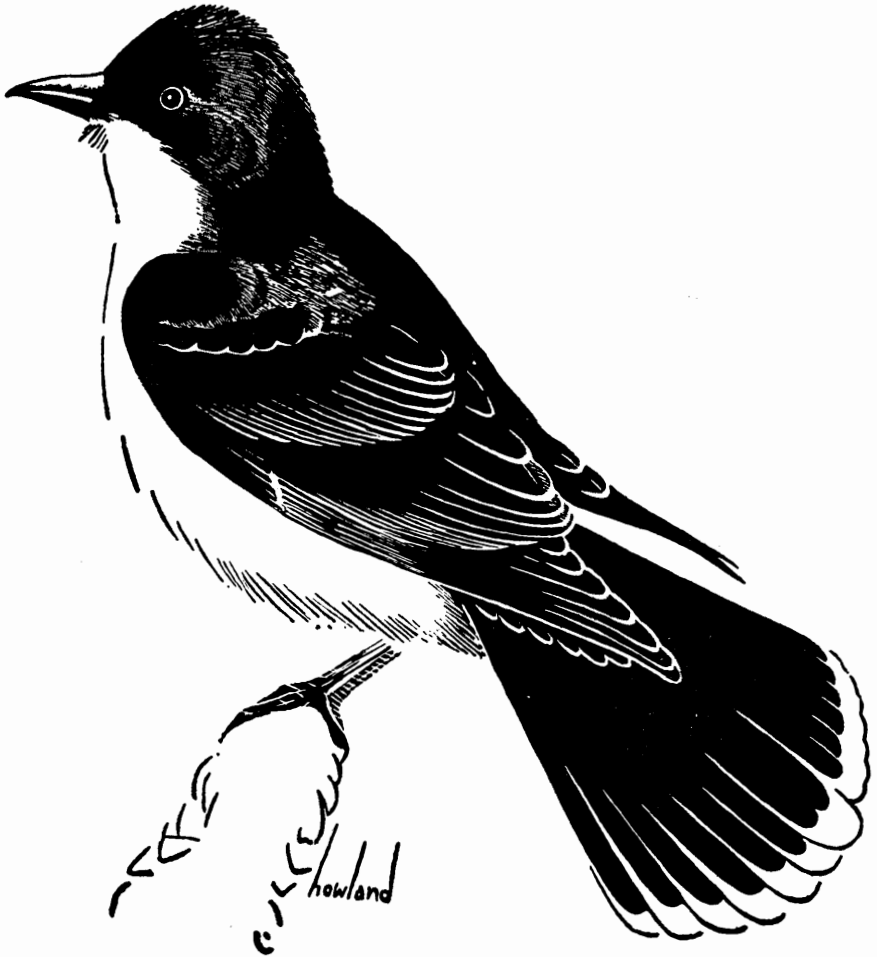


The **KINGBIRD**



VOL. XXXV, NO. 2

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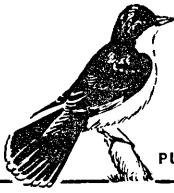
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Highlights of the Season

Editor – Robert Spahn

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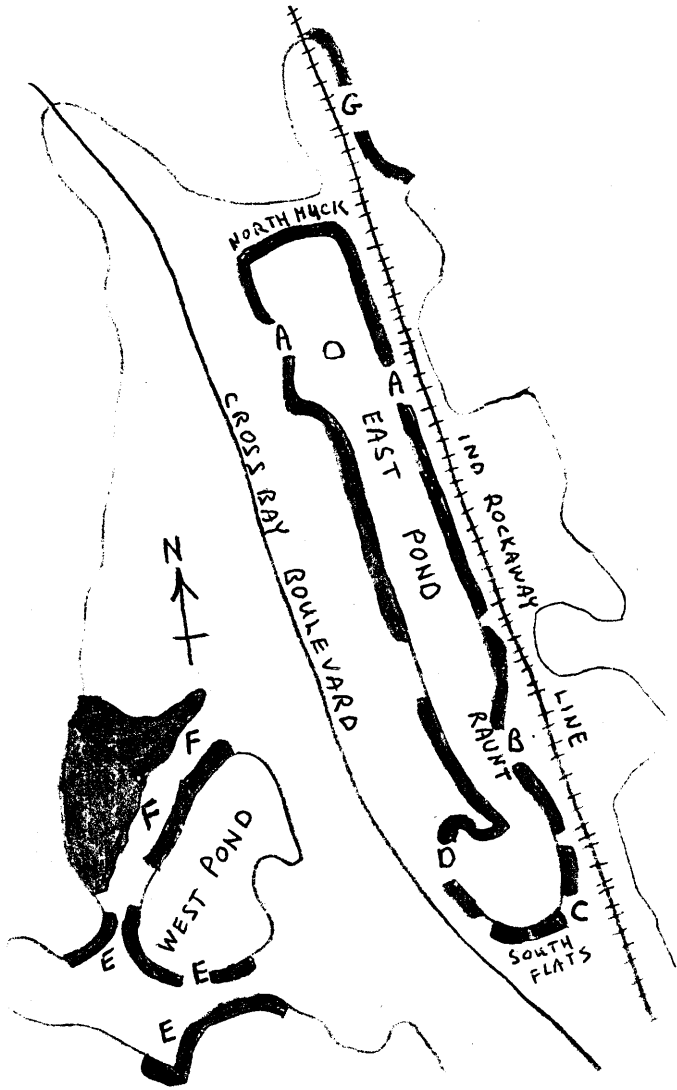


Figure 1. Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Shorebird Survey Areas.
(Adapted from Davis, 1982)

THE 1984 FALL SHOREBIRD SEASON AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

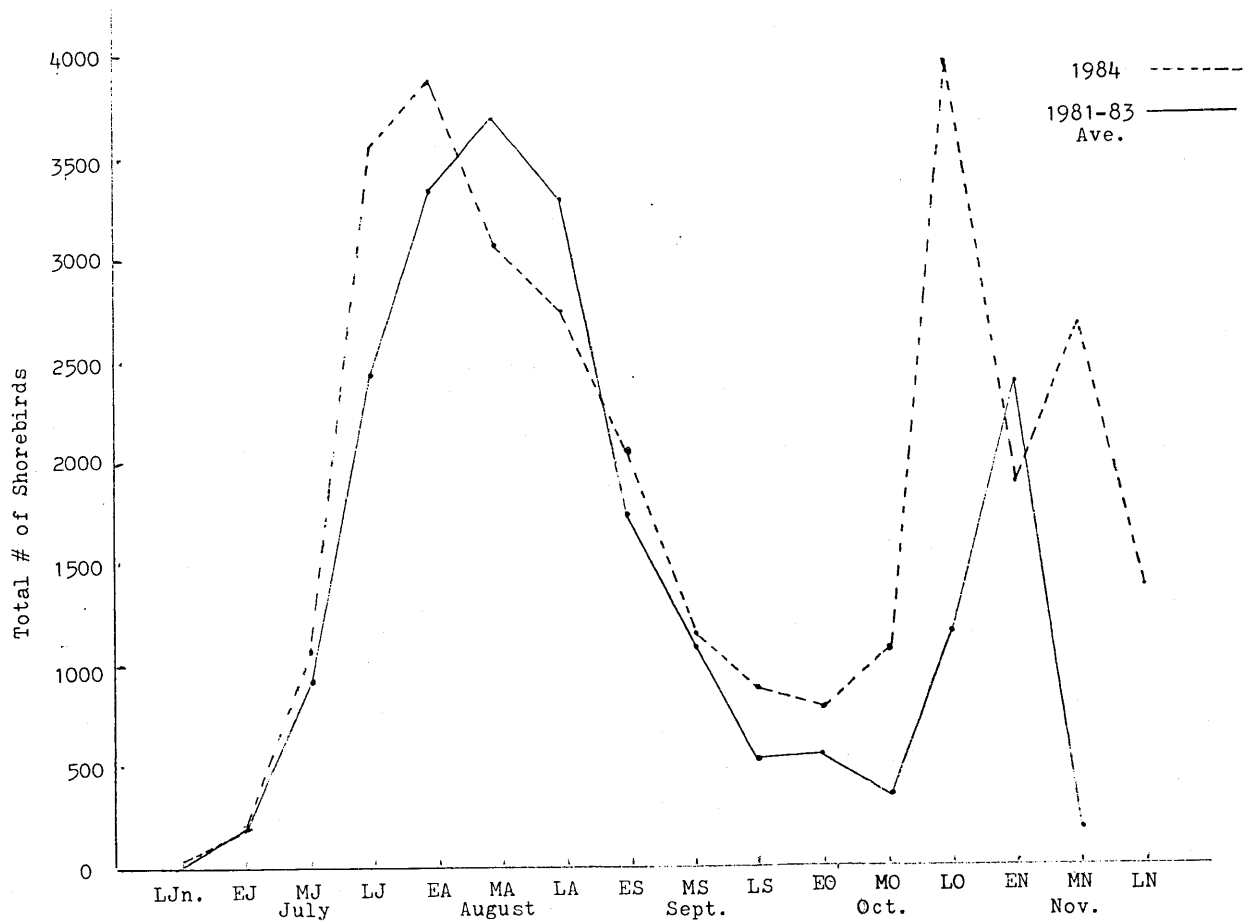
ARTHUR MORRIS

Thirty-four species of shorebirds were noted at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge (JBWR), Queens County, during the period 24 June to 24 November. During this time the refuge was visited 48 times and every species present was censused at least once a week. I endeavored to follow the techniques of Thomas H. Davis (1982). All visits overlapped the time of high tide, when the greatest number of birds fly into the East Pond from surrounding saltwater flats to rest, feed, and preen. A majority of birds present disperse to these tidal flats throughout Jamaica Bay as the tide recedes. This tidal influence was at its greatest late in the season. My visits averaged three to six hours in length. The refuge was divided into seven survey areas. Thomas W. Burke (22, 29 July and 4, 11 August), Stephen B. Dempsey (31 July and 9, 15 August) and Barbara J. Spencer (25 July) "took the count" while I was out of state.

Because of the inaccessibility of the East Pond (see below) early season coverage was limited at first to the West Pond, and then, additionally to the South Flats of the East Pond. Mid and late season censuses found the West Pond accounting for only 2-10% of the daily totals. Due to several torrential downpours between 30 June and 16 July, the water level on the East Pond was far higher than normal for this period. The storm of 30 June alone raised the level of the East Pond eight inches overnight (Bob Cook, pers. comm.). It appeared that the wet weather and conditions affected the birders more than the birds. The many birders who had spoken of participating in the search for the rarities of previous years (Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Little Stint) were virtually absent during this period (17-22 July). Migration however, continued apace. In fact, the peak of adult migration was reached more than a week early (Graph 1). During the first three weeks of July only small portions of the flats normally available to the birds for feeding and roosting were exposed. The Raunt, a favored roosting spot, was completely inundated for most of this period. In spite of this, shorebird numbers, while slightly lower than 1983 totals, were well above the 1981-1983 average (Davis, 1982, 1983, 1984; see Graph 1). Species diversity for this period, and for the entire season, was normal. No extreme rarities were noted this season.

The rainfall mercifully abated and by early August the pond had drained so that normal (low) water levels were attained. Water levels remained normal for the rest of the season, as the pond gradually began refilling after mid-October.

Graph 1. Comparison of 1984 Shorebird Migration to 1981-83 Average.



The late season was marked by unusually mild weather, which continued into November. It would seem that this mild weather was at least partly responsible for the unprecedented high totals of October-November and for the record number of shorebirds (6226) censused on 27 October.

In comparing the 1984 data with Tom Davis' previous surveys (Graph 1) it is important to consider the possibility of observer bias. Davis feels that I "counted" more birds than he would have this season because of my lack of experience in extrapolated and estimated censusing. Knowing in advance that this would be the case, I took a most conservative approach to counting. In addition, if sizable groups of birds dispersed after being counted, care was taken not to recount smaller groups of the same species found afterwards.

One additional area censused this year, Area G (Table 3), consisted of the shoreline east of the subway tracks one quarter mile north of the northeast corner of the East Pond, northwards to the base of the railroad bridge. To validate comparisons with Davis' previous work, Area G totals were *not included* in daily totals. The number of birds roosting at this comparatively small site fluctuated markedly, ranging from less than one to 193% of the daily total. On average, the Area G total was equal to a highly significant 67% of the daily total. It is possible, as suggested by Davis (1983), that some species shift their roosts to this location in response to the presence of Peregrine Falcons hunting at the East Pond. This matter will be investigated next season by starting coverage of Area G in August.

In gathering census data for the first time, I found the most striking revelation to be that some groups of shorebirds remained at the refuge for considerable periods of time—one, two and sometimes three or more weeks. This is contrary to the findings of banding studies at major staging areas, which indicate that the length of shorebird stopovers should be measured in days rather than weeks (Davis, pers. comm.). A large group of birds would arrive at the refuge on a given date. They would be seen on visit after visit, roosting at the same spot, feeding in the same areas, with flock composition remaining stable and recognizable. Certain individuals could often be recognized because of odd plumage characteristics or physical defects. With the passage of time, feather wear was easily detected on birds that had arrived as freshly plumaged juveniles. With each passing week fewer and fewer of the original group were present, as small groups peeled off and departed for points south. This pattern was especially noticeable in the Greater Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Godwit, White-rumped and Pectoral sandpipers, and both dowitchers.

From the data for 1981-1984, it is evident that increasing numbers of shorebirds are visiting the refuge each year. There are several possible explanations for this. A. The "word-is-spreading" theory; birds of previous years lead others in increasing numbers to the rich mudflats of the "newly discovered" East Pond (The East Pond was first drawn down in 1976). B. Increased breeding success in the far north. C. Favorable local or regional conditions or weather patterns. D. Improvement of feeding conditions on the adjacent tidal flats in Jamaica Bay itself, due to decreased industrial pollutant and bacterial levels. The Port Authority at J.F.K. International Airport has maintained booms for the past ten years at run-off sites where jet fuel and other industrial pollutants are vacuumed up by waiting treatment trucks. (Sam Chevalier, pers. comm.). Studies over the past seven years have shown a trend toward reduced bacterial levels in the bay and a study in its second year has Jamaica Bay ranked near the top among major East Coast estuaries in macro-benthotic (shellfish) productivity (John Tanacredi, National Parks Service, pers. comm.). E. Any combination of the above. The answer may lie in the data of future years.

This survey was done in cooperation with the International Shorebird Survey, Manomet, Massachusetts.

I would like to thank Tom Burke, Stephen Dempsey and Barbara Spencer, for without their help this project could not have been completed. I would like to thank my wonderful family for putting up with me. And most of all I would like to thank Tom Davis, whom I have so freely plagiarized, for teaching me the basics of shorebird aging and identification during the 1983 season, for reviewing his censusing procedures with me, for encouraging me to continue his work, for instilling in me his love of the magic and mystery of shorebirding, and finally, for his review of this manuscript. Without Tom there would be no Shorebird Survey at Jamaica Bay.

SELECTED SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Black-bellied Plover: An above-average season peaked in October rather than the usual September. This would appear to be due to the unseasonably mild late-season weather.

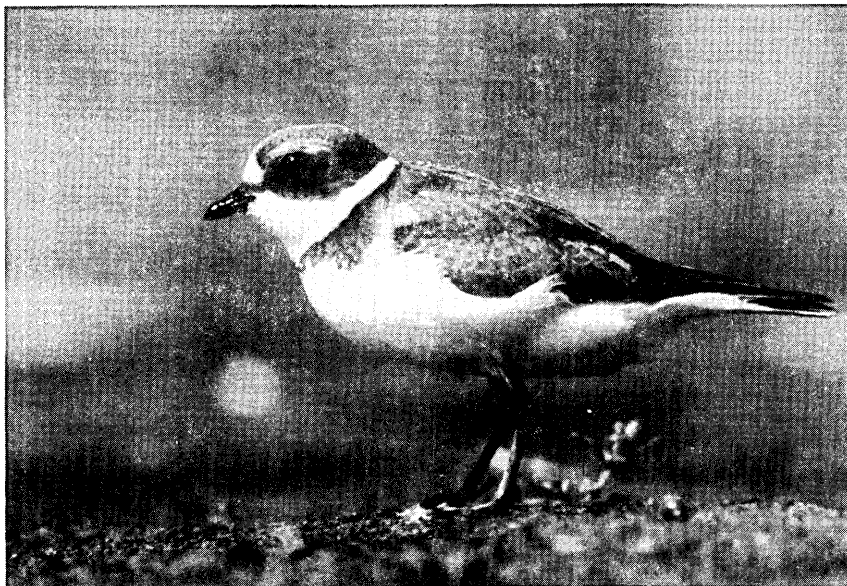
Lesser Golden-Plover: An average season negated the recent upward trend, which peaked in 1983. Fading adults were noted on 24 August and 31 August. All other birds were juveniles.

Semipalmated Plover: A second consecutive above-average season for this species began with an early adult on 30 June.

American Oystercatcher: Unprecedented numbers of this species reflect continued explosive increases in local and regional breeding populations with a new maximum of 66 on 6 August (Don Riepe).

American Avocet: Three winter-plumaged adult females were found by this observer in their customary haunts at the north end of the East Pond on 4 October. They remained at least until 14 October. This appears to represent the largest number seen in the region since 9 out of a flock of 12 were illegally shot on the Newark Meadows in 1932 (Bull).

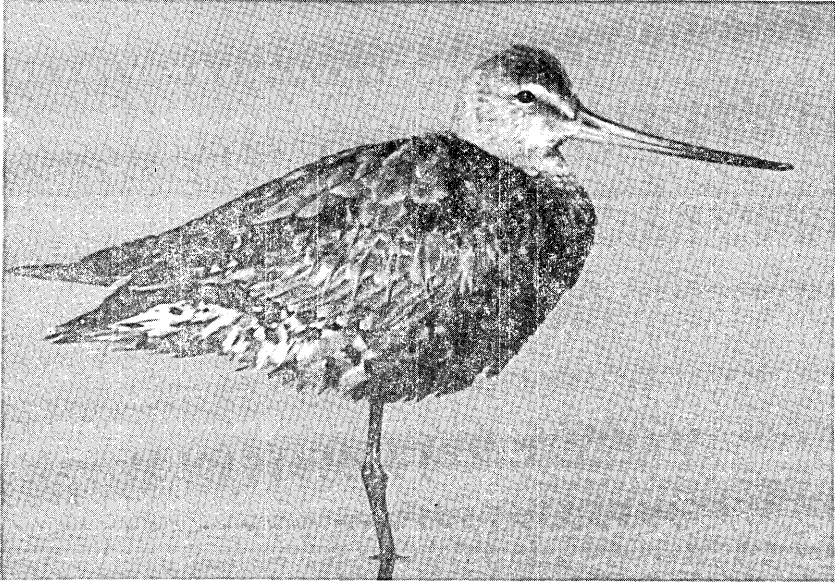
Greater Yellowlegs: Low numbers in the early season were offset by



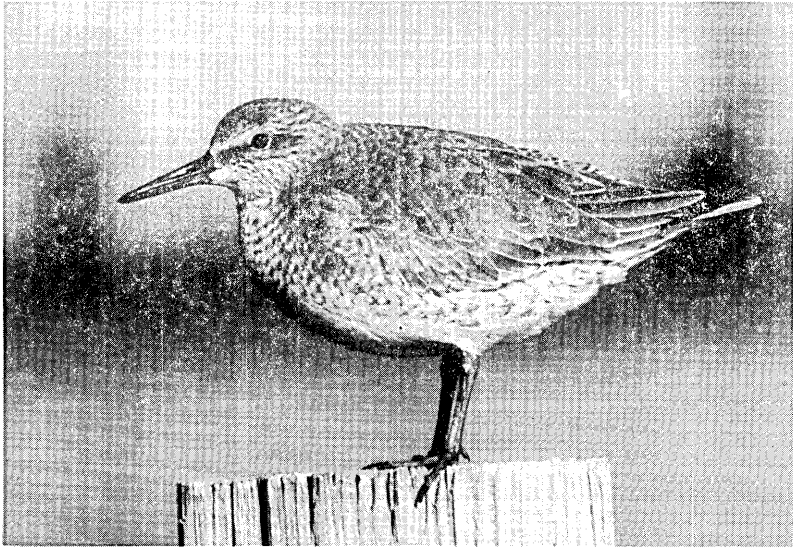
Semipalmated Plover – Juvenile
16 Sept. 1984

Art Morris

JBWR

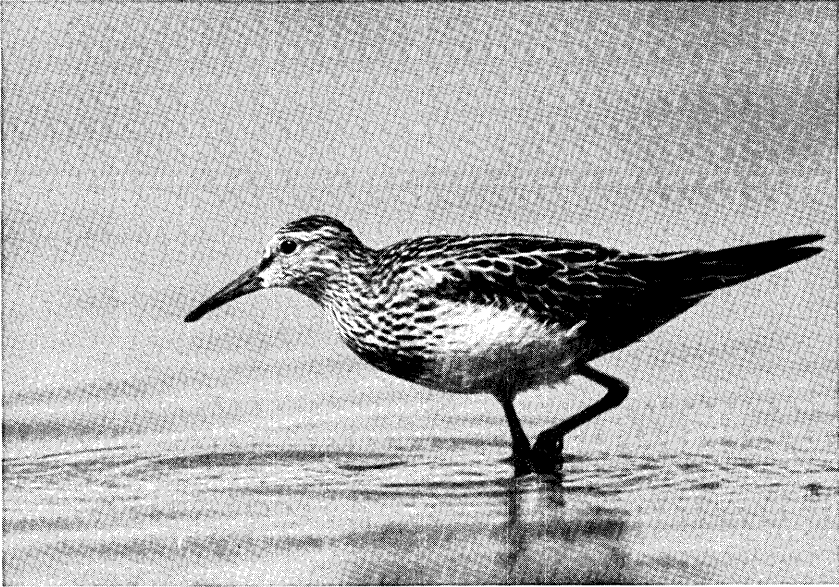


Hudsonian Godwit – Adult
30 Oct. 1984
Rob Villani *JBWR*



Red Knot – Adult - winter plumage
22 Dec. 1984
Art Morris *Zach's Bay, LI*

- unusually high late-season totals. This species became the first ever noted on all visits during an entire censusing period.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** An above-average season was highlighted by a new maximum of 137 on 26 August.
- Willet:** Ninety-one birds were noted on 25 dates, with high numbers present early in the season reflecting a continuing increase in the local breeding population.
- Upland Sandpiper:** A seasonal total of two individuals was highlighted by a rare on-the-ground appearance on the grassy shore of the West Pond on 11 September (T W. Burke).
- Whimbrel:** Although 20 birds on seven dates were reported between 21 July and 22 September this species was not seen by this observer. A new maximum of ten was recorded on 21 July (Paul Dumont).
- Hudsonian Godwit:** Eighty-two birds on 28 dates represented an above-average season, with juveniles well outnumbering adults. A majority of the eight birds present on 16 September remained at the refuge through mid-October. Two recognizable individuals remained at least through early November.
- Marbled Godwit:** The season's total was two individuals. Many reports of up to four Marbled Godwits were made by observers who misidentified distant juvenile Hudsonians as Marbleds.
- Ruddy Turnstone:** This above-average season was comparable to 1983, with a new maximum of 283 recorded on 4 August.
- Red Knot:** The recent upward trend of this species continued. The new maximum of 1,685 on 31 July was more than double the previous maximum.
- Sanderling:** A far below-average season, with the roosting flocks of previous years absent from the northwestern shore of the East Pond. Modest numbers of this species were present at Area G late in the season (see Table 3).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A below-average season.
- Western Sandpiper:** Very few Westerns were noted at the Refuge this season.
- Least Sandpiper:** An average season.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** An average season, with a notable flight of 37 birds (33 juveniles) noted on 8 October. Juveniles of this species were the last to arrive at the Refuge this year (first juvenile, 28 September), replacing the Long-billed Dowitcher which in all prior seasons had been the species whose juveniles arrived last at the Refuge.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Individual Baird's were reported on 2 and 3 September and 6-9 September (m.ob.). Two present on 27 September (John G. Williams) marked the first multiple occurrence of this mid-continental migrant at JBWR.



Pectoral Sandpiper – Juvenile
22 Sept. 1984

Art Morris

JBWR

Pectoral Sandpiper: An average season except for the record flight of 72 juveniles (new maximum) on 28 September. Many birds of this group remained at the Refuge until mid-October.

Dunlin: An unprecedented season found large numbers present until the end of the censusing period. A new maximum of 4,379 on 27 October was more than double the previous maximum. Rain on the 26th left East Pond margins puddled and muddy. Clouds of Dunlins were seen in flight up and down the length of the East Pond and many groups of 500 to 1,200 were observed feeding and roosting. Although an accurate count under such conditions is unattainable, both Rob Villani and I felt that we had underestimated!

Curlew Sandpiper: Bright but fading breeding-plumaged adults were noted on 19 July (David Krauss) and 9-15 August (m.ob.).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: The season's total was three individuals. One was on the West Pond on 2 and 3 September (m.ob.). One was on the East Pond 27 September (John G. Williams). Another, present on the East Pond 5-8 October, marked the latest appearance of this bird at JBWR (previous late date 18 September).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Yet another unprecedented season with a new maximum of 2,210 on 29 July nearly tripling the previous high count. The high water levels during the period 11 July to 4 August found Short-billeds feeding belly deep in record numbers on flats that would have been exposed and dry in a normal season.

Long-billed Dowitcher: A below-average season with the exception of the late season influx of 33 birds on 27 October, a new maximum. This group consisted of both winter-plumaged adults and molting first-winter birds. Also of note was the record early arrival of juvenile Long-billeds on 22 September (previous early date 26 September).

Wilson's Phalarope: The season's total was at least 13 birds. Three adults in fading breeding plumage present on the West Pond 24-26 June were probably southbound migrants departing from southerly breeding outposts (John Bull, pers. comm.).

Red-necked Phalarope: The season's total was three individuals.

