.
Sandpiper, Western	7/24	(8/22)	2nd or 3rd week July	3rd or 4th week Aug.
Sandpiper, Least	6/26	8/ 1	4th week June	4th week July-1st week Aug.
Sandpiper, White-rumped	7/31	10/ 2	3rd or 4th week July	3rd or 4th week Sept.
Sandpiper, Pectoral	7/17	(8/22)	2nd week July	4th week Aug.
Dunlin	8/28	9/18	2nd-4th week Aug.	1st or 2nd week Sept.
Sandpiper, Stilt	7/18	8/22	2nd week July	2nd or 3rd week Aug.
Dowitcher, Short-billed	6/26	8/ 8	4th week June	2nd week Aug.
Dowitcher, Long-billed	7/23	10/ 3	3rd or 4th week July	4th week Sept.

**TABLE 3. JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE FALL SHOREBIRD CENSUSES**  
(All counts were taken at high tide)

	<u>6/26</u>	<u>7/3</u>	<u>7/4</u>	<u>7/5</u>	<u>7/10</u>	<u>7/11</u>	<u>7/17</u>	<u>7/18</u>	<u>7/23</u>	<u>7/24</u>
Plover, Black-bellied	1					2		(1)	1	(1)
Golden-Plover, Lesser										
Plover, Semipalmated						8	10	22	165	190
*Killdeer	10	14	6	8	7	22	8	14	15	16
*Oystercatcher, American	1	8	3	3	(4)	4	18	18	9	4
Avocet, American										
Yellowlegs, Greater		21	20	10	13	5	35	37	102	128
Yellowlegs, Lesser		18	17	15	34	40	38	74	50	90
Sandpiper, Solitary										
*Willet						1	(1)	2	2	
*Sandpiper, Spotted	2	5	3	7	4	5	5	8	6	6
Whimbrel										
Godwit, Hudsonian							(1)		3	3
Godwit, Marbled										
Turnstone, Ruddy									1	5
Knot, Red									29	110
Sanderling									5	(20)
Sandpiper, Semipalmated					11	50	142	225	960	800
Sandpiper, Western										1
Sandpiper, Least	2		6	3	2	65	82	315	115	135
Sandpiper, White-rumped										
Sandpiper, Baird's										
Sandpiper, Pectoral							1		1	2
Dunlin										
Sandpiper, Curlew										
Sandpiper, Stilt								1	(6)	6
Sandpiper, Buff-breasted										
Ruff					(1)					
Dowitcher, Short-billed	3	75	20	58	220	173	535	560	620	680
Dowitcher, Long-billed									1	1
Snipe, Common										
*Woodcock, American	(1)				(1)					
Phalarope, Wilson's										
Phalarope, Red-necked										
No. Species	7	6	7	7	10	11	12	13	18	18
No. Individuals	20	137	75	101	297	375	876	1278	2086	2198
Coverage: East Pond		CD	CD		ABCD	CD	ABCD	BCD	BCD	ABCD
West Pond	EF	EF	E	E	E	EF	E	E	E	E

\*=breeds locally ( )=reported by others ✓=numbers not counted

**TABLE 3. JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE FALL SHOREBIRD CENSUSES**

(All counts were taken at high tide)

	<u>7/25</u>	<u>7/31</u>	<u>8/1</u>	<u>8/6</u>	<u>8/8</u>	<u>8/14</u>	<u>8/15</u>	<u>8/22</u>	<u>8/28</u>	<u>8/29</u>
Plover, Black-bellied		35	28	82	25	420	460	640	615	✓
Golden-Plover, Lesser						1			2	
Plover, Semipalmated	160	660	716	515	460	697	680	665	561	✓
*Killdeer	9	9	12	9	9	7	7	6	7	✓
*Oystercatcher, American	11	24	20		4	25	20	3	(5)	
Avocet, American									1	1
Yellowlegs, Greater	87	137	113	137	127	154	228	175	233	✓
Yellowlegs, Lesser	20	80	102	66	57	36	50	45	46	✓
Sandpiper, Solitary										
*Willet		4		1	1	2	1	1	(1)	1
*Sandpiper, Spotted	2	6	4	6	4	3	7	3	2	(1)
Whimbrel		1				(1)	3			1
Godwit, Hudsonian	(1)	2	3	3	1	1				✓
Godwit, Marbled		(1)							1	
Turnstone, Ruddy	6	47	40	43	25	52	115	34	50	✓
Knot, Red	90	170	114	356	135	360	470	250	90	✓
Sanderling	44	100	120	35	53	102	145	280	247	✓
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	840	1900	2000	1345	1650	1275	1210	1130	740	✓
Sandpiper, Western	1	1	1	2	4		1	2	1	1
Sandpiper, Least	64	64	109	40	38	81	88	68	61	✓
Sandpiper, White-rumped		1	1	4	5	4	6	10	10	✓
Sandpiper, Baird's								(1)	1	
Sandpiper, Pectoral	(1)	3	1		1			(4)	5	✓
Dunlin									(2)	
Sandpiper, Curlew		1	(1)	1	1					
Sandpiper, Stilt	5	7	11	14	15	12	16	9	19	✓
Sandpiper, Buff-breasted										
Ruff										
Dowitcher, Short-billed	742	720	805	490	427	293	465	110	82	✓
Dowitcher, Long-billed	5	6	10	3	7	7	22	5	8	12
Snipe, Common			1						(1)	
*Woodcock, American									(1)	
Phalarope, Wilson's								1	1	
Phalarope, Red-necked										3
No. Species	17	23	21	19	21	20	19	21	27	21
No. Individuals	2088	3969	4212	3152	3049	3533	3994	3442	2793	
Coverage: East Pond	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
West Pond		E	E	E		E	E		E	E

\*=breeds locally ( )=reported by others ✓=numbers not counted

**TABLE 3. JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE FALL SHOREBIRD CENSUSES**

(All counts were taken at high tide)

	9/4	9/5	9/6	9/11	9/12	9/18	9/19	9/25	9/26	10/2
Plover, Black-bellied	730	780	550	490	✓	600	✓			160
Golden-Plover, Lesser		2	(1)	2	7	4	4	(1)	(1)	3
Plover, Semipalmated	235	154	130	55	✓	28	28	12	15	14
Killdeer	6	14	5	17	15	13	4	12	16	10
Oystercatcher, American	5	5	(1)	9	8	8		1		
Avocet, American	1		1	1	(1)	1	1	1	(1)	1
Yellowlegs, Greater	320	424	519	455	✓	500	✓	168	45	120
Yellowlegs, Lesser	18	24	20	35	✓	21	12	20	12	15
Sandpiper, Solitary					(1)	1	(1)			
Willet	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	3	4	1
Sandpiper, Spotted	2	1	1	1	1	1				
Whimbrel					3	2				
Godwit, Hudsonian				1	(1)	(1)	1	2	2	2
Godwit, Marbled	2	2	2	2	2	1	1			
Turnstone, Ruddy	20	20	15	6	11	7	8	2		1
Knot, Red	80	90	90	48	66	72	✓			1
Sanderling	60	75	112	2	1	2	1	(1)	1	
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	330	290	180	130	✓	141	95	79	50	108
Sandpiper, Western	9	7	7	3	(2)	3		1		1
Sandpiper, Least	45	86	50	61	✓	15	18	15	12	8
Sandpiper, White-rumped	2		(1)			2	2	(2)	(1)	6
Sandpiper, Baird's	(1)			(1)			1			
Sandpiper, Pectoral	1	(1)		4	6	9	1	8	1	15
Dunlin	1	1	1	1	1	27	✓	32	60	35
Sandpiper, Curlew										
Sandpiper, Stilt	10	9	10	7	14	12	1	13	4	17
Sandpiper, Buff-breasted		1					(1)			
Ruff										
Dowitcher, Short-billed	50	40	45	50	✓	26	20	29	20	12
Dowitcher, Long-billed	9	6	8	1	1	10		(1)		
Snipe, Common										(1)
Woodcock, American	(1)	(1)		(1)						
Phalarope, Wilson's		1								
Phalarope, Red-necked	2	2	2							
No. Species	25	25	23	25	25	27	23	20	16	20
No. Individuals	1944	2040	1755	1388		1513		403	245	531
Coverage: East Pond	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	BCD	ABCD	BCD	ABCD
West Pond		EF		E	E	E		E	E	

\*=breeds locally ( )=reported by others ✓=numbers not counted

**TABLE 3. JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE FALL SHOREBIRD CENSUSES**

(All counts were taken at high tide)

	<u>10/3</u>	<u>10/9</u>	<u>10/11</u>	<u>10/16</u>	<u>10/17</u>	<u>10/23</u>	<u>10/24</u>
Plover, Black-bellied	196	1	13	3	44	425	143
Golden-Plover, Lesser	1			1		3	
Plover, Semipalmated	14	22	18		8	12	8
*Killdeer	10	8	9	4	12	7	6
*Oystercatcher, American	2						
Avocet, American							
Yellowlegs, Greater	235	30	82	97	85	12	10
Yellowlegs, Lesser	22	12	15	7	14	6	5
Sandpiper, Solitary							
*Willet	1	1	1		1	1	(1)
*Sandpiper, Spotted							
Whimbrel							
Godwit, Hudsonian	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Godwit, Marbled	1						
Turnstone, Ruddy	1	1					
Knot, Red	1		1			6	1
Sanderling	2					142	
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	107	116	48	3	18	25	18
Sandpiper, Western	1		1		1		
Sandpiper, Least	12	1	2		2	1	
Sandpiper, White-rumped	9	5	3	1	6	6	4
Sandpiper, Baird's							
Sandpiper, Pectoral	10	7	8	2	5	4	1
Dunlin	85	56	50	4	48	1306	250
Sandpiper, Curlew							
Sandpiper, Stilt	16	17	9	6	6	7	1
Sandpiper, Buff-breasted							
Ruff							
Dowitcher, Short-billed	24	12	5				
Dowitcher, Long-billed	2		4	10	5	1	1
Snipe, Common							
*Woodcock, American							
Phalarope, Wilson's		1					1
Phalarope, Red-necked							
No. Species	22	16	17	12	15	17	15
No. Individuals	754	292	272	140	257	1960	452
Coverage: East Pond	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	BCD
West Pond	E	E	E	E			E

Footnote: October 23 count includes 3 Lesser Golden-Plovers, 350 Black-bellied Plovers, 4 Red Knots, 140 Sanderlings, and 1100 Dunlins at the North Railroad bridge— see remarks in article. \*=breeds locally ( )=reported by others √=numbers not counted



YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO  
IN SUFFOLK COUNTY IN DECEMBER

DEBORAH SCHMIDT and RICK MOHLMANN



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus)*  
*at Moriches Inlet, Suffolk Co.*

*27 December 1982*

*Deborah Schmidt*

While walking on the western side of Moriches Inlet on an unseasonably warm 27 December, counting birds for the Central Suffolk Christmas Count, we spotted, to our great surprise, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). The bird was perched approximately a foot above the ground in a Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) in an area of Japanese Black Pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) and was not more than ten feet from us. Its distinguishing field marks, the yellow lower mandible, pure white breast, rufous tinge in the wings and white spots on the underside of the tail, could be seen easily with the naked eye.

According to Bull (1964, p. 268), the latest fall record of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo was collected on 11 November 1950 at Oakdale, L.I. Bull (1974, p. 324) gives later record dates of 13 November (coastal), 16 November (inland), and 25 November 1965, when an injured albino was caught at Alverne, Queens County. Bull (1974) states that sightings of Yellow-billed Cuckoos are "usually rare . . . after mid-October."

The cuckoo did not appear healthy, for as we approached it, it did not fly, but only hopped to the sandy ground. After taking a picture of this rare December straggler, as well as rare beach visitor, we watched it disappear deep into a thicket of Russian Olive. A search for it later in the day was unsuccessful.

Bull, J. 1964. *Birds of the New York Area*. Harper & Row Publishers, New York.

Bull, J. 1974. *Birds of New York State*. Doubleday/Natural History Press, Garden City, New York.

*Deborah Schmidt, 112 Pace Avenue, Bellport, New York 11713*

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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**Cerulean Warbler Breeding in Suffolk County:** In 1982, in the course of work on the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas, a small colony of Cerulean Warblers (*Dendroica cerulea*) was discovered south of Sag Harbor in Southampton Town, Suffolk County. Confirmed breeding evidence was obtained, the first for Long Island.

The breeding area is a narrow band of widely spaced Black Locust trees (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) at the edge of a rich, mesic woodland in the Ronkonkoma Moraine. The habitat, bordered by deep woods on one side, farmland and old pasture on the other, is characterized by extremely dense growth of blackberry (*Rubus*), catbriar (*Smilax*), and rose (*Rosa*) which effectively prevents a shrub or small tree layer from developing underneath. The scattered locusts average between forty and sixty feet in height.

The habitat is approached with great difficulty and the human uses of the surrounding areas are almost completely restricted to farming, fall hunting, and a limited amount of woodcutting in the forest (the latter in the fall and winter and probably by the owners of the tract). The actual breeding area is virtually impenetrable and essentially undisturbed.

The presence of Cerulean Warblers was first detected on 31 May 1982 from the woodland side at a place where a rather open, mixed woodland intersects with the edge of the belt of locusts. A persistently singing male Cerulean was using an open circle of forest trees as a regular part of its singing and feeding rounds and could be observed at length.

The persistence of this bird in pursuing a highly regular circuit throughout the month of June—often in drenching rain—led to suspicions of breeding. On 18 June a second (with possibly a third) singing male was located nearby. On 26 June, by following the edge of the locust belt from inside the forest, two or three more singing males were discovered and at least two females located in an area of somewhat lower and denser locust growth. One of these females was seen, in a rather agitated state, carrying food. Finally, on 10 July, at the site of the original observations, a fledging was observed in a shrub thicket at eye level being fed by an adult female. This fledgling bird, which exhibited every sign of having very recently been a nestling, had presumably fluttered down during an early flight attempt.

Interestingly enough, Dennis Puleston and Gilbert Raynor observed male Cerulean Warblers singing persistently and apparently on territory on a variety of breeding-season dates in the 1960s in moist woods near Noyack, hardly more than a mile or two north of the new breeding site.

These records were as follows: Singing males 19 May and 29 May 1962; 24 May and 10 June 1963; and 5 June 1964; and a female 20 June 1962.

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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**Redhead with Ducklings on the Saranac River, Franklin County:** On 17 July, 1982, while canoeing on the Saranac River between Middle and Lower Saranac Lakes (BBA Block 5590-C), I came upon a medium-sized duck with six young ducklings in tow. They were swimming quietly along the weed banks on the east side of the river, just downstream from the mouth of Halfway Brook. I pulled the canoe over along the west bank of the river, and stopped to take a closer look at this little family group. At first glance, without binoculars and at a distance of about 75 feet, my initial reaction was that this was a female Ring-neck with her brood. As this is a rather common species of waterfowl in this area, I had become well acquainted with it over the past three summers working on the Breeding Bird Atlas project. In fact, I had seen two separate groups of a single female Ring-neck with young ducklings not an hour before I encountered this group. As I watched the duck approach closer, I began to have second thoughts on my initial identification. This duck did not look "right" for a Ring-neck. I got out my binoculars and began to study the duck more closely, noting details to jot down in my notebook. I was able to observe the duck for approximately ten minutes, at distances of 75 to 25 feet, with 8 x 40 binoculars in bright sunshine and with the sun behind me. The duck was rather larger than the two Ring-necks I had seen earlier. Its head was rounded in profile, and lacked the "peaked" look of the Ring-neck. The bill was a bluish-gray, with a black tip, but there was no noticeable white ring. There was no white eye-ring or post-orbital streak which I had always found to be a good character for female Ring-necks. Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of this duck was its coloring. The head, neck, back, wings, flanks, and upper breast were all a rich cinnamon color. This was the most striking difference between it and the darker, subdued umber tones of the Ring-necks with which I was familiar. A frantic search through my Peterson field guide failed to produce anything which resembled the bird I had before me. Therefore, I wrote down all the characteristics I thought might prove helpful in identifying this duck at a later time.

When I returned home, I began searching for photos or paintings which resembled the duck I had seen. Finally, I came across a photo of a female Redhead in the *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds—Eastern Region*, on page 124, figure 153. This was the bird I had seen on the Saranac River just a few hours before. The color, head shape, bill color, and description of its size all fit. However, I knew that Redhead was not an acceptable answer to my question, as it was not supposed to be in the Adirondacks, much less be breeding here. A search of the literature however, proved more encouraging than I had hoped. Bull (*Birds of New York State*, 1974) lists Redhead breeding in Kings Bay, on Lake Champlain, and Wilson Hill Refuge in the St. Lawrence River Valley. Gretch (*Kingbird*, 31: 226) found Redheads breeding on Upper Chateaugay Lake, in southwestern Clinton County, in July, 1981. This location is approximately 35-40 miles, as the duck flies, from the Saranac River, immediately below middle

Saranac Lake. As Bellrose (*Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America*, 1980) states that Redheads—along with Blue-winged Teal and Ruddy Ducks—are one of the first species to move into an area, it does not seem unreasonable to find them at another Adirondack location only 35 to 40 miles from their newly found breeding location at Upper Chateaugay.

With breeding for this species confirmed at two Adirondack lakes in the past two summers, it would be prudent for birders working in the northern Adirondacks, especially in the lakes district of Franklin and St. Lawrence counties, to be on the lookout for further evidence of breeding by Redhead in suitable habitat.

Tom Dudones, 30 Ampersand Ave., Saranac Lake, New York 12983

**A Blue Jay Feeding on Large Mayflies:** On 14 June, 1982, while canoeing up a small stream near the Forest Home Road in Saranac Lake, I approached a beaver dam blocking the stream. Beyond the dam, the stream widened to twenty to twenty-five feet, and the forest receded from the stream banks, leaving an open meadow of heather, leatherleaf, Labrador Tea, and a few scattered alders near the water. There were a great many birds flying about this meadow and over the water. Alder and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Tree Swallows, Chimney Swifts, Cedar Waxwings and Yellow-rumped Warblers were feeding on the hoards of flying insects over the stream—midges, mosquitoes, and the ever-present blackfly. There was also a good number of very large Mayflies, emerging from the water, flying overhead, skipping along the surface of the water laying their eggs, and lying spent on the surface film afterwards. These Mayflies were approximately two to two and one-half inches in length, with a wingspan equal to their length. Most likely, they were of the species *Hexagenia bilineata*. Although these large Mayflies were by far the most conspicuous insect in the area, it appeared that they were being ignored by the squadrons of avian predators which were in such abundance. Just then, a Blue Jay caught my attention as it swooped low over the water, snapped up a Mayfly in flight, and flew up to a perch in a dead birch tree, which was leaning out over the stream. It proceeded to quickly devour its prey, and then flew out and positioned itself on the topmost branch of the birch. For a minute or so it seemed to be watching the insect activity over the stream. Then it darted out over the water, dropped down to a height of 6-8 feet above the surface, and pursued a Mayfly. Turning and twisting, the jay made several passes at the Mayfly, before finally pulling up short in a hovering attitude, like a kestrel, or Eastern Kingbird, and catching its prey in its bill. The hunter returned to the same perch, and finished its meal. This activity was repeated several more times—with equal success—before I continued on.

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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**An American Bittern Hunting Dragonflies:** On 1 September 1982, I noticed an American Bittern standing in a small, marshy pond near the Saranac Lake High School. The bird seemed to be stalking some sort of prey, as it moved slowly and deliberately through the pickerel weed, arrowhead and cattails. The bittern froze for a second, then extended its neck to its full length. It rotated its head slowly, following the flight of a large dragonfly. Suddenly the bittern lunged forward, and snapped at the dragonfly with its bill. The attack was unsuccessful and the insect escaped unharmed. Undeterred, the bittern continued its hunt and in a few minutes located another large dragonfly which was skimming low over the marsh. Again the bittern stood very still, and slowly extended its neck straight up. It followed the flight of its prey with its eyes and by slowly rotating its head. The dragonfly ignored what must have seemed to be a large stalk of some plant sticking up out of the water, and continued on its flight path—straight toward the bittern. With a lightning-quick movement, the bittern snapped the dragonfly in its bill as it flew by. The insect was trapped crossways in the bill of the bittern, which quickly devoured the unwary prey. I continued to watch the bittern for another half hour, while he stalked his airborne prey, but it was unsuccessful in three subsequent attempts at mid-air capture.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

Three years ago when I wrote these highlights for the first time (viewed as a one-shot effort at the time), the season was one of the warmest on record with loads of late dates and rare-for-winter records. Now, in my first winter as Highlights Editor, the situation is wilder yet. I have always viewed the winter and summer seasons as the two where we can really try to do quantitative analyses of trends from CBC data and Breeding Bird Survey data. What are we to do with a season with abnormal weather being a major factor in determining numbers and variety of birds present and/or observed? Certainly, most positives must be suspected of having substantial weather biases. Probably only strong negative trends for resident species can be clearly viewed as real, apart from the strong weather influence.

The weather! Best summarized by Bill Cook's, "This was the winter that wasn't." All regions had each month of the season well above normal for temperatures, from 3-9<sup>o</sup> F. For most, it was the mildest winter in at least 30 years, with many records broken for individual dates and monthly highs. In various locations, spring peepers and tree frogs were peeping off and on thru December and even into January. In Region 9, earthworms, ants and honey bees were out and about in early February. Except for January and February in Region 10, all precipitation levels reported were below average. Incredibly, Regions 9 and 10 reported the largest snowfalls, shutting out Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. Even the High Peaks area was short-changed, with about three feet of accumulation thru the season. For those who missed the various meteorological presentations, this winter's weather may be blamed on El Niño (off the west coast of South America) which developed in a pattern usually seen about once every 100 years. An excellent production by Environment Canada claimed that once this effect was in place and the water temperatures in that region of the Pacific Ocean measured, their math models of the related ocean and atmospheric currents predicted very accurately precisely the North American weather patterns observed. The major problems were: 1) it was not predicted or modelled until after the unusually strong El Niño was in place, and 2) they could not really predict, even in March, when or how it would finally break up.

