

The **KINGBIRD**



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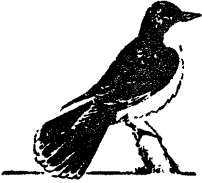
THE KINGBIRD (ISSN 0023-1606), published quarterly (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall) is a publication of The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., which has been organized to further the study of bird life and to disseminate knowledge thereof, to educate the public in the need of conserving natural resources and to encourage the establishment and maintenance of sanctuaries and protected areas.

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

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Editor – Paul A. DeBenedictis

Highlights of the Season

Editor – Robert Spahn

Circulation Manager – Constance N. Wilkins



*Organization meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs
Amsterdam, New York, 25 Oct 1947.
Photograph by Gordon M. Meade.*

THE ORIGINS OF THE FEDERATION AND WHAT HAPPENED THEN

GORDON M. MEADE, M.D.

Prior to World War II there were few birders and bird clubs in New York State. Contacts and communications among them were sporadic, casual and almost entirely confined to club members from adjacent communities who inevitably met each other on their independent field trips. From these fortuitous meetings and acquaintances came the first thoughts of a Federation. But nothing came of these until after the close of World War II.

It would be possible to ascribe the ideas and the concept of a Federation as the brainchild of several persons, but this would be a narrow view of its genesis. The time and conditions were right for the spontaneous generation of the idea. Interest in bird watching and ornithology were burgeoning due to the release from the tensions of the war and the increase in leisure. Automobiles were increasingly available, gasoline was no longer rationed and new highways made distant travel to birding areas far afield possible in a day or two. The pressure of industrial and population increases brought enlarging threats to natural areas and wildlife with a resulting need for constant and more concerted vigilance and action.

It became inescapably self-evident that some mechanism was needed for the birders of the state to get to know each other, to share their ideas and experiences, to jointly promote research and education in the field of ornithology, and to secure a common and stronger voice in conservation matters. In the contacts on field trips, at each others meetings, the thought of a statewide organization was suggested and discussed by many.

Finally members of the Genesee Ornithological Society and the Buffalo Ornithological Society decided the time was opportune. A list of all the known bird clubs in the state was prepared. Invitations were issued to all of them to attend a meeting to discuss the feasibility and desirability of forming a state organization. Its exact form and character was undecided at that point.

Twenty-one delegates representing twelve bird clubs attended this discussion meeting, held 7 Dec 1946 at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences. Several clubs had expressed interest but were unable to send a delegate. The clubs represented were: Buffalo Audubon Society, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Burroughs-Audubon Nature Club, Cayuga Bird Club, Eaton Bird Club, Elmira Garden Club, Genesee

Ornithological Society, Keuka Park Conservation Club, Sassafras Bird Club, Watertown Bird Club and Watkins Glen Bird Club.

It was clear that there was unanimous interest in a state organization. Suggestions as to the functions and activities were freely offered and varied. Among those proposed were assisting birders to get acquainted, exchange of ideas for club activities, unification of state conservation interests, regional and statewide censuses and habitat studies, service to young people, studies of New York flyways and migration routes, publishing a journal, and gathering material for a new state book. Consideration was given to what forms state organizations had taken in other states, how they operated and their success.

The half-day session ended on an enthusiastic note, and Gordon M. Meade and Winston W. Brockner were empowered to appoint a committee to prepare a draft constitution. Thus on 25 Oct 1947, an organizational meeting (Fig. 1) was held in Amsterdam with twenty-one persons representing thirteen clubs. The principal business was to consider the constitution, of which a draft had been made in advance. It was discussed point by point. The final draft was approved for presentation to the charter clubs for final adoption. Temporary officers were identified to hold office until the constitution was adopted and regular elections could be held: President, Gordon M. Meade; Vice-President, Winston W. Brockner; Corresponding Secretary, Peter Paul Kellogg; Recording Secretary, Fred M. Hall; and Treasurer, Guy Bartlett.

From this point on the reality of the Federation was certain. Out of these meetings had come widening acquaintances and friendships among birders throughout the state, mutual stimulation for personal and club projects, and a growing enthusiasm for the prospects of what could come from a unification of efforts.

Two years from the date of the exploratory meeting, the first organized annual meeting was hosted by the Genesee Ornithological Society in Rochester on 12-14 Dec 1948, at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences. This meeting set a guidepost for the form, caliber and content of future meetings. For the enjoyment of those attending there was a display of the Elephant Folio Audubon prints and of the skins of unusual species taken locally such as Hudsonian Godwit, Franklin's Gull, Sage Thrasher and Western Meadowlark. There were commercial exhibits by Bausch & Lomb Optical Co., Eastman Kodak and Ward's Natural Science Establishment. As a matter of record, it is worth noting the papers presented at that meeting since they have not been recorded elsewhere:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| "Status of the Little Gull on the Niagara Frontier" | F. L. Gambrel |
| "Observations on the Birds of the Adirondacks" | Harold Axtell |

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| "How Birds Find Their Way" | Peter Paul Kellogg |
| "The Snowy Owl Incursion in New York in 1945-46" | Gordon Meade |
| "Northward Extension of the Range of Certain Species into the Hudson Valley" | Robert F. Deed |
| "Changing Distribution and Abundance of Certain Passerine Birds in Western New York." | W. C. Vaughan |
| "Observation of Common Tern Colonies on Oneida Lake" | Hazel R. Ellis |
| "Birds Can Be Missionaries" | Walter Elwood |

At the first annual dinner the speaker was Dr. Arthur A. Allen, who spoke of the "Quest for the Bristle-thighed Curlew" and the finding of the nest of this elusive bird. On the field trip on Sunday morning the hosts convinced the delegates either that the Rochester area was one of the finest for rare species, or that they carefully "planted" rarities in strategic spots just ahead of the party, because successively there was a Red Phalarope which allowed the entire party to approach within fifty feet, a small flock of Purple Sandpipers feeding on a grassy shore, the first Eared Grebe for the area (which swam within 100 feet of the group) and a very tardy Great Egret was seen. Some New York birders went away muttering to themselves "How can we ever compete with this next year?" It even impressed some of the Rochesterians.

That's the way it all began! What has happened since that beginning? The combined thinking of the founders who met that October day in Amsterdam in 1947 anticipated most of the problems that the Federation would encounter in the future. And most of them have occurred. If they have not, there remains enough flexibility to allow accommodation for whatever situation arises.

For the first twenty-five years the resilience, enthusiasm, and sound thinking of the chosen leaders have kept the Federation going in the right direction. But as the years went by it became clear that the affairs which required an immediate decision were not being dealt with efficiently or promptly enough. The feeling was that some means other than the Council of Delegates, which met only once a year, should be devised to act more expeditiously. Accordingly, in 1975 an Executive Committee was established, composed of the officers plus enough other members, chosen at large by the president, to make a total of 15 persons. Every effort is made to have the geographic distribution as representative of the regions of the state as possible. This committee has been very effective in acting on questions which have come before it.

Many times the questions are asked: "What is the Federation" and "How do I join it?" To answer these queries, Richard Sloss prepared a brochure which tells what the Federation does, what the advantages

of membership are and how to join. An answer to the first question also can be given by summarizing the Federation's major accomplishments over the past 40 years.

When the idea of forming a Federation was discussed at Rochester in December 1946, one of many activities considered was "How about publishing a journal?" When it was finally decided to go ahead at the third annual meeting in Watkins Glen in 1950, the question became "What shall we call it? Let's name it the Kingbird! This is the Empire State. A king is the head of an empire. Ergo, call it *The Kingbird!*" Allan Klonick became the first editor with the issue of November-December 1950. His successors have been Stephen Eaton, Gerald Rising, Minnie B. Scotland, Alice E. Ulrich, Dorothy W. McIlroy, Joseph W. Taylor, Emanuel Levine and John Farrand, and currently Paul DeBenedictis. These men and women have brought *The Kingbird* to a leading place among state ornithological publications. It has been published quarterly with articles on New York's bird life, short notes and observations, records of New York rarities, and a section on what has been seen in the state.

How were the latter observations to be gathered? This was solved by dividing the state into Regions at first eight but since 1954 into ten. They are called: Niagara Frontier, Genesee, Finger Lakes, Susquehanna, Oneida Lake Basin, St. Lawrence, Adirondack-Champlain, Hudson-Mohawk, Delaware-Hudson and Marine. Each Region is assigned an editor, who is responsible for gathering observations from that Region and writing a Regional report. Then an overall editor writes a summary, called the "Highlights of the Season," for the entire state. These Regional reports have been one of the most popular parts of *The Kingbird*. There is a long list of persons who have given many years of producing these reports. Among them are Leslie Bemont (27 years), Edward Treacy (24), Fritz Scheider (22), Sally Hoyt Spofford (19), and Frank Clinch (18). At the end of the 1987 Annual Meeting the contributions of these Regional editors were formally recognized by the Federation with presentations of complimentary copies of the Breeding Bird Atlas [see also the Editorial in the previous issue - *The Editor*]. Others who have given long service are Margaret Rusk (12), Lee Chamberlaine (12), and Dorothy McIlroy, Theodore Mack, Vivian Pitzrick, all with 10 years.

Another idea raised at the December 1946 meeting was gathering material for a new state book. Elon H. Eaton wrote his book in 1914 and it was now years out-of-date. Robert Arbib and Gordon Meade tried very hard to raise money in the 1950's for a state bird book but were unsuccessful. It was at that time that John Bull indicated that he was interested in writing a book for the Federation. Finally Dean Ama-

don was able to raise private funds to pay an author. With considerable help from members of the Federation, Bull completed *The Birds of New York State*, which was published in 1972.

While Bull's book was a real addition to the ornithological literature, it was not meant to take any account of what was happening day to day around the state. So in 1976 Maxwell Wheat, with the help of Mary Ann Sunderlin, launched a newsletter called *New York Birders*. In recent years it has been produced with the help of Constance Wilkins. Its emphasis has been on the activities of the Federation's member clubs, their members and bits of news about what they have been doing. A feature has been the publishing of poetry about birds, — a love of the editor. His long devotion to the Federation was recognized at the 1987 meeting by a special citation.

In a desire to inform birders of the state and nation where the best places to bird in the state are located, an arrangement was made to produce a Baedecker on *Where To Find Birds In New York State*. Susan Roney Drennan undertook this monumental task and produced a magnificent book, which was published in 1981. Five hundred sites are named along with maps and detailed directions on how to reach them. Many members aided Susan in this project.

To assist birders in keeping up-to-date on what is being written about the birds of New York, a bibliography committee keeps a list of all material published on that subject. This list is published yearly in *The Kingbird*. Birders should be able to keep abreast of what is being written. The committee currently consists of Allen Benton, John Belknap, Stephen Eaton, Valerie Freer, and Kenneth Parkes.

Every ten years an index of *The Kingbird* has been completed by devoted members. The first, for 1950-60, was compiled by hard-working Guy Bartlett of Schenectady. When the next decade came along, 1960-70, the work was done by Dorothy McIlroy, aided by Mildred Comar. Ever a glutton for a sticky job, Dorothy did the next one, 1970-80, as a solo performance. All have been published as supplements to *The Kingbird*. A tremendous amount of work has been done.

Past presidents have given of their time and service unselfishly without any recognition of what they have done. A way to remedy this was found at the 1986 annual meeting. All living ex-presidents were invited to come and receive an award. Each was presented with a bronze replica of the kingbird, a statuette sculpted by Miriam "Mickey" Levine. Those who were honored in order of service were: Gordon M. Meade, Winston W. Brockner, Allan S. Klonick, Robert S. Arbib, Allen H. Benton, Kenneth D. Niven, Richard A. Sloss, Stephen B. Dempsey, Martin Borko, Morgan V. Jones, Charles R. Smith, and Harriet T. Marsi. Unable to be

present were: Frances T. Irving, David B. Peakall and Edward M. Reilly, Jr. Past presidents who had died before that meeting include Eugene Eisenmann, Harold D. Mitchell, Peter Paul Kellogg, Albert W. Fudge, John J. Elliott and Warren Hastings.

After the death of John J. Elliott, who was an active birder and researcher, a number of his friends and admirers created the Elliott Award. This award was to be given annually for the best paper published in *The Kingbird*. One of the most enthusiastic and active members of the Federation was Lillian Stoner. In her will she left \$1,000 to be used to pay the expenses of a worthy high school senior or college student to attend the annual meeting. He or she is to be nominated by their club and selected by a committee of the Federation. Since the award was begun in 1945, a number of its recipients have gone into the field of ornithology or ecology.

As other members have grown older and passed away, a question began to bother the Executive Committee. What should be done with the gifts and bequests that are left to the Federation? It was decided recently that all such future gifts and bequests shall be placed in a single account to be known as the "Bequest Fund."

Workshops which add so much to the annual meeting were tried for the first time in 1975 and have been continued ever since. They are now an expected pleasure. They give speakers a chance to describe what they are doing, and an opportunity for the audience to hear what's going on in the field and to ask questions. A sample of the subjects which have been discussed are: identification of shorebirds, gulls, raptors and fall warblers; how to take meaningful field notes; discussion of opportunities for cooperative field research. The workshop leaders have been outstanding in their field.

In December 1975, Richard Sloss proposed that we initiate a system of "Permanent Representatives." These would be persons to whom communications of the Federation could be sent and not get lost. Previously if a letter were sent to the president or secretary of a member club, it might not reach the attention of that club's membership because that officer had been replaced by another person. Sending all communications to the same person, a "Permanent Representative," should increase the chance of their being passed on to the rest of the club's membership. It also became evident that the Federation needed a way to identify itself and its members. An arm patch was designed, to be followed by a decalcomania.

When the Federation offered pelagic trips out of Montauk Point under the leadership of Thomas Davis, Stephen Dempsey and Barbara Spencer, the enthusiasm was very high. Many who had never before

given it a try came back for more. They thrilled to see skuas, shearwaters and storm-petrels. After adding these to their life lists, the novelty began to fade. After seven or eight years interest fell off until there were not enough persons to fill a cruise boat. It was time to drop these trips. Perhaps with a new generation of birders there will be a renewed demand.

To enable it to provide data on waterfowl population trends, the Federation began to sponsor an annual midwinter survey of waterfowl throughout the state in the winter 1972-73. It takes a dedicated, hard-core birder to remain a waterfowl counter, ticking them off on a wintry day, but Federation members have been making counts faithfully every mid January in each Region since 1973. The total number of birds statewide varies with the weather conditions. Birds that have shown a real increase over the years are the Brant and Canada Geese, while decreases have been seen in Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, and all 3 scoters. The results of the waterfowl census are looked forward to each year when they are published in *The Kingbird*.

After much discussion of a proposal first suggested by Paul DeBenedictis, the New York State Avian Records Committee was approved by the member clubs in 1977-78. This committee is meant to be the group to whom all reports of accidental, rare or unusual species should be sent for review and, perhaps as importantly, who provide for the permanent storage of the documentation for such records. It has taken some time for members of the Federation to realize that they could possibly be mistaken or be in error, and some have resented having their records reviewed by third parties. Gradually the committee has come to be accepted. Records are reviewed with all supporting documentation supplied to committee members, who are keenly aware of the possibilities for error. To date the most common failing in reports which are not found acceptable has been that insufficient details were supplied by the observer to identify a bird without question. Most states now have a similar committee which has to accept a report before a new bird is allowed on that state's list.

After years of accomplishment in education of its members through *The Kingbird*, *New York Birders*, the yearly bibliography, the waterfowl count, the Baedecker, the state bird book, and its brochure, the Federation reached a new height with a decision to embark on the production of an atlas of the breeding birds of New York State. First mentioned as something we might do in 1975, it was not until 1979 that it was given serious thought. Robert Arbib laid out a proposal which was presented to the member clubs and the idea was accepted. Gordon Meade was asked to chair a Steering Committee for the Atlas. The intent was to

determine exactly where in the state that the various species of bird breed. Accomplishing this task meant dividing the state into a grid of 5335 five by five km blocks for survey purposes. A regional coordinator, who recruited the field workers, was chosen from each of *The Kingbird's* ten reporting Regions. The field workers then went into the field to observe nesting birds, using preassigned criteria to classify the certainty that a bird nested within an atlas block as either Possible, Probable or Confirmed. The original plan was to complete the field work in five years but it was found necessary to extend it to six. At the end of six years 99.7% of the blocks had been given some coverage. The final count of nesting species was 238 species plus three hybrids. These included five newcomers to the state: Forster's Tern, Boat-tailed Grackle, Blue Grosbeak, Palm Warbler and Yellow-throated Warbler. The results of this effort are now being published by the Cornell University Press as *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*. The species accounts have been written by various authors. Illustrations were drawn by Karen Allaben-Confer, William Dilger, Cynthia Page and David Sibley. The editors were Robert F. Andrie and Janet R. Carroll. Real assistance was given by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Not only was major help given by the DEC staff, but money from the "Return A Gift To Wildlife" fund was granted to pay for some field work, incidental expenses, illustrators, and the editors.

This is the final accomplishment of the Federation — until the next one!

27 Mill Valley Road, Pittsford, New York 14534

AN INSTANCE OF OSPREY BREEDING IN THE TOWN OF HEMPSTEAD

JOHN D. ZARUDSKY

Introduction

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) historically have bred on the eastern end of Long Island (Geraud 1843) including Gardiner's, Shelter, Plum, Fisher's and Robins Islands, and on both the north and south forks. In the late 1800's an estimated 250 nests were located on Plum Island (C.S. Allen 1892, *in* Bull 1974) and in the early 1900's at least 300 nests were located on Gardiner's Island (Chapman 1908, *in* Bull 1974).

While most of the Osprey population still occurs in eastern Long Island, its numbers are considerably lower than originally. Ospreys were adversely affected by the use of DDT from the late 1940's through and until the mid 1960's, when its use in Suffolk county was finally discontinued. The final banning of DDT nationwide by the Environmental Protection Agency, however, did not occur until 1972. A widely used pesticide, DDT eventually had entered the food chain and a breakdown product, DDE, interfered with calcium deposition during egg development. Thin egg shells, which broke during incubation, resulted and consequently nesting success was practically nonexistent.

After curtailment of DDT use on Long Island, Osprey numbers began to show recovery by the mid 1970's (Nova 1986) wherein both egg hatching rate and chick survival improved. During the last ten years from 1977 to 1987, the number of active Osprey nests on Long Island more than doubled from 72 in 1977 to 152 in 1987 (Schiebel 1987 and *pers. comm.*). This increase in Osprey numbers allowed this species to be moved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from the endangered species category to the threatened list in 1983.

Of 152 active nests in 1987 (Schiebel 1987) the largest concentration, 91% of the total, occurred in eastern Suffolk and adjacent islands (Fig. 1) distributed as follows:

| | Nests | % |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Gardiner's Island | 52 | 34.2 |
| Orient and the north fork | 35 | 23.0 |
| Fisher's Island | 8 | 5.3 |
| Shelter Island | 15 | 9.9 |
| South fork | 15 | 9.9 |
| Robins Island | 5 | 3.3 |
| Subtotal, eastern Long Island | 138 | 90.9 |

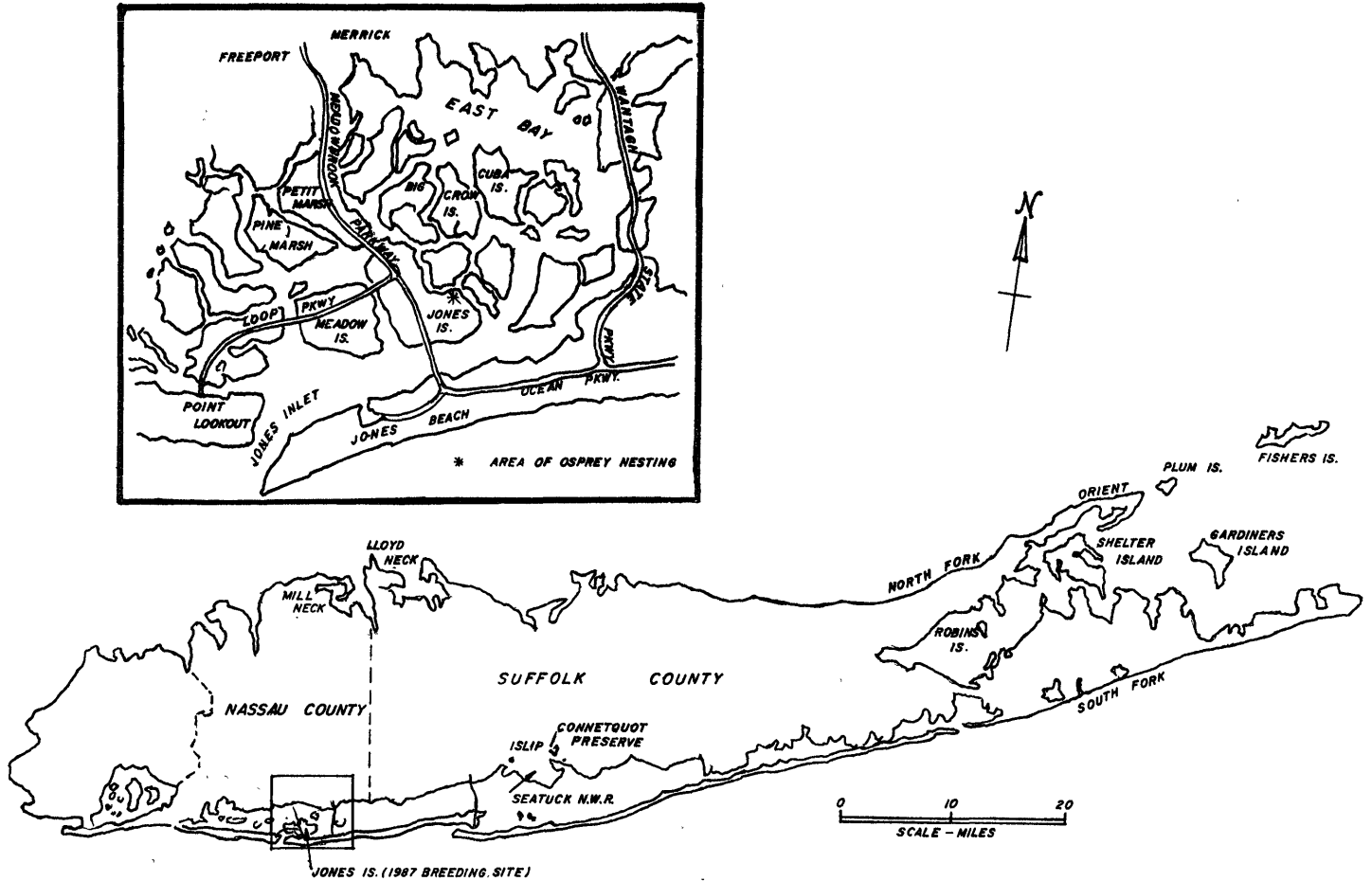


Fig. 1. Location map of Long Island showing recent (1987) osprey nesting site along the south shore, Nassau County.

Areas in central and western Suffolk County, which includes Caumsett State Park in Lloyd Neck only accounted for 12 or 7.9% of the total. Nassau County with one nest on the north shore in Mill Neck and a new nest on the south shore in the Town of Hempstead (Fig. 1), accounted for the remaining 1.3% of the total.

The limited nesting which has occurred in western Long Island on the north shore has been documented previously (Bull 1974) and includes Lloyd Harbor (Caumsett State Park) in western Suffolk and Oyster Bay and Mill Neck in Nassau County. Nesting along the south shore of western Long Island, however, has been sparse. In 1974 breeding occurred at the Connetquot State Park (Bull 1976) and in 1983 at the Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Islip (D. MacLean *pers. comm.*). Documented records of osprey nesting are lacking west of Islip along the south shore. Two observations are, however, noteworthy. In the late 1930's nesting was reported to have occurred along Parsonage Creek in Oceanside (Kelly 1978 and *pers. comm.*) and in the early 1950's at the northern reaches of Tobay Sanctuary (A. Dignan *pers. comm.*, who observed the nest site with John J. Elliott).

Osprey Nesting Program

The Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways has jurisdiction of approximately 19,000 acres of wetlands (marshes, channels, bays and flats). To provide nest sites in southern Nassau County, it initiated an osprey nesting platform project in 1978 when four units were established. Until the end of 1987, 14 usable units have been established by the Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways and by the Nassau County Mosquito Control Division. Provision of nesting platforms where natural sites such as dead trees are lacking undoubtedly encourages nesting. It is known that nearly half the nests built by Ospreys in the northeast are built on platforms (Nova 1986), the Osprey being an opportunistic breeder.

Two examples of structures being readily adopted for nesting can be cited along the south shore. Successful nesting occurred on a platform at the Connetquot State Park, Oakdale, in 1974 after it was established the previous winter (B. Behonick *pers. comm.*). Successful nesting also occurred on a platform erected on the Seatuck National Refuge, Islip, in the spring of 1983 following its establishment in the fall of 1982 (D. MacLean *pers. comm.*).

