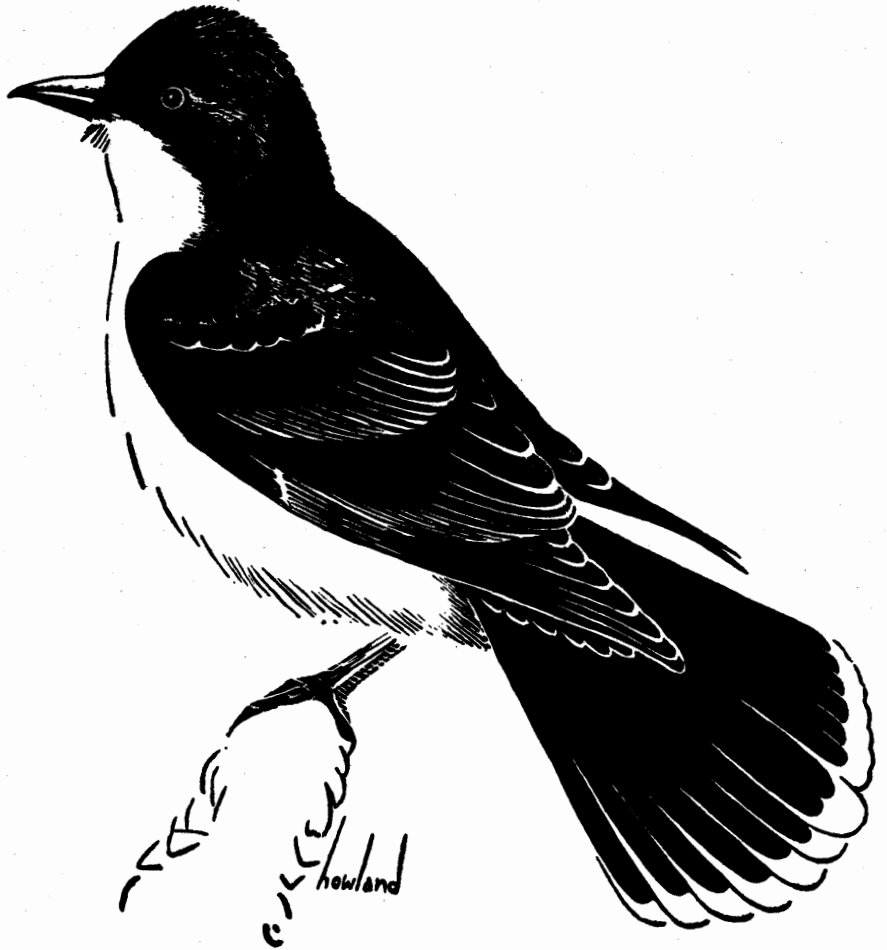


# The **KINGBIRD**



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**JUNE 1993**

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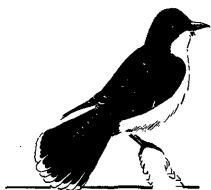
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# The KINGBIRD

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*Editor* — Paul A. DeBenedictis  
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Figure 1. Male Black-throated Gray Warbler at Fire Island, New York, 14 September 1992. Photograph by Jack Carlson.

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES 57: BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER

JOAN QUINLAN

On the morning of 14 Sep 1992, a Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) was discovered feeding in a Red Cedar just off the boardwalk leading to the lighthouse on Fire Island in Suffolk County, Long Island. The stunted growth of the barrier beach and the bird's proximity made for excellent viewing as it flew from cedar to cedar while feeding. It was readily identified as a male Black-throated Gray Warbler by its distinct black and white facial pattern, black throat and bib. Its yellow lores were also noted. Its sides were streaked with black. After John Fritz, with whom I was birding, and I ran through its field marks, we signaled Manny Levine and Jack Carlson to abandon the Fire Island Hawk Watch, which they were manning at the time, and join us to share our good fortune and excitement. It was then that Jack Carlson took the accompanying photograph, for which I thank him. The bird was observed for approximately half an hour, before it disappeared. To my knowledge nobody reported the bird subsequently.

This is apparently the tenth report for New York State and the third for Long Island within one year. Bull (1974) lists six sight records occurring in 1930, 1961, 1962 (2), 1963 and 1970. There was a hiatus until 1985, when one was seen in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, from 27 to 29 Sep (DiCostanzo 1985). The next report was on 13 Oct 1991 at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Reserve (Schiff and Wollin 1992a), followed by a sighting on the Queens County Christmas Bird Count, 14 Dec 1991 (Schiff and Wollin 1992b). [Editor's Note: the 1985 report noted above was reviewed by the New York State Avian Records Committee but was not accepted (*Kingbird* 37:204; 1987). The 1991 record has been accepted (*Kingbird* 43:22; 1993) in a report that appeared after this manuscript was submitted. None of the more recent records as yet have been reviewed by that body.]