Given the substantial uniformity in weather across the state, it is interesting to read the variety of descriptions of the general birding scene. There is unanimous agreement on the lack of winter finches

and northern visitors in general. There are several comments along the lines of good wild food crops, probable dispersion of birds across snow-free landscapes with plenty of open water, and near desertion of feeders. However, there are substantial differences in perceived numbers and variety of "half-hardies," supported to some extent by the Christmas Bird Counts, e.g. very high in Regions 6 and 9 and notably lower than recent averages in Region 10. Coming into play here to varying extents in different regions is certainly an effect noted by "Mike" Peterson in Region 7: "When rarities fail to appear, the expert birders tend to be scarce, too." Thus, coverage suffers a bit, fewer birds are found and round and round. Region 10's report is a classic in this regard: "... it was a dull winter," and it was; there were no species reported which would pull a long-time life-lister away from a warm fire. Yet Region 10 produced a species list exceeding all the other regions combined and including many regional and state late dates and high counts for winter. Region 9 was not far behind for "half-hardy" variety, and actually all the rest certainly had some exciting finds.

Merging the data from the reports, what interesting notes can we glean? In fact, we find many reports contrasting significantly with information published just about a decade ago in John Bull's *Birds of New York State* (Doubleday: Garden City, NY, 1974). Double-crested Cormorant is certainly regular now in winter in several locations (six regions, max 49 in Region 10), compared with: "In the winter this species is rare even on Long Island..." Canada Goose is wintering in ever increasing numbers as reported from all regions. In Region 3's report, Walter Benning ties this together—the decrease in Ring-necked Pheasant, shifts in wintering raptors, and the drop in Horned Lark, bunting, and longspur reports—with the impact of modern farming methods—crop shifts, dairy farm decreases, hedge row bulldozing, etc.—in at least the upstate area. Many raptors, with the specific exception of Red-shouldered Hawk, appear to be making slow comebacks in numbers. Note wintering Ospreys in Regions 3, 7, and 9. Sharp-shinned/Cooper's Hawk ratios remain different across the state, 1/1+ in Regions 1-7 vs. 2+/1 in Regions 8-10. Shorebird variety was good (16 species) for winter, particularly in Region 10. Snowy Owls were an exception to the lack of northern visitors, appearing in nine regions and lingering long in several. Tufted Titmouse is increasing and spreading, with no less than 25 individuals wintering in Region 7. Carolina Wren was down in spite of the mild winter; an effect of last spring's April storms? Eastern Bluebird seems to be im-



proving with time. The warblers were well reported for winter (eight species), especially in Regions 9 and 10; 1,030 Yellow-rumped Warblers on one CBC in Region 10! The sparrows left behind representatives of nearly every species in the East. Purple Finch numbers were very good, possibly allaying some of the fears that House Finch is crowding them out. House Finch continues its surge in numbers, e.g. CBC total of 2,448 in Region 3 and a maximum of 848 in Region 9. Certainly with study you can find many more examples in your particular family of special interest.

In the realm of high counts and late dates, I cannot begin to cover all the data for this season; Regions 9 and 10 alone would provide pages of such data and would nearly require reproducing those reports in these highlights. Instead, allow me to simply whet your appetite by sampling some of the most outstanding records by region. From Region 1 we have: Barrow's Goldeneye, two February Dunlins, a Red Phalarope, four Common Ravens, four Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and a Harris' Sparrow. In Region 2 were: a Great Cormorant, a January Red-necked Phalarope and Pomarine Jaeger, a Barn Owl, Jan. Tree Swallows, an Ovenbird, and a Northern Oriole. For Region 3 note: 40-50,000 Canada Geese, a "Richardson's" Goose, 180,000 Mallards, a Veery on 16 Jan. and a Cape May Warbler. Region 4 reports: a regional first winter record for Great Black-backed Gull, a Fish Crow, and a House Wren. Among Region 5's finds were: a Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, an adult male King Eider, and 10,000+ American Crows passing Derby Hill on 19 Feb. Region 6 turned up 14 Iceland, 51 Glaucous, and 600 Great Black-backed Gulls as peak counts in mid-February, a House Wren, crossbills, and an out-of-place Gray Jay and Black-backed Woodpecker. From Region 7 we have: winter Tundra Swans and Wood Duck, two Iceland Gulls for first reports in 45 years, a first winter record for Red-headed Woodpecker, and a CBC total of 2,801 Evening Grosbeaks. In Region 8 were: a Peregrine Falcon, two Thayer's Gulls, a banded Hairy Woodpecker showing an age of at least 6½ years, and a Varied Thrush. Region 9's report includes: Greater White-fronted Goose, seven Blue-winged Teal, Harlequin Duck, a female Barrow's Goldeneye, an imm. Broad-winged Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper at a state-late 5 Jan., Lesser Black-backed Gull, two Common Ravens, *two* Swainson's Thrushes, an Orange-crowned Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, and a Dickcissel. Again, Region 10's report should be read carefully in its entirety to find the likes of: 1,317 Northern Gannets, 109 Great Cormorants, most of the breeding herons of New

York State, 30,395 Brant, 147 Black-bellied Plovers, an 8 Jan. Semipalmated Plover, 3,774 Dunlins, two February Long-billed Dowitchers, a 27 Dec. Yellow-billed Cuckoo (not loon! CUCKOO!!!), 16 Palm Warblers, a Lincoln's Sparrow, and identifiable races: "Black" Brant, "Eurasian" Teal, and "Ipswich" Sparrow.

Among the multitude of good records, there is none really outstanding from the rest, so let the (BOTS) Bird of the Season be all those "half-hardies" which picked the right winter to linger and so lived to see Spring.

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

## REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

VIVIAN MILLS PITZRICK

Storms to the east of us, storms to the west of us and to the south of us overwhelmed and conquered, but ours not to wonder why, ours but to bask in the balmiest winter in years. Any brief periods of colder weather were at once followed by warmer conditions so that even though Lake Erie first touched 32° F. a couple days in mid-January, it promptly warmed again to end the season at 34° F., making this its first ice-free winter since 1953. The Allegheny and Genesee Rivers, too, remained open all winter. Small lakes and ponds were open through the warmest December in 60 years with temperatures 5.8° F. above normal and reaching 60° F. on Christmas Day. To complete a six-month sequence of warmer than usual weather, the final months of the season were also milder than normal, January by 3.2° F. and February by 4.6° F. Following the dry fall, precipitation was again below normal, December by .7 inches, January by 1.3 inches and February by 1.5 inches, with almost no snow. In December the 12 inches around the 21st soon melted as did the six inches in mid-January and the two five-inch falls the 9th and 25th of February. (Weather Data: WKBW-TV, Buffalo, and Wellsville Water and Light.)

Lack of snow cover most of the season and plentiful wild foods caused near desertion of feeders. Food must have been readily available to the north too, as northern finches were almost absent here, and even American Tree Sparrows and Evening Grosbeaks were down in numbers with none of the latter in many areas where usually plentiful in winter. However, several other species, less common for this season, did stay on to save themselves a trip south, painting a confusing picture of the migration. Were they coming or going? Canada Geese were widespread, wintering on a bounty of ear corn gleanings which Wild Turkeys also enjoyed. A flock of the latter was tracked in late January to discover they fed on ferns and green sedge leaves, sensitive fern spores and plentiful red oak acorns (Eaton). Winter banding was largely unexciting. However, at Farmersville Station, of the 568 birds netted in January, 486 were returns or repeats, a very high rate for small birds (D. Clark). Noteworthy bandings at Alfred Station were

59 Purple Finches and 99 American Goldfinches during December and January, good numbers for two months (Brooks).

Positives for the winter include 1) more Pied-billed Grebes than usual; nearly two dozen Great Blue Herons, widely dispersed; excellent swan reports; and a better count of American Black Ducks; 2) slightly better numbers of Northern Harriers; Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks holding steady; and fair reports of Red-tailed Hawks; 3) many grouse, including one drumming in December and another strutting toward three others in mid-January; lots of Wild Turkeys in flocks of five to 30; and one to two Killdeer appearing in half a dozen areas all winter; 4) good numbers of Short-eared Owls; many, many kingfishers; and woodpeckers doing well: a few wintering Redheads, widespread Red-bellied and lots of Hairies and Northern Flickers; 5) an incursion of Tufted Titmice with one to six per day at widespread feeders; and here and there a Brown Creeper; 6) larger numbers than usual of Golden-crowned Kinglets in southern Cattaraugus Co. and one to six at many other locations; lots of wintering robins; a record-breaking flock of Cedar Waxwings; and fair numbers of Northern Shrikes; 7) quite a few Yellow-rumped Warblers; 8) fine numbers of Northern Cardinals, one to ten per day; and a few wintering Field, Swamp and Song Sparrows along with lots of White-throated and a few White-crowned Sparrows; 9) some mixed-up red-wings and a record high for Rusty Blackbirds; 10) a multitude of Purple Finches: one to 28 per day; many American Goldfinches; and House Finches skyrocketing.

Winter negatives include 1) few loons or cormorants, as expected for winter; 2) scarcity of ducks on the Genesee River even though open all winter; 3) a mediocre Rough-legged Hawk season; and few kestrel reports other than Christmas Counts; 4) continued pheasant decline, only one to two per day; 5) Eastern Screech-Owls doing no better; and a poor Snowy Owl flight; 6) only low numbers of Horned Larks, as usual; and a disappointing Red-breasted Nuthatch flight; 7) fewer Carolina Wrens than expected for such a warm winter; and no Winter Wrens; 8) not many American Tree Sparrows and wintering juncos; 9) no longspurs, very few Snow Buntings, and almost no northern finches; and smaller numbers of Evening Grosbeaks.

Rarities: Barrow's Goldeneye, Red Phalarope, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Harris' Sparrow, plus *addendum* from Fall 1982: Razorbill. Several less common or out-of-season birds, worth special mention, are in bold type below.

*In Memoriam:* Harold Dies Mitchell. It was with deep sorrow that we heard of the passing of this gentle giant of the ornithological world on 21 December 1982. Well known as co-author with Clark Beardslee of the book *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*, he was active in many other natural science activities and helped organize the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs of which he was an early president. His contagious enthusiasm touched many lives, both young and old, and he will be greatly missed.

Abbreviations: BC—Bird Club; ACoC—Allegany Co. BC Census, 19 Dec, of birds outside the Scio Audubon Census circle; BM—Beaver Meadow Audubon Center; BH—Buffalo Harbor; CC—Audubon Christmas Bird Census; Jamestown (Jmst) 19 Dec; Fredonia 2 Jan; Saint Bonaventure (St Bon) 18 Dec; Scio 19 Dec; DH—Dunkirk Harbor; GMA or WMA—Game or Wildlife Management Area; NC, NP or NS—Nature Center, Preserve or Sanctuary; NWR—National Wildlife Refuge; Sanct.—Sanctuary; SF or SP—State Forest or Park.

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**LOONS-DUCKS:** Although there were no Red-throated Loons, one to two Com. Loons were seen on Chautauqua L. at Martha's Vineyard and Mayville for most of Dec, and another spent Dec and Jan at DH. A few grebes lingered all season with max counts: Pied-billed Grebe: nine JmstCC; and seven DH 2 Dec thru 23 Feb, large numbers for winter; and Horned Grebe: three Celoron 28 Jan. A Double-crested Cormorant appeared for the JmstCC and another was noted irregularly at DH 18 Dec thru 23 Feb. There were more than usual Tundra Swans this season: 16 Fredonia CC; 216 JmstCC; up to seven Dunkirk 1 Dec to early Jan; 19 Lakewood, Chautauqua L. 1 Jan; and 30 Burgeson Sanct. 23 Feb. As mentioned above, many areas reported Canada Geese wintering on ear corn gleanings with a high count of 2,400 at Iroquois NWR 2 Jan, increasing to 5,000 there 16 Feb. Notable duck reports include: Wood Duck: one on ACoc; and one near Jamestown 17 Feb; Green-winged Teal: two Niagara Falls irregularly 9 Jan to 6 Feb, late; Am. Black Duck: on CC's; 63 StBon, 52 Fredonia and 114 Jmst, all counts higher; and wintering: 50+ on the Allegheny R; and 30 DH; N. Pintail: one on JmstCC; max 25 Iroquois NWR 27 Feb, uncommon especially for Dec count; Gadwall: two on JmstCC; max 28 Chautauqua L. 15 Jan; Am. Wigeon: max six Chautauqua L. 1 Jan; Canvasback: 175 on JmstCC; max 12 DH 22 Dec to 16 Feb; Red-head: 180 on JmstCC; max six DH 28 Jan; Ring-necked Duck: on CC's; one StBon, two Jmst; max seven Celoron 17 Feb; Greater Scaup: 11 on JmstCC; max 26 DH 20 Jan; Lesser Scaup: max four Mayville 2 Jan; scaup (species?): max 10 DH 19-31 Jan; White-winged Scoter: one Mayville 5 Dec; Com. Goldeneye: on CC's: two StBon, 29 Fredonia, and 37 Jmst; and max 23 Barcelona 16 Jan; **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one Niagara Falls irregularly 5 Dec thru 23 Jan (RK, FR+) and (same bird?) Beaver Is. SP 14 Jan (PH), its fourth consecutive winter here; Bufflehead: 13 on JmstCC; max 30 DH 19 Feb; Hooded Merganser: on CC's: two StBon and 105 Jmst; and max 258 Mayville 4 Dec; Com. Merganser: on CC's: three Fredonia and 42 Jmst; and max 120 Red House L., Allegany SP, 2 Dec; Red-breasted Merganser: 65 on JmstCC; and max 200± DH 6 and 13 Dec; as well as a pair on the Allegheny R. 26 Feb, a less common area; and Ruddy Duck: 19 Celoron 4 Dec, the only report.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Hardly spectacular but at least better than last year are reports of the N. Harrier: two at ACoc and singles on CC's of Fredonia and Jmst with six other birds, total, at five locations. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks are holding steady with Sharpies numbering 15 and Cooper's 19 reported birds. Other notable raptors include: N. Goshawk: singles on ACoc and Fredonia CC with one at Canadea 28 Jan (HH); Red-shouldered Hawk: singles in Town of Sheridan 21 Dec, at Burgeson Sanct. 26 Dec and Allenburg Bog 27 Feb, and two over Lakeview 28 Feb, less common in winter; Rough-legged Hawk: unimpressively present with 16 birds, total, at 15 locations; and Am. Kestrel:

seven on ACoC, and on CC's: two StBon, three Scio, 14 Fredonia (six last year) and 13 Jmst (four last year), good counts, but with only three other birds reported. There was a fine winter population of the Am. Coot: 625 on the JmstCC (none last year), and max from other reports: 150 Celoron 1 Jan. Two Dunlins appeared at Niagara Falls 9 Feb (Klepfner), over a month late. Five Com. Snipes were tallied on the JmstCC; and one at BM 9 Jan was photographed by W. B. Hammond and was also seen by MJ and DJ, four days later than latest record. A very late RED PHALAROPE was found at Barcelona 8 Dec (RS). High spots of the larid season include: Little Gull: max two Lewiston 12 Dec (RA+); and two DH 6 Dec (MVJ), appearing all season until 21 Feb (mob); Bonaparte's Gull: max 6,000 DH 7 Jan with 175 still there 25 Feb; Iceland Gull (subspecies?): singles s. of Lewiston, Niagara R., 5 Dec and 30 Jan (RK, HK, WK+); and Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides kumlieni*) one s. of Lewiston 12 Dec (RA+); LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: one ad Barcelona 4 Dec (RS, DG, TMah), a first for Chautauqua Co., studied about a half-hour, compared with Great Black-backed; plus three verified thru BOS: one ad with a second-winter bird s. of Lewiston 2 Jan (RK); an ad at the last location 12 Jan (RA+); and another at Iroquois NWR 27 Feb (AM, WM+); Glaucous Gull: at least six counted along the Niagara R. and at BH all thru Dec and Jan; and BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: an imm DH 4 to 6 Dec (RS, DG, MVJ+).

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** The E. Screech-Owl was poorly reported: one on ACoC; two on JmstCC; and singles at BM, Alfred (road-killed), Amity Twp., Allegany Co., and Farmersville Sta., barely holding its own. Only three Snowy Owls showed up this season, all singles: BH 9 Jan and 14 Feb (FR, PH); Times Beach, Buffalo, 10 Jan (PH); and Town of Wheatfield irregularly 22 Jan to 26 Feb (Burch, HK, WK, D'Anna, Potter). Sightings of the Short-eared Owl rivaled last winter's numbers: one on ACoC and four on Fredonia CC; one Hume Twp, Allegany Co., 12 to 21 Dec (M+E Smith *vide* KP); three Town of Pomfret 29 to 31 Dec (TM+); max five Dunkirk Airport 1 Jan (JK, PK+); one Town of Alexander 11 and 15 Jan (TH, RA+); one Town of Portland 6 Feb (JMos, TM); and two West Bethany Twp. 27 Feb (AM, WM). Two N. Saw-whet Owls were found w. of Salamanca 28 Dec (TB) where one was seen last Oct; will they persist in the area and possibly nest? Stay tuned . . . Less common for winter were: Red-headed Woodpecker: one on ACoC; six Ft. Niagara SP 4 Dec (HK, WK); one Caneadea 1 Jan thru (HH); and four Youngstown 23 Feb (D'Anna, Potter); and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one on Fredonia CC.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Again there were few Horned Larks with max: of undesignated subspecies: 20 Dunkirk Airport 26 Dec to 2 Jan; of *Eremophila alpestris alpestris*: one Orchard Park 27 Feb; and of *E. a. praticola*: 20 Town of Lockport 18 Jan. Two Com. Ravens in the Town of Wellsville 14 Dec (GB) were well-described by one long familiar with the species in the west; one also was heard "croaking" on Cooper Hill, six miles n. of Allegany 13 Jan (SE); and another appeared in Ward Twp., Allegany Co., 10 Jan (EB) where seen several times previously. Only ten areas reported Red-breasted Nuthatches with max eight at Alfred 17 Dec. The mild winter apparently favored the Carolina Wren, as a few more were reported, all single birds: on JmstCC; Lakewood 1 Dec to 1 Jan; Belmont 5 Dec; Lewiston 6 Dec; Town of N. Harmony, Chautauqua Co., 6 to 31 Dec; and Chautauqua Institute 2 Jan. Max of the many wintering Am. Robins was 45 at Jamestown 7 Feb. A N. Mockingbird was seen on the Fredonia CC and one to two appeared at five other locations, normal numbers; and a Brown Thrasher wintered in Belmont at the Burtons' feeder, the only report. A record winter high for the Region was the flock of 500 Cedar Waxwings at Dunkirk Airport 2 Jan (MS, JGul). It was a fair season for the N. Shrike: singles on Scio CC and Fredonia CC; and 15 other birds in scattered areas.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warblers were discovered in at least ten locations with highest number 20 at Fredonia 1 Jan (PB), a near-record winter count.

**TANAGERS—WEAVERS:** Noteworthy of wintering sparrows were: Rufous-sided Towhee: on CC's: two Fredonia and one Jmst; and singles in Orchard Park thru 21 Feb and in the Town of Pomfret 11 Feb; Am. Tree Sparrow: max feeder count: 31 Amity L. 14 Feb, low; but 156 netted at Farmersville Sta. during Feb (DC); Chipping Sparrow: singles: Fre-

donia 19 Dec thru 27 Feb (DCar+); and Darien Center 22 to 26 Jan (TH), unusual for winter; Vesper Sparrow: two Town of Charlotte 5 Dec; Savannah Sparrow: two Town of Hanover 21 and 22 Jan (ASm, PSm), very very late (or early?); White-throated Sparrow: widely reported all season with max 20 Tuscarora Indian Reservation 21 Jan; White-crowned Sparrow: two Belmont all season; one imm Jamestown 22 Dec thru; and four Fredonia 30 Dec to 3 Jan, more than usual for winter; and HARRIS' SPARROW: one at J. Goetz' feeder, Fredonia, 9 to 21 Dec (JG, JF, TM, FR)—very very rare, and third occurrence in Chautauqua Co. (RS). From the sparse Snow Bunting reports, the max was 250± near Delevan in Feb. Good numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds were reported all season, with max 165+ at Kent Switch 1 Jan (coming or going? or did *they* know?). Other significant icterid reports include: E. Meadowlark: seven Fredonia 1 Dec; seven Town of Kiantone 22 Jan, not bad for winter; Rusty Blackbird: max 13 Town of Chautauqua 25 Feb (FR, LBk), a record winter high for upstate; plus five other reports of single Rusties; and N. Oriole: an ad male at Jamestown 7 to 19 Jan (RS, DG, Kerr), studied at the feeder. House Finches are still doing well with max reports: 86 Scio 6 Feb, and 85 Depew 28 Feb. The only "northern" finches noted were: Com. Redpoll: three on JmstCC; and one Jamestown 2 Jan; and Pine Siskin: five on JmstCC; and one Jamestown 6 Dec. Max report of Evening Grosbeaks was 48 Limestone 20 Jan, less than half the usual high count.

*Addendum:* to *The Kingbird* Vol. XXXIII No. 1, Winter 1983, an imm RAZORBILL on the Niagara R. swimming "on both sides of the International Boundary" near Fort Niagara SP 27 Nov (B. Duncan, KMclaughlin *vide* JT, *The Prothonotary*, Vol. 48, No. 12, Dec. 1982), a first for our Region and second authentic inland NY State record.