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35 *Mimosa Lane, Staten Island, New York 10312*

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	6/24	6/26	6/30	7/3	7/6	7/9	7/11	7/12
Plover, Black-bellied								
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated			1			1	1	4
* Killdeer	11	14	15	16	13	11	9	14
* American Oystercatcher	5		1	1	1	4	2	
American Avocet								
Yellowlegs, Greater	1	2	3	2	2	12	15	17
Lesser	3	4	1	2	3	4	7	18
Solitary Sandpiper						1		
* Willet	5	4	9	7	7	3	3	2
Sandpiper, Spotted	(1)		1	6		1	4	1
* Upland								
Whimbrel								
Godwit, Hudsonian								
Marbled								
Ruddy Turnstone								
Red Knot								
Sanderling								
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	2	2	6	14	18	121	112	6
Western								
Least				15	6	24	37	97
White-rumped								
Baird's								
Pectoral								
Dunlin								
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt								
Buff-breasted								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	1		(3)	57	73	168	211	241
Long-billed								
Common Snipe								
* American Woodcock		(2)			1			
Phalarope, Wilson's	3	3						
Red-necked								
#Species	9	7	9	9	9	11	10	9
# Individuals	32	31	40	120	124	350	401	400
Coverage: East Pond					B	B	B	B
West Pond	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF

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

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	7/16	7/17	7/19	7/20	7/21	7/22	7/25	7/29
Plover, Black-bellied			1			1	3	23
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated	12	23	34	51	✓	101	300	180
* Killdeer	9	8	3	2	✓	9	3	9
* American Oystercatcher	1		1	1		5		3
American Avocet								
Yellowlegs, Greater	7	3	5	8	✓	34	12	107
Lesser	7	17	18	41	✓	38	40	48
Solitary Sandpiper								
* Willet	5		1			7		2
Sandpiper, Spotted	3	2	2	2		5		1
* Upland								1
Whimbrel					(10)			
Godwit, Hudsonian				1				
Marbled								
Ruddy Turnstone			6	3	✓	11	12	44
Red Knot	8		51	8	✓	76	15	1117
Sanderling		1	1	1	✓	9	1	1
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	280	✓	383	602	✓	850	1100	510
Western		2	2	1				1
Least	48	✓	27	74	✓	68	45	47
White-rumped								1
Baird's								
Pectoral	(3)		(1)	2			1	
Dunlin								1
Sandpiper, Curlew			(1)					
Stilt	3	2	1	1	✓	22	8	28
Buff-breasted								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	700	✓	840	1387	✓	1030	800	2210
Long-billed						1	1	1
Common Snipe								
* American Woodcock						(3)		
Phalarope, Wilson's								
Red-necked								
#Species	13	11	18	16	12	17	13	21
# Individuals	1086	Inc.	1378	2185	Inc.	2270	2340	4336
Coverage: East Pond	ABC	BC	BC	ABC	ABC	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
West Pond	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	EF	E

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

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	7/31	8/4	8/9	8/11	8/15	8/21	8/26	8/31
Plover, Black-bellied	81	68	289	302	327	608	794	903
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated								1
	609	421	584	595	1117	655	429	478
* Killdeer	3	6	3	6	5	9	11	11
* American Oystercatcher	21	45	5	31	6	3	33	25
American Avocet								
Yellowlegs, Greater	75	108	94	88	124	56	220	247
Lesser	38	45	67	58	43	122	137	121
Solitary Sandpiper		(1)						
* Willet		3	1	9		2	1	8
Sandpiper, Spotted	4	5	1	3	3	1	2	
* Upland				1				
Whimbrel				(2)			1	
Godwit, Hudsonian		2	3	2	1	1	1	1
Marbled				1		1		
Ruddy Turnstone	106	283	48	175	115	31	22	48
Red Knot	1685	1516	346	325	150	131	301	67
Sanderling	2	10		1	1	53	9	22
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	1215	750	1099	820	1092	508	415	638
Western				1	6		1	2
Least	47	51	50	51	62	96	130	57
White-rumped	3	9	1	4	4	4	11	16
Baird's								
Pectoral		2		1	3	3	2	14
Dunlin		1		1				
Sandpiper, Curlew			1	1	1			
Stilt	3	7	2	3	4	11	12	19
Buff-breasted								
Dowitcher, Short-billed	1317	1210	451	424	132	214	153	269
Long-billed	2	2	12	5	11		2	11
Common Snipe								
* American Woodcock		(2)		1				
Phalarope, Wilson's	1	1				2	5	2
Red-necked					1			
#Species	17	23	18	26	21	20	23	21
# Individuals	5212	4558	3057	2911	3208	2511	2693	2960
Coverage: East Pond	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
West Pond	EF	E	EF	E	EF	EF	EF	

* - breeds locally () - reported by others √ - numbers not counted

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	9/1	9/7	9/13	9/15	9/16	9/22	9/23	9/28
Plover, Black-bellied	✓	809	✓	✓	327	288	✓	503
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated	1				3	1	1	7
* Killdeer	✓	319	✓	✓	106	56	✓	13
* American Oystercatcher	✓	(✓)	✓	52	(1)	14	✓	14
American Avocet					5	4		51
Yellowlegs, Greater	✓	86	✓	✓	45	202	✓	18
Lesser	✓	64	✓	✓	75	43	✓	33
Solitary Sandpiper	(1)							
* Willet	✓				2	3	2	
Sandpiper, Spotted	✓	2	✓	1	(1)	1		
* Upland Whimbrel					(4)	(1)		
Godwit, Hudsonian			(1)	(1)	8	6	4	3
Marbled				1	1	1	1	
Ruddy Turnstone	✓	8	✓	(✓)	1		1	1
Red Knot	✓	109	✓	✓	84	17		58
Sanderling	✓	4	✓	(✓)	10	6	✓	
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	✓	374	✓	✓	431	224	✓	233
Western	1	4		2	4			1
Least	✓	114	✓	✓	38	19	✓	30
White-rumped	✓	12	✓	✓	4	11	✓	11
Baird's	see	(1)	text					
Pectoral	✓	13	✓	5	4	12	✓	72
Dunlin		6	✓	✓	11	17	✓	112
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt	✓	37	80	✓	13	20	✓	14
Buff-breasted	see	text						
Dowitcher, Short-billed	✓	87	✓	✓	11	9	3	4
Long-billed						4	3	10
Common Snipe								
* American Woodcock	1			1	(1)			
Phalarope, Wilson's								1
Red-necked					1			
#Species	23	19	18	21	25	22	20	20
# Individuals	Inc.	2056	Inc.	Inc.	1191	959	Inc.	1189
Coverage: East Pond	BC	BC	BC	BC	ABCD	ABCD	BC	ABCD
West Pond					E			E

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

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	9/29	9/30	10/4	10/8	10/11	10/12	10/14	10/18
Plover, Black-bellied	✓	207	203	251	322	209	472	106
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated	3	2			0		2	0
Semipalmated	4	3		3	(1)		1	1
* Killdeer	✓	7	10	9	4	1	1	
* American Oystercatcher			3	38	14	5	3	2
American Avocet			3	3	3	3	3	
Yellowlegs, Greater	✓	3	56	251	248	68	95	127
Lesser	✓	11	21	21	21	17	11	17
Solitary Sandpiper								
* Willet		(1)	1	2				
Sandpiper, Spotted								
* Upland Whimbrel								
Godwit, Hudsonian	4	2	2	6	7	4	4	5
Marbled	1	(1)						
Ruddy Turnstone	7	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
Red Knot	✓	7	3		5	0	70	11
Sanderling			0	0	1	0	11	0
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	✓	96	31	144	95	46	37	31
Western	1		1					
Least	11	8	2	3	1		1	2
White-rumped	9	9		37	22	9	9	9
Baird's	See Text							
Pectoral	✓	7	35	34	37	16	18	8
Dunlin	✓	74	13	314	633	142	621	558
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt	✓	3	6		2	2	4	4
Buff-breasted	See Text			4				
Dowitcher, Short-billed		1	1	1	2	1	2	1
Long-billed			1	9	10	8	8	1
Common Snipe						(1)		
* American Woodcock								
Phalarope, Wilson's	(2)		1			2	2	
Red-necked								
#Species	18	18	20	19	20	19	21	18
# Individuals	Inc.	445	395	1128	1428	534	1375	883
Coverage: East Pond	BC	BC	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
West Pond				E	E		(E)	

* - breeds locally () - reported by others ✓ - numbers not counted
 0 - present at Area G

Table 1. JBWR Fall Shorebird Census

	10/19	10/22	10/27	11/3	11/6	11/10	11/12	11/24
Plover, Black-bellied	85	88	1079	64	210	481	334	95
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated		1	2					
* Killdeer	2	3					1	
* American Oystercatcher	(40)	5	1	2				
American Avocet				15				
Yellowlegs, Greater	85	283	297	12	75	97	25	7
Lesser	9	9	6		2	1		
Solitary Sandpiper								
* Willet								
Sandpiper, Spotted								
* Upland								
Whimbrel								
Godwit, Hudsonian	3		4	1	2	1	(2)	
Marbled								
Ruddy Turnstone		2	3	1	0	4	3	
Red Knot		29	301	4	34	62	40	8
Sanderling	43	0	104	3	1	3	5	15
Sandpiper, Semipalmated	18	32		1				
Western								
Least			2					
White-rumped	4	6	9	(5)	1			1
Baird's								
Pectoral	12	3	5					
Dunlin	863	1096	4379	935	1522	2057	2247	1266
Sandpiper, Curlew								
Stilt								
Buff-breasted								
Dowitcher, Short-billed			1					
Long-billed		7	33		4	21		7
Common Snipe	1							
* American Woodcock								
Phalarope, Wilson's								
Red-necked								
#Species	13	14	15	11	10	9	7	7
# Individuals	1167	1564	6226	1043	1851	2727	2657	1399
Coverage: East Pond	BC	A(n.end)	AB	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD	ABCD
		BC	CD					
West Pond	EF		EF	E		EF	E	EF

*-breeds locally (✓)-reported by others ✓-numbers not counted
 0-present at Area G

Table 2. Species Diversity 1981-1984

	Late Early	June- July	Late July	Early Aug.	Late Aug.	Early Sept.	Late Sept.	Early Oct.	Late Oct.	Nov.
1981		14	25	25	26	26	27	23	21	
1982		13	24	25	29	31	30	26	19	
1983		12	27	24	26	31	28	22	19	14
1984		13	25	29	26	28	29	26	21	14

Table 3. Area G Census

	9-28	10-4	10-8	10-11	10-12	10-14	10-18
Plover, Black-bellied	350	246	350	510	150	250	390
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated	6		1	1			1
Ruddy Turnstone		3		1	1	2	1
Red Knot		10		11	20	22	24
Sanderling		46	19	130	87	61	54
Dunlin		270	205	250	325	25	610
# Species	2	5	4	6	5	5	6
# Individuals	356	575	575	903	583	360	1080
	10-22	10-27	11-3	11-6	11-10	11-12	11-24
Plover, Black-bellied	650	4	247	312			1
Lesser Golden-Semipalmated							
Ruddy Turnstone	2		8	9		4	
Red Knot	3		80	137			
Sanderling	123		63	15		5	
Dunlin	600		494	1200	1	62	
# Species	5	1	5	5	1	3	1
# Individuals	1378	4	892	1673	1	71	1

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MASSIVE MORTALITY OF JUVENILE DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS ON LITTLE GALLOO ISLAND, JULY 1984

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INTRODUCTION

On 27 July 1984 we visited Little Galloo Island in eastern Lake Ontario as part of our annual monitoring of contaminant levels, population size and reproductive success of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) on the Great Lakes (Gilman *et al.* 1977, Weseloh *et al.* 1979, 1983, Mineau *et al.* 1984). We were startled on this visit to discover at least 624 dead cormorants on the island. This mortality represents about 42% of the potential cormorant productivity on Little Galloo Island in 1984. In this report we document the details of this event and contrast it with cormorant mortality on Pigeon Island, 14 miles (22 km) to the north.

METHODS

Since 1978, we have visited Little Galloo Island annually during the pre-nesting and/or nesting periods (March-August). We usually make an assessment of Herring and Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*) numbers in mid-late May and of Cattle Egrets (*Bulbulcus ibis*) and cormorants in mid-late July (Blokpoel and Weseloh 1981, Weseloh 1984, CWS unpubl.). In assessing cormorants, our usual procedure is to walk around the entire island, locate and identify all cormorant nest trees on a map and record the number of nests in each tree. When ground nests are present, we record their locations and numbers as well. On this visit, the number of dead cormorants associated with each nest tree and/or each ground nesting area (*i.e.*, each sub-colony) was also recorded. We climbed only a few of the nest trees to determine contents not visible from the ground. Identical procedures were used on Pigeon Island on the following day (28 July).

RESULTS

On Little Galloo, we recorded 736 cormorant nests and 624 dead cormorants. We may have missed or overlooked (among nesting debris) up to 10% of the dead. All but one of the dead (an adult) were young of the year. Dead juveniles ranged in age from newly hatched to approximately 3-4 weeks old. All carcasses appeared to be at a similar state of decomposition. Most carcasses had dried out and "settled" into the substrate; only a few had maggots. We saw no fresh carcasses. We estimated that most of the young cormorants had died 2-3 weeks earlier.

The dead young were located around the perimeter of the island where the cormorants nested. We found dead cormorants at 42 of the

Table 1. Mortality Rate of Cormorants on Little Galloo Island As Observed On 27 July 1984 By (A) Nest Substrate and (B) Nest Location

A.	Nest Substrate	Total No. Nests	Total No. Dead	Mortality Rate (No. Dead/Nest)
	Tree	380	318	0.84
	Ground	<u>356</u>	<u>306</u>	0.86
	TOTAL	736	624	0.85

B.	Nest Location (Portion of the Island)	Total No. Nests	Total No. Dead	Mortality Rate (No. Dead/Nest)
	NW to E	336	385	1.15
	SE and S	222	90	0.41
	SW	123	135	1.10
	W	<u>55</u>	<u>14</u>	0.25
	TOTAL	736	624	0.85

57 sub-colonies we identified as we walked around the island. For example, the first nest tree we encountered had 9 nests and 16 dead cormorants, 12 of which were on the ground beneath the nests. Sub-colonies ranged in size from 1 to 46 nests.

The mortality rate was similar for tree and ground nests (0.84 vs. 0.86 dead cormorants/nest, respectively, see Table 1A) but varied considerably from one area of the island to another (Table 1B). In sub-colonies where mortality occurred, those on the north and southwest shores of the island had a higher range of mortality rates (1.10-1.15 dead per nest), than those on the west, south and southeast shores (0.25-0.40 dead per nest). This does not appear to be related to any features on the island as 11 trees and ground nests were equally exposed.

At ground nests, the dead cormorants were usually still in the nest. The large young appeared to have died while still active, *i.e.*, they were usually partly outside of the nest, either lying across the nest or their bodies were in the nest cup while their necks and heads were draped over the edge of the nest. There were few if any large young that appeared to have died passively, *i.e.*, died in their sleep or while being brooded.

At tree nests approximately 19% of the observable dead were still in their nests and 81% were beneath the trees on the ground. Nearly



Figure 1. Photo of cormorant nest on Little Galloo Island showing medium-sized rock in nest cup.

all tree nests were intact and we found no signs that nests had fallen or been intentionally dislodged from the nest trees. Most tree nests were well above eye level and in relatively tall trees, 20-30' (7-10 m) high.

With only two exceptions (see below) we saw no indication of any unusual natural phenomenon, human disturbance or vandalism. We saw no fresh shotgun shells or rifle cartridges strewn about the island or dead cormorants with crushed skulls. This last feature, or any other skeletal damage, would have been difficult to detect and, due to the lack of necessary permits, we did not collect any of the carcasses.

We did find two ground nests, one on the west side of the island and one on the south side, containing large, 8" (3.1 cm) diameter rocks in the nest cup (Figure 1). Beneath each rock were eggshell fragments and in one nest a dead featherless cormorant chick. The chick was in a state of decomposition similar to most of the other dead young and we concluded that it had died when the rest of the deaths had occurred.

On 28 July, on Pigeon Island, where earlier in the year we censused 410 cormorant nests, we found 40 nests still active and a total of 37

dead juvenile cormorants. Omitting the active nests, this results in a mortality rate of 0.10 dead/nest. In our experience this is a much more usual figure for observed mortality on a cormorant colony (as determined by our methods) than the 0.84-0.86 dead per nest observed on Little Galloo.

DISCUSSION

The 623 dead juvenile cormorants on Little Galloo Island represent a significant portion of the potential productivity of the adult cormorant population. Since 1979 Double-crested Cormorants on established colonies on the Great Lakes have been producing (to fledging) approximately 2.0 young per nest (*i.e.*, per nesting pair of adults) (CWS unpubl.). Thus the 736 nests (nesting pairs) of cormorants which we recorded on Little Galloo Island should have yielded approximately 1500 young. The 623 dead juveniles represent approximately 42% of the potential productivity from Little Galloo Island. We did see several hundred fledged and/or nearly fledged young cormorants along the shore of the island. These birds presumably had fledged before or otherwise escaped the catastrophe(s).

From observations we made at the time of our visit to Little Galloo Island and from information that has since come to us (see below) there appear to be two causes for the large number of dead cormorants on Little Galloo Island. First, vandalism, as evidenced by the presence of medium-sized rocks in two nests, was a definite factor but one of unknown extent. We feel that whoever dropped the rocks into the two nests probably was responsible for at least some of the remaining cormorant mortality (at least at ground nests). It seems unlikely that any vandals would have dropped rocks into two nests and stopped there.

If our estimate is correct on how long the young cormorants had been dead, the vandalism could have occurred on or about the 4th of July weekend. We suspect one or more persons came to Little Galloo Island and at the very least dropped rocks into two nests. The same or different individuals may have gone around to some or all of the other ground nests and shot (perhaps with a pellet gun) and/or clubbed the young cormorants to death. This hypothesis is consistent with the positions in which we found many of the large dead young at ground nests. When approached by humans, large young cormorants extend their necks and lunge. If they were killed at this point, their heads and necks would drape over the edge of the nest. We cannot envision a form of passive death where the head and neck would be draped *over* the edge of the nest, and hence must conclude that these young were deliberately killed.

We do not believe the dead young in and below the tree nests were the result of vandalism. However, it is difficult to explain the large number of dead on the ground below nest trees. Usually only cormorants nearly ready to fledge will leap out of their nest when humans walk beneath the nest tree (pers. obs.). Few, if any, of the dead cormorants we found below nest trees were of this age. If the young had been shot while in the nest by someone standing to the side of the nest (out from under the nest tree where visibility would be the best), they would have collapsed in the nest. Also it is unlikely that wounded birds would crawl to the edge of the nest so as to fall to the ground. Finally, only if the nest and cormorant were shot at from directly below (and by something more powerful than a pellet gun) might the force of impact from a bullet be enough to throw the young out of the nest so that they would fall to the ground. This seems unlikely.

The second apparent cause of juvenile cormorant mortality on Little Galloo Island was a brief but intense rain and hailstorm which struck the island on Sunday, 15 July (B. Miller, G. Spaziani, New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation, pers. comm.). The storm came from the southwest, lasted approximately a half an hour (1600-1630 hours) and had 60 mph (100 kmh) winds and driving rain with intermittent $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.3 cm) diameter hail. A storm of that intensity would be severe enough to blow young cormorants from their tree nests. They would die either from the fall or from exposure.

We suspect that the vandalism occurred prior to the storm (4 vs. 15 July) and was directed at ground nests. The storm would have affected both ground and tree nests but the arboreal exposure of the latter would have put them at greater risk. Also depending upon how extensive the vandalism had been (at ground nests), there may have been only a few live cormorants still at their nests when the storm struck.

We do not feel that our original estimate of the time(s) of death (2-3 weeks prior to our visit) is inconsistent with our theory of two causes of death. We may not have been able to differentiate between carcasses dead for three weeks (vandals) and those dead only two weeks (storm). Furthermore, birds killed during the storm and pelted with hail and rain may have appeared to have been dead longer than they actually had.

If the storm moved northeast from Little Galloo Island, it would have missed Pigeon Island which lies directly north. It would also appear that the vandals who visited Little Galloo did not go to Pigeon Island.

We have no reason to suspect that other causes of death (*e.g.*, toxic chemical poisoning) played any major role in the mortality on Little Galloo Island. From our previous surveys of toxic chemicals in eggs of Herring Gulls and cormorants from monitor colonies in Lake Ontario,

we know that levels of the most predominant organochlorines (OCs) have decreased sharply and nearly continuously over the last 10 years (Weseloh *et al.* 1979, IJC 1983, Mineau *et al.* 1984, CWS unpubl.). Also, the levels of several OCs in eggs from Little Galloo Island in 1981 and 1982 were comparable to or lower than those in eggs from other Lake Ontario colonies (CWS unpubl.).

Although dead cormorants were very obvious on the island, we did not notice an abnormally large number of carcasses of any of the other colonial waterbirds which abundantly nest on Little Galloo Island, *i.e.*, Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Herring and Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*). Young of these species are more mobile and prone to flee than young cormorants and would have been able to take refuge in nearby vegetation when the vandals and storm struck.

Finally, with respect to deaths caused by vandals and to the lack of an abnormally large number of carcasses of other colonial waterbird species, we would be naive to discount the possibility that young cormorants had been singled out for attack. Cormorant numbers have been increasing sharply in recent years (Scharf and Shugart 1981, Price and Weseloh, MS) and cormorants are now more numerous on Lake Ontario (and the Great Lakes) than at any time in their recorded history (Weseloh *et al.* unpubl.). Fishermen have been known to vandalize cormorant colonies when cormorant numbers are high and they fear the birds are competing with them for fish (Omand 1947, Quilliam 1972). We are not suggesting that fishermen were responsible for the current vandalism on Little Galloo Island, but it is a possibility.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Mr. Bruce Beattie and the Phillips Petroleum Company for allowing us access to Little Galloo Island. The Technical Operations Division of the National Water Research Institute at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters, Burlington, Ontario, provided logistical support. Mssrs. Bob Miller, Gerald Spaziani, Lee Chamberlaine and Joe Lamandola of the New York Department of Environmental Conservation assisted in exploring causes of the mortality and/or providing weather data. Glen A. Fox, Martin K. McNicholl, Iola Price and Steve Curtis commented on earlier versions of the manuscript.

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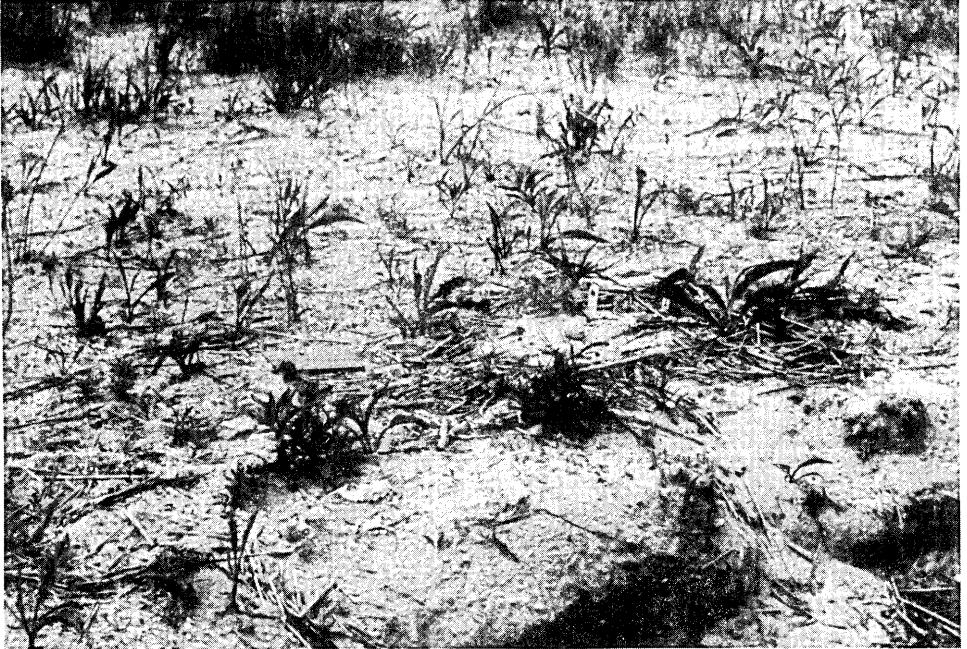
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BREEDING STATUS OF THE AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER IN THE TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD

JOHN D. ZARUDSKY



American Oystercatcher nesting habitat – dredge spoil
John Zarudsky

The American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) population and range on Long Island has expanded considerably during the more than twenty-five years since the first nest was recorded on Gardiner's Island in 1957 by L. Wilcox. That occurrence, along with other nesting records from 1960-1964 in eastern Long Island at Gardiner's Island, Cartwright Island, Moriches Inlet, and Shinnecock Bay, have been documented by Post (1961) and Post and Raynor (1964).

During the 1970's increased numbers and a westward expansion were recorded in a number of regional reports. In 1970, approximately 30 breeding pairs were reported on Gardiner's Island (*Kingbird* 20: 206).

In 1975, expansion into western Great South Bay, South Oyster Bay, and Jamaica Bay (10-12 pairs, 12 May) was cited by A. Lauro (*Kingbird* 25: 174). In 1976, 50 pairs were recorded during a Long Island aerial survey as cited by M. Gochfeld (*Kingbird* 26: 75). In 1977, continued breeding expansion of American Oystercatcher was cited by A. Lauro (*Kingbird* 27: 238); 40 pairs were counted on the sewer outfall line area of Nassau County, north of Jones Beach, during the summer.

During the 1980's, substantial increases have been recorded locally within the Town of Hempstead from 1981-1984 (Table 1), with expansion particularly apparent during 1983 and 1984. In 1983, 26 nests (21 breeding pairs) were recorded, and, in 1984, 48 nests (37 breeding pairs) were counted.

Table 1. Location and number of American Oystercatcher nests within Town of Hempstead Estuary. (1980-1984)

Location	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
North Line Island	*	2*	6	9 (6)	20 (13)
Seamans Island					1
Great Island-Low Island			1	2	4 (3)
Middle Line Island		3	2	3	2 ***
Green Island					1
Flat Island			1	1	2
Black Banks Island		2	2	4 (2)	3
Island NE of Sanford Is.		1	1	2	6 *** (3)
Long Meadow (East)				1	2 **
Long Meadow (West)				1	2
Cuba Island			1 **	1	1
Alder Island				1	1
Pine Marsh					1
Cinder Island				1	1
North Cinder Island		1			
Lawrence Marsh		—	—	—	1
		9	14	26 (21)	48 (37)

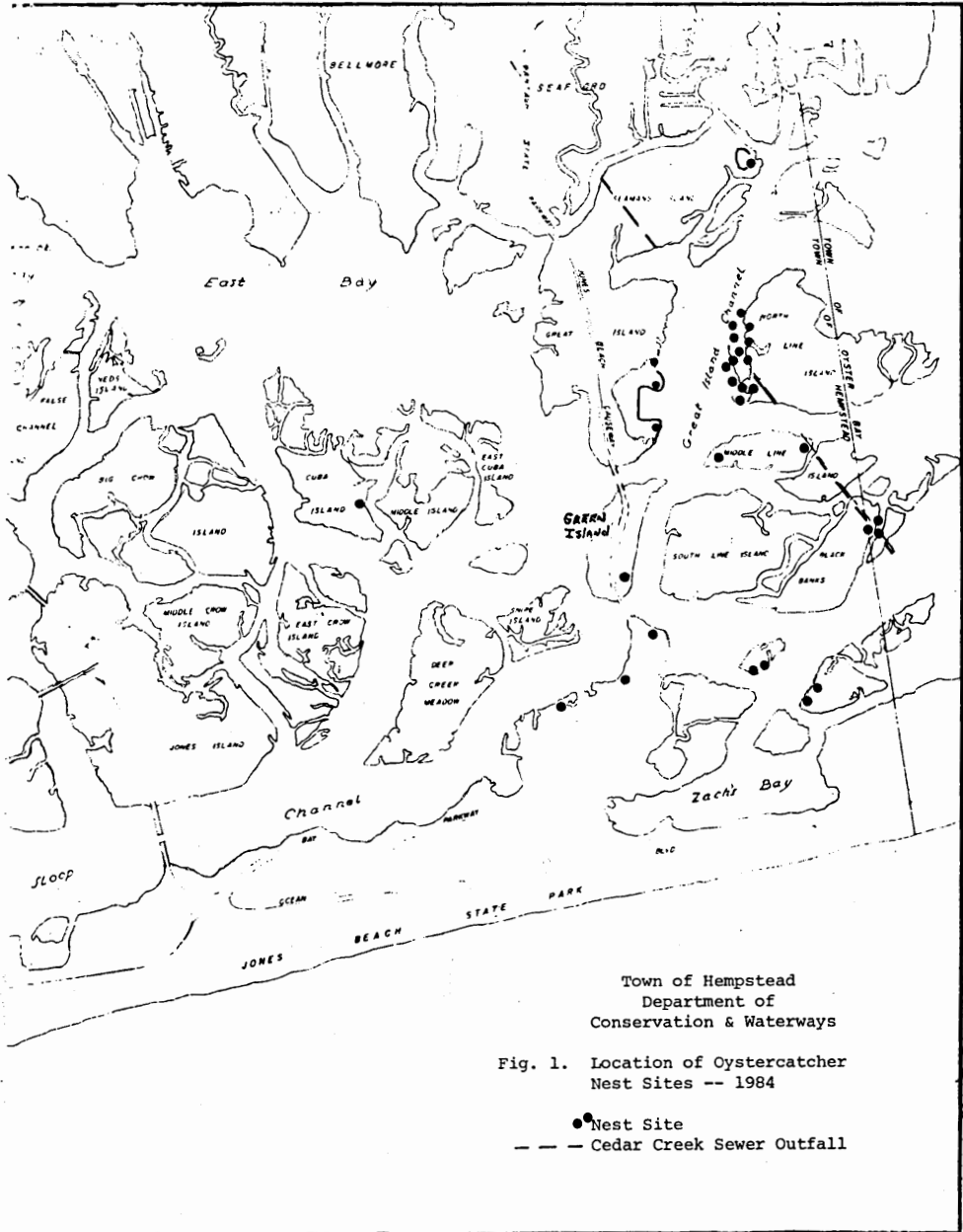
* Year of sewer outfall repair and restoration activities

** Estimated; pair of adults frequently seen on area

() Estimated number of breeding pairs

*** One pair of total reported by B. Lauro

In other locations on the south shore during 1984, namely in South Oyster Bay from the Town of Hempstead – Town of Oyster Bay line to Oak Beach, 32 pairs were recorded by B. Lauro (pers. comm.) and an estimated 20 pairs were breeding in Jamaica Bay (D. Riepe, pers. comm.). Further reports received from Seatuck Research Unit in conjunction with Common Tern censuses showed that at least one pair of oystercatchers was observed with each of the ten colonies extending





*American Oystercatcher nest on wrack – salt marsh
John Zarudsky*

from Signus Thatch Island (Town of Babylon) to Hicks Island in Peconic Bay. Captree Island, however, had 2 or 3 pairs. On Gardiner's Island a total of 12-15 pairs was estimated on Bostwick Point and Cartwright Point by M. Male (pers. comm., 27 Dec. 1984).