According to the A.O.U. (1983:612), the breeding range of the Black-throated Gray Warbler is North America generally west of the 105th meridian, from southern California to southwestern British Columbia. It migrates regularly as far east as Kansas, and winters from southern California and southern Arizona south to Oaxaca and Vera Cruz in Mexico. P.O. Box 655, Central Islip, New York 11772

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## FIRST ATTEMPTED NESTING OF DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

WILLIAM W. WATSON

Between 8 and 28 May 1992, Double-crested Cormorant were observed attempting to nest on a water diversion weir island in the Niagara River off Buckhorn Island State Park, Grand Island, New York. Although the nesting terminated unsuccessfully between 28 May and 9 June, this is the first nesting attempt of this species in the Niagara Frontier Region of New York State. The only other nesting of Double-crested Cormorant in the Buffalo Ornithological Society territory occurred on the north shore of Lake Erie at Mohawk Island, Ontario, Canada, which is located 35 miles due west of Buffalo. On 18 May 1983, A. R. Clark and Arthur Schaffner documented 12 cormorant nests, 8 of which contained eggs. On 15 June 1983, the Canadian Wildlife Service counted a total of 16 nests, 34 eggs and 9 young. Unfortunately by 3 August 1983, the colony was abandoned and it has not been re-established (Clark *et al.* 1983).

According to *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State* the closest colony to the Buckhorn Island site in New York State is located on Little Galloo Island in eastern Lake Ontario (Andrle and Carroll 1988). The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation conducted its annual census there during third week in June, finding 5400 nests on Little Galloo Island in 1992. Slightly more distant than the Little Galloo Island colony is the Wantry Island colony on Oneida Lake. Starting with one nest in 1984 (Claypoole 1988), this colony currently has 40 to 60 active nests.

### DESCRIPTION OF NESTING SITE

The nesting site is located on a water diversion weir island off Buckhorn Island State Park which is at the north tip of Grand Island in the Niagara River. This man-made island is 3 1/2 miles upstream from Niagara Falls at 78°59' 55" W longitude and 43°03' 30" N latitude. The island has an elongate axis that runs NNW and SSE with a length of 1060 feet and a width of 100 feet. It is mostly composed of boulder size fill overlain by cobbles and pebbles (smoothed Udorthents according to Owens 1986). Most of the island is covered with grasses with a few

shrubs and deciduous trees. The cormorants nested in two cottonwood trees at its NNW end.

The water diversion weir island at Buckhorn Island State Park is presently a thriving Ring-billed Gull colony. These gulls not only nest on the entire length of the 1060 foot island, but also attempt to nest on the adjacent mainland. A few breeding Herring Gull also are present most years. Previously there was a colony of Common Tern. However, the author has not seen any breeding Common Tern on this island since May 1987.

In June 1990 William D'Anna alerted the author to the possibility of Double-crested Cormorant nesting on the water diversion island, and on 12 June 1990, this research project commenced to measure their abundance and monitor any breeding activity of cormorants at this site. Each year from May to October cormorant counts and breeding activities were recorded. Observations were made with an 8 inch Celestron telescope (50x) from the water intakes 1 1/4 miles WNW of the island or with a Bushnell Space Master telescope (45x) from Buckhorn Island State Park 1000 feet SSE of the nesting trees (hereafter Buckhorn). Times are all Eastern Standard Time.

## OBSERVATIONS

- 8 May 1992.* At 6:00 PM three Double-crested Cormorant on three nests were observed from the water intakes. It could not be determined if they were sitting low enough on the nests to be incubating. A total of 23 cormorants was counted on the island.
- 9 May 1992.* From Buckhorn between 8:30 and 8:40 PM, three cormorants were observed at the first nest, one cormorant at the second nest, while the third nest was vacant. No cormorants appeared to be in an incubating position. A total of 181 cormorants was counted on the island. The increase was because the observation time was closer to sunset, when more cormorants come to roost.
- 13 May 1992.* Observing from the water intakes, four or five nests could be seen. Adults were possibly incubating on three of the nests. The nesting tree foliage was starting to obscure both nests and cormorants. The count of cormorants on the island was 34.
- 16 May 1992.* In the evening 158 cormorants were counted on the island from the water intakes.

