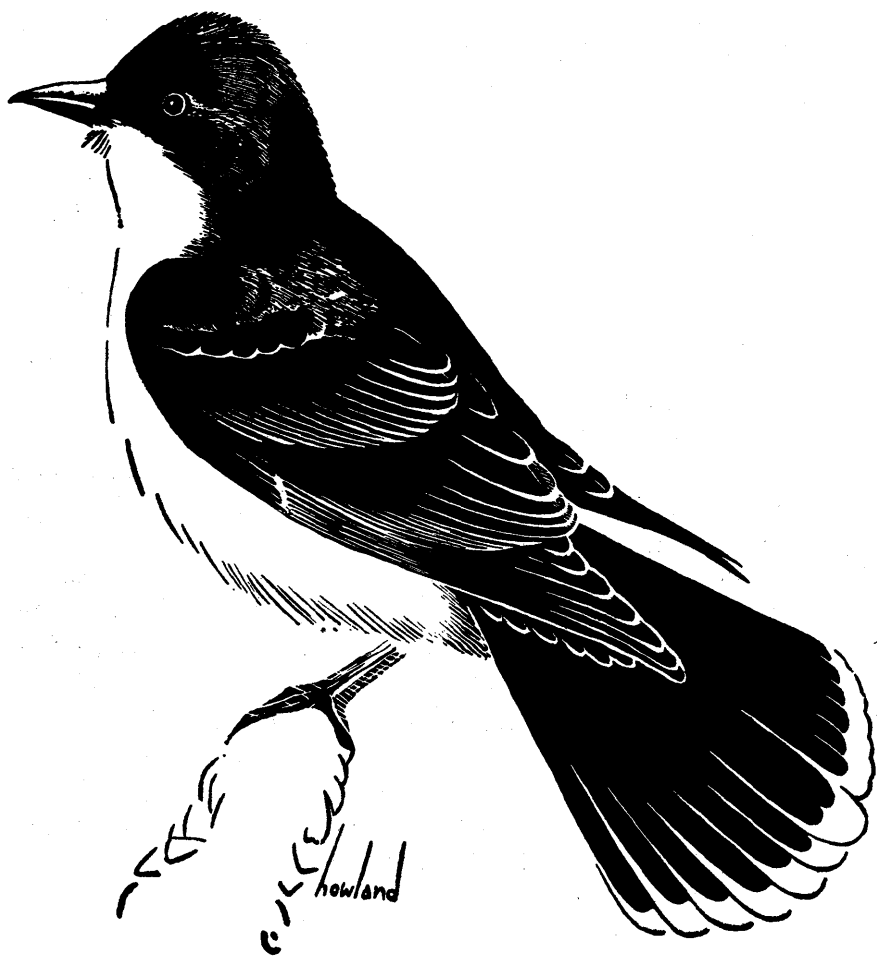


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Editor - Paul A. DeBenedictis

Highlights of the Season

Editor - Robert Spahn

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Figure 1. Nestling Yellow-crowned Night-Herons. Photograph by the authors.

FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF THE YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON IN RICHMOND COUNTY, NEW YORK CITY

ALAN D. MACCARONE, KATHARINE C. PARSON,
JOHN BRZORAD, AND HARRY JENKINS

The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*), a common breeding species in Southern states (A.O.U. 1983), has been recorded only rarely as nesting in the New York City area. The first breeding record in New York State was four pairs observed in Nassau County in 1938 (Bull 1964). There have been only two records for New York City: one pair at Jamaica Bay Refuge in Queen's County, in 1953, and two pairs at Pelham Park in Bronx County, in 1962 (Chapman 1966). We could find no more recent citations of breeding records for this species in New York City. Here we report the following: the first breeding record for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Richmond County (Staten Island); the first breeding record for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in all of New York City in 25 years, and, at nine pairs, the largest breeding population ever recorded in New York City.

Prall's Island, is located in the Arthur Kill, a narrow but important waterway separating Staten Island, New York City, and New Jersey. This 32 ha island supports approximately 300 pairs of herons, egrets, and ibises. Another 250 pairs of wading birds nest on 17 ha Shooter's Island, north of Staten Island in the Kill Van Kull (Maccarone and Parsons 1988). Both colonies formed about 10-15 years ago. More recently, a third colony was discovered breeding on Isle of Meadows, a 22 ha island located south of Prall's Island in the Arthur Kill. In 1988 we counted more than 800 breeding pairs on this island; in 1989, that number decreased to approximately 550 breeding pairs.

In 1986, we observed Yellow-crowned Night-Heron adults several times on both Prall's Island and Shooter's Island. However, we were unable to locate active nests of this species that year. During the 1987 breeding season, we located three Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests on Prall's Island. Two of these were on the extreme northern end of the island, in an area in which Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), and Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) also were nesting. Both Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests were located atop dead aspen trees (*Populus* sp.), approximately 4 m above the ground. The other nest was located on the southern end of the island, in a subcolony area also used by the other wading bird species. On Shooter's Island, seven active Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests were located in a small stand of Gray Birch (*Betula populifolia*) trees; all of these nests were

located between 4 m and 5 m above the ground. No other nests beside those of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron were found in this area. We did not monitor activity at Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests in 1987.

In 1988, we censused breeding populations on all three islands. On Shooter's Island, four or five active Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests were located in the same general area as in the previous year. These nests were placed too high in the trees to afford easy access, so we could not monitor Yellow-crowned Night-Heron reproductive success on this island. On Prall's Island, four active nests were monitored during the breeding season. Three nests were located in adjacent aspen trees on the northern end of the island. Of these, one nest fledged three young and two nests fledged one young each. The fourth nest, located at the southern end of prall's Island, also fledged three young. The lone Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nest on Isle of Meadows, the newest colony, also fledged one young in 1988. A total of eight active Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests were found among all three islands in 1989. We did not attempt to monitor activity or reproductive success.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron represents only about one percent of the total breeding population of wading birds at these three small island colonies. However, they appear to have gained a foothold in the area, having bred there for three years, and probably longer. During the 25 year period between documented breeding records of this species in New York City, the local waterways have suffered from extreme degradation, which affected water quality and prey populations. The prolonged unavailability of prey may have contributed to the absence of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. During the past four years, however, we have observed abundant, widely distributed populations of fiddler crabs (*Uca* spp.), the primary prey of the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Thus, it appears possible that Yellow-crowned Night-Heron breeding populations may grow larger as recruitment of new adults and maturation of immature birds from these colonies proceeds.

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- Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, MA 02345*

AN UNUSUAL NESTBOX NESTING OF THE WINTER WREN

ROBERT P. YUNICK

The Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) is a secretive species of the silent depths of shady, damp northern forests where its favorite nest site is in the upturned root pads of fallen trees, or in cavities found in mossy stumps and logs near ground level (Bent 1964; Bull 1974; Eaton 1912; and Forbush 1929). While it is partial to these lowlying, mostly earthen or decaying wooden cavities, I know of no reported instance in North America of it adapting to a man-made nestbox attached to a roof overhang of an occupied building to rear its young; or to build a mock nest in a flower planter attached to the roof overhang of another nearby occupied building. Both of these extraordinary events occurred in 1989 at Tawiskarou, Jenny Lake, in the Town of Corinth in northern Saratoga County, New York. The following is a chronological account of these events reported to me or witnessed by me, though not all reports were received in chronological order.

OBSERVATIONS

Jenny Lake is a small glacial bowl of about 47 ha at 376 m elevation atop the Kayaderosseras Range in the southeast corner of the Adirondack State Park. Sixty-five summer camps are situated along about one-half of its shore and in the forest contiguous to that shore. Once heavily lumbered and farmed, the area has been allowed to revert to forest primarily of Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and northern hardwoods, principally maple (*Acer* sp.). While some older growth exists, the regrowth is mostly about 40-80 years old, and is in very close proximity to these camps. Clearings in the forest, other than for narrow access roads and the camps themselves, are few and very limited in area. The outlet of Jenny Lake is a tumbling, rocky, mountain brook dropping 20 m in 0.65 km to feed Efner Lake, before becoming part of the Hudson River drainage via Great Sacandaga Lake. This outlet brook typifies those mystical places that Bent (1964) and Eaton (1912) so eloquently attribute to the nesting of this secretive forest mite.

C. W. Huntley, a camp owner who has birded the area for about 25 years, told me he has heard Winter Wren and Louisiana Waterthrush

(*Seiurus motacilla*) sing along this brook but, though suspected, nesting there was never confirmed. At his camp about 200 m north of this brook, he discovered nearly 20 years ago a Winter Wren nest on a ledge of his back porch, and a nearby mock nest suspended on the branch tip of a White Pine. The porch nest contained 4 young. The adult, presumably the female, was killed by a cat in early July just before the young were prepared to fledge, and efforts to raise the orphaned young failed.

About 50 m north of the Huntley camp there is a 7-8 m wide cut in the forest that extends into the forest about 120 m from the lake. It serves as drainage for a wet, low area in the forest. In late Jan 1986, a severe coastal storm brought heavy snow and wind to the area, toppling 6 or more Eastern Hemlocks into this forest cut, creating the impenetrable tangle of branches and upturned root pads in a damp setting so favorable to the Winter Wren. In May 1987, C. W. Huntley and I repeatedly saw and heard a male Winter Wren in this area. Nesting was strongly suspected but not confirmed. On 26 July 1987 I heard the male singing at my camp, located about 275 m north of the suspected nesting area. It was the last time and only time that summer that I heard the bird sing away from the immediate, suspected nesting site in the forest cut. On that same day about 100 m further away, I saw a second Winter Wren; and experienced occasional sightings of 1-3 wrens there in August and September.

In 1988, a male Winter Wren again appeared at the damp forest cut, and from May to July filled the forest with song. His presence and behavior again strongly suggested breeding, but no nest was sought or found. In autumn 1988, the downed hemlocks were cleared and the area returned to its earlier status of an open slash in the mature forest. No wren appeared at the forest cut in 1989.

However, on 4 July 1989 while I was fishing at the lake outlet, I heard some unfamiliar vocalizations in dense alder cover (*Alnus* sp.) at the lake outlet dam. I located the source and saw an adult Winter Wren feeding a wing-fluttering juvenile that had a yellow, fleshy gape. This location was 280 m south of the previously suspected site in the forest cut, and the feeding behavior suggested that the wren nested near the outlet brook.

On about 3-4 July, a wren (later identified as a male Winter Wren when I learned of this on 22 July) began appearing at the camp of Merrylea and Donald Trawin. Their camp is situated about 310 m north of the outlet, and 20 m from the terminus of the previously referred to

forest cut. On 10 July this bird was seen by the Trawins visiting a roof-hanging planter containing several white *Impatiens* plants. The Trawins discovered it was building a nest atop the soil among the bases of the plant stems. During my visit of 22 July, the forest rang with the song of a nearby Winter Wren, and the now completed nest matched that described for the species by Bent (1964) and others. It was a domed structure composed of very fine, dead hemlock twigs, and green moss. Most sources mention spruce and fir twigs, not hemlock. It measured 11 cm high and 11-12 cm in diameter. The entrance hole was 2.2 x 2.5 cm in diameter, centered 6.4 cm above the base. The nest was empty, and at no time during the summer was it known to contain eggs or young. I photographed it on 23 July.

The planter which held the nest was 23 cm in top diameter and 13 cm high. The *Impatiens* plants were about 30 cm high. The top of the planter was 2.5 m above ground, hanging from the camp roof overhang that was 3.1 m above ground. The area under the roof was a screened porch and beneath the overhang was a hedge of trimmed hemlock 2 m high .

Some notes on the behavior of the male recorded 26 July by the Trawins are as follows:

- 1404 - singing nearby, entered nest and remained there for 3 min.
- 1420 - singing nearby, entered for 5 min, singing resumed as the bird flew out.
- 1440 - singing nearby, entered for 5 min, some shaking of plant leaves. Flew to camp roof to continue singing.
- 1455 - singing, entered nest for one min, leaves shook, flew out and sang on roof, then flew to ground.
- 1530 - singing in distance.
- 1544 - entered nest for 2.5 min, emerged dropping something off the edge of the planter, reentered for 30 sec, then flew 3 ft away to roof gutter and sang for 4 min, entered and left nest quickly, then off into hemlocks for more singing.

About 120 m northeast of the Trawin camp is the camp of Margaret and Samuel (Bucky) Cozine. On 27 August, Bucky told me he thought he had a Winter Wren nesting in a nestbox on his camp roof overhang. I arrived at 1600 and we watched from inside the camp. At 1620, a Winter Wren, presumed to be the female, appeared and spent 10-15 sec feeding young at the box entrance. There was no doubt about the bird's identity. Its tiny size, rich brown back, distinct buffy line over the eye, and very stubby tail clearly distinguished it from the larger, gray-brown House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), which nests occasionally at Jenny Lake.

We took down the nestbox and pried it open to photograph and band the 2 young. They had 2 well opened tracts of rich brown feathers on the back, brown feathered heads topped with a fluffy bloom of medium to dark gray down, and broad, not yet fully pointed bills with fleshy, bright yellow gapes. The bill of the larger bird had begun to show signs of becoming pointed. The larger bird had a wing chord of 26.0 mm and had feathering protruding about 1 mm beyond the primary sheaths. The other bird had a wing chord of 24.5 mm, and feathering was just emerging from the primary sheaths.

The nest was composed of the same very fine hemlock branch tips and green moss as was the Trawin nest. One twig that I removed was 7.5 cm. The nest completely and compactly filled the inside of the box. Two flight feathers of a Winter Wren were found in the nest along with some Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) body feathers, and fine material resembling grass. The box containing the nest was a hollowed hemlock log measuring 15-16 cm outside diameter, 9-10 cm inside diameter and 15.5 cm high. It had flat bottom and top covers, and an open peaked roof over the top cover. The nestbox entrance diameter was 3.2 cm, centered 9.5 cm above the bottom of the box. Nesting material filled the bottom 1.8 cm of the entrance hole, making the entryway through which the wrens travelled 1.4 x 3.2 cm. The nestbox was hung from a rafter of the roof overhang such that the entrance hole was 2.1 m above ground, 38 cm from the side of the camp and 32 cm beneath the roof overhang. I photographed the box, the nest, and the young.

While at Cozine's camp on 2 Sep, I observed an adult several times feeding young at the entrance. At 1410 that day, I checked the nest with my finger and felt the 2 young inside. As I removed my finger from the nest, the young bolted from it and fluttered weakly to the ground 5-7 m away. Both were retrieved and replaced, and the adult was seen to feed them twice more with no apparent concern before I left. The larger bird now had a wing chord of 38 mm, the primaries having grown 12 mm in 6 days.

At 1030 on 3 Sep, I went to take more photographs of the camp setting. When I reexamined the nest, it was empty and cold. While there, I heard and saw an adult nearby. Early on 5 Sep the Cozines told me they saw one young back in the box and one on the box, both being fed by an adult. At 1125 on that day, I checked the box and both young were inside, but again bolted from the box when I removed my finger. This time they flew strongly, compared to 2 days earlier, and could not be retrieved. On the morning of 5 Sep the Cozines saw both young back

in the box being fed at the entrance. There were no observations made on 6-7 Sep. They saw them there again late on 8 Sep. I checked the box at 1030 on 9 Sep and found it empty, as did the Cozines on 10 Sep and I on 11 September, when observations ceased. The late evening sighting of the young in the box on 8 Sep was their last sighting there, and their presumed departure on 9 Sep represented the last of 6 days of intermittent use of the nest site.

The Cozine nest was collected and given to the New York State Museum at Albany. It bears accession number NYSM 8001. Color transparencies of the juveniles, and the Trawin and Cozine nests and camp settings were also placed on file at the Museum.

DISCUSSION

While this type of nesting behavior at the Cozine and Trawin camps appears unpublished for this species in North America, it is not without precedent in Europe and Great Britain. Dement'ev and Gladkov (1968) describe the traditional lowlying forest breeding locations in the Soviet Union, usually not more than 2-3 m above ground, but as high as 5 m in spruce trees, and make no mention of nestbox use. However, Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977) cite a Soviet reference that claims the wrens "make considerable use of nestboxes" in Russian spruce forests only where natural nest sites are scarce. Cramp (1988) and Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977) portray a much more varied selection of nest sites in western Europe and Great Britain, ranging from ground level up to 10 m, and including but not dependent on buildings and other human artifacts or artificial sites. Some of the nests the latter authors personally studied were in or near gardens in British suburbs, away from the more typical forest habitat. Cramp (1988) refers to a British study in which 5% of 170 nest sites occurred in a box or basket. Two out of 13 forest situated nestboxes intended for several species of tits (Paridae) at Batsford, England, in 1986 were occupied by Wrens (Sells, 1987). Mead (pers. comm.), using records of the British Trust for Ornithology, characterizes the use of nestboxes by Wrens in Great Britain as "uncommon, but certainly not rare," and adds that the use of previously used Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nests in barns and outbuildings is fairly common. In the Tring area, he has encountered Wren nests in nestboxes at the rate of one every 2-3 years among 500-600 boxes examined, and in the Wales and Hereford area at 2-3 per year among 1100 boxes examined.

Bent (1964) describes most North American nest sites as on or near the ground. Eighteen out of 35 described nests were located in upturned roots of fallen trees and 7 were in or under rotten stumps. Among the others was one in a woodpecker hole and one in an unoccupied hut. Elevated nests were up to 1.5-2.4 m above ground, and those on branch tips up to 3 m above ground. No use of nestboxes is mentioned. The Nest Card Program at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology contains 27 records of Winter Wren nests, three of which involved man-made structures. A 1971 record from Vilas County, Wisconsin, involved nesting in an "old rusty stove" 1 m above ground in a hemlock-maple forest at an elevation of 567 m. Two young were seen to fledge from the nest on 5 Aug in the presence of the parents. In a Balsam Fir-spruce forest near a bog in Oneida County, Wisconsin, at an elevation of 457 m, a nest was completed by 1 July 1975 on a "back eave under porch of tool house" located 8 ft above ground. By 10 July the nest, which may have been a mock nest, was believed abandoned. Competition from nearby Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) was presumed to cause abandonment. Then on 24 July the male reappeared at the nest singing "loudly and continuously." On 21 Aug at least 2 young appeared at the nest hole, and one adult on 25 Aug. On 29 Aug, the fledged young were seen nearby for the first and last time. On 4 Sep when the nest was removed, it contained one dead young.