The potential for Osprey nesting within the Town of Hempstead was realized to an extent during the 1980-85 years of the breeding bird atlas census, when Ospreys were observed using pole-platforms within the Town of Hempstead as feeding perches well beyond the spring migration period of March-April. Their continued presence during the entire summer indicated a sustaining food source was available in the estuary

at least for adults. Among early observations of Ospreys using nesting platforms locally was one seen periodically during the spring and summer of 1983 on North Line Island during the same year in which a platform was erected. With the establishment of two more poles each in 1984 and 1985, one or more Ospreys were also observed from time to time each year using all of these poles as feeding perches. All poles used by Osprey have been placed on remote areas of the marsh. These include three poles located east of the Meadowbrook Parkway and two east of the Wantagh Parkway.

Local Nesting

In 1987, a pair of Ospreys successfully fledged two offspring on Jones Island (Figs. 1 and 2) from a pole-platform erected by the Town of Hempstead, Department of Conservation and Waterways, in May 1985. The marsh island on which nesting occurred lies south of Merrick, east of the Meadowbrook Parkway and north of the State Boat Channel, within the Town of Hempstead in Nassau County. In reference to other nesting areas, the current nest location is approximately 21 miles west of the previous most westerly located nest along the south shore on the Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Islip and approximately due south of the most westerly located nest on the north shore in Mill Neck.

The pole-platform unit used for nesting consisted of a 4" x 4" x 16' CCA treated pole with an attached, braced wood pallet approximately 4' x 3.5". The pole is imbedded 4' below the marsh and is reinforced with 2" x 3" stakes. Sections of snow fence were added to the platform sides so that a basket about one foot high was formed, into which branches were placed. The resultant nest height is approximately 13' above marsh level.

An Osprey was first recorded using the platform on Jones Island on 8 May. Prior to this date, a Herring Gull occasionally was seen landing on it. After 8 May, frequent use by 1 to 2 Ospreys was noted. On 22 May, one adult was sitting low and assumed to be incubating eggs. This activity appeared to continue through early July, after which time the behavior of the adult indicated possible chick feeding. Because of the long distance and the angle of observation, however, a juvenile was not observed until 22 July. The young then were estimated to be two or more weeks old. On 18 Aug two adults and two juveniles were observed. The juveniles were large, about the size of the adults. On 21 Aug both fledglings were observed to have flown off the nest for an extended period of time, not returning to the platform until I had left the area. By 25 Aug only one Osprey was observed feeding on the platform. An adult and two juveniles believed to be from the Jones Island platform nest were observed to the north, also in East Bay, on a pole-platform located on Crow Island.



Fig. 2. Osprey nesting structure on Jones Island, Town of Hempstead, successfully used for nesting — 2 adults, 2 fledglings.

Photo by J.D. Zarudsky

8/18/87

It is likely that, if the adults return in subsequent years, nesting will occur earlier than during their first breeding occurrence. Increased opportunity for nesting locally is also possible, provided that surviving juveniles which reach sexual maturity in several years return to this area. For continued successful nesting, the assumption is made that food sources will remain adequate and that protection from predators will be afforded.

Conclusion

A pair of Osprey bred successfully on Jones Island in southern Nassau County during 1987 producing two offspring on a nesting platform established by the Town of Hempstead Department of Conservation and Waterways in 1985. The nest location currently is the most westerly situated along the south shore of Long Island. This isolated breeding incident, although earlier than expected, was perhaps predictable given an expanding Osprey population on eastern Long Island and the availability of numerous nesting sites made possible through the establishment of elevated platforms.

Acknowledgments

I thank the following members of the Town of Hempstead, Department of Conservation and Waterways for their support of this study: T. Doheny, Director of Conservation Division; G. Aiello, Commissioner; R. Gianfreda, drafting; R. Bialick, B. Noone, J. Zarudsky - establishment of pole-platform on which nesting occurred. B. Behonick, A. Dignan, L. Kelly and D. MacLean all graciously supplied information on other Osprey nestings.

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Town of Hempstead, Department of Conservation and Waterways, Lido Boulevard, P.O. Box J, Point Lookout, N.Y. 11569

THE 1987 FALL SHOREBIRD SEASON AT JAMAICA BAY WILDLIFE REFUGE

ARTHUR MORRIS

Thirty one species of shorebirds, the lowest total since the survey's inception in 1981, were noted at Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Queens, New York, during the 1987 fall migration. The refuge was visited 41 times between 27 June and 27 Nov. Every species present was censused at least once a week. Virtually all visits, which averaged three to five hours in length, overlapped the time of high tide when the greatest number of birds fly into the East Pond to rest, feed, and preen. A majority of these birds disperse to tidal flats throughout Jamaica Bay as the tide recedes.

As in previous years the refuge was divided into seven survey areas, "A" to "G" (Morris 1985). Areas "A" to "F" were covered regularly. Until fall, area "G" was visited only sporadically. Numbers of shorebirds here fluctuated widely, as they had during 1984 and 1985, when I censused this area regularly. From mid September on, I made many late afternoon visits to take advantage of the excellent photographic opportunities available at this site.

The gate valve at the north end of the East Pond was opened ten days late on 1 July. As a result, the water level was unusually high for the fourth consecutive July. Shorebirds arriving during the first half of July utilized the West Pond, as there were no exposed flats on the East pond. The East Pond drained quickly and the gate valve was closed on 22 July. A bloom of filamentous green algae, less substantial than last year's, was noted.

Complete census results are presented in Table 1 and partial census results are in Table 2. Species diversity (Table 3) was slightly below average for much of the season. Four rare, but regularly occurring species were missed: Curlew and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Ruff, and Red-necked Phalarope. Six species – Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Western, Least, and White-rumped Sandpipers – which were absent from the East Pond for much or all of October and November were noted at Area "G." They are included in Table 3 but not in Table 1.

Arrival dates of the commoner, non-resident species, separated by age class, for 1987 are listed in Table 4. Adult and juvenile arrival dates for the past seven years are summarized in Table 5. Adult arrival dates averaged about a week late; in spite of this, the adult migration peaked a week early on 6 Aug. Peak numbers were almost 50% higher than

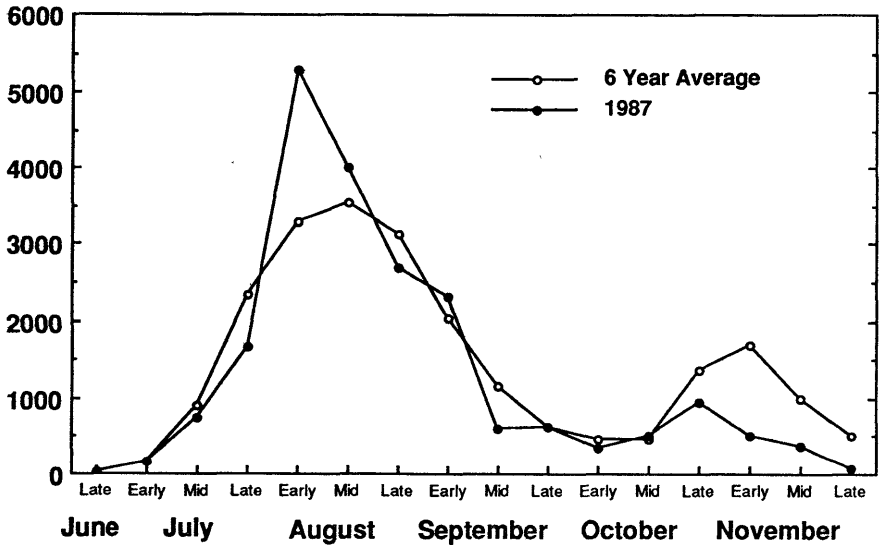


Figure 1. Comparison of 1987 shorebird migration with the 1981-1986 average.

the six-year average (Davis 1982, 1983, 1984; Morris 1985, 1986, 1987; Fig 1). With favorable conditions at the East Pond, from three thousand to more than five thousand shorebirds were present on the high tides of 29 July through 17 Aug. On several dates during this period, more than one thousand birds were found at the West Pond. The season's maximum of 5291 birds was recorded on 6 Aug. Juvenile arrival dates were wildly sporadic; they ranged from 13 days early to 22 days late! Low to fair numbers of juveniles were present after mid August.

Birds that breed in arctic regions, including most of our migrant shorebirds, do not produce great numbers of young in most years. Lopez (1986: 32-33) writes:

The communal alliances of far northern plants and animals we call ecosystems are distinguished from more southerly ecosystems by larger biomasses and lower overall productivity. Instead of many species, each with relatively few individuals in it, we find relatively few species, each with many individuals... But, generally speaking these large populations do not include enough surviving young each year to keep their populations stable. The size of the population often changes dramatically as a matter of course: the violent

weather typical of early and late summer routinely wreaks havoc on some arctic populations... On Wrangel Island in the Siberian Arctic, for example, an unbroken, ten-year series of late spring snowstorms prevented Lesser Snow Geese from ever laying their eggs. Between 1965 and 1975 the population fell from 400,000 to fewer than 50,000 birds... The population of snow geese on Wrangel Island was back to 300,000 by 1982.

Arctic breeding birds are relatively long-lived; thus, the occasional ideal year, with its bumper crop of young, can offset the effects of several disastrous breeding seasons. In 1984, the year when I assumed responsibilities for the count, large numbers of juvenile shorebirds of many species were present from mid August through September. I had believed that this was normal. Instead, the low to fair numbers of juveniles such as present in each of the past three seasons may more accurately reflect the limited breeding success attained in a typical year.

Dr. Frank B. Gill of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences and noted shorebird biologist Dr. J. Pete Myers (*pers. comm.*) feel that mortality rates on the wintering grounds, where first-year birds are particularly hard hit, have at least as great an effect on population levels as does reproductive success.

Because of heavy rains in the early fall, National Park Service personnel drained the East Pond on two occasions to provide ideal habitat for late season migrants (*vide* Mary Hake). Nonetheless, numbers were far below average after 20 Oct (Fig. 1). Various factors were involved: 1) the dismal Dunlin flight, 2) the virtual absence of Black-bellied Plover and Red Knot, 3) the early departure of several species which usually linger in small flocks, and 4) the cold November rains which quickly refilled the pond.

Table 1. Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge Fall Shorebird Census 1987

| Species | June | | July | | | | | | | | | Aug | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|-----|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|------|
| | 27 | 28 | 29 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 23 | 25 | 29 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 17 | 22 |
| Plover, Black-bellied | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 143 | | 198 | 431 | 584 |
| Lesser Golden-Semipalmated | | | | | | | 1 | 10 | 23 | 69 | 125 | 76 | 391 | 742 | 104 | 878 | 624 | 392 |
| Killdeer | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 6 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| American Oystercatcher | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 19 | 21 | 11 | | | 15 | 110 | 68 | | 139 | 37 |
| American Avocet | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Yellowlegs, Greater | | 4 | 11 | | | 10 | 10 | 22 | 37 | 6 | 30 | 25 | 34 | 113 | 142 | 106 | 171 | 286 |
| Lesser | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 55 | 46 | 41 | 45 | 8 | 27 | 26 | 51 |
| Willet | 11 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 27 | 17 | 20 | 9 | | 2 | 1 | 32 | 16 | | 46 | 20 |
| Sandpiper, Spotted | | | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 4 | | 2 | 3 |
| Whimbrel | | | | | | 2 | | | | 5 | | | | | | 2 | 3 | |
| Godwit, Hudsonian | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| Marbled | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Turnstone, Ruddy | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 114 | 31 | 143 | 412 | 66 |
| Knot, Red | | | | | | | | | | | | | 53 | 778 | 2 | 1225 | 236 | 42 |
| Sanderling | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 17 | | 31 | 162 | 4 |
| Sandpiper, Semipalmated | | | 1 | | | | | 44 | 85 | 95 | 170 | 205 | 2172 | 1823 | 394 | 2120 | 1433 | 1449 |
| Western | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | 2 |
| Least | | | | 7 | 7 | 58 | 110 | 52 | 57 | 55 | 55 | 70 | 36 | 42 | 8 | 28 | 32 | 32 |
| White-rumped | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| Baird's | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Pectoral | | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 9 | | | 1 | 1 |
| Dunlin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sandpiper, Stilt | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 8 | | 6 | 8 | 3 |
| Dowitcher, Short-billed | | 2 | | 20 | 61 | 41 | 194 | 502 | 805 | 232 | 395 | 404 | 526 | 1270 | 388 | 452 | 165 | 98 |
| Long-billed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 | | 27 | 8 | 2 |
| Woodcock, American | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| Phalarope, Wilson's | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| No. of Species | 4 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 9 | 15 | 17 | 20 | 13 | 17 | 21 | 24 |
| No. of Individuals | 26 | 24 | 29 | 43 | 96 | 138 | 373 | 682 | 1068 | 505 | 845 | 850 | 3307 | 5291 | INC | 5250 | 3916 | 3088 |
| Areas covered, East Pond | | | | | | c | c | A,C | A,C | B,C | A-D | A-D | A-D | A-D | | A-D | A-C | A-D |
| West Pond | E | E,F | E,F | E | E,F | E,F | E,F | E,F | E,F | E | | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |

Table 1 (cont.) Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge Fall Shorebird Census 1987

| Species | Aug | | Sep | | Oct | | | | | | | | | | Nov | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | 29 | 4 | 7 | 15 | 16 | 20 | 24 | 27 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 12 | 18 | 24 | 31 | 8 | 11 | 26 | 27 |
| Plover, Black-bellied | 803 | 1159 | 737 | 500 | 180 | 85 | 368 | 220 | 216 | 98 | 15 | 14 | 2 | 152 | 12 | 22 | 7 | | |
| Lesser Golden-Semipalmated | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Killdeer | 252 | 346 | 275 | 18 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | 6 | | | | | | |
| American Oystercatcher | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 2 | | |
| American Avocet | 76 | 78 | 48 | 80 | | 42 | 1 | 110 | | 120 | | 135 | 47 | √ | 100 | 3 | 30 | 4 | 10 |
| Yellowlegs, Greater | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Lesser | 80 | 203 | 217 | 90 | 150 | 105 | 206 | 150 | 46 | 192 | 155 | 109 | 295 | 355 | 77 | 40 | 8 | | |
| Willet | 40 | 57 | 48 | 40 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 1 | 11 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Sandpiper, Spotted | 28 | 29 | 12 | 7 | | 6 | 11 | 5 | | 7 | | | | 5 | | | | | |
| Whimbrel | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Godwit, Hudsonian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marbled | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 4 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Turnstone, Ruddy | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | | 3 |
| Knot, Red | 46 | 41 | 23 | 20 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 8 | | 6 | | | | | | | | | |
| Sanderling | 40 | 31 | 72 | 50 | 20 | 18 | 21 | 4 | 8 | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | | |
| Sandpiper, Semipalmated | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Western | 717 | 681 | 742 | 150 | 5 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 21 | 7 | | 10 | 2 | | | | | |
| Least | 1 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White-rumped | 70 | 31 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baird's | 25 | 8 | 5 | 23 | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| Pectoral | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Dunlin | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | | | | |
| Sandpiper, Stilt | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 16 | 24 | 34 | | 88 | 226 | 960 | 205 | 420 | 306 | 49 | 49 |
| Dowitcher, Short-billed | | 3 | 2 | 7 | | | 4 | 1 | | 2 | | | 9 | | | | | | |
| Long-billed | 70 | 48 | 69 | 30 | 15 | 35 | 43 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Woodcock, American | | 3 | | | | | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 34 | 6 | | 8 | 5 | | |
| Phalarope, Wilson's | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| No. of Species | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| No. of Individuals | 19 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 8 | 16 | 9 | 10 | 17 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| Areas covered, East Pond | 2263 | 2743 | 2287 | 1049 | 417 | 349 | 712 | 550 | 314 | 510 | 204 | 360 | 654 | 1498 | 405 | 505 | 364 | 53 | 62 |
| West Pond | A-D | A-D | A-D | B,C | A-D | B-D | A-D | A-D | A-C | A-D | A-D | A-D | A-D | A-D | A-D | B | A-D | A-D | |
| | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E,F | E,F | E,F |

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

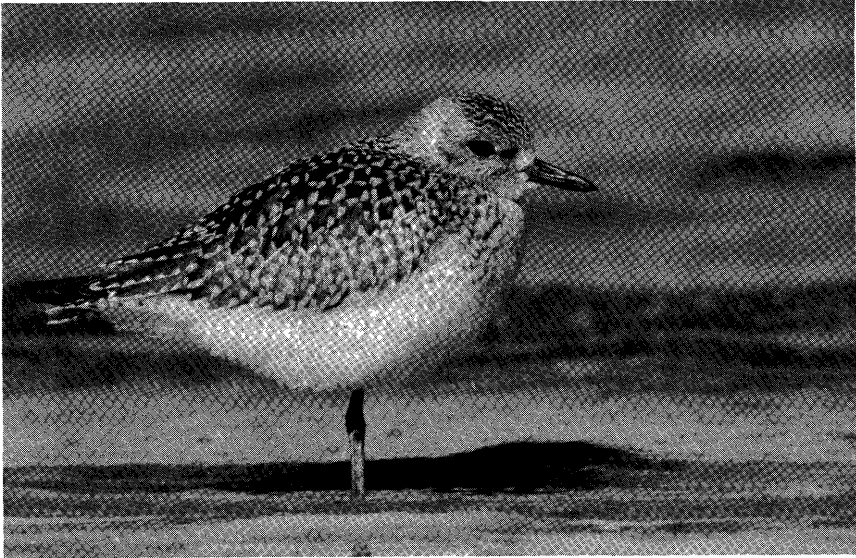
Black-bellied Plover: Average to above average numbers of this species were present through early October, but numbers were far below normal in the late season. Low to fair numbers of juveniles were present after 16 Sep. A new maximum of 1159 was recorded on 4 Sep.

Lesser Golden-Plover: With five birds on four dates, this species had its second straight abysmal season. It is often over reported; many observers misidentify Black-bellied Plovers in fresh juvenal plumage as juvenile Golden-Plovers. Separating the two species when they are not seen in flight can be extremely difficult. Published field marks for juvenile Golden Plover include a dark cap, a prominent whitish supercillium, small size, a small bill, and upperparts spotted pale yellow. Please note that Black-bellied Plovers in fresh juvenal plumage are spotted pale yellow above and often exhibit a golden cast. A useful distinction is as follows: young Golden-Plovers have mottled barring on the breast, the belly, and the flanks (Fig. 2), whereas young Black-bellied Plovers are streaked on the breast and the flanks but not on the belly (Fig. 3). Thus, young Black-bellied Plovers are much whiter below. Additionally, the streaking on the flanks of young Black-bellied Plovers almost never extends past the legs; the rear flanks are starkly white. In contrast, the streaking on the flanks of young Golden-Plovers always extends past the legs and the rear flanks are somewhat mottled. Occasionally a young Black-bellied Plover may show several fine streaks on the rear flanks, just past the legs, but this streaking is always on a white background. In flight, identification is straightforward: Golden-Plovers are all-dark above and have pale axillaries, whereas Black-bellied Plovers have white rumps and black axillaries.

Semipalmated Plover: Above average numbers of adults were followed by a fair showing of juveniles.

Killdeer: 1987 was an average season for this vociferous local nester. Numbers of migrant Killdeer, which pass through the region in September and October, were lower than usual.

American Oystercatcher: The large flocks of Oystercatchers present this season reflect continued increases in both local and regional populations. A pair with three young was observed on territory from late June through mid July. The nest was located on a sandy spit at the western edge of the South Marsh, about one hundred yards south of Bench 4 on the West Pond trail. This species has bred previously at the refuge, but only on inaccessible islands in Jamaica Bay.



*Figure 2. Juvenile Black-bellied Plover
Zach's Bay, Long Island, early Oct 1985.
Photo by A. Morris.*



*Figure 3. Juvenile Lesser Golden-Plover
Mecox Bay, Long Island, 6 Oct 1985.
Photo by A. Morris.*

- American Avocet:** Two of these elegant waders were noted this season. A female in winter plumage was seen in the shallows at the north end of the East Pond on all seven visits between 4 October and the record late date of 24 October.
- Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs:** Both *Tringa* were present in average numbers. Of note was an exceedingly early juvenile Lesser on 25 July; the previous record early date was 1 Aug.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Single birds present on 13 and 25 July were not included in Table 1.
- Willet:** Local and regional populations have increased explosively in the past two years. In 1981, the year the late Tom Davis began this survey, the high count was two. In August 1987, flocks of Willets ranging in size from 20 to 46 (a new maximum, 17 Aug) were seen on the West Pond as they gathered for their southbound migration.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** With the exception of eight present on 6 Aug, it was a poor year for this species.
- Upland Sandpiper:** On 10 Sep Robert Baines was walking to the refuge from the "A" Train. He was rewarded by finding two of this species at the American Legion baseball field. These birds are not included in Table 1.
- Whimbrel:** Seventeen birds on seven dates was a good showing. Two on 6 July were the earliest ever noted.
- Hudsonian Godwit:** It was an average season for this large, showy shorebird. Only a single juvenile was noted. It was seen sporadically on either pond between 10 Oct and 11 Nov.
- Marbled Godwit:** It was a banner year for this striking cinnamon visitor from the west, with more occurrences than on the six previous falls combined. New maxima, first of 3, and later of 4, were recorded on several dates.
- Ruddy Turnstone:** The adult flight arrived about 10 days late in numbers far above average. A new maximum of 412, more than half again the old, was established on 17 Aug.
- Red Knot:** Flocks of this species arrived ten days late, but in great numbers. On the high tides, they settled in the shallows near North Island to rest. Numbers built rapidly to a peak of 1225 on 10 Aug. They disappeared as quickly as they had come. Several color banded Knots were noted, each wearing two or three red and green bands in various combinations, and a single green leg-flag. (Christmas in August!) The leg-flag is simply a band with a quarter inch tab. Its color denotes the country in which the bird was banded

(green flag=USA). These birds were banded in New Jersey on their flight north by researchers from the Manomet Bird Observatory (Brian Harrington, *pers. comm.*)

Sanderling: After a three year disappearing act, good numbers of the wind-up-toy shorebird stopped briefly at the East Pond in mid August. They frequented their favorite roost, the triangular spit on the west shore just across from North Island. Two color banded Sanderlings wore orange leg-flags which indicated that they had been banded in Argentina by the Pan American Shorebird Program (J. Pete Myers, *pers. comm.*)

Semipalmated Sandpiper: An above average adult migration saw more than 2000 Semipalmated Sandpipers arrive during the last week of July. A fair showing of young birds resulted in good numbers through early September. It was unusual that very few visited the refuge after early September.

Western Sandpiper: A fair year, which halted the downward trend of the past three seasons, was highlighted by 12 juveniles on 15 Sep.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Except for the small flights on 29 August and 15 September there were very few adult White-rumped Sandpipers at the refuge this season; juveniles were scarcer still. The first arrived 22 days behind schedule on the record late date of 16 Oct. Only two others were noted.

Baird's Sandpiper: Three of these long-winged, mid-continental migrants were noted this season. On the hot, hazy morning of 25 July a Baird's Sandpiper was discovered on the South Flats by David Mizrahi. The bird was a worn, molting adult. It had a distinctive white eye ring. The retained scapulars, with dark centers broadly edged silver, were diagnostic. To my knowledge, this was the first adult Baird's ever recorded at JBWR. (The date, of course, was a record early one; all previous birds had been juveniles.) In late August, a juvenile was seen on the edge of the West Pond, where it occurs only rarely. Another juvenile was discovered at the Raunt, among a flock of Dunlin, on the record late date of 8 Nov (Joe DiCostanzo and Tony Leukering.)

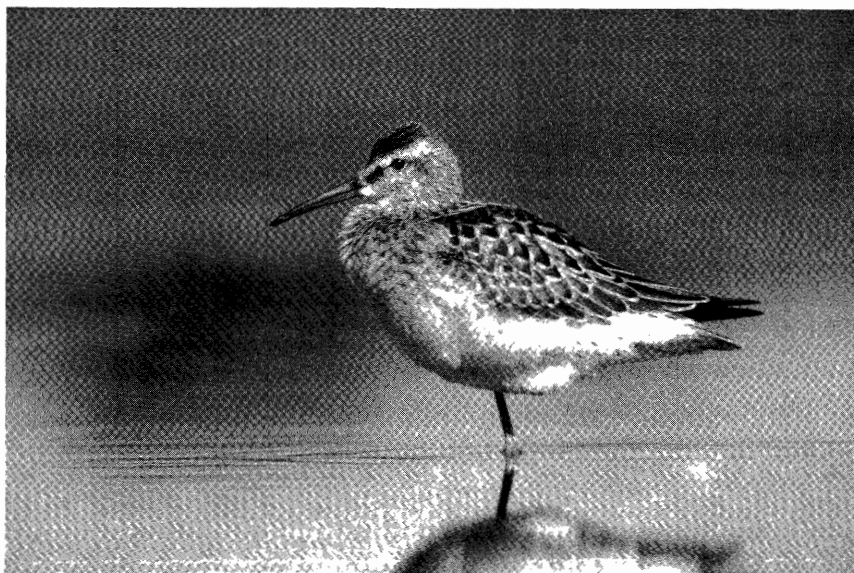
Pectoral Sandpiper: Small numbers of Pectorals were noted throughout the season. This is normal for adults, but not for juveniles.