- 28 May 1992. Between 5:30 and 5:40 PM possibly five and definitely four nests were observed at a distance of 1000 feet from Buckhorn. On four of the nests a Double-crested Cormorant sat very low with only their heads showing. These cormorants were definitely in incubating position. A total of 39 cormorants was counted on the water diversion island.
- 10 June 1992. Observing from Buckhorn between 4:50 and 5:10 PM, the nesting tree and the nests appeared to be abandoned. Although there were no Double-crested Cormorant on the water diversion island, a total of 74 cormorants was found on two Niagara Mohawk electrical towers 1800 feet and 2000 feet east of the island. During May these towers had been vacant. One day earlier, John Curtis, a senior wildlife technician for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, also noticed that the cormorants had deserted the water diversion island, and visited the nesting site. A total of nine nests was counted. He was able to look into two of the lower nests and found that one was empty and the other contained a broken gull egg.
- 7 November 1992. The nesting trees had lost enough leaves to make it possible to study the nests from Buckhorn. Between 10:50 and 11:10 AM two nesting trees could be seen about 20 feet apart on the east side of the north end of the island. The northern most tree had three well constructed nests, while the southern tree had four well constructed nests, one flimsy nest and possibly two remnants of nests. Four Double-crested Cormorant were observed upstream from the colony.

## DISCUSSION

There are several possible reasons for the premature abandonment of the colony some time between 28 May and 9 June. It certainly is not unusual for first attempted nestings to be unsuccessful. In the attempted nesting of Double-crested Cormorant at Mohawk Island in 1983, Weseloh "felt that such poor success was consistent with a new colony and the number of visits the island had probably received from boaters (and biologists)" (Clark *et al.* 1983). At the water diversion weir island, conditions appear to have been similar.

Through the spring and summer human activity increases on and around the water diversion island. Although the presence of the



thriving Ring-billed Gull colony discourages most people from landing on the island, fishermen and pleasure boaters frequent the surrounding waters. The LaSalle Yacht Club is only 6000 feet west of the nesting site. Any boater taking the shortest route around the north end of Grand Island would pass close to the water diversion weir island. Most of these boaters pass through the narrow channel between the land and the SSE end of this island. Workers from the New York Power Authority also frequent the area. A barge is sunk in the narrow channel between the mainland and the water diversion weir island in late November to divert ice over Niagara Falls and prevent an ice build up near the water intakes during the winter months. In the spring, usually about mid April, water is pumped out of the barge and it is removed. This year it was removed on 10 April. Other workmen painting the north Grand Island bridge used the peninsula next to the water diversion island to unload supplies from boats.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has been studying Common Tern that have small colonies at the base of the electrical towers, and have been attempting to reestablish the Common Tern colony at the SSE end of the water diversion island. This year in conjunction with the State University College at Buffalo, a monofilament grid was placed at the SSE end of the island on 14 and 15 April to discourage Ring-billed Gull from nesting. The island was visited 9 May and again on 23 May to remove the monofilament grid. On 13 June a census of Ring-billed Gull on the island recorded 2232 nests. Since none of these intrusions on the water diversion island occurred between 28 May and 9 June, it could be deduced that they were not a direct cause of the abandoning of the Double-crested Cormorant colony.

Over the past three years there has been a pattern of cormorants roosting on the water diversion island during the spring and switching to roosting on the nearby Niagara Mohawk electrical towers in the late summer and fall. Did the few birds that were nesting simply follow the flock to the towers and abandon their nests? However, 24 cormorants were counted on the island as late as 2 July in 1990, demonstrating that cormorants may remain on the island much later into the summer.

The abundance of young birds in the Ring-billed Gull and Common Tern colonies attracts predators. Although the swift current of the Niagara River thwarts predation by mammals such as raccoons, there is evidence of predation by Great Horned Owls on the Common Tern colonies at the base of the electrical towers. Although a Peregrine Falcon

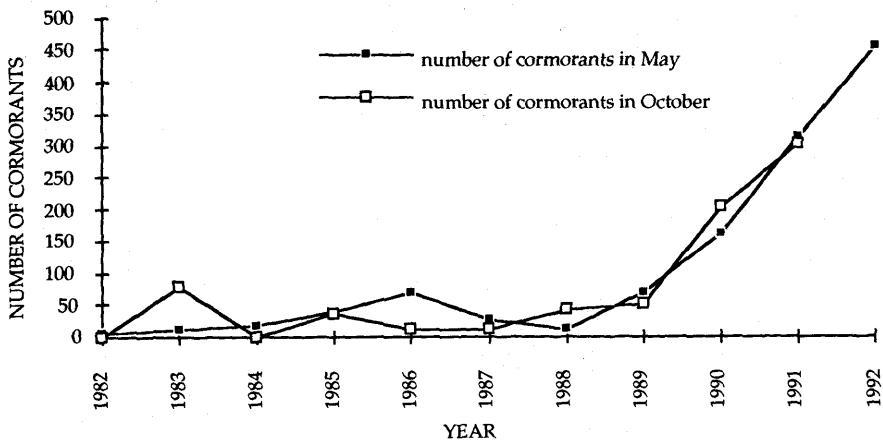


Figure 1. Number of Double-crested Cormorant on Buffalo Ornithological Society Counts.