A 1981 nest in Pacific County, Washington was located in an air vent on a house, 2.4 m above ground, in a suburban area 1.5 m above sea level. Searching for a site was first recorded on 27 Mar, building on 5 Apr, visits in May and June with feeding last recorded on 28 June and a "quiet" nest on 30 June. When the vent was cleaned on 2 Aug, two nests were found. This nesting is difficult to interpret. The time span of observed activity and the finding of 2 nests suggest two possible nestings, or one nest and a mock nest. The 12-week period from building on 5 April to presumed fledging 28-30 June is difficult to explain.

The Huntley porchledge nest referred to here is unusual and draws its closest North American parallel in the loghut nest described in Bent (1964) and the Oneida County, Wisconsin and Pacific County, Washington, nests in the Cornell records. All of these are more in keeping with the occurrence of nests in British suburban gardens described by Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977).

Assuming no eggs or nestlings were discarded or destroyed, or died before the box was opened, this brood of 2 is unusually small. Bull

(1974) reports clutches of 4-6 (n=14) in New York; Bent (1964) reports 4-7; and Cramp (1988) reports a mean of 5.6 (n=1115) in Great Britain (range normally 5-8, but 3-9 known) with only 4% of these clutches having 2-3 eggs. Only one out of 90 Dutch nests held only 2 eggs, and the smallest of 44 Polish nests was 4 eggs.

Bull (1974) reports egg dates of 22 May to 7 July, with a second brood 29 July, and fledging 15 June to 16 Aug while Eaton (1912) notes possible second brood egg dates in the Adirondack Mountains of 16-25 and 29 July. Forbush (1929) indicates dates of 20 May to 23 July in New Hampshire and 20 May to 8 Aug in Maine. This Jenny Lake nest represents a New York State record late fledging date of 3 Sep. The continued use of the nest by the nestlings for 6 days until 9 Sep is consistent with observations in Dement'ev and Gladkov (1968) and Armstrong and Whitehouse (1977) though not mentioned in North America. The latter authors cite examples of 4 and 17 days nest use after fledging. The 3 Sep fledging date, using an average nestling period of 17 days and incubation period of 16 days (Cramp 1988; Dement'ev and Gladkov, 1969; and Armstrong and Whitehouse, 1977), translates back to a last egg date of 1 Aug, only 3 days later than the late egg date reported by Bull (1974) and Eaton(1912).

While I cannot be certain that the wren that tended the nest at Cozine's camp was the same wren I saw feeding a juvenile at the lake outlet, the distance from the confirmed second nest location to suspected first location was about 430 m. Cramp (1988) indicates that females move an average of about 200 m between successive nestings.

The apparent lack of reported North American Winter Wren nest locations in proximity to human habitation compared to such nests in Great Britain can perhaps be attributed to the following. New York State nesting is geographically limited and for the most part is concentrated in the Adirondack and Catskill Mountains at elevations above 305 m (Bull, 1974; and Bonney, 1988), where human population is sparse. In contrast, Cramp (1988) describes the British distribution as follows: "The most abundant and widely distributed bird species in British woodlands, both in summer and winter. One of the 3 most widespread species in Britain, and one of the most adaptable, found in almost every habitat from seashore to highest mountain boulder-fields." This description is certainly not fitting its status in New York, and given the denser British human population, and the Wren's abundance and adaptability, it may for these reasons exhibit different nest site selection behavior. The literature on the subject for the 2 races

appears to differ substantially, and nestbox nesting of this species in North America appears never to have been reported based on the data bases I have searched.

Acknowledgments

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OVERWINTERING OF THE GREAT BLUE HERON AT COLLINS LAKE, SCHENECTADY CO., NEW YORK

CARL J. GEORGE AND ANNE MOORE

Frequent and regular sightings of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) during both night and day have been made at Collins Lake, Scotia, Schenectady Co., New York, for the winter months of 1988-1989. Review of the literature suggests that these observations merit further attention. DeKay (1844) does not report this species as overwintering in New York State; Eaton (1910) makes the generalized remark that, "This is the hardiest of all our herons and is occasionally seen in midwinter both on the coast and in the interior about the open water of springs and streams." Forbush (1929) comments: "From August until mid-November the birds are passing on their southward migration. The November flight (which in New England occurs mainly along shore) takes with it about all the remaining herons except occasional stragglers, a few of which may remain through the winter, though some such are starved and frozen before spring." Recent reviews of the species (Palmer 1962, pp. 391-403; Bull 1974, pp. 72-73; Hancock and Kushlan 1984, pp. 50-54) indicate that its overwintering range is generally south of the Tri-City Region of New York State. Regardless, occasional Great Blue Herons are reported here during the winter. Christmas Bird Counts conducted by members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club have tallied 12 herons during the past 13 years (1976-1; 1980-2; 1982-2; 1983-1; 1985-4; 1986-2). To the best of our knowledge, however, specific site accounts of *prolonged* winter (and nocturnal) residency for the species are lacking for upstate New York and this region.

DESCRIPTION OF COLLINS LAKE

Collins Lake (lat. 42° 49' 36" N, long. 73° 57' 35" W) is a man-modified kettle hole and oxbow basin 55 acres in extent. The maximum depth is 9 m. The lake is spring-fed along the northern and western shores. These springs produce a band of perennially open water up to 10 m wide. The lake drains eastwards through Collins Creek for a distance of about 1 km to the Mohawk River. A long, narrow island, about 244 m (800 feet) in east-west extent and 30 m (100 feet) average width, follows the long axis of the lake.

METHODS

Observations at the lake were made once or twice daily for a duration of 30 to 90 minutes on most days of the one year study period. Morning observations were made from 0700 to 1000 hours and afternoon-evening observations occurred from 1800 to 2100 hours, depending upon times of sunrise and sunset. Binoculars (Swift 8 x 50) and a spotting scope (Bushnell Spacemaster II 15-45x) were used regularly. Vantage points at the eastern, southern and western sides of the lake provided coverage of the full lake perimeter and all shores were routinely and systematically searched for the presence of Great Blue Herons. Street and commercial lights of the surrounding village and the light gathering capabilities of the optical equipment often allowed observations well after sunset. A 'standard sighting' as used here refers to the greatest number of birds seen each day.

The lake was divided into 9 sections (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW, creek) to record place of sighting and behavioral events of the observed herons. The number of birds sighted during each observation period was recorded; the maximum number of sightings for each day was totaled by week for the 53 weeks of the observation year; and the number of days per month with observations was also tallied. Air and water temperature, cloud cover, wind velocity, visibility, and remarks on the flora and other fauna were collected at the times of inspection. Additional meteorological data was obtained from a private observatory operated by Mr. Philip Falconer, professional meteorologist, located 4.4 km southeast of the lake.

RESULTS

The maximum number of total standard sightings (37) occurred during the seventeenth week (Nov. 20-26, 1988) when four to five (different) herons were seen each day (Fig. 1). These numbers were 3.5 times greater than those obtained during the weeks of the prior spring, summer and fall. The number of sightings continued at relatively high levels through mid March 1989 and then fell to less than five per week. Great Blue Herons were seen on 29 of the 31 days of December. The lowest number of incidences took place in May when a bird or birds were seen on only 1 of the 31 days of the month (Fig. 2).

During the months of December through March, when the lake was more or less covered with ice, herons were seen in the spring-warmed

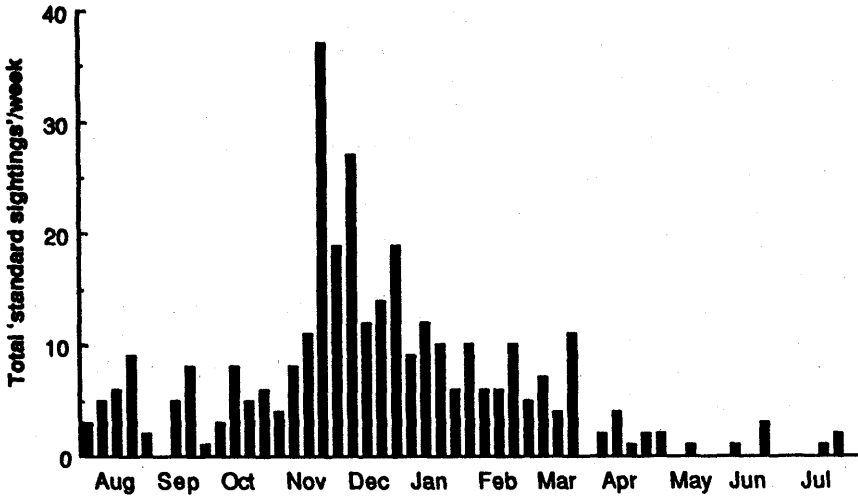


Figure 1. Total 'standard sightings' per week for the Great Blue Heron at Collins Lake for the period 7/31/88 through the week of 7/30/89.

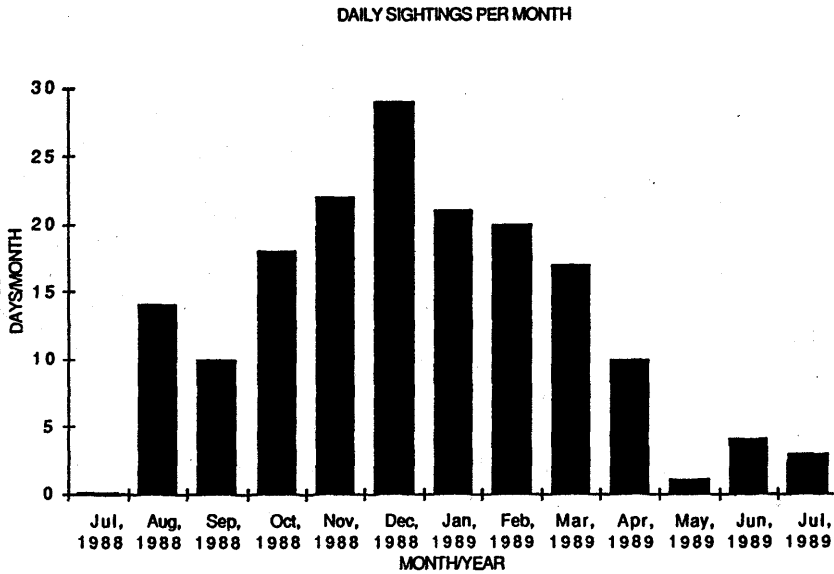


Figure 2. Total 'standard sightings' by month for the Great Blue Heron at Collins Lake for the period of 7/1/88 through 7/31/89.

band of open water along the northern edge of the lake and in the tail race of the small outlet dam. Temperatures at 15 springs along the northern edge of the lake, were measured on 20 Jan 1989. They averaged 7.6°C (45.7°F) and ranged from 6.5-8.5°C (43.7-47.3°F). The herons rarely engaged in fishing and usually stood in the water to depths of 30 cm with necks withdrawn. On mornings following especially cold nights (temperatures to -43.1°C or -20°F) dense clouds of mist drifted about the birds, and their plumage along with the surrounding surfaces, was covered with hoarfrost.

Observations during the evening after sunset commonly revealed herons arriving from the east either to perch on stumps and other woody debris at the east end of the island or to move directly to the northern edge of the lake. Two or three birds were often seen within three to five meters of one another. An effort was made to define age (mature vs. immature) status of the birds and to recognize individuals. However, the dull winter plumage, mist formation over the warmer spring water, falling snow and the large sighting distances did not allow reliable generalizations other than that all or most of the birds were immatures. One distinctively darker bird was frequently seen suggesting that at least one of the several birds seen was the same individual.

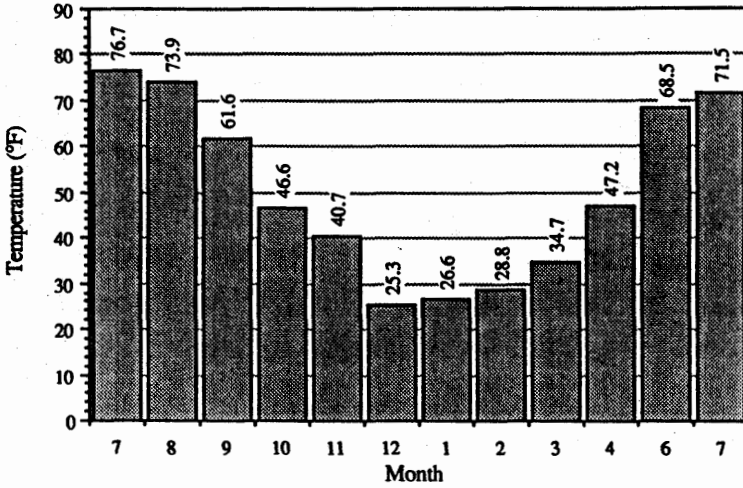
On several occasions birds were seen holding their wings in a forward and partially upturned position. This posture was not consistently directed toward other birds. However, on the three occasions (twice during the winter and once during a warm August afternoon) when a panting bird was seen, the posture was directed toward the sun. Thermoregulation may thus not be a fully satisfactory explanation because the panting bird would not have directed the wings toward the sun if cooling was required; the drying of plumage also may be involved.

On 20 January 1989, a clutter of feathers of a Great Blue Heron was seen on shore in the northwestern sector of the lake. A den of red foxes was located near the site and two foxes frequently were seen in the area. Death thus may have been due to predation. Instances of the herons being frozen into the ice were never observed.

DISCUSSION

The data gathered indicate that Collins Lake, Town of Glenville, Schenectady Co., was the site of overwintering and overnight roosting of

Monthly Average Temperatures, July 1988-July 1989



Eight Year Mean Monthly Temperature, °F in the City of Schenectady
July 1980-June 1988

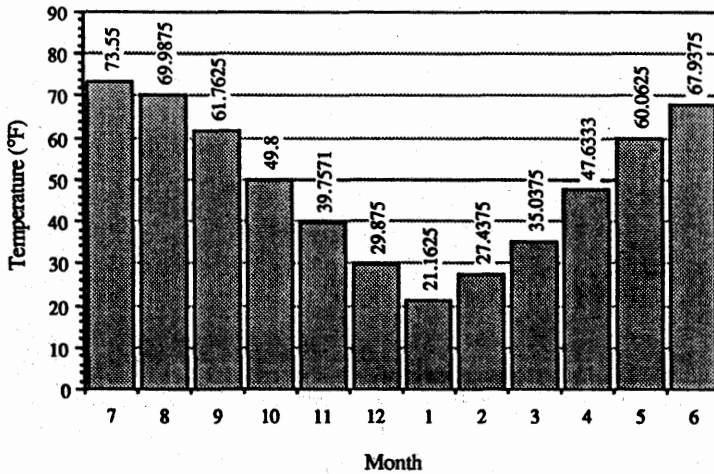
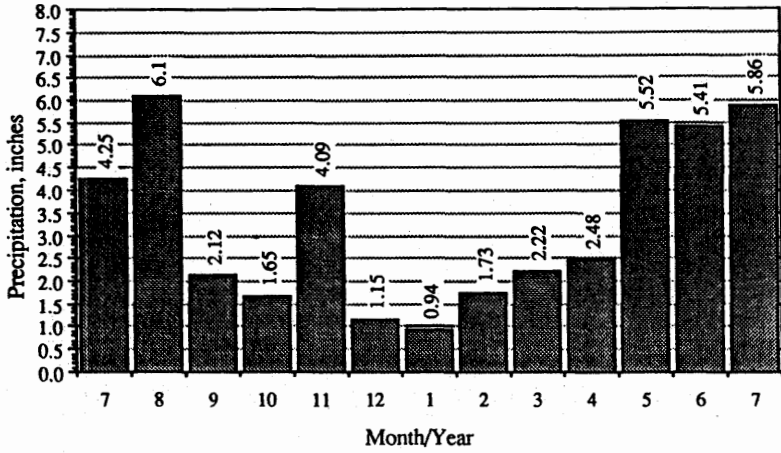


Figure 3. Comparison of temperatures for the study period with the eight year prior reference period; data collected in Schenectady 4.4 km southeast of Collins Lake.

Total Monthly Precipitation, July 1988-July 1989



Eight Year Mean Monthly Precipitation, in inches, for City of Schenectady
July 1980-June 1988

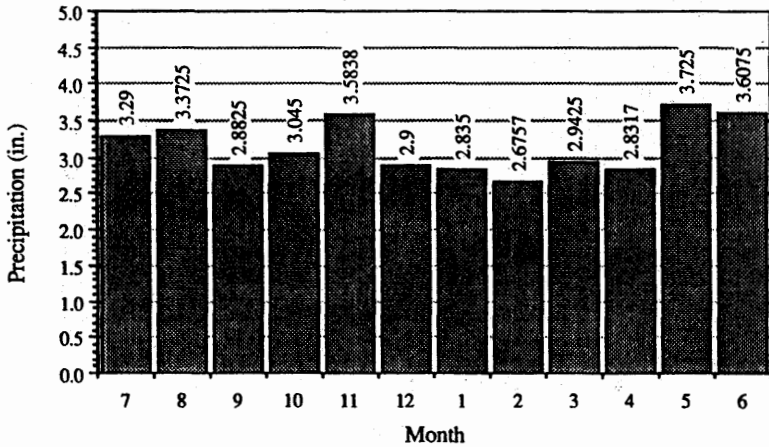


Figure 4. Comparison of precipitation for the study period with the eight year prior reference period; data collected in Schenectady 4.4 km southeast of Collins Lake.

at least five Great Blue Herons during much of the winter of 1988-1989. This overwintering is probably the consequence of the spring-fed nature of the lake with its continually open water, even during the coldest days of the winter. Although the winter of 1988-1989 was warmer (+3.2°F total difference for November-February relative to reference period) and had lower precipitation (-4.09 inches total difference for November-February relative to reference period) than previous winters (Figs. 3 and 4), open water has been found in winters with more severe weather. Other waters in the region which remain open during the winter, in descending elevation progressing eastwards, include the tail races below Vischer's Ferry Dam, Crescent Dam, the School Street Power Station and the rapids of the Mohawk River below Cohoes Falls. However, these sites are quite variable due to the vagaries of river flow and do not appear to be used regularly for overnight roosting.