Dunlin: Despite favorable conditions, this species was down 62 percent.

Stilt Sandpiper: This was a below average year. The season's maximum was 21 on 28 July.



*Figure 4. Worn juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper
Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
Photo by A. Morris.*



*Figure 5. Juvenile Stilt Sandpiper
Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, 3 Sep 1987.
Photo by A. Morris.*

Short-billed Dowitcher: An above average adult migration, which peaked sharply, was followed by a below average number of juveniles.

Long-billed Dowitcher: It was a good year which began strangely; there were no birds in July. Adults arrived 17 days late but in unprecedented numbers. A new maximum of 34 birds, all juveniles, was established on 18 Oct.

Common Snipe: single birds present on 29 Aug and 29 Sep are not included in Table 1.

American Woodcock: There were very few reports of this secretive local breeder this season.

Wilson's Phalarope: It was a poor year for this frenetic forager. The season's total was only seven birds. They occurred on widely scattered dates.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many observers who helped fill in the gaps in daily counts, especially those who made detailed, legible log entries. Special thanks also to Tom Hook, David Mizrahi, and Arthur Berland who assisted in gathering data for the 1987 count. This survey was done in cooperation with the International Shorebird Surveys, Manomet, Massachusetts.

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- 80-11 160th Ave. , Howard Beach, Queens, N.Y. 11414

Table 2. Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge Fall Shorebird Partial Censuses 1987

| Species | Aug 8—9 | Aug 30 | Nov 16 |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Plover, Black-bellied | √ | √ | |
| Lesser Golden- | | 1 | |
| Semipalmated | √ | √ | |
| Killdeer | √ | √ | |
| American Oystercatcher | √ | √ | 94 |
| American Avocet | | | |
| Yellowlegs, Greater | √ | √ | 11 |
| Lesser | √ | √ | |
| Willet | √ | √ | |
| Sandpiper, Spotted | √ | √ | |
| Whimbrel | | 3 | |
| Godwit, Hudsonian | √ | 6 | |
| Marbled | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Turnstone, Ruddy | √ | √ | |
| Knot, Red | √ | √ | |
| Sanderling | √ | √ | |
| Sandpiper, Semipalmated | √ | √ | |
| Western | | 5 | |
| Least | √ | √ | |
| White-rumped | √ | √ | |
| Baird's | 1 | 1 | |
| Pectoral | √ | √ | |
| Dunlin | | | 12 |
| Sandpiper, Stilt | √ | 1 | |
| Dowitcher, Short-billed | √ | √ | |
| Long-billed | √ | 2 | 6 |
| Woodcock, American | | 1 | |
| Phalarope, Wilson's | 1 | 1 | |
| No. of Species | 3 | 10 | 5 |
| Areas covered, East Pond | A-D | A-D | |
| West Pond | E,F | E | E |

Table 3. Shorebird Diversity 1981-1987

| | Late Jun & E. Jul | Late Jul | Early Aug | Late Aug | Early Sep | Late Sep | 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 | 22 |
| 1984 | 13 | 25 | 29 | 26 | 28 | 29 | 26 | 21 |
| 1985 | 15 | 24 | 25 | 29 | 27 | 30 | 22 | 20 |
| 1986 | 14 | 23 | 29 | 29 | 23 | 22 | 16 | 18 |
| 1987 | 14 | 22 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 26 | 21 | 24 |
| Average | 13.6 | 24.3 | 26.0 | 27.3 | 27.6 | 27.4 | 22.3 | 20.7 |

American Woodcock is presumed to be present through early October whether observed in a given period or not.

Table 4. 1987 Arrival Dates

| Species | Adults | Immatures |
|----------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Plover, Black-bellied | 25 Jul | 16 Sep |
| Lesser Golden-Semipalmated | 30 Aug | 4 Sep |
| Yellowlegs, Greater | 7 Jul | 12 Aug |
| Lesser | 28 Jun | 21 Aug |
| Turnstone, Ruddy | 27 Jun | 25 Jul |
| Knot, Red | 29 Jul | 12 Aug |
| Sanderling | 1 Jul | 29 Aug |
| Sandpiper, Semipalmated | 29 Jul | 30 Aug |
| Western | 12 Jul | 10 Aug |
| Least | 17 Jul | 19 Aug |
| White-rumped | 2 Jul | 1 Aug |
| Pectoral | 6 Aug | 16 Oct |
| Dunlin | 5 Jul | 2 Sep |
| Sandpiper, Stilt | 6 Sep | 7 Sep |
| Dowitcher, Short-billed | 12 Jul | 31 Aug |
| Long-billed | 28 Jun | 10 Aug |
| | 6 Aug | 24 Sep |

Table 5. Summary of Adult and Immature Arrival Dates

| Species | SPAN | Adults | | Immatures | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------|--------|----------------|-------|--------|
| | | Years | Mean | SPAN | Years | Mean |
| Plover, Black-bellied | late July* | | | 26 Aug -27 Sep | 7 | 6 Sep |
| Lesser Golden-Semipalmated | 14 Aug -3 Sep | 7 | 26 Aug | 29 Aug -11 Sep | 7 | 4 Sep |
| Yellowlegs, Greater | 30 Jun -15 Jul | 7 | 7 Jul | 11 Aug -22 Aug | 8 | 16 Aug |
| Lesser | 22 Jun -30 Jun | 7 | 27 Jun | 7 Aug -25 Aug | 6 | 18 Aug |
| Turnstone, Ruddy | 24 Jun -3 Jul | 8 | 29 Jun | 25 Jul -11 Aug | 9 | 5 Aug |
| Knot, Red | 19 Jul -29 Jul | 7 | 22 Jul | 12 Aug -30 Aug | 6 | 23 Aug |
| Sanderling | 16 Jul -28 Jul | 7 | 19 Jul | 15 Aug -29 Aug | 7 | 21 Aug |
| Sandpiper, Semipalmated | 15 Jul -29 Jul | 7 | 19 Jul | 23 Aug -30 Aug | 5 | 27 Aug |
| Western | 24 Jun -12 Jul | 8 | 3 Jul | 7 Aug -19 Aug | 7 | 13 Aug |
| Least | 12 Jul -24 Jul | 7 | 17 Jul | 12 Aug -30 Aug | 6 | 19 Aug |
| White-rumped | 28 Jun -9 Jul | 7 | 2 Jul | 26 Jul -10 Aug | 7 | 4 Aug |
| Pectoral | 18 Jul -6 Aug | 7 | 27 Jul | 13 Sep -16 Oct | 8 | 27 Sep |
| Dunlin | 5 Jul -20 Jul | 7 | 23 Jul | 22 Aug -9 Sep | 7 | 29 Aug |
| Sandpiper, Stilt | ** | | | 5 Sep -20 Sep | 8 | 13 Sep |
| Dowitcher, Short-billed | 9 Jul -20 Jul | 7 | 16 Jul | 26 Jul -31 Aug | 8 | 16 Aug |
| Long-billed | 24 Jun -6 Jul | 8 | 30 Jun | 8 Aug -15 Aug | 9 | 10 Aug |
| | 17 Jul -6 Aug | 8 | 20 Jul | 14 Sep -8 Oct | 7 | 27 Sep |

* lingering, non-breeding birds may be present throughout July

** only scattered adults present before mid September

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH AND RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH ON RECENT NEW YORK STATE CHRISTMAS COUNTS

ROBERT P. YUNICK

The White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) and the Red-breasted Nuthatch (*S. canadensis*) are forest-dwelling species found throughout most of New York state. The former is both a sedentary and migratory species, favoring deciduous forests as well as parks and wooded suburban areas (Bull 1964, 1974; A.O.U. 1983). The latter is a resident of higher elevations, favoring coniferous forests, from which it periodically irrupts to become numerous in habitats unlike the spruce-fir forests from which it comes (Bull 1964, 1974; A.O.U. 1983; Bock and Lepthien 1972, 1976). I have assessed changes in the abundance of these two species on New York state Christmas Bird Counts over the 26-year period from 1960 to 1986. I also have analyzed certain changes Christmas Bird Count coverage within the state over the same period.

Methods

Christmas Bird Count data published in *Audubon Field Notes* and its successor, *American Birds*, for the period 1960 through 1985 were collected from all counts bearing a location name solely within New York state. A single data point was derived for each species for each year by totalling the numbers reported for each species of nuthatch on all qualifying counts and dividing that total by the accumulated statewide "total party-hours" of observer effort, computed in an analogous fashion, in units of 100 hours. This gave a normalized value of reported birds per 100 party-hours. These values were plotted over the 26-year period and subjected to regression analysis to determine trends in population size.

Due to variation in the number and location of the counts reported each year, this analysis was repeated using only data from a core group of 35 counts that had a very high rate of repeated annual coverage. Every count in the core group was reported in at least 24 years of the 26-year period. Overall, they reported data for 98.68 percent of the counts theoretically possible in that period.

In addition, the number of reported counts, the annual total party-hours for all counts, the annual total party-hours for the core counts, and the total party-hours per count were assembled, plotted and also subjected to regression analysis.

Because the Red-breasted Nuthatch does not breed uniformly throughout New York, and because of its irruptive migratory behavior, a more detailed geographic analysis was conducted by separating Long

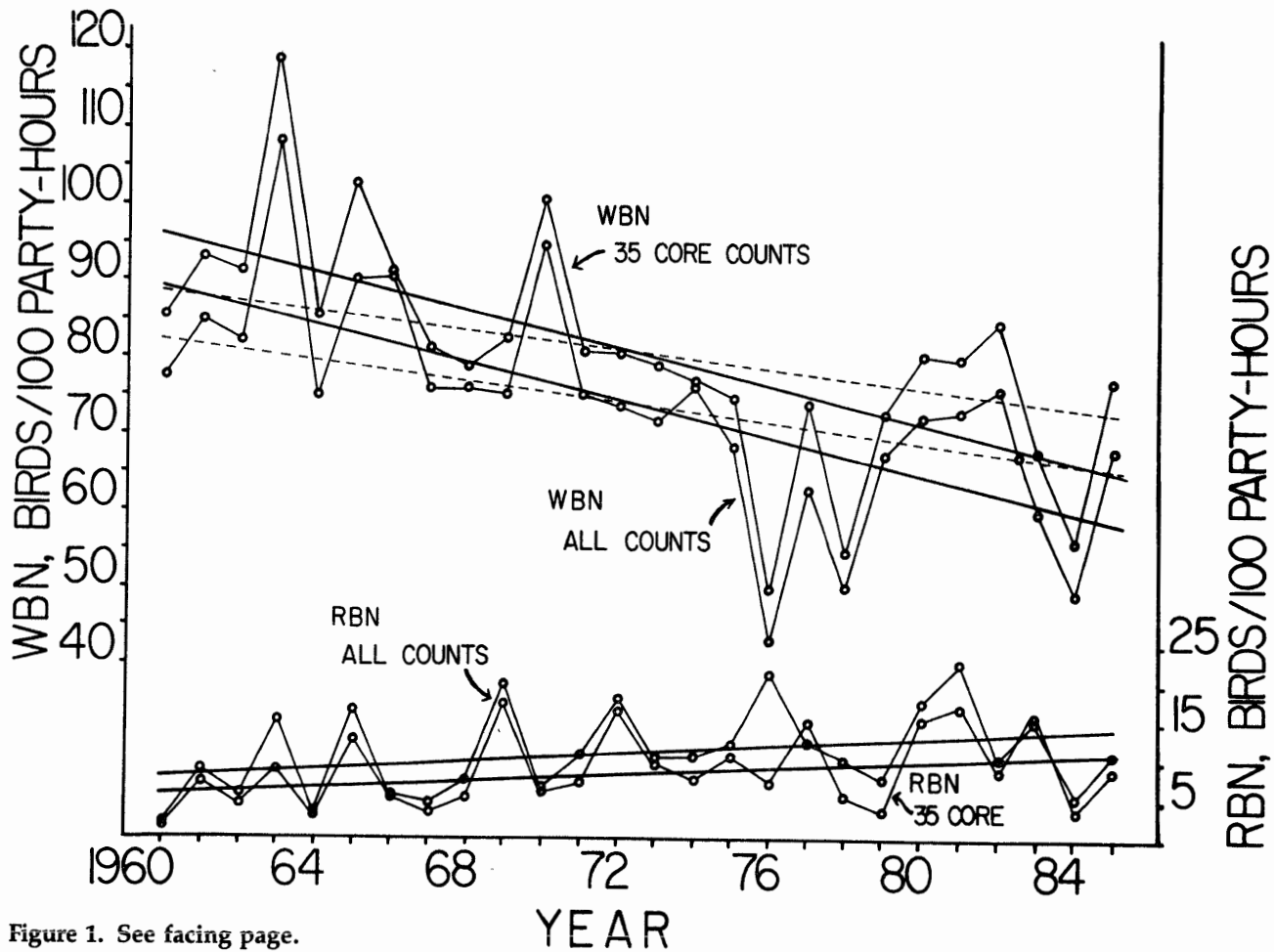


Figure 1. See facing page.

Island count data, and Adirondack count data from the statewide total. This left a residual body of data which was referred to as "rest of the state." Some of these results were plotted and analyzed also.

Results and Discussion

The annual reported abundances for both species are represented in Figure 1. Two regression analyses were run for the Red-breasted Nuthatch data to reflect the results from all counts, and separately the results of the 35 core counts. The White-breasted Nuthatch data were treated similarly. The regression parameters are given in Table 1. The more geographically detailed analysis of Red-breasted Nuthatch data appears in Figure 2. The changes in Christmas Count coverage over the 26 years are summarized in Table 2 and Figure 3.

Table 1. Regression analysis of White-breasted Nuthatch and Red-breasted Nuthatch Counts.

Regression equation:
Birds/100 party hours = a + b(year)

| Case | a | b | r ² | F-ratio | p |
|---|---------|--------|----------------|---------|---------|
| White-breasted Nuthatch | | | | | |
| All counts | 161.400 | -1.207 | 0.429 | 18.04 | 0.00028 |
| All counts less three highest and lowest totals | 121.307 | -0.650 | 0.507 | 18.54 | 0.00043 |
| 35 core counts | 170.395 | -1.235 | 0.418 | 17.23 | 0.00036 |
| 35 core counts less three highest and lowest totals | 125.702 | -0.618 | 0.535 | 20.73 | 0.00025 |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch | | | | | |
| All counts | -7.872 | 0.263 | 0.122 | 3.33 | 0.0806 |
| 35 Core counts | -0.638 | 0.224 | 0.118 | 3.21 | 0.0859 |

Year is calendar year - 1900, i.e., 1960 = 60, 1961 = 61, etc.

Figure 1. Annual New York State Christmas Count abundances of White-breasted Nuthatch (WBN) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (RBN) for the period 1960-1985. The open circles connected by solid lines represent annual data points expressed as birds/100 party-hours. For each species, two sets of data are presented, representing abundances found on all counts in the state, and on a core group of 35 highly repetitive counts. Each species is also represented by two solid regression lines, one for each of the data sets using the parameters in Table 1. The dashed lines for White-breasted Nuthatch represent regression analyses which exclude the three highest and three lowest totals referred to in the results.

White-breasted Nuthatch: This species showed wide, erratic fluctuations in annual abundance. In all years the abundance on the core counts slightly exceeded those for the entire state. Generally, the fluctuations and trends represented by the core counts are similar to those for all counts. The long-term trend of these counts was negative. Using the regression line values for 1960 and 1985, the total decline in birds/100 party-hours was 32.1 percent for the core counts and 33.9 percent for all counts. To determine the impact of extreme values on these results, additional analyses were made ignoring the three highest (1963, 1965 and 1970) and the three lowest (1976, 1978 and 1984) totals. Analysis of these data after removal of the extreme values also yields a decline, but of lesser magnitude at 17.4 percent for core counts and 19.7 percent for all counts.

The observed annual fluctuations appear consistent with Bull's (1964) comment about this species in the New York City area, "Like many species, this bird is subject to fluctuations, some years appearing in large numbers, other years in small numbers." In an attempt to gain insight on what might explain either the reporting extremes or the decline, I consulted the field note sections of *The Kingbird*. The weather summaries and the species reports that appeared quarterly gave no suggestion about events in those years of extreme high and low abundance that might help explain a possible cause. If anything, this species is invisible in these quarterly reports, because of the lack of attention and detail that is paid to its presence, a fate all too often suffered by what is perceived to be a common, resident species. Lacking the glamor of an exotic species, or lacking appearance on an extraordinary date, little attention is paid to detailed or quantified reporting of changes in its status. Because of this kind of failing in the current field note reporting system, data gathered in a more regimented manner, such as on Christmas Bird Counts, take on more value. Their continued collection should be encouraged, and some comparable type of collection should be expanded to other seasons of the year.

A comparison of the fluctuations in the White-breasted Nuthatch abundances in Figure 1 with those of the Red-breasted Nuthatch shows a low degree of synchrony between these species. Some of the annual increases of the early 1960's occurred synchronously, but there are few other similarities. On the contrary, the 1969 increase for one species and the 1970 increase for the other were out of phase, and the lowest occurrence of White-breasted Nuthatch in 1976 coincided with the second highest occurrence of Red-breasted Nuthatch. While Red-breasted Nuthatch irruptions have been related to cone crop failures in boreal forests (Bock and Lepthien 1972, 1976), there does not appear to be a similar cone-related impact on the White-breasted Nuthatch, perhaps due to its association with deciduous forests.

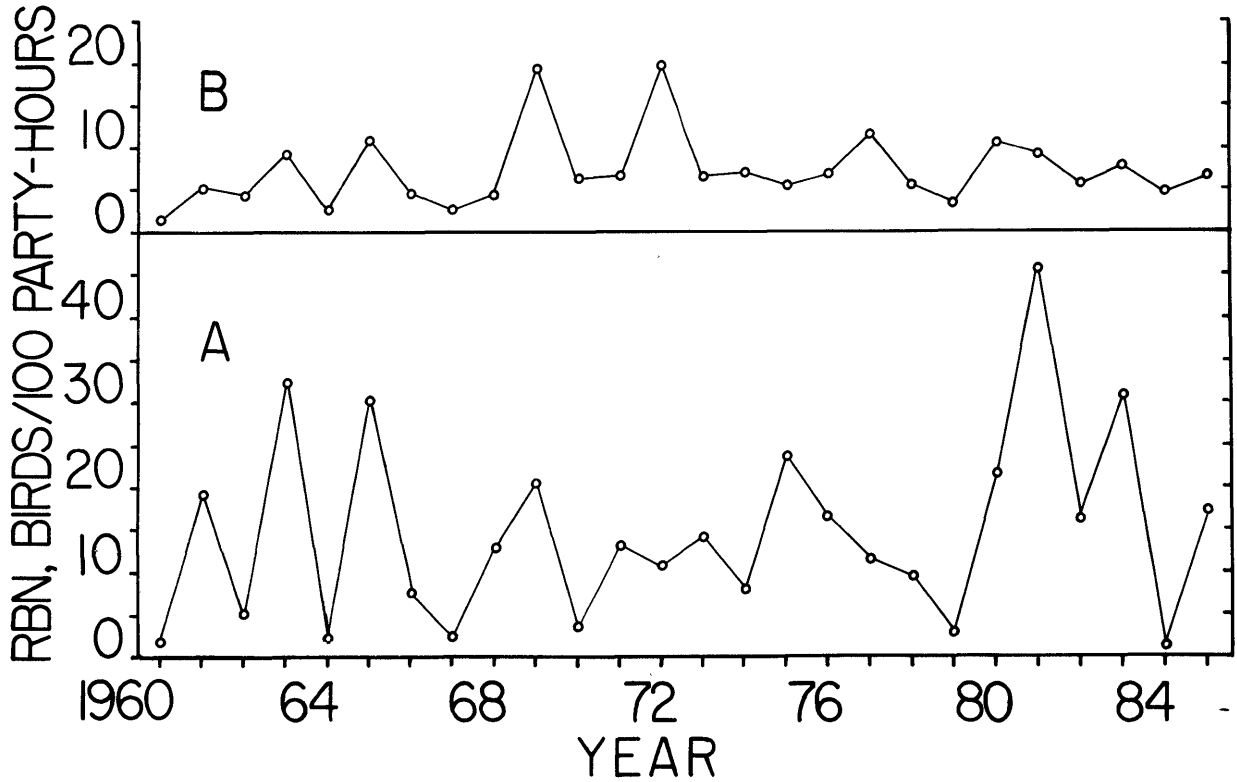


Figure 2. Annual New York State Christmas Count abundances of Red-breasted Nuthatch (RBN) for the period 1960-1985 for Long Island only (A), and for the rest of the state, excluding Adirondack count data (B).

Whatever the reason for the suggested reporting decline of this species on Christmas Counts, this species deserves further study to confirm the status of its abundance at other times of year, such as during the breeding season, to more fully assess what changes might be occurring in this population.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Results for this species differ in several ways from those for the White-breasted Nuthatch. Its abundance was about one-fifth to one-tenth that of the White-breasted Nuthatch; the long-term trend in its numbers appeared positive; the pattern of variations in abundance was consistent with its irruptive character, approximating a biennial rhythm; and with only two exceptions (1977 and 1983) the abundance on all state counts exceeded that on core counts. Using the regression values for 1960 and 1985, the increase in birds reported/100 party-hours was 113.6 percent for the core counts, and 83.3 percent for all counts.

The irruptive status of this species was examined further by separating data from the three Adirondack counts within the species' breeding range, the Long Island counts, and the "rest of the state." On Long Island the species is known almost exclusively as a migrant and wintering species (Bull 1964). Only one breeding report, occurring in 1975, is known (Bull 1976). Here, the species shows a nearly perfect biennial rhythm of alternating increases and decreases varying in magnitude (Figure 2A), except for 1967, 1977 and 1979. The 1960-1970 data are consistent with the pattern found for all of North America by Bock and Lepthien (1972).

Peak count years are partially but not completely synchronous between Long Island (Figure 2A) and the rest of the state (Figure 2B). Long Island counts are further distinguished by showing greater amplitude between years of high abundance and years of low abundance, and by greater abundance in birds/100 party-hours when compared to the rest of the state. In non-irruptive years, minimum abundances on Long Island were 2-5 birds/100 party-hours, similar to the 2-7 birds/100 party-hours for the rest of the state. Long Island maxima in years of irruption were 15-45 birds/100 party-hours, or about double the 10-22 birds/100 party-hours recorded in the rest of the state. Only in 1972 was its abundance on Long Island substantially less than elsewhere in New York.

Coverage of the three Adirondack counts (Elizabethtown, Old Forge, and Saranac Lake) was variable until the 1970's, and so it is difficult to draw many conclusions about them. While the results are not presented graphically here, they showed only slight suggestion of a biennial rhythm in annual abundance over the 26 years, but clearly, as of 1970, they represent the highest abundance of any counts in the entire state.

Count minima from 1970 to 1985 were in the range of 30-65 birds/100 party-hours, while maxima were usually in the range of 100-165 birds/100 party-hours. The greatest Adirondack count totals occurred in 1976 and 1978 with 480 and 227 birds/100 party-hours, respectively. These numbers in 1976 caused the peak in the state total for 1976 in Figure 1, which is missing in Figures 2A and 2B.

In 1976, the Saranac Lake count located 311 Red-breasted Nuthatches in 49 party-hours for a yield of 634.7 birds/100 party-hours, the state record during this 26-year period! These Adirondack counts within the species' breeding range have been areas of greatest abundance during Christmas Count time, followed by Long Island, then the rest of the state in an approximate ratio of 12:2:1, respectively. This finding differs from part of Bull's (1974) assessment about statewide status prior to the generation and examination of these Adirondack data, wherein he stated, "Varily rare to very common migrant, most numerous in fall along coast: much less common in winter."

Given the exclusion of the Adirondack and Long Island data in Figure 2B, the data for the rest of the state gave a regression line that increased 33.5 percent over the 26-year period, but at very low statistical reliability ($r^2 = 0.021$, $p = 0.479$) due to considerable year to year variability in abundance. Visual inspection suggests no significant, definable trend up or down for this species over this period, and it appears reasonable that the suggested increase in abundance portrayed in Figure 1 is an artifact contributed to in part by increased inclusion after 1970 of highly productive Adirondack counts, and the record 1981 Long Island count. Figure 2B suggests a continued erratic pattern in annual abundance.