Amity Lake, Belmont, New York 14813

## REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

The prospects of a mild winter frequently elicit both favorable and unfavorable reactions from the general populace. The 1982-83 winter season was no exception. Thoughts of "half-hardies" lingered in the minds of many, yet the possibility of seeing no winter finches was clearly etched upon those same minds. These mild-wintered premonitions proved to be the case, but there were many interesting deviations from what might have been expected.

Summer, it seemed, lingered on into December with eight dates recording new high temperatures. A new high temperature for the month was attained on 3 December when the thermometers topped out at 72° F. Snowfall obviously was well below the norm with 11.6 inches, but general precipitation was only slightly below normal with a total of 2.17 inches. January brought with it some variety at least, with both warm and cold spells, yet the overall pattern continued to say the same thing. The average temperature was a balmy 3.8° above normal at 27.4° F. Total seasonal snowfall accumulations reached only a meager 24.8 inches. February was no exception. The heat wave continued with an average temperature of 29.1° F., a full 4.7° above normal. The measurable precipitation was 1.09 inches below the average at 1.23 inches.

As might have been expected, the winter season was dominated by various contrasts in populations. Loons tarried on the lake well into January as did Horned Grebes. Great Cormorant any year or season is a big plus. Open waters

produced areas for wintering Great Blue Herons. The ice-free lakes of the southern reaches of the Region harbored better than usual concentrations and numbers of puddle ducks for the Christmas Bird Counts. The wintering American Kestrel population was very good. A positive note on the Ring-necked Pheasant—it may have held its own this season as observations were up. A Pomarine Jaeger sitting on Charlotte Pier in January? What will appear next? A proliferation of Snowy Owl reports signaled a good season for this much sought after northern species. Multiple reports of Tree Swallows gave you a hint of what the climatic conditions were. The mimids fared well with catbird and thrasher reported, and the mild winter seemed to be to the mockingbird's liking as the population appears to be on an upswing. Northern Shrikes were well-reported. The Yellow-rumped Warblers of Mendon Ponds and Spencerport enjoyed strong populations, and an Ovenbird wintered in the Region due to a sheltered yard and gracious hosts. Wintering sparrows were up in numbers with Song, Swamp and White-throated reported regularly with a smattering of Field, White-crowned and even a Chipping. Red-winged Blackbirds made a strong showing. A Northern Oriole chose a sunflower feeder at which to spend a few December days and tarried long enough to be counted on the Rochester Christmas Bird Count. The story of the positives appears influenced, as might have been expected, by the unseasonable weather.

Quite possibly we might also attribute some of the negatives to those same conditions. The occasional duck visitors such as King Eider and Harlequin Duck went unreported, and most wintering duck populations stayed well out of reach of optical aids, thus making counting very difficult. Rough-legged Hawks were down. White-winged gull reports were few and far between due partially to the fact that there were few large gull concentrations. The absence of consistent ice in the proximity of open water was a deterrent to gull watching in general. Short-eared Owl reports came from new and varied locations, but the overall population may have been on the down side. The oft common Snow Buntings were tough to find, if they could be located at all. Other than a few Evening Grosbeaks and two Common Redpolls, winter finches were nonexistent. The positives appeared to outweigh the negatives, yet the season itself didn't lend easily to a frenzy of avian observation. On the other hand, I didn't hear too many birders complaining.

Rarities: Great Cormorant, Red-necked Phalarope, Pomarine Jaeger, Tree Swallow, Ovenbird and Northern Oriole.

Abbreviations: BB—Braddock Bay area, CBC—Christmas Bird Counts, CH—Charlotte, CL—Conesus Lake, DC—Duck Census (L. Ontario), H—Hamlin Beach State Park, IB—Iron-dequoit Bay, IC—Island Cottage Woods, L—Letchworth State Park, M—Mendon Ponds, PB—Point Breeze, S—Sodus Bay, WL—West Lakeshore (Charlotte to Pt. Breeze).

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**LOONS-DUCKS:** Loons were reported from L. Ontario each month during the season. Red-throated Loon: three WL 3 Dec, one IB 29 Jan, good winter showing. Com. Loon: max three L. Ontario 15 Jan, one Pultneyville 20 Feb, very late. Grebes put in a relatively good season with Pied-billed Grebe: five CL 2 Jan. Horned Grebe: 13 L. Ontario 9 Jan (DC). Cormorant species—note the plural form—put in winter appearances in the Region. **GREAT CORMORANT:** one imm CH 9 Jan (MD, CP), viewed and studied as it flew over the pier. Double-crested Cormorant: one CH 18 Dec, one imm CL 1 Jan, and presumably the same individual at CL 5 Jan. Great Blue Heron: reports were good from Dec. and Jan., yet we were down to a single report during the first half of Feb. Where did they go? Mute Swan: one S 1-16 Feb. Tundra Swans were reported in Dec. and Jan. from open waters of Conesus and Silver Lakes as well as Sodus Bay. Brant: three H 9 Jan, one S 26 Jan-6 Feb. Canada Goose was noted regularly on L. Ontario with 400+ WL 30 Jan. Puddle ducks were well-reported due to open water on the southern lakes of the Region and the warm spell at February's terminus. Wood Duck: one female Pultneyville 1-31 Jan, two WL 26 Feb, early arrival. Green-winged Teal: two CL 26 Dec, two WL 27 Feb. Am. Black Duck: max 200 CL 23 Dec. N. Pintail: two WL 9 Jan, one CL 5 Jan, one WL 15 Jan, one BB 17 Feb. Blue-winged Teal: one BB 28 Feb, early arrival. Wintering diving ducks were present as usual. The open water made concentrations tough to find and observe. Ring-necked Duck: max 12 S 26 Jan, not always reported throughout the season. Greater Scaup: max 7,750 WL 3 Dec. Lesser Scaup: max 3,000 WL 3 Dec. Oldsquaw: 200 max WL 5 Dec. All three scoters were reported and White-winged did well as usual. Black Scoter: one Russell Station 22 Jan, last report. Surf Scoter: one WL 15 Jan, last report. White-winged Scoter: max 2,000 EL 31 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: max 2,000 WL 3 Dec. Bufflehead: good numbers present thru the season. Hooded Mergansers: three Round Pond 27 Feb, first migrants. Com. Merganser: plentiful. Red-breasted Merganser: seen thru the season.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Generally speaking, the hawks fared quite well. Accipiters were readily found and Red-tails and Am. Kestrels enjoyed a successful winter. Turkey Vulture: one early H 22 Feb. Bald Eagle: one ad Honeoye L. 26 Dec, one ad CL 1 Jan, one ad BB 27 Jan. N. Harrier: nine Lima 27-31 Dec (J & AF). The discovery of a harrier roost was most exciting. All three accipiters were well-reported with good records thru the reporting period. Rough-legged Hawk: reported but not very plentiful. Merlin: one Livonia intermittently from 1-29 Dec, one was photographed in Penfield, other details unknown. Peregrine Falcon: one H 26 Feb (RS). Ring-necked Pheasant: there were a fair number around during the season. How they fared during the mild winter remains to be seen. Wild Turkeys are still being reported regularly from the southern portions of the Region, while an apparent roost has been located near the lakeshore. Virginia Rail: one imm M 22 Jan, a traditional wintering spot. Am. Coot: reported each month during season. Killdeer: all three months saw reports of this hardy species. Open water springs provided wintering areas for individuals. Dunlin: one CH 4 Dec, a late individual. Com. Snipe: one Durand-Eastman Park 4 Dec, 14-17 IB 6-10 Dec, no reports after. Am. Woodcock: one Victor 28 Feb, displaying. **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE:** one IB 31 Dec, seen thru 5 Jan (BCa, mob). **POMARINE JAEGER:** one imm IB, CH 9 Jan (mob), the bird was present for two days before it disappeared. At times it could be observed sitting on the Charlotte pier. Little Gull: quite noticeable during Dec with a few lingering on into Jan, absent in Feb. Iceland Gull: one IB 31 Dec (MD, KG), one PB 16 Feb (MD, WS), an off year. Glaucous Gull: one PB 25-31 Jan, one IB 12 Feb, one Webster 14 Feb, one BB 27 Feb. Gr. Black-backed Gull: numbers were good again. Black-legged Kittiwake: one imm IB 11 Dec (MD, KG), bird was approaching adult plumage, unusual for the season.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Doves: doing quite well, numbers steady. E. Screech-Owl: they're always around if you look for them, 19 Leicester 18 Dec (WS), CBC. Interestingly enough, Snowy Owls had a great season. There were five plus reports thru period from several locations. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Pittsford 24 Feb, road kill. Open water brought Belted Kingfisher reports from Dec thru Feb, Woodpecker observations were about normal. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Leicester 18 Dec. N. Flicker: numerous sightings.



**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: max 260 7 Feb. **TREE SWALLOW:** Two separate reports of rare winter sightings came from the Region. One BB 6 Jan (CP, WS), eight Spencerport 13-17 Jan (B&CL). Tufted Titmouse: doing very well. Red-breasted Nuthatch: present locally during period. Carolina Wren: numerous reports, should have a good year due to winter conditions. Winter Wren: reports from Dec and Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: reported thru Feb. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one DE 11 Dec, one Oklahoma Beach 25 Jan, a road kill. E. Bluebird: 13 max CL 26 Dec, still making progress in southern portion of Region. Hermit Thrush: some reports, yet seemed low based on the type of winter we experienced. Gray Catbird: one Pittsford 11 Dec (AS), one H 20 Jan (MD), one Seneca Park 26 Feb (GH, TP). N. Mockingbird: well-reported. Brown Thrasher: one Greece 19 Dec (GM), one Rochester 14-15 Feb (MD, KG, PR). N. Shrike: good numbers thru reporting period.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** One might have suspected that this section would have produced a few "half-hardies" for the season, yet for the most part that was not the case. Yellow-rumped Warbler: Mendon Ponds and a small area in Spencerport produced two good pockets of wintering birds with 30+ at Mendon and 15+ frequenting the Spencerport locale. **OVENBIRD:** one Greece 30 Dec thru Jan (A&MM). This bird spent a good portion of the season in a protected area around a feeding station.

**TANAGERS—WEAVERS:** Rufous-sided Towhee: three reports in Dec, two reports in Feb, max two S 16 Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: This boreal species was found in very good numbers during the season. Chipping Sparrow: one H 28 Dec (MD), a bit on the late side?, one MP 30 Jan, even later yet. Field Sparrow: one CL 26 Dec, reported thru remainder of period. Song Sparrow: many wintered over. Swamp Sparrow: they are found regularly during reporting period. White-throated Sparrow: more common than usual. White-crowned Sparrow: 13 PB 24 Dec, four-eight PB 1-15 Jan, pretty decent numbers for winter. Dark-eyed Junco: well reported thru season. Snow Buntings: strangely scarce. Lapland Longspur: present all three months, 90 Hamlin all thru Feb. The sparrows did extremely well this season, yet icterids and finches didn't parallel this tendency for the season. E. Meadowlark: one Retsof 23 Dec (MD), only one? Rusty Blackbird: three separate reports from Region, one each month. **NORTHERN ORIOLE:** a single female visited a Greece feeder from 12 thru 19 Dec (DM). Winter finches failed to put in much of an appearance this winter. Com. Redpoll: two Penfield 19 Jan (RC). Evening Grosbeak: scattered small flocks were present each month.

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## REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

W. E. BENNING

The Region experienced the mildest winter in many years with above average temperatures and little snow. The only real normal winter weather were a few days in mid-December, again in mid-January and finally the second week of February. Snow cover, when there was any, was light.

As usual this type of weather was not conducive to driving birds to the feeders. They were able to find ample food in the fields and remained there much to the disappointment of feeder watchers. The mild weather may have held the northern water birds—loons, grebes, diving ducks—to the north of here, as relatively few wintered on our lakes.

Frost free ground allowed more than the usual amount of winter plowing. Wherever there was a freshly plowed field, Ring-billed Gulls, often by the hundreds, descended to forage. As a result many more than the normal number of these birds wintered here.

However, despite the mild winter few "half-hardies" lingered in the area. Icterids were almost totally absent, sparrows relatively few and American Robins reported mostly in ones or twos. The robins may have been simply less visible because they were dispersed rather than being forced by severe weather into large and more spectacular flocks at those spots offering food, water and shelter.

Changes in farming, particularly in Seneca and Cayuga Counties, have had an effect on the avian population here over the past few years. Formerly farming in the northern Finger Lakes area was largely dairy and general cash crops with a considerable acreage of hay. In the past ten years dairying has been concentrated in a few large dairies. Corn has become the principal cash crop. Hay and pasture acreage has been considerably reduced. To allow for the more efficient use of modern machinery, miles of hedgerows have been bulldozed out.

The switch to corn has encouraged large numbers of Canada Geese to winter here particularly on Cayuga Lake. Mechanical harvesting of the crop leaves some corn in the field providing ample food for the birds. Ever increasing numbers of geese have been wintering on the lakes. This winter there were 40,000-50,000 on Cayuga Lake. The mild winter resulted in some water remaining open at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge and, for the first time in its history, the Refuge had 12,000 wintering geese. These figures are much higher than the Waterfowl Count figures but that was taken along the lake shores at a time when the geese were scattered over miles of corn fields. The Canada Goose is now the most numerous bird on the Region's Christmas Counts, with their numbers exceeding the total of the next nine species. The same conditions have led to the overwintering of greatly increased numbers of Mallards and American Black Ducks.

Hay and pasturelands are excellent habitat for a high concentration of mice. In Seneca County especially, this fact has meant a high density of wintering raptors—Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Harriers, American Kestrels and Short-eared Owls. Rough-legged Hawks which used to stop in the area south of Waterloo now go on south to Ithaca and Elmira. The 1982 Christmas Counts show Red-tailed Hawks and Am. Kestrels at only forty percent of their abundance on the 1972 Christmas Counts. Short-eared Owls have largely abandoned their traditional wintering roosts in Seneca County. The widespread elimination of many hedgerows may have contributed to the near extirpation of the Ring-necked Pheasant.

Formerly the many dairies spread manure daily on the fields making many fresh feeding areas each day for Mourning Doves, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. Today with fewer and larger dairies, many of which have other methods of manure disposal, there are far fewer of these freshly manured feeding areas. Except for the Mourning Dove, the number of wintering birds of these species has declined. Another farming change is the use of herbicides for weed control. This is more effective than the old cultivation method so there are far fewer mature annual weeds sticking up thru the snow, providing winter food for American Tree Sparrows and other seed eaters and causing another shift in the Region's wintertime avian population.

Except for the Red-shouldered Hawk, those hawk species which were in so much trouble in the sixties are continuing their slow comeback. Eastern Blue-bird reports are encouraging. The mild weather may have induced larger numbers to overwinter here. Winter finches were almost nonexistent except for Purple Finches, which were widespread, and Evening Grosbeaks which appeared in numbers only in the southern part of the Region.

### Region 3 Christmas Bird Counts

Name	Date	Numbers		
		Participants	Species	Birds
Central Cayuga	1 Jan.	4	49	14,841
Elmira	1 Jan.	20	51	7,061
Geneva	29 Dec.	15	64	18,456
Ithaca	1 Jan.	102	77	13,999
Montezuma*	1 Jan.	12	42	14,098
Watkins Glen	19 Dec.	6	48	3,040

\* Only that portion of the count area lying within Region 3.

Total species reported within the period—115.

Total species reported on the Christmas Counts—94.

Abbreviations: Cay—Cayuga; CC—Christmas Count preceded by CC for Central Cayuga, E for Elmira, G for Geneva, I for Ithaca, M for Montezuma, WG for Watkins Glen; M—Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; Sen—Seneca; WC—Waterfowl Count 23 Jan.

Contributors and compilers: W. E. Benning, Jack Brubaker (Watkins Glen), Vernon Dewey (Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge), R. F. Heil, Bernice Hilfiker, Wilfred Howard, S. F. Kahl (Auburn), Herbert and Polly Keating, Malcolm Lerch (Penn Yan), Dorothy McIlroy (Ithaca), Paris Trail, Mary Welles (Elmira).

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one appeared on Cay L off Myers Pt again this year on 21 Feb (E. Gates, R. Lovell). Com. Loon: a few on each of the lakes. Pied-billed Grebe: scarce. Horned Grebe: scarce. Red-necked Grebe: one Union Springs 26 Dec (H). Double-crested Cormorant: one at Ithaca thru the period. Great Blue Heron: the usual scattered individuals overwintered in favorable spots. Tundra Swan: up to 33 (28 ads, 5 imm) spent Dec at M and the north end of Cay L; two were present on Cay L thru. Snow Goose: two M late Dec; one blue morph along the east shore of Cay L thru; 3,000 migrants (ratio four to one "Blue" to Snow) M 28 Feb. Brant: one Ithaca Dec. Canada Goose: see the introduction above for overwintering birds; spring migrants were moving thru strongly the end of the period; one bird of the *hutchinsii* race was at Dresden on Sen L thru.

Maximum waterfowl numbers as reported by the Montezuma Refuge personnel:

Am. Black	8,000	29 Dec.	Canvasback	500	29 Dec.
Mallard	180,000	29 Dec.	Redhead	500	29 Dec.
N. Pintail	500	20 Dec.	Ring-necked Duck	200	29 Dec.
N. Shoveler	175	20 Dec.	Greater Scaup	250	29 Dec.
Gadwall	5,000	20 Dec.	Hooded Merganser	60	29 Dec.
Am. Wigeon	1,500	20 Dec.	Com. Merganser	250	22 Feb.

Wood Duck: two Penn Yan 17 Jan. Green-winged Teal: one CCCC; one Ithaca Jan-Feb. Am. Black: 1,126 on CCs; 894 WC; more overwintered at Watkins Glen. Mallard: the astounding 180,000 reported at M during the last period remained there thru Dec. Many then moved on to Cay L; up to 10,000 spent the winter on Sen L. N. Pintail: one Keuka L 19 Dec; one Elmira 22 Jan; one Ithaca Jan-Feb. Gadwall: small numbers scattered over the Region thru. Am. Wigeon: small numbers only. Canvasback: 1,200 Union Springs 26 Dec; 804 WC. Redhead: 3,100 CCCC; 6,715 WC. Ring-necked Duck: 21 WC. Greater Scaup: 850 Union Springs 23 Dec. Lesser Scaup: 211 WC. Oldsquaw: nine Aurora 23 Jan; ten Dresden Feb. Com. Goldeneye: 854 WC. Bufflehead: 173 WC. Hooded Merganser: 39 WC. Com.

Merganser: scarce; 230 WC. Red-breasted Merganser: 80 north end Cay L 23 Dec. Ruddy Duck: one Dresden 2 Jan.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS: OSPREY:** one diving into Cay L west of King Ferry 3 Jan. Bald Eagle: imm with yellow tag on right wing Owasco L 1 Feb; one with yellow tag Aurora 20 Feb; imm. M 20-22 Feb. N. Harrier: an encouraging increase in the number of reports from all sections of the Region; five on WGCC is the highest in 26 years. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks: both widely reported in small numbers but with more Cooper's. N. Goshawk: two reports Elmira; one Geneva 29 Dec; one Cayuga Village 31 Jan; one Ithaca 21 Feb. Red-shouldered Hawk: one ICC, only report. Red-tailed Hawk: 127 CCs. Rough-legged Hawk: good numbers all winter in the southern half of the Region; few in the north. Am. Kestrel: 71 CCs. Peregrine: reportedly took a bird from a feeder in Odessa (C. Breckinridge *vide* JB). Ring-necked Pheasant: continued scarce with 11 on three CCs. Ruffed Grouse: continues to increase in most areas. 51 CCs. Wild Turkey: this elusive bird is expanding in range (northward) and in numbers. Am. Coot: 200 M 20 Dec; 208 CCs. Killdeer: one Ithaca 22 Feb, an early bird. Com. Snipe: one Dryden 27 Jan probably overwintering. Ring-billed Gull: 5,643 CCs. Herring Gull: 2,598 CCs. Iceland Gull: one Ithaca 27 Jan (Confer). Glaucous Gull: imm seen intermittently all period; one Geneva 29 Dec. Great Black-backed Gull: 38 CCs.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: on the CCs Elmira took top honors with 1,104 or about 30% of the total count of 3,718. Mourning Dove: 827 CCs. Com. Barn-Owl: one 1 Jan north of M (SFK). E. Screech-Owl: only seven on the CCs. Great Horned Owl: 21 CCs with 12 at Elmira; nesting in an old Red-tailed Hawk's nest at Phelps in Feb. Snowy Owl: one on the Sen L pier at Geneva sporadically during Jan. Barred Owl: one each on the GCC and ECC. Short-eared Owl: four Elmira late Jan thru; at four locations in Yates Co with max of 12 south of Penn Yan. Belted Kingfisher: normal overwintering birds; 10 CCs. Red-headed Woodpecker: three GCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: 41 CCs 26 of which were at Geneva. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Watkins Glen 10 Dec; one ICC. Downy Woodpecker: 378 CCs; Hairy Woodpecker: 130 CCs.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: remains at a reduced level: 97 CCs; max 80-100 Ithaca 13 Feb and "large" flocks Phelps mid-Jan with singing birds 8 Feb. Blue Jay: 496 CCs. Am. Crow: 870 of the 1,925 on the CCs were at Ithaca. Fish Crow: the local colony remained at Ithaca thru the period with a max of eight. Black-capped Chickadee: 1,995 CCs, 60% at Ithaca. Tufted Titmouse: 205 CCs also 60% on the Ithaca CC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: hard to find; 27 CCs with 16 on GCC. White-breasted Nuthatch: 373 CCs. Brown Creeper: 29 CCs. Carolina Wren: seven ICC; one Dresden and one Perry Pt, Yates Co early Feb. one Odessa Feb. Winter Wren: one Union Springs 24 Dec; one Elmira 1 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 51 CC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one ECC and two ICC. E. Bluebird: good overwintering numbers from Penn Yan and Ithaca south to the Pennsylvania border; max 14 Logan 26 Dec and 15 Perry Pt, Yates Co early Feb. Veery: one Bayberry Environmental Education Center, Phelps 16 Jan (P. Trail). Am. Robin: 350 flying over Union Springs 23 Dec and 166 CCCC, otherwise only scattered individuals. Gray Catbird: one ICC; one Phelps 12 Jan. N. Mockingbird: 33 CCs with 24 at Ithaca. Cedar Waxwing: 80% of the 683 on the CCs were at Ithaca. N. Shrike: one Waterloo 29 Dec; one at Ithaca feeder the first two weeks of Jan and one 27 Feb; one Schuyler Co 27 Feb, only reports. European Starling: 10,449 CCs with 4,205 of them at Geneva.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Penn Yan 1 Dec; 10 Aurora 24 Dec; 59 GCC; nine Long Pt State Pk, Aurora 6 Jan; two Lansing 15 Feb. CAPE MAY WARBLER: one at Orcutt's feeder Penn Yan 12 Jan-7 Feb (ML, mob).