Collins Lake usually has been overlooked by the several teams of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club performing recent Christmas Bird Counts. Thus, we have little information as to whether or not Great Blue Herons have overwintered at Collins Lake in prior years. The inaccessibility of the larger spring-fed open waters along the north shore of the lake combined with the abundance of dead gray wood matching the plumage of the herons makes observation difficult. We suspect that birds overwintering in earlier years may have been missed. Regardless, twelve members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club who have been active here for ten or more more years have expressed no knowledge of other regular overwintering sites for the Great Blue Heron in lower Mohawk Valley and the Tri-Cities Region. Collins Lake thus may be a novel record of a specific overnight and overwintering locality for the Great Blue Heron in the Tri-City region of New York. Given the relative high latitude of 42°49' 36" (and paucity of such records), the lake may be one of the most northerly inland overwintering sites documented for the species. Other high latitude winter records exist for British Columbia, Idaho, Wyoming, New England and the Maritime Provinces (Palmer, 1962).

Low numbers of birds observed starting in late March are probably due to the movement of birds from wintering sites to breeding colonies. Bull (1974) indicates egg laying occurs from April 15-June 9 in New York populations, supporting the idea that emigration from the lake for breeding purposes is the cause of reduced heron numbers at Collins Lake after the winter season.

Acknowledgments

We are pleased to affirm the important observational support provided by David Wachtel, Hank Stebbins, Dr. George Shaw and Dr. William Huntley. Special thanks are extended to Philip Falconer who has provided meteorological data for the observation period. We also thank the several senior members of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club who have provided us with their experience: Kenneth Able, Alan Mapes and Walton Sabin. Finally, we extend appreciation to the National Science Foundation for partial support of this study and to the Village of Scotia and the many residents who have shown interest in this project.

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FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
ANNUAL MEETING
Auburn, New York
15-17 September 1989

President Berna Weissman called the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. to order at the Auburn Holiday Inn at 2:15 P.M. on Friday, 15 September 1989. The roll call totaled 19 clubs, including the host club, Owasco Valley Audubon Society. The minutes of the 41st Annual Meeting were accepted as published in *The Kingbird*. The President announced that 1989 had been yet another productive year for the Federation, as would later be evidenced by the various committee reports presented. She thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their continued commitment and involvement. Moriches Bay has agreed to host the 1990 Annual Meeting, and the club delegates extended an invitation to all clubs to attend.

Dick Sloss and Barbara Butler accepted the appointments to the Committee on Resolutions before Stan Lincoln presented the Treasurer's Report. The Federation is enjoying good financial health, with a moderate increase in net worth since last year. The report was accepted by the delegates with thanks to Stan for his conscientious efforts. A report from the Auditing Committee, consisting of Dick Sloss and Irv Cantor, was also accepted with thanks. The report is filed with these minutes.

Myrna Hemmerick's Membership Committee report shows that membership stood at 790 at the end of 1988. To date, 688 individuals had paid the 1989 dues. New York City Audubon Society was unanimously voted in as a new member club.

An Administration Committee, consisting of Chad Covey, Myrna Hemmerick, Manny Levine and Stan Lincoln, had been established after last year's meeting to analyze the internal work routines of the Federation. A summary of their findings and recommendations will be published in *NY Birders*. Among major tasks already completed were the updating of the dues notice files and the computerization of mailing lists and membership files.

Manny Levine, Chairman of the Publications Committee, reported that the Checklist of New York Birds, largely a NYSARC effort, became available immediately prior to the meeting, and had been included in the registration package for this meeting. The list, which will be sold at

The Crow's Nest and through ABA Sales and other outlets, tallies 435 species, including 2 currently extinct. Current projects of the Committee include financial support to publish a new edition of *Adirondack Birds*, coauthored by Bruce Beehler and John M.C. Peterson, and plans for a new edition of the 1974 publication *Birds of New York* by John Bull.

Paul DeBenedictis, Editor of *The Kingbird*, reported that the fall issue was at the printers, and he extended his thanks to the Regional Editors. Max Wheat, Editor of *New York Birders*, solicited the help of an Assistant Editor.

Stan Lincoln presented the names of the Lillian C. Stoner Award winners: Andy Spar and James Vellatzzy from Saw Mill River Audubon Society, and Andy Wheelock from Lake Erie Bird Club. Paul DeBenedictis, with assistance from Manny Levine and Bob Andrle, had selected the winner of the John J. Elliott Award for the best *Kingbird* article in the past year, namely "The Status of Black Tern in New York State", authored by Janet Carroll.

Concerns were raised about current development policies on Long Island (Gateway and Jamaica Bay area), as reported in the August 21 and 28 issues of *The New Yorker* magazine. It was suggested that the Federation work through NYC Audubon Society on this issue. Harriet Marsi, assisted by Dick Sloss, will compile the appropriate factual information and inform the membership through *New York Birders*.

Harriet Marsi then presented the slate of officers for 1990: Chad Covey, President; Stan Lincoln, Vice President; Berna Weissman, Treasurer; Mary Ann Sunderlin, Corresponding Secretary; and Donald Windsor, Recording Secretary. The slate was accepted by unanimous vote. In his acceptance speech Chad thanked the outgoing officers for their dedication and service to the Federation. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

When the delegates reconvened at 9:45 A.M. on Saturday morning, an additional 11 clubs indicated their presence, bringing the total number of clubs represented to 30.

Dick Evans reported that the 1988 report from the New York State Avian Records Committee was in its final stages. Replacements for Steve Sibley and Fritz Scheider on the Committee was on the agenda for a planned November executive committee meeting.

Harriet Marsi gave an overview of the issues handled by the Conservation Committee in the past year. No response had been received to the letter sent to protest dredging of Irondequoit Bay in Rochester, which was discussed at last year's meeting. On behalf of the

Federation the Committee had voiced its support of the passage of a bill to ban the insecticide carbofuron, had help stop an amendment to the falconry bill, which would have legalized the sale of raptors bred in captivity, sent a mailgram to Governor Cuomo and Senate members to permit prescribed burning of Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) land, helped sponsor a Bald Eagle Conference, and had demanded a full environmental impact study before the proposed increased military activity in certain parts of the Adirondacks was implemented. Reporting for the Research Committee, Charlie Smith proclaimed Project Bird Watch to be in its third and final year. The Breeding Bird Survey had 85% coverage on the 116 New York State routes in 1988. Volunteers for the remaining 19 routes are sought.

Gary Parsons provided an overview of the Wildlife Program Management System of the DEC Bureau of Wildlife, which employs 60 individuals currently involved in needs assessment. When available, this report will be distributed to anyone interested. Gary extended an invitation and encouragement to get involved on an individual or group level. The projected time table for consolidation of comments and input is early 1990.

Bob Miller reported on current DEC projects of interest to the Federation: There were 15 pairs of Peregrines in New York State in 1989 producing 24 young; and 10 nesting pairs of Bald Eagles, 7 of which produced a total of 10 eaglets. As part of the "Return A Gift To Wildlife" program, a cable television camera will be used to monitor eagle nesting at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge next year. Continuing projects under this program are the Colonial Water Birds project, the survey of Black Terns, and the Long Island sea turtle projects. Thirty projects have been approved for 1990.

Ray Perry from the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation solicited support and involvement from individuals to provide bird banding demonstrations, help establish park checklists, provide educational programs for school children, etc. in any one of the 150 parks in the state. Allan Klonick, with strong support from the delegates, applauded the continued presence and support of state agencies in Federation activities.

By unanimous vote, Dick Sloss and Irv Cantor were reelected to the Auditing Committee, and Harriet Marsi and Manny Levine to the Nominating Committee.

Dick Guthrie from the Allan Devoe Bird Club motioned for a resolution to urge state park department involvement in protecting and

monitoring activities within the Caselton Island State Park near Albany. The Executive Committee was authorized to act on this resolution after consideration at its next meeting.

Before adjournment at 11:55 A.M., the clubs were urged to furnish the Federation with updated information about current officers. Information sheets will be sent out with the club dues notices, and a roster will subsequently be sent to each member club.

At the banquet later that evening, the 130 or so attendees congratulated the Stoner Awardees presented by Bill Reeves, and Janet Carroll (in absentia) for her John J. Elliott Award.

President Chad Covey presented Berna Weissman with a Kingbird statuette made by Mickey Levine for her 2 years of outstanding service as Federation President. Barbara Butler read the resolution of thanks to the host club, before Don and Lillian Stokes from Massachusetts delighted the audience with an entertaining and informative look at bird behavior in its many facets in a slide program entitled "Out on a Limb." With that, another successful Annual Meeting had finally come to a close.

Respectfully submitted,
Øivind E. Jensen
Recording Secretary

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

A wintering Pine Warbler: On 21 Dec 1989 my son Homer (Jimmy) told me that he had a warbler coming to his feeder. Doubting this, and because of his description of a greenish back with yellowish on the breast, I concluded that it probably was a kinglet, but I said that I would come to check it. His home is a 1760 house with a huge spruce tree in the front yard, located between Amenia and Millerton just off route 22 in northeastern Dutchess County. The feeder is a covered, wire enclosed tray fitted directly to the dining room window about 4 feet from the ground. A variety of small birds feed here, including Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, nuthatch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Finch and occasional American Tree Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. The warbler feeds often and compatibly with all, eating mostly from the balls of beef fat and cornmeal. I did go on 10 Jan 1990. Sitting in the dining room, after a wait of 20 minutes the bird appeared — warbler all right — a Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) with its plain back, white tail spots and quite distinct wing bars, and yellowish wash on its breast. At this close range the faint eye ring was visible. The bird comes regularly and often every day. It was seen last on 17 Mar 1990. R. T. Peterson, on the range maps in the back of the *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* (4th Ed, 1980, Houghton-Mifflin Co., Boston) notes that this species winters casually along the coast as far north as Cape Cod, often at feeders. It is quite unusual for one to overwinter in upstate New York.

Mrs. Homer Germond, RR 2 Box 408, Clinton Corners, New York 12514

[A photograph of the Pine Warbler submitted with this note is unsuitable for publication; it has been placed on file with the NYSARC. John Bull (1974. *The Birds of New York State*. Doubleday Natural History Press, New York) lists five Upstate winter records and a few additional records have appeared in subsequent *Kingbird* Regional reports — *The Editor*]

Insect-hawking by some North American gulls: The extent of insect-feeding by gulls, and the caloric benefits and the seasonality of this behavior is not well known. The term "insect-hawking" refers to a foraging strategy where insects are taken and devoured on the wing. Terres (*The Audubon Encyclopedia of North American Birds*. New York, Alfred P. Knopf. p. 489; 1980) describes insect-hawking as an "...action of a bird, such as a swallow or nighthawk, in catching insects out of the air by flying about with the mouth open." Insect-hawking has been reported for Bonaparte's Gull (*Larus philadelphia*) and Franklin's Gull (*L. pipixcan*) (Harrison, P. 1983. *Seabirds, An Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston), Glaucous Gull (*L. hyperboreus*). (De Graaf, R. M., N. G. Tilghman and S. H. Anderson. Foraging guilds of North American birds. *Envir. Mgmt.* 9: 493-536; 1985) and Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) (Stromsen, N. 1989. *A guide to Alaskan seabirds*. (2nd ed.) Alaska Nat. Hist. Assoc. in cooperation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage). David Lee (unpubl. data) has found fire ants (Formicidae) in the stomach contents of some gulls off the North Carolina coast. Helen Hays and Robert Dickerman (pers. comm.) have also reported insect-hawking by gulls on Long Island. In this paper we report additional observations of insect hawking by three species of North American gulls — Bonaparte's Gull, Laughing Gull (*L. atricilla*) and Ring-billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*) in southeastern Maine, in southeastern Canada and in Suffolk County on the north shore of Long Island.

On 5 Sep 1987 we observed a flock of approximately thirty-five Laughing Gull insect-hawking with some Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) over the salt marsh at Caumsett State Park (Suffolk County). Even though we were within four meters of the gulls we were unable to see the prey and therefore assumed that it was gnat-sized or smaller. Capainolo observed this behavior again on 11 and 16 Sep 1987. All three observations occurred at dusk over the marsh and involved adult birds only. During the 11 and 16 Sep observations, there were no nighthawks present.

In June 1988 Pitocchelli observed similar insect-hawking by Ring-billed Gull in Ottawa, Ontario. The Ottawa gulls were seen feeding around sunset over fields and the road but were not in mixed flocks. All individuals involved were adults.

Laughing, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls were observed insect-hawking on 26 Aug 1988, accompanying Common Nighthawks feeding over fields along Route 1 in Hancock County, Maine. These also were adult gulls.

In each case gulls were seen snapping at insect prey with their beaks rather than flying with their mouths open. Gulls hawking for insects would stop and hover while they snapped at prey. The hovering never lasted more than 20 seconds. None of the birds were seen sallying for insects.

Several questions are raised concerning insect-hawking by gulls. Why do gulls hawk for insects? When did they begin to exploit this feeding niche? How did this behavior evolve and is it transmitted culturally from generation to generation? Do the energetic gains of feeding on such small prey outweigh the costs of trying to catch it? Is the timing of the exploitation of this food resource correlated with any special physiological processes involved with egg laying, migration or molt? We believe behavioral ecologists should investigate these and other questions about insect hawking in gulls. Information may be useful to understanding the importance of varied foraging strategies and the success of gulls.

We would like to thank Helen Hays, Rosemarie Gnam (Ornithology Dept., American Museum of Natural History) and David Kuntsler (New York City Dept. of Parks and Recreation) for their help in improving this manuscript.

*Jay Pitocchelli, Ornithology Department, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024, and
Peter Capainolo, Queens College Center Museum, Queens College Center for Environmental Teaching and Research, Caumsett State Park, Huntington, NY 11743*

[Additional notes on insect-hawking by gulls appear in *The Kingbird* vol. 27 (2): 87 and vol. 33 (1): 35. *The Editor.*]

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

Is the weather ever typical or average? This winter swung from the coldest ever December over most of the state to a record or near record warm January, followed by a generally warm February. Precipitation was heavy in western New York in December, average to low in Regions 7-10. It was interesting that large snowfall depths often were recorded from relatively little actual precipitation; the snow was light, fluffy stuff. In January and February precipitation ranged from average to a bit above. Ice storms in mid February did considerable shrub damage in some areas and certainly caused some hardship for small birds. As suggested by Ken Able in the Region 8 report, we might well learn something about the factors which control bird distribution and abundance by studying the effects of dramatically atypical weather such as this winter's. It was interesting that CBC's totals in late December were average or only slightly below, with fair numbers of half-hardy species, in spite of the prolonged, extreme cold. Food was abundant in many Regions. In Region 8 many half-hardy species were found at higher elevations where the food supply was better rather than in the sheltered valleys, even during the worst of the winter weather. As pointed out in the Region 10 report, we really don't know much about the effects of weather on birds and birding. A great deal could be learned through careful observation, documentation, and publishing of notes. Mike Peterson in the Region 7 report illustrates how simple observations published may turn out to be of significance to students of bird behavior scattered around the world.

Following the pattern of last year's report, let us first look at the major groups which many monitor in winter. Water bird reports were similar to those of last winter, possibly a bit better for numbers of some of the less common wintering species. Red-throated Loon was found in five regions, Common Loon in all regions reporting except the north country in Regions 6 and 7. This season the only heron reported was Great Blue Heron, found in all but Region 7. However, several heron species regularly occur coastally in Region 10, and usually are not mentioned in Regional reports. Waterfowl reports were fairly good, with good numbers of less common species recorded, including: Greater White-fronted Goose in Regions 8, 9 and 10; Wood Duck in six Regions, and Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, N. Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, and

Red-breasted Merganser from five Regions. Relatively poor counts were noted for American Black Duck, Canvasback, Redhead (save for a good count from Region 2), both scaup, and White-winged Scoter. Rarer species noted included: **Ross' Goose** in Region 10, a "Richardson's" Canada Goose in Region 2, Barnacle Goose in Region 9, Tufted Duck in Region 10, Brant in Region 3, Barrow's Goldeneye in Region 1, and King Eider in Region 5. There were two sizeable waterfowl kills reported: 500+ in Region 5 apparently succumbed after eating moldy corn; and 51 were frozen into the ice in Region 7 after being induced to linger so far north so late by local handouts. Among the waterfowl, spring migration was evident from geese and some of the hardier ducks heading north after about 18 February.

No outstanding raptor concentrations were reported this season. Rochester area hawk banders captured some 60 Rough-legged Hawks on the Pt. Peninsula in Region 6 during December and January. Interesting raptor notes include: Turkey Vulture noted in seven Regions, including an immature captured, rehabilitated and released in Region 7; Black Vulture in Region 10; Bald Eagle in very good numbers from all Regions reporting; the usual, interesting Sharp-shinned/Cooper's hawk ratio, high downstate, low upstate; Merlin in Regions 1, 3 and 10; Peregrine Falcon in Regions 1 and 10; and Gyrfalcon in Regions 9 and 10. The owls showed in good variety but generally unimpressive numbers, with Snowy Owl in six Regions but considered scarce everywhere; Long-eared Owl in five Regions; N. Saw-whet Owl in six Regions; and Short-eared Owl reported from all Regions. It is interesting to note one large group of Short-eared Owls in Region 8 was decimated by Great Horned Owls as the winter progressed, with their feathers ending as nest lining to confirm the source of their demise.

Gull watching was not very fruitful. There was a scattering of white-winged gull reports from most regions and Little Gull was reported from Regions where they are now expected. The only other reports of note were Thayer's Gull in Region 8, Lesser Black-backed Gull in Regions 1, 2 and 10, and Black-legged Kittiwake in Region 1.

Irruptive passerine species, while widespread, were much higher in expectation than in actual numbers. Bohemian Waxwing was reported in seven Regions, with excellent counts of 201 in Region 5, 150 in Region 6, and 215 in Region 7. They were reported only sporadically and in small numbers in most of the other Regions. Northern Shrike also occurred in seven Regions, though only in fair to low numbers. This fall winter finches raised high expectations, which were realized only by White-

winged Crossbill, with a peak count of 1146 on the Saranac Lake CBC in Region 7, and the greatly increasing numbers of Pine Siskin toward the season's end. There is reason to look for both breeding in New York again this year, but that may already have occurred as this is summary being written and probably will be completed before you read it. Other species of finches were reported in most Regions, but often by very few observers and in very small numbers. Purple Finch was specifically flagged as very scarce in five Regions and Evening Grosbeak numbers again were subpar. The single rarity noted was a Hoary Redpoll in Region 5. The visiting winter flocks such as Horned Lark, Am. Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting appeared in average numbers in most regions, low in a few regions in each case.