From these various reports, including those from Jamaica Bay, the Town of Hempstead, and South Oyster Bay, the annual total of breeding pairs for Long Island is estimated at well above one hundred, an increase not originally anticipated during the 1960's (Post and Raynor, 1964).

While a number of factors may have contributed to the increases and range expansion over the past two decades, local and recent expansion within the Town of Hempstead estuary may be partly attributed to greater nest-site availability, resulting from dredge-spoil deposits that were created by the construction (1972-1974) and repair (1980-1981) of the Cedar Creek Sewage Treatment Outfall. These spoil deposits occur as overfill of the pipeline, residual material paralleling the pipeline, and managed disposal of excess material.

Prior to these construction activities, aerial photographs of the area indicate a lack of available high ground for nesting and an area not unlike other sectors of the estuary.

Nest Site Selection

Nesting areas included dredged material (spoil) which includes barren, sparsely vegetated, or vegetated sites, supra (high) sand bars, averaging 21 x 207 feet (6.4m x 83.1m) and salt marsh. Of 45 nests recorded during 1984, 33 (77.3%) were on dredge spoil, 10 (22.2%) on supra (high) sand bars, 1 (2.2%) on marsh and 1 (2.2%) on construction material. Most of the nests, *i.e.*, 38 (84.4%) occurred east of the Wantagh Causeway with 31 (68.9%) located on dredge spoil primarily associated with the construction of the sewer outfall. Similarly, in 1983, 22 of 26 (84.6%) of the nests occurred east of the Wantagh Causeway, with 17 (65.4%) located on dredge spoil (Fig. 1).

Arrival Period

American Oystercatchers were first observed in the Hempstead Bay area in 1984 during the third and fourth weeks of March. Several sightings included two adults on 22 Mar near Point Lookout, three adults on 28 Mar in East Bay and six adults on 29 Mar on Flat Island, a previously used nesting area east of the Wantagh Causeway. Arrival dates that have previously been recorded by various observers elsewhere on Long Island have been 26 Mar 1967, at Jones Beach, 9 Mar 1979, at Jones Beach, the earliest date recorded; 16 and 23 Mar at Tobay, 22 Mar at Hampton Bays, and 23 Mar at Shinnecock during 1980; and 14 Mar 1981 at a number of points on Long Island.

Nest Initiation

The earliest eggs in nests in 1984 were observed on North Line Island

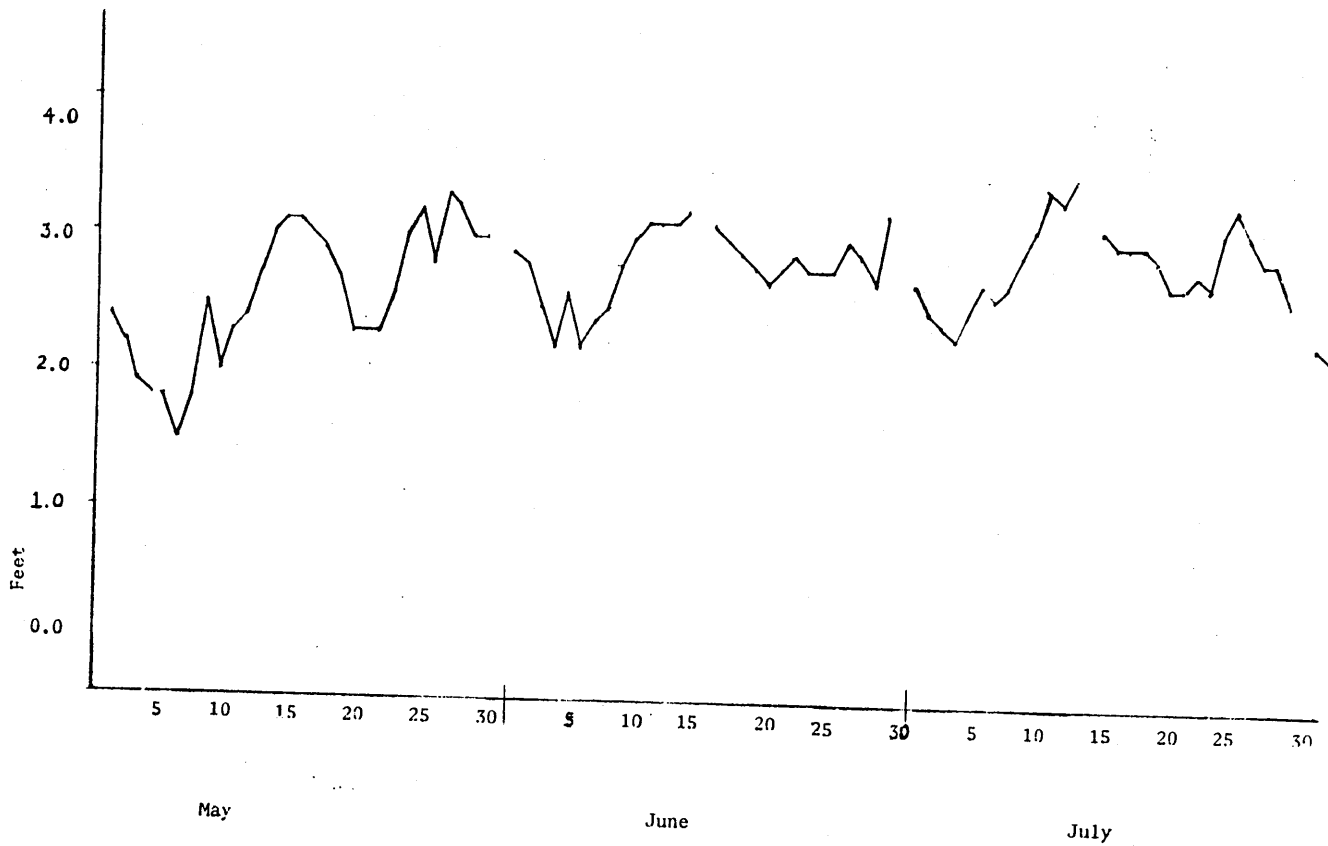


Fig. 2. Daily highest tides, Seamans Neck Park, Seaford - 1983

during the last week in April. Of seven nests located on 27 Apr., three contained one each, one contained two eggs, and three contained three eggs each. At least 20 nests were located during the first week in May on North Line and adjacent islands.

Clutch Size

Clutch size was obtained only for those nests that were observed for several weeks and that did not include nests robbed or abandoned before a full clutch was produced. Based on 34 nests, the mean clutch size (± 1 SD) in 1984 amounted to 3.08 ± 1.02 and for 15 nests in 1983, $3.26 \pm .88$. In Virginia mean clutch size for nests studied during six years (1978-1983) was 2.8 in first clutches (Nol, Baker, and Cadman, 1984).

Nest Diameter

The average diameter for 15 nests, which are usually a depression in the sand lined with shell fragments or pieces of littoral drift, was 18.9×19.6 cm.

Minimum Distance Between Nests

This species is semi-colonial, and two or more nests were often found on the same bar or dredge spoil hummock. Among minimum nearest-neighbor distances for active nests in 1984 were: 14.4 feet (4.4m) on Black Banks Island, 18.0 feet (5.5m) on Flat Island, and 18.3 feet (5.6m), 18.2 feet (5.5m) and 15.0 feet (4.6m) on North Line Island.

Average Elevation of Nest Site Above Mean High Water

Since above-normal tidal fluctuations can affect nests built near marsh levels, quantitative measurements were taken in 1984 to determine actual nest height above mean high water (MHW).

On North Line Island, at a large spoil area on which 20 nests were located and where elevations are known, a transit was used to obtain nest elevations. These elevations were then referenced to data from a local tide gauge recorder. The average elevation above MHW during the months of April, May, June and July for nests located on this area was 1.1 feet (0.3m). On other spoil areas and sand bars where reference elevations were not available, a hand level and Lenker self-reading rod was used to estimate nest height above MHW using short (< 15") (38.1cm) *Spartina alterniflora* as a reference. The average elevation above MHW for these nests was also 1.1 feet (0.3m). These measurements indicate, then, the use of nest sites elevated with a reasonable degree of protection from average high and, to an extent, moon tides. In 1983, five of 26 nests were located close to marsh elevations. Two of three marsh nests and two nests on low spoil (< 1' above the marsh) were believed to have been unsuccessful due to lunar tide flooding. The period of egg loss or abandonment coincided with above marsh (2.6'

(.79m) tidal highs of 3.2 (.97m) and 3.5 feet (1.1m) (fig. 2). Of two nests in 1984 built at or near marsh elevation, the one on low spoil experienced the same tidal flooding as in 1983. It is probable that if the population increases and competition for formerly used sites also increases, more nesting on high marsh with wrack will occur.

Late Summer Migration

Shorebirds tend to congregate on various mud flats and sand bars to feed and rest during their annual spring and fall migratory journeys. During late summer, large numbers of oystercatchers have been seen by various observers congregating on the Line Islands; one flock in late summer of 1977 consisted of 75 birds, 109 on 3 Sept. 1979, 155 on 11 August 1983, 215 on 15 August on North Line Island, and 104 on 31 July 1984.

Human Disturbances

Isolated supra sand bars and sandy dredge spoil sites afford ideal small-boat landing sites for picnicking and at times exercising dogs. Several instances of nest disturbance—damage to eggs or killing of chicks—have been attributed to recreational activities carried on at these sand bars. Disturbance is particularly acute during the Memorial Day weekend, when there may be both eggs and chicks present.

On the larger spoil area, North Line Island, where Common Terns, Herring Gulls, and American Oystercatchers, and occasionally Black Skimmers nest, "No Trespassing—Bird Nesting Area" signs were posted in order to identify the area and hopefully minimize disturbances.

Juvenile Production

Juvenile fledgling success was estimated on the basis of observations at six to eight weeks after hatching, or until late July. For 20 nest sites observed, juvenile success was .80 on North Line Island. However, where at least 13 breeding pairs nested, it was difficult to distinguish all nesting pairs with juveniles. Juvenile success could only be estimated at .54.

Since Herring Gulls and Common Terns also nest in the area, it is believed that predation and interspecific competition may limit production. The killing of juvenile oystercatchers by Herring Gulls has been reported previously by Post (1961), and Common Tern attacks on both adults and juveniles were believed to have caused juvenile mortality at Moriches during 1961-1963 (Post and Raynor, 1964). On North Line Island, an oystercatcher nest was occupied and subsequently taken over by a Herring Gull and both Herring Gull and American Oystercatcher chicks have been observed under the same clump of vegetation during 1984. The eventual fate of those oystercatcher chicks, although unknown, was dubious.

Conclusion

The American Oystercatcher population has expanded considerably during more than two and one-half decades since nesting was initially documented on Gardiner's Island in 1957. Substantial increases have been recorded especially along the South Shore from Jamaica Bay to South Oyster Bay during 1983-84. During this time period, within the Town of Hempstead, nesting has been primarily concentrated on dredge spoil deposits, accounting for 70.4% of the total nests recorded. An additional 21% of the nests occurred on supra sand bars located along major boat channels. Oystercatchers begin arriving in local estuaries from mid to late March with egg nest initiation occurring by late April. Clutch size in 1984 was 3.1 ± 1 , and $3.3 \pm .9$ in 1983. Average nest height above mean high water was 1.1 feet (0.3m). Juvenile production for twenty separate nest sites was .80. On areas where Herring Gulls, Common Terns, and American Oystercatchers nest, such as on North Line Island, interspecific competition may limit oystercatcher reproduction. Juvenile success there was estimated at only .54.

It will be interesting to observe to what extent the expansion of the oystercatcher population will be limited in future years, particularly if dredge spoil areas can continue to provide nesting sites as plant succession occurs and if competition for these sites by gulls increases. Periodic managed disposal of dredged material, however, can help insure that future nesting habitat is provided or maintained.

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NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Yellow-rumped Warbler in flight feather molt on Great Gull Island: On 28 August 1983, I netted an adult (AHY) female Yellow-rumped ("Myrtle") Warbler (*Dendroica coronata coronata*) on Great Gull Island, Suffolk County. Most of its body was still in alternate plumage, although a few brownish feathers had appeared on the back. However, the flight feathers of the wings and tail were in heavy molt. Primaries 9-5 on each side were worn and faded; primary 4 was somewhat less than half grown; and growing primaries 3-1 formed a graded series of increasing length. When the bird was netted, the outermost tail feather on each side (rectrix 6) was present, also in worn condition. One of these fell off before the bird was released, and had obviously been ready to be shed. The remaining rectrices were growing in, virtually simultaneously, and had reached about one-third its normal length.

Although both of John Bull's books (1964, *Birds of the New York Area*, p. 376; 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 486) indicate that there are a few August records for migrant Yellow-rumped Warblers in New York, the species is said to be "rare before September." This statement must obviously exclude records from the immediate vicinity of the breeding areas within the state.

Wood warblers normally undergo their complete prebasic molt on or very near the breeding locality. This is illustrated, in the case of the Yellow-rumped Warbler, by three Canadian specimens in the collection of Carnegie Museum of Natural History, all of which are in a molt stage close to that of the Great Gull Island bird. Specimen 111116 was collected 26 August 1931 at Moose Factory, Ontario. It retains the two outermost worn primaries on the right wing and the outermost (only) on the left wing. Specimen 129630 was collected 10 August 1942 at Aklavik, Northwest Territories, and retains five old primaries on the right wing and four on the left. Finally, specimen 156692 was collected 28 August 1933 at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and retains three old primaries on each wing. All of these were collected at breeding localities for the species, as indicated by the presence of juveniles taken at the same time and place.

The southernmost New York breeding localities for Yellow-rumped Warblers known to Bull were in the Shawangunk Mountains. However, the nearest breeding localities to Great Gull Island are not in New York but in Connecticut. The southernmost proven breeding site for this species in that state is at the White Memorial in Litchfield, roughly a 70-mile straight-line distance from Great Gull Island. However, the species is suspected to breed in the Union forest, northeasternmost Tolland County, which is approximately 50 miles directly to the north of Great Gull Island.

It is impossible, of course, to know whether the Great Gull Island bird's flight had originated in nearby Connecticut or substantially farther north. However, as indicated above, wood warblers do not normally leave their breeding grounds before molting and then undergo the complete prebasic molt at some intermediate staging area. Although I cannot be certain that this bird arrived on Great Gull Island during the night of 27-28 August, it had not been netted or seen by any of the Island personnel before that date. The heavy molt of the flight feathers would seem to preclude this bird's having flown very far; in fact, it is amazing

that it ventured to cross either the eight miles of open water across Long Island Sound from Connecticut or the three miles from Plum Island to the west. That it succeeded in making such a crossing makes one wonder about the validity of the careful computations of "wing loading capacity" in the literature, based on planimetric measurements of tracings of complete (*i.e.*, fully feathered) wings.

The warbler was netted and banded under the permits issued to Helen Hays, Chairman of the American Museum of Natural History's Great Gull Island Project. I am indebted to Noble S. Proctor for information on the breeding range of the Yellow-rumped Warbler in Connecticut.

This is contribution no. 65 from the Great Gull Island Project, American Museum of Natural History.

Kenneth C. Parkes, Carnegie Museum of Natural History,
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NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Spectacular Flight of Purple Finches at Derby Hill: White and Norway Spruce in the winter of 1984-85 had an extremely abundant cone crop. Southern Onondaga and Madison Counties, northern Cortland and Chenango Counties had hundreds of acres planted with these trees in the 1930's. There are also Larch, Red Pine and mixed deciduous trees.

This entire area was used heavily this winter by several finch species. Predominant were White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins. There were also Red Crossbills, Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks. Almost none of these species visited feeding stations, probably because of the natural food available. It was not unusual to see many small flocks of 20-30 Purple Finches feeding in the cones. Concentrations of finches must have occurred in other areas as well, where cones were abundant.

On 18 April 1985 weather predictions were perfect for a hawk flight at Derby Hill. But the front did not move. The weather continued overcast with rain and light southeast winds. The only birds moving were flocks of finches. Most of the observers watched for flocks to point out to Scheider who counted the flocks and kept the total count. By noon the weather broke enough for some hawks to migrate, and still flocks of 50 to 200 Purple Finches kept coming. The peak flight was between 1130 and 1500 hours. By late afternoon, Scheider's count was 7700. There had been 500 Purple Finches before his arrival, making a total for the day of 8200. Previous high reported was 600, Riis Park, 17 November 1973 (Bull 1976, *Supplement to Birds of New York State*, Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., p. 44). Gerry Smith, the Derby Hill observer, reported there were essentially no Purple Finches either the day before or after this flight.

During the entire day there were no more than 30 Pine Siskins, one small flock of Evening Grosbeaks and no crossbills.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

For the third year running, a relatively warm Fall has been followed by warm periods through at least the early Christmas counts. The pattern was quite similar across the whole state. Where details were presented, December was at or near the all-time warmest, averaging 6-8° F. above normal. Record highs were set early and/or late in the month, in Regions 1, 3, 4, and 9. Late February brought an early taste of Spring and a similar burst of record highs in Regions 9 and 10. This also brought the start of spring migration for waterfowl, some raptors, blackbirds, and a few other early species. In between, January to early February provided us with winter cold and snow with, as examples, 45 straight days of snowfall in Region 2, 34 days in a row below freezing plus the second snowiest January on record (66") in Region 1, and parts of Region 7 going from bare ground in late December to burial under four to six feet of snow by late January. A trial for everyone included record flooding in Region 5 in December, and further flooding with the February thaw in Region 6.

The general tone of birding matched the seesaw weather pattern. There were widespread complaints of few birds at feeders, consistent with reports of an excellent wild food crop in all regions and a warm, open fall and early winter. Yet the CBC's were at average to above for species counts, with many "half-hardy" reports and scattered very high totals, as well as a few lows for some of the traditional count species. January's snow brought a few more species to feeders, but the wild food was apparently sufficient for most birds. The short duration of the really severe cold ensured that many of the lingerers made it through the season. In terms of the major groups sought by birders in winter, the "half-hardies," in spite of feeder watcher complaints, were well recorded; winter finches were poorly reported outside of Region 7 and points immediately adjacent; and winter incursive species were generally quite low, particularly Rough-legged Hawk, Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, and Evening Grosbeak – all reported, but low to zero across the several regions. Continuing the general look, we find, as usual, that Region 10 is in a class by itself this winter, with 192 species recorded, 88% of the state's total for the season. However, this year provided the North Country with what was "... possibly the winter of the century for the Adirondack-Champlain Region and certainly so for the post-WW II period for which good comparative quantitative data are available," according to John Peterson. This excitement centered around the massive invasion of crossbills and siskins,

including CO Atlas records for each species by season's end, but also included excellent late dates and high counts for their CBC's in spite of abominable weather. Region 9's report causes us to look ahead with the comments attributed to Frank Murphy that it is unlikely that plants will expend as much energy on seeds and fruits two years in a row, so that next winter should provide a sharp contrast – little wild food and, maybe (?), lots of feeder birds.

Let's now take our usual, seasonal mental ramble through the checklist, and this time I will try to pick up most of the highlights in one pass, including some of the exceptional high counts and late dates. Each year it becomes a bit more difficult to pinpoint new state records as we add years from John Bull's landmark compilation (*Birds of New York State*, Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1974) and one must pour through all the intervening issues of *The Kingbird* or trust fallible memory. Loons, grebes, and waterfowl were well represented across the state with open water nearly everywhere at least through the CBC's, often through the January Waterfowl Census. Highlights included very high counts of 402 Hooded Mergansers in Region 1 and 27,000 Brant in Region 10, and such rarities as Eared Grebe and Western Grebe in Region 10, Greater White-fronted Goose in Region 9, Eurasian Wigeon in Region 8, and Harlequin Ducks in Regions 1 and 5, the latter two, of course, were present in numbers in Region 10, as expected. Double-crested Cormorant continues its increase across the state, even at this season, appearing in seven regions. Will we soon hear an outcry as flocks of cormorants clean out the fish in small farm ponds inland? Among the herons, Region 10's report reads like a roster of the breeding season. Across the state we find state late dates for Cattle Egret – 12/12 in Region 10 and 12/21 in Region 2 and Green-backed Heron very late in Regions 2 and 3, as well as 10. The raptor picture is fairly typical of winter, with special notes including: early Turkey Vultures in Regions 1 and 2 in late February and a single in Region 7 in late January; Bald Eagles in all regions scattered thru the season; no less than three Broad-winged Hawk events in Region 9, with three on 12/22, one adult on 2/7, and an unprecedented 18 on 2/17 along with a passing group which included ten Red-tails, five Rough-legs, and one Osprey – also a month early!!; the usual few Merlin and Peregrine Falcon reports, spiced a bit by a report from Region 4 where a farmer flushed a late Wood Duck only to see it blasted from the sky by a streaking Peregrine . . . read the report for details of the fate of one and all; and finally a cooperative gray phase Gyrfalcon in Region 10 thru the season. Even the rails had their day this year with the Black Rail late date extended to 1 January in Region 10. Wild Turkey continues to increase in nearly all regions and Ring-necked Pheasant to decrease. Shorebirds were present in

typical numbers in both coastal and inland areas with a few late dates, as expected in a year such as this, with Spotted Sandpiper at record coastal and inland dates – 12/16 in Region 10 and 12/1 in Region 3 – and Dunlin very late on 1/6 in Region 1, plus American Woodcock early with the February thaw in Regions 1, 7, 9, and 10. Gulls are represented by high counts in Region 10, most notably 68,000 Herring Gulls and a record high 1,500 Black-legged Kittiwakes on 12/15, and by rarities such as a first regional, winter Laughing Gull in Region 1 from 1/29 to 2/16 and Thayer's Gull in Regions 6, 7 and 8. Alcids of note included a second regional, third inland Razorbill in Region 1 on 1/2 and a Common Murre in Region 10 on 12/30. Owl reports were up a bit. Possibly owling is more appealing on warm nights. Northern Saw-whet Owl was reported from six regions and Region 7 again reports Great Gray Owl.

Pause for a breath, —, then off through the second half of the checklist. Among the woodpeckers, we wonder again whether last year's Long Island Red-headed Woodpeckers really were our (Region 2) local birds as this year Long Island is back to their normal few, while our local colonies are repopulated with the return of a normal acorn crop. Moving into the passerines, we will find a host of late dates. Late flycatchers included E. Phoebes in Regions 9 and 10 and a record late Eastern Kingbird on 12/30 in Region 10. Somewhat surprisingly, there were no late or early swallow records. Common Raven continues to expand its range, with reports from Regions 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The only out-of-place Boreal Chickadee was in Region 2. Wrens saw a Carolina in winter in Region 7, House in Regions 9 and 10, Winter in seven regions, and Marsh in four regions. Both kinglets were reported in good numbers scattered across the state. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were recorded at record late dates in two regions, with two on 12/10 and one on 12/20 in Region 10 surpassed by one from 12/15-30 in Region 9. Thrushes provided two interesting notes with Swainson's reported in Regions 9 and 10 at very late dates and American Robins roosting in incredible, unprecedented numbers in Region 8 – a conservative 50,000 in one roost (locally in Region 2, we had been impressed by a record CBC count of an over 1800 total). Robins were flagged as up in nearly all regions for the season. Cedar Waxwings, too, were noted in good numbers in most regions. Our waning state population of Loggerhead Shrike was represented by a single wintering individual in Region 9. These are becoming "chase birds" for year listers in this state. As another indicator of the mild fall and winter, two species of vireos and 13 species of warblers were tallied. The most notable late records were: the state late Solitary Vireo on 12/29 in Region 10, a state late Red-eyed Vireo on 1/23 in Region 9, Cape May Warbler in Region

2 on 12/9, a Black-throated Blue Warbler on 12/1 in Region 1, the state late Yellow-throated Warbler on 12/1 in Region 3, an American Redstart on 12/23 in Region 9, and very late Wilson's Warblers on 12/22 in Regions 8 and 10. In the face of all those late warbler records, the Yellow-rumped Warbler was relatively scarce thruout the state. Northern Cardinals were cited as low in several regions, possibly due to scarcity at feeders with all of the wild food available. There were only two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, but one of these on 2/16 in Region 2 was suggestive of successful wintering thru. The sparrow group provided abundant "half-hardies"; I'll leave it to you to ferret out your favorites. Of special note were a "Spotted" Towhee in Region 8 and a high count of 512 Dark-eyed Juncos from Region 1. There are also several reports of "Pink-sided" Junco from Region 7. The icterids gave us a state late Bobolink on 12/15 in Region 9, a first regional Brewer's Blackbird on 12/6-14 in Region 7, one Yellow-headed Blackbird in Region 2, and an amazing new high of 39 Boat-tailed Grackles wintering in Region 10. Finches bring up the rear. Winter finches are most of their story, mainly confined to Regions 7 and 8 and the higher parts of Regions 4 and 5, except for scattered small numbers. Note the discussion of separable subspecies of Red Crossbill in the introductory section of the Region 7 report. Interestingly, all regions but Region 7 reported Evening Grosbeaks virtually absent this winter. Tune in to next year's changing picture.

As always, there are numerous interesting notes dispersed through the regional reports and I can't pass bringing a couple more to your attention. How many individuals do you have at your feeder in those flocks of sparrows or finches? In Region 4 a bander had 20-25 Purple Finches coming, banded 100+, and still had many unbanded individuals in any group of 20-25 present at a given time. Unless you find distinctively marked individuals or lone rarities, you generally have no idea of the real numbers of individuals visiting your feeder. Again from a bander, this time in Region 8, we have a House Finch recaptured on 1/20/85, banded on 12/8/73 in the same city! You can surely find more to match your own special interests.

This season the rarities have been woven into the species notes above. As you have seen, there are no records standing far above the rest, thus no B.O.T.S. Award for this season. Let's hope that spring brings a better selection to tempt us all afield.

716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

The unusually warm weather of the fall season continued on into winter making 8 December the warmest in 114 years of records at Buffalo. Temperatures averaged nearly seven degrees above normal and ranked second to the warm December of two years ago. Seasonal snowfall up to New Year's Eve was 12.6 inches, the lowest since 1948 and much behind the 69.7 inches logged by the same time last year. Rain averaged 3.67 inches, about a quarter of an inch above normal. The region was on the fringes of storm systems, with the jet stream taking a northward sweep just to the west and allowing the Bermuda High to influence our weather. This certainly was one of the factors keeping birds in the fields and woods away from feeders but the abundance of wild foods, the lack of snowstorms and an increase in accipiters – both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned, must also be considered.

Over much of the region south of Buffalo, January was fairly typical but Buffalo itself in the lee of unfrozen Lake Erie was hit by a vicious lake-effect blizzard on the 19th when 15.6 inches of snow occurred and two days later when 14.9 inches hit. These finally drove birds to feeders where they seemed in relatively short supply through the rest of the month. Sixty-six inches of snow fell in Buffalo during January, which was the second greatest monthly total recorded in 100 years – just short of the 68 inches of January 1977. To the south and east in the region, away from the area of lake-effect snows, snow depths were near normal. Lake Erie froze over 22 January and apparently concentrated more water birds in Dunkirk Harbor as well as other open water.

February began with arctic air and frequent light snowfalls, but a thaw developed on the 11th after 34 days of below freezing weather which began the snow melt. The average temperature for the month was slightly above normal at 24.8° F. and Lake Erie remained frozen at 32° F. The amount of possible sunshine was 19%, the lowest sunshine total ever recorded. Heavy rains occurred over the region on the 23rd and 24th with rapid snow melt as temperatures climbed into the 50's. Rain coupled with the snow melt resulted in much flooding in low-lying areas. Birds left the feeding stations again as soon as the thaw occurred.