**TANAGERS—WEAVERS:** N. Cardinal: 3,148 CCs with 60% at Ithaca. Rufous-sided Towhee: one GCC. Am. Tree Sparrow: low numbers again this year; 540 CCs. CHIPPING SPARROW: one Ithaca 6 Feb. Field Sparrow: three Union Springs 23 Dec; four ECC. Savannah Sparrow: Shelldrake 31 Jan. Song Sparrow: fewer than normal; 92 CCs. Swamp Sparrow: one Brooktondale 9 Jan. Dark-eyed Junco: 429 CCs with 50% at Ithaca; "Oregon" Junco: one Elmira 9-10 Dec. Lapland Longspur: one report at Penn Yan in Dec; one Ithaca 13 and 20 Feb. Snow Bunting: reports are "none" or "very few." Red-winged Black-

bird: almost none except for 62 GCC. E. Meadowlark: one CCCC; one Ithaca 24 Jan. Com. Grackle: very few; 24 WGCC. N. Oriole: one at a Penn Yan feeder Dec and Jan; one at a Phelps feeder 3-27 Jan. Purple Finch: moderate numbers widely distributed; max 100 Long Pt State Pk, Aurora 15 Jan. House Finch: still exploding; 2,448 CCs. Crossbills: none of either species. Com. Redpoll: one Waterloo Dec 10 ICC. Pine Siskin: at Penn Yan in Dec; eight ICC. Am. Goldfinch: 802 CCs. Evening Grosbeak: 456 ICC: 91 ECC; 25 WGCC; otherwise very scarce in the Region. House Sparrow: 3,707 CCs with 1,075 at Ithaca.

*Erratum:* Vol. XXXII No. 2, p. 118, Region 3 report: Blue Jay: 936 (not 1936).

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## REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

HARRIET MARSI

The winter of 1982-83 was probably one of the mildest ever recorded in Region Four. According to the National Weather Service, Link Field, Broome Co., an upper air pattern, flowing from west to east across northern US, blocked off the usual winter flow of frigid Canadian air, bringing instead a flow of modified air from the Pacific Northwest across the entire northern USA. Consequently, in December the average temperature was 34.4<sup>o</sup>, a record-breaking nine degrees above normal. Average January temperatures, usually in the teens and low twenties, were closer to the high twenties and low thirties, except, of course, during the Waterfowl Count week. 15 January, target date, brought the only major winter snowstorm, with a whopping 18" recorded officially in Binghamton. A week of overnight lows in the teens, and even below zero on 18 Jan. followed. Lakes and rivers, open until then, either froze solid or ran with slush ice, each segment of which resembled a small duck sailing down river. At week's end, however, temperatures were back into the thirties, accompanied by freezing rain 23 Jan.

On 2 Feb, Punxsutawney Phil, renowned rodent meteorologist, enjoyed a cloudy, drizzly day, preclusive of all shadow, thereupon predicting an early spring. The following week, nevertheless, for the second time all winter, mean temperatures hit single digit figures or low teens, 10, 11 and 12 Feb. were cold. Gradually, however, the warming trend was reestablished and a 32<sup>o</sup> mean temperature was recorded on the 15th. For the rest of Feb. mean temperatures were well above that mark. Punxsutawney Phil scores again! The period was also notable for the lack of accumulated snow. Most precipitation was light and snow melted quickly. Only the 15 Jan. storm deposited enough snow to cover the wild seed crop. That snow, however, had such low moisture content that it quickly settled, becoming thinner and thinner until it was finally eliminated by light rains the first week in Feb.

How did the bird life react to this mild, open winter? Obviously the open waters affected some species. Reports of Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were up. A Great Black-backed Gull was a first for the Region. A Pied-billed and a Red-necked Grebe were counted—nice but not really rare for this area. Geese in fair-sized flocks lingered long 15 Jan and returned early 27 Feb. As for ducks, aside from the usual numbers of Mallards and

Am. Blacks, disappointingly few dabblers lingered into Dec—one Wood Duck, one Northern Pintail and one American Wigeon as late as 4 Jan. Why more surface-feeders did not remain in the open sidewaters is anyone's guess. The diving ducks also averaged low counts. A small number of Common Goldeneyes, one large flock of Common Mergansers, a few Hooded Mergansers, two Bufflehead and that was it. Since these birds winter only as far south as frozen waters force them, one can speculate that north of us rivers and lakes were also ice-free. Brown fields and swamps apparently afforded predators good hunting, Northern Goshawks and Red-tailed Hawks were particularly numerous. Two Red-tails with white tails were of special interest. One Snowy Owl found plenty to eat around a feed store in Norwich. A higher than average Northern Harrier report on the Christmas counts was welcome. Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and Rough-legged counts were good. Wild Turkeys and Ruffed Grouse evidently found the brown background good camouflage. Counts for both these species were good.

One might have expected a significant number of "half-hardies" to have overwintered in the area, influenced by the warm temperatures. Surprisingly, reports of these were low. Possibly the birds were present but spread out and were therefore overlooked. Also the very poor berry crop, especially gray dogwood and multiflora rose, may have contributed. A Yellow-rumped Warbler did show up at an Endicott feeder as did a House Wren at a backyard in Norwich. Eight Swamp Sparrows and ten Field Sparrows on the Christmas Counts were high numbers. Winter finches, except for small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks, were poorly represented. Northern food supplies must have been abundant. Unfortunately only one Carolina Wren was reported and Northern Mockingbird counts were lower than usual (poor multiflora crop?). We recorded no Snow Buntings and very low numbers of Horned Larks.

Rarities: 50 Brewer's Blackbirds at a feeder in Binghamton; a Great Black-backed Gull on the Cortland Christmas Count.

Abbreviations: BCC—Binghamton Christmas Count 26 Dec; CCC—Cortland Christmas Count 18 Dec; DOCC—Delaware-Otsego Christmas Count 18 Dec; OPM—Oneonta, Portland, Milford; SCC—Sherburne Christmas Count; TCC—Tioga Christmas Count 31 Dec; WFC—Waterfowl Census.

Observers: C. & J. Baldwin, J. Barnes, J. & D. Bell, L. Bemont; R. Bennett, L. Bingley, C. Boise, B. Bozdos, W. Breidinger, I. Brille, N. Brundage, L. Carey, J. Chittenden, M. & L. Clark, A. & M. Davis, C. Davis, J. Davis, L. Dean, M. Dobinsky, S. Dorber, A. Este, D. Gracey, S. Hartman, A. Hayes, E. & G. Holway, C. Howard, D. Kibbe, F. Koon, M. Layton, C. Lehman, J. Lehman, F. Linaberry, S. Lively, H. Marsi, R. Marsi, A. Mason, L. McLaud, D. Messineo, R. & J. Miller, R. Mudge, V. Myers, F. Nettleton, E. & J. New; F. O'Leary, R. Parker, S. Paston, P. Pollock, D. Rider, H. Robinson, R. & J. Saunders, J. Sedlacek, M. & R. Sheffield, K. Slater, M. & P. Strausser, B. Thomas, A. Thompson, W. Toner, E. Washburn, C. Whitcomb, K. Wilson, T. & B. Wilson, D. Windsor, I. G. & W. Wright.

LOONS—DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: one Pepacton Reservoir 22 Jan (JL, DM), uncommon at this date. Red-necked Grebe: one Chenango River, Pt. Crane 9 Jan (A&MD), not common. Great Blue Heron: 17 reports spread through area, seven Dec, six Jan, three Feb, one 23 Dec thru, open winter probably accounts for unusually high number of Jan and Feb reports, although one reported from Otselic questions this assumption, "They have stayed here most severe winters, fishing through holes of running water in the river and warmer spring runs" (DM). Canada Goose: 23 SCC; four TCC; one other Dec count of 50 Otsego Lake (DM); Jan reports of 30 at Unadilla, one Otsego Lake and 30 all period Rogers Center; all other Jan reports came from Cannonsville Reservoir where up to 150 were reported 18 Jan at a patch of open water in ice; a few days later the reservoir was almost completely iced

over; no geese the remainder of the period until 28 Feb when two small wedges were seen in Vestal (GK, RM); Wood Duck: one DOCC (DK, CB), very late date. Am. Black Duck: 27 BCC, three DOCC, 24 SCC, a few reports of small numbers thru area, but large flock of approx. 300 reported by many at Cannonsville Reservoir Jan. Mallard: 188 BCC; 12 DOCC; 91 SCC; 32 TCC; 270 WFC; several other reports of from nine to 30 birds and a large flock of approx. 200 at Cannonsville Reservoir reported by many in Jan. N. Pintail: one Owego 26 Dec (JD, RM); "some" Cannonsville Reservoir 9 Jan Tioga Bird Club. Am. Wigeon: one Cannonsville Reservoir 4 Jan (SD). Com. Goldeneye: seven WFC 17 Jan; one Cannonsville Reservoir 22 Jan (DM); one Tioga Co. Dec. and one Tioga Co. Jan (C&JB, LB); Bufflehead: two TCC. Hooded Merganser: four Otsego Lake 8 Jan (MD, KW); two Cannonsville Reservoir 9 Jan (Tioga Bird Club). Com. Merganser: five TCC; one other Dec report of two Otsego Lake 20 Dec (MD). 11 WFC 18 Jan; several Jan and Feb reports of from one to nine; one large flock 300 Cannonsville Reservoir 13 Jan (SD).

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Bald Eagle: many reports all in Jan, all from Cannonsville Pepacton Reservoir area, of from two to nine birds, the ratio of ad to imm seems to run about 50-50 weighted slightly in favor of imm; a good year, too bad so many reporters fail to mention age. N. Harrier: two SCC; four TCC; one other report Norwich 12 Dec "flying along West Hill Ridge near my house, chased by 50 House Finches" (JL), a slight increase over past years. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one BCC; one SCC; four Dec reports Delhi same station (same bird?) (M&RC); one Dec report Tioga Co (C&JB); two Jan reports Broome Co (SP, B&TW); one Jan report Tioga Co; three Jan reports from Delhi same station (same bird possibly as in Dec?) (M&RC). One Otselic 5 Feb (DM), average numbers but on high side. Cooper's Hawk: one BCC; one DOCC; three SCC; one TCC; two other Dec reports, Broome Co (JS) and Cortland Co (WB); three Jan reports, Broome Co (JS), Otselic Township (DM), Tioga Co (C&JB, AW, LD); one report Jan and Feb "off and on around feeders" (LD); one Feb report Cortland Co (WB); N. Goshawk: one DOCC; four SCC; six others, one Cortland Co. 26 Dec (WB); one Tioga Co Dec (AW); one Broome Co 14, 15 Jan (MS); one McGraw 29 Jan (WB); one Plymouth Reservoir Jan (WL); one "off and on all period" Rogers Center (LC), extremely high count, especially concentrated in Chenango Co. Red-tailed Hawk: three BCC; nine DOCC; 12 SCC; 18 TCC; many other reports through area through period; of special interest two birds seen Otselic 23 Jan with white tails, "tail completely white—no red or pink—no subterminal band—positive i.d. by very distinct belly band, seen at less than 200 feet with 7x35 binocs and 15x60 scope—rainy, damp overcast day—I had seen a pair of normal red-tails a few minutes earlier several miles away. Those birds were sitting very low (hunting? or grounded by rain?). At a distance of hundreds of yards these normal red-tails flew at the opening of my truck door. The white-tailed birds allowed me to approach to within 150 ft. and then flew only about 50 to 75 ft. I was able to see front and rear views. All other aspects except tail seemed normal. It was not light phase." An accompanying drawing showed from behind pure white tail, dark upper tail coverts; from front white tail with 2 or 3 "very faint bands (imm?)" (DM). Rough-legged Hawk: nine SCC; one TCC; two Jan reports OPM (MD, KW); one Jan report Tioga Co (RB), one Cannonsville Reservoir 13 Jan; one Feb OPM (MD) one to three daily Otselic, Dec thru 15 Jan, all dark phase; two or three Otselic 13 Feb thru, all light phase (DM); Am. Kestrel: four BCC; two DOCC; three SCC; six TCC; common thru area through period. Ring-necked Pheasant: one BCC, one DOCC; eight other reports from Broome Co.; two Tioga Co; one Norwich; Otselic "released birds (fall '82) some survived the winter" (DM). Ruffed Grouse: five BCC; 24 DOCC; 29 SCC; 5 TCC; other reports through period through area, average year. Wild Turkey: 31 DOCC; 22 SCC; an increasing number of reports from entire area, one of 150 to 200 Chenango Forks, Broome Co, 2 Feb and 13 Feb seems of interest; also of interest the comment of a rural mail carrier OPM area on seeing a dozen or so following a manure spreader, "They must have been awfully hungry to eat that stuff!" (MD). Killdeer: one SCC; one other report in Dec from Tioga Co. Ring-billed Gull: three BCC; four TCC; one other report in Jan, Tioga Co (RB, C&JB). Herring Gull: 14 BCC; four TCC; 30 Otsego Lake 20 Dec; other numerous reports of "gulls" cruising the rivers may be Herring or may be Ring-billed. **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** one CCC; first report of this species at

this season for this area; at the rate in which it is expanding its range this may be the first of many to follow.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: 369 BCC; 300 DOCC; 579 SCC; 885 TCC; Mourning Dove: 44 BCC; 47 DOCC; 142 SCC; 90 TCC; common thru area but slightly down. E. Screech-Owl: one SCC; one Otselic off and on up to 26 Dec (DM); one Tioga Co Dec; Great Horned Owl: four BCC; one DOCC; 11 SCC; two TCC; the usual scattered reports through area thru period; one pair "calling since Dec, after 1 Feb exclusively from nest site, calling very rare by middle of Feb, only early evening and morning one or two calls, completely silent after 18 Feb" (DM). **SNOWY OWL:** one Norwich 6 thru 18 Dec, probably same bird as reported in Nov in Sherburne, seen frequently by several, often hunting behind a feed store, perched on tanks on top of mill, air-conditioning units and telephone pole, one day "spent most of day on the warehouse roof, dozing behind a ventilator out of the wind on the south side," on 18 Dec hit by a truck, sent to Delmar for autopsy, identified as imm male (JL). This supports the theory that imm birds go farther south in winter. Barred Owl: one Plymouth, Chenango Co Jan (GS). Belted Kingfisher: six BCC; three TCC; several other reports thru period thru area. Red-headed Woodpecker: three reports; one DOCC imm; one Tioga Co Dec (C&JB); one Otego 19 Feb (DM). Red-bellied Woodpecker: two TCC; two all period Newark Valley, Tioga Co (LD), one Cortland all Dec, not after early Jan (WB); one Cortland 15 Jan may be same as previous one (RMu); one Truxton 9 Dec (FO'L); one Broome Co 6 Feb, seem to be spreading. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Choconut Center, Broome Co, off and on from 22 Jan thru 13 Feb, same location as the last two years but "looks different—very mottled and brownish with the blackest crown you ever saw" (MS). Downy Woodpecker: 28 BCC; 52 DOCC; 69 SCC; 56 TCC. Hairy Woodpecker: five BCC; 25 DOCC; 28 SCC; nine TCC. N. Flicker: four SCC; one TCC; two other reports both Tioga Co one Jan, one Feb. Pileated Woodpecker: one DOCC; three SCC; two TCC; one Tioga Co Jan; three Broome Co Feb; "several sightings" Otselic thru period.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Larks: four DOCC; three OPM seen both 25 Jan and 29 Jan (MD, KW); two flocks of 20 Otselic 4 Feb (DM), very low count (open winter?). Blue Jay: 29 BCC; 235 DOCC, 247 SCC, 189 TCC; many reports but in Broome Co, especially frequently accompanied by such comments as "scarce this year" "very low population at feeder." Am. Crow: 365 BCC; 336 DOCC; 784 SCC; 437 TCC; common thru; Fish Crow: one Vestal 28 Feb (GK) same location as last year. Black-capped Chickadee: 257 BCC; 453 DOCC; 475 SCC; 324 TCC; common thru. Tufted Titmouse: seven BCC; ten DOCC; four SCC; 22 TCC; several other reports of one or two birds thru period thru area. Red-breasted Nuthatch: one BCC; seven DOCC; eight SCC; two TCC; one Broome Co Dec (JS), one Delhi off and on all Dec, Jan (MC); one Tioga Co Jan; one Middlefield 13 Jan (NB); two Milford 11 Feb (MD). White-breasted Nuthatch: 31 BCC; 50 DOCC; 81 SCC; 65 TCC; common thru. Brown Creeper: one BCC; six DOCC; seven SCC; one TCC; five other reports, one Cortland "occasionally visits" (WB); one Tioga Co Jan (D&JB); one Truxton 5, 11, 12, 20 Jan (FO'L); one Broome Co 23 Feb (A&MD); one Broome Co 27 Feb (JS), improved over last year. Carolina Wren: one TCC only report, very low. **HOUSE WREN:** one Norwich 1 Jan "giving two different types of notes, a single ticking or clicking note and a small scold note—appeared to be feeding on my compost heap (insects?)" (JL). Winter Wren: one SCC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: two BCC; one CCC; 20 DOCC; one SCC; four TCC; two Dec reports Broome Co (JS, FL); four Tioga Co 15 Feb (LD); nine Norwich Dec and Jan; "several" in two locations Otselic no date; best report in years. E. Bluebird: one Tioga Co 1 Dec (AW); one Tioga Co 3 Jan (SD); Am. Robin: one BCC; one DOCC; one TCC; no other Dec reports; two Jan reports, one Broome Co 27 Jan (MS), one Tioga Co (C&JB); two Oneonta and Otego 19 Feb (MD); three Tioga Co 24 Feb (LD). Gray Catbird: one Tioga Co Dec (no specific date) (AW). N. Mockingbird: three TCC; one Broome Co station reporting one bird 18 Dec, two 1 Jan, one 20 Jan (FL); OPM reporting one 25 Jan, one 28 Jan and one 25 Feb (MW, KW); Tioga Co reporting "common" thru period; one sighting Beaver Meadow (Chenango Co), no specific date, with comment "first in this area for me." (DM). Cedar Waxwing: 73 BCC; 8 SCC; 92 TCC; several other reports thru period from Broome and Tioga Co; only one farther north, 25 to 30 Truxton 12 and 13 Jan (FO'L). N. Shrike: one CCC; six other birds reported, one OPM 25 Jan (MD, KW); one Middlefield 26



Feb (NB); one Norwich 19 Dec "probable Northern" (JL); one Otselic 11 Dec (DM), two Otselic 14 Jan (DM). European Starling: 4,602 BCC; 387 DOCC; 882 SCC; 472 TCC; common thru.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Endicott station reports one bird, probably the same one, sighted 7 Jan-9 Jan, 12 Feb-13 Feb (JS).

**TANAGERS—WEAVERS:** N. Cardinal: 29 BCC; 16 DOCC; 22 SCC; 96 TCC; common thru. Am. Tree Sparrow: 22 BCC; 77 DOCC; 232 SCC; 151 TCC; many other reports, feeder reports of only one or two, roadside reports larger, up to 35. Field Sparrow: nine SCC; one TCC. Song Sparrow: eight BCC; one DOCC; 10 SCC; eight TCC; seven other Jan reports, six Broome Co, one Tioga Co, low for this species (open winter?). Swamp Sparrow: three SCC; five TCC. White-throated Sparrow: ten BCC; three DOCC; three SCC; four TCC; five other reports of one or two intermittently at feeders, four Broome Co, one Tioga Co., low for this species in past few years. White-crowned Sparrow: one DOCC. Dark-eyed Junco: 57 BCC; 68 DOCC; 81 SCC; 230 TCC; many reports thru area thru period. Snow Bunting: none. Red-winged Blackbird: one DOCC; one TCC; reported CCC but no numbers. Dec. reports of six Truxton, Cortland Co, and two Delhi. Jan. reports one Broome Co, one Tioga Co, one Delhi 1-5 Feb. E. Meadowlark: one Milford 11 Feb (MD). Rusty Blackbird: one report Tioga Co Dec, no details (AW). **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** 50 Binghamton 15 Jan; "at feeders, driven in by snowstorm; stayed about 15 min; observed at close range but through swirling snow; same shape as Rusty Blackbirds; at least some with light eyes but didn't check entire flock so can't say there were females with dark eyes; plumage on all seemed the same—dark with a slight sheen; there was definitely no rusty; it was mainly the total lack of rusty color which determined the conclusion these birds were Brewer's Blackbirds; a small number—about five—were observed briefly same place about a week later." (CH). Com. Grackle: eight SCC; one TCC; ten Windsor 4 Dec only other report (JS). Brown-headed Cowbird: one DOCC; one TCC; three Truxton 7 Dec (FO'L); one Delhi 16 Dec (MC); 2 Middlefield 28 Dec (NB); 100 Norwich 5 Jan (JL); 40 OPM 8 Jan (MD, KW); one Tioga Co Jan (LD). Pine Grosbeak: two BCC (ML, JC, EW); one Pharsalia State Lands 30 Jan (JL). Purple Finch: 22 BCC; 102 DOCC; 78 SCC; 106 TCC; several other reports thru period from OPM region "flocks of 10-25 feeding in ash trees," one Broome Co feeding station reported intermittent appearances of a flock of eight to ten; one station in Delhi had a similar flock of up to seven showing up off and on thru Jan; one female was reported in Newark Valley in Feb; and two Dec, one Jan report of two to four from Norwich. House Finch: 320 BCC; 18 DOCC; 248 SCC; 784 TCC, increasing everywhere but still low numbers in OPM and Delhi areas. White-winged Crossbill: one report of 15 Cortland 1 Jan (CD). Com. Redpoll: one BCC, only report. Pine Siskin: three BCC; four SCC; two Truxton 19 Dec (RP), one Endwell 24 Jan (FL); no other reports, low count. Am. Goldfinch: 96 BCC; 61 DOCC; 59 SCC; 213 TCC, all period everywhere in good numbers. Evening Grosbeak: 115 BCC; 296 DOCC; 325 SCC; 108 TCC; many reports from all areas but numbers generally low, no complaints about this species costing a fortune in sunflower seed this year. House Sparrow: 255 BCC; 505 DOCC; 467 SCC; 688 TCC; reports from all areas all period but several comments such as "scarce this year."