Region 10 recorded record late dates for Least Sandpiper, Roseate Tern (sickly individual), and Forster's Tern and very late dates for Semipalmated Plover, Western Kingbird, and House Wren. Half-hardy species were a bit more numerous than in the past few winters. Many were tallied on CBC's, and certainly nearly all which survived to late December had a fair chance of overwintering successfully, with abundant food in many areas and only the local February (and later March) ice coatings with which to contend. Species expanding their range northward from the south did well, all at least holding their own at the fringes of their range. Some of the more notable half-hardy reports included: Marsh Wren in two Regions; Eastern Bluebird in seven Regions; Hermit Thrush in six Regions; 8 species of warblers, including Cape May in Region 9, **Yellow-throated** in Region 1, Pine in four Regions, Ovenbird in Region 1, and Orange-crowned, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow-breasted Chat in Region 10; the best sparrow contingent in several years, with Vesper, Grasshopper, and Lincoln's Sparrow in Region 10, Savannah Sparrow in three regions, and Fox Sparrow in four Regions, in addition to the more regular species; the best E. Meadowlark winter total in many years from Region 9; and N. Oriole in Region 8. The only real negatives in the group were Swamp and White-throated Sparrow numbers in several Regions. Most blackbird species were reported in average numbers this winter, but by mid to late February they were on the move northward along with the returning waterfowl.

Gathering up the loose ends, we find: Double-crested Cormorant well represented in Regions 1, 3, and 5, harbingers of too much of a good thing; Ring-necked Pheasant still generally low but Wild Turkey still

increasing; the best Gray Partridge count in quite a while from Region 6; a scarcity of Belted Kingfisher reports; Red-headed Woodpecker generally scarce, though noted in four Regions; Black-backed Woodpecker observations from Regions 7, 8 and 9; Common Raven continuing to increase, with reports from six Regions; Fish Crow holding on to expansion toeholds in Regions 3, 5, 8 and 9; a good irruption of Red-breasted Nuthatch noted in five Regions; and high N. Cardinal counts in Regions 1 and 7. Especially high counts not woven in above include winter Regional highs for Rusty Blackbird in Region 9 and Yellow-rumped Warbler in Region 8.

Early spring notes include Red-shouldered Hawk courting two weeks early in Region 1 and Tree Swallow on 9 Feb in Region 9. The latter helps to point out the Regional editors' problems with spring arrival dates when many birds overwinter. Are late February half hardy species and waterfowl early arrivals or are they just overwintering individuals or flocks simply beginning to move around a bit more widely but still locally?

In reading through the reports, be sure to find the notes on wintering birds in the Finger Lakes National Forest from Region 3, Bald Eagle reports contrasted with numbers 10 years ago in Region 7, and from Region 10, notes of more alcids than in recent years, Red-tailed Hawks wintering in good numbers around dumps, and a good summary of the birds commonly found near the beaches and which are at best uncommon elsewhere in the state at this season.

Several Regional editors have commented that tardy reports make their job unnecessarily difficult and frustrating, especially when the offenders provide valuable information about some otherwise uncovered part of a Region. Faced with editorial deadlines, they have to choose between delaying *The Kingbird* or producing an incomplete report. Neither choice is satisfactory. If you find the report for your Region does not properly reflect your birding experiences there, and you don't submit a report, submit one next season. Your editor needs your report approximately a week after each reporting season ends. If you report tardily, be punctual. If you are guilty of neither offense, then thanks for your contribution to our journal. Remember that your editor may not know as much as you do about your favorite birding areas and the local significance of the records you submit. Help your editor by including both details for the more significant reports that you submit as well as an explanation as to why you think those reports deserve special attention.

Typically, every Region had their good birds this season. At least one species, Dickcissel, was widespread with records from Regions 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10. The best of the rest not referenced earlier included: Region 1 - Varied Thrush; Region 3 - Western Grebe; Region 6 - Golden Eagle; Region 9 - **Townsend's Solitaire**; and Region 10 - **Common Murre**. An European Goldfinch in Region 1 likely was an escape from captivity. Look through all the notes above and this listing; what would be your choice for the BOTS award? To me, it falls to the Townsend's Solitaire in Region 9, a very cooperative individual, staying near where it was first found from early January into March.

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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS: county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE; 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; y — young.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

STEPHEN W. EATON

This was the coldest December ever recorded in Buffalo, according to the *Buffalo News*, but the only wintery month of the period. The ice boom in Lake Erie was put in place on 7 Dec, when the lake temperature reached 39°, the earliest since 1977. On 19 Dec Lake Erie reached 32°, three weeks earlier than normal. "The culprit," according to the *Buffalo News* was a strong northwest flow of frigid air locked in by a jet stream that stayed south of Buffalo. Snowfall at Buffalo International Airport totaled 35 inches but more than 50 inches fell in the lee of Lake Erie. At Amity Lake, the ground was snow covered all month and even Buffalo had a white Christmas, their first in four years. This weather made great birding in Dunkirk Harbor and at feeders but curtailed the laridophile's search for strange gulls along the Niagara River. Gerald Rising (*Prothonotary* 56:2) wrote, "The reduction in gulls is probably related directly to the earlier than usual buildup of ice in the Niagara River, especially below the falls where the ice bridge formed at a record early date...By the end of the month gull numbers were declining still further with the number of Bonaparte's Gulls very low." In contrast, January was a "kinder gentler" month. It was the sixth warmest January on record. The average temperature was 33.4° at Buffalo, almost 10° above the normal 23.5°. Precipitation was a third of an inch below normal, coming mostly as rain, and only 11.8 inches of snow fell at Buffalo, less than half the normal 25.7 inches. This respite from winter saved many species which normally winter further south, such as Eastern Bluebird and American Robin, which wintered in large numbers. Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee, Field Sparrow also appeared to survive winter with some help from feeders, but generally birds left feeders. Waterfowl in Dunkirk Harbor retired to openings of the ice on Lake Erie. February averaged almost 5° above normal at Buffalo, and higher temperatures were reported away from the cooling effect of Lakes Erie and Ontario. It was the wettest February in Buffalo's history with 5.9 inches of rain, over twice normal, and 28 inches of snow. More fell in the snow belt where skiers rejoiced. Each snow fall brought feeder birds back but then they dispersed as temperatures climbed and snow melted.

Raptors seem to be prospering. The pair of Bald Eagles at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge came back to their nest, a Merlin wintered

along Lake Erie shore and an adult and an immature Peregrine found the Rock Dove population at the Power Plant in Dunkirk Harbor a good source of food for a while. At least two pairs of Red-shouldered Hawks began courtship flight two weeks early. Sharp-shinned Hawks winter much more commonly than in the past and found food by hunting at feeders. Rough-legged Hawks were well represented this winter and Short-eared Owl found good mouse hunting on the lake plain fields later in the winter.

It was a good winter for Red-breasted Nuthatch, probably coming mainly from the north but perhaps, too, from birds nesting successfully in our mature spruce stands. Of the four species of warblers reported, probably only two, Yellow-rumped and Pine, survived the winter. It seems every year another species of sparrow starts to spend the winter, lured to the high calorie feeders of affluent Americans. The Chipping Sparrow is joining the ranks of Rufous-sided Towhee, Field, Song, White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows which overwinter at feeders.

The carduline finch show this winter was better than last year but not spectacular. There was one report of Red Crossbill, only a few of Pine Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak but fair numbers of White-winged Crossbill, apparently attracted by a good crop of White Spruce cones in the plantations of the plateau. The Pine Siskin was certainly the dominant carduline often accompanied by lesser numbers of American Goldfinch. An European Goldfinch, seen by many observers at a feeder in Arcade, Wyoming County, in January, was almost certainly an escaped cage bird (G. Rising, *Prothonotary* 56:13).

With the growing number of well manned feeders and sophisticated observers many interesting birds are being reported in winter. The Varied Thrush, Yellow-throated Warbler and European Goldfinch, all seen this winter are good examples.

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Abbreviations: ACBC - Allegany CBC 16 Dec; ARes - Allegheny Reservoir; BCBC - Buffalo CBC 17 Dec; BOS - Buffalo Ornithological Society; DFCBC - Dunkirk-Fredonia CBC 31 Dec; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River; PTwn - Pomfret Township, CHAU: SCBC - Scio CBC 16 Dec; SBCBC - St. Bonaventure CBC 16 Dec; TWMA - Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: last mouth NR 1-14 Dec. Com. Loon: last two DH 9 Dec. Horned Grebe: max four DH 2-23 Jan. Red-necked Grebe, one DH 23 Jan; one ARes 4 Feb. Double-crested Cormorant: one Fort Niagara SP 18 Feb, rare in winter. Great Blue Heron: max 34 Motor I, NR, 27 Jan. Tundra Swan: four Beaver I SP 21 Jan., rare in winter; arr 75 INWR 22 Feb; four TWMA 24 Feb. Canada Goose: 1770 BCBC, max in 61 years; 329 DFCBC; 322 ACBC; arr INWR 22 Feb.: max 4,760 around INWR 24 Feb. Snow Goose: one DH Dec-4 Feb, wounded? Wood Duck: two Tonawanda 14 Jan, unusual in winter. Green-winged Teal: one DH 30 Dec, unusual in winter. N. Shoveler: one DH 29 Dec, rare in winter. Canvasback: max 325 NR 7 Jan, pitiful numbers compared to 1950's. Oldsquaw: max 4,000 mouth NR 26 Jan. White-winged Scoter: max 75 mouth NR 2 Dec; 12 Golden Hill SP 10 Feb. Black Scoter: max 17 mouth NR 2 Dec, last five DH 23 Dec. Surf Scoter: max 5 DH 23 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: max 1,000± DH 4 Dec. Com. Merganser: max 500± DH 25-31 Dec; courtship ARes 16 Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: 25 ARes 4 Feb, unusual away from Great Lakes in winter.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one Sheridan 8 Feb (JG,Sr.), early migrant or wintering bird from Letchworth SP (*Kingbird* 39(2):74-79). Bald Eagle: one Youngstown 30 Dec; one at nest tree INWR 30 Jan, two on 31 Jan.(staff), present all Feb; ad, imm ARes 4 Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: nine BCBC, highest in 61 years. N. Goshawk: one wintering near feeders Sheridan (R&CB). Red-shouldered Hawk: one Sheridan wintered near feeders, single pairs in courtship flight there and Vandalia CATT, both 18 Feb, latter earliest in 40 years (SE). Rough-legged Hawk: 12 BCBC, second highest, max 27 in 1948 (*Rising, Prothonotary* 56:2); 12 reports Jan, five reports Feb (BOS). Merlin: female Pt Gratiot and Sheridan wintering as two previous winters (*fide* TM). Peregrine Falcon: ad male DH 7 Jan (Watson, Rew mob); imm DH Jan. (TM). Wild Turkey: good numbers on CBCs, 15 INWR 1 Dec in marginal lake plain habitat. Am. Coot: max 45 DH 31 Dec. Killdeer: two reported ACBC 16 Dec. Purple Sandpiper: max 10 NF 18 Feb. Dunlin: one NF 30 Dec. Com. Snipe: three SCBC. Little Gull: five reports NR 2-31 Dec. Bonaparte's Gull: max 10,800 mouth NR 2 Dec; 42 on 23 Dec. Iceland Gull: one NF 2 Dec; max three NF 7 Jan. Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Adam Beck Hydro, NR, 2 Dec. Glaucous Gull: max three NF 7 Jan. Black-legged Kittiwake: one NF 3 Dec.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: 338 BCBC, 268 SCBC, 102 DFCBC, 127 SBCBC, still wintering well throughout. Long-eared Owl: one Wilson 10 Feb. Short-eared Owl: max 16 INWR 27 Jan. N. Saw-whet Owl: specimen L Erie SP 31 Dec, powerline casualty. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Lewiston 19, 20 Dec; one Silver Creek 29 Dec (*fide* RS). N. Flicker: six Lewiston &

Porter Twn NIAG 23 Dec; nine BCBC, 25 DFCBC in grape country; one SCBC: one SBCBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: good numbers through winter, 100± PTwn 1 Dec; 30 BCBC, 55 SCBC, 75 Amity Twn ALLE; 100 Java Twn 27 Feb. Blue Jay: 61 at feeder attracting raptors Sheridan Twn 29 Dec. Com. Raven: one Alfred Twn 16 Jan; one Carrollton Twn 31 Jan. Tufted Titmouse: five reports Dec, three reports Jan, four reports Feb (BOS); doing well in Allegany Hills, three singing in our valley Feb. Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 23 Ward Twn ALLE 1-31 Dec; high numbers State Forests Charlotte Twn Jan (TM); 13 BCBC, three DFCBC, 16 SCBC, 11 SBCBC, a good winter show. Carolina Wren: three ACBC, one DFCBC, one SBCBC, still in low numbers since 1976. E. Bluebird: six reports BOS Dec; 29 DFCBC, from six areas, must be all-time high; ten Sheridan Twn 28 Dec, all roosting in one box (R&CB); four Amity Twn ALLE 15,20 Jan; two Poland Twn CHAU 16 Jan; two Amity Twn ALLE 22 Feb. Hermit Thrush: two DFCBC. Am. Robin, 223 BCBC: 289 DFCBC, another grape lover; two ACBC: one SBCBC, max 400± Cherry Creek 7 Jan (*fide* RS); 70 E. Aurora 9 Jan; 90 Somerset Twn 3 Jan; 150 Lewiston 26 Feb; many other areas with smaller counts. **Varied Thrush:** male at feeder Fredonia 15-31 Feb (SP, *fide* TM). Brown Thrasher: one BCBC. Bohemian Waxwing: one Lewiston 23 Dec.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one E. Aurora 6 Dec; one Elma Twn 23 Dec; four DFCBC; six L Erie SP 31 Dec; max nine Portland Twn 3 Jan; one Hamburg 8, 12 Feb. **Yellow-throated Warbler:** imm female? at feeder Dunkirk Twn 1-8 Dec (D&JG, *fide* TM). Pine Warbler: one Orchard Park 4 Feb. Ovenbird: one at feeder Williamsville 1, 7 Dec.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: 321 BCBC most in 61 years, 37 DFCBC, 27 SCBC, 117 ACBC, 33 SBCBC, first of southerners to invade, first to recover from winter 1976. **Dickcissel:** one at feeder E. Aurora irregularly 2 Dec-7 Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: one-three at feeders PTwn 8-24 Dec; one Sheridan 28 Dec; one at feeder Warsaw 13 Jan, 5-25 Feb. Am. Tree Sparrow: 446 BCBC, 341 DFCBC, 145 SCBC, 123 SBCBC. Chipping Sparrow: one Jamestown 6 Dec; singles at feeders PTwn 4 Dec, Burgeson Sanctuary 17 Dec; one Fredonia 31 Dec, not reported Jan and Feb although it frequents feeders. Field Sparrow: singles at feeders Darien 1 Dec-28 Feb, PTwn 8-28 Jan. Lapland Longspur: 20-25 PTwn 1 Dec; 20 SBCBC; two Strykersville 27 Dec; four Albion 14 Jan; one Sheridan Twn 31 Jan; five localities Feb.(BOS). Snow Bunting, max 1300 Porter Twn NIAG 1 Jan, large flocks n and e Buffalo. Rusty Blackbird: arr two at Williamsville feeder 18, 24 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: seven Orangeville Twn WYOM 15 Jan; three Charlotte Twn CHAU 28 Jan. Purple Finch: four reports BOS Dec; max six Alfred Twn 1-3 Jan; six Charlotte Twn 14 Jan; four reports BOS Feb. Red Crossbill: 11 Allegany SP 14 Jan.(TB). White-winged Crossbill: 68 Alma 10 Dec.(Griswald *fide* VP); 34 Alfred Twn 17 Dec; 25 Charlotte Twn 23 Dec; nine Ward Twn ALLE 30 Dec; 60 Charlotte Twn 30 Dec, feeding on White Spruce seeds. Com. Redpoll: one Newfane Twn 14 Jan, only report BOS. Pine Siskin: ten reports BOS Dec; 358 banded Alfred Twn during Jan (EB); 125 Wales 5-31 Jan; many reports e and s of Buffalo during Jan; up to 200 at feeder Wales Twn 1-28 Feb; up to 75 Amity L

ALLE 1-28 Feb; 50-75 Vandalia CATT 1-28 Feb, to be watched for nesting, almost a repeat of 1987-88 influx. Am. Goldfinch: 99 banded Alfred Twn 1-31 Jan, with siskin flocks at feeders though not as numerous. European Goldfinch: *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: six reports throughout Region Dec (BOS); max 100 Java 13 Jan, ten other reports e and s of Buffalo in Jan, four reports in Feb.

Ten Mile Road, Allegany, N.Y. 14706

REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

It was cold. It was warm. What started out as a bitter forecast proved to be a season of fluctuation. December set a record as the coldest ever. The average temperature was a mere 17.1°, which easily eclipsed the previous (1876) record low of 18.5° and was nearly 12° below normal. Snowfall was above average, but measurable precipitation was only 1.58 inches, just about an inch below the average. January then turned mild. In fact, it was the mildest January since 1933. The temperature reached 40° or higher on 16 days. The average of 33.6° was 10° above normal. The snowfall and precipitation were below normal. February saw the warm trend continue with the 29.3° average being nearly 5° above normal. On 13 Feb the thermometer recorded a temperature of 60°. Snowfall was nine inches above average at 31.3 inches, and measurable precipitation total 3.93 inches compared to the average of 2.23 inches.

Ornithologically the winter was a generally lackluster season. Apparently the December cold pushed a number of birds out of the Region. There were no significant changes during the mild remainder of the season until late in the season, when some species may have returned for the spring. Although originally this looked like it was going to be a "winter finch" year, a flight never really materialized. Comments generally were that the season was the 'essence of mediocrity.'

The area Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) produced some interesting records. The Letchworth-Silver Lake CBC had small numbers of waterfowl due to the frozen lake, but the fields and edges produced record numbers of Horned Larks, American Tree Sparrows and Snow Buntings. Other highlights were Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The Rochester CBC had record highs for Mallard and the still increasing House Finch. Great Black-backed Gull set a high with a total of 342, and Red-breasted Nuthatch (33). American Robin (517) and Dark-

eyed Junco (382) totals were good. Waxwings were scarce. On the Little Lakes CBC, Ring-necked Pheasant broke the 10 year average of 18 with a whopping 50 birds. Record highs were established for Red-bellied Woodpecker (52), Red-breasted Nuthatch (48), White-breasted Nuthatch (215), Northern Mockingbird (11), Northern Cardinal (242) and House Finch (865).