The mild December produced many late fall or winter records for species normally wintering farther south. N. Flicker, E. Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Am. Robin, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, and E. Meadowlark were all reported in the region and most in goodly numbers. Am. Woodcock, Com. Snipe and Black-throated Blue Warbler were reported from Jamestown in mid-December and later, and White-crowned Sparrows, becoming regular winter visitors on the lake plain, were found there in three localities, with five on the Scio Christmas Count. A Chipping Sparrow was seen on the Fredonia CC 1 January and later. Wintering Rusty Blackbirds are not common in the region but one was seen 9 January in Chautauqua Co.

The Southern Tier counties, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany, have

traditionally hoped for the influx of carduline finches and have always been puzzled at their unpredictability. Almost no large numbers of these birds appeared but there were small numbers of most species. Several observers spoke of one Evening Grosbeak female one day, which makes one wonder if she was just making the rounds. A few Pine Grosbeaks appeared but no large incursion, a few Pine Siskins (one report of a large flock), and a few crossbills of both species. Goldfinches were fairly common but not in large flocks as in 1983-84. Purple Finches seemed to be more common than usual, particularly later in the winter. Large junco flocks of up to 100 wintered and appeared to be mostly males, feeding on the abundant hemlock seeds scattered on the snow after every wind and snow.

Dunkirk Harbor has become a mecca for water birds in winter and these have attracted many birders. The most interesting species were Laughing Gull and Harlequin Duck, at least three species of grebes, ten species of ducks, Canada Goose and Tundra Swan. Snow Buntings with a few Lapland Longspurs were reported in good numbers in the central and northern part of the region. Gulls of at least seven species were reported from the Niagara River and Dunkirk Harbor. The thaw in late February produced first reports of migrating Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, N. Pintails, Gadwalls, Turkey Vultures, Killdeers, Common Grackles, and Red-winged Blackbirds.

Abbreviations: Allegany-A; Bird Club-BC; Christmas Count-CC; Dunkirk Harbor-DH; Fredonia-F; Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge-INWR; Jamestown-J; St. Bonaventure-SB; State Park-SP.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: two DH 15 Feb (TM) and 16 & 20 Feb. (AS *et al.*). Com. Loon: one or two DH 8-25 Dec., 13-18 Jan. and 10-20 Feb. indicates wintering successfully. Pied-billed Grebe: winters fairly regularly on the Allegheny R. but seldom elsewhere in the region, so one to four DH 1-29 Jan. and 10-26 Feb. is interesting. Horned Grebe also found DH as a winter haven after the blizzards when 40 were seen 3 Feb. (RA *et al.*); 75 max 10 Feb. (DG) and 22 on 23 Feb. (PH). Red-necked Grebe: usually very rare in winter according to Beardslee & Mitchell, but one to two appeared at DH just before the blizzard 17 Jan. (TM, DG) and reported there as late as 3 Feb. (RA *et al.*). Double-crested Cormorant: one and two showed up late at DH 18 and 24 Dec. (TM). Great Blue Heron was reported from several areas about region in Dec. and Jan. but reports dwindled to one at Belmont 16 Feb. (L & DB). Tundra Swan first moved into region when one appeared in Twn. Kiantone, Chaut. Co. 28 Feb. (DD). Snow Goose: one SBCC Olean 15 Dec. (FM); two Burgeson Sanc. 23-31 Dec. (DC, DC, Jr.). Tundra Swan: first migrants Twn. Kiantone, Chaut. Co. 28 Feb. (DD). Though Canada Geese were reported through the period they were probably locals; migrants first over Amity L. and Dunkirk 23 Feb. Green-winged Teal: two Orchard Park, Erie Co. 21 Dec. (DF) and one Niagara Falls 29 Dec. (HA *et al.*).

Am. Black Duck: one of special concern, seen in fair numbers on CC's: 19 FCC, 13 SBCC, 77 JCC. Mallard on CC's: 221 FCC; 556 JCC; 9 SCC; 38 SBCC. Pintail: wintered in region at DH, INWR and Buffalo. Gadwall: first 29 Jan. DH (TM *et al.*) and perhaps first migrants INWR 26 Feb. (DE). Am. Wigeon: five 26 Feb. INWR first (DE). Canvasback: no reports away from Niagara R. where several thousand were around end of year. Redhead: 80 DH 16 Feb. first migrants, 120 DH 20 Feb. (AS *et al.*). Ring-necked Duck: one Red House L. 2 Dec. (TB); two SBCC at Olean 15 Dec.; three JCC 16 Dec. were unusual Dec. records; first spring one DH 15 Feb. (TM). Greater Scaup: no reports. Lesser Scaup: one Amity L. 29 Dec. (VP); four FCC 1 Jan.; five DH 16 Feb. (AS *et al.*), probably migrants. King Eider: three Ft. Niagara SP 13 Jan. (Collins). Harlequin Duck: that beautiful duck of northern and western trout streams at nesting time showed up DH 5 Feb. as the Rosches dined at The Gallery Restaurant. What an appropriate name! Oldsquaw: one DH 26 Jan.; one 29 Jan. (DG, RS). All three species of scoters moved into DH after the blizzard. Black Scoter: two 30 Jan. (FR *et al.*). Surf Scoter: one 29 Jan. (TM, BC). White-winged Scoter: two 29 Jan. (TM, BC). Com. Goldeneye: 230 JCC 16 Dec.; 25 DH FCC. 1 Jan.; one Red House L. 23 Dec. and Quaker L. 6 Jan. (TB) reflects the late freezing of these waters; the species wintered in small numbers on the Allegheny R.; too common to be noteworthy about Buffalo. Bufflehead: 30 JCC 16 Dec.; 14 FCC and 26 All. Co. 15 Dec. Hooded Merganser: six ASP 2 Dec. (TB); one Allegheny R. 27 Jan. (TB); five DH 11 Jan. and one 29 Jan.; 402 JCC 16 Dec.; Feb. records DH and INWR. Com. Merganser: wintered on Allegheny and Genesee Rivers and on small lakes until freeze-up after mid-Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: eight FCC 1 Jan. Ruddy Duck: one DH 19 Jan. (FR, TMy).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one INWR 25 Feb. (DE) first. Bald Eagle: one adult Allegheny Res. 4 Dec. (VW); one imm lower Niagara R. 17 Feb. (BF, BOS). N. Harrier: reported from five localities on lake plain in Dec. and Jan. and one Twn. Angelica All. Co. 9 Feb. (CK). In Dec., Jan. and Feb. there were more reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks than Cooper's—some switch from a decade ago. Perhaps the abundant feeders are to blame. Chickadees fattened up on sunflower seeds must make a "sharpie's" day. I've always felt our locally breeding Goshawks move out in winter, so records in Jan. and Feb. are assumed to be migrants from the north or dispersals from forested country; one Eggertsville 14 Jan. (AM); one Wales 17 and 28 Jan. (A & OR); one Dunkirk 20 Feb. (AS, GS). Red-tailed Hawk: wintering fairly commonly now Allegheny plateau. Rough-legged Hawk: reported from All., Catt. and Chaut. Cos. along Southern Tier Expressway and Niagara Co. in Dec., Jan. Feb. Wild Turkey: the reported harvest in spring and fall 1984 showed a downward trend, reflecting poor productivity over the region and state as a whole (JG). Am. Coot: ten JCC 16 Dec.; 51 FCC DH 1 Jan.; 30 DH 29 Jan. (RS, DG); also DH 16 and 20 Feb. (AS *et al.*); one Celoron Chaut. L. 24 Feb. (DG); two INWR 26 Feb. (DE). Killdeer: first one Twn. Stockton, Chaut. Co. 17 Feb. (DG, DD). Purple Sandpiper: two Niagara R. 10 Jan., four 13 Jan. (Collins, HA); one DH 18 Jan. (MS); five Niagara Falls 16 Feb. (Collins). Am. Woodcock: one JCC 16 Dec. (KY) was a new count species. Com. Snipe: one Dolloff Rd., Jamestown area 9 Dec. (DG). LAUGHING GULL: one first seen DH 29 Jan. (RS, *et al.*) and later until 16 Feb. (AS, Walker), a first winter record for the region. Little Gull: one DH 8 Dec. (TM); one 5 and 13 Jan. (FR, LBk); three lower Niagara R. 3 Feb. (RB, BOS). Iceland Gull: one DH 5 and 13 Jan. (FR, LBk); one and three Adam Beck Hydro 10 and 16 Jan. (Collins); six Niagara R. 13 Jan. (HA); one Goat Island 10 Feb. (WD, BP). Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Adam Beck Hydro 26-31 Dec. (HA *et al.*), also next day. Glaucous Gull: first winter report Adam Beck Hydro 23 Dec. (Collins, HA); several reports Niagara R. Jan. and Feb. RAZORBILL: one Ft. Niagara 2 Jan. (HA *et al.*), a second record for region and third state inland record (Vivian Pitzrick, *Kingbird*: 33: 116).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: six locality records from the lake plain near Buffalo and one from Mayville, Chaut. Co. Records from 1 Dec. to 26 Jan. Long-eared Owl: one Youngstown, Niagara Co. 9 Dec. (WD, BP); one Wheatfield 12 Jan. (WD, BP). Short-eared Owl: one Lockport, Niagara Co. 1 Jan. (PH). Red-bellied Woodpecker: several

reports from lake plain and one from All. Co. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Lewiston 22 Dec. at various times to 15 Feb. (WK), unusual winter visitor. N. Flicker: reported from all parts of region through period but most commonly on lake plain; nine JCC 16 Dec.; six FCC 1 Jan.; 3 SCC 15 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris alpestris*) max 150 Twn. Pomfret, Chaut. Co. (DG). Com. Raven: one ASP 30 Dec. (TB). Tufted Titmouse: seen on all Southern Tier CCs except Fredonia but seen there during week of count; three SBC 15 Dec.; three JCC 16 Dec.; two SCC 15 Dec.; reported from lake plain INWR, Lewiston, and Orchard Park. Red-breasted Nuthatch: BOS records for period; two Alfred 4 and 5 Jan. and seven and three Alfred 1 and 16 Feb. (EB); two Orchard Park 15 Dec. and 18 Feb. (GO); two Twn. Pomfret 24 Dec. (TM); 12 JCC 16 Dec. indicated locally common presence but not a big year. Carolina Wren: one Lakewood, Chaut. Co. at feeder until 26 Jan. (CW); one Ashville, Chaut. Co.; two Twn. Humphrey, Catt. Co. at feeder during Jan. (AC). Winter Wren: these fellows in winter require luck or persistence around brush piles near water. Two of our observers persevered; one Pt. Gratiot, L. Erie 14 Jan. (TM) and one Amity L. 11 Feb. (VP). Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Lakewood 12 Jan. (RS, TM); a rare winter visitor. E. Bluebird: four INWR 19 Dec. (DE); two Lawson Rd., Busti, Chaut. Co. 16 Dec. (EP); six Prosser Hill Rd., Chaut. Co. 3 Jan. (RH); four Riverside Rd. and Conewango Creek 24 Dec. (DC); two Fentonville, Chaut. Co. 7 Jan. (JP); no Feb. reports but first migrant Amity L. 1 Mar. (VP). Am. Robin: 300 Burgeson Sanc. 5 Dec. (DG); 49 JCC 16 Dec.; three SBCC 15 Dec.; two SCC 15 Dec.; 24 INWR 19 Dec. (DE); 136 FCC 1 Jan.; 120 max for Jan. L. Erie SP 5 Jan. (T & JM); 25-70 Fredonia 8-14 Jan. (JG); 90 Twn. Stockton 9 Jan. (TM); 70 Canadaway Nat. Sanc. 14 Jan. (TM); 50 Dunkirk 29 Jan. (RS, DG); 54, 59, 35 INWR 1, 11, 13 Feb. (DE); 250-300 INWR 9 Feb. (G & DS); two-49 Amity L. 20-28 Feb. (VP); 145 L. Ontario plain 21 Feb. (WK) these last perhaps migrants. N. Mockingbird: five records from lake plain and one near Jamestown. Brown Thrasher: one Bemus Pt., Chaut. Co. 5 Dec. (BB). Cedar Waxwing: 154 SCC 15 Dec.; 149 SBCC 15 Dec.; 238 JCC 16 Dec.; 295 FCC 1 Jan.; 15-60 Wales 1-31 Dec. (OR); 68, 19, 23 Twn. Amity, All. Co. 2, 7, 25 Jan. (VP); small numbers through most of Feb. until 285+ and 200+ Twn. Amity 26, 27 Feb. (VP). This species and Am. Robin most abundant through period in many years. N. Shrike: one ASP 2 Dec. (TB); one Farmersville Sta. 6 & 7 Dec. (DC); one Alfred 15 Dec. (EB, PG); one Silver Creek 26 Dec. and one Sheridan 26 Dec. (DF); one Grand Island 31 Dec. (PH); one Stockton, Chaut. Co. 12 Jan. (TM); one Twn. Lewiston 13 Jan. (WK); one Darien 21 Jan. (TH); one Twn. Evan 30 Jan. (FR *et al.*); six single birds reported to BOS in Feb. well scattered over region.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: two east of Falconer, Chaut. Co. 9 Dec.; one INWR 19 Dec. (DE); one Twn. Pomfret 21 Dec. (TM); one FCC 1 Jan.; five L. Erie SP 5 Jan. (T & JM); 28 max Twn. Portland Chaut. Co. 13 Jan. (FR, LBk); one Burgeson Sanc. 19 Jan. (DG) and one near Jamestown 19 Jan. (HR) were last reports and one wonders if the storm which arrived on 19th may have done them in. Only other species for this section reported this quarter was Black-throated Blue Warbler: one male and one female Jamestown 12 Dec. (C & LD).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinals left their normal haunts in late fall but a few returned to feeders after heavy snows. Were they out in the woods? Did they have a poor reproductive year or did accipiters or disease trim them down? 17 SCC 15 Dec.; six SBCC 15 Dec.; 68 JCC 16 Dec.; 13 FCC 1 Jan.; all these represent numbers well below normal. Rufous-sided Towhee: two SCC 15 Dec.; one Orchard Park 9 Dec., 10 and 18 Feb. (GO); one Twn. Pomfret 21 Dec. (TM); at least one appeared to survive winter. Am. Tree Sparrow: reported in the Southern Tier Cos. in normal numbers but late; only five banded Farmersville Sta. Dec. (DC); poorest Dec. banding he could remember. Chipping Sparrow: one FCC 1 Jan. and two Fredonia 9-18 Jan. (JG). White-throated Sparrow continues to winter in good numbers as well as White-crowned Sparrow: five SCC 15 Dec.; five Twn. Pomfret

17 Jan. and four same place 7 Feb. Dark-eyed Junco: although not noted by BOS in their noteworthy records, the Southern Tier Cos., particularly the forested unglaciated part, experienced unprecedented numbers; flocks of 100 individuals are common on migration but these flocks were present through Dec. & Jan. and until a thaw in late Feb. They visited feeders after snows but took to the woods as winds blew down more hemlock seeds on snow surface; 512 along road berm in 26 km ASP 13 Jan. (TB); 100+ Ten Mile Rd., Catt. Co. (SE). Snow Bunting: 500 max Twn. Alabama 13 Jan. (Collins); 500 Fredonia 28 Jan. (BC); with these a few Lapland Longspurs. Red-winged Blackbird and other icterids, along with Eur. Starlings moved into the region following the thaw 23 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: some wintered on lake plain but 15 at feeder Burgeson Sanc. 12-14 Feb. (DD) probably very early migrants. Pine Grosbeak: two Alfred 15 Dec. (EB). Purple Finch: six SBCC 15 Dec.; 33 SCC 15 Dec.; 23 JCC 16 Dec.; four FCC 1 Jan. were numbers a little above normal. House Finch: 527 JCC 16 Dec. a max - still on increase. Red Crossbill: one ASP 13 Jan. (TB); four Alfred 22 Feb. a max (CK). White-winged Crossbill: one Alfred 1 Feb. (EB). Pine Siskin: 90+ Amity L. 4 Dec. (VP). Am. Goldfinch: 120 SCC 15 Dec.; 47 SBCC 15 Dec.; 143 JCC 16 Dec.; 9 FCC 1 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: one Alfred 15 Dec., three and two 18 & 26 Jan., 10 on 22 Feb. (CK); 32 ASP 30 Dec. (TB); one Wales 13, 15, 29 Jan. (OR); one-20 Amity L. 20-31 Jan., one-31 through Feb. (VP); one Ten Mile Rd., Catt. Co. 28 Jan. (SE); one Farmersville Sta. 8 Feb. (DC); seven Fentonville, Chaut. Co. 21 Feb. (JP); 65 Whitesville, All. Co. a max 17 Feb. (H. Ward).

Ten Mile Rd., Allegany, New York 14706

REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

It appeared as though winter was going to bypass us this year. December's average temperature was a sultry 35.9°. That was a staggering 6.9° above average. Precipitation was only .72" above normal, but warm temperatures provided spring-like conditions for the Christmas Bird Counts. Just when it appeared as though winter might not arrive, reality set in and it began to snow, and snow, and snow. Not a day went by in January without some snowfall. The average temperature was 21.9°, and the measurable precipitation was 2.49". The persistent snow made birding difficult and uncomfortable. The snow continued into February but subsided by the end of the month as quite often is the case. The monthly average temperature was 25.6°, and the precipitation amounted to 1.78". Both figures were slightly above normal.

The season featured some interesting highlights and noteworthy observations. The warm spell produced some surprisingly late individuals and may have contributed to some of the ones that wintered here. One of the most fascinating wintering birds was the immature Black-crowned Night-Heron. The warm waters from a power station provided an ideal wintering spot. Wintering waterfowl species were generally typical with good numbers of Oldsquaw. Great Black-backed Gulls continued their mercurial rise with good numbers everywhere along the lakeshore. Once again Snowy Owls were predictable with at least three separate birds frequenting traditional haunts. There were also numerous reports of other individuals. N. Saw-whet Owl reports seemed up with a report from a known nesting area. The return of Red-headed Woodpeckers was most

refreshing. Any season that Boreal Chickadee is reported is a plus. The mildness may have accounted for the good numbers of kinglets and creepers that inhabited numerous locales. The wintering robin population was one of the highest in years. Of great significance were the warbler reports from the Christmas Counts. Some surprising finds were noted. The winter sparrow population was good with substantial numbers of White-throateds and American Trees.

On the other hand, some species didn't enjoy such an eventful season. Rough-legged Hawk reports were meager at best. Ring-necked Pheasants struggled through another winter. Cedar Waxwings, while by no means in a desperate situation, appeared in somewhat smaller numbers. This was in direct contrast to the high robin count. Both species often feast together on winter fruit. The Bohemian Waxwing was nonexistent, which is a change from recent winters. The wild fruit and cone crop must have been just as good elsewhere. What was anticipated as a possible "finch winter" never really materialized. The cone crop was staggering in proportion to recent years. Finch reports were consistent but mediocre in total numbers. A big push just didn't happen. Purple Finches were low as were both crossbills. Pine Grosbeaks were way down, and Evening Grosbeaks exhibited a miniscule population. Thus, a reverse of high expectations was experienced.

Rarities: Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Boreal Chickadee, Cape May Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abbreviations: A-Avon, B-Braddock Bay, BS-Bergen Swamp, C-Charlotte, CL-Conesus Lake, D-Durand-Eastman Park and adjacent Lake Ontario waters, EL-East Lakeshore, G-Greece, H-Hamlin, HL-Hemlock Lake, I-Irondequoit Bay, K-Kendall, LSCBC-Letchworth-Silver Lake Christmas Bird Count, LLCBC-Little Lakes Christmas Bird Count, L-Livonia, M-Mendon, P-Point Breeze, R-Rochester, RCBC-Rochester Christmas Bird Count, RS-Russell Station, S-Sodus Bay, W-Webster, & WL-West Lakeshore.

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LOONS-DUCKS: It was a typical loon and grebe winter with the customary smattering of reports. December and January are traditional reporting months with a slackening in February. Red-throated Loon: two H 3 Jan. Com. Loon: one D 1 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: one S 13 Jan. Horned Grebe: max three EL 13 Jan. Red-necked Grebe: two H 4 Jan. (WS). Double-crested Cormorant: max six S 1 Jan. The opportunity to report on herons during this season seldom arises, but this season breaks that tradition. Great Blue Heron: usual scattered singles. **CATTLE EGRET**: one Monroe Co. Airport 21 Dec. (MS), tremendous surprise for this time of the year. Green-backed Heron: one Salmon Creek 9 Dec. (B & JK), very late tarrying individual. **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**: one imm RS Dec.-Feb., sighted often, feeding along the edge of Slater Creek or perched in adjacent trees, seemed to gain strength as the season progressed. Waterfowl reports and concentrations were about normal with a variety of interesting reports. Tundra Swan: max 32 CL

26 Dec. Mute Swan: two S all Dec., one S Jan.-Feb. Snow Goose (blue morph): one LSCBC 15 Dec. Wood Duck: one Hollands Cove 3 Feb. N. Shoveler: one G 13 Dec. late. Ring-necked Duck: four S 26 Jan. Oldsquaw: large numbers along the lakeshore during the season. Hooded Merganser: max 140 LSCBC 15 Dec. Ruddy Duck: two Honeoye L 30 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr two G 28 Feb. Bald Eagle: two imm WL 1-31 Dec., one wing-tagged; one adult HL 30 Dec.; two imm WL 1-10 Jan.; one adult CL 6 Jan.; one adult HL 12 Jan.; last three birds most likely from pair that nested in that area. N. Goshawk: one R 16 Dec. (RCBC), three W 1-31 Dec., one Pultneyville 30 Jan. Rough-legged Hawk: one Ellison Park 10 Dec., scarce during season. Merlin: one W 17 Jan.; one G 28 Feb., imm. Wild Turkey: 20 Springwater 1-31 Jan. Virginia Rail: one Honeoye L. 30 Dec., not as prevalent as some years. Killdeer: one H 6 Jan., not as many as usual for the season. Dunlin: one C 6 Jan. (DS, TT), very late. Com. Snipe: arr four HL 17 Feb., quite possibly they wintered. Little Gull: max 22 D 1-31 Dec., nine D 1-14 Jan., typical numbers. Bonaparte's Gull: max 120 D 14 Jan., good total for Jan. Iceland Gull: one EL 1 Dec., 1st year; one H 3, 13 Jan., imm; one I 6 Jan., imm; three P 25 Jan., good total; one G 16 Feb., adult; one H 20 Feb., imm. Glaucous Gull: 12 P 25 Jan. (WL), super number; one RS 13 Jan., 2nd year; one I 10 Feb., adult; one I 24 Feb., adult; improved after a slow start. Great Black-backed Gull: max 600 P 25 Jan., part of the excellent gull flight of the 25th.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Great Horned Owl: good tallies on the CBC's; 30 R 16 Dec. (RCBC); 41 LLCBC 30 Dec. Snowy Owl: reports of six different birds during most of the period. Short-eared Owl: good totals seen from Jan. thru the period with a max of 24 in Geneseo area. N. Saw-Whet Owl: one CL 30 Dec., one BE 19 Jan., one Helmer Nature Center 14 Feb., more reports than is customary for the season. Red-headed Woodpecker: population returned to an area from which they were absent last year, increased acorn production may be the cause. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: good seasonal reports, two R 16 Dec. (RCBC), two Letchworth 15 Dec. (LLCBC), one I 13 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers along lakeshore. **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** one Letchworth 15 Dec. (KB, LSCBC). Red-breasted Nuthatch: quite a few in region during the season. Winter Wren: one R 16 Dec. (RCBC), one CL 5 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: excellent number of wintering birds. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: three LLCBC 30 Dec., fairly high total for this uncommon winter species; one M 3 Jan. (EB, MR). Hermit Thrush: minimum of four wintering birds from various locations. Am. Robin: excellent totals of wintering birds. Gray Catbird: one W 16 Dec., one G 16 Dec. (RCBC), one H 27 Jan., two L 4 Feb., good total of hardy winterers. N. Shrike: max two R 10 Feb., meager totals.

VIREOS-WARBLES: **CAPE MAY WARBLER:** one Perinton 9 Dec. (TT), very late and unusual. Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 31 Spencerport 19 Jan., traditional wintering area; one M 4 Feb., numbers very low at this locale. **PINE WARBLER:** one HL 30 Dec. (WLI, MAS, D & DT, LLCBC), most unusual find. Com. Yellowthroat: one CL 30 Dec. (MD), male.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rose-breasted Grosbeak: one L 16 Feb. (HM), female. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Cobb's Hill thru Jan. Am. Tree Sparrow: good totals. Field Sparrow: one CL 30 Dec. (LLCBC). White-crowned Sparrow: one H 3 Feb., two H 10 Feb., uncommon winterer. Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon subspecies): one Lima 1-31 Dec. (A & JF). Lapland Longspur: max 350 H 8 Dec. Snow Bunting: max 5000 K 23 Feb. **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** one G 30 Jan. (ML), male at feeder, seen one day only. Rusty Blackbird: ten R 3 Jan., one Stafford 1 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: one H 3 Jan. (WS), paltry total. Red Crossbill: one D 8 Dec., male; one D 30 Dec.; one D 5 Jan.; one H 13 Jan., female; three Highland Park 1 Feb.; ten H 20 Feb. White-winged Crossbill: one D 4 Dec., one G 16 Dec., three D 21 Feb. Pine Siskin: two H 4 Jan., one I 20-21 Jan., 20 D 21 Feb.; max 150 H 21 Feb. Evening Grosbeak: numbers very low for season.

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REGION 3 – FINGER LAKES

DICK CLEMENTS

The period's weather started out as if we were going to have a wicked winter as early December cold and a 6-8 inch snowfall on the sixth sent us reeling. It didn't last however, as the rest of the month was very mild including a couple of record high temperatures. It was 60 degrees on 29 December at 11:00 p.m. in Pine City. The Elmira Christmas Bird Count was conducted on 1 January in a soaking rain, and mild temperatures with singing Am. Robins. December averaged six degrees above normal.

January on the other hand averaged three degrees below normal as most of the ponds froze over. From approximately mid-January to mid-February, the temperature never rose above the freezing mark. February was much better, averaging two degrees above normal despite the minus 15° reading around the sixth. The temperature rose above 60° F. on the 24th and the geese, blackbirds and robins returned in numbers.

Snowfall was hardly enough to notice as both Ithaca and Elmira registered paltry amounts. Ithaca had 31 inches, 20 inches below normal. The mild weather in December was no doubt responsible for more waterfowl observations and an increase in the number of lingering passerines. Some notable late or non-departers were Double-crested Cormorant, Green-backed Heron, Wood Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Water Pipit, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, Savannah, Swamp, and White-crowned Sparrows, Rusty Blackbird.

A bird in a category all its own was the Yellow-throated Warbler spotted in Ithaca. This bird is very rare in our region, especially so late in the year. The bird cooperated nicely and even sang for the observers.

Most observers agree that birds were present in lower numbers at feeders. The No. Cardinal received the most "Where are they?" comments. Your editor usually has 10-15 of these birds at his feeders in Pine City around dusk, but this year only four-five. However, one was able to find many of these birds feeding on dogwood berries and multiflora rose hips in nearby open woods and fields. A pair of No. Mockingbirds usually found in our backyards were often seen in this same habitat "miles from home." Likewise, the abundant weed seeds and enormous cone crop kept many of our finches away. Some birders in the Watkins Glen and Ithaca areas were blessed with sightings of Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill and Pine Siskin. Most of us however missed out on our winter finches and weren't even granted a glimpse of an Evening Grosbeak. Selected species of waterfowl observed during the waterfowl count period are listed according to location sighted.

	Cay. L	Keu. L	Sen. L*	Can. L	Chem. R**
Com. Loon	6	11		4	
Pied-billed Grebe	2	4		2	
Horned Grebe	40	14	2		

	Cay. L	Keu. L	Sen. L*	Can. L	Chem. R**
Red-necked Grebe	1	2			
Am. Black Duck	970	147	70		20
Mallard	1512	484	1000+	700+	83
Gadwall	80	4			
Canvasback	302	734		24	
Redhead	1608	1054	23	1380	
Greater Scaup	115	1	485		
Lesser Scaup	9	6			
Scaup sp.	522				
Com. Goldeneye	354	60	98	3	7
Bufflehead	27	47	42	31	
Hooded Merganser	22	28		2	
Com. Merganser	200				3

* area near Watkins Glen, only available data.