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

PAUL A. DeBENEDICTIS

The winter of 1982-83 proved to be much tamer than most had predicted. The only two cold spells, the first two weeks of December and mid-January to mid-February, were only slightly cooler than seasonable. Most of the winter saw

temperatures considerably above normal. The season was very dry. With only a third of its average total, Syracuse was out of contention for the snowiest city in New York. Several local skiing events were curtailed or cancelled because of lack of snow. In fact, at the end of the season the real concern was the very low levels of our lakes, with no prospect for a significant spring runoff to replenish them.

The ground was generally open all winter. Your editor was able to complete the Syracuse Christmas Bird Count in canvas running shoes, something he had never expected possible, because of the absence of snow. These open conditions recurred several times during the winter. One expects numbers of "half-hardy" species to persist through such a winter, but they were little in evidence after mid-January. The one ornithologically significant weather event of the season, a severe ice storm in mid-January, is a likely explanation for their sudden disappearance. Several species, like Common Snipe, Hermit Thrush and Rusty Blackbird, were most notable for their near absence this winter.

Waterfowl were more difficult to categorize. Poor weather for the waterfowl census partially account for low numbers then, but later and under more favorable conditions, numbers generally remained low. Tundra Swan, Snow Goose and Brant persisted quite late this winter, but mid-winter counts of ducks were very low. White-winged gulls were present in the best numbers in some years, and single Thayer's Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull were the only true rarities of the season.

Irruptive species were little in evidence. Hawks and Northern Shrike were generally scarce, though Northern Harrier did better than in many winters, due to the open conditions. A few Snowy and Short-eared Owls were found, and Northern Saw-whet Owls were almost conspicuous in February. Numbers of American Robin and Cedar Waxwing were unexceptional, but both persisted conspicuously in western Oswego County, from whence they often vanish in winter. Golden-crowned Kinglets were found in very good numbers. Of the winter finches, only Evening Grosbeak and Purple Finch, the latter most unusually abundant, were conspicuous this winter. The few reports of our other winter finches all appear in the summaries below.

A review of past winter season reports from this and other regions indicates that more care is needed in describing the status of our winter avifauna. Reports should distinguish short-term from long persistent individuals, and note which species actually persist through the late winter when most open water is frozen. This can be accomplished by more carefully applying the three terms generally used for winter records: winter, wintering, and overwintering. In this regional report, a "winter record" implies a short-term stay, a "wintering record" implies a long-term stay, and "overwintering" implies persistence through the late winter. It is unfortunate that both the Christmas Bird Counts and the Federation's waterfowl census come so early in the winter that they fail to properly reflect the avifauna which actually overwinters in this Region.

Very mild weather at the end of February brought the return of raptors, crows and icterids to Derby Hill and elsewhere in the Region. Early Derby Hill totals rivaled the exceptional spring of 1981. It was a great pleasure to end the season with House Finches, Northern Cardinals and Red-winged Blackbirds singing widely in urban Syracuse. A total of 119 species were reported this

winter. The two gulls mentioned above were the only great rarities found. "Oregon" Juncos were reported for the first time since it was merged into Dark-eyed Junco, and the usual small numbers of Barrow's Goldeneye and King Eider, including a striking adult male of the latter, were found.

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Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; DH—Derby Hill, Oswego Co; FH—Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, Cayuga Co.; LOL—Lake Ontario littoral, Oswego Co.; NYSARC—report submitted to New York State Avian Records Committee; Onon—Onondaga; twsp—township.

**LOONS—DUCKS:** Red-throated Loon: last LOL on 2 Dec. Com. Loon: five Skaneateles Lake 15 Jan is a good winter count; one overwintered Oswego and one FH 12 Feb. Pied-billed Grebe: singles overwintered Baldwinsville and Oswego. Horned Grebe: winter max 16 Oswego 6 Jan, last Skaneateles Lake 15 Jan. Double-crested Cormorant: last Oswego 19 Dec. Great Blue Heron: at least one overwintered along Oswego River. Tundra Swan: three near Bridgeport persisted to 15 Jan. Mute Swan: adult overwintered FH. Snow Goose: singles HIGMA 1 Jan and Oswego 13 Jan are our first, overdue winter records. Brant: singles near Bridgeport 9 Jan and Oswego 13 Jan are record late. Canada Goose: max 1,776 Skaneateles Lake 15 Jan. Wood Duck: female overwintered Baldwinsville: arrival Brewerton 21 Feb. Green-winged Teal: last n. Onon Co 11 Dec. Am. Black Duck: max 311 Skaneateles Lake 15 Jan. N. Pintail: male overwintered on Oswego River; arrival FH 27 Feb. N. Shoveler: last Brewerton 18 Dec. Gadwall: last five Oswego River 27 Jan. Am. Wigeon: last FH 16 Dec. Canvasback: late winter max 15, may not have overwintered, arrival Brewerton 21 Feb. Redhead: late winter max four, may not have overwintered, arrival Brewerton 21 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: male persisted to 8 Feb Oswego, arrival FH 28 Feb. Greater Scaup: late winter max 650 Oswego. Lesser Scaup: late winter max seven Oswego. King Eider: about five individuals reported LOL including a regional first ad male Oswego 16-20 Feb. Oldsquaw: max 98 Oswego. Black Scoter: one Oswego 13-27 Jan. Surf Scoter: one Oswego 13 Jan. White-winged Scoter: one Oswego 13 Jan, three DH 27 Feb. Com. Goldeneye: late winter max 832 Oswego. Barrow's Goldeneye: two or three Oswego area thru early Feb. Bufflehead: late winter max 35 Oswego. Hooded Merganser: about four overwintered Brewerton, low. Com. Merganser: late winter max 1,400 Oswego. Red-breasted Merganser: late winter max 19. Ruddy Duck: 87 Onon Lake mid-Dec, last there 9 Jan.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Turkey Vulture: arrival DH 28 Feb, early. Bald Eagle: imm FH 22-27 Jan, untagged. N. Harrier: one to three/day thru winter, arrival DH 19 Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: only singles all winter, scarce, arrival DH 20 Feb, record early. Cooper's Hawk: as above, arrival DH 20 Feb record early. N. Goshawk: scattered singles during winter, arrival DH 28 Feb. Red-shouldered Hawk: arrival DH 20 Feb, record early. Red-tailed Hawk: arrival DH 20 Feb. Rough-legged Hawk: widespread but scarce, arrival DH 20 Feb. Ring-necked Pheasant: none northern Pompey twsp this winter, where normally persistent, yet another sign of its continued decline in the Region. Ruffed Grouse: max 11 LOL 27 Jan is very high count. Am. Coot: last Onon Lake 17 Jan. Killdeer: last Jamesville 17 Jan, arrival Oswego 20 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: last Oneida Lake 2 Jan, late. Ring-billed Gull: late winter max 2,000 Oswego. Herring Gull: late winter max 3,000 Oswego. **THAYER'S GULL:** imm Fulton 27 Jan (FGS, JH, NYSARC). Iceland Gull: max six Oswego River mid-Feb. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** near ad Oswego 19-20 Feb (FGS, RK, GAS). Glaucous Gull: max eight Oswego River early Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: late winter max 110 Oswego.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Mourning Dove: late winter max 190. Snowy Owl: about six reported during the winter. Long-eared Owl: one S. Onon 13-16 Feb. Short-eared Owl: at least six overwintered near Central Square. N. Saw-whet Owl: about six reported, much above average, including an apparently territorial pair near Palermo. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: two Syracuse CBC 18 Dec rather late. N. Flicker: very scarce after mid-Jan.

FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS: Horned Lark: last LOL 5 Dec, arrival s. Onon Co. 29 Jan. Am. Crow: 10,000 past DH after 19 Feb. Tufted Titmouse: widespread, to four/day. Red-breasted Nuthatch: to three/day widespread thru winter. Carolina Wren: only report of one overwintering Fayetteville. Winter Wren: last Skaneateles CBC 29 Dec. Golden-crowned Kinglets: late winter max ten, best since 1968. E. Bluebird: four Oneida in Dec (*vide* EV), five W. Camillus valley thru 27 Jan (GAS). Hermit Thrush: one northern Pompey twsp 22 Jan (DWC) only report for winter. Am. Robin: mid-winter max 20 most unexceptional. Gray Catbird: last Syracuse CBC 18 Dec. N. Shrike: about nine reported, seldom persistent, rather sparse.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: last two Camillus valley 13 Jan. Com. Yellowthroat: last Skaneateles CBC 29 Dec, late.

TANAGERS—WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: mid-winter max 30/day, low. Field Sparrow: last Syracuse CBC 16 Dec. Song Sparrow: 28 on 9 Jan, to five/day after mid-Jan. Swamp Sparrow: one overwintered S. Onon. White-throated Sparrow: to 25/day, rather widespread. Dark-eyed Junco: to six/day; two "Oregon"-type northern Pompey twsp 22 Jan-6 Feb (DWC), first reports since 1973. Snow Bunting: max only 100 near Phoenix, low. Red-winged Blackbird: small numbers overwintered Syracuse (max 17), arrival DH 21 Feb. E. Meadowlark: only two singles reported all winter. Rusty Blackbird: last n. Onon Co. 11 Dec, usually overwinters. Com. Grackle: two mid-winter reports only, arrival Phoenix 16 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: mid-winter max nine. Pine Grosbeak: 20 Carter Circle on 6 Jan (MS) only report. Purple Finch: to 50/day, best numbers since 1968; FGS noted a close association between this species and ash samaras. House Finch: widespread, singing nearly everywhere by late Feb, but no large concentrations noted. Com. Redpoll: 12 Snake Swamp 15 Jan and one there 6 Feb (GM) only reports. Am. Goldfinch: max 100, about normal. Evening Grosbeak: not in numbers until early Jan, max 55, low.

ADDENDA: Com. Scoter: 56 Beaver Lake 22 Oct is a very high count away from LOL. Ruddy Duck: 308 Beaver Lake 10 Nov (GS) is new regional high count.

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## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

The mildest winter in thirty years produced correspondingly unremarkable birding. No rarities were reported. Be it shrikes or redpolls, there were few northern visitors. Of course this can not be directly attributed to the mild weather here, but more likely to a good cone and lemming year in the Far North. Minimal freezing of the St. Lawrence River meant greater dispersion of wintering eagles and waterfowl.

Except at higher elevations, there was no snow accumulation between storms. Here at 600 ft. the maximum fall was about 10 in. 1 Feb. There was snow in mid-December, but rains soon washed it away. Over half the days each month reached temperatures above freezing, and only ten days in January and February had readings below zero. For January and February mean (and extreme) daily high and low temperatures were: Jan—high 35 (47), low 10 (-20); Feb—high 32 (47), low 16 (-4). There were 13 days in January and eight in February with measurable precipitation. Total precipitation for the two months was 1.60 and 2.43 in., respectively.

The 46th Watertown Christmas Count 18 Dec recorded 50 species and 7,050 individuals—the latter being up 31% from 1981. The 12th Massena CC reported 68 species and 11,107 individuals, as opposed to 46 species and 6,692 individuals last year, the increase being largely attributable to the expertise of a contingent of Canadian birders. The Thousand Islands CC recorded 66 species and 13,205 individuals.

A total of 93 species was reported for the regional report. Positive trends include increased wintering populations of Canada Goose, about which Joe Van Riet expresses concern. There were also unprecedented numbers of wintering crows, whether to honor or mislead the survey sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, we don't know. Lingering summer residents included Belted Kingfisher, House Wren and Field Sparrow, as well as Northern Mockingbird and more American Robins than usual. There were fewer reports of species expanding ranges than usual. While Northern Cardinals have become commonplace, House Finch was reported only from Canton in St. Lawrence County, and there was only one report each for Tufted Titmouse and Red-bellied Woodpecker—both from Jefferson Co.

The absence of expected species was perhaps as interesting as those recorded. In addition to the dearth of arctic and boreal raptors, the only Barred, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owls reported were on the Christmas Counts. There were no Bohemian Waxwings, no Pine Grosbeaks, and only one report of Pine Siskin.

Perhaps the closest thing to rarities were a Black-backed Woodpecker somewhat out of place on the Thousand Islands Christmas Count, and a Gray Jay in Rensselaer Falls.

Abbreviations: MCC—Massena Christmas Count; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park; SLR—St. Lawrence River; ULL—Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Mgt. Area; WCC—Watertown CC; TICC—Thousand Islands CC.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: two TICC; four MCC. Red-necked Grebe: one MCC. Great Blue Heron: seven singles Lake Ontario 18 Dec to 9 Jan; one MCC; three Canton 31 Dec & 10 Jan. Mute Swan: three WCC; two Brownville 2 Feb. Snow Goose: one MCC; one Hannawa Falls 15 Jan. Canada Goose: exceptionally high numbers, 924 MCC, 1,997 WCC; large numbers wintering thru period—580 SLR Massena 22 Jan; 1-200 Oak Point, 2-300 Henderson and Henderson Harbor; ca. 100 Brownville, where they are pairing early (SB); flock over Canton 26 Feb, (early arrivals?). Fifteen species of ducks reported, for which max were: Am. Black Duck: 159 MCC. Mallard: 310 MCC. N. Pintail: one TICC. N. Shoveler: three MCC. Gadwall: 11 MCC; ten Henderson Hbr, 16 Jan. Am. Wigeon: one MCC; Canvasback: ten MCC. Ring-necked Duck: one TICC. Greater Scaup: 140 WCC. Lesser Scaup: one MCC. Oldsquaw: two WCC. Com. Goldeneye: 1,392 TICC. Bufflehead: 33 TICC. Hooded Merganser: ten Ray's Bay 27 Dec. Com. Merganser: 6,456 TICC. Red-breasted Merganser: five MCC.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: two TICC; pair ad PRWMA 29 Jan (LC); three (ad, fifth year, third year imm) Chippewa Pt. to Oak Pt. 30 Jan (GS). N. Harrier: max three Pt. Peninsula 9 Jan; only seven other reports thru. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one TICC; one Canton thru (MEH); one Henderson 17 Dec; one Watertown 6 Jan. Cooper's Hawk: one Pierrepont 1 Feb; one Rodman 11 Feb; one Henderson in Feb. N. Goshawk: three TICC; one MCC;

two near ULL 13 Jan (PVD); one RMSP 15 Feb; one LeRay 5 Feb (JE); several ad between Alexandria Bay and Ogdensburg mid-Jan to mid-Feb (GS). Red-tailed Hawk: five thru RMSP; nine scattered reports; very common (JVR); increasing in Feb (LC); populations down (SB). Rough-legged Hawk: max seven MCC; only seven other reports, mostly before mid-Jan. Am. Kestrel: only a few scattered reports; three to five on Christmas Counts. Gray Partridge: 17 both MCC & TICC; down from last year, broods number five to eight (SB). Ring-necked Pheasant: female Canton 15 Dec; cock, three hens Brownville mid-Feb. Ruffed Grouse: 58 TICC; one per day—low (KC). Ring-billed Gull: 250 WCC; four arr Hawkins Pt 20 Feb (JVR). Herring Gull: 1,700 MCC; 1,600 Hawkins Pt. 22 Jan; five Southwick Beach 27 Dec. Iceland Gull: 14 Hawkins Pt. mid-Feb (JVR), most ever. Glaucous Gull: 51 Hawkins Pt. mid-Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: 600 Hawkins Pt. 22 Jan; 18 Southwick Beach 1 Jan.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** E. Screech-Owl: one on each CC. Great Horned Owl: six MCC; pair resident Dry Hill; singles ULL and Philadelphia. Snowy Owl: singles MCC, WCC, Bogg's Corners 17 Jan. Barred Owl: one TICC, only report. Long-eared Owl: one WCC; two MCC. Short-eared Owl: one WCC; three MCC. No. Saw-whet Owl: one TICC. Belted Kingfisher: one MCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: male at feeder in Henderson 11 Feb (LC). Red-headed Woodpecker: one Brownville 28 Jan (JE). Downy Woodpecker: several reports; way up (LC). Hairy Woodpecker: same as Downy, though about half as many. **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER:** one TICC. N. Flicker: one MCC. Pileated Woodpecker: five scattered singles.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** Horned Lark: few reports; 200 Oak Pt. to Chippewa Pt. 1 Jan (GS). **GRAY JAY:** three Chandler Pd., two Dead Creek, two Jock Pd., one near Catamount Mt.—all in Colton (LW); one ULL 27 Feb (MEH). Blue Jay: one to five at feeders. Am. Crow: ten to 50 per day along western SLR (GS); 40 Bogg's Corners 9 Jan; 80 Canton 14 Jan; 100-150 in pre-roost gathering Canton 13 to 15 Feb. Com. Raven: three Canton early winter (MEH); one So. Colton (LW). Black-capped Chickadee: about same as last year, up to 12 per feeder. Tufted Titmouse: pair Henderson thru (LC), only report. Red-breasted Nuthatch: up in WCC & MCC; two reports from Canton. White-breasted Nuthatch: pairs at five out of eight feeders. Brown Creeper: 35 TICC; one Henderson 30 Jan; one Canton Dec & Feb (MEH); one Canton 3 Dec. House Wren: one "calling" Orleans 20 Feb (JE). Golden-crowned Kinglet: 73 TICC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: two TICC. Am. Robin: 19 TICC, 13 Pt. Peninsula 1 Jan, amazing! (GS). N. Mockingbird: one Lisbon early fall thru (GH). N. Shrike: six MCC; four WCC; five singles at Canton, Potsdam, Stony Pt., Pt. Peninsula and Orleans 13 Dec to 3 Feb. Cedar Waxwing: numbers up on Christmas Counts; several reports in Jan; max 48 on our Mt. Ash Pierrepont 17 Jan.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS:** No reports.

**TANAGERS—WEAVERS:** Am. Tree Sparrow: max 25 Potsdam 12-18 Jan (SDeG); numbers generally low, three to ten per feeder. Chipping Sparrow: one Canton (MEH). Field Sparrow: three TICC. Song Sparrow: 18 TICC; one at feeder in Henderson thru. Swamp Sparrow: TICC. White-throated Sparrow: six WCC; one Pierrepont 10 Dec thru. Lapland Longspur: two MCC only report. Snow Bunting: 273 MCC; none WCC; 40 Pierrepont 13 Feb, first since Nov; three flocks of 90-150 in Brownville, Housefield and Orleans in mid-Feb only other reports. Red-winged Blackbird: one Brownville 22 Feb; three arr Westcott Beach 26 Feb. Com. Grackle: two TICC. Brown-headed Cowbird: flocks of 30-50 Canton late Jan; ten Potsdam 1 Feb. Purple Finch: max 65 TICC; two to eight at feeders thru. House Finch: 53 WCC; none TICC; MCC, three Canton 12 Dec (JG); four Canton thru (MEH); max 38 Henderson (LC). Red Crossbill: six MCC. White-winged Crossbill: ten MCC. Com. Redpoll: max 17 WCC. Pine Siskin: three Canton Dec (MEH), only report. Am. Goldfinch: three to 60 (MEH) at feeders thru. Evening Grosbeak: max 114 Canton early Feb, most ever seen (MEH); 100 Pierrepont 25 Feb, 90% females (KC); flocks averaging 20 or so thru, but numbers not high.

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## REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

Winter birding in the four county Adirondack-Champlain Region largely centers around five Christmas Bird Counts, which depend heavily upon outside observers, followed by a last foray by a few (fool?)hardy natives to scour the blustery Champlain shoreline and any other open waters for the NYS Waterfowl Count, before cabining in for a season of feeder watching. The regional Christmas counts are Elizabethtown (ECBC); the Essex Co. portion of Ferrisburg, VT/NY, within a circle that overlaps both shores of Champlain (FCBC); the Hamilton Co. portion of Old Forge (OFCBC); the Clinton Co. portion of Plattsburgh, which also crosses the lake (PCBC); and Saranac Lake (SLCBC). Field trips by the two regional Audubon chapters, High Peaks and Northern Adirondacks, and visiting bird clubs were fewer than usual during the winter of 1982-83, due to a shortage of snow, the failure of lakes and rivers (most notably, the Chubb) to freeze solidly, and a lack of the hoped-for northern species in the boreal forest, and thus on the dial-a-birds and birding hotlines. When rarities fail to appear, the expert birders tend to be scarce, too. Such was the case this past balmy winter. Yet, except for the important spruce cone crop which was mediocre in most areas, wild foods seemed abundant: ash, balsam, basswood, beech, birch, bittersweet, buckthorn, and so on through the alphabet to sumac and beyond.