Both loon species were reported during the period. Five Common Loon on Canandaigua Lake in January was interesting, but the other reports were of the usual scattered individuals. The increase of Double-crested Cormorant in the Region has carried over into winter, and sightings came from all three months. Great Blue Heron was scattered but present as might be anticipated given the weather conditions. Waterfowl numbers were about average. Canada Goose managed to winter in the Region again. The usual Wood Duck concentration in Penfield was observed. Puddle duck variety was generally good. Some interesting concentrations of Canvasback and Redhead were noted in the Sodus Bay and Canandaigua Lake areas. Diving duck totals on Lake Ontario seemed down a bit, but they merely may have remained farther out on the lake. By the end of the season migrating waterfowl had arrived in fairly good numbers. The usual winter shorebirds, Killdeer and Common Snipe, were reported. The gull highlight of the season was an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** found on Conesus Lake during a Rochester Birding Association field trip on 9 Dec. Iceland and Glaucous gulls were fairly regular after the turn of the year. Another highlight was a late Little Gull.

Turkey Vulture once again wintered in Letchworth State Park along the Genesee River gorge. The Bald Eagle recovery is apparently doing fairly well; reports came from each month of the season. All three accipiters were reported, with good totals of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were inconsistent. At times many were found while on other occasions a single bird was the rule. Snowy Owls were scarce and birds were generally transient and hard to relocate. Short-eared Owls fluctuated with good totals during some stretches of the season but scarce at other times. The numbers seemed to build towards the end of the reporting period. As usual Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls arrived late February.

Wild Turkey was reported from a new site along the West Lakeshore in Parma. Red-headed Woodpecker was reported from the Nations Road area after an apparent absence of a couple of years. While half hardy passerines were scarce, there were some good winter numbers. Kinglets

and creepers were found regularly in suitable habitat. Carolina Wren continued to be widespread. Robins were seen throughout the season with some good concentrations. Cedar Waxwing reports were sparse at the season's start but increased during the middle and end of the season. There were some reports of Bohemian Waxwing during the winter months. Northern Shrike numbers were at recent levels. Yellow-rumped Warbler was found in a few locations as is often the case; numbers were fair. American Tree Sparrows maintained fairly traditional levels. A Fox Sparrow in Brighton was unexpected, as was a Chipping Sparrow in Irondequoit. White-crowned Sparrow wintered in much higher numbers than usual. An "Oregon" type Dark-eyed Junco from the Conesus Lake area on 30 Dec was interesting. Late in the season, high numbers of Lapland Longspur were found along the western shore of Lake Ontario. They may have been on the return trip north as numbers there were low earlier in the season. Snow Buntings were closer to normal levels. Rusty Blackbird wintered as individuals in scattered pockets around the Region, as in recent years.

Finches were fairly interesting with the expected species being seen. Early in the season numbers were poor but sightings increased in February. Were these birds just working their way here or had they stopped on the return trip?

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Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay, CanL - Canandaigua Lake, DEP - Durand-Eastman Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, PtB - Point Breeze, WL - western Lake (Ontario) shore.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one Charlotte 17 Dec, unusual in winter. Com. Loon: max five Charlotte 16 Jan, good total. Double-crested Cormorant: one Charlotte 15 Dec, (PS), one IB 25 Jan (PM), one IB 10-11 Feb (JC,NM), good winter records. Great Blue Heron: max 11 Mumford 25 Jan. Tundra Swan: max 26 Conesus L 9 Dec. Mute Swan: max two BB 15-20 Feb. Canada Goose: max 8000 BB 22 Feb; "Richardson's" type Sodus 14 Jan (TS,D&DT, MAS, DS). Wood Duck: max 26 Penfield 14 Jan. Green-winged Teal:

one Greece 17 Dec, late. N. Pintail: one Greece, Penfield all winter, unusual. Am. Wigeon: one Pittsford 31 Jan, unusual winter bird. Canvasback: max 44 Sodus 17 Jan. Redhead: max 2500 Woodville 6 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: max 3 CanL 2 Dec. Surf Scoter: one WL 21 Feb, max four Manitou 1 Jan, unusual in winter. Ruddy Duck: female CanL 25 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: max five Letchworth SP 1 Feb. Bald Eagle: one WL 6, 16 Jan (CC), one PtB 24 Feb (WL). N. Goshawk: one HB 3 Jan, one Parma 8 Jan, one Brighton 2 Feb. Killdeer: max two IB 28 Jan. Com. Snipe: one Brockport 1-31 Jan, one Greece 25 Jan. Little Gull: one DEP 20 Jan (RS). Bonaparte's Gull: one DEP 25 Jan. Iceland Gull: one DEP 17 Dec, one IB 14 Jan, one Sodus 14 Jan. Glaucous Gull: max three Sodus 14 Jan. Lesser Black-backed Gull: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one Brighton 17-22 Dec. Long-eared Owl: one Manitou 22 Feb. Short-eared Owl: max 15 Retsoff 4 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: two Manitou 22 Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: *intro*. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one DEP 17 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 180 WL 17 Feb. Red-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. White-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. Am. Robin: *intro*. N. Mockingbird: *intro*. Bohemian Waxwing: max eight Macedon 14 Jan (ML).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 11 Brighton 11 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: *intro*. Rufous-sided Towhee: one Webster 17 Dec. Chipping Sparrow: one Irondequoit 7-8 Dec (B&BP), very late and unusual. Fox Sparrow: one Brighton 1 Jan (AB). White-crowned Sparrow: max 12 WL 8 Jan. Dark-eyed Junco: *intro*. Lapland Longspur: max 135 WL 17 Feb (BM). Snow Bunting: max 1500 WL 4 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: max 260 Greece 20 Jan (BM), unusually high total for January. Pine Grosbeak: max 14 Greece 4 Feb. Purple Finch: max two Rochester 6 Feb, scarce. House Finch: *intro*. Red Crossbill: 12 Greece 17 Feb, only report. Com. Redpoll: max 60 Sodus 14 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: max 68 Springwater 1-31 Jan.

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REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

C.K. MELIN

December of 1989 was the coldest ever in New York State and the fifth coldest of any month on record. The statewide average temperature for December was 14° below normal, and total precipitation (rain and the liquid equivalent of snow) totalled just 45% of normal. Ithaca's coldest December temperature was 14.2°, breaking a record set in 1917. In the Finger Lakes Region, temperatures were 11-13° below normal and precipitation was below normal for December, although there were 10 to 20 inches total snowfall in the Finger Lakes. December's frigid temperatures and snow persisted from 2 Dec through the holiday week, when the coldest temperatures of the month occurred. By the New Year, temperatures moderated to a more seasonable level and milder temperatures from 2-3 Jan brought welcome relief after December's extreme cold. January temperatures were above normal, making it New York's fourth warmest January on record and the warmest since 1950. The warmest temperatures of the month were from 16-18 Jan with temperatures 15-25° warmer than normal. In the Finger Lakes Region, average January temperatures were 32-36° and precipitation was near normal. February saw a continuation of the warm temperature trend that was established in January. Temperatures were above normal nearly every day until the last four or five days of the month, when cold temperatures and up to 15 inches of snow blanketed the Finger Lakes. It was the warmest February since 1984, with temperatures about 7° above normal and near normal precipitation for the month. By the end of February, numbers of Icterids were moving into the Region and there were reports of Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird at a number of locations in the Region.

Christmas Bird Counts in the Region produced about 60 species each. Highlights on Christmas Counts were Long-eared Owl, Lapland Longspur, abundant winter finches and Rough-legged Hawk, several Northern Shrike, Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur, Wild Turkey, and many new "high counts" for waterfowl. The cold and snowy weather during the Count period concentrated birds at feeding stations, resulting in high numbers of nuthatches, sparrows, finches, and woodpeckers. Finger Lakes Christmas Counts confirmed peak numbers of Carolina Wren throughout the Region, with 3 to 6 Carolina Wren in

most reporting localities and a max of 11 at Queen Catherine Marsh.

Waterfowl counts in the Region produced a variety of common winter residents including Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck, Common Goldeneye, Scaup, Redhead, Canavasback, and Common and Red-breasted Merganser. There were single reports of Brant, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, White-winged Scoter, and Mute Swan.

Maximum numbers of waterfowl were at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, as expected, although the Finger Lakes had the greatest variety of species. Peak numbers reported at MNWR were: 20 Tundra Swan, 32,000 Canada Goose, 13,000 Mallard, 3,200 Am. Black Duck, 30 Hooded Merganser, and 110 Common Merganser. Maxima of other species at MNWR included 33 Great Blue Heron, 20 Ruffed Grouse, 725 Ring-billed Gull, 100 Herring Gull, and 80 Great Black-backed Gull. Three Bald Eagle were present all season, and Refuge staff comment that, since the Bald Eagle nest site was discovered in 1987, there is little evidence that the three adult eagles leave the immediate MNWR area for any length of time. This would include even the coldest periods prior to the onset of breeding season in December and January.

Harsh December weather concentrated birds at feeding stations. There were many reports of winter finches throughout the Region including Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill. It was a good winter for numerous observations of Red-breasted Nuthatch, Rough-legged Hawk, and Long-eared and Short-eared Owl. There were no reports of Snowy Owl or redpoll this season. There were numbers of species at the northern limits of their winter range, including Eastern Bluebird, Northern Mockingbird, and Carolina Wren.

Finger Lakes National Forest (formerly Hector Land Use Area) was the site of many interesting observations this winter. The patchwork of hayfields, pastures, hedgerows and tree rows, conifer plantations, and woodlands there include a superabundance of food including cones, sumac, and fruits of multiflora rose, crab apple, hawthorn, and apple. Hundreds of American Robins and at least one Northern Mockingbird were present all season, and numbers of winter finches including Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill were reported throughout the season. Also present were Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, and Northern Goshawk. Both Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were seen and heard for confirmation. Northern

Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk were present in numbers, and a single Northern Shrike was reported as well. The highlight was two **Common Raven** observed on several dates near the radio tower.

Highlights for the season included **Western Grebe**, **Common Raven** and **Dickcissel**.

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Abbreviations: ACBC - Aurora Christmas Bird Count; CL - Cayuga Lake; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; ICBC - Ithaca Christmas Bird Count; MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; SL - Seneca Lake; WG - Watkins Glen.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: widespread all season. Red-throated Loon: one WG 3 Jan. Horned Grebe: max eight ICBC. **Western Grebe**: one CL 24 Jan (AR!). Great Blue Heron: max 33 MNWR. Tundra Swan: *intro*; ten CL 2 Dec, four SL 15 Dec. Snow Goose: present CL Jan-Feb. Brant: imm CL Myer's 8 Dec. Wood Duck: singles only. Oldsquaw: single report, nine ACBC. Hooded Merganser: max ten CL Myer's 8 Dec. Ruddy Duck: one Elmira 10 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*; ad Old City Pier SL 21 Jan. Sharp-shinned Hawk: widespread all season. Cooper's Hawk: widespread all season. Red-shouldered Hawk: reported without details Ithaca during CBC period. Merlin: one Cornell 5 Dec. Dunlin: last Myer's CL 25 Nov. Bonaparte's Gull: one WG 4 Dec.

PIEGONS-WOODPECKERS: Great Horned Owl: nesting Queen Catherine Marsh 8 Feb. E. Screech-Owl: scattered throughout Region. Long-eared Owl: max five Dodge Road Ithaca entire season; one near FLNF throughout Dec (Gregoire). Short-eared Owl: five Scipioville Jan-Feb, one Big Oak Golf Course Dec, scattered other reports including FLNF. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Dodge Road Ithaca 18 Feb. Red-bellied Woodpecker: max ten WG CBC. Red-headed Woodpecker: single report, one ACBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: scattered reports throughout Region.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Am. Crow: large roosts Ringwood Road Ithaca and 500+ w WG. Fish Crow: four Stewart P Ithaca 8 Dec. **Com. Raven**: *intro*; one Horseheads 8 Dec, two East Hill Elmira 9 Dec. Red-breasted Nuthatch: *intro*. Carolina Wren: *intro*. Winter Wren: single report; one Ithaca Larch Meadows 22 Feb. Am. Robin: widespread; *intro*. Hermit Thrush: single report, one Tanglewood Nature Center 31 Dec. N. Mockingbird: *intro*. Gray Catbird: single report, Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary 4 Dec (DN). Water Pipit: single report, one Burdett Dec present at a farm for 10 days (EG). Cedar Waxwing: widespread all season. N. Shrike: one FLNF 2, 8 and 14 Feb; also one Chemung Valley CBC, one Eaton CBC, two ICBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: singles throughout Region.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Dickcissel: male Taughannock Falls SP 19 Jan, (DN, NYSARC); also one at a Geneva feeder during January but no details available. Field Sparrow: singles ACBC, Ithaca during count period. Fox Sparrow: one 26 Feb Ithaca HHR (Confer). Red Crossbill: female Elmira 12 Jan only report. Pine Siskin: *intro*; abundant throughout Region all season.

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REGION 4 - SESQUEHANNA

[There is no Region 4 report because there is no editor for Region 4.]

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

The early part of the 1989-90 winter season broke all kinds of weather records. We were in a deep freeze and birders witnessed the coldest and snowiest December on record. The average temperature at Syracuse was 14.7° surpassing the old record of 17.8° set in 1917 and 13.6° below the monthly average. With daily temperatures averaging 13.3° below normal, Oneida L was completely frozen over by 13 Dec, the first time since 1933. The month also set a record for most days (26) with a high at or below 32°F and tied the record for most days (6) with a low at or below zero. The first day with any warmth was the last day of December when the thermometer soared to 45°. At the end of December, 64.6 inches of snow had fallen for the month, surpassing the old record of 52.5 inches set twenty years earlier. Seasonal snowfall at the end of December was 77.5 inches, exceeding the previous October to December record of 71.5 inches set in 1944. In contrast, the monthly average temperature for January and February was 7.7° above normal, melting most of the seasonal snowfall by mid January. Only two significant snowfalls occurred for the remainder of the season to remind us that winter was here. A total of 10.4 inches fell on 28 and 29 Jan. and 14 inches on the last six days of February. An interesting fact about December's snowfall was that only 1 inch of precipitation had fallen by 27 Dec, making it very easy to shovel. Afterwards the amount of

moisture began to increase especially when a brief, but severe thunderstorm helped to bring the day's total to 1.62 inches on 15 Feb. Later that same evening as the rain turned to ice, countless trees and shrubs were damaged in Onondaga and Oswego Counties. At the end of February the total yearly precipitation was over 6 inches compared to the previous winter's drought of 2.77 inches.

What effect did this season's weather have on bird life? Unfortunately, five hundred waterfowl were found dead at Woodman's Pond near Hamilton in mid December. Heavy snowfall covered their natural food, forcing many Canada Geese, Mallard and Am. Black Duck to find food elsewhere. The next best food source were piles of corn and grain that area farmers had stored in open or bunker-style silos to feed their cattle. The suspected cause of their demise was aspergillosis - a mold that had grown on the surface of the silage. December's deep snow practically eliminated access to berry and seed crops, thereby providing the Region with some unusual records at feeders. The area's first Dickcissel in ten years along with Chipping and Savannah Sparrows highlighted some of this season's feeder birds. Lastly with temperatures averaging 6° above normal for the first fifteen days in January, birds became more widely dispersed. Two examples of this were the one-two day stays of Red-throated Loon and King Eider at Oswego Harbor.

Other winter highlights include a record early arrival for Snow Goose when B. Purcell observed six from Derby Hill on 22 Feb, surpassing the old record by two days; this was only the fourth Regional winter report. Although there are approximately twelve records for Am. Wigeon in the winter, and one at Wright's Landing in Oswego Harbor on 12 Feb may have been an early arrival too. A **Turkey Vulture** seen at Scott Swamp on the 27 Jan by R. Knight and on the next day near Selkirk Shores State Park, Oswego Co, by S.F. Kahl (possibly the same bird), was the area's first January sighting and our fifth winter record. Eight reports of Bald Eagle continue to demonstrate this species' increase in numbers over previous winters. Two reports of Red-shouldered Hawk, the first winter reports since 1983, were encouraging for this declining raptor. Rough-legged Hawk reports were widely scattered across the Region with the highest maximum near L Ontario. **Fish Crow** continues its presence at the western end of the Mohawk Valley. Another corvid that made news was Oswego County's first winter record for a Com. Raven. Three of these birds, along with a Bald Eagle, were observed flying over County Rt. 17 near Redfield on 10 Dec by M.S. Rusk. Toward the end of

December observers were both delighted and surprised to find **201** Bohemian Waxwing north of Rome 29 Dec. This is the highest number ever recorded for the Region and a surprise away from the L Ontario Plain, where the previous max of 115 was recorded at Port Ontario in 1976.

A small variety of half-hardy species were found, but never in large numbers. Eastern Bluebirds persisted through the winter in several localities east of Oneida L. American Robin overwintered where staghorn sumac was abundant primarily near the Erie Canal and in the Camillus Valley.

Among winter finches, impressive numbers of White-winged Crossbill were found in both the Adirondacks and the Appalachian Plateau. One observer commented that they were everywhere, with a maximum of 320 on a trip between Old Forge and Big Moose on 1 Feb. In the southern highlands of Madison Co., up to 200 were observed feeding on the cones of Norway and White Spruce. Pine Siskin also began to appear in large numbers. An estimated 300 were counted toward the end of February in Oneida, reminiscent of a similar invasion two years ago. The first **Hoary Redpoll** in two years appeared at a feeder in Cazenovia, especially unusual considering that only seven Com. Redpoll were reported. Evening Grosbeak was common in the Adirondacks and to a lesser extent in southern Madison Co, but nowhere near the abundance a decade ago.

Negatives for the season include no Killdeer after 1 Jan, no Common Snipe reported and very few white-winged gulls observed along the Oswego River. Two one-day reports of Snowy Owl were the lowest in years. Gray Jay was not reported, and Carolina Wren may have been hard hit by December's weather. There was no Swamp Sparrow and even White-throated Sparrow appeared less conspicuous. Lastly, Purple Finch just simply vanished from our Region with just one report.