** area near Elmira.

Abbreviations: Can-Canandaigua; Cay-Cayuga; Chem-Chemung; ECC-Elmira Christmas Count; ICC-Ithaca Christmas Count; Keu-Keuka; L-Lake; MCC-Montezuma Christmas Count; MNWR-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; QC-Queen Catherine Marsh; Schuy-Schuyler; SCC-Schuyler County Christmas Count; Sen-Seneca.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: three ICC. Pied-billed Grebe: one occasional Watkins Glen thru; four Myers Pt. 24 Feb; two Dresden 11 Jan. Red-necked Grebe: one Long Pt. 11 Feb. Double-crested Cormorant: one Watkins Glen Jan; two Lodi Pt. 27 Jan, one with wing tangled in fishing line, eventually died. Great Blue Heron: several sightings throughout our area during the period. **GREEN-BACKED HERON**: one ICC, first record. Tundra Swan: 40 MNWR 15 Dec; five MCC; one Keu L. Jan; seven Geneva 28 Feb. Mute Swan: a possible feral family seen Cay L. thru Feb. Snow Goose: two MCC. Brant: one Long Pt. 1 Dec. Canada Goose: many wintered; first migratory flights around 20 Feb. Wood Duck: three QC 18 Dec. Am. Black Duck: 153 SCC 29 Dec, new high. No. Pintail: six SCC, first record. Blue-winged Teal: MCC. No. Shoveler: five Cay L. 3 Dec. Gadwall: 120 Cay L. 15 Dec; 100 MNWR 12 Dec. Am. Wigeon: 28 MNWR 21 Dec; four SCC. Ring-necked Duck: 200 MNWR 12 Dec; 30 Cay L. 15 Dec. Greater Scaup: 485 Sen L. 11 Jan. Oldsquaw: one Elmira 11 Dec; two Myers Pt. 15 Dec. White-winged Scoter: one Sheldrake 27 Jan; two Keu L. 27 Jan. Com. Goldeneye: sighted in all areas thru. Hooded Merganser: 200 Cay L. 12 Dec; 350 MNWR 12 Dec. Red-breasted Merganser: 158 Cay L. 15 Dec; two MCC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: one imm. tagged with blue and yellow streamers Hibiscus Harbor 13 Dec; one Union Springs 24 Dec reportedly released Tupper L. region 1981; one imm. with yellow tag Sen L. in Jan. No. Harrier: many reports Ithaca area thru; present thru Schuy Co.; three Elmira 26 Jan. Sharp-shinned Hawk: three ICC plus other reports thru; one ECC. Cooper's Hawk: reported in all areas including one found dead in Horseheads with no apparent injuries. No. Goshawk: one adult Connecticut Hill 27 Jan; one S. Darby 14 Feb. Red-tailed Hawk: numbers down Watkins Glen area; building new nest after losing old one to a Great Horned Owl near Phelps; seven ECC; 20 ICC; both low. Rough-legged Hawk: seen in all areas but very few except the 11 spotted near Aurora 10 Dec. Am. Kestrel: scarce but regular; feeding on suet and possibly "other things" near Phelps. Ruffed Grouse: good numbers Schuy Co.; ten ICC. Wild Turkey: gradually increas-

ing around Phelps and Penn Yan areas; none ICC; only two ECC. Am. Coot: 88 SCC, new high. Killdeer: two ICC; two Cay L. area late Feb. Spotted Sandpiper: one East Corning 1 Dec. Bonaparte's Gull: Sheldrake 26 Jan. Iceland Gull: two ICC. Great Black-backed Gull: present thru Ithaca and Watkins Glen; one Elmira 19 Jan, first winter report since 1978.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: four ECC and regularly calling thru; one found dead south of Ithaca holding dead Blue Jay 8 Feb. Great Horned Owl: four ICC; present QC thru; on nest Phelps 14 Feb. Snowy Owl: one Dresden Dec and Jan; one Branchport Jan; one emaciated bird brought to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology 3 Feb, eventually died. Barred Owl: one S. Darby 28 Jan; one near Sapsucker Woods 14 Feb. Short-eared Owl: 15 Penn Yan thru; two near Aurora 16 Jan. **NO. SAW-WHET OWL:** one Ithaca 16 Jan; one calling S. Darby 20 Feb. Belted Kingfisher: four ECC; six ICC. Red-headed Woodpecker: one at suet feeder Phelps area thru. Red-bellied Woodpecker: down in numbers Schuy Co. but regular at QC; regular Phelps area. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one imm. Pine City; one imm. Corning 18 Dec; one Odessa Jan and Feb; one ICC and two Jan and Feb reports from Ithaca. Hairy Woodpecker: numbers down. No. Flicker: 26 ICC; five QC thru; up in numbers in most of region. Pileated Woodpecker: numbers holding steady.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: no large flocks reported; several displaying and singing at Watkins Glen Race Track 28 Feb. Blue Jay: conflicting comments but most agree numbers at feeders up this year; an amazing 40 plus at feeder in S. Darby. Fish Crow: three ICC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: nine ECC, high; not an incursion year for our region. Brown Creeper: five ECC; 27 ICC, high. Carolina Wren: present Ithaca thru; two regular QC; one at feeder Pine City 1 Feb. Winter Wren: one QC thru; one Hammondsport Jan; absent from ECC. Marsh Wren: one QC, present until 29 Dec. Golden-crowned Kinglet: favorable reports from all areas; "always easy to find," Elmira. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one ECC; one ICC (5th record). E. Bluebird: wintered throughout most of our area with a max 14 near Penn Yan. Hermit Thrush: one ICC. Am. Robin: flock of 100 plus seen regularly in Schuy Co.; 20 ECC; six ICC; over 90 Penn Yan area thru. Gray Catbird: one Sapsucker Woods Rd. 3 Dec; one netted and banded Penn Yan 9 Dec. No. Mockingbird: observations down. Brown Thrasher: one ICC. Water Pipit: seen Ithaca area first week in Dec. No. Shrike: one Dundee, date unknown; Ithaca Dec and Feb; Watkins Glen 11 Dec.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: five Aurora 2 Dec; seven Stewart Pk 2 Dec; small flock Penn Yan area Jan; **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER:** one adult male Stewart Pk 1-2 Dec (P. Hunt, S. Lang).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: No. Cardinal: numbers down everywhere. Rufous-sided Towhee: one to two at feeders in Phelps thru; one ECC; Ithaca area intermittently thru. Field Sparrow: max three QC thru. Savannah Sparrow: Myers Pt. 9 Dec last report. Swamp Sparrow: several QC thru; one ICC. White-throated Sparrow: no large flocks but enough to make feeder areas more interesting. White-crowned Sparrow: max six at feeder in Phelps area during Jan; one Sen Falls 10 Jan thru 21 Jan. Lapland Longspur: Ithaca area Dec. and Jan. Snow Bunting: over 200 Schuy Co 6 Jan; 200 plus Ithaca area early Dec; present in Elmira, Penn Yan and Canandaigua areas. Red-winged Blackbird: 25 ICC: few individuals elsewhere until late Feb. E. Meadowlark: one ICC: one Elmira 26 Jan. Rusty Blackbird: four ICC, second record; five QC 19 Jan; 13 QC 5 Feb. Com. Grackle: 100 SCC; one ECC; one ICC. Brown-headed Cowbird: 31 ICC. Pine Grosbeak: ten S. Darby 24 Dec. Purple Finch: flocks of 15-20 Ithaca early Jan; 20 Elmira late Jan; regular in conifers Watkins area thru; scarce Penn Yan. Red Crossbill: eight Hector Land Use Area 14 Jan; five reports in Ithaca area including a foraging flock on Cornell Campus in Feb. White-winged Crossbill: Hammond Hill Rd. 16 Feb. Redpolls: none. Pine Siskin: one ICC; 30 Monterey 12 Jan. Am. Goldfinch: present in conifers Schuy Co. Evening Grosbeak: regular in state forests in western Schuy Co.; low numbers or completely absent in most of our region.

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REGION 4 – SUSQUEHANNA

HARRIET MARSI

Region #4, Dec., 1984: Skiers and children were disappointed in it; "regular" people rejoiced in it; birders . . . well, birders were confused by it. The fact is that December, 1984, was warm – the second warmest in the 35 year history of weather records at Edwin A. Link Field National Weather Station and the second warmest of the century in the Village of Cooperstown where weather records have been kept since 1854.

Accompanying the warmth was precipitation well below average (10.5" of snow as against a normal of 18.7"), a record wild food crop and constant queries, "Where are the birds?", "Why no birds at my feeder?", "How come so few birds this year?", etc. All Christmas Counts reflected this condition. Although the number of species was not alarmingly low, augmented by several to-be-expected Stay-Behinds, the number of birds per species was often down. An abundant wild food crop – the heaviest in 20 years (Mike Hall, DEC) – plus open fields probably kept the birds scattered through. The new year also started out on the warm side, but not for long. After less than a week the realities of January asserted themselves. By the 9th bitter cold had set in (mean temp. 8° F.). For the next two weeks a series of cold fronts, combining with intermittent high and low pressure systems and gusty winds, produced Arctic conditions that included several sub-zero nights. A -15°F matched the previous record low for its date. The term "Siberian Express" was quite appropriate. Snow there was, too, but it came in dribs and drabs and there were no major storms. Nevertheless, its total of 23.5" for the month was more than enough to cover fields and meadows. Birds did begin to show up at feeders. A few complaints persisted, however. There were no winter finches, N. Cardinal counts were low, Am. Tree Sparrows and goldfinches seemed sparse at feeders. February didn't exactly derail the "Siberian Express" either – at least not immediately. Friday, 8 Feb., registered a mean temperature of 7° F. and brutal, driving winds forced the wind chill factor down to the 45° to 50° below zero range. Fortunately, the remainder of the month was less cruel. One could call it "seasonal," crisp and chilly, but not life-threatening. Then February did a turnabout and ended in a final week that was a lovely warm "preview of spring."

For most birders it had been a rather negative winter. Even so, there were a few highlights – some actually spectacular. 1. A Snowy Owl showed up on the CCBCCC. 2. In Vestal, where those who watched the feeders were counting 20 to 25 Purple Finches daily, a bander tallied over 100 Purple Finches (GK) and there were always unbanded birds still flying about. 3. Late in February in Vestal, a N. Saw-whet Owl was heard several times in the same area but at different locations. Because it moved so often, the listening birders decided it was a male with a nest site in the area already chosen but still seeking a mate (GK, RM, HM). 4. In Dec. a farmer in Franklin, crossing a shallow stream by tractor, flushed a Wood Duck. Suddenly from the top of a nearby hemlock a large hawk shot out, faster and straighter than any bird he had ever seen – "like a Kamikaze plane" – and collided directly with the duck. The two birds fell to the ground.

As the farmer raced toward the landing site the hawk took to the air, flying directly away from him. Then, it suddenly veered and circled back, allowing him to observe the facial marking that proclaimed it a Peregrine Falcon! Looking down at the ground he watched the Wood Duck – bedraggled but alive – sneaking shakily off thru the grass toward the creek (RMi). 5. And finally the explosion of the crossbills! The reporting of a Red Crossbill on the Chenango Bird Club's Christmas Count encouraged members to search elsewhere in the county for these birds. As a result, all winter, club members have diligently combed the county, clocking an unprecedented number of hours afield (CC, RD, JL, DM, DW) and meticulously keeping detailed records (JL). Mostly they have concentrated on State Forest Lands where large stands of spruce are bearing the heaviest cone crop in years. They found both Red and White Crossbills (and lots of other birds as well!) and all the evidence, such as songs, flight songs, courting behavior, carrying nesting material, etc., suggests breeding. Members are searching hard for a nest. Congratulations to all who participated! Maybe it wasn't such a dull winter after all.

Abbreviations: Br–Broome; Chen–Chenango; CBC–Chenango Bird Club; CCBC–Cortland County Bird Club; DOAS–Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society; NCBC–Naturalists Club of Broome County; TCBC–Tioga County Bird Club; CC after any of the above means Christmas Count; CR–Cannonsville Reservoir; OPM–Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; SOFH–South Otselic Fish Hatchery; WPR–Whitney Point Reservoir. Crossbill Hunters: Chad Covey, Roger Daigle, Jay Lehman, Dave Messineo, Don Windsor.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one CBCCC; still there 16 Dec, gone 22 Dec (CC). Pied-billed Grebe: one 1 Dec WPR (A & MD); one 12 Feb, Tioga Co. (HM). Horned Grebe: one NCBCCC. Great Blue Heron: one CCBCCC; two DOASCC; two TCBCCC; Jan. Tioga Co. (C & B, RE). Tundra Swan: Jan. Tioga Co. (C & JB, CY). Canada Goose: 38 CBCCC: one 31 Dec. Binghamton (DO'N); Dec. Tioga Co. (C & JB); Jan. Tioga Co. (C & JB); four Tioga Co. 12 Feb. (HM); first flights north 23 Feb. So. Otselic (DM), Binghamton several; thousands 24 Feb. Wood Duck: one 23 Dec. Franklin, attacked by Peregrine Falcon. Green-winged Teal: one 10 Jan. CR (SD). Am. Black Duck: two CBCCC; 21 COBCC; 12 NCBCCC; four 12 Jan. Tioga Co. (GK); eight 12 Feb. (HM). Mallard: 87 CCBCCC; 228 NCBCCC; 19 TBCCC; four 10 Dec. nine 17 Dec. OPM (MD, KW); 50 CR 16 Dec. (SH); 300 Jan, Feb CR (several). N. Pintail: two NCBCCC; one 29 Jan. CR (HM); Feb CR (TCBC). Am. Wigeon: one NCBCCC. Redhead: one NCBCCC. Lesser Scaup: 12 12 Feb. Tioga Co. (HM), still there 18 Feb. (FL). Oldsquaw: two CBCCC; 16 Dec. still there, gone 22 Dec. (CC). Com. Goldeneye: 26 CCBCCC; one 15 Dec. WPR (A & MD); Dec. Jan. TCBC; 40 13 Jan. Tioga Co. (GK); one 16 Jan. Br. Co. (FL, HM); 20 12 Feb. Tioga Co. (RM, HM); 18 18 Feb. Tioga Co. (FL). Hooded Merganser: 15 CCBCCC; one 13 Jan. Tioga Co. (GK); one Feb. Chen. Co. (DW). Com. Merganser: 50 15 Dec. CR (SH); one NCBCCC; one TBCCC; nine 25 Jan. Delhi (CK); 20 13 Feb. Tioga Co. (RM); 98 18 Feb. Tioga Co. (FL).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: from one to six Jan. CR, seen by several. N. Harrier: two NCBCCC; seven TCBCCC: one 26 Dec. Br. Co. (GK); one 24 Feb. Chen. Co. (JL). Sharp-shinned Hawk: one NCBCCC; one TCBCCC: one 7-31 Dec, Delhi (MC); one Dec. So. Otselic (DM); one Jan. and Feb. Tioga Co. (LD); one Jan Norwich (DW); one Feb. So. Otselic

(DM). Cooper's Hawk: three TCBCCC; one NCBCCC; one Dec. Norwich (DW); one off and on Dec thru Feb Br. Co. (FL); one off and on Jan-Feb Tioga Co. (LD). N. Goshawk: one 19 Jan. Chen. Co. (JL, DM); one 26 Jan. Chen. Co. (JL, DM); one 24 Feb. Chen. Co. (JL) all different locations. Red-tailed Hawk: seven CBCCC; 13 CCBCCC; four DOASCC; four NCBCCC; 21 TCBCCC; otherwise normal numbers thru. Rough-legged Hawk: one CBCCC; one CCBCCC; two 10 Dec. OPM (MD, KW); one 26 Jan. Tioga Co. (GW); one 13 Feb. Tioga Co. (RM); one 21 Feb. Br. Co. (FL, HM); one 28 Feb. Otsego Co. (MD); five 5 thru 24 Jan. Chen. Co. (RD, JL, DM, DW); "normal numbers" Chen. Co. (CC). Am. Kestrel: one CBCCC; four DOASCC, four NCBCCC; ten TCBCCC; normal thru. **PEREGRINE FALCON**: one 23 Dec. Franklin, seen attacking a Wood Duck (RMi). Ring-necked Pheasant: three DOASCC; six NCBCCC: Jan. Tioga Co. (SEV); "a few stocked birds doing well into Jan. So. Otselic" (DM). Ruffed Grouse: five CBCCC; four DOASCC; nine NCBCCC: two TCBCCC: a few others during period; numbers low. Wild Turkey; two 8 Dec. Delhi (MC); Dec. Tioga Co. (J & CB, D & JB, LD); thruout So. Otselic (DM); in general numbers low. Am. Coot: three CCBCCC. Com. Snipe: one Feb. Greene (JD). Ring-billed Gull: one CBCCC: 94 CCBCCC; six DOASCC; five NCBCCC; three TCBCCC; 30 1 Dec., 25 22 Dec. Otsego L (MD); two 23 Feb., 16 23 Feb. Chen. Co. (JL). Herring Gull: 35 CCBCCC; 110 NCBCCC: eight TCBCCC; three Dec. records OPM (MD, KW); several Dec. and early Jan. SOFH until freeze up (DM); regularly Jan., Feb. Br. and Tioga Cos.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 507 CBCCC; 512 CCBCCC: 253 DOASCC: 207 NCBCCC: 856 TCBCCC. Mourning Dove: 286 CBCCC: 43 CCBCCC; 33 DOASCC; 122 NCBCCC; 70 TCBCCC. E. Screech-Owl: one CBCCC; only report. Great Horned Owl: three CBCCC; one DOASCC; 11 NCBCCC; six TCBCCC: one or two Dec. Delhi (MC); regular Br. and Tioga Co. thru, one nest Feb. Br. Co. (JS). **SNOWY OWL**: one CCBCCC. Barred Owl: one NCBCCC; one 24 Jan. Norwich (DW); one 13 Feb. Tyner (JL); two 13 Feb. Smithville Flats (JL). N. **SAW-WHET OWL**: one 23, 27, 28 Feb. Vestal (GK, RM, HM). Belted Kingfisher: one CBCCC; one CCBCCC; one DOASCC; eight NCBCCC; three TCBCCC; "many until Jan. freeze - back 23 Feb" S. Otselic (DM). Red-bellied Woodpecker: Tioga Co. all period (D & JB, LB, LD). Downy Woodpecker: 29 CBCCC: seven CCBCC; 37 DOASCC; 41 NCBCCC: 39 TCBCCC. Hairy Woodpecker: 25 CBCCC: four CCBCCC; nine DOASCC; nine NCBCCC: eight TCBCCC. N. Flicker: two CCBCCC; three NCBCCC; four TCBCCC; one thru period Chenango Bridge (JBe); one Jan. So. Otselic (DM). Pileated Woodpecker: three CBCCC; two DOASCC; two NCBCCC; three TCBCCC; "occasional" Dec. Delhi (MC); Jan. Tioga Co. (LD); "several thruout" So. Otselic (DM).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: Jan. Tioga Co. (LD); 12 22 Feb. Pitcher (DM); 12 Feb. Otselic (DM). Blue Jay: 176 CBCCC; 77 CCBCCC; 169 DOASCC; 116 NCBCCC; 210 TCBCCC. Am. Crow: 264 CBCCC; 221 CCBCCC; 237 DOASCC; 227 NCBCCC; 390 TCBCCC. Black-capped Chickadee: 338 CBCCC; 68 CCBCCC; 277 DOASCC; 501 NCBCCC; 305 TCBCCC. Tufted Titmouse: two CBCCC; none CCBCCC; two DOASCC; 29 NCBCCC; eight TCBCCC; strong in southern counties, less so farther north. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 12 CBCCC; five DOASCC; one NCBCCC; Dec. Tioga Co. (BC); 14 Chen. Co. (Crossbill Hunters). White-breasted Nuthatch: 29 CBCCC; seven CCBCCC; 18 DOASCC; 58 NCBCCC; 30 TCBCCC. Brown Creeper: six CBCCC; two CCBCCC; 22 NCBCCC; one TCBCCC; one 4 Dec. Tioga Co. (RM); two 14 Dec. Delhi (SH); six Jan.-Feb. Chen. Co. (Crossbill Hunters). Golden-crowned Kinglet: 33 CBCCC; 29 NCBCCC; two TCBCCC; six 1 Dec. Walton (SH); 32 Chen. Co. (Crossbill Hunters). E. Bluebird: three CBCCC; four TCBCCC; one 17 Jan. Tioga Co. (SD); Feb. Tioga Co. (several); 23 Feb. Br. Co. (EK); 24 Feb. Br. Co. (AD, JS). Hermit Thrush: one Br. Co. 23 Jan. thru Feb. (J & RS). Am. Robin: one Dec. "off and on" Jan., Feb. Tioga Co. (D & JB, RE, AW); one 15 Jan., later 24 Jan. Vestal (GK); one 23 Jan. Endwell (FL); one 23 Jan. off and on thru early Feb., Chenango Bridge (JBe); one 24 Feb. Norwich (JL); eight 24 Feb. Br. Co. (JS); Feb. Newark Valley (LD). N. Mockingbird: two NCBCCC; five TCBCCC; three Dec. Br. Co. (JS); one Feb. Br. Co. (JS). Brown Thrasher: one Jan. Tioga Co. (LD). Cedar Waxwing: 179 CBCCC; 57 CCBCCC;

50 DOASCC; 137 NCBCCC; 530 TCBCCC. N. Shrike: one CCBCCC; one 10 Dec. OPM (MD, KW); one 20 Jan. Plymouth (HME); one 1 Feb. So. Otsellic (DM). Eur. Starling: 947 CBCCC; 891 CCBCCC; 424 DOASCC; 1370 NCBCCC; 2401 TCBCCC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one 31 Dec. Norwich (DW). Com. Yellowthroat: one CBCCC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: 18 CBCCC; nine CCBCCC; eight DOASCC; 45 NCBCCC; 34 TCBCCC. Am. Tree Sparrow: 235 CBCCC; 35 CCBCCC; 27 DOASCC; 89 NCBCCC; 106 TCBCCC. Chipping Sparrow: one Dec. Tioga Co. (LD). Field Sparrow: one NCBCCC. Song Sparrow: seven CBCCC; one CCBCCC; two DOASCC; 27 NCBCCC; six TCBCCC. White-throated Sparrow: three CBCCC; seven NCBCCC; 52 TCBCCC; one 17 Dec. Oneonta (MD); eight 23 Jan. Br. Co. (GK, HM). Dark-eyed Junco: 184 CBCCC; 12 CCBCCC; 29 DOASCC; 216 NCBCCC; 281 TCBCCC; good numbers thru. Snow Bunting: one large flock (100+) 17-23 Jan. Br. Co. (AC, CJ, GK, HM); Jan-Feb Chen. Co. "normal numbers" (CC); seven locations Chen. Co. (JL, DM, HME, DW). Red-winged Blackbird: one CBCCC; one CCBCCC; 15 TCBCCC; one 18 Feb. Norwich (JL); three Feb. Norwich (DW); 100 24 Feb. Br. Co. (JS); 100 28 Feb. OPM (MD); one 28 Feb. So. Otsellic (DM); Feb. Tioga Co. (LD). E. Meadowlark: one 24 Feb. Br. Co. (JS). Com. Grackle: one CBCCC; one NCBCCC; one 31 Dec. thru 31 Jan. Delhi (MC); ten 1 thru 31 Jan. Walton (SH); 30 18 Feb. Br. Co. (HM); general return 23-24 Feb. Br. Chen. Cos., OPM, Tioga co. Brown-headed Cowbird: 200 DOASCC, "in one field"; three 5 Dec, one 19 Dec. Delhi (MC); one Feb. Norwich (DW); 20 10 Feb. (CL) two 17 Feb. two 19 Feb. Norwich (JL). Pine Grosbeak: two DOASCC. Purple Finch: 24 CBCCC; 26 DOASCC; 17 NCBCCC; one TCBCCC; one to seven off and on Dec., Jan. Delhi (MC); one to eight Feb. OPM (MD); five to ten mid-Jan. thru Feb. So. Otsellic (DM); Tioga Co. (LD); 105 banded Feb. Vestal (GK). House Finch: 114 CBCCC; 101 CCBCCC; 37 DOASCC; 616 NCBCCC; 607 TCBCCC. **RED CROSSBILL:** 30 17 Dec. OPM (MD, KW); two CBCCC; thereafter approx. 25 locations Chen. Co. 25 locations Chen. Co. (Crossbill Hunters). White-winged Crossbill: 15 11 Jan. Chen. Co. (DN); thereafter approx. 28 locations (Crossbill Hunters). Pine Siskin: one 1 Dec. Br. Co. (CH); over 40 locations Jan., Feb. Chen. Co. (Crossbill Hunters); six 24 Feb. Br. Co. (JS); eight 27 Feb. Br. Co. (FL, HM). Am. Goldfinch: 47 CBCCC; 32 CCBCCC; 162 DOASCC; 115 NCBCCC; 158 TCBCCC; sporadic reports thru except Chen. Co. where Crossbill Hunters found approx. 15 locations. House Sparrow: 326 CBCCC; 312 CCBCCC; 348 DOASCC; 395 NCBCCC; 860 TCBCCC.

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REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

PAUL DeBENEDICTIS

An ornithologically dull fall portends only bad things for the coming winter. So it was. Everyone wondered where all the birds were, although surprising numbers of some species were found. However, one had to work for everything.

The weather again duplicated that of the previous winter. December was generally mild, with two cold snaps and exceedingly warm temperatures at the end of the month. Runoff from the thaw caused severe flooding in northeastern Oswego and northern Oneida Counties. January turned sharply, though not brutally colder, with snow in Syracuse every day of the month, and into early

February. Mid-February weather was more seasonal, and the end of the month saw a genuine warm spell. Total snowfall in Syracuse at the end of the season was only a couple inches short of the average total for the entire winter, with two months of snow to go.

Water bird numbers generally were unspectacular, probably because of the early and unrelenting freeze-up of shallower lakes and ponds in the Region. Numbers of overwintering waterfowl were not very high, but almost all of the expected species were found. Loons and White-winged Scoters were noted more regularly than usual, and mid-winter records of Tundra Swan, Black Scoter, Harlequin Duck (the only real rarity of the season), and Barrow's Goldeneye were especially noteworthy. White-winged gulls were uncommon, and no rare gulls were observed this winter. Although there were not many land birds about, the winter did not appear to be hard on what was present. A few types, like Horned Lark and Lapland Longspur, were found somewhat more regularly than usual, though numbers were not high. Most species that overwinter here were less numerous than usual, but a few half-hardy species like Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were noted. Field Sparrow was a surprising miss. Almost no raptors, and few owls were found.

There are two clear exceptions to this gloomy picture. First, American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were widespread all season, and unusually numerous in Oswego County. One report of a Bohemian Waxwing was received. The explanation for this is clearly the excellent berry crop. The second exception was winter finches, but only in mature spruce/pine plantations at higher elevations. Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins were the most widespread forms. Both Red and White-winged Crossbills were frequently seen in northern Herkimer County and in the highlands of southern Onondaga and Madison Counties; a visit to the southwestern Tug Hill at the end of the season produced none. Three of the finches gave evidence of nesting. Nest building by Pine Siskins and numerous pairs and flight songs of both crossbill species were observed. None had been confirmed nesting at the end of the season. Crossbills have not been even suspected to have nested in the Region since 1973! In contrast, Pine Grosbeak was reported only from the Adirondacks. Evening Grosbeaks were extraordinarily scarce; Dorothy Crumb, who usually feeds them by the bucketful, had only one visit from this species during the entire winter. The few Common Redpoll reports were confined to late December-early January.

With the warm weather in late February, the spring migration was clearly evident. 24 February saw widespread arrivals of Canada Goose, Ring-billed Gull, Am. Robin, Red-winged Blackbird and Com. Grackle. About 9700 Am. Crows passed by Derby Hill, but only about 100 hawks were counted during Feb. A total of 119 species and two additional forms were reported, which is about average.