Christmas Count Coverage: During the period 1960-1985, Christmas Counts were reported from 74 locations in New York State. Eighteen of these were conducted one to ten times, 15 were conducted 11 to 19 times, and 42 were conducted 21 to 26 times in the 26-year period. Referring to Table 2 and Figure 3, there was an increase of 60 percent in the number of counts reported per year (bottom line in Figure 3) over the period of this study. This increase was eclipsed by a 214-percent increase in annual total party-hours for all counts in the state (top line in Figure 3). The latter increase was due to the growing number of counts reported annually and also to increased party coverage per count.

This latter phenomenon is illustrated by the two middle lines in Figure 3. The total party-hours/count rose 89 percent for all counts (lower middle solid line) and the accumulated total party-hours on the 35 core counts rose 107 percent (upper middle solid line). In both cases, the increases appeared to occur in three incremental steps from 1960 to 1969, 1969 to 1974 and 1974 to 1985. During those periods the total

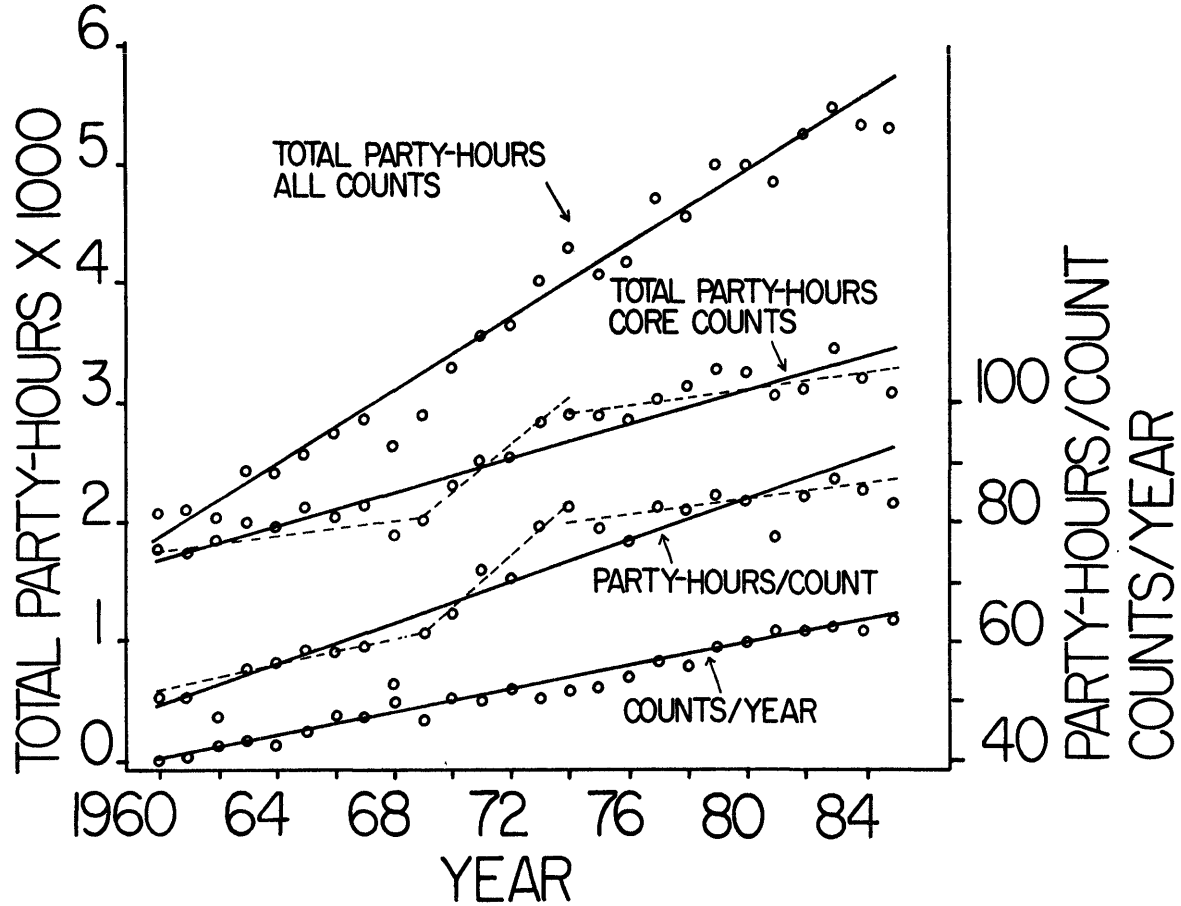


Figure 3. New York State Christmas Count coverage for the period 1960-1985. The open circles represent annual data counts. Solid and dashed lines represent regression lines based on data in Table 2. The top two sets of data use the ordinate to the left, while the bottom two sets use the ordinate to the right.

party-hours/count increased 18.0, 35.3 and 9.7 percent, respectively, and the accumulated total party-hours on the 35 core counts increased 17.6, 44.7 and 12.5 percent, respectively. These incremental increases are shown as dashed lines in Figure 3.

If the 1960 and 1985 values of the dashed lines are used instead of the respective values of the solid lines in the middle two data sets in Figure 3, the increase in total party-hours/count becomes 73 percent, and the increase in accumulated total party-hours of the 35 core counts becomes 86 percent. Since any given 15-mile diameter count circle can be advantageously divided into only a limited number of sectors for coverage by parties of observers (given in part to some observers' perception of territoriality), and since there is a limit to the amount of available daylight, and in some cases human endurance to winter weather, the number of total party-hours/count should reach some limiting value beyond which further increases are not likely. Similarly, some limitation will eventually occur on the number of annually reported counts.

Table 2. Regression analysis of New York State Christmas Bird Count Characteristics.

Regression equation:
Count parameter = a + b(year)

| Count Parameter | a | b | r ² | F-ratio | p |
|------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------|
| Number of counts/year | -15.909 | 0.939 | 0.970 | 765.60 | <0.00001 |
| Party-hours/count | | | | | |
| 1960-1985 | -55.482 | 1.744 | 0.088 | 169.89 | <0.00001 |
| 1960-1969 | -10.200 | 1.013 | 0.519 | 8.61 | 0.01885 |
| 1969-1974 | -236.538 | 4.314 | 0.952 | 13.00 | 0.00088 |
| 1974-1985 | 28.067 | 0.702 | 0.233 | 3.03 | 0.11232 |
| Total party-hours/year | | | | | |
| 35 core counts | | | | | |
| 1960-1985 | -2647.830 | 72.079 | 0.091 | 231.67 | <0.00001 |
| 1960-1969 | -312.040 | 34.776 | 0.546 | 9.61 | 0.01465 |
| 1969-1974 | -10843.320 | 187.540 | 0.973 | 145.41 | 0.00027 |
| 1974-1985 | 457.253 | 33.450 | 0.395 | 6.53 | 0.02860 |
| All counts | -7579.560 | 156.840 | 0.958 | 545.70 | <0.00001 |

Year is calendar year - 1900, i.e., 1960 = 60, 1961 = 61, etc.

Summary

An evaluation of New York State Christmas Count data over the period 1960-1985 showed that annually reported numbers of White-breasted Nuthatch varied widely and erratically, but overall suggested a decline between 17 and 34 percent, depending on the method of treating the data. A similar analysis showed an apparent increase of 83-114 percent in the reported abundance of Red-breasted Nuthatch. Removal from the analysis of data from Long Island, and highly productive Adirondack areas, reduced this increase elsewhere in the state to 34 percent. Because of this species' irruptive behavior, this apparent reporting increase may be an artifact, and there may have been no significant change in abundance over the 26 years.

On Long Island the Red-breasted Nuthatch appeared to be biennially irruptive but less so elsewhere in the state. Since 1970, it was most abundant on Adirondack Christmas Counts where it is resident, followed by Long Island where it is a migrant and winter visitor, and finally in the remainder of the state in a ratio of approximately 12:2:1. White-breasted Nuthatch reports throughout the state outnumbered Red-breasted Nuthatch reports by about 10:1 in the 1960's and about 6:1 in the mid-1980's. During the 1976 record low count of White-breasted Nuthatches and the near record high count of Red-breasted Nuthatches, the ratio was about 2:1.

Christmas Count activity during the 1960-1985 period increased substantially. The number of annually reported counts rose by 60 percent, the total party-hours by 214 percent, and depending on the method of treating the data the total party-hours/count by 89 or 73 percent, and the accumulated total party-hours on the 35 core counts by 107 or 86 percent.

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- 1527 Myron Street, Schenectady, New York 12309

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
ANNUAL MEETING
New York, New York
September 18-20, 1987

The 40th annual meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc., hosted by The Linnaean Society of New York, was called to order on Friday, 18 Sep 1987, at the Days Inn, 440 West 57th Street in New York City by President Harriet Marsi at 2:15 P.M. Twenty-five member clubs answered to the roll call. Marilyn Schindler read the minutes of the 39th annual meeting, which were accepted as corrected in pen and filed.

The President's report was given by Harriet Marsi; the report is filed with these minutes. Stan Lincoln read the Treasurer's report. He stated that the Federation was in good financial shape and explained some of the recent changes. The report was accepted and filed with these minutes. Stan Lincoln also read a statement that on 10 Aug 1987, the auditors had met and approved the financial condition of the Federation. It was signed by Irving Cantor and Richard Sloss. The statement is filed with these minutes.

Harriet Marsi asked for ideas that might bolster membership. It was suggested that a specially colored application or card be put in *The Kingbird* or *New York Birders* to attract the attention of individuals who might wish to join the Federation. Another suggestion was to place this type of application in club newsletters, explaining the advantages of Federation membership. This would reach those club members who do not attend the club meetings, where the Federation is mentioned and where the publications are displayed. One delegate suggested that 10% of the monies received should be spent for recruitment each year with a special "push" to be held every other year.

Harriet commended Paul DeBenedictis for some new items of interest in *The Kingbird*. Paul, himself, stressed that members should send items to him - saying, "It is **your** journal and will reflect what you submit." He wanted Regional editors to be told of bird departure dates. All names and addresses of regional editors appear in the journal. Paul is pleased with the material being sent to him and wants clubs to be thanked. Applause was given to the editors who do a difficult job of writing the Regional reports.

President Harriet Marsi talked about the new column for bird clubs in *New York Birders*. One delegate suggested that a schedule of deadlines be put in the issues so that members of clubs can contribute other items of interest in the necessary time frame. Max Wheat, editor of *New York Birders*, urged delegates to check with their bird clubs to make sure a copy of the newsletter of their clubs was being sent to him. Max commented that much good writing is going on in newsletters and it is a good medium for communication. He can pick up interesting information from club newsletters if he receives them. A suggestion that Max made which clubs might like to remember was that a writer should not start an article with a date and number of people who

might have attended but instead might start with a phrase such as "Bald eagle sighted!"

An announcement of awards was made: Manny Levine stated that Bob Dickerman will receive the John J. Elliott Award. Dick Sloss announced that Eric VanderWerf of the Genesee Ornithological Society and Nicholas Bailey of High Peaks Audubon Society will be the recipients of the Lillian C. Stoner Award. Manny Levine suggested that the original intent of the award should be reviewed.

Myrna Hemmerick reported on Membership. Thirty-nine clubs have paid their dues. Jamestown Audubon and Schuyler County clubs have not. A new membership application or brochure has been developed by Connie Wilkins and received by Harriet Marsi. When these applications are printed, individuals and clubs will receive them along with an invitation to join the Federation. It was suggested that clubs who are not currently members be invited to join each year. Ron Dodson's list of Audubon clubs should be referred to as a source for such clubs.

Walton Sabin's report on ducks is filed with these minutes, although he was unable to attend the annual meeting. Allen Benton and John Confer were also absent and no Bibliography Committee report was made. President Harriet Marsi volunteered to serve on the Committee on Resolutions with Stan Lincoln at this meeting.

Because of an Audubon meeting in Arizona, Peter Berle and his staff members of the National Audubon Society were unable to attend this meeting to speak or answer questions of concern to the delegates.

Mike Peterson and Bob Long gave input regarding the elimination of regional officers, including Ron Dodson, by National Audubon. There will be nine candidates of thirty-six on the National Audubon Board – hopefully to speak for individual club interests. Ron Dodson has formed New York State Audubon Society, Inc. It was felt that our state can support an Audubon office of its own, although more financial help is needed. Mike thanked the Federation for allowing time to discuss this important matter, which certainly affects us all. We must urge Peter Berle and Ron Dodson to get together to talk about the misunderstandings between them. Ellie Long of Onondaga Audubon Society said that they had sent a contribution to the new New York State Audubon Society, Inc., but wanted some questions answered such as, "Is it tax exempt?" Apparently, there are many different ways that state organizations run in conjunction with the National Audubon. Charles Smith suggested that we not take sides and urged caution regarding a formal affiliation with any organization. Some sort of state Audubon is needed, he felt, but cooperation with the National organization is necessary. We need to know the bylaws and setup of the new organization from Ron Dodson's office. Dick Sloss suggested that support was appropriate but not financial support at this moment. He urged caution. A suggestion was made that a committee be formed to write a letter of support to Ron. Another suggestion was that a "resolution" be drawn to be considered on Saturday, 19 Sep 1987.

The meeting then adjourned until the following morning. We reconvened on Saturday morning, at 9:30A.M. Roll call was again taken.

Harriet Marsi mentioned the contributions of Bob Arbib, who had the idea for the Breeding Bird Atlas, and who passed away this summer. She also thanked Connie Wilkins and Marilyn Schindler for their efforts.

Charles Smith of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of new officers:

President: Berna Weissman
Vice-President: Chad Covey
Corresponding Secretary: Mary Ann Sunderlin
Recording Secretary: Øivind Jensen
Treasurer: Stanley Lincoln

It was moved that the secretary cast one ballot that the slate be accepted. It was seconded and approved.

Harriet Marsi welcomed the new president, Berna Weissman, and Berna, in turn, thanked the outgoing president for her hard work and concern.

Gordon Meade announced that the Atlas is about finished. It will be coming out in May of 1988.

Paul DeBenedictis reported that Fritz Scheider has been acting as chairman for the NYSARC pending their formal meeting. The Committee has reviewed records for 1985 and 1986 and will try to have a report ready for the upcoming issue of *The Kingbird*. Fritz suggested that the number of members of the committee may have to be increased. Berna Weissman wanted Fritz to be thanked for the work of the committee in "catching up".

Charles Smith thanked people present for their help with Project BirdWatch. He said that 425 persons had paid the \$7.00 fee to participate and 333 had submitted reports. The data base now has 298 species represented. Charlie described Project BirdWatch like that of a "fishing expedition". There will be various possible uses of the information which is collected.

He also answered questions about "Project Feeder Watch". Shifts in agricultural practices affect numbers and the distribution of birds in New York State. There is a large regional attempt to know what is going on. Charlie said, "If we don't know what is happening to the birds in New York State with all these projects, we might as well give up!"

He further discussed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife breeding bird surveys. Machines do not like wrinkled, dog-eared reports. Information will be increasingly more available through new technology such as satellites. By 1989, Charlie hopes that all routes in New York State will be covered by observers. Fritz Scheider holds the record for covering 7 routes (a 25-mile automobile route with specific rules for observing every half mile during the breeding season) over a 20 year time span. An observer must be able to hear and see the birds. A long-time commitment is more important than ability. As experience progresses – so does the coverage.

Harriet Marsi reported for Peg Gorson on the conservation committee. The "Essential Habitats Bill" was defeated again. The Wild Bird Bill is still holding. There is much interest in the project that will determine the way in which state forests will be managed. Berna has asked Harriet Marsi to become the new Conservation Chairman.

The Jay Coalition in Rye, N.Y., which the Federation is supporting, was briefly explained to the delegates. The ancestral home of the John Jay family adjoins a nature preserve and only remaining salt marsh in the area. It is in the private hands of a developer. Many people want the property condemned so that it can be used by the public. Concerned citizens want the property preserved, rather than developed. Bob Arbib as well as other members of the Federation were very much involved in this effort. Its importance is that it is so close to a unique nature area. Berna Weissman asked that delegates bring problems of this nature to the attention of the Federation because "We do make a difference!"

One delegate mentioned that there is a growing concern from the grass roots regarding the lawn care companies and their use of pesticides which could affect all kinds of wildlife.

A motion was made and approved that Irving Cantor and Richard Sloss be appointed to serve on the Auditing Committee again. A motion was made and approved that Harriet Marsi, Manny Levine and Mike Peterson be appointed to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Mike Matthews from DEC's Urban Wildlife office in Albany was introduced. He spoke on the following topics:

1. There were 8 pairs of Peregrine Falcons in the state, 5 nests, and 3 chicks produced. There is a new Bald Eagle nest as well. At Montezuma, 1 male, 1 female and 1 unidentified Bald Eagle were attending 2 young eaglets – a unique situation with 3 adults.
2. The Essential Habitats Bill will be reintroduced by DEC, which will really push for it to be passed.
3. Loons are doing better than anticipated. There is conflicting information regarding the effects of acid rain. Mike quoted President Reagan as having just said the previous day that acid rain has no effect on the environment. There is much controversy about this and certainly many factors are affecting the environment. The "Acid Rain" Digest was recommended for reading.
4. Mike brought various pamphlets about subjects of concern to delegates. One was about Ridley sea turtles.
5. "Return a Gift to Wildlife" was discussed again. There are two committees that review proposals for funding. Basically, they rate projects that are submitted. Mike felt that the Fish and Wildlife Dept. was "on the ball" regarding where funds should go. About twelve uses of the fund ought to get money from other sources. Twelve million dollars is desired

from the Legislature to pay ongoing expenses. We should pressure the Legislature and Governor's office for more money. The amount of money collected by "Return a Gift to Wildlife" seems to be stabilizing in the amount of 1.5 million dollars. Some projects could or should be funded by the Conservation fund, rather than "Return a Gift".

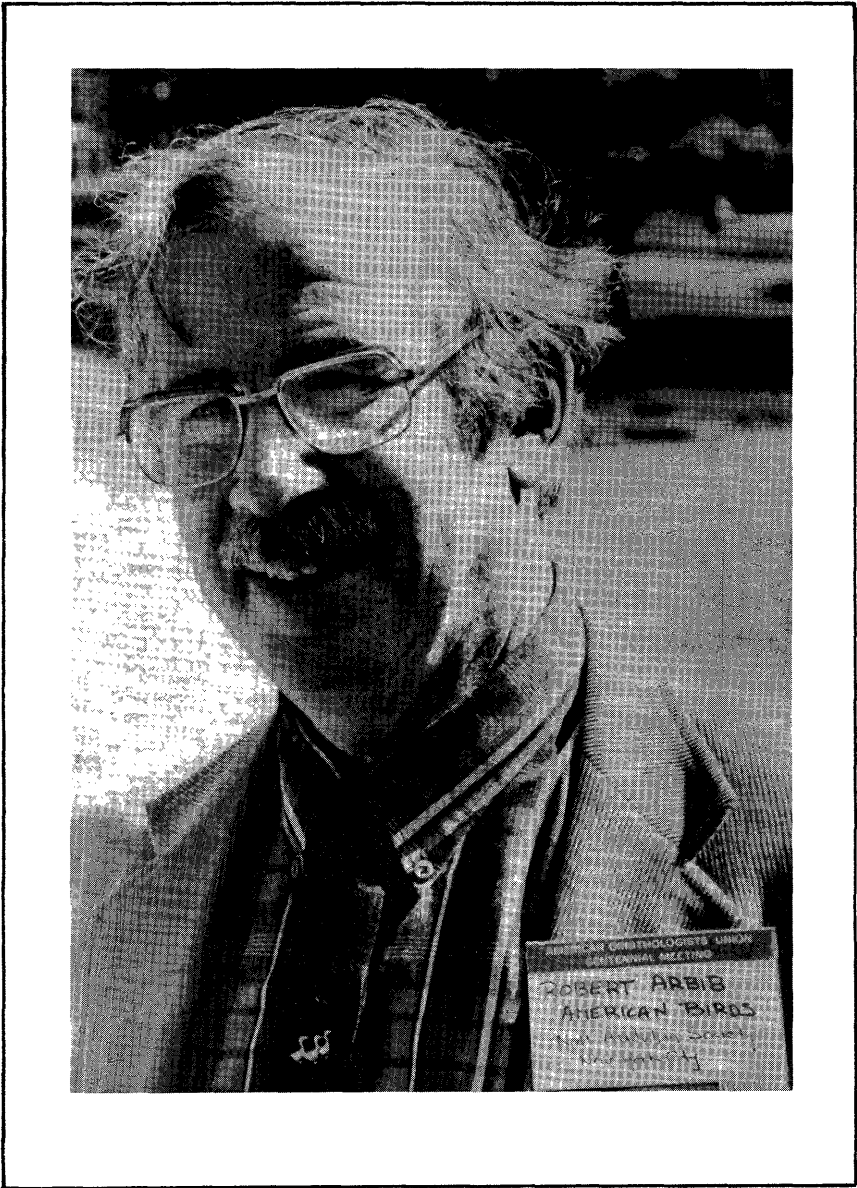
Stan Lincoln read two resolutions worked on by the Resolution Committee. A motion was made, seconded, and voted for that both be approved. Both resolutions are filed with these minutes. The committee was commended by Mike Peterson and Chad Covey. Charles Smith moved that the resolution concerning the Audubon Society's conflict be printed in the next issue of *New York Birders*. Copies of the resolution will be sent to Peter Berle, Ron Dodson, Dick Martyr, and Commissioner Thomas Jorling. This motion was approved.

The next annual meeting of the Federation will be in Rochester, N.Y., as is the custom every ten years. Gordon Meade and Øivind Jensen will serve as co-chairmen. We are still looking for a club to host the 1989 meeting. One has to plan for 150 - 200 persons and about 50 - 60 rooms. Staying in homes and camping are also possibilities. A group representing a club, rather than the president of the club, can host the annual meeting. Chad Covey suggested that perhaps a short notice about this need could be placed in *New York Birders*.

It was noted that the St. Lawrence-Adirondack Club was not currently a member of the Federation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marilyn Schindler, Recording Secretary



IN MEMORIAM
ROBERT S. ARBIB, JR.

RICHARD A. SLOSS

Robert Arbib died on 20 July 1987 and with his passing the Federation has lost one of its founders and guiding forces. He ably served our organization for many years in many ways – as Chairman of the State Bird Book Committee; Vice-President (1962-1963); President (1964-1965) and Chairman of the Publications and Research Committee up until his death. A member of the Executive Committee, his counsel was listened to with respect. It was Bob who planted the seed that grew into the largest project ever undertaken by the Federation – The New York State Breeding Bird Atlas. What a pity he will not see the final result!

Arbib was born 17 March 1915 in Gloversville, New York, and spent his youth in Woodmere, Long Island, near a large tract of woodland, stream and marsh called the Lord's Woods, where he was introduced to the wonders of the natural world. From these early years to that evening in 1985 when he was awarded the prestigious Arthur A. Allen Award by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University for his fourteen year career as editor of *American Birds*, he distinguished himself as a widely known and highly respected member of the ornithological community.

In his youth birding, Big Days and Christmas Bird Counts were the stuff of life, then on to Yale University and graduation as a biology major. A short stint in radio was followed by enlistment in the U.S. Army's 36th Engineers Regiment, where he served for five years before and during World War II in France and England. While in England he wrote and published his first book, a delightful account of his experiences in England entitled *Here We Are Together*. During those years he also wrote articles for the London Daily Express and, as though he had already chosen his creative field, upon his discharge from the service he immediately took a position with Grey Advertising as a copywriter. For the next twenty-six years he wrote for Grey, Kenyon and Eckhardt and D'Arcy advertising agencies before retiring in 1968 and moving on to become editor of *Audubon Field Notes*, later to be *American Birds*, in 1970.

Robert became part of organizational ornithology in 1938 when he joined the venerable Linnaean Society of New York. In 1949, a few years after his military service, he was elected President and he became a Fellow in 1957. It is touching to reflect that 1987 marked the

fortieth anniversary of *The Linnaean Newsletter*, the Society's monthly publication, which Bob created and produced for many years before other editors followed. He was a founding member and Secretary of the Hawk Migration Association of North America; a director of Friends of Marshlands, Inc. of Rye, N. Y.; was appointed to the Coastal Zone Management Commission of Mamaroneck, N. Y., where he lived for more than twenty years with his wife Renee. An elective member of the American Ornithologists Union, he was also a member of the Cooper and Wilson Ornithological Societies and the author or coauthor of several books on bird finding.

Despite all these serious and impressive accomplishments there was a bit of the pixie in Bob. He had a wonderful sense of humor and appreciated a good story as well as the next person. He was a regular contributor to the AOU's annual spoof, *The Auklet*, under the pseudonym *Strix nebulosa*, the Great Gray Owl. And who of us who were there can forget his investiture as President of the Federation in Poughkeepsie. When the gavel was turned over to him at the banquet he made a few formal acknowledgments and blithely into an "ornithological" joke with an off-color punch line whose central character was called the Crunchbird. The gasps from some of the more staid members at the banquet were drowned out by roars of laughter.