Observers in the region reported 113 species during the winter. The most unusual of these were King Eider, **Turkey Vulture**, **Dickcissel** and **Hoary Redpoll**. Other notable species reported were Red-throated Loon, Snow Goose, Red-shouldered Hawk, N. Saw-whet Owl, Fish Crow, Common Raven, Bohemian Waxwing, Chipping and Savannah Sparrow.

Contributors: Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Patrick Burns, David Cesari, Rachel Connell, Kate Coyle, Dorothy Crumb, Robert L. Evans, William T. Gruenbaum, John Hanyak, Elva Hawken, Gene Huggins, Steven F. Kahl, Ruth Knight, Mary Alice Koeneke, Nancy Lange, Gary Lee, Robert Long, Belle Peebles, Robert L. Post, Bill Purcell, Margaret S. Rusk, Gerald Smith, Magdalena Stooks, Jim & Elba

Van Dresar, Gary Webb, Glenn Wolford

Abbreviations: DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; FBSP - Fairhaven Beach State Park, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral, OSWE; NPT - northern Pompey township, ONON.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: one Oswego 11 Feb. Com. Loon: last two Oswego 1 Jan. Pied-billed Grebe: two Oswego entire period, one Otisco L 24 Feb. Horned Grebe: two Scriba 18 Feb, one Oswego H 2 Dec-20 Jan, one Noyes Sanctuary 18 Jan-18 Feb. Double-crested Cormorant: seven Oswego all winter. Great Blue Heron: max 16 Oswego R 14 Jan. Tundra Swan: two ad, three imm Oneida L 4 Dec. Snow Goose: intro. Canada Goose: max 600 Otisco L 4 Dec. Wood Duck: two Manlius 14 Jan. Green-winged Teal: max eleven Hookway Tract 13 Jan, present all season. Am. Black Duck: max 137 Onondaga L 28 Feb. N. Pintail: max 15 Seneca R flats 24 Feb. N. Shoveler: one Manlius 6 Jan. Gadwall: eight Oswego 1 Jan. Am. Wigeon: *intro*. Canvasback: four Oswego 28 Jan, eleven reported for the period. Redhead: five Brewerton until 18 Feb. Ring-necked Duck: last nine Skaneateles L 13 Jan. Greater Scaup max 860 Skaneateles L & Oswego 1 Jan. Lesser Scaup: six Oswego 31 Dec, last one 28 Jan. King Eider: one Oswego 15 Jan, 12 Feb. Oldsquaw: max 51 Oswego 11 Feb. White-winged Scoter: one Nine Mile Pt 8 Dec, one Noyes Sanctuary 9 Dec, one Oswego H 1-20 Jan. Com. Goldeneye: max 342 Oswego R 11 Feb. Bufflehead: max 148 Skaneateles L & Oswego R 1 Jan. Hooded Merganser: max 30 Otisco L 6 Dec, five Phoenix 27 Feb. Red-breasted Merganser: max 33 LOL & Oswego R 15 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: *intro*. Bald Eagle: one Big Moose, Dart L, Bald Mt 15 Dec-28 Feb, ad Toad Harbor 14 Jan, ad Oneida 2 Jan; two ad Fulton & Selkirk Shores SP 24 Feb, imm Fulton 20 Jan-27 Feb. N. Goshawk: five reports. Red-shouldered Hawk: one Whitestown 24 Feb, two North Bay, Oneida L 26, 27 Feb. Rough-legged Hawk: max five LOL 22 Feb. Am. Kestrel: twelve reported for the season. Ring-necked Pheasant: seven near Verona 18 Jan. Wild Turkey: max 20 near Rome 26 Dec. Am. Coot: one FBSP 2 Dec, one Baldwinsville 20 Jan, two Oswego through period. Killdeer: one Seneca R flats 23 Dec, one Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery near Martisco 1 Jan, none afterwards. Herring Gull: departed Old Forge 10 Dec. Iceland Gull: three Oswego R 6 Jan-27 Feb. Glaucous Gull: one FBSP 12 Jan, two Oswego R 13 Dec-27 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one DH 2 Jan, one at Griffis AFB, very scarce. Barred Owl: seven reports. Short-eared Owl: one Lenox 10 Dec, two T Vernon 17 Dec, one DH 13 Feb. N. Saw-whet Owl: one NPT 23 Dec, two Limekiln L 7 Feb. Red-headed Woodpecker: two Oneida 1 Jan. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Carpenter's Brook near Martisco 7 Jan. N. Flicker: 13 reports.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Horned Lark: max 150 Wampsville 27 Feb. Blue Jay: max 85 Old Forge to Big Moose 1 Feb. Am. Crow: max 300 near Rome. **Fish Crow**: one New York Mills 1 Jan (G. Webb). Com. Raven: *intro*. Black-capped Chickadee: max 92 Old Forge to Big Moose 1 Feb. Carolina Wren: two Camillus 4 Jan, one Hookway Tract 25 Feb. Golden-crowned Kinglet: three/day until 15 Jan, none afterwards. E. Bluebird: eight T Vernon 8 Jan. Hermit Thrush: one NPT entire period. Am. Robin: max 65 Kasson Rd Syracuse all winter. **Bohemian**

Waxwing: *intro.* Cedar Waxwing: max 80 Otisco L 10 Jan, very scarce afterwards. N. Shrike: ten reports for the period.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel:** female at feeder Sandy Creek 6-12 Dec, first report since 1979 (R. Connell). Am. Tree Sparrow: max 35 Rome, very scarce by the end of the season. Chipping Sparrow: two imm at feeder NPT until 3 Dec, with one persisting to end of period (DWC). **Savannah Sparrow:** one at a feeder Otisco L 8 Dec-1 Jan, third winter record (RLP). Song Sparrow: nine reports. White-throated Sparrow: max four Dewitt 7 Jan, very scarce. White-crowned Sparrow: one NPT 20 Jan to end of period. Dark-eyed Junco: max 12 Rice Creek Biological Station, Oswego 13 Jan. Lapland Longspur: max 21 DH 8 Dec, one Erieville 30 Dec-30 Jan, one near Pratts Falls 31 Jan. Snow Bunting: max 300 T Vernon 26 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: four/day until mid Feb, arr Baldwinsville 11 Feb. Rusty Blackbird: three Fayetteville 10 Jan. Com. Grackle: three Old Forge 20 Dec, one NPT 1 Jan, arr Camillus 23 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: max 20 Nine Mile Pt 19 Dec. Purple Finch: one Erieville 3 Dec-23 Feb, only report. Red Crossbill: two Tug Hill 25 Jan, one Georgetown MADI 11 Feb, four Fabius 20 Feb. White-winged Crossbill: *intro.* Com. Redpoll: four Erieville 5 Dec, three Holland Patent 3 Feb, last there 15 Feb. **Hoary Redpoll:** one at a feeder Cazenovia 19, 29-31 Jan (N Lange, *fide* DWC). Pine Siskin: *intro.* Evening Grosbeak: max 90 Old Forge to Big Moose 1 Feb, 40 Erieville 2 Jan, scarce elsewhere.

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REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

Extremes in weather resulted in a winter of poor birding. It was the coldest December on record, with almost four weeks of temperatures below freezing and half the mornings below zero. Plants froze, pipes froze, lakes and rivers froze, and the birds left. January was one of the warmest on record, with temperatures more than 11° above normal; precipitation was considerably above normal as well. Significant winter storms passed through the Region on 13-14, 20-21, and 27-28 Jan. The first storm dumped two to three feet of snow on the Tug Hill. February was also on the warm side, though less so than January. Temperatures were 3-5° above normal and precipitation was just about normal. Thus, February snowfall was considerably less than in January. For the three-month period both temperature and precipitation averaged about normal, with little snow in northern St. Lawrence Co., but 260 inches

falling on the Tug Hill.

The small numbers of wintering waterfowl remaining after the December freeze dispersed over large expanses of open water created by the prolonged January thaw. There were no reports of loons or grebes. Mallard outnumbered Am. Black Duck about five to one at Moses-Saunders Dam. Moderate numbers of Common Goldeneye were seen, while Common Merganser counts were low. Small numbers of Gadwall and Red-breasted Merganser were reported, as well as one Greater Scaup. Wintering gull numbers also were down.

Winter raptor numbers were only fair. On the NYSDEC flight 23 Jan, Blanche Ritchie counted eight adult and one immature Bald Eagle on the St. Lawrence River, fewer than usual. P. O'Shea spotted a Bald Eagle at Cranberry Lake on 4 Feb, a very unusual location in winter. A few N. Harrier and American Kestrel lingered into Dec. There was a possible N. Goshawk in Massena and an immature at Cape Vincent 27 Feb. A total of three Sharp-shinned and ten Cooper's Hawk were reported. One Cooper's Hawk took a male Northern Cardinal at Dick Brouse's feeder in Watertown, and LBC found one dead, possibly from starvation, in Henderson. Red-tailed Hawk was outnumbered by Rough-legged Hawk, with many dark morph birds of the latter in southern Jefferson Co. Mary Wood reported 18-25 Rough-legged Hawk at Cape Vincent all winter. One adult **Golden Eagle** on the St. Lawrence River 23 Jan is most unusual. A Snowy Owl at Cape Vincent from late Dec to late Feb was the only report and a few Short-eared Owl were reported. There was a N. Shrike in Watertown in December and several singles in St. Lawrence Co. in Feb.

There were several reports of Gray Partridge. During the period of intense cold and snow accumulation in Dec, several large flocks of Wild Turkey were observed near Canton, where one flock of 33 ventured into yards in the village.

Among half-hardy species reported were Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, **Northern Mockingbird**, and Rusty Blackbird. Somewhat hardier species reported included Red-bellied Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse. **Bohemian Waxwing** numbers were strong. Horned Lark was present throughout the winter in greater numbers than usual, and large flocks of Snow Bunting were seen frequently. Reports of Lapland Longspur in St. Lawrence Co. are unusual. There was a probable on the Massena CBC and "dozens" on Cape Vincent all winter, although perhaps the latter report may merely reflect the presence of an experienced birder in the

right place at the right time.

Finally, winter finch numbers were better than their dearth in recent years. There were several reports of small flocks of Pine Grosbeak. Both crossbills were reported. Two Com. Redpoll in Canton on 28 Dec was the only report. Pine Siskin was seen in small numbers through the period, increasing markedly in Feb. Purple Finch was scarce. Evening Grosbeak reports were spotty, common according to some, but generally down.

In spite of new reports from Cape Vincent, Ogdensburg and Gouverneur, number of species was down with the exception of raptors. There were eight waterfowl, 13 raptors, five gulls, eleven other non-passerines, and 32 passerines for a total of 69 species reported.

Contributors: Marilyn Badger, Carol Budd, Richard Brouse, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, John Green, Paul Kelly, D. Larrabee, June LaVack, Jill Lee, Peter O'Shea, Michael Sheard, Glen Snell, Brian Watson, Mary Wood.

Abbreviations: MSD — Moses-Saunders Dam.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: three in early Dec. Am. Black Duck: max 40 MSD 27 Jan. Mallard: max 210 MSD 27 Jan. Com. Goldeneye: max 110 MSD 27 Jan. Com. Merganser: max 55 MSD 21 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*. Cooper's Hawk: *intro*. N. Goshawk: *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Gray Partridge: three MSD, six at Limerick Cedars, 40 at Cape Vincent. Wild Turkey: *intro*. Iceland Gull: one MSD 19 Jan. Glaucous Gull: three MSD 19 Feb.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: Great Horned Owl: several reports. Snowy Owl: *intro*. Barred Owl: one Louisville 25-31 Dec. Short-eared Owl: seven Pt. Peninsula 23 Jan. Belted Kingfisher: one Wellesley I 30 Dec. Red-bellied Woodpecker: three at feeder Henderson (LBC). Northern Flicker: two reports.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Com. Raven: several vocalizing s STLA late Feb. Tufted Titmouse: one near Rodman on Tug Hill, the only report in recent years (DL). Red-breasted Nuthatch: good numbers. Golden-crowned Kinglet: three 23 Dec. **N. Mockingbird**: on both Massena and Watertown CBCs. **Bohemian Waxwing**: 34 Wellesley I on 30 Dec; 40 Louisville 14 Feb. N. Shrike: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: none.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: continued increase in numbers, max six males and two females at Watertown feeder. White-throated Sparrow: two reports. White-crowned Sparrow: two Louisville 26 Jan. Lapland Longspur: *intro*. **Rusty Blackbird**: eight Massena 29 Jan. Purple Finch: only report from Louisville. House Finch: now well-established, max 75 at Cape Vincent feeder all winter. Red Crossbill: single Louisville 21 Dec. White-winged Crossbill: max 38 Chaumont Barrens 17 Dec; also at Canton and Barnes Corners. Com. Redpoll: *intro*. Pine Siskin: *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: *intro*.

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REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

The most notable birds during the winter of 1989-90 were almost a continuation from the fall season. As then, there were lots of Bald Eagle, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill across the four northeastern counties, with a few other surprises thrown in as well. A total of 82 species was reported, or just two fewer than last winter, and with good variety and numbers on Regional Christmas Bird Counts. Species honors went to the NYS side of the Ferrisburg circle with 53, while Saranac Lake CBC had the individuals high count of 4,770, about a quarter of which were White-winged Crossbill!

If the birds were much the same, the weather was most unusual, even for the North Country. This was the coldest December since at least 1831 (when local records commence), with readings of -20°F at Newcomb on 2 Dec, -20°F at Elizabethtown 8 Dec, -25°F at Paul Smiths 9 Dec, and -20°F at Newcomb 29 Dec typical figures for the month. January, by contrast, was balmy, with a classic thaw late in the month: Plattsburgh 37°F on 23 Jan, Lake Placid 44°F on 25 Jan, and Plattsburgh 39°F on 27 Jan. Snow was mainly at higher elevations; on 12 Jan, for example, Lake Placid received 10 inches, while Elizabethtown picked up only an inch. There was a major 2-ft. snowfall at the end of January. February similarly saw some unseasonably warm temperatures Regionwide: sunny 40°F on 1 Feb, Plattsburgh reached 39°F on 6-7 Feb and 44°F on 9 Feb, and even Saranac Lake climbed to 47°F on Washington's Birthday. The birds were undoubtedly as relieved as those buying fuel oil to see the break in the weather. By the close of the period, the first three Red-winged Blackbird had even shown up at Franklin Falls on 27 Feb.

The trainmen aboard Amtrak's "Adirondack" turbotrain, following the scenic old D&H tracks along Lake Champlain on its run from NYC to Montreal, reported regular sightings of Bald Eagle all winter. Nor were they alone. Consider first, though, that during the Olympic Winter of 1979-80 there were *no* Bald Eagles reported here. Then consider, and savor, the following from winter 1989-90: an adult near Westport 13 Dec, an immature at North West Bay 24 Dec-7 Jan, an adult at Essex harbor 6 Jan, a transitional adult at Wickham Marsh and a full adult at Willsboro Point 20 Jan, two at Valcour Island and Ausable Point 27 Jan, an adult Limekiln Lake 12 Feb and at Seventh Lake 20 Feb, another at Indian Lake Dam, a subadult at Tupper Lake 5-21 Feb, an immature at Essex

harbor 24 Feb, and an adult again at Willsboro Point 24 Feb. Even given some duplication, this magnificent species is obviously recovering well.

Bohemian Waxwing, as promised, put in a strong appearance too. At least 215 were found on the Essex County lake shore side of the Ferrisburg CBC circle 16 Dec. They also penetrated higher elevations than usual: seven at Lake Placid on 30 Jan; 20 at Terry Mt., CLIN, 9 Feb, and three on the Paul Smiths College campus, FRAN, the first two weeks of Feb, leaving only Hamilton County devoid of this striking northerner.

Small flocks of Pine Grosbeak were found on three CBCs and at other locales, with a lovely, rosy male still visiting Charlcie Delehanty's Tupper Lake feeder at the end of Feb. White-winged Crossbill was found on four CBCs, with an incredible 1,146 counted (by just 14 observers) on the Saranac Lake CBC. Gary Lee reported them "Everywhere the whole period and still around, but fewer in numbers now," a feeling echoed by Bob Hagar, who thought they "thinned dramatically by Feb 6th and while still around are hard to find now." All of the other winter finches, except Hoary Redpoll, were present, but in mixed numbers. House Finch was on one CBC and the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club found a max 40 at Essex 24 Feb. Red Crossbill was on two CBCs and among four at Owls Head on Valentine's Day, a male was apparently mate-feeding. Common Redpoll were thinly scattered and found only on one CBC; they arrived at Owls Head 3 Dec, with a max of 13 there on 7 Dec, and the HMBC still found a few near Essex to 24 Feb. On the same date the visiting Hudson-Mohawk birders found, "lots of siskins— they were everywhere, at every feeder in flocks of 40, 50, 60, 100+!" They certainly were numerous, turning up on three CBCs, with a max 636 on the Saranac Lake CBC. Both "green-morph" and "gray-morph" Pine Siskin showed up among the flock of 150+ at the editor's feeder near Elizabethtown (see *American Birds*, 43(5, Winter):1268-1274; 1989). But the most striking individual was among those at the Furness feeder near Mineville that was "obviously a siskin, but looks like all the world as if it was trying to impersonate a Hoary Redpoll!" The impression given by this leucistic individual was of a white bird with dark face, wings, and tail. There were fewer American Goldfinch (four CBCs, max 306 Elizabethtown CBC) and Evening Grosbeak (three CBCs, max 772 Elizabethtown CBC).

On New Year's Eve, Arthur Dodge of Westport and a companion were skating on newly frozen North West Bay when they encountered some 51 dead Canada Goose, American Black Duck, and Mallard frozen in the ice about 100 feet offshore from the NYS Boat Launching Site,

where some 1,251 Canada Goose, 27 Am. Black Duck, and 266 Mallard had been counted in the same area on the 16 Dec Ferrisburg CBC. North Country SPCA president, Robert Lopez, D.V.M., blamed the deaths on local feeding of feral domestic geese and the wild flocks at the launch site in recent years. "Abnormal feeding by well-meaning people has drastically upset their normal behavior. They're killing them with kindness," said Lopez. An immature Turkey Vulture found grounded in the Adirondacks this winter and, while being rehabilitated at the Westport Rehabilitation Center, seemed grateful for the waterfowl carcasses, according to Dr. Craig Russell, who successfully released this feathered recycler during the January thaw.