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Abbreviations: arr-arrival; BBS-breeding bird survey; CBC-Christmas Bird Count; DH-Derby Hill, Oswego Co.; FH-Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, Cayuga Co.; last-last of season; Onon-Onondaga; Syr-Syracuse; twsp-township.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: arr (three) DH 28 Feb. Com. Loon: seen more regularly than usual to 2 Feb. Horned Grebe: last Skaneateles L 22 Dec, arr DH 28 Feb. Red-necked Grebe: last Onon L 15 Dec. Double-crested Cormorant: at least two overwintered Oswego. Tundra Swan: two Oswego 9 Jan. (LH), imm Onon L 25-28 Jan. record late. Mute Swan: two Oneida CBC 25 Dec. Snow Goose; last FH 8 Dec, arr Seneca River Flats 24 Feb. Wood Duck: singles Oswego R 16 Dec and 2 Feb. N. Pintail: one overwintered Oswego R. Blue-winged Teal: last Howland's Island 1 Jan. (RK), late. N. Shoveler: last FH 8 Dec. Gadwall: last (five) Oswego 24 Jan. Am. Wigeon: last Oswego R 17 Jan. Canvasback: mid-winter max five, low. Redhead: mid-winter max 21, low. Ring-necked Duck: last (12) 6 Jan. Greater Scaup: mid-winter max 1100 Oswego. Lesser Scaup: mid-winter max 20 Oswego. **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: female Oswego 24-27 Jan (FGS, mob) is the 15th Regional record. Oldsquaw: mid-winter max 115 Oswego. Black Scoter: one Oswego 29 Jan. most unusual. White-winged Scoter: mid-winter max 16 Oswego. Com. Goldeneye: mid-winter max 500 Oswego. Barrow's Goldeneye: females Caughdenoy and Oswego 14-16 Jan. (FGS, RK), male Fulton 16 Jan (MSR). Bufflehead: mid-winter max 244 Oswego. Com. Merganser: mid-winter max 1800 Oswego. Red-breasted Merganser: mid-winter max 25. Ruddy Duck: last (14) Onon L 16 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: imm Oswego 9 Jan, Minetto 13 Jan. N. Harrier: last Syr CBC 15 Dec; arr Oriskany Falls 16 Feb. N. Goshawk: four reports all winter. Rough-legged Hawk: max 16 cent Oneida Co. 13 Jan. Virginia Rail: one found in snow Cazenovia 14 Jan. (Spencer Baird *vide* DWC) died next day. Am. Coot: last Fulton 19 Jan. Killdeer: four apparently overwintered s.e. Onon Co. Com. Snipe: one Clay Marsh 2 Feb. only report. Bonaparte's Gull: last Oneida L 15 Dec. Ring-billed Gull: mid-winter max 5500 Oswego. Herring Gull: mid-winter max 2100 Oswego. Iceland Gull: max two, last 14 Feb. scarce. Glaucous Gull: max and last eight Oswego R 2 Feb, early departure. Great Black-backed Gull: mid-winter max 220 Oswego.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: about four reported, none persistent. Long-eared Owl: injured bird Syr 24 Jan. sent to Cornell Univ. N. Saw-whet Owl: single Limekiln L 17 Jan (GL) and Noyes Sanct 28 Feb (FGS, JH, DWC), later calling by day in response to whistled imitation. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: last DeWitt 9 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: mid-winter max 30, better than most years, arr DH 13 Feb, max 175 there 24 Feb. Tufted Titmouse: fewer reported than in previous few winters. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max seven, almost entirely confined to potential nesting areas. Winter Wren: last FH 6 Jan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: two reported without details thru mid-Jan. E. Bluebird: arr (four) n. shore Oneida L 24 Feb. Am. Robin: numbers not outstanding but more widespread than usual to 50 in Oswego area in mid-winter. Gray Catbird: last DeWitt 9 Feb. N. Mockingbird: fewer reported than in previous few winters. Brown Thrasher: one Big Moose 21 Jan (GL). Cedar Waxwing: several counts in low hundreds thru Jan better than usual. Bohemian Waxwing: Limekiln L 22 Jan (JL). N. Shrike: about five reported thru 24 Jan.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: only reports on CBC's.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: one town of Onon 26-31 Jan (JH). Am. Tree Sparrow: mid-winter max 25, low. Song Sparrow: mid-winter max 3, low. Swamp Sparrow: only report after CBCs three town of Onon, 3 Feb. White-throated Sparrow: mid-winter max 10, low. White-crowned Sparrow: last Holland Patent 7 Dec; "arr" DH 21 Feb (GAS) no doubt overwintered nearby. Dark-eyed Junco: mid-winter max 30, female Oregon-types n. Pompey twsp and Pratts Falls in Jan (DWC, mob). Lapland Longspur: max 6 Oswego R 19 Jan, more reports than usual. Snow Bunting: mid-winter max 500. E. Meadowlark: two Oswego R. 13 Jan.

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REGION 6 – ST. LAWRENCE

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Although this was the closest thing to an old-fashioned winter in several years, the birding did not follow suit. Winter visitors were sparse; there were few above average numbers of half-hardies, and few rarities of either northern or southern affinity. December was the second warmest since 1953, with temperatures about eight degrees above normal. Temperatures reached the high 50's on the 30th, while minimum temperatures well below zero occurred on 27 Dec. A major storm brought over two feet of snow in lake effect regions, and several inches fell 25-26 Dec. January brought steady cold with mean temperatures five degrees below normal. Temperatures were above freezing only once, on 2 Jan., and the mercury was below zero on 15 mornings with the minimum on 16 Jan. A blizzard on 19-22 Jan. dropped 30 inches on Watertown, and snowfall in Jefferson and Lewis Counties for the last two weeks of Jan. was over six feet. The first two weeks of Feb. continued cold. Minimum temperature was in Gouverneur -25° on 7 Feb., and the max was 51° in Canton on the 21st. Snowfall for the month ranged between two and four feet. Heavy rains on the 22nd produced the worst floods in 30 years.

The Watertown Christmas Count reported 7184 individuals comprising 42 species. The Thousand Islands CBC, held 23 Dec., yielded 6426 individuals representing 54 species. The Massena CBC turned up 50 species and 20,000 individuals of which half were Com. Mergansers. Also on the MCC was the only true rarity for the region – a Thayer's Gull identified by an experienced group from Ottawa, who also reported one in the 1981 MCC. Other noteworthy sightings were Barrow's Goldeneye, record numbers of Bald Eagles and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Half-hardies included Double-crested Cormorant, N. Mockingbird and White-crowned Sparrow as well as Golden-crowned Kinglet and many N. Flickers and Am. Robins. Record numbers of House Finches and Eur. Starlings were reported on the CBC's. Also in good numbers were Blue Jays, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins. N. Shrikes and both Pine and Evening Grosbeaks were scarce. There were no redpolls.

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Abbreviations: EDB–ElDorado Beach Preserve; Jeff. Co.–Jefferson County; Jeff. Co. Pts.–Pt. Peninsula, Pt. Salubrious; L Ont.–Lake Ontario; MCC–Massena Christmas Bird Count (CBC); MSPD–Moses Saunders Power Dam; PRWM–Perch River Wildlife Mgt. Area; Pt. Pen.–Point Peninsula, Jeff. Co.; Pt. Sal. —Point Salubrious, Jeff. Co.; RMSP–Robert Moses State Park; St. Law. Co.–St. Lawrence Co.; SLR–St. Lawrence R; TICC–Thousand Island CBC; ULL–Upper and Lower Lakes Watertown CC; WD–Wiley Dondero Pools, RMSP, Massena; WH–Wilson Hill WMA.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: three MCC, one Pt. Pen. 14 Jan.-late. Horned Grebe: scattered reports L. Ont. to 12 Dec., max 11 Pt. Pen. 10 Dec. (SH). Double-crested Cormorant: two SLR north of Massena 25 Dec. (JVR)–extraordinarily late as winter records are rare for this region, but in light of the increasing frequency of winter records in nearby

Region 5 and increase in local breeding populations, more early and mid-winter occurrences should be expected. Great Blue Heron: one Jeff. Co. 16 Dec. (JF); one WCC (LBC); one Pillar Pt. 30 Dec. (SH); none thereafter. Swan species: one, too distant for positive identification, Black River Bay 27 Dec. (SH). Brant: one straggler RMPD area 4 Dec. (JG). Canada Goose: as has become normal in recent years, large flock persistent in lake plain and river valley areas through Dec, most counts 200-700 per day at several locations; max 2900 WCC. Wood Duck: male wintered successfully in Henderson, (LBC, SH). Am. Black Duck: max 70 WD 3 Dec. and 67 MCC; 50 Pillar Pt. 29 Dec; 20-40 per day Jan.-Feb. RMPD; scarce elsewhere after Dec. Mallard: max 580 MCC is record high count for the 14-year history of that count; 65 WCC; 60 Henderson; most other counts 15-30 per day at scattered locations. N. Shoveler: fall dep. 54 WD 3 Dec. (JVR). Why is that site so attractive to this species while they are scarce elsewhere in the region? Gadwall: 12 MCC only report. Canvasback: nine SLR, Tibbets Pt., Jeff. Co. 14 Jan. (SH) is only report. Redhead: six Tibbets Pt., Jeff. Co. 14 Jan. is only report. Ring-necked Duck: a pair WCC (RJW) are rare in this region in winter. Greater Scaup: 200-800 per day. L. Ont. in bays around Jeff. Co. Pts. to freeze-up in mid-Jan. (LBC, SH). Oldsquaw: one RMPD 23 Dec. is only SLR report; 6-12 per day Jeff. Co. Pts. to mid-Jan.; max 27 on 10 Dec. Pillar Pt. White-winged Scoter: three singles Jeff. Co. Pts. to mid-Jan (SH). Com. Goldeneye: 2500 MCC is nearly twice previous high for 14 years of the count; 200-400 per day at open water pools along SLR Jan-Feb.; 100-200 per day Dec. at Jeff. Co. Pts. reduced to 5-15 per day by ice in Jan. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: two females RMPD 5 Jan. (JVR). Bufflehead: very scarce as usual SLR with two singles in Dec, none thereafter; small flocks (20-36) present to early Jan. at Jeff. Co. Pts. Hooded Merganser: two females Pt. Sal. 30 Dec. (SH) and one female Black R. at Dexter, 18-20 Jan (SH), infrequent in winter. Com. Merganser: 10,000 RMPD area 1 Dec. to MCC; 4500 still there late Jan. (JVR); 1500-2500 per day open water pools of SLR between Oak Point and Morristown Jan.-Feb. Red-breasted Merganser: 5 MCC; three thru SLR near Massena; one Morristown 14 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: exceptional numbers of this species were present during the winter. Along the SLR eagles were frequent during mid-winter in the species' traditional local winter range between Chippewa Point and the Morristown area of n.w. St. Law. Co. and adjacent Ontario with lesser numbers in other sections. Mid-winter max 14!! (5-6 years) adult, 5-6 subadult (2-4 years), and 3-4 imm (1st year) along the SLR 31 Jan. (GAS); other sightings include: seven Eel Bay, Wellesley Is., Jeff. Co. 3 Jan. (GAS, SH), probably an early winter use area prior to full freeze-up for birds that later move east to Chippewa Pt.-Morristown area; imm MCC and adult RMSP 30 Dec are unusual for the eastern SLR in winter (JVR) adult WCC (RJW). N. Harrier: one to two per day Jeff. Co. Pts. in Dec, absent from then to arr 26 Feb., usually a few are present on those points thru; two Henderson 6 Jan (LBC). Sharp-shinned Hawk: two MCC; one at feeder in Canton thru (MEH). Cooper's Hawk: one Canton 1 Jan. (KC); only report. N. Goshawk: total eight all scattered singles, primarily Dec.-Jan. Red-tailed Hawk: one to four per day Jeff. Co. Pts. thru (SH, GAS); one to three per day western SLR valley thru; 23 WCC, scarce elsewhere; two MCC, otherwise scattered singles. Rough-legged Hawk: very scarce for this region; one to three per day Jeff. Co. Pts. thru; five WCC, most other sightings one per day scattered. In this area such counts are truly abysmal. Am. Kestrel: one per day scattered Jeff. Co. thru; five WCC; very scarce elsewhere with only a few sightings of one per day. Gray Partridge: eight Sackets Harbor, Jeff. Co. Dec.-Jan. (LBC, SH); two Evans Mills, Jeff. Co. 20 Feb. (LBC); five MSPD area 20 Dec. (JVR). Ring-necked Pheasant: very scarce, two reports only! Ruffed Grouse: very scarce, a few reports of one-two per day but absent in many areas. Wild Turkey: **40 plus** near Redwood, Jeff. Co. (LBC) is possibly a record high count for this area. Dunlin: two Pillar Pt. 10 Dec (SH)—very late. Bonaparte's Gull: 20 MSPD area 2 Dec. (JVR) dep. there 5 Dec.; injured bird unable to fly Pt. Pen. 10-11 Dec. (LBC, SH). Ring-billed Gull: 900 MSPD area 25 Dec. (JVR)—unusual for so late in season; 300 there MCC; 40 there 5 Jan with most gone by 13 Jan.; two stragglers 26 Jan (JVR). Herring Gull: 2000 MCC; 2000 MSPD area 13 Jan; numbers there reduced to 300 by 10

Feb. **THAYER'S GULL**: first-year bird MCC at the MSPD. Iceland Gull: 405 per day RMPD area Dec.-Jan. (JVR); max 10 there 26 Jan.; two singles Oak Pt. area Jan. (GAS). Glaucous Gull: 10-20 per day MSPD area Jan. (JVR); max 30 there 13 Jan. Great Black-backed Gull: 500 per day MSPD area Jan.; 20-50 per day western SLR. Black-legged Kittiwake: one MSPD area thru Dec. (JVR), unusually late.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one MCC. Several Great Horned Owls were reported. Snowy Owl: one RMSP 9-16 Dec.; two ULL early Jan; adult female (?) Galop I., SLR 19 Jan., imm female Brownville 19 Jan, imm female Pt. Pen. 9 Feb. (all GAS). Short-eared Owl: one Pillar Pt. 30 Dec., one Sacket's Harbor 20 Feb. (SH); two Henderson 3 Jan. (LC). No other owls. Belted Kingfisher: one Jeff. Co. 16 and 21 Dec. (JF). Red-bellied Woodpecker: one or two males Henderson 24 Jan. thru; two probable sightings in south of Canton - two 14 Nov. (KC) and a group of four in Jan. (JB). These sightings are significant, and it is unfortunate visibility precluded positive identification. Downy and Hairy Woodpecker: total of 51 and 31 respectively. N. Flicker: many more than usual - two WCC near Depauville; one TICC: one Jeff. Co. 30 Dec.; one Pt. Pen. 2 Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers thru, especially in Jeff. Co.; 40-700 per day in Pt. Pen. area mid-Jan. thru mid-Feb. (GAS). Blue Jay: numbers up. Am. Crow: seen regularly thru, even in town of Fine (PO's). Com. Raven: thru period in so. St. Law. Co., two at deer carcass, Sevey's Corners 25 Feb. (PO's). Tufted Titmouse: pair Henderson thru. Black-capped Chickadee: two to seven per flock; down from last two years. Red-breasted Nuthatch: none Jeff. Co.; two MCC; frequent in mixed flocks with chickadees in Fine and more common than White-breasted (PO's). White-breasted Nuthatch: 7 WCC, 32 MCC. Brown Creeper: singles Henderson 9 Dec., Canton Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglet: three MCC; one Sacket's Harbor 4 Feb., two Watertown 12 Feb. (SH). Am. Robin: 23 WCC; up to 40 per day mid-Jan. thru. N. Mockingbird: one Hogansburg late Dec., one RMSP 26 Jan., possibly same bird (JVR). Cedar Waxwing: max 70 Wilson Hill 26 Dec., 40 Pierrepont 9 Dec., 50 MCC; 30 Stony Pt. 10 Feb. N. Shrike: generally scarce; two MCC; singles WCC, Henderson 6 Jan., Pillar Pt. 27 Dec. and 20 Feb.; GAS reports three singles along SLR in Jan.-Feb. Eur. Starling: abundant thru; 414 on MCC is all-time high and 2144 WCC is high.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: None

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: eight MCC; two WCC, low. Am. Tree Sparrow: abundant, max 18 at feeder Pierrepont 18 Jan.; 122 MCC three-year high. White-throated Sparrow: single Ogdensburg 8 Dec. thru 7 Jan. (AM). Song Sparrow: one MCC; two Pt. Pen. 10 Dec.; one Watertown 26 Jan. (RB). White-crowned Sparrow: seven Pillar Pt. 12 Jan. (SH). Dark-eyed Junco: more than usual; 11 MCC; also reported from Morley, Pierrepont and Wanakena. Snow Bunting: 3000 so. of Massena 26 Dec. (JVR). E. Meadowlark: one Canton 21 Dec. (KC). Red-winged Blackbird: female Hermon 14 Dec.; one WCC; one 12 Jan., eight 26 Feb., both Pillar Pt.; arr 26 Feb. Com. Grackle: one WCC; one Watertown 1 thru 26 Jan. (RB); arr 24 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: 13 MCC; one Pierrepont 28 Dec. Pine Grosbeak: four Canton 13 Jan.; eight Colton 17 Feb., only reports. Purple Finch: 6 MCC; none WCC; increasing mid-Jan. thru to unusual numbers at feeders; max 60 Stony Pt. 10 Feb., 65 Canton (MEH); sex ratio three males to one female (BW). House Finch: 16 MCC, new to count; 82 WCC; 15 Canton feeder (MEH); max over 200 Henderson. Red Crossbill: pair Wanakena 2 Feb. White-winged Crossbill: ten RMSP 24 Dec.; 50 MCC; small flocks Parishville, Colton, Wanakena, Star Lake; none Jeff. Co. Com. Redpoll: none. Pine Siskin: none Jeff. Co.; 25 Pierrepont 24 Jan.; common on roadsides in so. St. Law. Co. mid-Jan. thru; two Canton 27 Feb. Evening Grosbeak: none WCC! 345 MCC; generally low numbers, only one to four per day in Jeff. Co. (LC).

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REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

As expected, this was possibly the winter of the century for the Adirondack-Champlain Region and certainly so for the post-WW II period for which good comparative quantitative data is available. This, in spite of abysmal weather on the Christmas counts, continuing public complaints about “no birds” (meaning few willing to leave the bounty in the wilds for feeder hand-outs), and the usual winter drop in the number of active observers. The crop of Red Cedar berries and similar fare provided record numbers of robins and waxwings (the juncos are more difficult to explain), while the heavy set of seeds by birches, hemlocks, and spruces provided incentive for nesting by enormous numbers of crossbills and siskins. Commenting on the situation in the Cedar River-Indian Lake area of Hamilton County, McKinney spoke for most Adirondack observers by noting, “Hundreds of Red and White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins. Couldn’t really make an estimate of numbers. More crossbills in three days than I’ve seen in 40 years of birding combined. WOW!”

Nesting crossbills and siskins are hardly thought of as yard birds, so it is indicative of the invasion that window-watchers reported Red Crossbills dismantling an old waxwing nest near Inlet to build their own in nearby spruces, and others in song-flight over a house near Elizabethtown. White-winged Crossbills brought young to a Tupper Lake yard and were in song-flight around a log cabin near Paradox. Pine Siskins were spotted gathering nesting material outside homes near Elizabethtown and Witherbee. As of the end of November, and after five full years of Atlas field work, hundreds of observers had recorded Red Crossbills in only 24 regional blocks, White-winged in just 20. By the end of February, about a dozen dedicated observers had pushed those totals to Red Crossbill in 70 blocks, White-winged in 90. Considering that multiple sightings within a single block were often involved, the breeding numbers were incredible, even with reports from only a fraction of blocks that might have had crossbills nesting.

Several observers detected differences in calls, bill size, and food preferences among nesting Red Crossbills, and with no interbreeding where they were in close proximity. At least two, and perhaps three, forms seemed involved, with the smaller-billed *Loxia curvirostra sitkensis* which favors hemlock, most widespread. For similar taxonomic puzzles over whether these might pertain to forms, races, subspecies, “emergent interspecies,” or even separate full species, see the account of “Crossbill” (also *L. curvirostra*) in *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland*, p. 428.

Following the late second Indian Summer, the season began with bare ground that was quickly covered by a major storm on 6 December that piled 18” of snow over much of the region. Weather for the Christmas Bird Counts was terrible on each of the three succeeding week-ends. The 15 December Ferrisburg CBC (hereinafter FCBC) had snow and freezing rain with gusty winds at the start, although Lake Champlain remained open at 42° F, at a level of 94.96’. Plattsburgh reached a record 54° on 17 December, but by 22 December the Elizabethtown

CBC (ECBC) began with freezing rain, and some trails still had snow up to 14" deep. The following Friday it began raining heavily, and by the 29th December Saranac Lake CBC (SLCBC) the snow in the woods was down to bare ground in places, rivers swollen above their banks. Birds avoided feeders and road shoulders, while observers were confounded by problems of access. Hiking flooded trails was out, as was "walking the river," with the ice out. Canoes, snowshoes, and skis were equally useless, and cars not much better on the icy roads.

January was 3° colder than average, with just 29% of possible sunshine. The 26 inches of precipitation in lower areas was mostly light and fluffy and about average. Lake Champlain was closing over by the 13 January NYS Waterfowl Count (NYSWC). By the end of the month there were about 4½ feet of snow on the higher mountains, only a few inches less than last winter.

February temperatures were above normal and there was 31% of possible sunshine recorded. Total precipitation in the lowlands was about 11 inches. Snow depths reached about five feet on some summits, but had sunk a foot by the end of the month, thanks to a thaw on 24 February. As the following cold front pushed through, winds reached gusts of up to 75 mph on 25 February, felling trees. Champlain stood at 96.41' at the close of the period. A total of about 89 species, plus at least two subspecies, was reported, somewhat lower than the last two winters. Unfortunately, no report of the 15 December Plattsburgh CBC was received.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Two unidentified loons came down in a snowstorm 18 Dec. at Raquette L. where Browns Tract stream created an opening; one crossed the ice 20 Dec., was caught on shore, taken to still-open Seventh L. and released, while the other apparently got out of Raquette (*vide* GL). Com. Loon: max six NYSWC. Horned Grebe: max 19 FCBC. Again, Great Blue Herons lingered, with one over Tahawus in late Dec. (WC), one SLCBC, and a third at Elizabethtown 2 Jan. (GL). In spite of the PIK program and local cutbacks in corn production, an amazing 1,461 Canada Geese stayed for the FCBC, while one of three honkers on the Raquette R. 21 Jan. was chased by a Bald Eagle. Even after Whallon's Bay froze in late Jan., over 300 geese remained. Am. Black Duck: max 158 NYSWC. Mallard: max 112 NYSWC; both blacks and Mallards were found on all three CBCs and a few remained on the Boquet R. thru Feb. Three No. Pintails showed up for the SLCBC, while five No. Shovelers made count period for the FCBC at Westport. North West Bay also had pairs of Gadwalls and Canvasbacks on count day of the FCBC. White-winged Scoter: one, northern Clinton Co. 2 Dec. (MG). The NYSWC tally included two Canvasbacks, two Greater Scaups, one Lesser Scaup, 1,575 Com. Goldeneyes, 33 Buffleheads, three Hooded Mergansers, 511 Com. Mergansers, and a single Red-breasted Merganser. A few Com. Mergansers were found thru Feb. on the Boquet R., at Indian L., and Tupper L.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Rather unexpected was the Turkey Vulture flying over River Road, Salmon River, 25 Jan. (JT), and one over Owl's Head Hill near Franklin Co. Rt. 27 on 26 Jan. (*vide* JT). Bald Eagle reports included an imm. at Limekiln L. in Dec., one at Inlet 22 Dec., one imm. diving on a duck and later feeding at Tupper L. 25-26 Dec., two imm. Tupper L. 27 Dec., mature adult Inlet 7 Jan., adult Keeseville 8 Jan., one at Tupper L. chasing the goose 21 Jan., and two imm. and an adult at Tupper L. by 28 Feb.; these reports seem to involve at least six individuals (three imm., three adults). No. Harrier: one, so. Clinton Co. 11 Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one ECBC, one chasing jays at an Owl's Head feeder 15 Dec., one chasing feeder birds at Tupper L. 9 Jan. thru Feb. No. Goshawk: one Cedar R. in Dec., one pursuing robins and waxwings through Red Cedars at Whallon's Bay 15 Dec., one ECBC, one perched near a Tupper L. feeder 10 Jan., one around an Inlet feeder to mid-Jan. Red-shouldered Hawk: one seen in same marshy area on Studley Hill Road at Town Line Brook, Franklin Co., 30 Jan. and 10 Feb. seemed resident (AH, JT). Red-tailed Hawk: recorded on three Christmas counts, max 7 ECBC. Rough-legged Hawk: reports from Crown Point, Essex, Owl's Head, Wadhams, and Westport as expected, but one at Tupper L. Marsh 3-6 Jan. was away from the usual haunts. Single Am. Kestrels turned up on the ECBC and on Crown Point peninsula 25 Feb. Gray Partridge: five, no. Clinton Co. 9 Dec. (MG). A pair of Ring-necked Pheasants were in the marsh at Westport Beach 15 Dec. and one visited a Tupper L. feeder 21-28 Feb. (RG, JG). Ruffed Grouse: max 14 ECBC and one visited a Tupper L. feeding station in Feb. (CD). Ring-billed Gull: only 41 FCBC was low, but one SLCBC on Mirror L. was a first for that inland count. Herring Gulls: 20 FCBC was low, but 18 SLCBC was extraordinary for a species last recorded during count period in 1953! **GLAUCOUS GULL:** adult at dump near Saranac L. 12 Dec., followed by an imm on L. Flower 17 Dec. (RH); these appear to constitute a first record for Franklin Co. and second and third records for the Adirondack Park. Great Black-backed Gull: 4 FCBC; max 17 NYSWC along Clinton and Essex Co. shorelines and the St. Regis R. in Franklin Co.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: max 474 SLCBC. Mourning Dove: max 73 ECBC and widely reported elsewhere, including two at Tupper L. in Feb. Two E. Screech-Owls were heard on the ECBC near Wadhams. Great Horned Owl: pair calling near Paradox by 15 Dec. A Snowy Owl was found dead at the Saranac Lake airport in Dec. (EG, RH), another reported from Ticonderoga 7 Feb. (BC). Barred Owl: two ECBC, one SLCBC; pair started courtship calling near Paradox 19 Jan. (MB). A **GREAT GRAY OWL** was seen on the Depot Road south of North Bangor 5 Feb. (DF), and there were two other possible sightings from no. Franklin Co. No. Saw-whet Owl: one ECBC responded to a tape from a known territory; calling began at Chilson 9 Feb., Paradox 22 Feb., and Tupper L. 26 Feb. Belted Kingfishers lingered at Westport to 13 Jan. and Saranac R. to 29 Jan. (RH). Downy Woodpecker: max 23 ECBC. Hairy Woodpecker: max 16 ECBC; woodpeckers courting near Paradox from 17 Feb. (MB). Two No. Flickers were noted in Dec. Pileated Woodpecker; max 8 ECBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Ten Horned Larks were found on the FCBC, with about that many near Westport in early Feb. (JT). Gray Jay: max three SLCBC. Blue Jay: max 251 ECBC. Am. Crow: max 400-500 Porter Road north of Thomas Hill Road near Malone 19 Jan. suggests a nearby roost (JT). Com. Raven: max eight SLCBC, and reports of pairs patrolling the highways for dead birds near Inlet, Lake Placid, Long Lake, and Speculator. Could the vultures have been exploiting the same ready supply of dead finches? Black-capped Chickadee: max 614 ECBC. Boreal Chickadee: max eight California Road off Studley Hill Road, n. Franklin Co., 4-10 Feb. (JT). Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 55 ECBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: max 24 ECBC; both species eating beechnuts and courting near Paradox 9 Dec. (MB). Brown Creeper: max 7 SLCBC, and singing began near Paradox 5 Feb. A **CAROLINA WREN** found between Elizabethtown and Westport on the ECBC was the first report since April 1981 and the first winter report in a decade (JR, CS). Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 44 ECBC. Observers were surprised to find two E. Bluebirds near Essex 1

Dec. (GR), three looking over bird houses at Moriah 29-30 Dec. (AP), and max 4 investigating another Moriah nestbox 31 Dec. (MR). What a remarkable winter for Am. Robins! The record 178 seen near Essex and Westport on the NYS side of the Ferrisburg CBC actually represented only a fifth of those found within the two-state count circle on 15 Dec.! Other reports came from Crown Point, Heart Lake, Inlet, Keene Valley, Keeseville, Owl's Head, Point au Roche, Raquette Lake, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake well into Feb. Bohemian Waxwing: Inlet 22 Dec. the only report of the season (GL). Cedar Waxwings were no less exciting, and even more abundant than robins, with a max 442 on the Essex Co. side of the FCBC circle, and that also only a fifth of the total for both states. Eur. Starling: max 366 FCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: A Yellow-rumped Warbler survived on a diet of frozen spiders on a Peru porch from 23-27 Jan. (EF).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: No. Cardinal: max seven ECBC and seven SLCBC, almost matched by six at a Ticonderoga feeder (EP). Song Sparrow: one ECBC. White-throated Sparrow: two ECBC. The numbers and wide distribution of wintering Dark-eyed Juncos were exceptional: 83 on the NYS side of FCBC (just over half the two-state total), max 223 ECBC, 31 SLCBC, plus reports of 45 near a Paradox cabin and 32 at Tupper L. thru late Jan., and seven at Indian L. into Feb. providing a general idea of regional totals. On 8 Dec. the flock at a feeder near Elizabethtown was joined by a bird matching descriptions and plates of "Pink-sided Junco" (*Junco hyemalis mearnsi*), the junco remaining through the 22 Dec. ECBC (EJ, JP). Another, initially described as an "Oregon Junco", appeared at a feeder near Inlet in Dec., then another visited the same feeder from 23 Jan. and was an "Oregon-or-Pink-sided" (GL). Another reported as "Oregon Junco" was at the edge of Rt. 99, Franklin Co. 4 Feb. (JT). Identification was based upon the Peterson guide, but written description matched account of "Pink-sided" in the Audubon Master Guide and plate somewhat erroneously labeled "Pink-sided Oregon race" in the Robbins guide. Whatever they were, there were four of them, in three different counties, this winter. Lapland Longspur: four, no. Clinton Co. 5 Jan. (MG). Although no Snow Buntings were encountered on the Christmas counts, a max 1,000 were at Essex 9 Jan. (GR), 100 near Hogsburg 30 Jan. (HW), and smaller numbers near Ft. Covington, Owl's Head, Ticonderoga, Wadhams, and Westport. Red-winged Blackbird: 3 FCBC provided the only report until late Feb. A Rusty Blackbird on the SLCBC was a first for regional counts. An adult male BREWER'S BLACKBIRD frequented a feeder on the Whallon's Bay Road, Essex, from 6-14 Dec. (J & RP, also GC, EJ, JP). The bird came in on the morning of 6 Dec. as one major storm ended, fed largely on whole sunflower seeds, struck a window several days later, and was last seen alive in weakened condition late in the afternoon 14 Dec. just before another storm with sleet and freezing rain arrived. The bird made the FCBC "count period," but failed to appear on "count day" 15 Dec. On 16 Dec. a cat brought in parts of the blackbird. This constitutes the first regional and Adirondack Park record. Com. Grackle: New Russia feeder to 11 Dec. (WT), one ECBC. Brown-headed Cowbird: three SLCBC. Pine Grosbeak: five SLCBC. Purple Finch: max 218 SLCBC. House Finch: max 222 FCBC, with other reports from Essex, Inlet, Saranac L. and Westport indicating both the numerical and geographical expansion of the past decade. Red Crossbill: max 36 ECBC, but some flocks of a hundred or more crossbills undoubtedly included this species; nest-building by Feb. White-winged Crossbill: max 303 SLCBC (highest total ever for the 29 counts since 1947, in spite of adverse conditions), singing and courtship flights from early Dec., with a fourth Confirmed Atlas record provided by a family group of male, female, and three newly-fledged juveniles feeding on spruce cones at Tupper L. on 4 Feb. (CD). Pine Siskin: max 113 SLCBC, singing from early Dec., gathering nesting material and engaging in chases by Feb. Am. Goldfinch: max 247 ECBC, flocks in birches and hemlocks throughout the region, but scarce at feeders. Evening Grosbeak: max 740 ECBC, with 175 at a Paradox area feeder 24 Jan. (MB), and 300 at a Tupper L. feeder 14 Feb. (CD). House Sparrow: Max 127 ECBC.