The most significant contributions Robert Arbib made to ornithology were his tireless efforts to preserve our wildlife areas. He was passionately concerned with conservation and for many years he fought to preserve critical pieces of land. He was a dedicated fighter whose sword was not so much the spoken word as it was the pen. I believe that was his most precious gift – an ability to express himself lucidly, powerfully and with beauty. His greatest cry against the exploitation and destruction of our natural heritage was the publication of his book *The Lord's Woods*, those very woods he tramped through as a boy. It is a profoundly moving appeal for which he won the distinguished John Burroughs medal. As Susan Drennan wrote in her Memoriam to Bob: "if this book were Arbib's single lasting memorial, it would be quite enough." He leaves a message in those pages which should not be forgotten and it seems appropriate to say good-bye to Bob by quoting the beginning and ending of the preface to his book:

"Whose woods these are I do not know. I have never seen the man or heard his name. But whoever he may be, he is my mortal enemy. By right of title, deed, grant, or fee, or any measure of quiritarian ownership these woods belong

to him. It matters not that he is a distant and uninterested proprietor, he is the legal possessor of these acres nonetheless. I see the torn and faded caveats his watchmen posted long ago along his boundaries, and I ignore them. Unafraid I walk the green paths that connect his wells. The smoke from the stack of his pump house flaps down across his snowy fief in sullen folds, and I curse this gray flag of disgrace. By every measure of law and logic, he is the rightful landlord and I the trespasser... So long as these woods live for me to roam in body or in spirit, so long as the jewelweed hangs heavy in August on the stream banks and autumn whispers with the rustle of bracken-brown thrush, my spirit shall have a secret wellspring, my heart shall have a home, and my America..a beloved countenance. But when that dread day comes that has been threatened for so long, when these woods have been allowed to perish through neglect or destroyed for greed, then my spirit shall be dispossessed and I (and you) for all eternity bereft. And because that time seems near at hand, and the long vigil ended, and because the thousands of years that have witnessed their beauty grow and evolve now approach a final agony, I will write this personal memorial. For myself I write it, and for you, to keep the Lord's Woods alive and green forever on these pages and in our hearts.

Then at last, and too late, the trespasser will indeed become the final possessor."

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

In many respects this season was nearly a carbon copy of the winter 1986-87. As Mike Peterson suggested for Region 7, in most areas it was a relatively easy winter for both birds and birders, though a relatively dull one for the birders. Steve Eaton reminds us in the Region 1 report that the presence of species during the winter is a complex function of weather, food crops, prior breeding success and other factors.

The general description of weather patterns was very similar to last year's over the season and quite uniform across the state. This season, December was generally warm until the last few days, dry and short of snowfall in most areas. The winter storm track typically passed south, then up the coast again, so the southern and eastern parts of the state generally received more of the fluffy white stuff than did the traditional Upstate snowbelt areas. January seesawed between cold and several thaws, with precipitation generally closer to normal. Across the state, a late January thaw brought record or near-record temperatures on 31 Jan. February brought some good cold snaps and more snowfall, but still averaged nearly normal. The combination of very poor wild food crops in most areas, excepting Region 9, and the cold and snow in February may have terminated some overwintering attempts by half-hardy species.

To further this comparison of winter seasons, I first evaluated reports of waterfowl, raptors, incursive species, and half-hardies as I did last year. Many Regions had open water through much of the season and good waterfowl variety, though relatively few high counts of individuals. Jay Lehman, in the Region 4 report, does a particularly good job of putting this season's data into historical context. There, waterfowl were at their second best in 10 years. Among the waterfowl with good counts were Canada Goose, increasing nearly everywhere as a wintering species; Wood Duck, with record winter counts in Regions 2 and 3; American Black Duck, up a bit, best in Region 8, but still very poor in an historical context; Mallard, with a peak of 87,000 in Region 3; Gadwall at a record 35,000 in Region 3; Hooded Merganser in Regions 1 and 3; and Red-breasted Merganser in Regions 2 and 5, where it usually is relatively scarce in winter. Diving ducks were generally scarce this season, with Canvasback best in Regions 1, 8 and 9; Redhead in good numbers only in Region 3; scaup and scoters low everywhere they were reported. A bright spot was six Barrow's Goldeneyes in Region 6. The open water did bring increased reports of scarcer wintering waterfowl, with reports of Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and American Wigeon scattered across the state.

This winter apparently saw a relatively widespread vole population explosion, with attending large gatherings of raptors in many places. Most prominent were Rough-legged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Northern Harrier on the day shift, with Short-eared Owl taking over at night in the same fields, with some interesting interactions at dawn and dusk. Both Rough-legged Hawk, with a peak count of 130 in Region 6, and Short-eared Owl, with a peak of 92 in Region 2, set state record high counts. Among the other raptors, Turkey Vulture reports continue to increase during the winter season, with reports from Regions 1, 2, and 9. Up to 15 birds overwintered in Letchworth State Park in Region 2. A very late Osprey was recorded in Region 2 on 28 Dec. Bald Eagles were again recorded in all regions, with the highest counts in Region 9. Accipiters appeared in typical numbers, except for a scarcity of Northern Goshawk in all but Region 7, and falcons, other than American Kestrel, were scarce, with no Merlin and only one Peregrine Falcon reported. Nonetheless, there were Gyrfalcons in both Regions 2 and 9.

It was not a great winter for incursive species. Rough-legged Hawk, noted above, was numerous. White-winged gulls were scarce except in Regions 5 and 6. Snowy Owls appeared in all but Regions 7 and 9, with the best numbers in the Regions bordering Lake Ontario. Both chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatch wintered in relatively low numbers. Bohemian Waxwings were noted only as singles away from Regions 6 and 7. Northern Shrike was reported from eight Regions, with good early winter numbers decreasing with time. American Tree Sparrow, and most of the other winter visitant sparrows for that matter, were present in low numbers only. The winter, open-field birds, Horned Lark, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur, were present in only average to low numbers in most Regions, with the latter by far the scarcest. It was not a winter finch year. Only Pine Siskin appeared in large numbers in all Regions to feed on a bumper crop of eastern hemlock cones and to drain our niger feeders on the side. The rest of the winter finches were found only irregularly, in small numbers, with Region 7 having the best variety. A small Common Redpoll outbreak was noted in Regions 5, 6 and 7, accompanied by a Hoary Redpoll in Region 5.

The number of reports of half-hardy species was pretty dismal in most Regions, though overall most of the expected lingerers were found in 3-5 Regions each. Of particular interest were Great Blue Heron in all Regions; Common Snipe only in Regions 1, 8 and 9; Northern Flicker numbers low in all regions; Eastern Phoebe in only Region 1; Eastern Bluebird reports mixed, with some feelings that numbers had dipped a bit again; Hermit Thrush numbers very low across the state; American Robin numbers uniformly down; only four species of warblers (certainly biased by the lack of a Region 10 report), the most unusual being the

Pine Warbler in Region 1 and the Ovenbird in Region 3; Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Region 4; Savannah Sparrow only in Region 9; Vesper Sparrow, a winter rarity, in Regions 2 and 9; Fox Sparrow in Regions 1 and 4; and Northern Oriole in Regions 6 and 9. Song, Swamp, and White-throated sparrows and most blackbirds were noted as quite scarce in most Regions, with a pleasant surprise of Eastern Meadowlark appearing in all Regions except 7. This winter should have had little negative impact on species whose range is expanding northward, e.g., Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, and Northern Mockingbird, which were noted at many typical locations at the edge of their respective ranges.

There are a number of reports which didn't fit neatly into the above categories plus a few of the usual tidbits to ponder, all of which set this season off from last winter. There were only a few very late records, less than one might expect after a mild early winter. Most notable were a record late Semipalmated Plover, Osprey and Common Moorhen in Region 2, and an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron and an Indigo Bunting in Region 9. With the large increase in Double-crested Cormorants nesting on Lake Ontario, the low number of winter reports from Upstate Regions seems surprising. From Region 5 we have note of an albino Red-tailed Hawk. Reports of Wild Turkey indicate continued increase across the state, with counts of over 100 reported from Regions 4 and 6. Thayer's Gulls were carefully sorted out in Regions 5 and 6. As a legacy of the Olympic opening ceremony, one can now locate Rock Doves easily in Region 7 near Lake Placid. The story of the exploding House Finch population reached another milestone with wintering numbers of Purple and House Finches now reported to be about equal in Region 6, not a particularly positive note. To make observers stop, rub their eyes and wipe their lenses, then look again, we read of a "golden" Evening Grosbeak in Region 7 and another with white wings and tail in Region 6. Finally, a problem for the records committee, we have a Ruddy Shelduck from Region 7 reported to NYSARC, very highly likely an escape, but... I note this species in particular, as our local records committee took the approach of simply filing (very close to the "circular file") the flurry of reports received from last fall to present here. Up to two pairs were recorded at a refuge, the spookiest of the waterfowl present, but with escape from captivity so highly likely and proof of vagrancy in such a case so difficult it seemed not be worth the time and effort to review the reports.

The rarities of this season generally were half-hardies and/or of local rarity only, not species rare statewide, excepting the Gyrfalcons, Thayer's Gulls, and Hoary Redpoll noted above. I'll leave it to the reader to check the various Regional reports. The BOTS award goes to a Great

Gray Owl found in Region 6 for several days in mid December and again, at the same location, on March 6. Did it disappear in between? Did anyone look? Were the phone lines and mail routes severed for the winter?

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Standard abbreviations: county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters; ! - details seen by Regional editor; ad - adult; arr - arrival or first of season; CBC - Christmas Bird Count; I - Island; imm - immature; *intro* - see introduction to report; j - juvenile; L - Lake; max - maximum; mob - multiple observers; NWR - National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC - report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P - Park; Pd - Pond; ph - photographed; Pt - Point; Res - Reservoir; SP - State Park; spm - specimen; subad - subadult; T - Town of; Twn - township; WMA - Wildlife Management Area.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

The unusually warm fall continued on through December and January because of the positions of two storm tracks. One which went up the east coast was too far east to bother Region 1 and another which traveled up through the central Great Lakes brought us only warm rains. In December there were consistently mild temperatures and only four days remained below freezing. In Buffalo the only general snowfall of 2-4 inches came on 28-29 December and 30 Dec was the coldest day of the month. The sun was out during 37% of daylight hours, 10% above normal. January was mild, too, and dry and sunny. Snowfall totaled only 6.9 inches in Buffalo with one lake-effect storm on 26 Jan in Buffalo and heavy lake effect snow-falls south of Buffalo on the 4 and 9 Jan. Through much of the Region the ground soon became bare. There were three January thaws instead of the usual one, a thunderstorm on 20 Jan and a record 62° the 31 Jan. At the end of the month only half of Lake Erie was frozen over. Winter returned with a vengeance, however, in February as open waters of Lake Erie produced two lake-effect snow storms. The average temperature was 24.3 degrees, just about normal and Lake Erie, being still open, produced measurable lake-effect snows daily from 2-13 Feb. The middle stretch of the month was mild, wet and cloudy but it turned cold from the 24 Feb to the end of the month.

Although the weather during the winter season usually is thought to be the primary influence on presence or absence of birds here, there are many other reasons. These include the success or failure of reproduction during the previous breeding season and the availability of open water and/or food (such as the abundance of mast or other species-specific requirements for survival as worms for Am. Woodcock) in an area. Northern species escaping the rigors of the arctic and cyclic food shortages elsewhere also can account for the numbers of some species.

The open water and available aquatic food was probably responsible for Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Tundra Swan and American Coot present from December to early January. None were reported in February. Great Blue Heron appeared to winter through the entire winter in sheltered places. January Purple Sandpipers were topped by a Dunlin on Goat Island on 14 Feb. The Niagara River with its resident, superiorly trained gull watchers, as usual turned up the Region's show of larids, including Common Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Raptors also seemed to reflect an open winter. A Turkey Vulture was seen by Don and Jane Clark over Farmersville Station on 27 Dec, five weeks beyond the previous record late, and Red-shouldered Hawks were seen in Arkwright Twn on 4 Feb, Stockton Twn 14 Feb, and Hanover Twn on 17 Feb. All three of these Townships are contiguous along the Portage Escarpment in Chautauqua County. One was also probably present about the first of the month. Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks were unusually common on the lake plains. After the February snowstorms the Rough-legged Hawks appeared to move south into northern Chautauqua County. Snowy Owls, Short-eared Owls and Long-eared Owls were found in good numbers along the lake shores or on the lake plains

but there was no indication that many moved south after the February snows.

Although two Eastern Phoebees were reported at Westfield on **10 Jan**, it is inconceivable they could have survived through February. However, Eastern Bluebirds did overwinter in the Genesee Valley in unprecedented fashion. The fact that they roost in boxes and can switch to sumac fruits during severe weather perhaps accounts for their survival. Stoneflies hatching from the streams and available on the snow in February and March also can help add to their diet in this area of dendritic streams. There were only two species of warblers reported in December this year compared with last year's four species, though temperatures were much the same. Some other factor than weather perhaps was operating here. It has certainly been the winter for Pine Siskins, particularly on the Allegheny Plateau where an abundant supply of Eastern Hemlock seed supplied them with food on the tree and on the ground. Most seed was on the ground or on the snow surface after January. They also flocked to feeders, usually favoring the niger seed. Almost all the smaller woodland birds, such as Black-capped Chickadee and Dark-eyed Junco, also fed on hemlock seed. The great increase in well stocked feeders in the Region has apparently resulted in the more winter reports of Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Pine Siskin and Rusty Blackbird. It is probable that these species are hidden in unexplored habitats but when they find feeders they are brought to human viewing. Perhaps the most unusual passerine was the **Bohemian Waxwing** spotted in Weathersfield Township, Wyoming Co, on 7 Dec by Dave Junkin and his wife.

Contributors, Allegany County Bird Club, Robert Andrie, Tim Baird, Bellerby, Lois Buck, Lou and Doris Burton, Buffalo Ornithological Society, Otto and Gretchen Carlson, Cattaraugus County Bird Club, Bruce Chilton, Don and Jane Clark, William D'Anna, Steve Eaton, Don Endres, Marcya Foster, Joe Gula, Joe Gula, Jr., Jamestown Audubon Society, Dave and Marty Junkin, Walter and Harriet Klabunde, Roberta McDonald, Terry and Judy Mosher, Joanne Nelson, Jean Pigman, Vivian and Raymond Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Carol Roby, Olga Rosche, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill, Jim and Regina VanScoy, Lou and Doris Vernon, Watson.

Abbreviations: ASP-Allegany State Park; BH-Buffalo Harbor; BOS-Buffalo Ornithological Society; ChL-Chautauqua Lake; DH-Dunkirk Harbor; FCBC-Fredonia Christmas Bird Count; INWR-Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; JCBC-Jamestown Christmas Bird Count; NF-Niagara Falls; NR-Niagara River; SBCBC-St. Bonaventure Christmas Bird Count; SOCBC-Scio Christmas Bird Count; TFNP-Tiffitt Farm NP.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two NF 1-31 Dec, three Goat I 8 Dec, six NF 17 Dec; one Mayville, ChL 22 Dec; one DH 2 Jan; one Salamanca 17 Jan, grounded and released Allegheny R (TB); no Feb records. Pied-billed Grebe: max four DH 2 Jan. Horned Grebe: max four DH 2 Jan. Red-necked Grebe: two BH 5 Dec; two DH 29 Feb, apparently wintering. Double-crested Cormorant: one Bird I Pier, Buffalo, 9 Dec; one ChL 24-29 Dec; one DH 1-5 Jan; one Olcott 3 Jan; no Feb reports. Great Blue Heron: max 26 Grand I 16 Jan, many other records wintering lake plains; one Quaker Run, ASP, 17 Jan. Tundra Swan: max 75 Mayville, ChL 22 Dec; 12 DH 10 Jan, three other reports Jan, none Feb. Mute Swan: one Buffalo area during period. Snow Goose: one DH 10-13 Jan. Canada Goose: max 1200 INWR 16, 31 Jan; 230 DH 22 Jan. Wood Duck: one Cassadaga 2, 9 Jan, 1 Feb; few winter records. Green-winged Teal: one BH 1 Jan; two Kiantone 23 Jan; three Wheatfield, NIAG, 24 Jan, unusual winter. N. Pintail: three Eden 26 Dec; max nine NF 12 Jan; arr four DH 26 Feb. N. Shoveler: seven DH 6 Jan, rare in winter. Canvasback: max 2500 Beaver I SP, NR; 300 Mayville, ChL, 22 Dec. Redhead: max 50 Mayville, ChL,

22 Dec; 18 DH 19 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: max four DH 1 Jan. Surf Scoter: one La Salle Park, Buffalo, 6 Dec; one DH 6 Jan. White-winged Scoter: six reports NR (BOS) and DH 1-31 Jan, max four. Hooded Merganser: max 150 Mayville, ChL, 22 Dec; eight reports NR (BOS) and DH 1-31 Jan. Com. Merganser: throughout period S Tier Cos. Ruddy Duck: one Mayville, ChL, 22 Dec; one Pt Gratiot, L. Erie, 2 Jan; one NR 10 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: *intro*; arr Arkwright Twn, CHAU, 29 Feb. Bald Eagle: one INWR 5 Dec and two ad, one imm on 13 Dec; one (Canadian) Jan and no Feb reports. N. Harrier: Dec max eight Shelby Twn, ORLE, 14 Dec; Jan max ten Porter, NIAG, 24 Jan, nine other Jan reports (BOS); nine reports from lake plain Feb (BOS). N. Goshawk: one Ripley Twn, CHAU, 28 Feb, migrant? Red-shouldered Hawk: *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: Dec max six Shadigee, NIAG, 18 Dec; 12 reports Jan (BOS); max 18 CHAU 6 Feb include seven in one field Charlotte Twn. Am. Coot: max 78 DH 2 Jan. Killdeer: singles NF and Goat I, apparently wintering; one Quaker Run, ASP, 17 Jan; arr Elma 20 Feb. Purple Sandpiper: up to four NF 1-29 Jan. **Dunlin:** *intro*. Com. Snipe: five Gerry Twn, CHAU, 23 Jan, unusual in winter. Red Phalarope: one DH and Canadaway Creek NS 23-28 Dec. Little Gull: max seven mouth NR 4 Feb. **Com. Black-headed Gull:** one mouth NR 27 Dec. Bonaparte's Gull: max 18,500 mouth Niag. R. 19 Dec; 1,200 DH 2 Jan. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one Adam Beck Hydro, NR, 2 Jan. Glaucous Gull: arr mouth NR 6 Dec. Great Black-backed Gull: max 150 Grand I, NR.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: seven reports lake plains 1-31 Dec (BOS); five Buffalo waterfront 3 Jan; one Charlotte Twn, CHAU, 21 Feb, unusual away from lakes. Long-eared Owl: three Porter Twn, NIAG, 3 Jan; one INWR 10 Jan; max seven Cambria Twn, NIAG, 7 Feb. Short-eared Owl: arr nine Shelby Twn, ORLE, 7 Dec; two lake plain reports Jan and six Feb (BOS). Belted Kingfisher: max ten Genesee R, SOCBC; eight JCBC; two FCBC; one Allegheny R, SBCBC. Red-headed Woodpecker: one Ft Niagara SP 17 Jan, 7 Feb; two 19 Feb; one Beaver I SP 18 Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: five Dec reports nine reports Jan: six reports Feb, mainly from lake plain, Genesee and Allegheny Valleys and CHAU, increasing and attending feeders (BOS). N. Flicker: singles Salamanca 24 Jan, Grand I 18 Feb, unusual winter.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: E. Phoebe: *intro* (L&DV *vide* RS). Horned Lark: 50 Sheldon Twn, WYOM, 15 Jan; ten NIAG and ORLE 31 Jan; 14 Kiantone 23 Jan; max 60 Cambria Twn, NIAG, 14 & 27 Feb. Black-capped Chickadee: max/participant 22 SOCBC, 20 SBCBC, 20 JCBC; 11 FCBC. Tufted Titmouse: one to four Amity L, ALLE, through period; two Pomfret, CHAU, Dec-Jan; two Vandalia, CATT, through period; max 12 SOCBC; six SBCBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: singles Pomfret Twn, CHAU, 1-31 Jan; Lewiston Twn, NIAG, 2,20 Jan; Porter Twn, NIAG 21 Feb, scarce. Carolina Wren: one Buckhorn I SP 19 Dec; two Portland Twn, CHAU, 16 Jan; one Beaver Meadow Wildlife Refuge, WYOM, 20 Feb; two Vandalia, CATT, through period. Winter Wren: one Bay State, ASP, 7 Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglet: 11 JCBC, seven SOCBC, seven FCBC, six SBCBC. E. Bluebird: max four Amity L, ALLE, 28 Dec, one 31 Jan, two 18 Feb (VP), unprecedented wintering on Allegheny Plateau. Am. Robin: three TFNP 17 Jan; six reports BOS region 7-29 Feb, scarce compared to 1986-87. Gray Catbird: one Jamestown 8 Jan, died next day (spm). N. Mockingbird: five reports BOS region Dec, three reports Jan. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: max 75 Lake Erie SP 3 Jan, five other reports BOS 1-31 Jan; 26 Dunkirk 20 Feb. N. Shrike: three reports Dec, six reports Jan, two reports Feb (BOS).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Bemus Pt, ChL, 5 Jan, only report. Pine Warbler: one at feeder Wilson 3 Jan; one Newfane Twn, NIAG, 24 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 100 Salamanca, feeding on Wild Grape *Vitis riparia* fruits (TB); slightly up on four S Tier CBC's. Rufous-sided Towhee: one at feeder Ellery, CHAU, Jan-Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: near normal numbers four So. Tier CBC's. Chipping Sparrow: one at feeder Williamsville, ERIE, 9 Jan. Field Sparrow: one Pomfret

Twn, CHAU, 14 Jan, unusual in winter. Fox Sparrow: one Jamestown 1-4 Dec. Swamp Sparrow: max three INWR 14 Dec; one Tonawanda Twn, ERIE, 3 Jan, one TFNP 17 Jan, unusual in winter. White-crowned Sparrow: one at feeder Kennedy 3-24 Dec; two Lewiston Twn, NIAG, 17 Jan; one Yates Twn, ORLE, 29 Feb. Lapland Longspur: max three Cambria Twn, NIAG, 27 Feb. Snow Bunting: max 350 Barre Twn, ORLE, several other large flocks lake plain and open areas Allegheny Plateau. Red-winged Blackbird: up to 30 Weatfield Twn, NIAG, 7-31 Jan. E. Meadowlark: four Porter, NIAG, 12 Dec; one Hamburg 30 Jan, unusual in winter. Rusty Blackbird: ten Burgeson NS 22 Dec and two on 23 Jan; seven Fentonville, CHAU, 31 Dec., 1-31 Jan; unusual in winter. Com. Redpoll: two Ellicott, CHAU, 2 Jan, one Beaver Meadow Wildlife Refuge, WYOM, 28 Jan, only reports. Pine Siskin: max 75 Amity L, ALLE, Dec, 65 Jan, 75 Feb; many other reports wooded Allegheny Plateau. Evening Grosbeak: max 200 Beaver Meadow Wildlife Refuge 16 Jan and Wales, ERIE, Dec; many other reports throughout Region.

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REGION 2 – GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

Overall, the winter proved to be a rather mild one. Temperatures on the whole were above average, precipitation was down and there was a scarcity of major storms. This provided us with a diverse set of reports. December was very mild with an average of 32.6°, eclipsing the average by a rather healthy 3.6°. Precipitation came mostly as rain and was totaled at 1.98", 0.61" below average. January's average temperature was 1.4° above normal at an even 25°. Precipitation was 1.58" below normal with a total of 0.72. Although the warm and dry trend had continued, January was characterized by cold spells and intermittent thaws. The month's end even brought some near record high temperatures. February broke the trend only slightly. The average temperature was 23.7°, which was a paltry 0.7° below normal. Snowfall was above average, but the total precipitation was just barely below normal at 2.18".

This weather was favorable for some birds. There was much open water in the Region. This helped during the Christmas Bird counts. Total snow cover was down. Thus, there were good feeding opportunities for field hunting raptors as well as the ground feeding birds. The lack of major storms made life easier all around. With such conditions you might expect the highlights of the season to be very good. Yet, as is usually the case, there were some very definite minuses to go along with the pluses.

Loons and grebes seemed to be pretty plentiful. Red-throated Loon in January is notable for the Region. Pied-billed Grebes were found in good numbers. While waterfowl were in general more notable for their variety, some species were found in noticeably above normal numbers. These included Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter and Common Merganser. A real highlight was a record number of Wood Ducks with a high count of 51 in Perinton on 24 Jan. Turkey Vultures also appeared in record numbers with a record maximum of 15 individuals sighted 24 Feb in Letchworth State Park and other observations that month.

Vultures only recently have begun to winter in the area, so this is a trend we'll need to watch. Rough-legged Hawks were found in good numbers along the lakeshore and in other areas within the region. Ring-necked Pheasant seemed to show a very slight increase. The mildness of the season should have helped. Of special interest was a record late Semipalmated Plover reported from Braddock Bay in December. Owls were very evident this year. Snowy Owls were found in numerous locations. Some spots had two or three individuals. Short-eared Owls were quite numerous. Both species benefited from the high vole populations that also were evident.