And there were, as always, a few rarities. Bob Hagar found a drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** a half-mile north of Ausable Point, south of Valcour Island, CLIN, on 6 Feb, where it remained through 24 Feb, according to Hagar and Ted Mack. Helen Menwissen was surprised to encounter a male **Spruce Grouse** on Benson Road, about a mile west of Rt. 30, southern HAMI, during the first week of Jan: "It ambled across the road very nonchalantly, with no concern at all for my approaching car." Rarely reported anywhere in winter, this is yet another unexpected record from south of its documented Atlas range. Bob Hagar also located a male **Red-bellied Woodpecker** on Dunn Road near Chazy, CLIN, on 6 Feb.

Remember that your own rarity or record of unusual behavior may be of interest far beyond New York State. Our note with Greg Furness of his careful observations of "Common Redpolls excavating snow burrows and snow bathing" (*Kingbird* 37:74-75; 1987) has subsequently brought enquiries and requests for reprints from redpoll researchers in Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, Newfoundland, Ontario, Belgium, France, Germany, and Spain. One who regularly contributed such notes and observations was Mark Gretch of Clinton County, who is moving to the wilds of Region 1. His contributions to our knowledge of the birds of the Adirondack-Champlain region have been considerable. We're grateful, Mark, for your tireless efforts, recognizing that our loss is the Niagara Frontier's gain.

Contributors: Joan Charboneau, Charlcie Delehanty, John David Delehanty, Marion Delehanty, Arthur Dodge, Tom Duffus, John Fritz, Emily Geddes, Robert Hagar, Rudy Hagland, Terry Hall, Candy Hess, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, Anne Hungerford, Robert Kurtz, Gary Lee, William Lee, Robert Lopez, Theodore Mack, Helen Menwissen, Edith Mitchell, Dan Nickerson, John & Susan Peterson, Gary Randorf, Craig Russell, Jeanne Shonyon, Mary Ann Tebo, Jan Trzeciak, and all the Christmas Bird Counters.

Abbreviations: CICBC - Champlain Islands Christmas Bird Count; ECBC Elizabethtown Christmas Bird Count; FCBC - Ferrisburg Christmas Bird Count 16 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake Christmas Bird Count 30 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Canada Goose: *intro*. Am. Black Duck: *intro*. Mallard: *intro*. Oldsquaw: pair Whallon's Bay from fall to 8 Jan (RH), but not FCBC. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*. Red-tailed Hawk: 1 SLCBC new to count. Rough-legged Hawk: one SLCBC also new. Gray Partridge: Chazy Dec only report. **Spruce Grouse**: *intro*. Wild Turkey: 16 ECBC new; also two hens Tupper Lake 2 Dec, two in Tupper Lake yard 24 Jan, and two toms all winter Inlet from 8 Jan at deer feeders shows continued survival in Adirondack interior. Am. Coot: two FCBC unusual. Herring Gull: three SLCBC new. Great Black-backed Gull: one ECBC new.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Short-eared Owl: two fighting over prey ECBC new to count. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: *intro*. Black-backed Woodpecker: 1 SLCBC and Ferd's Bog 17 Jan only reports.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: max 160 FCBC and 142 CICBC good numbers, but report from Indian L. shop 9 Feb (GL) almost as unexpected as the Inlet dump report last winter. Gray Jay: six SLCBC, plus Moose RRA 2 Dec and Ferd's Bog 17 Jan a good showing. Com. Raven: max 12 ECBC a new high, plus reports of many patrolling highways picking up road-killed crossbills and siskins. Boreal Chickadee: max five ECBC, also one SLCBC, three Sabattis Road Bog 24 Feb, and Moose RRA 1 Dec, Seventh L 13 Feb representative of most winters. Tufted Titmouse: reports from Port Henry and Willsboro Point expected, but arr Inlet feeder 9 Dec through period quite a find. E. Bluebird: three males Westport only report (EG). **Hermit Thrush**: Saranac Lake feeder 4-29 Dec, when it hit window and died; a new SLCBC count week bird, just missing the count day, alas. Am. Robin: seven FCBC, under tree in Baldwin Rd. yard near Ticonderoga after overnight rain 1 Jan (JC), one wintering in Tupper Lake village Jan; fewer than some recent winters. **Brown Thrasher**: briefly at feeder near Elizabethtown 10 Feb (SP), only fifth winter record for Region. Bohemian Waxwing: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: 22 FCBC, only report. N. Shrike: given the number of siskins at feeders, reports seemed alarmingly low; the four reports were from the Lakeshore Rd., ESSE, 21 Dec (JFRK), SLCBC, one killed a Downy Woodpecker Inlet feeder 22 Dec and was singing by the same house at entrance to Moose RRA 4 Feb (GL), and the last was calling (?) Owls Head 11:15 AM, 23 Feb (JT).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: three FCBC not unprecedented but still a good find, feeding in red cedars near Split Rock Point and Grog Harbor.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 15 ECBC indicative of generally high numbers, while a pair wintering well outside hamlet of Elizabethtown are indicative of another general outward movement. Song Sparrow: one FCBC, two ECBC, one SLCBC, an excellent showing for this half-hardy unrecorded in some winters. White-throated Sparrow: three FCBC, max six SLCBC, and two

wintering Tupper L even better than last winter's exceptional showing. Dark-eyed Junco: 117 ECBC typical of high numbers this winter. Lapland Longspur: 31 CICBC only report of this "birders' bird." Snow Bunting: max 587 ECBC and 40-100 wintered in an Owls Head yard. Red-winged Blackbird: four FCBC and four Lake Shore Rd., ESSE, 21 Dec unusual in winter here. Com. Grackle: three SLCBC notable anywhere, but especially at higher elevations. Pine Grosbeak through Evening Grosbeak: *intro*.

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REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

KENNETH P. ABLE

Atypical seasons have the potential to tell us things about the factors controlling distribution and abundance of birds. This winter was unusual in particularly interesting ways. December was the coldest since records began in 1795, and the third coldest for any month on record. At Albany, temperatures averaged almost 13°F below normal and the mercury never reached the freezing mark from 12 to 30 Dec. Sustained cold of this magnitude is very unusual for December and resulted in the freezing of most water, including the large rivers. Lake George froze over completely on the night of 23 Dec, the earliest on record. There was little precipitation in Dec. January, usually our coldest month, was the fifth warmest on record. In a complete reversal of the situation in Dec, temperatures averaged about 12°F above normal. In Albany, the temperature never reached as low as 10°F, and soared to the 50's on 16-18 Jan. Precipitation was greater than normal and snowfall of nearly 10 inches on 29-30 Jan was the first fall of over 6 inches in nearly two years. The warmth continued through most of February, with a strong southerly flow and temperatures topping 60°F around 23 Feb. At the end of the month, however, winter returned. Precipitation in February, including snowfall, was above normal, bringing seasonal totals near long-term averages. These unusual conditions, especially the abnormal, sustained cold in the beginning of winter provided an opportunity to look for effects on the birdlife. One might predict, for example, that half hardy species might be forced southward or killed. The records, especially CBCs taken during and immediately following the coldest period, showed conclusively that this was not the case. The presence of

Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Rufous-sided Towhee and Fox Sparrow attested to better than average abundance of these species. Some of these were even more numerous in higher elevation regions than in the river valleys. The important factor was apparently that food (especially berries) was abundant in these areas, providing an illustration that given sufficient available food, these species are little affected by cold temperatures, per se.

The finch flight that was evident during the fall continued. White-winged Crossbill built to large numbers, especially in the higher elevation state forests. They were accompanied by small numbers of Pine Grosbeak and moderate numbers of Evening Grosbeak. These two species were largely confined to higher elevation areas. Pine Siskin built in numbers through the period and were very abundant by season's end. Purple Finch and Common Redpoll were scarce. Short-eared Owl was exceptionally numerous. In RENS, a nice group was slowly decimated over the season by Great Horned Owl predation. They used the Short-eared Owl feathers to line their nest! Perhaps related to the numbers of Short-eared Owl was more than the usual number of reports of Long-eared Owl. Rough-legged Hawk was present in good, but not exceptional, numbers. Bald Eagle continues to increase.

Mild weather in the last half of February induced substantial migration of icterids and the early arrival of Killdeer. With the return of cold and snow toward the end of the month, many of them disappeared.

Rarities during the period included **Greater White-fronted Goose, Thayer's Gull, Black-backed Woodpecker, Bohemian Waxwing and Dickcissel.**

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Abbreviations: ACBC - Albany CBC 17 Dec; BCRes - Basic Creek Res, ALBA; CCCBC - Catskill-Coxsackie CBC 19 Dec; JGCBC - Johnstown- Gloversville CBC; SCBC - Salem CBC 17 Dec; SSSP - Saratoga Spa SP; TCBC - Troy CBC 30 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one Stockport Sta 16 Dec (WC), three Hague 21 Dec (ER), both quite late. Horned Grebe: one Hague 12 Dec (MS), late. Great Blue Heron: 15 reports including overwintering at Cambridge WASH (JS). Mute Swan: max 13 Cheviot COLU 24 Jan (AL); one TCBC. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** two Tomhanock Res RENS 13 Dec (fide WS). Snow Goose: 19 SCBC, unusual in winter. Canada Goose: overwintering in increasingly large numbers;

conditions, 500-1000 Schuylerville all season, 2000 Cambridge 19 Feb, 9021 TCBC. N. Pintail: arr Hudson R COLU 23 Feb (AL). Canvasback: max 224 Catskill 22 Feb (PFC). Ring-necked Duck: one CCCBC; one TCBC. Lesser Scaup: six Stockport Sta 16 Dec (WC); one TCBC. Oldsquaw: one Hudson Falls CBC 17 Dec; three CCCBC. Hooded Merganser: six reports including 13 SSSP CBC 16 Dec. Red-breasted Merganser: 10 Schoharie Creek at Central Bridge SCHO 1 Jan (BB,KB); male Conklingville Dam 27 Jan (RPY).

HAWK-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one Rensselaer 24 Jan (TJ); one Nassau 14 Feb (FC); early migrants COLU 19-23 Feb. Bald Eagle: 38 reports. N. Harrier: 40 reported, max 12 CCCBC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 24 reports. Cooper's Hawk: 28 reports. N. Goshawk: 10 reports, low. Red-tailed Hawk: 118 CCCBC, high. Rough-legged Hawk: good numbers throughout, max 21 TCBC. Am. Kestrel: scarce. Ring-necked Pheasant: two reports. Wild Turkey: good numbers, max 50 near Berlin (AR). Killdeer: arr Stockport Sta, Hudson 22 Feb (PFC,WC). Com. Snipe: one Burnt Hills 21 Jan (DB). Am. Woodcock: one SSSP 21 Jan through period (RH,TC). **Thayer's Gull**: one first winter TCBC (SBT,KPA,RLH). Iceland Gull: 15 reports, max 9 TCBC. Glaucous Gull: five reports.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: good numbers including Jenny L in Dec. Snowy Owl: two reports, CCCBC (KPA,SBT), Coxsackie Flats 21 Jan (JP, *fide* RPG), perhaps same bird. Long-eared Owl: one Linlithgo COLU 19,20 Dec (SBT,KPA,CP); one JGCBC; one Silver Bay WARR (EA). Short-eared Owl: 29 reported, max eight Johnsonville RENS Nov (NW). N. Saw-whet Owl: three CCCBC; one Berne 23 Dec, 5 Jan (KPA); two Loudonville 8 Jan. Belted Kingfisher: nine reports including Hague 7 Feb (ER). Red-bellied Woodpecker: 27 reported, max 16 CCCBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: five reports including one through period Berne (KPA). **Black-backed Woodpecker**: one Fultonville 4 Jan (WG).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Fish Crow: singles Schenectady 10 Dec (RPY), New Baltimore 17 Feb (RPY), Niskayuna 19 Feb (WL). Com. Raven: six reports, max five Spencertown COLU (NK). Black-capped Chickadee: large numbers arriving Jenny L Dec-Jan; high proportion ad not typical for invasion year. Red-breasted Nuthatch: widely scattered, good numbers most areas. Carolina Wren: 10 reports, max 21 CCCBC. Marsh Wren: singles Poolsburg COLU 10 Dec (PFC), CCCBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one CCCBC. E. Bluebird: good numbers, max 15 Auriesville 24 Jan. Hermit Thrush: 10 reported, max six ACBC. Am. Robin: arr large numbers 22 Feb. Gray Catbird: singles Clarksville early winter (LA), SCBC, CCCBC, BCRes 28 Dec, 2 Jan (BB,KB). Am. Pipit: one near Jenny L 10 Dec (RPY), odd date and locality. Cedar Waxwing: widespread in good numbers. **Bohemian Waxwing**: five Westerlo 15 Dec (KPA), three SCBC, one CCCBC, one Greenville 22 Dec (JC). N. Shrike: scarce, six reported.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: unusual numbers; 46 CCCBC, record count. Pine Warbler: one at feeder Glens Falls early Dec (MA).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel**: imm female Ghent COLU 2 Dec through period (OW,WC,BC,mob). Rufous-sided Towhee: one CCCBC. Field Sparrow: one ACBC. Savannah Sparrow: one TCBC. Fox Sparrow: one ACBC, seven

CCCBC, one Hague 25 Dec (BJ), one L Taghkanic SP 4 Jan (AL). Song Sparrow: 20 BCRes 28 Dec (BB,KB), large number. Swamp Sparrow: 16 CCCBC, good count; one Shushan WASH 2 Jan (JS). White-throated Sparrow: numerous even at higher elevation. White-crowned Sparrow: three reported. Lapland Longspur: good numbers, max 16 Bacon Hill SARA 16 Dec (BP). Red-winged Blackbird: arr large numbers 17-23 Feb. E. Meadowlark: more numerous than usual, 41 CCCBC. Rusty Blackbird: six reported. Com. Grackle: one Albany 8,9 Dec (LT); arr large numbers 16-23 Feb. N. Oriole: imm female at feeder Glenco Mills COLU to 17 Dec (WC). Pine Grosbeak: reported seven localities, 9 Dec through period; max 25 Partridge Run GMA ALBA (BC). Purple Finch: few reports; max 47 CCCBC. Red Crossbill: five reports, all singles except 10 Partridge Run GMA 28 Feb (AL). White-winged Crossbill: widespread in moderate numbers, max 100 Cole Hill SF ALBA 28 Jan (KPA). Com. Redpoll: five reports, max 22 TCBC. Pine Siskin: very large numbers, increasing late winter; max 900 JGCBC. Evening Grosbeak: moderate numbers at higher elevations, max 54 Jefferson SCHO 27 Feb (AM).

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

HELEN C. MANSON

December put us in a deep freeze. The record breaking cold made this the coldest December in 55 years. Average temperature was 17°, almost 19° below normal. This record cold was followed by a record warm January which brought above average temperatures, some days in the 50s, and rain instead of snow. February continued the mild trend. The average daily temperature was 33.4°, once again the warmest month in 55 years and more than 8° above normal. There was little snow cover and the Hudson River froze over early and at mid January was still frozen except for channels. The ice went out early and by the end of January and early February the ice was gone. Waterfowl moved steadily northward and there were no great rafts of ducks.

An abundance of wild foods, especially wild berries and seeds, kept the hardier and half-hardy species well fed. Poison Ivy berries were especially heavy, keeping Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy Woodpecker and Black-capped Chickadee busy at the seeds. Christmas Bird Count totals indicated that good numbers of Red-tailed Hawk, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing and

American Tree and Song Sparrows were present in late December and early January.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was discovered 7 Jan on a little used road in eastern Dutchess County. The birders who found it were on their way to check a report on some hawks when they spotted the bird in a roadside tree. This is a second record for Dutchess. The first was collected in March 1953 in Dover Plains and is a skin in the American Museum of Natural History. This bird was feeding on the black fruits of the Buckthorn, which is often the last fruit eaten by birds at the end of the winter. The bird continued to be observed by many people well into March. There was a plentiful food supply with wild rose, cedar and other wild fruit and seeds. Other birds in the same area were Purple Finch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, E. Bluebird and chickadees. A spruce plantation provided good shelter for these birds.

Another good find was the first **Barnacle Goose** record for Dutchess County. On 11 Feb this bird was spotted with Canada geese. It took a sharp eye and patience to pick him out amongst the thousands of Canada Geese that winter in northeastern part of the county.