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REGION 8 – HUDSON-MOHAWK

RICHARD P. GUTHRIE

Although through a weatherman's eye December and January have been described as "boring," and February as worse, winters such as the one just passed serve as a "crystal ball" for birders with one eye on the future. How long ago was it when the first N. Cardinal or N. Mockingbird appeared on an area Christmas Bird Count? Or, when was it that White-throated Sparrows began to vastly outnumber Song Sparrows on the upstate counts? Without going back over the old weather records, I suspect that mild winters led into those evolutions. Well, "boring" was just the term used to describe this winter in the newsletter of the Amer. Meteorological Society. December was remarkably warm, including a record high shirt-sleeve temperature of 75° F. on the Troy Christmas Count day, 29 Dec. Early December was almost as mild. Open water prevailed through much of the area. In fact, a lone Mallard lingered on an opening in Jenny Lake in northern Saratoga Co. at least until 23 Dec. In other winters, the Hudson River would have been frozen by the second week of December. January turned out to be more nearly normal. There were no big storms as a relentless "Alberta Clipper" poured cold air out of Canada, displacing storms to our south and east. February followed with a few light snows early in the month, then a big warm-up and rains later. The stage was set for some interesting trend setting individuals to foretell the future of their species. Hence may we dare read more than what first meets the eye in perusing the reports that follow? What can be said about the 50,000 plus Am. Robins flocking to a Coxsackie roost through January, or about the high numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers on the Catskill CBC? Surely the open water can account for the high numbers and variety of waterfowl on the Christmas counts. But even when the water threatened to freeze completely, a Great Blue Heron held tenaciously to a small opening at the Ft. Plain waste water treatment plant through the worst of the winter. And flocks of Canada Geese took to landing on the ice at Tomhannock Reservoir and the Hudson River to spend the nights between their daytime forays to snow-free cornfields nearby.

Other more noticeable population trends emerge from the records submitted this season. Of course, the Com. Raven continues to expand its range. Three incursion directions are evident, from the north – the Johnstown birds, from the east – Poestenkill area reports, and a leapfrog group from either of those populations in the Round Top, Catskill Mts. Carolina Wren seems to have ventured out of its tenuous foothold in the Hudson Valley to take up winter residence in more rugged climatic areas of Chatham and Palmer's Ravine, Montgomery Co. Finally, there's lots of room for speculation regarding the Red-bellied Woodpecker's showing in Ft. Plain, Montgomery Co. Could those three birds represent a pioneer group from the lake plain stock on the verge of meeting the coastal population somewhere in the Hudson-Mohawk Valley? The nearest known Hudson Valley birds were found on the Catskill CBC, about one hundred miles to the south.

Rarities for the season include: Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Merlin,

Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Fish Crow, Marsh Wren, Wilson's Warbler, and Rufous-sided Towhee, "spotted" race.

Contributors to this report include: Ken Able, Bob Budliger, Bill Cook, Mike Crevier, Warren Greene, Dick Guthrie, Dan Hitchcock, Becky Holberton, Jack Jacquillard, Dave Kiefer, Mike Kuhrt, Cris Ketcham, Al Mapes, Tom Palmer, Brian Post, Alice Ross, George Steele, Scott Terrill, Pete Worthington, and Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations used here are: Cats-Catskill, Greene Co.; Cox-Coxsackie, Greene Co.; Chat-Chatham, Columbia Co.; HR-Hudson River; MR-Mohawk River; Schen-Schenectady, Schen. Co.; SRens-Southern Rensselaer, and of course, CBC-Christmas Bird Count.

One hundred twenty species were reported this season with most of them coming from the following CBC's:

Count Name	Date	Species Total
Schenectady	Dec. 15	60
Chatham	Dec. 15	61
Catskill-Coxsackie	Dec. 20	79
So. Rensselaer	Dec. 22	60
Ft. Plain	Dec. 27	43
Troy	Dec. 29	69
Johnstown-Gloversville	Dec. 30	44

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one grounded in a 5 Dec. ice-storm near W. Sand L., Rensselaer Co. released on open water the next day. Another less fortunate had ingested a tangled wad of monofilament fishing line and was found near starvation on 7 Jan. near Guilderland. It died shortly after. Com. Loon: one Cats CBC (new to count); one Waterfowl 9 Jan. Horned Grebe: one SRens CBC. Great Blue Heron: one each Chat & Cats CBC; two Troy CBC; one thru Ft. Plain but missed there on CBC day. Mute Swan: two thru 13 Jan. at Embough Bay, HR, Greene Co. Snow Goose: three Amsterdam 23 Dec.; 117 Troy CBC; one Hoosic R. 22-24 Jan. Brant: 15 Dec. Johnsonville, near Hoosic R. Canada Goose: several flocks still flying south in Dec. and Jan.; 4833 Chat CBC; 1550 Cats CBC; 2000+ Tomhannock Res. 26 Jan; 150 thru HR at N. Baltimore. **WOOD DUCK:** one Cats CBC. Am. Black Duck: 342 Cats CBC; 763 Troy CBC; numerous other reports thru. Mallard: 72 Amsterdam thru; 525 Cats CBC; 871 Troy CBC. No. Pintail: 28 Cats CBC; one Amsterdam STP 13 Jan. **BLUE-WINGED TEAL:** 7 Cats CBC (CK) all in one flock on a small pond; another found on the Troy CBC. No. Shoveler: one Coeymans 4 Jan. Gadwall: the 23 reported on the Cats CBC came from two groups, Tom Palmer's group had 21 in a shallow pond about ten miles from the HR, and the other two were found in another pond nearby; six Troy CBC; one Embough 24 Feb. Am. Wigeon: five Cats CBC; two Troy CBC. **EURASIAN WIGEON:** one drake on Tomhannock Res. was found on the Troy CBC count day and remained around for the next five days (W. Gorman). Canvasback: one Chat CBC. Redhead: five Embough 26 Jan. Ring-necked Duck: one each Chat and Cats CBC; plus six Troy CBC. Greater Scaup: one Chat CBC. Lesser Scaup: one each on the SRens and Johnstown CBC; two MR at Cohoes 13 Jan. Oldsquaw: one 20 Jan. MR at Crescent. Black Scoter: HR at Castleton 2 Dec. and 25 Dec. (J. Cook). Com. Goldeneye: 39 each on the Cats and Troy CBC's. Bufflehead: one Troy CBC. Hooded Merganser: two Troy CBC; one Stillwater 16 Feb. and ten Embough 24 Feb. Com. Merganser: several reports from CBC's with max. being 214 on the Troy CBC. **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:** the one on the Schen CBC was the second record of this species in the count history, the previous record was in 1931; another was found on the Troy CBC. Ruddy Duck: 20 Embough early Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: one imm Cats CBC; also adults seen along the HR at the Embough 13 Jan. Halfmoon 14 Feb., and Cohoes 18 Feb. The latter two dates probably

represent the same bird. No. Harrier: 11 Cox for the Cats CBC; 14 other reports from CBC's. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 26 reports mostly of individuals hanging around feeders; max four Cats CBC. Cooper's Hawk: six reports including two feeder birds. No. Goshawk: five reports. Red-tailed Hawk: max 51 Cats CBC followed by 48 Troy CBC: seen in courtship flight 23 Feb. (TP). Rough-legged Hawk: very low numbers; only two Cats CBC; max nine on Johnstown CBC and Cox Flats 10 Feb. Am. Kestrel: also very low; max 14 Cats CBC. **MERLIN**: second year that one has been found for the CBC's, this one on SRens CBC by M. Gruett. Ring-necked Pheasant: only three region-wide reports for the season. Ruffed Grouse: "fairly common" (TP); max 11 Johnstown CBC. Wild Turkey: widespread and increasing; max 50 Cats 13 Jan. Killdeer and Am. Woodcock: both returned on the warm front of 24 Feb. **THAYER'S GULL**: one first-year bird at Colonie Landfill from Troy CBC day intermittently thru mid-Feb. (ST, KA). Iceland Gull: Colonie, Troy CBC. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: four distinctly marked individuals at various locations including one Troy CBC (DG), two Colonie 5 Jan., and one Waterford same day (BL); another poss. Niskayuna 29 Dec., plus one more at Coxsackie 13 Jan. (DG). Glaucous Gull: two Troy CBC gave that count a clean sweep on gulls for the day. Great Black-backed Gull: max 89 Troy CBC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS. E. Screech-Owl: mild weather might have contributed to more owling by CBC parties; max seven on both Cats and Chat. CBCs, followed by six on Troy CBC and five on SRens. Great Horned Owl: same here, total of 17 on five CBCs led by five on the Cats CBC; territorial in New Baltimore 22 Dec. Barred Owl: only reports are from Johnstown CBC (one) and Chatham. Long-eared Owl: at least three returned to last year's roost in Athens, one in time for the Cats CBC; two were found again in Princetown by M. Crevier on 18 Jan.; they were calling there on 18 Feb. Short-eared Owl: the Coxsackie roost has apparently dwindled with only one found for the Cats CBC. Let's hope that this is only a weather adjustment. No. Saw-whet Owl: several calling birds reported in widely scattered locations thru the period; two Troy CBC; also, Palenville, Cornwallville, E. Greenbush, and Johnstown. Red-headed Woodpecker: two Cats CBC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: three Ft. Plain CBC; one Cats CBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: five Cats CBC; one Claverack 4 Jan. Downy Woodpecker: max 91 SRens CBC; absent from Jenny L. thru. Hairy Woodpecker: max 22 SRens CBC. No. Flicker: were still migrating south on the Cats CBC day when a high of 63 were counted.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Horned Lark: snowless fields made finding these birds very difficult; max an about normal 432 for Cats CBC; only two for Schen CBC. Blue Jay: high on all counts; also still in migration during some CBCs; max 395 SRens CBC. Am. Crow: a noisy downtown roost in Schenectady led to numerous complaints from the residents and gave the Schen CBC a whopping count of 1,608 compared to a 530 for the cornbelt Cats CBC count. Tufted Titmouse: max 74 Cats CBC; min 17 Troy CBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: "poorest showing in 14 years of banding at Jenny Lake" (RY); max 26 Johnstown CBC; min one Cats CBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: max 95 Cats CBC; min 24 Johnstown CBC. Brown Creeper: many reports thru, but the max of 14 on the Cats CBC is not consistent with other high numbers of "half-hardies" this year. Carolina Wren: eight reports including one from Chatham, Coxsackie, Brunswick, Amsterdam, and two from Schenectady. Winter Wren: four each, Cats and Schen CBC, several other scattered reports. **MARSH WREN**: one each Cats CBC (BB & GS) and Troy CBC (DG & WL), a new addition to the area CBC composite list. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one each for the Cats, Schen, and Troy CBCs. E. Bluebird: max 19 Cats CBC followed by nine on the Troy count. Hermit Thrush: somewhat low when compared to other mild years; max three Cats CBC; missing from most other counts. Am. Robin: more than 1000 on Chat CBC with high numbers on other counts; the big news was the establishment of a major roost near Athens, Greene Co. Birds pouring in from all points of the compass at dusk could only be estimated, but numbers were conservatively put at 50,000 plus! Also enticing were the mysterious call notes heard from the swarm hurrying to roost. Who knows what interesting vagrant might

have been drawn into the flock? Gray Catbird: two Schen and one Chat CBCs. No. Mockingbird: fairly consistent with 28 on the SRens CBC and 27 each on the Schen and Troy CBCs. Brown Thrasher: one at a Troy feeder late Jan.; one also at Saratoga Spa 4 Feb. No. Shrike: only three reports – one each Ft. Plain and Johnstown CBCs; one Coxsackie 8 and 10 Feb. Eur. Starling: SRens CBC wins with 12,197 counted. Lucky them! Most of those were at the downtown Albany roost.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: **64** on the Cats CBC was not only high for the count, but consisted of the only report for the region. Palm Warbler: reported from both Schen and Albany on 13 Dec. Com. Yellowthroat: **two** Cats CBC and one Schen CBC. **WILSON'S WARBLER:** one male seen well at the start of the SRens CBC day by M. Kuhrt and Paul Conner.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: No. Cardinal: not especially feeder conscious, preferring the abundant natural food available this season; max count was 134 on the Schen CBC, min 11 Johnstown CBC. Rufous-sided Towhee: one each on the Schen and Cats CBCs; most interesting, however, was the male Rufous-sided Towhee of the "spotted" race at Cris Ketcham's feeder in Greenville, Greene Co. The bird was very shy at first but eventually ventured out into full view. The bird first appeared in late Dec. and remained thru Feb. (CD, DG). Field Sparrow: three each Schen and Cats CBCs. Fox Sparrow: one Troy CBC. Song Sparrow: max 43 Cats CBC. Swamp Sparrow: 11 reports, most from CBCs. White-throated Sparrow: max 289 Cats CBC, followed by 103 on the Schen CBC. White-crowned Sparrow: one thru, Amsterdam (TP). Lapland Longspur: only three reported, all from Cats CBC. Snow Bunting: also scarce; one CBC bird from Cats. E. Meadowlark: only report is of six way out in Ft. Plain on the CBC; curiously absent from other favored wintering areas. Rusty Blackbird: one SRens CBC. Com. Grackle: two each from Cats and SRens CBC; large flocks shortly after the count period. Purple Finch: generally scarcer to the north, increasing to the south; max 132 Cats CBC with 30 on the Troy and Schen CBCs. House Finch: still increasing in some areas; numbers decrease northward; max 518 Cats CBC; for the second winter a noticeable trend to the more wooded countryside in Greene Co. with fairly large flocks being seen in hedgerows far removed from houses (DG). A female captured in Schenectady on 20 Jan. was banded there on 8 Dec. 1973, making her at least 11 years, 8 months old, which may represent a new North American age record for the species. Red Crossbill: large flocks feasted on the abundant spruce cones in no. Saratoga and Fulton Cos. Territorial males soon led to confirmed breeding in several locations. Other numerous reports of displaying birds led to nothing as the birds moved on, taking their domestic intentions with them. At least three nestings have been confirmed. White-winged Crossbill: similar but on a smaller scale than the preceding. Most reports were from the Lake Desolation and Johnstown areas. Pine Siskin: abundant to the north; generally absent to the south; ignoring thistle seed in favor of the superabundant natural food crop (TP). Evening Grosbeak: scarce away from the conifers, and to the relief of some feeder operators, preferred the natural foods to handout sunflower seeds. House Sparrow: seem to be holding their own against the House Finch, alas.

Remember Dial-A-Bird for the latest in Hudson-Mohawk bird sightings and field trips: (518) 377-9600.

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

(Eds. note: We welcome the return of Dick Guthrie as Region 8 editor. He stepped into the breach at the last moment. Thanks.)

REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

It was a strange winter as seasons go. December started off with a cold first week, and then warmed up to make many late migrants stay put. New temperature records were established on 17 December – 60° F., and 29 December – 68° F. January turned quite cold, and remained that way into February when a warming trend set in by the second week. A record of 72° F. was established on the 24th. Most larger bodies of water were still open for Christmas Counts, but frozen for the Federation Waterfowl Count on 13 January, and open again in the warm weather of mid-February. Ice left the lower Hudson by mid-February and the upper Hudson by 23 February. Almost every week of the period had some precipitation, but most of it was negligible; less than an inch of snow and only a trace of rain. The exceptions were 27 December when the southern portion had four or five inches, but the northern portions had less than an inch; and about six inches everywhere on 6 February. The light snows largely evaporated rather than melted, and, at period's end with no runoff, reservoirs were dropping toward the 50% level with no relief in sight. A look at water supplies at this writing brings apprehension about conditions this summer.

The most frequent comments heard thru the period were about the abundant food supply and the lack of winter visitors. Conifers were loaded with seeds beyond belief, and in most areas snow surfaces were blackened by birch seeds. No need for finches to move south for food, and no need for residents to come to feeders. Frank Murphy made an interesting comment to watch out for next year. It is improbable that trees would expend as much energy in seed production two years in a row, and next winter could be bleak in terms of available food. It could be rough on the birds, but great for the feeder watchers. Let's wait and see.

The N.Y.S. Federation Waterfowl Count on 13 January was the second best in both numbers of individuals and species in 31 years. Even with no counts made in Sullivan, Putnam and northern Westchester, the total was more than 19,000 individuals with more than 12,000 of them Canada Geese. Of these, 8,000 were in Dutchess alone.

A warm December induced many migrants to stay long enough to be counted on Christmas counts. Records were made for a number of species including Double-crested Cormorant, Spotted Sandpiper, Gray Catbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Phoebe, wrens, thrushes, Red-eyed Vireo and several species of warblers. Other quality visitors reported during the period were Red-necked Grebe, Greater White-fronted Goose, Glaucous Gull, Snowy Owl, Common Raven, Bohemian Waxwing, Red Crossbill and Broad-winged Hawk.

Contributors and observers cited: Al Brayton, Tom Burke, Judy Cinquina, Robert F. Deed, Stan DeOrsey, Jan & Francis Fitzpatrick, Valerie Freer, Sibyll Gilbert, Frank Murphy, Dan Niven, Eleanor Pink, Brian Schiefer, John Tramontano, Ed Treacy, Marion Van-Wagner, and Berna Weissman.

Abbreviations: Ashokan–Ashokan Reservoir; CP–Croton Point; EP–Esopus Point; FWC–

Federation Waterfowl Count on 13 Jan.; MC–Marshlands Conservancy; PL–Playland, Rye.

Christmas Counts cited: BCC–Burroughs, Ulster, 22 Dec.; BMCC–Bear Mountain, 9 Jan.; BWCC–Bronx Westchester, Rye, 23 Dec.; GSCC–Greenwich Stamford, SE Westchester, 16 Dec.; HCC–Housatonic, NE Dutchess, 16 Dec.; MCC–Mearns, E. Orange, 15 Dec.; RCC–Rockland, 23 Dec.; SCC–Sullivan, 29 Dec.; WCC–Waterman, Dutchess, 28 Dec. No reports received from Putnam and Peekskill Counts.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: five off Rye 23 Dec. on BWCC. Com. Loon: one on Greenwood L on FWC was the first since 1978 for that count. Horned Grebe: six of the 25 on GSCC were found on Kensico Res. Red-necked Grebe: always unusual in winter. One on Ashokan thru 6 Jan. Two on BCC (no details). Double-crested Cormorant: remained thru period in unprecedented numbers. RCC has only had them for the past three years in 38 counts. This year a “whopping” 36 individuals. One on BMCC was a first for that count. Another adult at CP 12-15 Dec. was a winter first for that location. Another was at PL 23 Dec. Great Blue Heron: reached a peak of 52 on 8 Dec. at PL. RCC had ten; the previous high count was five in 1956 and four in 1975. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one remained at PL to 29 Dec. Mute Swan: the 145 on FWC was up from 110 last year. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE**: one returned for the third year to Round Pond near Amenia on 28 Feb. (D. Fleury). Snow Goose: many more reports than usual of from one to a few individuals at such locations as Mamaroneck, CP, Dobb’s Ferry, Dover, Amenia and Montgomery; 16 reports from various ponds in Dutch. Of the six on FWC, five were in Dutch. Canada Goose: 11,946 on FWC was up from 2,123 last year and made up more than 50% of the entire count. Am. Black Duck and Mallard: numbers up 300% over last year’s count on FWC. N. Pintail: the two found on FWC belie their higher than usual numbers thru the period. Gadwall: six on Wappinger’s L 29 Dec. was a good date for Dutch. Three continued there for FWC. Am. Wigeon: usually a few on FWC, but none this year. Canvasback: the 916 on FWC was better than average, but down slightly from last year. Greater Scaup: 759 on BWCC in the Rye area. Lesser Scaup: one on the Hudson at Bear Mt. was a first for the BMCC. Eight were on Wampus Pd. Armonk on BWCC. Oldsquaw: rarely found up river in winter; one at EP 25 Dec. White-winged Scoter: one on MCC was a first for that count. Com. Goldeneye: 53 on FWC was down from 219 last year. Bufflehead: a paltry seven compared with last year’s 36 on FWC. Hooded Merganser: the 124 on GSCC included 43 from inland West. Com. Merganser: 2,823 on FWC was less than half last year’s total.

-**HAWKS-ALCIDS**: Turkey Vulture: single birds reported thru the period from the eastern and southern parts of the region were probably not residents, but rather scouts probing northward from N.J. on the warmer days of the period. Most residents were back on territory by the end of Feb. Osprey: one at Byram L. Mt. Kisco 1 Dec. was very late. Two on RCC was the fourth time for that count in 38 years; all since 1978, and the sixth winter record for that county. Observed in the Hackensack Swamp area between Blauvelt and West Nyack. Bald Eagle: more than usual and more widespread; reported from all areas. At least six wintered at Iona I. Of the 65 birds reported on the Jan. survey of NYS, 49 of them were in the Sull-Ulster area. This number was composed of 31 adults and 18 imm. At least 12 spent Feb. at Rondout Res. One caught at Mongaup Res. 27 Feb. by the DEC had been previously tagged at the same location 25 Feb. 1980. N. Harrier: more than usual. At least two wintered at Galeville Airport and four others reported from Dutch during Feb. Accipiters: all local species reported well during period. A Sharp-shinned was trapped accidentally in a summer screen house at your reporter’s home and had to be released by hand on 23 Feb. One N. Goshawk at Wawarsing observed on 23-24 Jan. and 12 Feb. seemed to have a predilection for Mourning Doves at a feeder. Red-shouldered Hawk: nine passed the Butler Sanctuary on 7 Dec., a very late movement. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK**: the occasional mid-winter report is usually ignored by your reporter, but this year there were three well-documented events. We report them here and leave it to the

reader to accept or reject them. One adult well observed and described by Liz and Lew Dumont (experienced hawkwatchers) 9 Feb. near Warwick. Three imm over Pauling 22 Dec. (SG). On Sunday, 17 Feb., at about 4 pm, Andy Cszaszar was stopped for a traffic light near Port Jervis when two went over his car. He pulled over and in the next 20 minutes observed 16 more raptors; ten Red-tails, five Rough-legs and one Osprey. They came in small groups of twos and threes. Rough-legged Hawk: very well reported. At least three wintered at Galeville and two more in the Red Hook area. Many scattered reports of single individuals. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: one and possibly two were in the Rio-Mongaup area thru the period. Am. Kestrel: numbers severely down in the Rock area where only two were on the RCC. That count had as many as 18 as recently as 1979. Peregrine Falcon: a heartening reappearance of this species. One was on offshore rocks at MC on 9 Dec. Another took up residence on the Tappan Zee Bridge 21 Dec., and was observed repeatedly thru period. Another was harassing blackbirds below Mt. Peter on 25 Feb. Ring-necked Pheasant: six reports in Dutch during Dec.; max eight along Clove Rd. 9 Dec. Wild Turkey: from 12 to 25 regularly during Feb. near Amenia. Appearing more and more on Christmas Counts for the first time. FM reports them down in the Ulst area. He observed none, and received no reports of any. Clapper Rail: three at MC on 23 Dec. Killdeer: one report of 22 birds on 1 Jan. in Dutch (no details). Greater Yellowlegs: one at PL thru Dec. Spotted Sandpiper: after the first winter record on BMCC last year, RCC had its first this year when one turned up in the Town of Ramapo (P. French). Purple Sandpiper: as many as 100 on rocks off Rye during Dec. Com. Snipe: two on BWCC in Rye. Am. Woodcock: one at MC 30 Dec., seven at Verbank 27 Feb. Observed in courtship flight 23 Feb. at West Point, and at Saugerties. Gulls: the Westchester Co. dump at CP was finally closed to garbage and only about 700 gulls were counted there during the period. There used to be thousands - oh well, the price of progress. Laughing Gull: the last two of a few late birds at PL were reported on 26 Dec. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: the usual bird at Harbor I. Pk., Mamaroneck was there during Dec., but became more elusive later on. **GLAUCOUS GULL**: one Ashokan 2 Dec. Three on Wanasink L, Sull 28 Nov. was a new county record for Sull (E. Scott).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: around in exceptional numbers; 213 on BCC, 546 on WCC and 773 on MCC. E. Screech-Owl: residents in five areas of Dutch this year compared to nine last. Great Horned Owl: many reports. AB had five different birds calling near his home at Saugerties the night of 25 Dec. Observed calling in at least five locations in Dutch during Jan. Snowy Owl: the only report, one flying near 6½ Station Sanct. in Goshen (Bob Frederick). Barred Owl: very few reports. Long-eared Owl: only a single report, one bird roosting all day on 10 Feb. in an ornamental tree outside a window in Upper Nyack. Short-eared Owl: very poorly reported, one at Hamptonburgh 29 Jan. JT reported six at Galeville Airport 25 Feb., but other birders who frequent the place saw none for the season. N. Saw-whet Owl: more than usual. One moved south, tree by tree along the road in front of JFF's home in Campbell Hall, calling all the way, on the eve of 24 Dec. Another was calling near AB's home in Saugerties 29 Dec. The latter was heard regularly thru 10 Feb. when it was joined by a second, unreported thereafter. Red-headed Woodpecker: a small group of five was found near Walden on MCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: many feeders have single individuals. More commonly reported than Red-headed. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: BW reports more than usual in west central Westchester, three at Pound Ridge Res. 9 Dec. and another in Rye 23 Dec. N. Flicker: 46 on MCC was an excellent number, as was 32 on WCC. Pileated Woodpecker: six on WCC and four on RCC. One of the latter was being pursued by a Sharp-shinned. One can only wonder what the hawk would do with it if he caught it. The observer did not see the chase concluded.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **EASTERN PHOEBE**: extremely rare in winter. One 29 Dec., Wurtsboro (DN). Horned Lark: sparingly reported, max 450 Warren Sod Farm near Pine I 27 Jan. 400 Red Hook 5 Feb., down to 49 on WCC from a high of 490 in 1966.