Winter weather in this Region seems to have a greater effect upon observer activity and feeder concentrations than upon actual occurrence or abundance. A Brown Thrasher on the SLCBC, or birds like it, argue for a link between "half-hardies" and the mild winter, except that there was also a thrasher on the previous year's count when temperatures were lower and snow deeper. Still, this season's Great Blue Herons, Osprey, Northern Harriers, Belted Kingfishers, and the explosion of Tufted Titmice were undoubtedly weather-related. The 1982-83 winter was one of the warmest on record, with monthly temperatures running 9° F. above long-term averages in December, and 4° F. above average in January and February, or almost 7° F. above overall for the period. On 3, 4, and 6 Dec. record temperatures around the Region reached the high 50's and low 60's, with chickadees whistling and spring peepers calling. By 13 Dec. Newcomb and Tupper Lake were down to -18° F., before the thermometer went back up to record 50's on 16 Dec. Winds reached 50 mph on the 26 Dec. ECBC. And so it went with bare ground through the second warmest December on record. Then temperatures fell as low as -16° at Tupper Lake 4 Jan, -13° at Newcomb 9 Jan, and -16° at Ray Brook 20 Jan, but with other days almost 40° warmer than average, and 8" of snow at Plattsburgh on 16 Jan, the first storm of the season (Burlington, across Champlain, had 1 7/8"). 3 Feb. saw 1" rain, with temps. 33° in Saranac Lake and 44° in Plattsburgh, just prior to a dump of 14" of snow at Tupper Lake and Wilmington on 8 Feb, followed by lows on 11 Feb of -26° at Malone and Newcomb. Mostly though, it continued warm, with daily highs in the 40's and still less than 3' snow accumulation on the High Peaks at the end of the season.

Over the three-month period, a total of 91 species, plus one hybrid (Mallard x Am. Black Duck) were reported, which seems a respectable enough total; at

least three of the Christmas Counts never reach half that. Feeder watching provided a few rewards: Black-backed Woodpecker at Lake Placid, Brown Creeper at Paradox, Golden-crowned Kinglet at Cadyville, and Pine Grosbeak at Witherbee. Where feeder birds assemble, avian raptors are not far behind. Window-watchers reported Sharp-shinned Hawks at Bloomingdale, Tupper Lake and Witherbee; Northern Goshawks at Paradox and Westport; a Red-tailed Hawk scattering Evening Grosbeaks at Wadhams; resident Barred Owl at Paradox; and Northern Shrike at Cadyville and Tupper Lake. Rarities for the period include Tundra Swan, Iceland Gull, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Evening Grosbeak was the most abundant winter finch, with a possible all-time North American record on the SLCBC on 2 Jan.

All Adirondack-Champlain birders join in extending heartfelt thanks to Theodore D. Mack of Paul Smiths for his outstanding service as Region Seven Editor of *The Kingbird* for more than a decade. Ted has set down a series of reports for Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties whose usefulness will endure.

Contributors and initialed observers: Russ Bailey, Merry Baker, Dirck Benson, Helen & Robert Booth, Bev Brown, John Bruce, Bob Budliger, Geoffrey Carleton, Bernard Carman, Greenleaf T. Chase, Dewey & Joan Clark, Dean Cook, Charlie Delehanty, David Dudones, Janet & Tom Dudones, Dot & Paul French, Greg Furness, Mark Gretch, Bea Guyett, Robert Hagar, Thomas Hale, David Harrison, Elsbeth Johnson, Sally Johnson, Charlotte Jones, Betty Karuth, Mr. & Mrs. Hughes Kilburn, William Krueger, Harmon & Jane LaMar, Gary Lee, William Lee, Frances MacMurtrie, Larry Master, Shami McCormick, Ruth Miller, Terry O'Connell, Raymond Payson, Eleanor Pearson, John Peterson, Helen Phinney, William Rutherford, Dave Rutkowski, Dean Spaulding, Pat Taber, Pat Tarkowski, Joanne Treffs, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Vaughn, Ken West, Betty Wilson, Jeanne Wisner, Cecelia Wojciukiewicz, and all of the Christmas Bird counters.

**LOONS—DUCKS:** A few Com. Loons lingered along L. Champlain thru 22 Jan; max six NYS Waterfowl Count. A max 17 Horned Grebes were diving in Essex harbor 22 Jan, with two on North West Bay and three off Willsboro Pt. the same day (EJ, JP). For perhaps the first time, Great Blue Herons were present during each winter month, with one at Westport 18 Dec; two there 4 Jan-14 Jan; one at a tiny pond with an opening for domestic ducks several miles inland 21 Jan, after NW Bay froze (RV); one at Ellenburg 2 Feb (HB, RB); and two flying north off Willsboro Pt. 15 Feb (RM). The three **TUNDRA SWANS** at Crown Point peninsula from about 28 Nov remained there thru 3 Dec, and were last seen on adjacent Bulwagga Bay 4 Dec (HK, *vide* GC); they apparently provide the fifth regional record. Canada Goose: max 412 Whallonsburg 18 Dec; less expected were 35 in a Gabriels potato field thru 7 Dec and one at Tupper L. 15-16 Dec. Two hypothermic canoeists flushed a Wood Duck on the Saranac R. 2 Jan (GTC, RH), a first for the SLCBC. Am. Black Duck and Mallard were widely reported, and a hybrid turned up near Ausable Pt. 16 Jan on the NYSWC. A N. Pintail and two Gadwalls were at the same location 1 Jan (MG, TO). NW Bay had two Canvasbacks 17 Jan (GC), while two Redheads were off the Peru dock 18 Dec (MG, TO). The only Ring-necked Duck was on Tupper L. 22 Jan (CD). The PCBC noted 85 scaup (sp.) and a male Oldsquaw, while a pair of Oldsquaws were at NW Bay 17 Jan, and one at Essex harbor 22 Jan. A string of 12 White-winged Scoters flew low over Treadwell Bay 18 Dec (WK). Com. Goldeneyes were on L. Champlain, L. George, Indian L., and Tupper L. thru the period on open water. Buffleheads were reported from L. Champlain only, thru 17 Jan. Hooded Merganser: max 16 at the north end of L. George 11 Dec (DC); also on L. Champlain and Tupper L. into Jan. Com. Mergansers were on the same three bodies of water Dec-Jan. A Red-breasted Merganser was at Westport 18 Dec (GC).

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** An Osprey was over Bulwagga Bay marsh 17 Dec (GF). An ad Bald Eagle cruised the Champlain shoreline at Port Kent 20 Feb (HL, JL), while Tupper L. had an ad arrive 24 Feb, joined by an imm the next day, the younger bird present thru 28 Feb.



Twice the young eagle flew to where an otter was feeding on the ice; once the otter tried confrontation, but the eagle raised its wings, took a step forward, and the otter gave up (CD). N. Harriers were reported in all three months for the first time: one near Westport 26 Dec (GC, BG, JW); a male near Westport 4 Jan (EJ, JP); and one at Bay Pond 4 Feb (BL, *fide* TM). An ad Cooper's Hawk was at Saranac L. 2 Jan (DB). Several wintering N. Goshawks were reported from Clinton and Essex Cos; a breeding ad returned to Paradox 21 Feb. Several Red-tailed Hawk reports came from n. Clinton Co; Wadhams, Essex Co; and Bay Pond, Franklin Co. Rough-legged Hawks were regular in open areas of Clinton, Essex, and Franklin, with a max four on the NYS side of the FCBC circle. A few Am. Kestrels were reported from the Champlain Valley. A cock and two hen Ring-necked Pheasants wintered at a Tupper L. feeder. Ausable Pt. had 26 Bonaparte's Gulls 18 Dec, the last reported. Tupper L. had Ring-billed Gulls to 10 Dec; Herring Gulls to 6 Dec, although a few of both species probably remained around open portions of L. Champlain, which did not close entirely, thru the season. Two first-winter ICELAND GULLS were scoped out from among the Ring-bills and Herrings at Essex harbor 19 Jan (EJ, JP), the first winter report in this Region in over 45 years, though surprisingly there are several recent spring and summer records from the Four Brothers Islands and L. Placid landfill. Great Black-backed Gulls continue a dramatic increase in winter numbers along L. Champlain, including four FCBC; 14 PCBC; max 21 along the Clinton and Essex Co. shorelines in Jan on the NYSWC. Since only an estimated two to three pairs now nest on the Four Brothers, and no other Champlain island nesting locations in NYS or VT are known, at least some of the winter visitants must originate outside the Champlain basin.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: max 404 PCBC. Mourning Dove: max 49 FCBC; three at Indian L. (MM, RM) and seven at Wells (BW) in Hamilton Co. were surprises. An E. Screech-Owl answered a whistled imitation at Wadhams 18 Dec (EJ, JP); others were reported roosting in duck nest boxes at Little Chazy R. 19 Feb (MG). The fourth season for the NYS Breeding Bird Atlas began with Great Horned Owls calling near Auger Pd., Elizabethtown, Paradox, Plattsburgh, Reber, Ticonderoga, Tupper L., Wadhams, and Westport. Barred Owls were heard near Elizabethtown, Indian L., Paradox, Westport, and Willsboro; the resident Paradox pair started courting 2 Feb (MB). The first tooting N. Saw-whet Owls were heard at Tupper L. 25 Feb and E-town and Paradox 28 Feb. A Belted Kingfisher was at Essex harbor 21 Jan (RB) and four were along Champlain in Clinton Co. 22 Jan (MG). A RED-HEADED WOODPECKER appeared near Essex 28 Jan, remained thru Feb, by which time coloration suggested two birds might be present (SJ); this provides the first winter record for the Region. Three-toed Woodpecker: two males 8 Dec east of NY 3, and south of Second Pd. (TD). Black-backed Woodpecker reports included one east of Indian L., one Halfway Brook, two Moody Pd., one at a L. Placid feeder, and extralimital singles near Cadyville and Wadhams.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** An early E. Phoebe was near Sugar Bush, Franklin Co. 18 Feb (DD, TD). A few Horned Larks at Paul Smiths 2 Feb (TM); Sugar Bush 13 Feb (*fide* JD); and Tupper L. 22 Feb (CD), provided the only reports. A Gray Jay was near Brandon 3 Dec and seven were gleaning hunting camp scraps along Halfway Brook 6 Dec (TD). The survey of wintering crows focused in on small Am. Crow roosts near Keeseville, L. Placid, Wadhams, and Witherbee, averaging about 100 birds each; undoubtedly more roosts exist. Com. Raven is just that in the Adirondacks. Boreal Chickadees were reported from Bloomingdale Bog, Chubb R. (max 23 there), Hurricane Mt., Moody Pd., and Sabattis Rd. Bog, with a record 26 on the SLCBC. The number of Tufted Titmice reported was without precedent in this Region: two Crown Point; five Elizabethtown; two Keene Valley; three Moody; one Moriah Center; one Paradox; two Ticonderoga; two Tupper L.; and max seven Wells (BW), for a seasonal total of at least 25 titmice reported, and undoubtedly many more present. An E. Bluebird was catching cluster flies at Crown Pt. 12 Feb (GF). Am. Robin present thru Feb, with reports from Saranac L., St. Regis Indian Res., Tupper L., Wadhams, and Westport. A Gray Catbird visited a heated bird bath at Plattsburgh 20 Feb (Charles Woodruff, *fide* MG). A N. Mockingbird was near L. Placid 12 Feb (DH) and another at Sara-

nac L. 20-28 Feb, where there was a Brown Thrasher 7 Feb (both TD). Cedar Waxwings were widespread: 10 ECBC; 26 FCBC; max 106 PCBC typical numbers. N. Shrike: singles at Ausable Pt., Averyville, Cadyville, New Russia, Tupper L., and Whallonsburg.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 36 PCBC. Tree Sparrow: max 101 PCBC. Fox Sparrow: one Crown Point Jan (GF). Song Sparrow: a few reported from Crown Pt., Plattsburgh, Schroon L., Westport. White-throated Sparrow: two Crown Pt.; one Tupper L. Dark-eyed Junco: reports from all four counties; max 20 Halfway Brook 6 Dec (TD). Snow Buntings were scarce, with only three reports in Dec-Jan, totalling about 30 birds. Wintering Red-winged Blackbirds were at Essex, Rainbow, L. Tupper L.; max 17 PCBC; first migrant arr Crown Pt. 28 Feb. Single Com. Grackles were at Saranac L. and Tupper L. Pine Grosbeak: scarce all winter; max 22 PCBC. Purple Finch: widely scattered; max 125 Crown Pt. from 7 Feb. House Finch: a few Crown Pt., Essex, Ticonderoga, Wadhams; max 267 PCBC. Red Crossbill: a few Paul Smiths and Tupper L. White-winged Crossbill: two SLCBC the only report. Com. Redpoll: a few Elizabethtown, Wadhams, Westport, Saranac L. Pine Siskin: virtually absent, max seven SLCBC. Am. Goldfinch: widespread and abundant; max 208 FCBC. Evening Grosbeak: the most abundant winter finch; max 2,801 tallied in Bloomingdale, L. Placid, Ray Brook, and Saranac L. during the SLCBC! House Sparrow: max 464 PCBC.

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## REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

BILL COOK

This was the winter that wasn't. 1982-83 was the warmest winter in thirty years. NYS meteorologists claim that the average temperature was six Fahrenheit degrees warmer than usual and that one has to go back to 1954 to find a warmer winter. Three snowfalls, which scarcely covered the ground for a week each, comprised the entire winter accumulation. The first snow did not arrive until 15 January and was well gone after the rains of the 23rd. The other two storms both occurred within the second week of February. Even then the second February storm, which hit areas south of Region 8 heavily, barely affected Albany and left the Adirondack forest floor with no snow cover. With plenty of wild food available there wasn't any major invasion from the north and feeder activities were minimal. Yet for those of you that did have lemmings lashed to your suet there was hope because one Snowy Owl was reported in the Region.

Still, most northern species were scarce or absent. Few Rough-legged Hawks and few raptors in general characterized the Christmas counts. There was only one report of Pine Siskins and only two reports of Pine Grosbeaks. Crossbills and redpolls were not reported at all. Observers speculated that low counts of finches may have been due to their dispersal throughout fields and forests rather than being congregated at feeding stations. On the other hand, lingering "half-hardies" littered the locale. Several Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and a Northern Oriole were found through the winter. High numbers of Brown Creepers, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Swamp Sparrows were counted. A phoebe, a towhee and a Vesper Sparrow seem to offer fitting symbols of the season.

Open water was available nearly all winter so waterfowl and gulls were present in large rafts. A Northern Shoveler in Cocksackie for the Christmas count was a good find since this bird is uncommon though probably an annual visitor to Region 8. The Thayer's Gulls found by Ken Able and Scott Terrill at the Colonie Landfill perhaps represent a southeastward expansion of their winter range since the first documented observation of this species in New York away from the Great Lakes was 7 December 1980 (*The Kingbird* Vol. 31, No. 4; 1981, pg. 207).

Three and a half Christmas counts were submitted for this report which again helped to boost the total tally for the season over the one hundred mark to 104. Another Black-hooded Parakeet was recorded on a count list, this time in East Greenbush. The count compiler documented research that indicates that "... this bird was not tame and may have been in the wild for some time."

#### SUMMARY OF AREA CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Date	Count	Abbreviation	Total Species	Approx. Numbers	Observers
18 Dec 82	Alan DeVoe (in part)	ADCBC	39	792	3
26 Dec 82	So. Rensselaer	SRCBC	54	30,907	34
29 Dec 82	Cocksackie	CXCBC	62	11,542	
2 Jan 83	Troy	TRCBC	56	15,549	24

The first Long-eared Owl reported in over two-and-a-half years was unfortunately a road kill in New Baltimore. The specimen was added to the Columbia-Greene Collection which has grown to 250 specimens representing 126 species. An immature Northern Saw-whet Owl was banded in Schenectady two weeks after it answered a Great Horned Owl recording for the local Christmas count.

The most misplaced bird for the season was an adult male Varied Thrush reported by Burrell Buffington. The bird visited Burrell's feeder in West Taghkanic for six days in January. Eight Graylag Geese found in Cocksackie on 19 January were eventually demonstrated to be of the domestic variety based on their red legs. We also have the first Merlin report since May 1982 and the first Peregrine Falcon report since April 1981.

Following this report I will be turning over the duties of regional editor for Region 8 to Ed Reilly, Box 21, Old Chatham, New York 12136.

Good Birding and may you all get breeding confirmation for Sora and Sedge Wren in your swamps this summer.

Contributors: Ken Able, Jane Barry, Burrell Buffington, William Cleveland, Bill Cook, Harold Ettelt, Peter Feinberg, Richard Guthrie, Ronald & Carolyn LaForce, Robert Marx, Tom Palmer, Jon Powell, Shirley & Alfred Schadow, William Shuster and Robert Yunick.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: one CXCBC. Red-necked Grebe: one Saratoga L 5 Dec. Great Blue Heron: one West Taghkanic 17 Jan. Mute Swan: two ADCBC; two CXCBC. Canada Goose: ten reports thru max 500 Embough Bay Catskill 22 Jan; 56 SRCBC; 57 CXCBC; 597 TRCBC. Green-winged Teal: one with blacks and Mallards on river ice at Hudson 22 Jan. Am. Black Duck: nine reports; 28 SRCBC; 1,335 CXCBC; 271 TRCBC. Mallard: 12 reports; two ADCBC; 218 SRCBC; 1,057 CXCBC; 1,309 TRCBC. N. Pintail: four reports thru: 14 CXCBC. N. Shoveler: one CXCBC. Gadwall: six CXCBC. Am. Wigeon: one Hudson 22 Jan; one TRCBC. Canvasback: 100 Embough Bay 11 Dec; 3,000 Clermont all winter. Ring-necked Duck: nine CXCBC. Greater Scaup: two CXCBC. Oldsquaw: one TRCBC. White-winged Scoter: one CXCBC. Com. Goldeneye: five reports thru; five CXCBC; 17

TRCBC. Hooded Merganser: one Hudson R 27 Feb; one SRCBC; two TRCBC. Com. Merganser: nine reports thru; seven ADCBC; 56 CXCBC; 92 TRCBC. Red-breasted Merganser: one TRCBC.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** Bald Eagle: one adult Saratoga L 21 Dec (RM). N. Harrier: male Livingston thru; two SRCBC; eight CXCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: nine reports; three SRCBC; one CXCBC; one TRCBC. Cooper's Hawk: five reports; one SRCBC; one CXCBC; two TRCBC. N. Goshawk: two SRCBC; one TRCBC. Red-tailed Hawk: 22 reports; five ADCBC; 43 SRCBC; 48 CXCBC; 43 TRCBC. Rough-legged Hawk: five reports max five Coxsackie 29 Jan; one SRCBC; two CXCBC. Am. Kestrel: 13 reports; one ADCBC; 13 SRCBC; 11 CXCBC; one TRCBC. Merlin: observed eating a female Red-winged Blackbird on a perch during a 29 Jan field trip on the Coxsackie Flats (RG). **PEREGRINE FALCON:** one Johnstown, Fulton Co. 11-13 Feb (RM). Ring-necked Pheasant: one SRCBC; two TRCBC. Ruffed Grouse: six reports; nine SRCBC; 14 CXCBC; 14 TRCBC. Wild Turkey: five males and 30 females in Ghent 25 Feb; three SRCBC. Killdeer: two Mohawk R 23 Feb. Com. Snipe: two TRCBC. Ring-billed Gull: ten reports in Dec; 11 ADCBC; 1,061 SRCBC; 451 CXCBC; 634 TRCBC. Herring Gull: 12 reports; 23 ADCBC; 15,387 SRCBC; 451 CXCBC; 2,210 TRCBC. **THAYER'S GULL:** two Colonie 13 Dec-2 Jan (KA); one TRCBC. Iceland Gull: three Colonie 11 Dec; second year bird there 26 Dec; one SRCBC; three TRCBC. Glaucous Gull: one Colonie 11 Dec (RG & PF); one TRCBC. Great Black-backed Gull: eight reports; one ADCBC; 758 SRCBC; 46 CXCBC; 145 TRCBC.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** Rock Dove: eight reports: 14 ADCBC; 1,993 SRCBC; 856 CXCBC; 2,773 TRCBC. Mourning Dove: Jenny L contingent in Adirondack habitat lingered until 4 Dec; paired by 21 Feb, 19 ADCBC; 380 SRCBC; 239 CXCBC; 308 TRCBC. Black-hooded Parakeet: one SRCBC. E. Screech-Owl: seven reports; red phase in Vosberg's Wood Duck Box Coxsackie 29 Jan; gray phase Clifton Park basement; one ADCBC; six SRCBC; one CXCBC; three TRCBC. Great Horned Owl: 15 individuals reported; one ADCBC; two SRCBC; two CXCBC; four TRCBC. Snowy Owl: one Livingston 1 Feb (HE). Long-eared Owl: road kill male New Baltimore 20 Jan (RG). Short-eared Owl: two Livingston 1-20 Feb; two Coxsackie 29 Jan. N. Saw-whet Owl: road kill New Baltimore 5 Dec; an imm heard on the Schenectady Christmas Count 18 Dec added this species to their list for the first time. The bird was seen on 31 Dec and banded 1 Jan. Belted Kingfisher: one West Taghkanic 21 Jan; two Altamont 29 Jan; three SRCBC; two CXCBC; one TRCBC. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Coxsackie 29 Jan. Red-bellied Woodpecker: male Wellsville early Jan thru; male and imm Livingston 11 Feb; one Millpoint feeder 22 Jan-5 Feb. Downy Woodpecker: ten reports; 34 ADCBC; 42 SRCBC; 94 CXCBC; 84 TRCBC. Hairy Woodpecker: eight reports; a recapture in Schenectady was at least six-and-a-half years old 19 Feb; three ADCBC; 18 SRCBC; 20 CXCBC; 13 TRCBC. N. Flicker: eight reports; two SRCBC; 31 CXCBC; seven TRCBC. Pileated Woodpecker: eight reports; one ADCBC; three SRCBC; three CXCBC; three TRCBC.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** **E. PHOEBE:** two CXCBC. Horned Lark: five reports; 75 ADCBC; 158 SRCBC; 425 CXCBC. Blue Jay: 17 ADCBC; 89 SRCBC; 114 CXCBC; 250 TRCBC. Am. Crow: 12 ADCBC; 522 SRCBC; 703 CXCBC; 535 TRCBC. Black-capped Chickadee: more birds than usual in a non-invasion year with a higher rate of return (RY); 69 ADCBC; 353 SRCBC; 528 CXCBC; 348 TRCBC. Tufted Titmouse: ten ADCBC; 50 SRCBC; 79 CXCBC; 35 TRCBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: no invasion; one ADCBC; 11 TRCBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: 13 ADCBC; 67 SRCBC; 107 CXCBC; 72 TRCBC. Brown Creeper: two singing Palmer's Ravine 27 Feb; one SRCBC; 12 CXCBC; six TRCBC. Carolina Wren: Niskayuna RR station 18 Dec. Golden-crowned Kinglet: Palmer's Ravine thru, max four; one ADCBC; four SRCBC; 20 CXCBC; one TRCBC. **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET:** two Middleberg 5 Dec; one Delmar 31 Jan-7 Feb; one Guilderland 20 Feb; one CXCBC. E. Bluebird: seven reports thru, max eight with one banded New Baltimore 5 Dec; five CXCBC. Hermit Thrush: one Altamont 9 Dec; one Glenville 22 Jan; another in Glenville 13 Feb. Am. Robin: more abundant this year; 12 ADCBC; eight SRCBC; 1,282 CXCBC; 19 TRCBC. **VARIED THRUSH:** male West Taghkanic 17-23 Jan (BB). Gray Catbird: one Glen-

mont (RM). N. Mockingbird: 17 reports; three ADCBC; ten SRCBC; 27 CXCBC; 13 TRCBC. Cedar Waxwing: 15 ADCBC; 30 SRCBC; 308 CXCBC; 141 TRCBC. N. Shrike: one SRCBC; one TRCBC. European Starling: 260 ADCBC; 7,750 SRCBC; 1,227 CXCBC; 3,117 TRCBC.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: four reports from early Dec; 16 CXCBC.