There were some positives from wintering passerines also. Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper showed above average numbers. Most spots with suitable habitat had these species in residence. The traditional wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers were located at Mendon Ponds and in Spencerport. There were a fair number of crossbill reports, but only a few individuals were involved. The only winter finch present in numbers was Pine Siskin.

Negatives for the Region this season included some waterfowl, such as Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead, which appeared in below average numbers. The only raptor that seemed to be down in numbers was Northern Goshawk; sightings were few and far between. Gull totals were noticeably down. Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were difficult to find, at best. Numbers of gulls seemed to pick up towards the end of the season and could be found in larger concentrations at Braddock Bay and Irondequoit Bay.

Winter passerines exhibited some negative trends during the season. Wintering thrushes were few in number. Eastern Bluebird and American Robin were more scarce than in recent winters. Hermit Thrushes were very low in number. Gray Catbird, a frequent half-hardy species, went unreported for the season. Bohemian Waxwing was reported in December but not afterwards. Northern Shrikes, except for one brief rush, were more difficult to find than usual. Regular wintering sparrows also were down in numbers. Most notable was the lack of White-throated Sparrows. Some winters Lapland Longspurs and Snow buntings border on plentiful, but this was not the case this year. It was generally an off winter for blackbirds. Winter finches generally were few in number. The best example was Pine Grosbeak. The only report was from December.

The hint of an early migration occurred during February. The late month warm spell brought in a few blackbirds, waterfowl, crows and Horned Larks, and hawks began to trickle through as well. This certainly was just a hint of things to come.

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Abbreviations: BB-Braddock Bay; CL-Conesus Lake; DE-Durand-Eastman Park and adjacent Lake Ontario waters; HB-Hamlin Beach State Park; IB-Irondequoit Bay; LSP-Letchworth State Park; MP-Mendon Ponds; SB-Sodus Bay; SeP-Seneca Park; WL-West Lakeshore.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one WL 12 Dec, one IB 17-31 Jan, unusual in winter. Pied-billed Grebe: one Charlotte 12 Jan. Red-necked Grebe: last IB 20 Dec. Double-crested Cormorant: one Parma 17 Jan, only report. Great Blue Heron: 18 SeP 16 Jan, excellent winter total. Tundra Swan: imm Greece 4 Jan, unusual. Mute Swan: one Henrietta 15-20 Dec, new location; two IB 1-28 Feb, now year round residents. Wood Duck: record max 51 Penfield 24 Jan, where 29-51 seen at various times during the winter. Am. Black Duck: max 300 CL 3 Jan, good winter total. Mallard: max 1400 Genesee Co Wildlife Preserve 10 Jan, very high count for single location. Blue-winged Teal: one Greece 20 Dec, very unusual. Redhead: max 2000 Canandaigua L 25 Feb, good total. King Eider: one Pt Breeze 1 Jan (R & SS); imm male Forest Lawn 17 Jan; this species has been regular in recent years. Black Scoter: max three SB 17 Jan, good in winter. Ruddy Duck: one Charlotte 23 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: *intro*. Osprey: singles Crusoe L 6 Dec, Genesee 28 Dec, very late. N. Harrier: max 30 WL ? Jan, 20-30 seen throughout the month. N. Goshawk: one WL 17 Feb, one Retsof 29 Feb, only reports, both possible migrants. Rough-legged Hawk: max 15 Retsof 14 Feb. Peregrine Falcon: one Rochester 20 Dec (F & RD), one Rochester 8 Jan (RS). **Gyr Falcon**: white morph Parma 14 Jan (B&JK, NYSARC). Virginia Rail: two-four MP 1-31 Jan; one Brighton 11 Jan, 29 Feb is a new wintering location. Com. Moorhen: one BB 1-19 Dec, very late. Semipalmated Plover: one BB 1-9 Dec (SC, MD & DT), very late. Killdeer: one Brockport 9 Jan, usual wintering location. Little Gull: max two DE 12 Jan, scarce. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad Rochester 16 Dec (RS). Iceland Gull: one BB 4 Dec, one SB 27 Dec, one IB 3 Jan, poor showing. Glaucous Gull: one WL 1-31 Dec, one Greece 9 Jan, two IB 31 Jan, paltry season total.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: at least 14 birds reported. Long-eared Owl: two Hemlock Lake 27 Dec, unusual in winter. Short-eared Owl: max 82 T Hamlin 3 Jan (RD), excellent total; widespread throughout the Region. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one CL 27 Dec; one SeP 12,17 Jan; one Greece 14 Feb, more reports than usual.

FLYCATCHER-STARLINGS: Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 30 DE 9 Jan, excellent winter total. Carolina Wren: one Penfield 1-31 Dec, new location. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Warsaw 19 Dec, one CL 27 Dec and 1 Jan. E. Bluebird: max 11 Mendon 27 Feb, scarce. Hermit Thrush: one SeP 12 Jan, poor showing this season. Bohemian Waxwing: one Greece 20 Dec (KG,ROs), only report. N. Shrike: max six WL 16 Jan, only good day, much more scattered throughout the rest of the season.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: two Gates 20 Dec, one Brockport 9 Jan, both new winter locations. Com. Yellowthroat: two CL 27 Dec, traditional wintering location.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Field Sparrow: three Palmyra 1-28 Feb, good winter total. Vesper Sparrow: one Scottsville 14 Feb, very unusual winter report, report on file with Genesee Ornithological Society. White-crowned Sparrow: max two HB 17 Jan. E. Meadowlark: max five Savannah 3 Jan, very good total. Rusty Blackbird: max seven Rochester 12 Jan. Red Crossbill: one HB 9 Jan. White-winged Crossbill: one HB 9 Jan. Am. Goldfinch: max 125 LSP 24 Feb.

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester, NY 14612

REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

C. K. MELIN

December 1987 was warmer than normal with average precipitation. The only outbreak of really cold air occurred on the final two days of the month. There was up to 7 inches of snowfall from 3 through 5 Dec, followed by mild weather and clear skies through 11 Dec, when a low pressure system from the West brought up to 5 inches of snow to the Region. By 18 Dec, another 4 to 7 inches of snow had fallen, following a major storm from the Midwest. The first day of winter, 22 Dec, was warmer than normal, and temperatures remained above normal until the last few days of December, when a coastal storm brought approximately 10 inches of snow to the Region. Following this storm, temperatures fell to below zero throughout the Region and the rest of New York State and remained low through 5 Jan, when an Arctic cold front dropped up to 4 inches of snow in the Finger Lakes. Temperatures during this period were 10 to 15° colder than normal and blustery winds made for bitterly cold wind chills. After 10 Jan, and another 5 inches of new snow, temperatures moderated for a few days. Warmer temperatures in the 30's and 40's prevailed from 16 to 24 Jan. A second thaw from 28-31 Jan brought highs in the 40's to 50's. February 1988 began with this warm weather, followed by a heavy snowfall, very cold air and high pressure on 4 Feb. A second winter storm from 11-13 Feb brought several inches of snow. A period of warm weather followed from 14 to 19 Feb, with temperatures in the 30's and 40's. During this period, Brown Creepers were heard singing in Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary. On 19 Feb, temperatures dropped again, snow fell, and the weather remained seasonably cold temperatures with occasional snowfall for the remainder of February.

At Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, maximum waterfowl numbers all occurred in December, before cold weather froze the pools for the remainder of the season. However, many of these waterfowl species subsequently were reported throughout the Season on Cayuga Lake, although in less spectacular numbers. Maximum numbers for the Region at Montezuma were: 20 Tundra Swan, 20 Snow Goose, 48,000 Canada Goose, 100 Wood Duck, 87,000 Mallard, 300 Pintail, 35,000 Gadwall, 560 Hooded Merganser, and 1,000 Common Merganser. It was estimated that up to 50,000 Canada Geese wintered on Cayuga Lake this season. Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, and Horned Grebe were reported regularly all Season on Cayuga Lake. There were no reports of Green-winged Teal, Brant, Ruddy Duck, and all three scoter species.

Early in January, Montezuma NWR manager Gene Hocutt announced the successful relocation of the Bald Eagle nest at the Refuge. The nest had been the summer home of the adult eagles which successfully produced two eaglets in 1987 and was one of only two successful nests in New York State in 1987. It was the first successful Bald Eagle nesting at Montezuma since 1956. The relocation was taken to prevent the almost certain loss of the nest, which was precariously perched some 50 feet up in a rotten, dead elm tree that was virtually certain to fall during winter storms, or lost while eggs or young eaglets were in the nest. Experts generally agree that second-year nesting success for relatively inexperienced birds is enhanced if the preceding year's nest is still intact. Bald

Eagles use the same nest year after year, adding new sticks to the nest each spring. To relocate this nest, a 75-foot pole was installed by NYSEG employees only 6 feet away from the nest and nest tree. A "cradle" was positioned and bolted into place at the 50-foot level of the pole. The supporting limbs of the nest were cut loose, and the nest was secured to the new platform. Three adult Bald Eagles were present at MNWR all Season, and were observed sitting on the newly relocated nest, as well as on the Osprey nest at the Refuge. Bald Eagles were also reported outside the Refuge in the vicinity of the N.Y.S. Barge Canal.

Temperatures were seasonably cold for Christmas Counts in the Region, but a lack of substantial snow cover made many birds harder to find, as they were not concentrated at feeding stations. However, there were many highlights worth noting. At southern locations in the Region, there were record-breaking high counts of Wild Turkey: 65 in Watkins Glen, 38 in Ithaca, and 58 in Elmira. Also counted in record high numbers throughout the Region were Mourning Dove (max 648 at Elmira) and Great Black-backed Gull (max 47 at Ithaca). Other Christmas Bird Count highs for the Region included 47 Gadwall and 1,800 Redhead at Auburn, and 206 Greater Scaup and 16 Fish Crow at Ithaca. There were many Christmas Count reports of relatively uncommon winter residents: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird. Cedar Waxwing was very scarce, and observers noted a corresponding lack of appropriate food crops.

Short-eared Owls were present all Season at Hayt's Corners near Ovid. They had previously wintered in this area, so the site was carefully checked each weekend after early November 1987. The Short-eared Owls were first sighted 6 Dec, when 5 were counted one mile due west of Hayt's Corners. Short-eared Owls were reported from this location each weekend until 10 Jan, when birders discovered them flying out of their roosting site, a partially collapsed abandoned house. For the remainder of the Season, up to a dozen Short-eared Owls were present at or near this site, and were observed roosting, foraging, vocalizing, and driving off Northern Harriers in the area. Other raptors present at Hayt's Corners were Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and American Kestrel.

There were many species widely reported all Season throughout the Region. These included: Great Blue Heron, American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-Tailed, and Rough-legged Hawks, Great Horned Owl, and Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers. Observers commented that Red-bellied Woodpeckers seemed more abundant than usual. There were approximately a dozen locations in the Region for Carolina Wren. In agricultural areas, Horned Larks and Snow Buntings were present all Season. Pine Siskins were abundant this Season at feeding stations in Elmira, Ithaca, and Watkins Glen, but were not present elsewhere in the Region. Other winter irruptives — Pine Grosbeak, crossbills, and redpolls — were very scarce or absent. Small numbers of Icterids, including Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird, were present all season. Highlights for the Winter Season were: **Ovenbird**, **Gray Catbird**, and **Chipping Sparrow**.

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Abbreviations: ACBC-Auburn Christmas Count; CH-Connecticut Hill Game Management Area; CL-Cayuga Lake; ECBC-Elmira Christmas Count; ICBC-Ithaca Christmas Count; MNWR-Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; NYSEG-New York State Electric & Gas Corporation; SL-Seneca Lake; WGCBC-Watkins Glen Christmas Count.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: two Aurora 13 Dec. Double-crested Cormorant: one Sheldrake 17 Jan. Oldsquaw: only report Aurora 28 Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: N. Goshawk: one Burdett 2 Jan, one CH 24 Jan. Red-shouldered Hawk: single report, ad Mt. Pleasant Ithaca 28 Feb. Am. Coot: many hundreds SL, CL all season. Killdeer: one MNWR 1 Jan, one Big Flats 17 Jan. Am. Woodcock: single report Ithaca 28 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: last two Stewart Park 2 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: abundant throughout Region; max 1120 MNWR 1 Dec. Herring Gull: present throughout Region; max 38 MNWR 8 Dec. Iceland Gull: one Stewart Park 9 Jan, 1 Feb, 29 Feb. Glaucous Gull: none.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: reported only from s part of the Region; max 14 WGCBC; one roosting in a Wood Duck nest box Pine City 28 Feb. N. Flicker: present but scarce all Season throughout Region.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Am. Crow: present and increasing throughout the Region; max 1684 ICBC, many hundreds all season in the vicinity of a traditional roost Mt. Pleasant Ithaca. Com. Raven: no reports. Red-breasted Nuthatch: present in small numbers all Season. Winter Wren: two reports; one SL 2 Jan, two Aurora 24 Jan. **Gray Catbird:** one W. Dryden Rd. 4-14 Jan, one Sheldon Rd, Ithaca 6 Jan. N. Shrike: two reports; one ECBC, one Ledyard 23-31 Jan.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Ovenbird:** one in a hedge on S Plain St, Ithaca, 7 Dec (Sibley); only previous winter record, Dec 1951. Yellow-rumped Warbler: single report Aurora 31 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: not as abundant as usual; max 138 ECC. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Aurora 11 Jan. Song Sparrow: present in small numbers throughout the Region. White-crowned Sparrow: ad Dryden 11 Dec; also two ICBC, one ACBC. Lapland Longspur: only report seven ICBC.

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REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

JAY G. LEHMAN

December at Binghamton was quite warm with the average mean temperature for the month 3.4° above normal. In 19 of the first 28 days of the month mean temperatures ranged from 3 to 18° above the norm. For the second consecutive winter there was no white Christmas, but the month's total of 18.9 inches of snow gave area residents a taste of winter. On 29 Dec the weather turned bitterly cold, windy, and snowy and remained arctic-like well into January. January was slightly colder than usual with an average mean temperature 0.7° below normal and had 17.4 inches of snow, two inches below average. The first half of January

was cold and a record low of 2°F was set at Binghamton on 6 Jan. After mid month there were about the same number of days colder and warmer than normal. A record high of 53°F was set on 31 Jan. The average mean temperature for February was 0.7° above the norm. The month started warm; 50°F on 1 Feb matched the previous record high. Twelve days of below normal mean temperatures followed, and the month ended with more warm days than cold ones. There were 27.3 inches of snow, two inches below average.

Observers reported that this winter was rather open, mild and with less ice on the rivers, even though weather summaries for the period indicate that only December was exceptionally mild. Otherwise, temperatures and snowfall were nearly average for the period. However, from late January to mid February there were two complete thaws removing snow cover, while only partial thaws are normal for that period. Waterfowl reports seem to reflect these conditions. The list of fourteen species is the second best in ten years. While Common Mergansers were low on the Binghamton and Owego CBC's in December, they were reported in higher numbers later when the weather was colder. Pied-billed Grebe was seen on the Binghamton CBC for the first time since 1975 and only the fourth time in ten years for the period. The first ever Wood Duck on the Sherburne CBC is only the third winter report for the Region in ten years. Open rivers in February yielded a good assortment of diving ducks, such as Red-breasted Merganser, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck and Greater Scaup, which were reported for the second, fourth, fifth, second, and third times, respectively, in ten years.

The large number of Wild Turkeys reported, especially in Chenango County, apparently is a consequence of two consecutive mild winters as well as improved habitat for this species due to changing land use. Ring-necked Pheasant reports were also higher than normal, suggesting better winter survival of stocked birds.

There were the usual reports of accipiters taking birds at feeding stations. A Starling (Yea, Sharpie!) and a Field Sparrow (Oh no!) were reported as Sharp-shinned Hawk prey by Mildred Clark and Don Weber, respectively. Mourning Doves seem to be particularly susceptible, since at least one is reported as accipiter prey every winter season. One "bit the dust" to a Cooper's Hawk at Harriet Marsi's feeder near Vestal in February. Goshawk reports were unusually frequent in December, perhaps a continuation of the movement reported in the fall. Two on the Oneonta CBC is the second highest report since 1975. Northern Harrier reports were high but Rough-legged Hawk numbers were somewhat low on Christmas Bird Counts due to the mild conditions. However, two to five reports/month in January and February seemed normal. Many bird clubs in the Region reported on their normal winter pilgrimages to Cannonsville Reservoir and both branches of the Delaware River to see Bald Eagles. Consequently, good numbers were reported again this winter.

The mild, open winter greatly affected reports of passerines as indicated in CBC data. For most counts in the region the amount of effort measured by party hours has increased only slightly since 1975; therefore, count numbers will be used in this discussion instead of numbers per party hour. Counts of some southern range expansion species were higher than normal. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were present at two feeders through the period in Chenango County where they are unusual. Tufted Titmice totals on the Owego and Binghamton

CBC's were the highest and third highest, respectively, since 1975. Eight Carolina Wrens on the Binghamton CBC is the highest number since 1975. One was also present in Norwich at Crystal Wright's feeder until the hard cold arrived in late December, but there were still reports from four southern tier locations through the period. Northern Mockingbirds were seen in the northern part of the Region. One was reported for the first time on the Sherburne CBC, one stayed through the period in Norwich at Don Windsor's feeder, and one was reported by Chad Covey in New Berlin in February.

Half hardy species were reported in higher numbers. Northern Flickers were reported in February. Red-winged Blackbirds were seen on the Oneonta CBC in the highest number since 1975 and reappeared rather early in February. Common Grackles appeared on the Cortland CBC in the fifth highest count since 1975, and a few stayed at other sites into January. Eastern Meadowlark was reported on the Cortland CBC for only the second time since 1975. Brown-headed Cowbirds, which are seen fairly frequently on Christmas Bird Counts, stayed at scattered locations through the period or returned early in February. A Rusty Blackbird was seen on the Sherburne CBC for only the second time. Purple Finches were reported in high numbers on CBC's and several stayed through January and February. Robins were seen on more than the usual number of CBC's and arrived at two locations in February.

Several unusual species appeared during the mild December. The most unusual species was the **Common Raven** seen on the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count. This bird had been hanging around a dairy farm and feeding on the afterbirth from calving. Chenango Bird Club members have searched since the count but have not found it again. Two **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** appeared at two different feeders for the Cortland CBC. This is the first report since 1979. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported on the Binghamton and Owego CBC's for the first time since 1975. Fox Sparrows were seen on the Binghamton and Cortland CBC's for the first time since 1975. A Field Sparrow which stayed into January, a Brown Thrasher and a White-crowned Sparrow in January, as well as a well described Chipping Sparrow in mid February are all apparently part of the same trend. Despite the mild December, Cedar Waxwing numbers were very low, the maximum only seven, on Christmas Bird Counts. They also did not appear in late February as they sometimes do. Apparently, the berry crop was very poor.

Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos were down on most CBC's and were not very common though the rest of the period. Perhaps they never got here in their usual numbers due to the open winter. However, Snow Bunting numbers on the Oneonta and Sherburne CBC's were the highest since 1975 and 1978, respectively. The open conditions early probably provided good conditions for these ground feeders. Northern Shrikes also appeared in good numbers, which suggests that conditions north of us were less favorable.

The winter finch flight was poor except for large numbers of Pine Siskins. No Pine Grosbeaks and few crossbills were reported. Some Redpolls appeared on CBC's but apparently passed through and did not arrive back here until mid February. Apparently, these were north-bound migrants. Goldfinches were down on several CBC's and were not very common through the period. On early CBC's Evening Grosbeak numbers were fairly high in the northern parts of the region but low in the southern parts of the region. Higher numbers were reported in

the south just before the bitter cold hit the region in late December, suggesting that a late movement of Evening Grosbeaks was induced by the weather.

The species list of 82 is the fourth lowest since 1978. **Common Raven**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**, and **Chipping Sparrow** are rarities. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow are lesser rarities.

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Abbreviations: BCBC-Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; CCBC-Cortland Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; ChFrk-Chenango Forks; CRes-Cannonsville Reservoir; JCity-Johnson City; OPM-Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; OCBC-Oneonta Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; SCBC-Sherburne Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; TBC Tioga Bird Club; TCBC-Tioga (Owego) Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; WFC-Waterfowl Count, 11-17 Jan; VCent-Vestal Center.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: one BCBC; one Endwell 29 Jan (AC). Great Blue Heron: max three SCBC; last Susquehanna R between Endwell and Binghamton 13 Jan (EW). Canada Goose: mid winter max ca. 250 WFC BROO; 160/four flocks JCity 23 Feb (MP), early migrants?. Wood Duck: *intro*. Am. Black Duck: mid winter max 73 WFC. Mallard: mid winter max ca. 600 WFC. Canvasback: only one TIOG Feb (RB). Redhead: only one TIOG Feb (RB). Ring-necked Duck: only one Susquehanna R between Endwell and Binghamton 13 Jan (EW). Com. Goldeneye: mid winter max 43 Susquehanna R BROO WFC 16 17 Jan. Bufflehead: singles Binghamton 7 Feb (DO'N) & TIOG Feb (RB). Hooded Merganser: only three Susquehanna R 16 Jan (GK, BB). Com. Merganser: mid winter max 65 WFC BROO. Red-breasted Merganser: only one TIOG Feb (RB).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: one Andes 3 Dec (SC); two-three ad & two-six imm CRes 3-24 Jan. N. Harrier: one/month TIOG; max five TCBC, high. Sharp-shinned Hawk: five to six singles/month. Cooper's Hawk: one to four singles/month. N. Goshawk: singles VCent 3-13 Dec (SD) & Bowman L 24 Dec (DW), good early count. Red-tailed Hawk: winter peak 13 reports/month Jan. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Am. Kestrel: six/month Dec, three/month Jan-Feb. Ring-necked Pheasant: singles OCBC, TIOG Jan-Feb (B&EM), REEC 25 Feb (CC), high. Ruffed Grouse: no more than two/day and often missed. Wild Turkey: ca. 20 reports of 20-50/flock, widespread Dec-Feb; max 75-110/flock Greene; still increasing. Am. Coot: singles Binghamton 17-23 Feb (DO'N) & TIOG Feb (RB). Ring-billed Gull: max 100 Otsego L 5 Dec (MD); late winter max 75 Susquehanna R BROO 28 Feb (HM, FL, BB). Herring Gull: max 30 Otsego L 8 Dec (MD); three to five singles/month thereafter.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: *intro*; max 80 Delhi 17 Dec (MC), numbers decreasing through Feb. E. Screech-Owl: singles SCBC, BCBC & TIOG Dec & Jan (TBC); max two TCBC. Great Horned Owl: max 18 in seven hours owling BCBC; two to four reports/month Jan-Feb. Snowy Owl: only one Sherburne 4 Dec (BG fide MR). Barred Owl: only singles BCBC & TCBC. Belted Kingfisher: one to three reports/month. Red-bellied Woodpecker: regular reports TIOG (TBC), ChFrk (MDv), Smyrna (MR), & Oxford (JA) Dec-Feb. Downy Woodpecker: one to ten/day Dec-Jan, fewer in Feb. N. Flicker: one SCBC; max two TCBC; TIOG Feb. Pileated Woodpecker: only one to two/month, scarce.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: flocks 10 to 50 Franklin, Whitney Pt, Willet, Sherburne after 16 Feb, high. Blue Jay: 10-20/day Dec, decreasing through Feb. Am. Crow: late max 100 Laurens 16 Feb (MD). **Com. Raven:** *intro*. Black-capped Chickadee: max 35/day. Tufted Titmouse: CBC max 93; one to two regularly ten sites all season, still increasing! Red-breasted Nuthatch: four to eight reports/month. White-breasted Nuthatch: to four/day. Brown Creeper: max two, less numerous Jan-Feb. Carolina Wren: *intro*. Golden-crowned Kinglet: CBC max 46; only one to two/week Norwich Jan-Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one TCBC & two BCBC. E. Bluebird: singles TIOG Dec, VCent 4 Dec (SD) & TCBC. Am. Robin: singles TIOG Dec (AW) & Apalachin 17 Dec (P&EG); CBC max four, high; arr Delhi 20 Feb (SC). N. Mockingbird: *intro*; CBC max nine; six sites Jan-Feb, high. **Brown Thrasher:** one TIOG Jan (LD), unusual. Cedar Waxwing: *intro*. N. Shrike: max two SCBC; singles three sites Jan-Feb, last 27 Feb, high.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** *intro*. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Vestal 12 & 20 Feb (SK), unusual. Am. Tree Sparrow: max 16 Delhi 20 Dec (MC), decreasing through Feb, low. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Norwich 13 Feb (DW), unusual. Field Sparrow: one TIOG Dec-Jan (TBC). Fox Sparrow: *intro*. Song Sparrow: high; few scattered singles Jan-Feb. Swamp Sparrow: only two SCBC. White-throated Sparrow: to three/day JCity & Norwich. White-crowned Sparrow: only report TIOG Jan (AW). Dark-eyed Junco: several at five to seven sites Jan-Feb. Lapland Longspur: singles SCBC & TIOG Jan (RB). Snow Bunting: CBC max 525; flocks of 20-75 at four sites Jan-Feb, good count. Red-winged Blackbird: last four TCBC; arr Delhi 20 Feb. E. Meadowlark: *intro*. Rusty Blackbird: *intro*. Com. Grackle: max four CCBC; one TIOG Jan (LD), high. Brown-headed Cowbird: max seven Delhi & ChFrk Dec, not seen daily; singles seen once Endwell & OPM Jan; arr three Preston 13-15 Feb, high. Purple Finch: 103 total four CBC's, high; singles two sites Jan-Feb. House Finch: max 125 JCity 27-28 Feb (MP). Red Crossbill: only one SCBC. Com. Redpoll: CBC max 27; to two/day four sites from 12 Feb. Pine Siskin: many feeder reports increasing through Feb to max 60 JCity 29 Feb (JS). Am. Goldfinch: to twelve/feeder all season; max 22/day Delhi from 22 Feb (MC). Evening Grosbeak: *intro*; max 100 OPM 16 Feb (MD), somewhat low.