that roosted on the electrical towers was not verified until 16 August 1992, it was probably present earlier. Both of these birds could have stressed the breeding adult cormorants. Four miles downstream from the nesting site is a colony of Black-crowned Night-Heron. This species has been documented taking Common Tern eggs.

Finally, the cormorants that roost at this site are mostly immature and probably represent a young population of birds that are inexperienced breeders. The disruption of humans, the urge to change roosting locations, predatory birds and the inexperience of these young birds all may have contributed to the abandonment of the Double-crested Cormorant colony.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Double-crested Cormorant in the Buffalo Ornithological Society's territory during the last five years. This trend is demonstrated in the May Counts and October Counts of the Buffalo Ornithological Society (Fig. 1). This chart shows nearly identical trends for both the May and October counts. The annual May Counts show an increase from 11 Double-crested Cormorants in 1988 to 453 in 1992. The October Counts show a five year increase from 13 cormorants in 1987 to 303 cormorants 1991. Yearly maximum counts of Double-crested Cormorants within a two mile radius of the breeding site indicate that their number has more than doubled each of the last three years. A maximum of 149 cormorants was recorded on 20 September 1990. In 1991 the cormorants peaked at 386 birds on 25 September, representing a 259% increase. In 1992 there was a 214% increase as the cormorants reached a maximum of 827 birds on 1 September.

The establishment of the Double-crested Cormorant colony off Buckhorn in Region 1 was not unique. At the same time the Region 1 colony was being established a similar colony was being established in Braddock Bay in the neighboring Genesee Region (Griffith 1992). The increase in migrating Double-crested Cormorant and the establishment of two new colonies in New York during 1992 indicates that observers on the Niagara Frontier and in much of the rest of New York State should expect to find new cormorant colonies and should be actively monitoring potential nesting sites. The Buckhorn Island site should continue to be monitored. The water diversion island not only has suitable nesting habitat but also is surrounded by an increasing cormorant population. It is very likely that cormorants will successfully breed at this site in the near future.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Senior Wildlife Biologist Mark Kandel, Senior Wildlife Technician John Curtis, Senior Wildlife Supervisor Robert Miller (all of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), Dr. Stuart Calhoun of the Biology Department of the State University College at Buffalo and Frank Miklitsch, Construction Supervisor of the New York Power Authority for providing valuable current information. I would also like to thank Gerald Rising and other people who reviewed this report and provided personal communications and encouragement.

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## BIRDING THE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS OF SOUTHWESTERN JEFFERSON CO., NEW YORK

LEE B. CHAMBERLAINE

Much of the east end of Lake Ontario is bordered by low sandy soils with extensive embayments isolated from Lake Ontario by sand dunes. Stream and river deltas that drain the Tug Hill Plateau also provide important wetlands. Several of these wetlands in southwestern Jefferson County in *Kingbird* Reporting Region 6 are maintained as Wildlife Management Areas by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. These wetlands are important both as nesting and feeding areas for summer resident species and as staging areas for migratory water birds. A variety of species unusual both in Region 6 as well as in New York State have been recorded in them. This paper provides an overview of the bird life of these areas as well as tips for observing birds in them.

### Perch River Wildlife Management Area

The Perch River Wildlife Management Area protects the Perch River marshes. It is located about 7 miles northwest of Watertown in the Towns of Brownville, Orleans and Pamela and is about 7804 acres in size. It is primarily managed for waterfowl production and as an area for migrating waterfowl to rest and feed in the spring and fall. The area is divided into units which will be discussed separately as to their bird life and how best to visit them. The area is open to hunting for waterfowl during the season, but the waterfowl hunting hours are restricted from sunrise to noon. Waterfowl hunters must leave the area by 2:00 PM.

Please note that much of the area is posted against entry and will be posted as **WETLAND CONTROLLED AREA** or **POSTED NO ENTRY**. The purpose of this posting is to protect nesting and resting waterfowl from any interference. If an area can be traversed, it will be posted as **Fishing Allowed** or **Public Hunting Lands**. Also note that Perch Lake on the north end of the area is closed to the public as a Refuge Area and trespass is strictly forbidden at all times.