TANAGERS—WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: greater numbers this year; male singing in Schenectady 6 Feb 5° F; five ADCBC; 41 SRCBC; 88 CXCBC; 55 TRCBC. ROSE-BREADED GROSBREAK: male N Troy 19 Feb; Glenville 19 Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Niskayuna 18 Dec. Am. Tree Sparrow: singing Palmer's Ravine 4 Dec; 39 ADCBC; 95 SRCBC; 133 CXCBC; 286 TRCBC. VESPER SPARROW: one CXCBC (KA). Savannah Sparrow: one Melrose 17 Jan; one Coxsackie 29 Jan. Song Sparrow: one ADCBC; ten SRCBC; 34 CXCBC; 32 TRCBC. Swamp Sparrow: 18 CXCBC. White-throated Sparrow: fewer at Schenectady feeder this year; three ADCBC; four SRCBC; 84 CXCBC; 40 TRCBC. Dark-eyed Junco: 15 ADCBC; 143 SRCBC; 249 CXCBC; 101 TRCBC. Lapland Longspur: found on Coxsackie Flats during count period. Snow Bunting: six reports max 30 Ballston 22 Jan; three ADCBC; 15 CXCBC. Red-winged Blackbird: one ADCBC; two SRCBC; one Embough Bay 16 Jan; male singing near Hudson 21 Feb heralded spring influx. E. Meadowlark: five Coxsackie 29 Jan. Rusty Blackbird: heard in Coeymans 5 Dec (RG). Com. Grackle: one Troy feeder 15 Jan; one Embough Bay 16 Jan. Brown-headed Cowbird: ten reports thru max 200 Coxsackie 5 Dec; 102 SRCBC; one CXCBC low; 20 TRCBC. N. Oriole: Sand Lake feeder 9 Dec. Pine Grosbeak: two Rotterdam 21 Jan; 20 Glenville 9 Feb. Purple Finch: two males stayed at Jenny L until 8 Jan; 31 ADCBC; 24 SRCBC; 263 CXCBC; 112 TRCBC. House Finch: 50 in the wild, Coxsackie 5 Dec; 25 ADCBC; 303 SRCBC; 397 CXCBC; 277 TRCBC. Pine Siskin: ten SRCBC; no other reports. Am. Goldfinch: 16 ADCBC; 134 SRCBC; 235 CXCBC; 206 TRCBC. Evening Grosbeak: arrived Jenny L 4 Dec. New Baltimore 5 Dec and Amsterdam 6 Dec; most numerous in Jan; 15 ADCBC; 381 SRCBC; 222 CXCBC; 448 TRCBC. House Sparrow: 25 ADCBC; 577 SRCBC; 483 CXCBC; 876 TRCBC.

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

What with sunspot activity and the eruption of several volcanoes around the world throwing millions of tons of ash into the atmosphere last year, weathermen were predicting one of the coldest winters of the age. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. In fact, the New York Weather Bureau labeled it the mildest winter since 1951, and the fifth mildest since record keeping was started. Temperatures were well above normal for all three months. Larger lakes and the upper Hudson did not freeze until the week of 22 January and were opening by the last of February. The unusual warmth enticed many "half-hardy" species to remain, and some such as Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Rufous-sided Towhee were observed in unprecedented numbers. What with open water, ducks and geese were not concentrated, and the number of species and individuals present for the Waterfowl Count in January was on the low side. Several Christmas Counts achieved new record highs for numbers of species, and all the others came close. Spring Peepers were calling in South Rockland, Dutchess

and Sullivan Counties on 2, 4 December and 11 January respectively; and earthworms, ants and honey bees were out and about on 3 February.

Precipitation for December amounted to about two inches of snow on the 20th and only a small amount of rain before and after that date. Similarly 15-16 January gave us about four inches of snow with very little rain for the rest of the month. Real snow came in February with more than six inches on the 7th and 15-20 on the 12th. Warm temperatures in the 40<sup>o</sup>-50<sup>o</sup> range immediately thereafter melted it quickly. The ground was largely exposed for most of the period and the available food supply was excellent. It was so good in fact that feeder populations were unusually low. With the exception of Purple Finches, northern finches failed to show. Very few Evening Grosbeaks arrived, and only a few siskins and redpolls were reported. Most birders are still waiting to add them to their year lists. Crossbills went completely unreported.

The period was not without its rarities. Among them: Double-crested Cormorant, Greater White-fronted Goose, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Spotted Sandpiper, both white-winged gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snowy Owl, Common Raven, Marsh Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Dickcissel.

Contributors and observers cited: Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Jack Focht, Valerie Freer, Ken McDermott, Frank Murphy, Frank Nicoletti, John C. Orth, Eleanor Pink, Victor Schwartz, Brian Schiefer, Benton Seguin, Selden Spencer, Robert Terwilliger, John P. Tramontano, Edward D. Treacy, Marion VanWagner, Otis Waterman, Mary Yegella.

Abbreviations: Ashokan—Ashokan Reservoir; CB—Cornwall Bay; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; USMA—U.S. Military Academy; BMCC—Bear Mt. Christmas Count, 5 Jan; BWCC—Bronx-Westchester Christmas Count, 26 Dec; FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count, 15-23 Jan; GSCC—Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Count (inc SE Westchester) 19 Dec; JBCC—John Burroughs Christmas Count 18 Dec; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count (E Orange Co) 18 Dec; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count 19 Dec; SCC—Sullivan Christmas Count 18 Dec; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count (Dutchess Co) 27 Dec.

*Addendum:* One Wilson's Phalarope at Croton Point 31 Oct was very late, and may well be the first record for Westchester Co.

**LOONS—DUCKS:** Red-throated Loon: one off Milton Pt. 29 Jan was to be expected, but the one in CB 9 Jan was a surprise (KM). Com. Loon: last inland report was five at Ashokan 5 Dec. Horned Grebe: only inland report one at CB 5 Jan. **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:** unexpected in winter, especially after the low numbers of last summer. One was in Rye on the BWCC, and a flock of 25 over the Hudson on RCC was the first time for that count. Previous late date for Rock was 12 Nov. Another was on CB 19 Dec. Great Blue Heron: between 20 and 30 roosting at PL during Dec. Varied from 14-25 during Jan. Black-crowned Night-Heron: only report three in Rye on BWCC. Mute Swan: WCC had 31, up from last year's 20 and a good increase for the northern part of the Region where they are not common. Warm weather had one pair copulating near Crugers as early as 18 Feb. Bar-headed Goose: although it was undoubtedly an escape, the single bird that spent much of Nov with the domestic geese at Ring's Pond at Cornwall Town Hall moved to Orange Lake where it was observed for three weeks in Jan, was too beautiful to go unmentioned. **GREAT-ER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** one first found by MY and Dorothy Fleury 4 Jan near Wappingers L stayed thru FWC on 18 Jan and was the first for that count. Brant: occurred regularly off Rye for most of the period. BWCC had 34 between PL and Milton Pt. Canada Goose: continues to increase if that is possible. On 20 Jan more than 2,000 were gathered about two small openings in Rockland Lake. The 1,562 on RCC was up by 200 from the previous high in 1977. 1,726 were on the WCC, and the FWC produced 5,796 which was

three times last year's count. Wood Duck: one in Rock and three in Ulst was twice the average for FWC. The usual Dutch bird did not show this year. Blue-winged Teal: always rare in winter. Seven at Pound Ridge on GSCC. N. Shoveler: one at MC from 4 Dec thru end of month. Gadwall: more wintering than ever before. Unreported until 1978 on FWC. The 22 on this year's count was double that of last year. Good numbers in Orange, Ulst, West and Rock thru period. Am. Wigeon: as many as 30 wintered at PL and MC, and four spent the third week of Jan at Purdy's Sta in West. Canvasback: FWC had 470 belying the several thousand found along the Hudson before and after that count. Ring-necked Duck: peaked in Dec with 94 on Kensico Res. and more than 400 at Croton Dam 13 Feb. Scaup: both species completely missed on FWC. **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: one at PL 20 Feb was gone next day. Oldsquaw: a pair were at Ashokan 15 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: the 11 on FWC was half the usual average and only one-fifth last year's count. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: a female found at CB 5 Jan by BSe was well observed by mob and remained thru 14 Jan. Bufflehead: five on FWC was one-tenth last year's count and well below average. Com. Merganser: excellent numbers. The 1,194 on FWC was almost four times average. 436 on Kiamesha L 8 Dec was excellent so far from the Hudson where the largest concentrations were found. The same goes for the 907 on West Branch Res in West 30 Dec. Red-breasted Merganser: no inland reports. 275 on PL 7 Dec. Ruddy Duck: 201 on FWC would mean a return to the numbers of ten years ago. Well up from the three birds of last year's count.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: Turkey Vulture: more winter reports than usual. Three during Jan in Rock and few from central West. Migrants were returning in early Feb and were reported as far north as Mohonk 19-20 Feb. Osprey: one on RCC at Stony Pt was the fifth winter record for Rock. Bald Eagle: making a good recovery. Several reports from the mid-Hudson region. Could be the two imm and one adult that wintered near Iona I. The regular winter census totaled 42 in the Sull-Ulst area, with about half of these in the vicinity of Rio and Mongaup Res. Of the 42, 25 were adults and 17 imm. Sharp-shinned Hawk: usual few feeding on the feeders at the feeders. Cooper's Hawk: one regularly feeding on House Sparrows at Millbrook School feeder thru Jan. Another at Monticello 20 Dec was feeding on a starling. N. Goshawk: one on BWCC at PL. Another coming to a feeder occasionally thru Feb at Stissing. Another along Rt. 293 at USMA 10 Feb. Red-shouldered Hawk: one at MC on 24 Dec. One on RCC was the first since the 1976 count. Another was at the east end of Ashokan 12 Feb. Broad-winged Hawk: winter reports are always suspect, but Donald S. Deed, an accomplished birder, found an imm at Nanuet only a half mile from last summer's active nest site. Red-tailed Hawk: one might have thought them completely removed from the Region after last fall's excellent movement, but the winter numbers were excellent. More than 30 along Rt. 84 in Oran one day in Feb. An albino was observed in Dutch on New Year's Day. Rough-legged Hawk: around in good numbers although not an invasion. Reported from all areas. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: two observed at Stissing on 2 Feb where they wintered several years ago (RT). Two others were reported wintering in n. Sull and were still present on 1 Mar. One of these could have been observed over Rondout Res on 5 Feb, when an imm bird was seen by a Waterman Field Trip. Am. Kestrel: winter numbers unusually low. Only nine on RCC and two on GSCC. One on BMCC. Merlin: one in downtown P'kpsie observed thru scope while searching for a Snowy Owl (MY, EP). Ring-necked Pheasant: rep in good numbers in Dutch during Jan, 16 there. Wild Turkey: one seen during Dec at Pound Ridge Res. N. Bobwhite: two on 15 Dec near Pawling were the only report. Clapper Rail: single birds at PL and MC on the BWCC. Spotted Sandpiper: one on BMCC at Iona I was almost a month later than the previous late date of 10 Dec 1980 (EDT). Dunlin: one at Baird Pk Dutch 1 Dec by a Waterman Field Trip was a new late record for the Co.Com. Snipe: one at MC 22 Jan. Am. Woodcock: one in Rye 23 Dec. Laughing Gull: last four at Rye 4 Dec. Bonaparte's Gull: unusual inland; one Morgan L Dutch 22 Dec. Ring-billed Gull: this species along with Herring and Great Black-backed are overwintering in ever increasing numbers about the landfill areas of Orange, Rock, West and Dutch. Iceland Gull: Observed regularly along the Newburgh waterfront from 17 Jan. Another at West Harerstraw dump from 5 Feb. An unusual inland occurrence was a first year bird at Orange L 30 Jan, and a second year bird there 6 Mar. Another was at Croton Pt from 28 Dec thru 15 Jan.

One was at the Town of Ulster dump 21 Feb and again 23 Feb. Another at the P'kpsie dump 7 Jan. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one at Harbor 1 Pk, Mamaroneck was recorded for the third year on the BWCC. Another was at PL 5 Dec and again 19 Jan. One was at Croton Pt in early Dec and again 5 Jan. **Glaucous Gull**: a few more than usual along the Hudson and at landfills. A second year bird was at Annsville, near Peekskill 27 Feb. Another at Newburgh 17 Jan, one at Stony Pt dump 2 Feb and another P'kpsie dump thru period.

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS**: Mourning Dove: numbers down from last winter, but still widespread in sizeable flocks. 588 on MCC and 706 on WCC. Maroon-bellied Conure: five observed but not counted on RCC in South Grandview. Obviously escaped or released, and seen again on other days. Seem to be succeeding in an area where Monk Parakeets have been observed in previous years. E. Screech-Owl: MVW was observing at least five regularly thru period in Dutch. **SNOWY OWL**: one on a barge at the end of Piermont Pier 8 Jan. Another was observed on buildings in downtown P'kpsie 16-29 Dec. Even had his picture in the local newspaper. Barred Owl: one E. Walden 15 Dec appeared about the time a resident Barn Owl disappeared. Long-eared Owl: one on GSCC in Bedford. Responded to a screech owl tape. Short-eared Owl: at least four wintered again on the former Buttonwood Tree Farm property along Purgatory Rd. in Hamptonburgh. Wintering birds at Galeville Airport near Wallkill increased to 12 by 13 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: one returned to MC 5 Dec and remained thru Jan. Another was heard calling near Newburgh for about 20 minutes on the night of 25 Jan. Red-bellied Woodpecker: more frequently reported now than Pileateds, and most Christmas Counts reported more of them than Pileateds. Many coming to suet feeders. 18 on GSCC was extraordinary. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: unusual in winter. One at New Paltz 13 Dec.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS**: E. Phoebe: two reports from Dutch, one 15 Dec and another 23 Dec. Blue Jay: exodus last fall must have removed most of the winter residents. Am. Crow: in the largest numbers ever on most Christmas Counts. Middletown roost with more than 8,000 birds by mid Jan. An albino was observed 1 Dec at Baird Pk, Dutch by a Waterman Field Trip. Fish Crow: regularly reported along the Hudson where they are usually rare in winter. Two were reported about 30 miles from the river at the Middletown roost. **COMMON RAVEN**: two near the summit of Slide Mt 7 Dec (AB). Tufted Titmouse: still in good numbers, but the 146 on RCC was lower than the last two years. Red-breasted Nuthatch: almost none for the entire Region with the exception of Ulst where a few wintered around the aeration basin at Ashokan. Brown Creeper: the 11 on RCC was their highest count since 1973. About in good numbers thru the rest of the Region, as well. Carolina Wren: most Christmas Counts were well down from the totals of last year—perhaps the result of last April's blizzard. Winter Wren: one at Rye Nature Center from 24 Dec. Five were on RCC. Marsh Wren: one was at PL 25, 26 Dec for the BWCC. Another was at 6½ Station Sanctuary in Goshen 9 Jan. Might well be the first local record for Oran. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one still at PL 31 Dec. E. Bluebird: missed entirely on RCC, but excellent numbers elsewhere. 98 on GSCC and 35 on WCC. Swainson's Thrush: one was a surprise at PL on 26 Dec. Another appeared on the RCC for the second time in 35 years. Hermit Thrush: as many as four on the BWCC in Rye. Am. Robin: many reports. Flocks of 100-300 reported in Dutch thru Jan. Gray Catbird: at least three at PL thru 1 Jan, and five on RCC, two on WCC. N. Mockingbird: the 90 on RCC was surprisingly low, down at least one-third from the last two counts. Brown Thrasher: more wintering than ever before. Two were at Rye 26 Dec with one remaining thru Jan. Two were on RCC and another at Kingston Point 3 Dec. One was at CB 16 Feb. Cedar Waxwing: excellent numbers in Feb. More than 130 at Wawarsing 23 Feb. Earlier a flock of 125 were at Woodstock 10 Dec. N. Shrike: a surprising report of one at Montgomery 15 Dec; the only report.

**VIREOS—WARBLERS**: Orange-crowned Warbler: one at MC 26 Dec (*vide* John Askliden, Julio de la Torre). Cape May Warbler: one on JBCC 18 Dec was at a feeder on the Administration Bldg. at Ashokan. It was still present 21 Dec. (AB, RT). Yellow-rumped Warbler: 27 near Carmel 30 Dec, 89 on RCC was the highest number since 1956, and well distributed over four of their nine regions. 15 on MCC with 12 of them feeding on berries



near the Tomahawk L. spillway. 22 on WCC was a record high for that count. Usually averages one or none. Ovenbird: one 10 Dec on Main St in Congers (Chas Holbrook). Previous late date for Rock was 22 Nov. Com. Yellowthroat: a male was present at MC from 4 Dec-22 Jan. Yellow-breasted Chat: one at Mamaroneck's Taylor Park 25 Dec (TB). Dickcissel: one at Millbrook School 15 Dec-25 Jan. Rufous-sided Towhee: two thru period in Dutch, one at Pleasant Valley and the other at Salt Point. One spent Jan at Rye Nature Center, and two wintered at Montgomery. Am. Tree Sparrow: 75 on RCC was poor compared to 156 last year, and the counts of 400-500 on the 1950's and 60's. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: three at MC 31 Dec. Swamp Sparrow: one Bashakill 22 Dec. White-throated Sparrow: numbers quite low for a regular winter visitor. White-crowned Sparrow: an imm at Clinton Corners after the snow of 12 Feb. Dark-eyed Junco: 436 on RCC was only half of last year's count, but still better than most recent years. Snow Bunting: unreported from most areas. Observed several times at Warren Sod Farms near Pine I 1 Jan. Flocks of 10 or 12 reported several times along the roadsides near DeBruce. 56 were at Red Hook 18 Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: first migrants were in Nyack by 26 Jan, early. Reported in excellent numbers at feeders in the northern part where they usually do not winter. E. Meadowlark: only one report of a bird wintering in Orange on MCC. Rusty Blackbird: four reports: one from Stony Pt. 8 Jan, 15 near Millbrook School 9 Feb, two at Salt Point 28 Feb, and three at Kingston 18 Feb. Com. Grackle: wintered in good numbers in the southern part. First migrants were on time 15 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: eight were at John Jay High School at Cross River 6 Jan; and 15 visited a feeder at South Salem thru much of Jan. Purple Finch: the only northern finch reported in good numbers. Found at most feeders often to flocks of 50 or more. 100 on RCC was the second highest in 35 counts. The highest was in 1949. House Finch: 246 on RCC was their second high count. MCC had a "whopping" 818. Crossbills: none anywhere of either species. Com. Redpoll: two flocks totaling 87 were on RCC. BMCC produced 38. 20 were at Bashakill and 17 were at Monticello 23 Dec. 30 were on the SCC. Pine Siskin: almost unreported. A flock of 60 at Coldenham 20 Dec and a flock of ten on SCC.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

## REGION 10 -- MARINE

JOSEPH A. Di COSTANZO

There was almost no winter in the Region this year; and very little in the way of birds either. December was very warm—7.3° F. above normal; and dry—only 1.47 inches of rain, 42% of normal. Highs in early December were regularly close to 60° F. or above. It began to look as if the fall would never end, until three inches of snow fell on 12 December. It was the earliest significant snowfall in the Region in years. Temperatures then rose again to a high of 58 on 16 December, promising balmy weather for the first weekend of Christmas Counts, 18-19 December. Alas, it was not to be. Temperatures were below freezing all day on the 18th and only a bit warmer under blustery, overcast skies the 19th. Counts held after this weekend fared much better weatherwise. Temperatures did not drop below freezing again until 4 January. January continued warm with the month's average 2.7° F. above normal. The total rainfall of 5.01 inches was 1.8 above normal. The only snowfall was 1.9 inches on 15-16 January. The weather continued in much the same pattern into February till the 11th when the blizzard of '83 arrived. Snow started falling in New York City at about 2 p.m. By the time it stopped that night there were 16.5 inches on the ground in Central Park. In

the outer boroughs and farther east on Long Island accumulations of two feet or more were not unusual. The best mode of transportation in New York City the next morning was cross-country skis. Despite being one of the worst blizzards of the century, the storm had no reported effect on the Region's birds except to briefly increase numbers at feeders. Most of the rest of February was warmer than normal with the average for the month 2.2° F. above normal. Rainfall for February was within a tenth of an inch of normal. (All weather data from New York City.)