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REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The weather for the period was slightly warmer and drier than average. December's average temperature was 32.3°, 4.2° above normal. The average temperature for January was 23.1°, only 0.5° below the norm. February's average temperature matched the norm of 24.6°. The season recorded sub-zero temperatures on 7, 11, 14 and 15 Jan and on 5 Feb and yet birders had the rare opportunity to shed their heavy winter clothing when temperatures soared to a record high 63° on 31 Jan. Precipitation in the form of rainfall for the three month period averaged 1.87 inches, 1.02 inches below the norm. Snowfall was below normal for the first two months of the period, but February's snow accumulation remained on the ground to the end of the period with 46.1 inches.

One observer commented that she could see more birds in her backyard than

by traveling 30 to 50 miles. It was, to say the least, a very dull winter. One factor contributing to the low populations of Am. Robin, Cedar Waxwing, N. Cardinal, Am. Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and Evening Grosbeak was the total lack of berry and seed crops. For the first time in twenty years, Pine Grosbeaks failed to make an appearance in the southwestern Adirondacks. Blue Jay numbers were very low and they appeared infrequently, a possible reflection of their mass exodus in mid September.

Fortunately there were some positive highlights for this season. Pied-billed Grebe showed a small increase in numbers from the last season, when only one was reported. Although Great Blue Heron numbers were down slightly, one bird persisted along Nine Mile Creek at Holland Patent through the period. Twenty-seven species of waterfowl were reported. Increased numbers of Canada Geese remained at Howland's Island toward the end of February. Among surface-feeding ducks, Am. Black Duck and Mallard showed moderate increases in total numbers while Gadwall indicated a marked decline. Populations of most diving ducks were down with the exception of Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser. A male Barrow's Goldeneye made a one-day appearance on the Oswego R. at Fulton on 6 Feb, the first since 1985.

Eight sightings of Bald Eagle were quite encouraging after last year's one report. An albino Red-tailed Hawk was repeatedly observed near Biddlecum. A moderate incursion of Rough-legged Hawks occurred throughout the Region. White-winged gulls were very prominent, the best appearance since 1976, after last winter's dismal showing. Once again **Thayer's Gull** was found on the Oswego R. from 6 Jan to 6 Feb. Short-eared Owl set a new maximum high of 14 near Sherrill on 18 Feb with an impressive 33 birds being observed for the period.

Northern Flickers were slightly down, with only one report after 7 Jan. Scattered flocks of Horned Larks were present in good tallies on open fields in s. Oneida Co., where dairy farming has decreased in recent years. Tufted Titmouse continued its expansion with a bird coming to a feeder in n. Herkimer Co. A small number of Northern Shrikes rounded out this almost uneventful season.

A total of 116 species and one morph was reported, about average. The great rarities included Thayer's Gull and Hoary Redpoll. Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Common Raven and Boreal Chickadee were reported from the Adirondacks only.

Contributors: David Cesari, Dorothy W. Crumb, Robert L. Evans, John Hanyak, Elva Hawken, Richard W. Hildreth, Gene Huggins, Gary N. Lee, Tom Linda, Robert L. Post, Bill Purcell, Margaret S. Rusk, F.G. Scheider, Magdalena Stooks, Elba Van Dresar.

Abbreviations: Adks-Adirondacks, Oneida and Herkimer Cos; FH-Fairhaven, Cayuga Co; HIGMA-Howland's Island Game Management, Cayuga; LOL-Lake Ontario Littoral; OnonL-Onondaga Lake; SVB-Sylvan and Verona Beaches, Oneida Co.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last L Ontario 24 Jan. Com. Loon: max five Oswego H area 11-20 Dec, last there 31 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: max two LOL 6 Dec, seven reported for the Region. Horned Grebe: max 12 Nine Mile Pt 17 Jan, last three OnonL 14 Feb. Red-necked Grebe: two OnonL 22 Dec, 14-15 Feb. Double-crested Cormorant: last Oswego H 16 Jan. Great Blue Heron: 13 for the Region, *intro*. Tundra Swan: four s shore Oneida L 12 Dec-1 Jan. Snow Goose: blue morph Oswego R 7 Jan-28 Feb,

first Regional overwintering record. Green-winged Teal: four Syracuse to 31 Jan. Am. Black Duck: max 150 Otisco L 11-24 Dec; three Dart's L all winter exceptional Adks record. Mallard: max 980 9 Jan. N. Pintail: male Oswego R 10 Jan-28 Feb, only report. N. Shoveler: two Manlius 17-23 Jan, one OnonL 25 Feb. Gadwall: max nine Oswego R, LOL 6 Dec, 14 Feb. Am. Wigeon: one Fulton 15 Feb, only report. Canvasback: max 29 Oswego H 18 Feb. Redhead: max ten OnonL 16 Jan. Ring-necked Duck: four Otisco L 13 Dec, Skaneateles L 9 Jan. Greater Scaup: max 700 Oswego R 6 Feb. Lesser Scaup: max 16 LOL 17 Jan. King Eider: two females Oswego H 6 Dec-24 Jan. Oldsquaw: max 96 Oswego H 17 Jan. Black Scoter: one Oswego H 17 Jan-18 Feb, very unusual in winter. Surf Scoter: last Oswego H 20 Dec, 10 Jan. White-winged Scoter: max 14 LOL 5 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: max 220 Oswego R, L Ontario 10, 17 Jan, low. Barrow's Goldeneye: *intro*. Bufflehead: max 80 Oswego R 6 Feb. Hooded Merganser: max 36 Otisco L 24 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 1000 LOL 10 Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: max 310 LOL 6 Dec. Ruddy Duck: male Oswego H 6-20 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: ad along Moose R, Adks, 1-22 Dec, OnonL 6, 14 Feb, Fulton 14 Feb, Second Lake, Adks, 13 Feb; imms Brewerton 22 Dec, Hastings 31 Jan, and near Holland Patent. N. Harrier: max 16 on 24 Dec, 32 reports for the season. Sharp-shinned Hawk: to four/day. Cooper's Hawk: to three/day. N. Goshawk: max two, 8 reports for the season. Red-tailed Hawk: max 21/day. Rough-legged Hawk: max 9/day, 29 reports for the season, four of which were dark morphs. Am. Kestrel: max five/day, twenty-two birds reported. Ring-necked Pheasant: nine birds reported, very scarce, Wild Turkey: max 36 near Erieville. Am. Coot: max two FH 14 Dec, five reports. Killdeer: max three near Elbridge 3 Jan, 27 Feb. Bonaparte's Gull: max 110 SVB 5 Dec, last 7 Jan. Ring-billed Gull: max 5000 Oswego R & LOL 28 Feb. Herring Gull: max 2800 Oswego R & LOL 10 Jan. **Thayer's Gull**: one Oswego R 6 Jan, 6 Feb, two there 7-10 Jan. Iceland Gull: max 13 Oswego R & LOL 10 Jan. Glaucous Gull: max 10 Oswego R & LOL 6-18 Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: max 856 14 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 141 3 Jan. E. Screech-Owl: one to seven/day. Great Horned Owl: one to two/day, seven reports for the season. Snowy Owl: nine widely scattered reports. Barred Owl: five reported. Long-eared Owl: two OnonL 17 Dec, only report. Short-eared Owl: *intro*. Belted Kingfisher: to three/day. Red-bellied Woodpecker: max ten/day; one seen near Holland Patent to the end of the period. Downy Woodpecker: max 16/day. Hairy Woodpecker: to six/day. Black-backed Woodpecker: one near Third L, Adks, 17 Jan. N. Flicker: max three/day, 16 for the season, *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 207 Paris Hill uplands 24 Feb. Gray Jay: one Third L, Adks, 21 Dec. Blue Jay: max 35 on 28 Feb, very scarce. Am. Crow: max 300 on 28 Feb. Com. Raven: present at Old Forge through the winter. Black-capped Chickadee: max 62 Pumpkin Hollow & Nine Mile Creek 3 Jan. Boreal Chickadee: two Third L 21 Dec. Tufted Titmouse: to four/day, with one at a Big Moose feeder 17 Jan. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max four/day, scarce. White-breasted Nuthatch: max ten/day. Brown Creeper: max 11/day. Carolina Wren: three reports, one Camillus V 3 Jan, one near Minoa 19 Jan, one Oakwood Cem 18 Feb. Winter Wren: last 3 Jan. Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 11 Highland Forest 23 Jan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one Oneida 26 Dec, one near Elbridge 3 Jan. Hermit Thrush: last Syracuse 19 Dec. Am. Robin: max 9 Otisco L 1 Jan, 17 for season. Gray Catbird: one Syracuse 19 Dec. N. Mockingbird: max four DeWitt 19 Dec, 2 Jan. Cedar Waxwing: max 40 DeWitt 8 Feb, very scarce. N. Shrike: ten birds reported.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 48 on 27 Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: max 24/day, very scarce. Song Sparrow: to six/day, 40 reported for the season. Swamp Sparrow: max

five Clay Marsh 17 Dec, last 9 Jan. White-throated Sparrow: to four/day, scarce. White-crowned Sparrow: last Holland Patent 3 Dec. Dark-eyed Junco: max 21 Hannibal 20 Dec, scarce. Lapland Longspur: four Oxbow Rd near Canastota 7-8 Jan, five Peterborough Rd, MADI, 25 Jan. Snow Bunting: max 500 Peterborough Rd, MADI, 25 Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: max 150 24 Dec, last Dart's L, Adks, 21 Dec late for so high elevation. E. Meadowlark: last four Maltby Rd, Pulaski, 5 Dec. Rusty Blackbird: max five 17 Dec, last 20 Dec. Com. Grackle: to four/day until 17 Jan. Brown-headed Cowbird: max 31 Sangerfield 24 Feb. Purple Finch: max nine Highland Forest 23 Jan, 18 reports for the season. House Finch: max 185 14 Jan. Red Crossbill: two SVB 26 Dec, only report. White-winged Crossbill: six Limekiln, Adks, 27 Feb. Com. Redpoll: arr s ANON 23 Jan, max 220 27 Feb. Hoary Redpoll: one Clay 27 Feb, only report. Pine Siskin: arr Hastings 12 Dec, max 130 Erieville. Am. Goldfinch: max 120 Hastings 6 Feb. Evening Grosbeak: max 150 s MADI, low and infrequent elsewhere.

1065 Westmoreland Avenue, Syracuse, New York 13210

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL AND GERALD A. SMITH

This winter season was generally mild and dry, though snow and cold prevailed in mid February. December temperatures were 4-6° above normal and precipitation was an inch below normal. Temperatures ranged from the mid-50's on 9 and 10 Dec to 10-12 below zero on 30 and 3 Dec. Total snowfall ranged from 7.8 in. on Wellesley Island to 54.6 in. at Highmarket on Tug Hill. January temperature ranged from slightly below normal in Lewis Co. to 5° above normal in St. Lawrence Co., with readings running from the upper 50's on 31 Jan to about -30° on 14-15 Jan. Snowfall was scant, except in lake effect areas. Highmarket had a total of 108 inches, of which 70 fell 4 through 6 Jan. February temperatures were also above normal, ranging from highs in the upper 50's on 1 Feb to -25° a week later. A winter storm brought blizzard conditions to the snowbelt from 6 to 9 Feb and a more general storm brought snowfalls of a foot or so on 12 and 13 Feb. In the St. Lawrence Valley snowfall for the month was considerably above normal.

Winter birders found large concentrations of raptors feeding on peak vole populations. On Pt. Peninsula at the eastern end of L. Ontario, sightings of N. Harrier ran 20-40 per day; there were 80-110 Rough-legged Hawks, of both color phases, per day with a maximum of 130 in late Dec. Red-tailed Hawk counts ran 15-30 per day. Numbers of these hawks and other raptors declined with increasing snow depth in February as birds moved south or onto the islands. Less impressive, but still unusually high, numbers of Red-tails and Rough-legs were found in Robert Moses State Park. Diurnal owl numbers also were above average. Snowy Owl sightings between Cape Vincent and Pt. Peninsula averaged 3-6 per day with a maximum of 12 in mid January; two Snowys were seen near Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area in Canton, and singles were reported from Hawkins Pt. and elsewhere throughout the period. A **Great Gray**

Owl was seen by Bob Cerwonka on Hatch Rd., Potsdam, from 15 to 17 Dec and in the same spot by Norbie Ackerman on 3 March was it there all winter?! Sightings of Short-eared Owl were frequent east of Lake Ontario, running 3-6 per day with a peak of 30 at Pt. Peninsula from 20 Dec to 2 Jan!

Winter finches were mixed. Com. Redpoll was up but usually outnumbered 10:1 by Siskins, though a flock of 50 was reported at a feeder. Pine Siskin was unusually abundant. Lee Chamberlaine reported 40 per day in Henderson and Peter O'Shea had 100 in Cranberry Lake. There were **NO** reports of Pine Grosbeak or either crossbill.

The moderate winter yielded an interesting assortment of half-hardy species. There were two N. Flicker in Massena 24-31 Jan, and 1-2 per day on the Pt. Peninsula. G. Smith found 5-10 Robin on the Pt. Peninsula through the winter. Crowell had a Brown Thrasher at his feeder in Pierrepont after 3 Jan; and Marilyn Badger had a N. Mockingbird until 2 Jan in Louisville, where she also had a Yellow-rumped Warbler (no date) and a N. Oriole keeping company with Evening Grosbeaks until 11 Jan. Com. Grackle was reported from Henderson on 5 Dec and from the Pt. Peninsula on 2 Jan. Ten Red-winged Blackbird, ten Brown-headed Cowbird and one Meadowlark were all seen on the Pt. Peninsula on 26 Dec.

With regard to species whose range is expanding into the Region, in addition to the N. Mockingbird noted above, Lee Henderson reports Red-bellied Woodpecker through the period in Henderson, where he also had a pair of Tufted Titmouse. There were two unconfirmed sightings of Titmice from Canton. Crowell enjoyed as many as two male and three female N. Cardinal — a family? — in Pierrepont after 17 Dec. Numbers of House Finch, at 3 to 10 per day, almost equaled Purple Finch in Massena.

Evening Grosbeaks lacking black pigment were reported from both Morley and Parishville. Norbie Ackerman described the latter bird, which was there for most of the winter, as being "lemon yellow with snow-white wings and tail."

Wintering rare and endangered species included Com. Loon, Bald Eagle, N. Harrier, Short-eared Owl, and Com. Raven. Can't Peter O'Shea turn up a Spruce Grouse in his trappings through southern St. Lawrence Co.? If Barrow's Goldeneye and Thayer's Gull are almost regular at Moses-Saunders Dam, then the only rarity was the Great Gray Owl cited above. A total of 81 species was reported, including 15 waterfowl, 6 gulls, 7 hawks, 6 owls and 37 passerines.

It is good to have Bruce Di Labio's regular coverage of the St. Lawrence River between the Cornwall Bridge and Wilson Hill. The GM Central Foundry dump site and alleged discharge from the Reynolds Metal plant make this important wintering area a hotspot for PCB's and other toxic substances. Like the Native Americans on the adjoining St. Regis Mohawk Reservation, birds don't vote and need our voice in regional environmental issues.

Contributors: Norbert Ackerman, Marilyn Badger, Rick Capuso, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Robert Cerwonka, Bruce Di Labio, John Green, and Gerry Smith.

Abbreviations: HPt-Hawkin's Pt.; MSD-Moses-Saunders Dam; PR-Perch River WMA; PtP-Pt Peninsula; RMSP-Robert Moses State Park; SLR-St. Lawrence River.

Contributors: Norbert Ackerman, Marilyn Badger, Rick Capuso, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Robert Cerwonka, Bruce Di Labio, John Green, and Gerry Smith.

Abbreviations: HPt-Hawkin's Pt.; MSD-Moses-Saunders Dam; PR-Perch River WMA; PtP-Pt Peninsula; RMSP-Robert Moses State Park; SLR-St. Lawrence River.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Polly's Gut and one MSD 7 Dec, late! Canada Goose: wintering numbers increasing, 2500 in Henderson 25 Dec; 45 HPt 7 Dec. Am. Black Duck: max 35 MSD 24 Jan. Canvasback: male MSD 24 Jan and 25 Feb (BDiL). Ring-necked Duck: male MSD 25 Feb, unusual. Greater Scaup: max 70 MSD 24 Jan. Lesser Scaup: two pair MSD 24 Jan (BDiL). Oldsquaw: two MSD 7 Dec; 200 Pt Penn 26 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: max 250 MSD 24 Jan. Barrow's Goldeneye: max six (two pairs ad, ad male) downstream of MSD 25 Feb (BDiL). Hooded Merganser: female MSD, male downstream 24 Jan. Com. Merganser: max 3500 MSD 7 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: six to ten SLR mid Dec to mid Feb; imm PtP all of Jan (GAS). N. Harrier: *intro*. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one killed in Henderson pursuing birds at feeder into window. Cooper's Hawk: one Henderson chasing Mourning Doves and House Finches at feeder; one Canton 19 Dec. N. Goshawk: none! Red-tailed Hawk: *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Gray Partridge: 12 RMSP 11 Feb. Wild Turkey: 48 Alexandria 28 Dec; flocks of 100 near Gouverneur; tracks near Cranberry Lake and Seevey's Corners, Colton. Ring-billed Gull: max 75 MSD 7 Dec. Herring Gull: max 150 MSD 7 Dec. **Thayer's Gull**: one Basic I MSD 15 Feb (BDiL). Iceland Gull: three MSD 7 Dec; 26 to 32 from 24 Jan to 25 Feb. Glaucous Gull: one MSD 24 Jan, max 14 on 25 Feb. Great Black-backed Gull: max 350 MSD 15 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: "wintering everywhere, even on Tug Hill" (LBC). Snowy Owl: *intro*. **Great Gray Owl**: *intro*. Long-eared Owl: max 12 PtP in Jan (RC); one HPt 15 Jan. N. Saw-whet Owl: two roosting in spruce, one found dead Massena Pt 24 Jan. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*. N. Flicker: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Horned Lark: three Pierrepont 7 Feb unusually early. Blue Jay: 15-20 at many feeders. Am. Crow: present all winter; 100 Canton 17 Dec. Com. Raven: present in same areas of s STLA as during breeding season, max four at Seevey's Corners (PO'S). Tufted Titmouse: *intro*. Am. Robin: *intro*. Brown Thrasher: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: max 10 MSD 10 Feb, scarce. Bohemian Waxwing: 35 Pierrepont 14 Dec. N. Shrike: one to two per day on PtP (GAS); three in five days SLR, Massena (BDiL); ten reports.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: *intro*. Am. Tree Sparrow: numbers up, but not high. Song Sparrow: one MSD 24 Jan. White-throated Sparrow: one Pierrepont 29 Dec. Dark-eyed Junco: a few overwintering, max three Massena 15 Jan. Snow Bunting: small numbers, max 200 Canton 2 Dec. Red-winged Blackbird: *intro*. E. Meadowlark: *intro*. Com. Grackle: *intro*. Brown-headed Cowbird: *intro*. N. Oriole: *intro*. Purple Finch: max 15 Massena 11 Jan. House Finch: *intro*. Com. Redpoll: *intro*. Pine Siskin: *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: *intro*.

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GAS-P.O. Box 498, Mexico, New York 13114

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

A partial answer to the mystery of lingering geese, an Old World duck, gulls who passed up Florida for Adirondack garbage, an early and massive incursion of siskins, and a few odd feeder birds all brightened the winter of 1987-88. Christmas Bird Count variety was great, but overall seasonal variety was poor by recent standards. Whatever one's opinion of the birdlife, it was at least a relatively easy season on both birds and residents who overwintered in the Adirondack-Champlain Region.

A light dusting of snow over much of the Region on 4 Dec was followed by 6 inches of wet snow on 15 Dec. Conditions remained good for the Christmas counts, with 2-10 inches on the ground 26-27 Dec when the Elizabethtown and Saranac Lake counts were held. The month closed cold, however, with windchills to -50°F on 29 Dec. The first half of January was 3°F colder than average, with 3.3" snowfall and 55% possible sunshine in the Champlain district, yet by the end of the month, temperatures ran about 6° milder than average. Ray Brook thermometers dropped to -17°F on 7 Jan, and the shortest ever January thaw on 13 Jan was followed by a "Siberian Express" that plunged the Tupper Lake area to -25°F the next day. Snowfall for the period was similarly light, with six inches at Plattsburgh AFB on 4 Feb and up to a foot of snow at Elizabethtown 12 Feb qualifying as the great storms of the season. A thaw on 18 Feb pushed temperatures above the freezing mark at lower elevations.

The Atlantic Flyway population of Canada Geese has increased 2 1/2-fold since 1950, and each year more geese winter farther north. Among the 1,200 Canada Geese at North West Bay, Westport, on the 19 Dec Ferrisburg, VT/NY, CBC were a few wearing colored neck collars. The numbers inscribed on them were traced for four of the marked honkers. A yellow-collared male banded in Maryland in Feb 1984 had been sighted previously in NY and NJ. A yellow-collared female banded in Maryland in Feb 1985 had turned up in DE, MD, NJ, and PA. A male marked with a yellow collar in Pennsylvania in Feb 1986 had subsequently been sighted in MD, NJ, and PA. Finally, a female banded with an orange collar in northern Quebec in late July 1986 had been previously seen as far south as NJ and PA. Along Champlain the geese feed in cornfields, sometimes persisting even after the lake had frozen, spending sunny days sitting on the ice catching the few rays.

While participating on 20 Dec in a new Vermont-New York Christmas count that includes portions of the Clinton County shoreline, Bob Hagar and Ted Mack spotted a single bird hunkered down on a small ice floe on Monty Bay. As a pair of river otters swam by, the bird got up, moved a bit, and appeared to be feeding on something. Through binoculars and 20-30x spotting scope it appeared chunky, short- and thick-necked, about brant-sized, smaller than a nearby loon and larger than a Herring Gull. The chestnut body contrasted with the creamy head and black bill, legs, and feet of a **Ruddy Shelduck**. Details have been submitted to NYSARC.

Limited open water encouraged Great Blue Herons to linger on the AuSable

River at Keeseville to 24 Dec and on the Saranac River at Saranac Lake to 27 Dec. Similarly, Belted Kingfishers rattled away along the Boquet R. at Elizabethtown to 25 Dec, at a pond near Lewis to 26 Dec, and on the Saranac R. at Saranac Lake to 27 Dec; these are extremely late dates for such inland locations. Gulls also remained inland quite late. Ring-billed Gulls were at Tupper Lake to 8 Dec and at the Westport landfill to 26 Dec, Herring Gulls were at the Inlet landfill to 10 Dec, the Westport landfill to 26 Dec, and at Saranac Lake to 27 Dec. Especially noteworthy was a count period Great Black-backed Gull at Saranac Lake. More expected were the 55 Great Black-backed Gulls along Champlain during the NYS Waterfowl Count in mid January.

Bohemian Waxwings now seem to be an annual visitant in the Champlain district with a record 79 on the 26 Dec Elizabethtown CBC and 214 inside the count circle near Wadhams the following day; others were seen there into Jan. Another northern visitor was hard to find, however. Gary Lee reported that for the first winter in at least 22 years he saw no Pine Grosbeaks near Inlet and there were few reports from elsewhere, five birds on the Saranac Lake CBC providing the seasonal maximum.

The major ornithological event of the winter was the influx of Pine Siskins. The Ferrisburg, VT/NY, CBC recorded 662 on both sides of Lake Champlain, smashing the previous 28-year high count of 110. The Elizabethtown CBC tallied 413 siskins in the Champlain Valley and eastern High Peaks, eclipsing the 15-year mark, also of 110. In the conifers of the Adirondacks, the 32-year high for this species on the Saranac Lake CBC was tripled, with a spectacular total of 1,903 Pine Siskins, counted by just ten observers. Compiler Larry Master felt that although most were observed at feeders, "A widespread synchronous northeastern hemlock mast seed crop probably [was] responsible for the influx of these birds." Other seed crops such as birch or spruce were considered poor, but niger seed consumption at feeders was remarkable.