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Abbreviations: JBCBC - John Burroughs CBC 23 Dec; OCBC - Orange County CBC 16 Dec; PCBC - Pawling CBC 1 Jan; SCBC - Sullivan County CBC 29 Dec; WCBC - Waterman CBC 16 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Hudson R at New Hamburg 17 Feb (JMK). Pied-billed Grebe: one Hudson River 18 Feb (JMK). Great Cormorant: three ad, three imm Hudson River off Peekskill 27 Jan (Sullivan Co. Audubon Soc). Great Blue Heron: lingered in many areas. Greater White-fronted Goose: one Dover Plains 13 Feb (MY DF). Snow Goose: two e DUTC 11-24 Feb. **Barnacle Goose**: *intro*. Canada Goose: wintered by the thousands DUTC, PUTN. Wood Duck: one SCBC, last two Pleasant Valley 8 Jan, arr 9 Feb, increased to four Stissing by end of month. Green-winged Teal: three Goshen 17 Feb. Am. Black Duck: widespread and on all CBCs. Mallard: good winter numbers. N. Pintail: three WCBC, four Minisink 10 Feb, two Wappingers area, one 21 Feb. Rhinebeck (SJ). Gadwall: six Wappingers L 1 Dec. Am. Wigeon: two L Walton 12 Feb, two Wappingers L 13 Feb (BM). Canvasback: 44 OCBC, fewer in Hudson R, max 31 mid Jan. Ring-necked Duck: five OCBC; 25-30 wintered Sylvan L; returned to inland ponds DUTC mid Feb, 17 PUTN 31 Jan, 61 WCBC. Greater Scaup: one Kays P 11 Jan (MVW). Lesser Scaup: one Sylvan L 18 Feb (JMK). Com. Goldeneye: three OCBC, two Rondout Res 5 Jan, four New Hamburg 27 Jan (OTW), max ten Esopus 27 Feb (OTW). Bufflehead: two Purdy's Putn 31 Jan (FB), four Vanderburg Cove 13 Feb, six OCBC. Hooded Merganser: 17 PCBC, three

Wappingers Creek 18 Feb. Com. Merganser: 80 Rondout Res 5 Jan, 158 OCBC, 1600+ Hudson R mid Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: few L Glenada and L Carmel through period (FB). Ruddy Duck: three hardy birds OCBC, only report.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: a few always seem to linger through the winter, 29 PCBC; arr mid Feb. Bald Eagle: eight wintered at Iona Island; scattered reports of one to three birds along the Hudson R, few strayed inland DUTC; 87 on NYSDEC aerial survey ULST and SULL Res Jan, 39 in Feb. N. Harrier: five ORAN 10 Dec, scattered reports for DUTC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 11 OCBC, five WCBC, seven PCBC, two BCBC indicating a good winter population. Cooper's Hawk: two WCBC, four OCBC, few others throughout the period. N. Goshawk: singles Claryville 10 Dec, Dover Plains 17 Dec, PCBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: three SCBC, a rare winter record; one through period Wappingers Falls (OTW), singles BCBC and PCBC. Red-tailed Hawk: 51 OCBC, 57 WCBC, 30 BCBC. Rough-legged Hawk: well reported most areas, max 15 Pine Plains, fairly common ORAN, a 6-1 ratio of light to dark morphs (JPT). Golden Eagle: imm wintered near Wawarsing feeding on deer carcass, one SCBC, two Stissing Mt through period. Am. Kestrel: 11 OCBC, eight WCBC, returned to usual haunts by late Feb. **Gyr Falcon:** a very large falcon near Newburg 16 Dec (JPT), observer familiar with this species; if confirmed would have been a local first. Ruffed Grouse: 14 PCBC, few others. Wild Turkey: low numbers noted SULL, poor breeding season with high fox and coyote fall and winter activity (JW), 15 PCBC, seems to be doing well in DUTC. Semipalmated Plover : one WEST Dec. Killdeer: arr Millerton 11 Feb (JMK). Com. Snipe: three WCBC, one SCBC, one wintered Millerton. Am. Woodcock: one Milan DUTC 13 Feb (Steve Keene), returned to some areas ORAN 17 Feb. Iceland Gull: first year bird Stony Point 23 Jan (ET); one flying up the Hudson R 5 Feb. Glaucous Gull: imm Stony Point 23 Jan. (ET).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one DUTC Dec, none Jan and Feb; three BCBC, very scarce or unobserved in most areas. Great Horned Owl: one or two heard most areas but no nesting noted. Snowy Owl: one not confirmed Millerton early Dec. Barred Owl: one or two most areas. Long-eared Owl: one heard DUTC Jan; at least one pair continues to occupy a large juniper thicket near Florida ORAN (JPT). Short-eared Owl: four wintered near Goshen, one flew over car on Taconic Parkway DUTC 11 Feb (AJ). N. Saw-whet Owl: one Pawling 20 Jan. Red-headed Woodpecker: few noted (JPT), one wintered Rhinebeck (SJ). Red-bellied Woodpecker: 20 OCBC, 16 WCBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: five DUTC 28 Feb. N. Flicker: 14 PCBC, 16 OCBC. Pileated Woodpecker: noted widely throughout period.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: several hundred at farm areas in n DUTC. Tree Swallow: one of these tough little birds at a bluebird box Rhinebeck 9 Feb. Blue Jay: high count on some CBCs, usual numbers at feeders. Am. Crow: over 9000 at Middletown Roost, uncounted numbers near Hyde Park, 1500 crossing the Hudson R at sunset near the Mid-Hudson Bridge (AJ). Fish Crow: not well reported but heard in usual places along Hudson R. Com. Raven: widely reported from at least four Catskill locations, two at feeder SULL

Dec. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 48 PCBC, 23 WCBC, a wonderful invasion. Brown Creeper: 18 PCBC. Carolina Wren: widely reported SULL, ORAN, 13 OCBC, nine WCBC. Winter Wren: two OCBC, three Deer Park Dec PCBC, Golden-crowned Kinglet: eight WCBC, 33 PCBC, 22 OCBC, 15 BCBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one 9 Dec. (CV). E. Bluebird: 56 WCBC, 15 OCBC. **Townsend's Solitaire**: *intro*. Hermit Thrush: one Millerton 17 Dec, one ULST late Dec. Gray Catbird: one or two DUTC mid Jan and mid Feb, one at feeder 15, also 21-22 Jan following ice storm (FB). Brown Thrasher: one at feeder near Goshen 1-5 Dec. **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Middletown 1 Feb (JPT). Cedar Waxwing, max 200 (JPT), 126 WCBC, 164 PCBC, fifty OCBC. N. Shrike: one WCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Cape May Warbler: one Millbrook 13 Dec. Yellow-rumped Warbler: seven in one flock WCBC, 14 PCBC, three OCBC, one or two seen throughout area. Pine Warbler: one through Jan and Feb. at feeder Millerton.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: singles at three different feeders DUTC, two WCBC. Field Sparrow: one 24 Feb (BB), four WCBC, four OCBC. Savannah Sparrow: four to six wintered in Red Hook. Fox Sparrow: one 15-24 Feb, two 27-28 Feb (FB), several SULL Dec, Jan; singles reported around DUTC. Song Sparrow: 30 WCBC. Swamp Sparrow: one Pond Gut 14 Feb (CV). White-throated Sparrow: small numbers but widespread (JPT), good numbers at most feeders, 206 WCBC. White-crowned Sparrow: one Wawarsing mid Dec-mid Jan, one PCBC. Dark-eyed Junco: abundant. Lapland Longspur: nine Red Hook 19 Dec (HM), three to five there all winter. Snow Bunting: four OCBC, flock of 1500 on the farm flats Red Hook, like a blizzard when they flow up and whirled about. Red-winged Blackbird: some wintered, arr mid Feb. E. Meadowlark: eight Millerton 20 Jan, seven wintered near Goshen, three PCBC. Rusty Blackbird: 22 ORAN 16 Dec, record winter number (JPS). Com. Grackle: large flock mixed with Red-winged Blackbird Red Hook 23 Feb (SJ). Pine Grosbeak: four Rhinebeck 2 Feb (SJ), 35 WCBC. Purple Finch: few at some feeders, 17 PCBC. White-winged Crossbill: 15 Duel Hollow Road DUTC 9 Jan (ET, MY). Com. Redpoll: two WCBC. Pine Siskin: 105 PCBC, abundant SULL, few noted ORAN and DUTC, increased in numbers mid Feb. Evening Grosbeak: common to abundant SULL, some flocks up to 120 birds, 81 BCBC, 20 daily Wiccoppee DUTC and Rhinebeck in n DUTC, virtually unrecorded in ORAN.

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REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

The pleasant fall quickly gave way to winter, frigid winter. The month of December was one of the coldest on record with Brookhaven Lab recording the lowest average temperature in its 40 years of keeping records. In New York city it was the third coldest December since record keeping started in 1869. This time the meteorologists blamed the "Polar Vortex" for pushing the jet stream south. In contrast January was considerably warmer than normal with an actual mean temperature of 41.4° F. against a normal of 31.8°. In addition, new highs were recorded during the period 16-18 Jan when the temperatures were above 60°. February also was warmer than normal with an actual mean temperature of 39.8° against a normal of 33.4°. Thus, after a numbing December, the balance of the Winter was "warm" with January warmer than February. The consequences of all this for birding are unknown. However, it is to be noted that despite the cold December, the minimum temperature never dropped below 5° F. and we are still not in jeopardy of loosing our climatic designation of Zone 7. Precipitation was slight in December and more normal during the rest of the period, with January above normal and February below balancing one another. A late February snow exhibited what we are finding is the usual pattern for precipitation, 1.8 inches in Central Park and a foot at Montauk with intermediate amounts between.

The frigid weather came prior to and during the Christmas count period. However, most reports which came to us indicated that birding and the counts were better than the compilers had expected. Unofficial count totals for the Region ranged from 99 to 129 and were somewhat less than recent species totals. Still, compared to normal highs elsewhere these are impressive numbers. It appeared the one factor throughout was the lack of strong winds. Even the count on December 30 fared "reasonably well" amidst the sleet which formed ice sheets on the jackets of those of us who were unfortunate to be out that day. It was miserable, but not too windy. Birds and birders alike can take the cold, but the wind chill is another matter.

Alcids were seen in greater numbers than in recent years with reports of **Common Murre**, **Thick-billed Murre**, **Razorbill**, and **Black Guillemot** (details under species accounts). On the other hand, this was another non-finch Winter in our Region except for the few occurrences

also noted below. Snowy Owls were reported widely, but did not stay for any length of time at any one place. The fall's **Gyrfalcon**, however, did stay long enough to be counted on the Southern Nassau CBC of 30 Dec, but became more wide ranging and departed shortly thereafter. Other notable winter birds were a **Ross' Goose**, which stayed through the season, found at Calverton on 1 Jan by James Clinton, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, and a **Pine Warbler** wintering at a feeder.

The winter beaches and adjacent ocean in Region 10 constitute a major birding area for the rarer birds. Such rarities, when seen, are regularly reported. Many birds "uncommon" in other parts of the state are a normal part of the winter beach avifauna. These tend to be glossed over by us since this Region is where they winter. We therefore include a list here of the species (all seen this and almost all seasons) to be expected at Jones Beach for Upstate birders. Not otherwise mentioned in our report are: Common and Red-throated Loon, Northern Gannet, Great and Double-crested Cormorants, Great and Snowy Egret, Northern Harrier, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-eared Owl, Horned Lark, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Snow Bunting.

For the first time in some years Horned Grebe was reasonably abundant on the ocean this winter with reports both from the eastern and western south shore. In contrast, several correspondents indicated that the opposite was true in western sections of Long Island Sound, where they appeared to be down in numbers. Results of the Duck Census for this and past years ought to throw some light on what may be happening. (This would be a good topic for a short paper for *The Kingbird*).

On 31 Dec Henry Flamm counted 22 Red-tailed Hawks in view at New Springfield, Staten Island, overlooking the Fresh Kills Dump. Hawk watchers please note.

There were many reports of Eastern Bluebird, mostly from mid Long Island. The Bluebird project is probably a cause and is beginning to bear fruit.

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Abbreviations: BCBC - Brooklyn Christmas Count 16 Dec; CCBC - Captree Christmas Count 17 Dec; FI - Fire Island; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge;

JFKWS - John F. Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary (Tobay); JBch - Jones Beach; LI - Long Island; MNSA - Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside; MPt - Montauk Point; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; Pwy - Parkway; PtL - Point Lookout; ShIn - Shinnecock Inlet; SI - Staten Island; SNCBC - South Nassau Christmas Count 30 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Horned Grebe: *intro*. Red-necked Grebe: a half dozen records Bronx to MPt mostly on CBCs. Tundra Swan: one with Canada Geese sod farms Calverton 1 Jan-7 Feb (mob). **Greater White-fronted Goose**: one Hook Pd 7-24 Jan (TB, A Rich), in a flock of Canada Geese containing a few of both morphs of Snow Geese. Snow Goose: blue morph Southaven P 27 Dec (BA,SD), three blue morph nw Riverhead 24 Jan (PG). **Ross' Goose**: *intro*. Wood Duck: pair Moravian Cemetery SI 14 and 16 Jan (HF); various other records. Blue-winged Teal: one each on BCBC and Montauk CBC. Eurasian Wigeon: approximate eight birds widely scattered across the island. Tufted Duck: one Central Park Res. Com. Eider: winter reports from Jones Inlet and Montauk as late as 3 Feb, max 34 Montauk CBC. King Eider: same comments as preceding, max 12. Harlequin Duck: one Glen Cove early Dec, ten ShIn 26 Dec, two w end JBch 19 Dec, then ten by month end, finally building to a max of 25 in a closely knit flock which frequented the jetties on both sides of JBch Inlet. Com. Merganser: 50 in Bannister Creek, Lawrence, a large number to be seen in salt water.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Black Vulture: one Northern State Pwy near the NASS-SUFF line 6 Jan (DM). Turkey Vulture: two near Moors' Lane in early Feb, feeding on a dead deer (Paul Stoutenburgh in the *Suffolk Times*, *vide* PG), at least one was seen as late as 24 Feb (SW). Bald Eagle: one JBch 2-3 Dec, imm Brookhaven 27 Dec (BA), w end JBch 3 Feb, plus sightings on three different CBCs. Sharp-shinned Hawk: fewer than usual wintered. Cooper's Hawk: a few wintering birds reported from SI to e LI. N. Goshawk: several wintering. Red-shouldered Hawk: Queens CBC 16 Dec. Red-tailed Hawk: all dumps in the western parts of the Region reported this species, *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: several, all from early winter. Am. Kestrel: fewer than usual. Merlin: noted on three CBCs. Peregrine Falcon: noted on four CBCs, arr mid Manhattan mid Feb. **Gyrfalcon**: one Meadowbrook Pwy till 3 Jan, then more wide ranging, PtL 14 Jan, w end JBch 18 Jan and 3 Feb. Clapper Rail: MNSA 24 Jan (PM). Sora: found N. Nassau CBC. Com. Moorhen: Smithtown CBC. Semipalmated Plover: Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens CBCs, Mill River 14 Jan. Am. Oystercatcher: 20 SNCBC. Greater Yellowlegs: scattered numbers wintered. Least Sandpiper: one Montauk 16 Dec. Little Gull: imm SNCBC 30 Dec (SD). Com. Black-headed Gull: West 12th St, Manhattan after 12 Dec, imm PtL 1 Jan, 14 Jan, ShIn 24 Feb. Iceland Gull: several wintered, reported by most south shore CBCs, one at Baldwin at Silver L Pd away from the ocean (William Belfind). Lesser Black-backed Gull: Halesite, Huntington Harbor 18 Dec (HB). Glaucous Gull: less numerous than Iceland Gull, a few from Queens to MPt. Roseate Tern: sickly bird ShIn to early Dec (AB). Forster's Tern: two CCBC 17 Dec. Com. **Murre**: one ShIn 6 Dec (Mr. & Mrs. PG), 6 Jan (JC), 7 Jan (JR, mob), three live and several dead from e LI

(NYRBA). Thick-billed Murre: one in bay off of Foot Pd, Montauk 11 Feb (NYRBA). Razorbill: two MPt 16 Dec (Andy Farnsworth,TB). **Black Guillemot**: one ShIn 7 Jan (MC, mob).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Rose-ringed Parakeet: one (provenance unknown) at feeder in Baiting Hollow 5 Dec. Snowy Owl: one Midland Beach, SI 9 Dec (HF), others at PtL, w end JBch, ShIn, Westhampton, MPt, Orient Beach SP. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: numerous singles from SI to e LI.

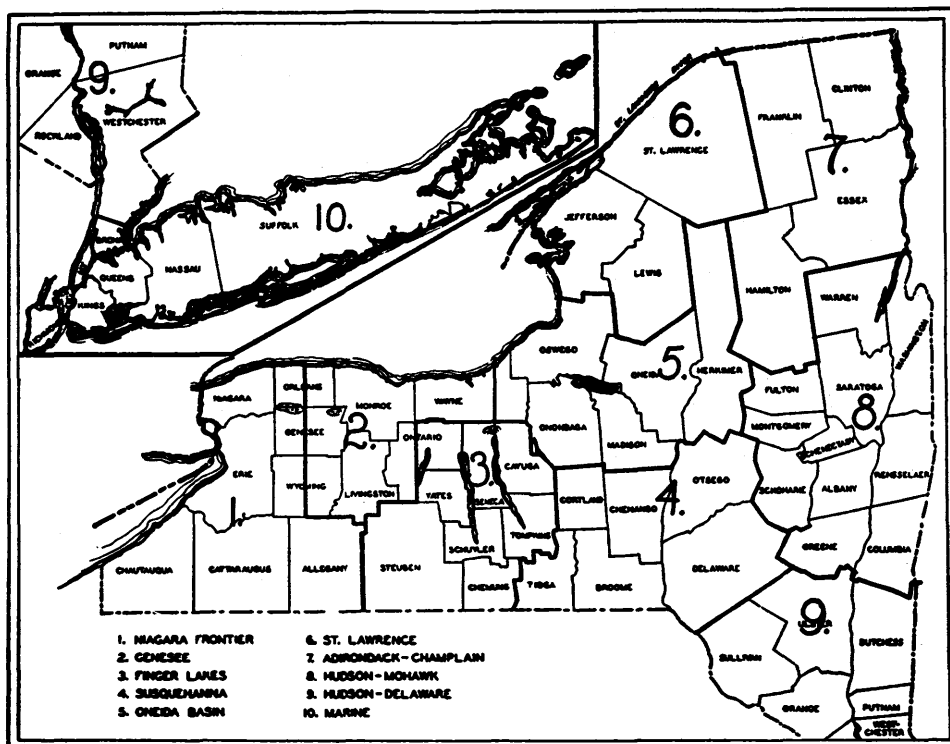
FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: E. Phoebe: one MP 16 Dec. W. Kingbird: CCBC. House Wren: one MPt 16 Dec, two CCBC. E. Bluebird: *intro*. Am. Pipit: 35 SNCBC, three ShIn 7 Jan (JR).

VIREOS-WARBLERS: Orange-crowned Warbler: one MPt 5 Dec, w end JBch 10 and 14 Dec, BCBC, SNCBC. Com. Yellowthroat: BCBC. Yellow-breasted Chat: one Quogue-Watermill CBC. **Pine Warbler**: one wintered at a feeder in Sunken Meadow (HB), also noted on two CBCs.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Dickcissel: at feeder Northport 27 Dec-14 Jan (SV), one Central Suffolk CBC. Chipping Sparrow: five BCBC. Vesper Sparrow: noted on three CBCs. Grasshopper Sparrow: MPt 16 Dec. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: one MNSA 9 Jan (PM). Lincoln's Sparrow: noted on two CBCs. Lapland Longspur: 47 St. Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale (SW). Rusty Blackbird: two Bellmore 9 Jan (PM), six Yaphank-Carman's R 17 Jan (JC), 10 Glen Cove 3 Feb and 15 Feb (Ralph Cioffi). Boat-tailed Grackle: 12 Queens CBC, 2 BCBC. Com. Redpoll: one at feeder Oyster Bay 20 Feb-2 Mar, three SNCBC. Pine Siskin: five W.T. Davis Refuge SI 6 Dec (HF). Evening Grosbeak: two Old Brookville 8 Dec.

603 Mead Terrace, S. Hempstead, NY 11550.

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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