Observers were unanimous in their opinions—as far as birding was concerned it was a dull winter. The warm weather meant that all fresh water areas were still open at the time of the Christmas Counts and counts had the mildest weather many birders could remember. But the lackluster fall migration apparently left very few birds to enliven the Counts and there was no winter finch flight. Virtually all Counts had smaller species totals than in recent years: Southern Nassau—123, Central Suffolk—122, Captree and Bronx-Westchester—120, Montauk—115, Brooklyn—113, Quogue-Watermill—103, Northern Nassau—97 and Staten Island—92. (Full summaries were not received for the Brooklyn, Queens and Smithtown Counts.)

The mild weather did result in good numbers of some lingerers and “half-hardies”: a good variety of herons (most on the Southern Nassau count); a good variety and numbers of shorebirds, wrens and blackbirds. Other “half-hardies” in good numbers were: Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Palm Warbler. Late lingerers, some at record late dates were: Green-backed Heron, Tricolored Heron, Semipalmated Plover, American Oystercatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, an unidentified *Empidonax* flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, a reported Yellow Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Species reported in about normal numbers, though there were variations from place to place, and not reported in the main body of this report are: Pied-billed Grebe, Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, N. Pintail, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, both scaup, Oldsquaw, Com. Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Am. Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, N. Bobwhite, Killdeer, Sanderling, Bonaparte's, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, Rock and Mourning Doves, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, N. Flicker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Am. Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Am. Robin, Gray Catbird, N. Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, N. Cardinal, Rufous-sided Towhee, Am. Tree, Field, Fox, Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, E. Meadowlark, House Finch and Am. Goldfinch. Including the above, 178 species plus four identifiable races are recorded in this report.

Rarities: Greater White-fronted Goose, Black Guillemot, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler.

Dates of Christmas Bird Counts: Brooklyn, Montauk, Queens, Quogue-Watermill and Staten Island—18 Dec; Captree—19 Dec; Bronx-Westchester and Northern Nassau—26 Dec; Central Suffolk—27 Dec; Orient—29 Dec; Southern Nassau—2 Jan.

Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; LI—Long Island; SI—Staten Island; SP—State Park; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; mob—many observers.

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**LOONS—DUCKS:** After their poor showing in the fall report, Red-throated and Com. Loons and Horned Grebes were recorded in average to good numbers on the local CBCs. The only Red-necked Grebes reported were two on the Montauk count. There were good numbers of N. Gannets thru Dec with 332 counted in one hour at Montauk Pt on 4 Dec (SN); Montauk had a count record high of 1,317 while Quogue-Watermill found 55 the same day, their highest since 1974. Great Cormorants were in about normal numbers in most areas, except for a count record 109 on Bronx-West.; this number was the result of an observer checking offshore islands by boat (PAB). This offshore patrol also resulted in a count record high of 49 Double-crested Cormorants; most other counts reported between two and six birds. With the mild weather good numbers of Am. Bittern might have been expected but they were found only on C. Suffolk and S. Nassau, though S. Nassau's 13 was their highest since 1975. Great Blue Herons were found in good numbers on all CBCs with 152 on C. Suffolk the highest, but far from a record there. Great Egrets lingered to early Jan with seven at S. Nassau not quite a count record. S. Nassau also found one Snowy Egret, but the latest was one at Forge R, Moriches on 22 Jan (GSR). Tricolored Heron has become almost regular on the S. Nassau CBC in recent years, and one was found again this year. Brooklyn and Quogue-Watermill both had single Green-backed Herons. 179 Black-crowned Night-Herons at S. Nassau was that count's highest in over a decade. Three Tundra Swans were at Mecox 1 Jan (GSR) and two were at Oyster Pd. Montauk 15 Jan (J. Clinton). Quogue-Watermill's 114 Mute Swans was about 70% more than in recent years, but they were in normal numbers on other counts. The **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** reported in the fall stayed long enough to be counted on the Brooklyn CBC. Captree, Montauk, S. Nassau and Bronx-West. each reported two Snow Geese: one of S. Nassau's was the "Blue" morph; the highest winter concentration of Snows was 70 at JBWR on 5 Feb (GSR). The S. Nassau CBC reported a count record 30,395 Brant; even allowing for some duplication, an impressive number. Two Brants of the western "Black" (*nigricans*) race were reported: an adult at Jones Inlet 27 Nov-4 Dec (MS, BB); and an imm at JBWR 4-8 Dec (W. Kurau, R. Cook). The mild weather contributed, no doubt, to the wide distribution of Wood Ducks. They were found on the Captree, C. Suffolk, Quogue-Watermill, N. Nassau, S. Nassau and Staten I. counts; 30 on the N. Nassau CBC is quite high for the winter. Two male Green-winged Teal of the "Eurasian" (*crecca*) race were found: 2 Jan at Massapequa on the S. Nassau CBC, in the same place where one was found last year (RS); and 20 Feb at JBWR (RK). Two counts reported Blue-winged Teal, rare in winter: Montauk—three, and C. Suffolk—six. Bronx-West. had a count record 223 N. Shovelers. Eurasian Wigeons were reported in smaller numbers this winter than last but three CBCs found them: C. Suffolk—two; N. Nassau—one; and S. Nassau—one, down from a record five last year. A hybrid Eurasian x Am. Wigeon was reported at E. Moriches 30 Dec (GSR). The male Tufted Duck at the Central Park Reservoir reported in the fall remained there at least till early Feb (mob). The Montauk CBC missed Com. and King Eider for the first time in over a decade. Fourteen Commons were at Montauk Pt 15 Jan and a drake King was there 20 Jan (GSR). The Montauk count did have a Harlequin Duck as did Staten I. The Staten I. bird was a first ever for that count as well as apparently only the second county record (GB); the bird, a female, was first found at Great Kills Harbor 4 Dec (R. Clermont, M. Gage) and remained until 9 Jan (GB). A male Harlequin was at Rockaway 25-30 Jan (G. Horowitz, *et al.*); three males and a female wintered at Montauk Pt (mob). Most CBCs reported all three scoters in lower than

normal numbers. Hooded Mergansers were found in above normal numbers on most counts, the highest being 235 on S. Nassau. One observer reported that 16 Com. Mergansers at Hempstead Lk SP was the "most in my memory" for that location (SBD). Montauk's 3,444 Red-breasted Mergansers was considerably above normal for this count.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** The C. Suffolk CBC had two Bald Eagles at Eastport; one was still there 2 Jan (GSR). The Brooklyn count had an imm Bald which was seen intermittently at JBWR during the winter. An adult Bald was at Hempstead Lk SP 13 Jan (K. Kahn). Sharp-shinned Hawks were found on all counts for which full reports were received with a minimum of 45 reported on LI counts. Cooper's Hawks were also widespread: Montauk—one; Orient—one; S. Nassau—one; N. Nassau—two; Bronx-West.—two; and C. Suffolk—four, a count record. There were scattered reports of N. Goshawks: one found on the Staten I. CBC wintered at the High Rock Conservation Center; Captree—two; Bronx-West.—two. S. Nassau had a Red-shouldered Hawk, a rare bird for this count; another was on Staten I. Red-tailed Hawks were in above normal numbers on virtually every count with C. Suffolk's 25 and Bronx-West's 48 both count records. It was only a fair winter for Rough-legged Hawks with seven on the Montauk, six each on the C. Suffolk and Staten I. counts and scattered birds elsewhere. One Golden Eagle was reported: 21 Dec at the Latourette Golf Course, SI (WS, NS). The S. Nassau CBC reported five Merlins; Captree and Orient each found two and Bronx-West. one. The Bronx-West. count found one Peregrine Falcon at Pelham Bay Pk; another was at Cedar Beach 22 Dec-3 Jan (SN). Two Ruffed Grouse were found on the C. Suffolk count, normal for this area. The Wild Turkey flock at Connetquot R SP continues to grow with 43 birds reported there on the Captree CBC, up from 27 last year; 18 on Gardner's I, on the Montauk CBC is only about half of last year's 34, but adverse weather the day of the count may have held the total down. Single Clapper Rails were found on the C. Suffolk and Quogue-Watermill CBCs; the latest reported was one at Shinnecock 29 Jan (GSR). The Captree and Montauk counts each had one Virginia Rail and C. Suffolk four; one Virginia lingered at Laurel till 17 Jan (RA). A relatively late Com. Moorhen was at Southaven the week of the C. Suffolk CBC but could not be found the day of the count (GSR). As was mentioned in last winter's report Am. Coots continue to be below normal on the Region's CBCs. Black-bellied Plovers were in good numbers on most coastal counts with S. Nassau's 147 far above normal. A lingering Semipalmated Plover found on the S. Nassau count remained at least till 8 Jan at Jones Beach SP (mob, photo by EL). An Am. Oystercatcher present on the S. Nassau CBC also lingered at Jones Beach SP till 8 Jan (mob). Three Lessers were found among 18 Greater Yellowlegs in Massapequa on the S. Nassau count; Quogue-Watermill also had two of each. The S. Nassau and Staten I. CBCs reported 34 and 23 Ruddy Turnstones, respectively; the only other reports were four on Captree and one on Montauk. Two counts reported record numbers of Red Knots: C. Suffolk—98; Quogue-Watermill—92; A flock of 65 at Shinnecock contributed to the Quogue-Watermill total (GSR). S. Nassau reported 235 Purple Sandpipers; Bronx-West's record high of 159 was attributed in large part to the boat patrol mentioned earlier. The 3,774 Dunlin reported on the S. Nassau CBC is apparently a record winter max for the Region. Three Long-billed Dowitchers were at Lawrence 2 Jan for the S. Nassau count (EL); at least two remained there till 20 Feb (RK). Three Com. Snipe was a low number for the C. Suffolk CBC but snipe and Am. Woodcock were in about normal numbers on other counts. A lingering Laughing Gull was found on the Quogue-Watermill CBC and five on the C. Suffolk; there were no later reports. Single Little Gulls were found on the Captree and Montauk CBCs; an adult was at Jones Beach SP 30 Dec (M. Kleinbaum). A Com. Black-headed Gull frequented a sewer outlet at W12th St. in Manhattan 13-19 Feb (mob). Ring-billed Gulls have been increasing fairly steadily on the Region's CBCs in recent years. This year was no exception with both the Bronx-West. and S. Nassau counts reporting all time count highs of 6,262 and 5,039 respectively. Iceland Gulls were found at Montauk—two; S. Nassau—one; and Staten I.—one. The S. Nassau bird was the "Kumlien's" reported in the fall report. A first year Iceland imm was at Montauk Inlet 15 Jan (RA, GSR); another was on a piling in the Hudson R at 130th St. on 23 Dec (JD). An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was found at the Central Pk Reservoir 29 Jan (MS).

Single Glaucous Gulls were found on the Montauk and Quogue-Watermill CBCs. Following good numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes at Montauk Pt last fall, the Montauk CBC reported 1,116 kittiwakes; over 300 were at Montauk 15 Jan (GSR). Three Dovekies were picked up dead or dying on LI this winter. The first was an exhausted, emaciated bird in a backyard in Bayport, the bird later died (E. Austin, *vide* FF). Quite an addition to a backyard list! The second was found dead at Mattituck 17 Dec (*vide* A. Dove); third was picked up dead at the West End, Jones Beach SP (ED). A Thick-billed Murre was found on the Montauk CBC (TWB). One to two Razorbills were seen intermittently at Montauk 8 Dec-29 Jan (mob). An adult **BLACK GUILLEMOT** was at Montauk Pt 19 Feb (MS, BB).

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** A **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** was found and color photographed 27 Dec on the C. Suffolk CBC (F. Mohlmann, D. Schmidt). This represents a new late record for the State by a month; the previous late date was 29 Nov. Com. Barn-Owls were reported on three counts; Captree—one; Montauk—three; Staten I.—one. All CBCs reported E. Screech-Owls in normal to above normal numbers with the highest being C. Suffolk with 12, though this was well below last year's count record of 42; Captree had 11. Last year S. Nassau reported their first ever Great Horned Owl at Lawrence; the bird must have liked it there because it (or another) was back in the same place for this year's count. It was still there 29 Jan (SBD). Snowy Owls were widely reported thru the season. The earliest reported was at the Oakwood Sewage Treatment Plant, SI on 3 Dec (WS, NS); two on the Captree CBC remained in the vicinity of RMSP thru the winter (AJL); one on the Bronx-West. CBC is a very rare bird for this count (IC); two at Lido Beach on the S. Nassau CBC alternated between here and the West End, Jones Beach SP thru the winter (AJL); two were about a mile apart along Dune Rd, Hampton Bays 19 Feb (RA, GSR). One to three Long-eared Owls wintered at JBWR (mob); one to two individuals were reported on most CBCs. Short-eared Owls were also widely reported on the CBCs with the highest total, 12, on S. Nassau, followed by Montauk with ten. As usual there were scattered reports of N. Saw-whet Owls from the pine groves along the beaches. Given all the open water it is not surprising that Belted Kingfishers were well represented on all counts. One Red-headed Woodpecker was on Gardiner's I. on the Montauk CBC; four were in Central Pk 19 Dec (P. Post); aside from occasional reports of the Central Pk birds there were no other reports after this. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were widely reported on the CBCs with the highest totals: Bronx-West.—13; and N. Nassau—seven. Another lingering species no doubt encouraged by the weather was Yellow-bellied Sapsucker with singles found on four counts: N. Nassau, Orient, Staten I. and Bronx-West.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** An Empidonax flycatcher was seen at Tobay 7 Dec (P. Bernarth). Given the extreme lateness of this date one can only wonder which species was involved. A western species perhaps? We'll never know. Surprisingly, given the weather, no E. Phoebes were reported. One observer felt that there were very few Horned Larks this winter (GSR); the CBCs seem to bear this out with the species reported in below normal numbers on most counts. Fish Crows set count records on at least two CBCs. C. Suffolk—50 and S. Nassau—109; other counts were about normal or above. After the past two winters of record and near-record numbers of Black-capped Chickadees, the species was recorded in about normal numbers on most counts this year. Tufted Titmouse continues to increase on eastern LI with both the Montauk and Orient CBCs setting count records of 11 and 77, respectively; as recently as 1978 Orient's record high was seven. Red-breasted Nuthatches were in good numbers for a non-flight year. Brown Creepers: normal to above normal numbers with 19 a count record on the S. Nassau CBC. Carolina Wrens were down on most counts: C. Suffolk—eight, compared to last year's 28; Montauk—two, the lowest of any year in which Gardiner's I. was covered. Bronx-West. had a House Wren, an excellent find in winter. Bronx-West. also had one Winter Wren and Orient three. Three CBCs found lingering Marsh Wrens: C. Suffolk and Orient—three each; and Bronx-West.—two. Golden-crowned Kinglets were above normal on most counts with Captree the leader with 82 followed by S. Nassau with 24. No E. Bluebirds were reported. Four Water Pipits at sand pits in Hempstead Harbor were the first on the N. Nassau count in 24 years; Bronx-West. also had four and S.

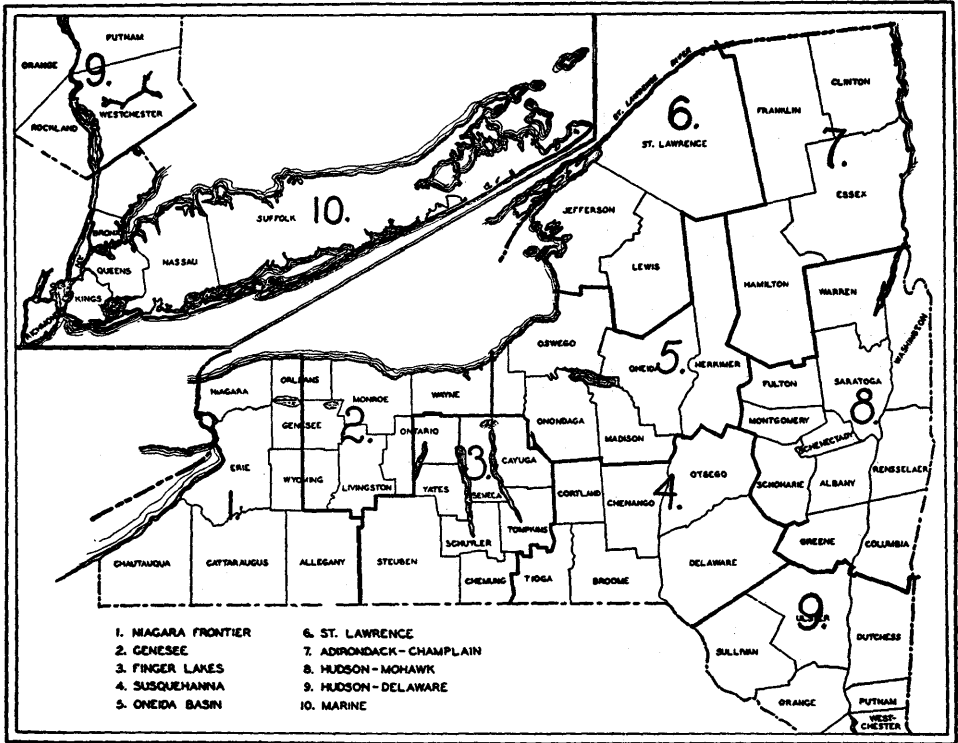
Nassau one. Several counts had good numbers of Cedar Waxwings: S. Nassau-73; C. Suffolk-58; Orient-23. No reports of shrikes were received.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** The Brooklyn, Captree, Queens, and Bronx-West. CBCs each had one Orange-crowned Warbler. For Bronx-West, it was their first ever, certainly long overdue. An Orange-crowned wintered, 19 Dec-13 Feb, at the Helgeson's feeder in Elm Park, SI where its favorite food was grape jelly (mob); about a week before it was last seen it was joined by a second "dingier" bird (*fide* GB). The Queens count had a late lingering Nashville Warbler in Flushing (R. Dieterich, *et al.*). On 27 Dec an observer on the C. Suffolk CBC reported a **YELLOW WARBLER** (Peter Stoutenberg). If correct this would be a record late date for the State by better than two months, the previous late date being 24 Oct. Both the Orient and C. Suffolk counts reported high numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers: 1,030 and 544, respectively. Two counts reported Palm Warblers in considerably above normal numbers: Quogue-Watermill-16; S. Nassau-12. Aside from these counts the species did not seem to be as widespread as last winter. Single Com. Yellowthroats were reported on the Montauk, Quogue-Watermill, S. Nassau and Bronx-West. counts. The only Yellow-breasted Chat report received was of one in Central Pk 15-19 Dec (M. Gambichler). This is considerably below recent winters.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** A late lingering male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found in the NY Botanical Gardens on the Bronx-West. CBC (JD). At least one to two Chipping Sparrows were recorded on six CBCs: Captree, C. Suffolk, Orient, Quogue-Watermill, Bronx-West. and N. Nassau. A Chipping, very rare in mid-winter, was at a feeder in Brooklyn 8-11 Feb (JY). Vesper Sparrows were also widespread with singles on the Orient, Quogue-Watermill and Staten I. counts as well as two on the Montauk and three on the N. Nassau CBCs. The "Ipswich" (*princeps*) race of the Savannah Sparrow was reported in good numbers with Montauk and S. Nassau counts tying for the most with five each. The unfrozen marshes provided good numbers of Sharp-tailed Sparrows: Captree-two, C. Suffolk-four, Montauk-one, and Quogue-Watermill-two: and Seaside Sparrows: Captree-two, C. Suffolk-one, Quogue-Watermill-three, and Bronx-West.-one. A late Lincoln's Sparrow was found at a feeder on Fire I. on the Captree CBC (M. Cooper). Following a poor fall migration no White-crowned Sparrows were reported. Only two reports of Lapland Longspurs were received, both from CBCs: Captree-one, Montauk-three. Red-winged Blackbirds were in above normal numbers on most counts, probably because of the unfrozen marshes. A Rusty Blackbird at Manorville 21 Feb may have been a spring arrival or may have wintered in the area; they were reported in small numbers on several CBCs. Bronx-West. reported a count record high of 4,588 Com. Grackles, most in a single roost in Van Cortlandt Pk. This is a record high winter count for anywhere in the Region. With the grackle count above, Bronx-West. reported 331 Brown-headed Cowbirds, far above normal but not a record. The N. Nassau count had a N. Oriole for the third year in a row; another was found on S. Nassau. A N. Oriole appeared at a feeder in Floral Park 9-15 Feb (B. Craig). Good numbers of Purple Finch were found on the C. Suffolk-36, and N. Nassau-23, counts, elsewhere they were only in small numbers. There were two reports of Red Crossbills: 20 at Tobay 1 Jan (AJL) and six at Cedar Beach 7 Jan (S. Terrill). Pine Siskins were almost totally lacking; the Captree and N. Nassau counts each reported three; Staten I. one and Bronx-West. the only small group-45. Evening Grosbeaks were reported only a handful of times, usually ones and twos.

Great Gull Island Project, A.M.N.H.,  
Central Park West at 79th St., New York, New York 10024

## 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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