Probably due to a loss of manured farms. Am. Crow: it's assumed that the usual roosts are still working, but no one reports them. Fish Crow: excellent winter numbers. Remained at MC thru 23 Dec. Three at CP 15 Dec., observed regularly thru winter across the river at Haverstraw Dump. One Kingston Point 23 Feb. RCC had its 11th occurrence in 38 counts with a record high of 38 birds. **COMMON RAVEN**: one observed soaring over Butler Sanct. on 7 Dec. (Frank Nicoletti), appears to be the third record for West. Two were again at Slide Mt. 1 Dec. Tufted Titmouse: RCC had a record high of 212. Red-breasted Nuthatch: eight observed together at Mongaup Res. in mid-Feb., five there again on 2 Mar. Very few elsewhere, and missed on most Christmas counts. Brown Creeper: seem to be many around this winter. The Rye group tallied 14 on BWCC. Carolina Wren: numbers up and seems to have done well thru period. Many at suet feeders and singing loudly by end of period. House Wren: one very late bird at Purchase on 16 Dec. and another at Rye 23 Dec. Winter Wren: six in Rye for BWCC was excellent. Marsh Wren: MC contributed one to the BWCC, another was at CP 15 Dec. Kinglets: both species well up in numbers thru period. Rye added 27 Golden-crowned and 13 Ruby-crowned to BWCC, which made for record totals for each. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: one at CP 15 Dec. was probably the same bird found there on 30 Dec. (D. Panko). E. Bluebird: found in excellent numbers in areas where nest box trails exist. FJF had an interesting experience of six roosting together overnight on a tree branch near their home in Campbell Hall. They would arrive about a half hour before sunset, feed for a while, and then huddle next to each other for the night. Both BCC and WCC report 25 each. **SWAINSON'S THRUSH**: one on RCC at Clarkstown (Mary Wilfred), third time in 38 counts. Hermit Thrush: six in Rye for BWCC; one on BCC. Am. Robin: another one of those winters where they abound. A flock of well over a thousand at Dover, Dutch on 26 Jan. Several reports of flocks from 25 to 75 at various locations in Dutch thru Jan. and Feb. 31 at Wawarsing in early Dec. increased to 64 in early Jan. 730 counted on BCC and 128 on WCC which usually average 20. Gray Catbird: six at Rye on BWCC; MCC had five. Water Pipit: three over Rye's Milton Pt. 23 Dec. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: three at Middletown 12 Feb. was a first for Oran (JT). None elsewhere for many years. Cedar Waxwing: more than usual, many reports of small flocks thru region for period. N. Shrike: one was at Kingston Pt. from mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. Another, possibly the same bird, was at the IBM plant at Kingston for third week of Feb. (R. Terwilliger). Loggerhead Shrike: JT found one at Galeville from 29 Dec-23 Feb., but he was the only observer.

VIREOS-WARBLES: **RED-EYED VIREO**: one at a feeder in New City 23 Jan. (Ed Bieber). Bird was seen only that day during a record-breaking cold spell. Orange-crowned Warbler: one at PL 23 Dec. was an excellent find for BWCC. Yellow-rumped Warbler: 68 on RCC was an excellent comeback from lows of recent years, 15 on MCC was also excellent. **AMERICAN REDSTART**: a female at Clarkstown on RCC was a new record for the count. Com. Yellowthroat: an extraordinary four at MC for BWCC. One at CP 15 Dec. (D. Panko). RCC had its fourth record and the fifth for the county with a single bird at Hackensack Swamp, s.w. of Nyack (Donald S. Deed).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: at least three wintered in Dutch, and single birds were on two local Christmas Counts. Chipping Sparrow: two remained at a feeder at Wanasink L, Sull thru early Dec. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: one remained at MC for the BWCC. Swamp Sparrow: 11 in Rye on BWCC. White-throated Sparrow: RCC had a record high of 587; numbers good elsewhere, but not nearly that high. White-crowned Sparrow: on several Christmas Counts. One on GSCC at Armonk, and another at MC on BWCC. Another remained at the IBM plant in Kingston thru 24 Feb. One was at Wawarsing in early Dec. and another was on WCC for the fifth record in 27 counts. Lapland Longspur: three at Red Hook on 5 Feb. were in various stages of plumage, and feeding with a few Horned Larks and Snow Buntings (MVW). Snow Bunting: max 500 Magee Hill, Dutch 22 Jan., 200 Red Hook 5 Feb., 50 Warren Sod Farm 27 Jan. Many other reports of smaller flocks. Icterids: local breeders returned early in Feb. Max a flock of from 3000 to 3500

observed several times near Chester Elementary School, last week of Feb. Bobolink: one well-described bird near Pawling 15 Dec. could be a record late date for the region. Report submitted to NYSARC (SG). E. Meadowlark: a heartening 19 at Nichols Preserve in Armonk 13 Dec. and again 16 Dec. (BW); missed completely on most Christmas Counts. Brown-headed Cowbird: a "whopping" 2,300 in the Town of Northeast 16 Dec. on HCC. N. Oriole: one at Wawarsing until 2 Dec. Purple Finch: the only northern finch in good numbers. HCC had 52 in the Town of Northeast, Dutch. House Finch: astronomical increase; 342 on WCC was 30% higher than House Sparrow count. 814 on MCC, 698 on BCC were twice the House Sparrow counts. Red Crossbill: two at Pound Ridge Res. on 9-11 Dec. (Frank Nicoletti). Another pair was in spruces along Fir Brook north of Willowemoc on 23 Feb. (BW). Com. Redpoll: their scarcity makes any report suspect. Only report four at a feeder in Forestburgh in early Jan. Pine Siskin: almost totally absent from the southern portion. A number of small flocks reported from northern Sull on 23 Feb.; missed on every Christmas Count. Am. Goldfinch: numbers poor on Christmas Counts and at feeders, but they were out there. More than 50 in early Dec. at Twin Pds., Sull. Several flocks of 25-30 at Monticello in late Dec., and more than 200 at Rondout Res. 30 Dec., RCC had a high of 391. Evening Grosbeak: most reports from Sull. Most Christmas Counts had only a few or none.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 – MARINE

JOSEPH A. DiCOSTANZO

It was a winter of sharp contrasts. It started with the warmest December on record. The warmest day of the month was the 29th, with a high of 70° F. The day's mean of 63° was 30° above normal. The month's average of 43.8° F. was 7.6° F. above normal. Ironically, the only significant snowfall of the month, 4.8 inches on the 27th, preceded the "heat wave." December's total precipitation of 3.26 inches was 0.55 below normal. The late December warm spell carried over into early January until temperatures dropped below normal on the 8th. The real arctic blast came, however, on the 21st when temperatures plummeted to two below zero. January's mean of 28.8° F. was 3.0° F. below normal. The new year continued the dry spell of late 1984 with January's total precipitation of 1.00 inches, 2.21 below normal. The only major snow was 4.1 inches on 17 January. The first nine days of February continued cool, but after that temperatures were mostly above normal with a record breaking high of 75° F. on the 24th. February's total precipitation of 2.41 inches continued on the deficit side, this time by 0.72 inches. The only measurable snowfall was 4.3 inches on the 2nd and 5.7 inches on the 5th-6th. (All weather data from New York City.)

Despite December's mild weather there seemed to be very few birds around. There were very few rarities, either on the Christmas Bird Counts or later. With the exception of Southern Nassau, most counts reported near or slightly below normal totals. Southern Nassau - 133, Montauk - 127, Brooklyn - 122, Queens

- 121, Captree - 119, Bronx-Westchester -118, Central Suffolk - 114, Orient - 110, Northern Nassau - 108, Quogue-Watermill - 102, Smithtown - 98, and Staten Island - 91. The Long Island counts reported a total of 175 species, three less than last year.

The mild weather did result in some lingerers and good numbers of some "half-hardies" such as lots of herons, wrens, kinglets, Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows and a good variety of warblers. Species setting new late records included Black Rail, Eastern Kingbird and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The less common gulls were also well-represented. On the negative side, no Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported and winter finches were nowhere to be found.

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: Com. Loon, Great and Double-crested Cormorants, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, N. Shoveler, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Oldsquaw, Com. Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded and Com. Mergansers, Ruddy Duck, N. Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks, Am. Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Com. Snipe. Laughing and Great Black-backed Gulls, Rock and Mourning Doves, Great Horned and Long-eared Owls, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Belted Kingfisher, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Am. Robin, Gray Catbird, N. Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Eur. Starling, Am. Tree, Field, Fox, Song, and Swamp Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, E. Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, House Finch, Am. Goldfinch and House Sparrow. Including the above, 192 species plus two identifiable races are recorded in this report, one less than last winter.

Rarities: Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Gyrfalcon and Common Murre.

Dates of Christmas Bird Counts: Brooklyn, Montauk, Queens, Quogue-Watermill and Staten Island - 15 Dec.; Captree - 16 Dec.; N. Nassau - 22 Dec.; Bronx-Westchester - 23 Dec.; Central Suffolk and Smithtown - 27 Dec.; Orient - 29 Dec.; S. Nassau - 30 Dec.

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

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LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loons were found in about normal numbers on the CBCs, though one at HLSP 1 Jan. (SBD) was unusual away from the coast. Pied-billed and Horned Grebes were reported in near normal numbers and Red-necked Grebes were absent everywhere but at Montauk where one to three individuals wintered. It was a grebe winter, nevertheless. An **EARED GREBE** was discovered at JBWR on the Brooklyn

CBC (BB, MS) before drifting into the neighboring Queens count; since Brooklyn observers saw it first, and on their side of the line, it will be listed only on the Brooklyn CBC. A dark phase **WESTERN GREBE** was discovered at Ditch Plains on the Montauk peninsula 12 Jan. (JD, AM); seen that day and the next by many observers it could not be relocated after that weekend. N. Gannets were found in fair numbers on several LI counts: Montauk - 756; Quogue-Watermill - 730; and S. Nassau - 610. Undoubtedly due to the very warm Dec. the heron list resembles a summer report rather than a winter one. Am. Bitterns were reported on six LI CBCs with S. Nassau leading with nine; Brooklyn, Captree and Quogue-Watermill each had three; Queens - two and Montauk - one. Good numbers of Great Blue Herons were found on virtually all counts. Great Egrets seemed to be everywhere with 22 found on LI CBCs. Queens was tops with eight, followed by S. Nassau - seven; Brooklyn - five; Staten I - three; Captree and Montauk each had one, their first ever; two Greats wintered at HLSP (AW, SBD) and two were at JBWR 29 Jan. (NYRBA). Snowy Egrets were also well-represented on the counts: Queens - four, S. Nassau - three, and N. Nassau and C. Suffolk - one each. S. Nassau had a record four Little Blue Herons and one Tricolored Heron; single Little Blues and Tricoloreds were still at Tobay 6 Jan. (NYRBA). A Cattle Egret at JBWR 12 Dec. (WR) just missed the Queens CBC. Single lingering Green-backed Herons were found on the Captree and Queens counts. Brooklyn turned up a record three Glossy Ibis and S. Nassau, one. Tundra Swans were at their usual eastern LI locations: five at Hook Pd. 12 Jan. (JJR) and six at Mecox 20 Jan. (IC), probably the same birds in both locations. Mute Swans were in above normal numbers on virtually every count and for the first time were reported on every count in the region. Snow Geese were found in ones and twos on virtually every count, except for Brooklyn - 328 and Queens - 48, who benefited from the flocks at JBWR. S. Nassau's total of over 27,000 Brant again surpassed all other counts combined. Lingering Wood Ducks were on nearly all counts with C. Suffolk's 25 the most and a count record. A "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal returned to the Massapequa Preserve again this winter (NYRBA) and another was at Lawrence 23 Feb. (R. Kelly). N. Pintails were in above normal numbers on nearly all CBCs. S. Nassau had a record 14 Blue-winged Teals; the only other report was two on the C. Suffolk CBC. The two male Eurasian Wigeons reported in the fall continued at JBWR thru Dec. and were joined by a female (mob); another Eurasian was at the Massapequa Preserve from 30 Dec. on; others were singles at Hook Pd. 1 Dec. (JJR), Babylon 16 Feb. (JJR) and two in Lynnbrook during Dec. (NYRBA). Canvasbacks were well above normal on most counts with Queens ahead of everybody with 3,485 followed by Quogue-Watermill with 3,044. Redheads were a bit below normal on most counts. A Tufted Duck on the East R off Manhattan 3 Feb. was probably the bird that frequents the Central Pk. reservoir (NYRBA). After last winter's record number of Lesser Scaup, the Montauk CBC could only find two this year; elsewhere the species was reported in mostly above normal numbers. It is an odd winter on LI when King Eiders outnumber Com. Eiders, but it happened this year. Ten female Commons at Montauk 1 Dec. (JJR) were the most all winter; throughout the rest of the season the most seen at Montauk was two and the species was often missed; a male was at Shinnecock 18 Jan. (NYRBA). Small numbers of King Eiders were at Montauk all winter, peaking at seven 9 Feb. (NYRBA); other sightings included a male at Caumsett SP 8 Dec. (JP) and a female off Peconic 29 Dec. (JJR). The four Harlequin Ducks that appeared at Pt. Lookout in late Nov. spent the entire winter there; four or five Harlequins also wintered at Montauk (mob). Though above last year's numbers all three scoters were still below normal on most counts. Two Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported: a female at Caumsett SP 13 Jan. (T. O'Connor) and a male at Montauk 10 Feb. (BB, MS). Montauk had a count record 5,965 Red-breasted Mergansers; elsewhere the species was found in near to slightly above normal numbers.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Two Bald Eagles wintered at CRSP (mob) and individuals were seen over the Belt Pkwy, Brooklyn 23 Jan. (NYRBA) and Seaview Fields, SI 28 Feb. (NS, WS). Cooper's Hawks were widespread on the CBCs: Orient had three, Bronx-West, Brooklyn, Captree and S. Nassau each had two and C. Suffolk, N. Nassau and Quogue-Watermill

had one each. It was a poor winter for N. Goshawks: Bronx-West found two and Brooklyn and Captree each had one; the only other report was of two in Pelham Bay Pk 20 Jan (NYRBA) and these were probably the Bronx-West birds. Two Red-shouldered Hawks on the N. Nassau and one on the Smithtown CBCs were the only ones reported. Rough-legged Hawks were even rarer than last winter with half the counts missing them. It was another good winter for Merlins, though not as good as last year; most counts had at least one, and one wintered at Jones Bch (mob). Single Peregrines were found on the Brooklyn, Captree, Montauk, Queens and S. Nassau CBCs. The gray phase GYRFALCON that appeared at Zach's Bay, Jones Bch in late Nov. spent the entire season there (mob). The only Ruffed Grouse reported were three on the Westchester portion of the Bronx-West CBC. I spoke too soon last year when I said the CRSP Wild Turkey flock had leveled off at 45; it increased to 63 this year on the Captree CBC; 56 on Gardiner's I on the Montauk count is within the normal range there. N. Bobwhites were up on all the eastern LI counts and about normal where they occur elsewhere. In Dec., 1983 four birders set a new late record for BLACK RAIL when they flushed two at Tobay; on 6 Jan. we had a repeat performance at half-strength: two of the same birders flushed a Black Rail from almost exactly the same spot (AW, S. Schiff). Do you guys supply maps? Most LI counts reported one or two Clapper Rails. Montauk found four Virginia Rails and Brooklyn, C. Suffolk, Orient and Smithtown each had one. The warm weather no doubt was responsible for single Com. Moorhens on Brooklyn, Queens and Quogue-Watermill. Am. Coots were up slightly from their low numbers in recent years. Black-bellied Plovers were widespread in good numbers; they were found on every count with S. Nassau tallying 304, followed by Queens - 120 and Captree -108. Greater Yellowlegs were also widespread in high numbers, S. Nassau once again leading with 45. Along with their Greater, S. Nassau found two Lesser Yellowlegs as did Bronx-West and Queens. A near record late Spotted Sandpiper was on the Captree CBC. Staten I had 65 Ruddy Turnstones and Orient 50, both above normal numbers. Two counts found Red Knots: S. Nassau - 81 and Queens - 14. Two or three Western Sandpipers were lingering at Zach's Bay 2 Dec. (SBD, *vide* NYRBA). The S. Nassau CBC found seven Long-billed Dowitchers; none were reported after that. The record breaking heat wave of 24 Feb. was probably the stimulus that had four or five Am. Woodcocks doing aerial displays at Pelham Bay Pk. that evening (JD, P. Malloy). Parasitic Jaegers are proving to be regular lingerers into Dec. in recent years with two on the Montauk CBC and one on Quogue-Watermill; one bird was still at Shinnecock 30 Dec. (JB). Montauk and S. Nassau each had one Little Gull; from one to four Littles were seen at Shinnecock all winter (mob). Queens and Staten I. each had one Com. Black-headed Gull; Shinnecock and Jones Inlets each had two Black-headed Gulls frequenting them mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. (mob); one of the birds at Shinnecock had a nearly full hood. There were over 5,300 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Montauk CBC and approximately 2,000 each on the Brooklyn and Captree counts; elsewhere they were about normal. N. Nassau set a count record with 7,190 Ring-billed Gulls; the species was in normal to above normal numbers on all counts. Brooklyn's total of 68,000 Herring Gulls broke the count record of 64,500 set just last year. Iceland Gulls were found on three CBCs: Montauk had two and S. Nassau and Quogue-Watermill each had one; at least two birds wintered in the vicinity of Shinnecock (mob); another two were on the East R, at 14th St., Manhattan 24 Feb. (FV). Gyrfalcon watchers were usually rewarded with views of the adult "Kumlien's" Gull wintering at the Boardwalk restaurant even when the Gyr was being uncooperative. Four Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported: one on the Brooklyn CBC and singles at Montauk Pt. 1 Dec. (JJR), the Central Pk. reservoir 3 Feb. (NYRBA) and Ditch Plains, Montauk 9 Feb. (NYRBA). Montauk had two Glaucous Gulls; Smithtown and S. Nassau each had one; a sick second-year bird was picked up at Moravian Cemetery, SI 24 Feb. and later died (*vide* AM). The Montauk CBC had 1,500 Black-legged Kittiwakes, but following this Kittiwake numbers there were not as good as last winter. A late Com. Tern was reported in the Montauk Harbor 12 Dec. (S. Saphire). Also at Montauk was a COMMON MURRE 30 Dec. (R. Roth, T. Battaley, C. Hartel, *vide* NYRBA).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Seven counts found Com. Barn-Owls: S. Nassau - five; Brooklyn - three; Captree and Staten I - two each; and C. Suffolk, Montauk and Queens - one. E. Screech-Owls were in normal or above numbers on most counts with Smithtown leading, as usual, with 31. Snowy Owls were relatively few and far between: three JFK airport 2 Dec. (HR); two Fort Tilden 17 Dec. (NYRBA); one Breezy Pt. 31 Dec. (M. Penzer); one Bay Pk. 1 Jan. (SBD); one JBWR 5 Feb. (NYRBA) and one irregularly at the West End, Jones Bch Dec. to Jan. (mob). Short-eared Owls have been virtually nonexistent on SI the last two winters due to habitat destruction according to one observer (AM); they were in about normal numbers on the other CBCs. Red-headed Woodpeckers did not repeat their invasion of last winter. Only two were reported; one at a feeder in East Islip thru the season (JM, MM) and another at a feeder in Westhampton thru 29 Jan. (S. Young). N. Nassau again claimed the high count of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 19 this year. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and N. Flickers were in normal to slightly below normal numbers on the CBCs. Bronx-West found a Pileated Woodpecker on the Westchester portion of the count.

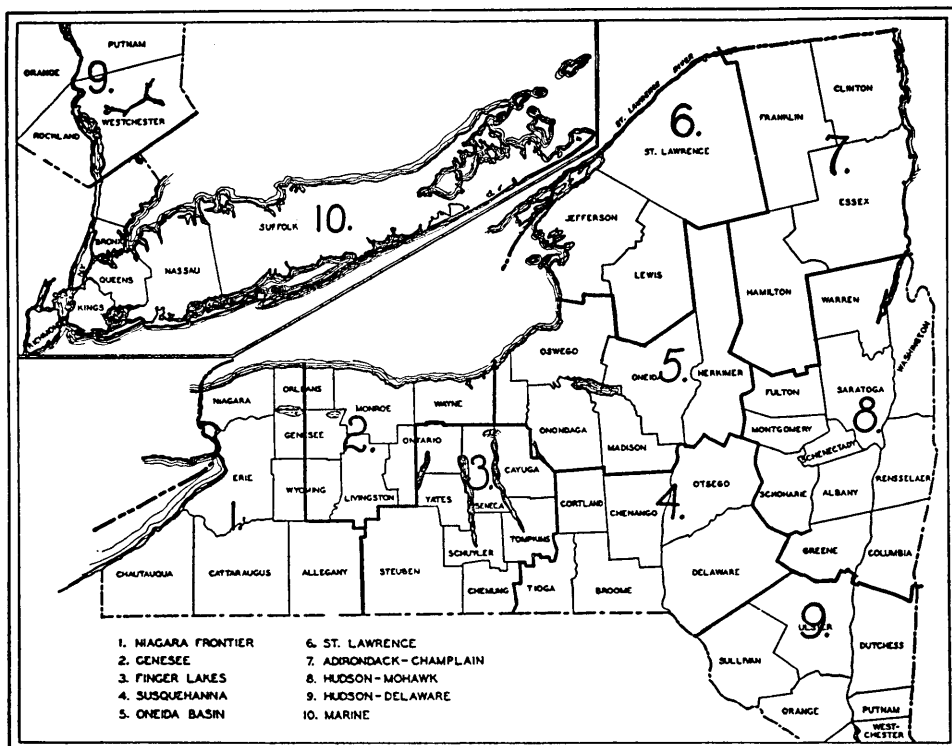
FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Given the mild temperatures in Dec. it is surprising that only the Orient CBC had an E. Phoebe. One to two W. Kingbirds were on Jones Bch 1-25 Dec. (mob). A record late E. **KINGBIRD** was reported at Zach's Bay on the S. Nassau CBC (BB, MS). Staten I again took top honors for Am. Crow with 12,250; Captree was a distant second with a still impressive 5,662. Tufted Titmouse continues its increase on eastern LI: last year Montauk's 18 and Orient's 89 were count records, this year they had 66 and 157, the third consecutive year of record numbers for both. Red-breasted Nuthatches were notable for their almost total absence; Captree had the highest total, seven; some CBCs missed the species entirely. White-breasted Nuthatches were also down but not as sharply. Carolina Wrens were a bit above normal but other wrens were found in large numbers. An amazing five House Wrens were reported: singles on Bronx-West, Brooklyn, Captree, Orient and S. Nassau. Winter Wrens were way up with a total of 36 on all counts combined, 13 on Bronx-West alone. More counts found Marsh Wrens than missed them, a total of 19 on all counts. Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in normal numbers on all the eastern LI counts but were in record or near record numbers on all the western counts; Bronx-West had 137 Goldens and 28 Rubys; N. Nassau 80 Goldens and 24 Rubys. Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Douglaston, Queens 10 Dec. (GD) were a late record, but they were quickly surpassed by another at Wolfe's Pd, SI 20 Dec. (NS, WS). Montauk had three E. Bluebirds, Captree - two and Orient - one. N. Nassau reported a Swainson's Thrush in the same area they found one last year. The only Water Pipits reported were Queens - 16 and Bronx-West - six. Cedar Waxwings were reported in low to moderate numbers on nearly all counts, but Bronx-West had nearly three times its nearest competitor with 104. A N. Shrike on N. Nassau was the only shrike reported.

VIREOS-WARBBLERS: A lingering Solitary Vireo was found on the Orient CBC. Orange-crowned Warblers seemed to be everywhere: Bronx-West and Montauk each had three; Brooklyn, Captree and N. Nassau had one apiece. Three Nashville Warblers were found in Central Pk 16 Dec. for the Lower Hudson CBC. Yellow-rumped Warblers were below normal on most counts. Three CBCs found lingering Pine Warblers: Captree - two, Brooklyn - one and S. Nassau - one; another was at the Lea Estate, Queens 28 Dec. (A. Wagner). Palm Warblers were well above normal: C. Suffolk, Montauk and S. Nassau each had five, Brooklyn - four, Queens - three and Orient - one; lingerers were still at Montauk 12 Jan. (P. Cane) and HLSP 14 Jan. (SBD). A Black-and-white Warbler was at HLSP 16 Dec. (W. Belford) and another was on the N. Nassau CBC. An Am. Redstart was in Central Pk. 16 Dec. for the Lower Hudson count. A lingering Ovenbird was reported at Hunter's I, Pelham Bay Pk 20 Dec (NYRBA). Twenty Com. Yellowthroats were reported from all CBCs combined with Montauk once again having nearly half of them - eight. A male Wilson's Warbler was a first ever for the N. Nassau count and a record late date. For the first time in several years no Yellow-breasted Chats were reported this winter.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinals were in above normal numbers on most counts. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared at a feeder in East Islip 22 Dec. and remained there thru the period (JM, MM). While no count missed Rufous-sided Towhee, they were in low numbers on all of them and some only found one bird. Brooklyn reported six Chipping Sparrows; N. Nassau, Orient and Quogue-Watermill one each. The only CBC to report Vesper Sparrow was Orient with two, but Queens just missed them with singles at JFK airport 13 Dec. (HR) and Flushing Cemetery 14 Dec. (W. Astle). Most LI counts reported the usual small numbers of the "Ipswich" race of Savannah Sparrow. Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found by almost every CBC that had the habitat for them; a total of 30 on the LI counts and one more on Bronx-West. Seaside Sparrows lingered in much lower numbers but C. Suffolk, Queens and S. Nasasu each had one and Quogue-Watermill two. White-throated Sparrows were in record numbers on Bronx-West and C. Suffolk CBCs, 1949 and 798, respectively; elsewhere they were normal to a little above. A total of ten White-crowned Sparrows were on the LI counts with another at Bronx-West; one wintered on Jones Bch (AW) and another was at Great Kills, SI 27 Jan. (AM). Queens with nine was the only CBC to find Lapland Longspurs; they were scarce everywhere this winter. Snow Buntings were in above normal numbers on most CBCs. Both N. Nassau and C. Suffolk set new highs for Red-winged Blackbirds with 905 and 375, respectively; the species was above normal on most other counts also. Last winter I called 12 Boat-tailed Grackles in Broad Channel "astounding." I don't know what to call the 36 Boat-tails found this year on the Queens CBC; even this is less than the 39 there earlier in the month (WR, GD); most of this flock apparently wintered in the area. This year C. Suffolk had the big Com. Grackle roost with over 1,000 birds in one flock in Yaphank. Brown-headed Cowbirds were widespread with Orient and Montauk the leaders with 128 and 111, respectively. A N. Oriole was on the Montauk CBC; other singles were found near Stony Brook 28 Dec. (S. & S. Nord) and at a feeder in Bellrose Terrace in mid-Jan. (R. Craig). Apart from 13 Purple Finches on Bronx-West the species was virtually unreported. Winter finches were essentially absent from the region this winter. Aside from 25 Pine Siskins on the Montauk CBC the only other reports for the species were singles on C. Suffolk, and N. and S. Nassau. Bronx-West had one Evening Grosbeak; the only other report was of 12 at Ridge 2 Jan. (JJR).

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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