In addition to the usual complaints of accipiters, unusual "feeder birds" included 7 Wild Turkeys being fed at Wells and 4 Gray Jays accepting crackers near an abandoned cabin at the outlet of Bear Pond (both Hamilton Co. locations). Snow Buntings visited bird feeders at Owls Head and Mountain View (Franklin Co.) and Willsboro Point (Essex Co.). A golden-colored Evening Grosbeak visited a Westport feeder for the second straight winter.

Although a near record 40 species were recorded on the Elizabethtown CBC and a 32-year record of 43 species (plus 4 count week birds) were tallied on the Saranac Lake CBC, only about 75 species were reported during the winter season. This is the lowest total in at least six years and may be attributed to a general decline in birding activity (except for CBCs and the Waterfowl Count), no data from the Plattsburgh CBC, and fewer reports from visiting birders. Banding activity near Elizabethtown was also light, with just 83 individuals of 5 species banded between 6 Dec and 13 Feb. The highlight was the repeat of a Blue Jay banded there on 17 Jan 1983 and now at least 5 1/2 years old, in a winter when jays were absent or in short supply at most feeders.

Contributors: Bartlett & Isabelle Bailey, Helen & Robert Booth, Walter Chapman, Dewey & Joan Clark, Jan Cooper, Charlicie Delehanty, Nora Ercole, Susie Frenette, Gregory Furness, Bob Gillis, Anne Hungerford, Elsbeth Johnson, Gary Lee, Theodore Mack, Gertrude MacKenzie, Robert McKinney, Shirley Meisburger, Jim Meritt, Sue

Millar, Edith Mitchell, John Parke, John Peterson, Edward Richardson, Jan Trzeciak, and all the Christmas counters.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: *intro*. Canada Goose: *intro*. N. Pintail: 1 SLCBC, 2 NYSWC unusual. Ruddy Shelduck: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: 1 Tupper L 2 Dec-6 Jan, 20 Feb (CD), ad SLCBC 27 Dec, imm Willsboro Bay 16 Jan (TM,JP), ad Wickham Marsh 26 Jan (GM,JP), subad Willsboro Bay 6 Feb, ad there 7 Feb (ER), ad Whallon's Bay 23 Feb (JPa) suggests at least five different birds, a good showing. N. Harrier: 2 Tupper L 1 Dec (CD), late. N. Goshawk: widely reported. Rough-legged Hawk: Tupper L 29 Dec an unusual location. Wild Turkey: one Cedar River Rd. in area of summer nest, *intro*. Am. Coot: Port Douglas 16 Jan (TM,JP), late. Ring-billed Gull: *intro*. Herring Gull: *intro*. Great Black-backed Gull: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rock Dove: 505 SLCBC perhaps a legacy of opening ceremonies of the XIII Winter Olympics of 1980. Belted Kingfisher: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Gray Jay: *intro*. Blue Jay: *intro*. Bohemian Waxwing: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: 15 SLCBC a new count record and suggests a viable population in the Sara-Placid region. Snow Bunting: *intro*. Pine Grosbeak: *intro*. Purple Finch: virtually absent, max 9 SLCBC. House Finch: max 53 SLCBC, a new count record and reflects populations established in some Adirondack villages. Red Crossbill: 14 ECBC, only report. White-winged Crossbill: reported from only 5 locations in flocks of no more than 10 birds. Com. Redpoll: arr Elizabethtown 26 Dec, a few among siskin flocks at feeders in Jan-Feb. Pine Siskin: *intro*. Am. Goldfinch: small numbers wintered. Evening Grosbeak: moderate numbers wintered, *intro*.

Discovery Farm, RD 1, Elizabethtown, NY 12932

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

LINDA ARMSTRONG

This winter season Region 8 was a picture postcard place. Snow covered the ground, lakes and reservoirs were frozen solidly as usual, and open water existed at only a few river locations. December was warmer than normal and the Northeast Regional Climate Center reported below normal snowfall. January was a mixture of numerous snowstorms and two brief thaws. Although overall precipitation was below normal, there were enough storms to keep us from noticing. Temperatures averaged on the cooler side even with the thaws, for there were nasty periods when frigid arctic air poured into the Region. With or without the groundhog, winter kept us company all of February with cold temperatures and many days of snow.

Bird feeders were occupied by the normal wintering species. Black-capped Chickadees cheered up even the coldest days and Northern Cardinals provided splashes of gorgeous color against the snowy backdrop. Tufted Titmice, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers kept our eyes watching as busy birds flitted about backyards. American Goldfinches and House

finches consumed their normal amounts of thistle seeds. Searching the ground underneath feeders were numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows and Mourning Doves. The only surprises this winter were the small numbers of Common Redpolls and the tremendously large number of flocks of Pine Siskins. Virtually every observer commented on the unusually high number of siskins and these numbers remained consistent throughout the season. The Region reported Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged and Red Crossbills, and Common Redpolls. And of course the Region hosted those species that visit New York State for their "fun in the sun" vacation. Flocks of Snow Buntings frequented farm areas and were joined by a few Lapland Longspurs. Snowy Owls and Rough-legged Hawks helped thin out the rodent population.

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Abbreviations: CCCBC-Catskill Coxsackie 17 Dec, ChCBC-Chatham CBC19 Dec, FPCBC-Fort Plains CBC 31 Dec, HFCBC-Hudson Falls CBC 2 Jan, JGCBC-Johnstown Gloversville CBC 2 Jan, SSCBC-Saratoga Spa State Park CBC 18 Dec, SRCBC-Southern Rensselaer County CBC 26 Dec, TrCBC-Troy CBC 2 Jan.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: single report L George 15 Dec. Horned Grebe: three L George 18 Dec sole report. Great Blue Heron: one JGCBC, two ChCBC, one Five Rivers 31 Dec. Mute Swan: max 19 CCCBC. Wood Duck: two TrCBC, one SRCBC, only reports. Green-Winged Teal: max five Galway L 6 Dec. Black Duck: numerous reports, max 604 TrCBC. Mallard: max 1130 TrCBC. N. Pintail: two reports, one Galway L 6 Dec, four CCCBC. Gadwall: sole report one TrCBC. Am. Wigeon: single report one SRCBC. Canvasback: max 1500 CCCBC. Ring-necked Duck: only report three Hudson R at Coxsackie 28 Feb. Greater Scaup: single bird Federal Dam in Troy 17 Feb. Lesser Scaup: single report one TrCBC. Com. Goldeneye: max 67 TrCBC. Bufflehead: max 37 Hague Bay 10 Jan. Hooded Merganser: max ten Hague Bay 10 Jan. Com. Merganser: max 406 Tr CBC. Red-breasted Merganser: sole report two TrCBC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: numerous sightings of three to five birds at Sacandaga Res during Jan, ad L George 8 Dec, ad and imm L George 7 Jan, one L George 17 Jan, imm ChCBC, two ad Battenkill near Cambridge during mid Feb. N. Harrier: reported in small numbers from many parts of the Region. Sharp-shinned Hawk: singles seen in many parts of the Region, often at feeders. Cooper's Hawk: singles seen Amsterdam during Jan, ChCBC, TrCBC, Greenport 9 and 17 Feb, Cambridge 4 Feb, Five Rivers 27 and 29 Feb. N. Goshawk: five singles reported, ChCBC, Livingston 26 Jan, JGCBC, TrCBC, SSCBC, latter seen taking a crow. Red-tailed Hawk: commonly seen throughout Region. Rough-legged Hawk: reported from many areas, max 20 Coxsackie Flats 28 Feb. Am. Kestrel: small numbers seen Greenport, Clarksville, Coxsackie, Fort Plain, Five Rivers, Troy, Battenville. Ruffed Grouse: reported from all CBCs. Wild Turkey: max 30 ChCBC in Stuyvesant. Am. Coot: single report two SRCBC, new to count. Killdeer: max five CCCBC. Com. Snipe: single report Palmer farm 1 Jan. Am. Woodcock: single report one TrCBC. Ring-billed Gull: seen along both Hudson and Mohawk R during entire reporting period. Herring Gull: also reported from both rivers. Iceland Gull: 2nd year bird Mohawk R in Cohoes 17 Feb (AM). Great Black-backed Gull: max 146 TrCBC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: max 138 on TrCBC. E. Screech-Owl: single individuals or small numbers reported on CCCBC, ChCBC, TrCBC, FPCBC, JGCBC and also Greenport, Clarksville, Five Rivers. Great Horned Owl: reports similar to preceding. Snowy Owl: max two JGCBC, also one Tongue Mt Rd 11 Feb. Barred Owl: five singles, JGCBC, FPCBC, Hague 24 Feb, Charleston 15 Feb, Cambridge several dates. Short-eared Owl: single report of four individuals FPCBC. N. Saw-whet Owl: sole report one Hague 21 Jan. Belted Kingfisher: single numbers reported from CCCBC, TrCBC, JGCBC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: have become winter feeder birds! pair wintered Mill Pt, T Florida; male Langley Rd, T Florida; one Ghent; male Malta. N. Flicker: max seven ChCBC, none Five Rivers is unusual. Pileated Woodpecker: few reports, two ChCBC, three FPCBC, T Florida 2 Dec and 22 Feb, Clarksville 6 Jan and Feb, Cambridge 26 Dec, Five Rivers during Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: widespread but scattered throughout the period, max 100 Coxsackie 21 Feb. Blue Jay: higher numbers in T Florida (TP) but none at LA's feeders in Clarksville for first time, smaller numbers in Schenectady (RY), low numbers at Glens Falls feeders. Com. Raven: small numbers at n parts of Region. Carolina Wren: two reports, two CCCBC, one daily at feeder Clarksville. Winter Wren: two CCCBC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: most reports from s part of Region with BC reporting higher numbers than usual. E. Bluebird: reported on CBC and from some observers but fewer birds spent the winter than did last year, max wintering at one locale four T Florida; both Clarksville and Five Rivers reported particularly infrequent sightings. Am. Robin: few in number, single birds reported from ChCBC, TrCBC, three JGCBC. N. Mockingbird: to four per day. Cedar Waxwing: max 22 JGCBC. N. Shrike: singles JGCBC, Five Rivers during Jan, Hague 12 Feb.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: single report one FPCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: max 168 FPCBC. Song Sparrow: few reports, low numbers, first singing Five Rivers 24 Feb. Swamp Sparrow: two singles ChCBC, Five Rivers 1 Jan. White-throated Sparrow: max 16 TrCBC. White-crowned Sparrow: single report two FPCBC. Lapland Longspur: single report two Coxsackie 21 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: max five FPCBC, three males thought to be migrants Bell's Pond 28 Feb. E. Meadowlark: two reports five JGCBC, 12 ChCBC. Com. Grackle: two reports one TrCBC, five Five Rivers 26 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: two reports, 67 TrCBC, one Cambridge 6 Feb. Purple Finch: few reports mostly numbering one to three birds. House Finch: most unusual report comes from Poestenskill where seldom seen. Red Crossbill: largest flock 30 Saratoga State Park 29 Feb (RH). White-winged Crossbill: few reports, only one bird heard at Jenny L. Com. Redpoll: max six JGCBC.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

HELEN C. MANSON

December was generally mild with little snow. Temperatures remained in the mid twenties to mid thirties until the end of the month, when it plunged to -4°. January was cold and snowy. Temperatures ranged from -15° in mid month to 54° on 31 Jan, giving us a slightly colder January than normal. February was cold and snowy but with fluctuating temperatures. It was slightly warmer than a year ago. The Hudson River was frozen but had many open leads as the ships keep the ice broken up in the channels. Ducks were seen throughout January and February. By February they were moving northward as the ice broke up. Bald Eagles were observed along the Hudson and many wintered at Rondout and Mongaup Reservoirs and at Iona Island.

An immature Black-crowned Night-Heron that was found huddled along the Hudson River at Beacon 28 Feb by Marion VanWagner was a surprise. Eagles and Short-eared Owls were a treat for those who took the time to go see them. An immature Gyrfalcon was found on 4 Dec with an injury to its wing not far from the area in Dutchess Co. where one wintered last year. Taken to Dr. Heinz Meng in New Paltz, it may be released if it becomes strong enough. Another flying along the Hudson River was seen from the train by Dick Guthrie on 23 Feb. No Snowy Owl was reported in the entire Region. The twelve White-winged Crossbills that paid a brief visit to a yard in Dover Plains on 18 Dec was the only report of these interesting northern birds. There was only one report of Common Redpolls and Pine Grosbeaks for the whole Region. Pine Siskins took over many feeders but Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in most areas. American Robins were scarce and many hearty Eastern Bluebirds wintered.

The winter food crop seemed fairly abundant. However, poison ivy berries were in short supply and were pretty well depleted by mid winter. Multiflora rose and Bittersweet seemed plentiful and supported the usual mockingbird population. For some reason sparrows were scarce in most areas.

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Abbreviations: BCBC-John Burroughs Natural History Society Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; OCBC-Orange County Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; SCBC-Sullivan County Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; WCBC-Waterman Bird Club Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: two Cornwall Bay 12 Dec; one Rio Res 1 Jan; one 3 Dec. Wappingers L (BM). Horned Grebe: 25 BCBC. **Great Cormorant**: two imm 9 Dec. Washington L (ET BS), imm 27 Dec. Cornwall Bay (DK), first verified report locally. Double-crested Cormorant: one 3 & 10 Dec. Poughkeepsie and New Hamburg WBC. Great Blue Heron: several throughout winter DUTC; 12 WCBC, two BCBC. Black-crowned Night-Heron: *intro*. Mute Swan: 16 Cornwall Bay 19 Dec, good numbers wintered in DUTC. Snow Goose: one OCBC, two DUTC 7 Dec, three 13-28 Dec. Brant: 84 Hudson R WBC 10 Jan. Canada Goose: wide spread, large numbers throughout Region. Wood duck: four OCBC, one DUTC 10 Jan. Am. Black Duck: 65 Rondout Res 9 Jan, 96 OCBC, 33 WCBC, 27 BCBC; good numbers throughout Region. Mallard: numerous on all CBC and good winter population. N. Pintail: four OCBC second winter record, four DUTC

10 Jan, five Sylvan L 20 Feb (HM). Gadwall: three to six Wappingers L mid Dec. Am. Wigeon: one 11 Feb (TH). Canvasback: few seen all winter, 410 OCBC. Ring-necked Duck: ten OCBC was unusual, up to 50 wintered at Sylvan L in area kept open by the Canada Geese. Greater Scaup: five New Hamburg 13 Dec (BM). Com. Goldeneye: six OCBC, one Rondout Res 2 Jan, 20 Hudson R 28 Feb, ten WBC 10 Jan. Bufflehead: 13 OCBC; one Wappingers Creek 13 & 19 Dec, three on 28 Feb; one Rondout Res 2 Jan. Hooded Merganser: four Rhinebeck 13 Dec (AJ), eight OCBC, three Rio Res 1 Jan, one WCBC, three BCBC, three DUTC 24 Feb. Com. Merganser: 259 OCBC, 125 Rondout Res 9 Jan, many on Hudson R Jan and Feb. Ruddy Duck: last five OCBC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: three all winter Pawling, one 20 Feb Galesville Airport, returned most areas 20-22 Feb. Bald Eagle: widely scattered along major rivers, DEC located 50, one or two New Hamburg and Rhinebeck along Hudson R Feb. N. Harrier: scattered females ORAN, SULL, one WCBC, one BCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: scattered reports throughout Region, many at feeders. Cooper's Hawk: one OCBC, one PUTN 13-27 Dec, 3 Jan 2 Feb (FB), three at feeders SULL Jan, one Millerton 20 Dec, four scattered throughout DUTC and WEST. N. Goshawk: ad Blue Hill SULL 10 Jan, imm window injury Roscoe 4 Jan rehabilitated and released 10 Feb, none wintered in ORAN (JPT). Red-tailed Hawk: good numbers on all CBCs. Rough-legged Hawk: only reports singles DUTC 13 Dec, 31 Dec, scarce. **Golden Eagle:** imm Rondout Res 31 Jan, two ad 6 & 7 Feb (GW). Am. Kestrel: 21 OCBC was encouraging return to normal winter numbers, six BCBC, very low DUTC. **Gyrfalcon:** *intro*. Ring-necked Pheasant: seven OCBC, higher than usual, nine WCBC, one BCBC. Ruffed Grouse: seven OCBC, four singles SULL Jan, three Feb WBC, five BCBC. Wild Turkey: excellent population SULL, ORAN and DUTC, seem to have overwintered well in ULST. Am. Coot: two wintered at Sylvan Lake. Killdeer: three or four all winter DUTC. Com. Snipe: one Salt 7 Dec, three 22 Dec Point (MVW), one Millerton 31 Jan, one BCBC. Am. Woodcock: one Claryville 3 Dec (JW). Ring-billed Gull: several thousand overwintered at Regional landfills and malls. Herring Gull: 328 BCBC, 1000 ± OCBC. Iceland Gull: imm Rondout Res 31 Jan (JO). Great Black-backed Gull: one WCBC, 100 Rhinecliff 31 Jan (AJ), 25 New Hamburg (JMK), two Kiamesha L SCBC, two BCBC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: numerous at feeders throughout Region. E. Screech-Owl: five WCBC, numbers seem down throughout Region. Great Horned Owl: reported from places in DUTC, four BCBC. Barred Owl: one killed 21 Jan as it was chased by crows and was hit by a car on Rt 17 (ML); four WCBC, one BCBC. Long-eared Owl: none. Short-eared Owl: widely noted in ORAN from Pine Island, Campbell Hall, Warwick, one 20 Dec Bashakill, up to 15 Galesville Airport (mob). N. Saw-whet Owl: one SULL 5 Dec (AJ). Belted Kingfisher: normal numbers, fewer in the bitter cold of Jan and Feb. Red-headed Woodpecker: only three during period (JPT), one Rhinebeck 13 & 19 Dec. Red-bellied Woodpecker: widespread. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: two Vassar College 13 Dec, one 25 Dec; one Norrie Point 26 Feb (MVW). Downy Woodpecker: 90 WCBC, 87 BCBC. Hairy Woodpecker: usually reported as half the number of Downy. N. Flicker: seem to have wintered well throughout the Region. Pileated Woodpecker: up to three reported each month DUTC, one Wurtsboro Hills 13 Jan, six BCBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers all season Warren Sod Fars, 200 on 27 Feb (JPT); up to 300 Red Hook; also good numbers Amenia, Verbank and Millerton. Am. Crow: 3500 WCBC, mostly at a roost near Poughkeepsie. Fish Crow: the usual two or three near Poughkeepsie. Com. Raven: four Claryville 8 Dec, then singles thereafter at various Catskill locations. Black-capped Chickadee: 749 OCBC, over 3-400 each WCBC and BCBC, lower numbers in Jan and Feb. Tufted Titmouse: seem to have wintered well at most feeders. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 43 BCBC, few most areas. Brown Creeper: reported throughout Region in fair numbers. Carolina Wren: five OCBC; two during period Middletown, encouraging (JPT); reported from the Poughkeepsie-Pleasant

Valley areas, four BCBC. Winter Wren: one Claryville 27 Jan, one Pawling 1 Jan, one 6 Feb (Bob Schultz). Golden-crowned Kinglet: good numbers all areas. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: two OCBC, one or two DUTC each month. E. Bluebird: 20 OCBC, very encouraging; wintered well in DUTC, 16 BCBC. Am. Robin: rather scarce throughout Region. Gray Catbird: one BCBC. N. Mockingbird: good numbers on all CBCs, wintered well. Cedar Waxwing: good numbers all winter. N. Shrike: singles Dover Plains 14 Dec, Hughsonville 22 Dec took a junco, Millbrook 7 Jan, Beacon 9 Jan, regularly visited yard Parksville, SULL. European Starling: thousands on CBCs.

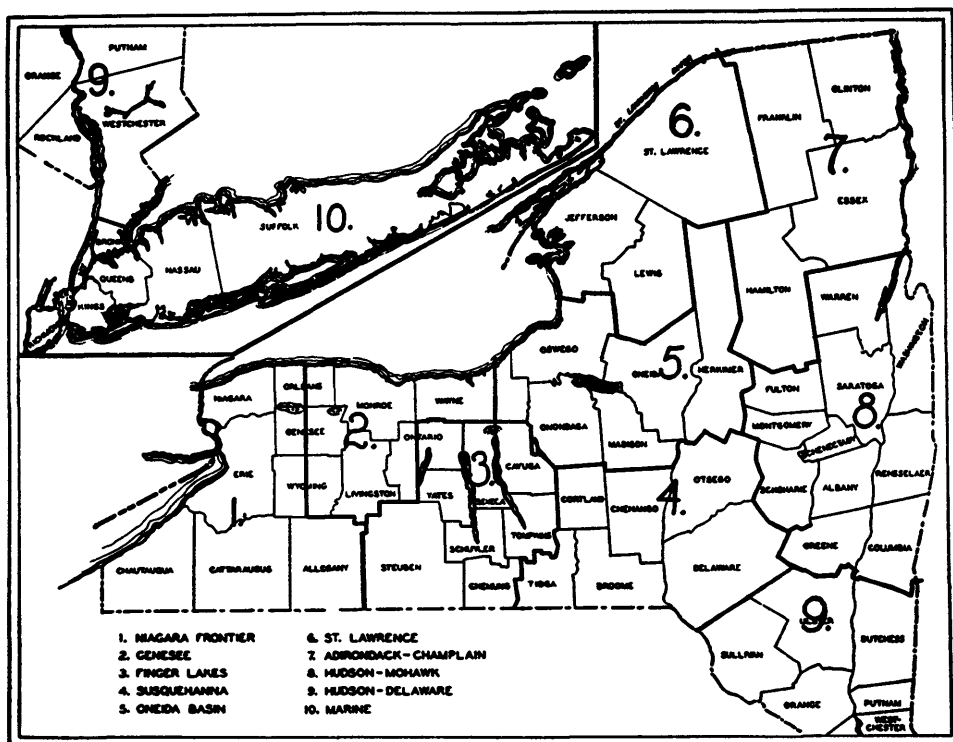
VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: five OCBC, one Red Hook month of Jan. Com. Yellowthroat: one OCBC, the second local winter record (JPT).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Indigo Bunting: one Pleasant Valley 1 Dec (MVW), very late. Am. Tree Sparrow: very low in all areas, some people had none at feeders. Field Sparrow: singles OCBC, BCBC. Vesper Sparrow: one Pleasant Valley 5 Jan (EP), first winter record in many years. Savannah Sparrow: one Red Hook 5 Feb (EP, MVW). Fox Sparrow: two BCBC. Song Sparrow: 20 WCBC, 18 BCBC, seem scarce throughout Jan and Feb. Swamp Sparrow: two BCBC. White-throated Sparrow: numbers seem down this winter but good on CBCs, 12+ at feeder PUTN (FB) about average. White-crowned Sparrow: after wintering several years in DUTC none were reported this season. Dark-eyed Junco: on 90% of Jan feeders SULL, numbers down slightly DUTC, an albino noted in Wappingers Falls had black stripe on wing. Lapland Longspur: small numbers wintered with Horned Larks Warren Sod Farms, Pine Plains and Warwick. Snow Bunting: small numbers sporadic in several localities ORAN, scarce in DUTC, 50 Red Hook 14 Feb where 500 were seen in Nov. Red-winged Blackbird: few overwintered, first migrants mid Feb many areas of DUTC, appeared 27 Feb ORAN and ULST. E. Meadowlark: few overwintered, seven Galesville Airport 20 Feb; only two DUTC, both in Feb. Rusty Blackbird: one Poughkeepsie through Dec, 12 Millbrook through Jan, two Stissing 14 Jan (TH). Com. Grackle: none wintered or were not reported; first migrants three Clove Valley 22 Feb (EP), 27 Feb ULST and ORAN. Brown-headed Cowbird: 52 OCBC, few throughout period DUTC. N. Oriole: two WCBC. Pine Grosbeak: 25 Mongaup Falls Res 3 Jan only report. Purple Finch: scattered reports throughout period, few on CBC. House Finch: continues in good numbers all areas. White-winged Crossbill: *intro*. Com. Redpoll: one Balsam L 10 Jan, 25 Forrestburg 9 Jan. Pine Siskin: widespread throughout period, at most feeders. Am. Goldfinch: good numbers, seem to have wintered well. Evening Grosbeak: good numbers in some areas of DUTC, scarce in ORAN, at 80% of feeders in SULL.

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[There is no Region 10 report because there is no Editor for that Region. Anyone interested in serving as regional Editor should contact the Editor of The Kingbird or Emanuel Levine.]

REPORTING REGIONS



For descriptions of Regions see Kingbird Vol. XXXVII No. 1, p. 9-10.

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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