The following rare or unusual species for this part of New York have been seen at Perch River Wildlife Management Area: American White

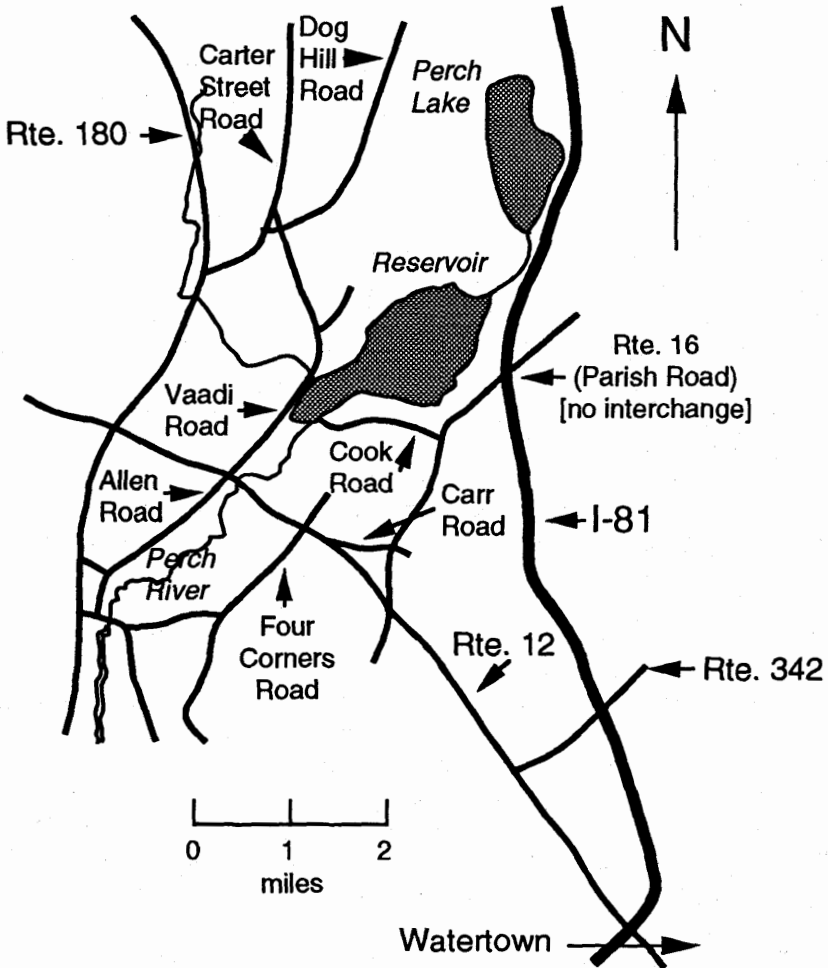


Figure 1. Road map of the Perch River Wildlife Management Area. Some secondary roads, especially away from the Wildlife Management Area, have been omitted. See text for further details.

Pelican, Least Bittern, Great Egret, Glossy Ibis, Tundra Swan, Mute Swan, Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Gray Partridge, Upland Sandpiper, Common Black-headed Gull, White-winged Tern, Black Tern, Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Stilt Sandpiper, Pine Warbler, Sedge Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Grasshopper Sparrow and Henslow's Sparrow.

Perch River Wildlife Management Area is easiest to reach from I-81 (Fig. 1). From the south or east consider an approach cutting across the Tug Hill Plateau on New York Route 177 to I-81 at Adams Center rather than going into Watertown via New York Route 12 from Utica. Route 177 will provide you with a view of Tug Hill Plateau and bypasses downtown Watertown. Take I-81 north to Exit 47 (Bradley Street and NY Route 12), and follow Route 12 northwest toward Clayton about 6.6 miles to an area called Seven Bridges (now only two bridges exist). Look for the Area Signs as you drop down into the Perch River drainage. From the north you may leave I-81 at Exit 48 (New York Route 342, Fort Drum - Black River) and follow route 342 west to NY Route 12, where you turn right and continue on Route 12 to the Seven Bridges about 4.6 miles beyond this intersection.

**LOWER POOL:** This area is the portion south of Route 12 and is best viewed from Allen Road, which parallels the area and has two parking facilities with good overlooks. A spotting scope is a must for these locations, as you will be a considerable distance from the marsh. The first parking area is about 0.4 miles from Route 12 and will be on your left. It is a good location to look for large waders and waterfowl as well as nesting Osprey. The second parking area is about 1.1 miles from this lot and is again on your left. This area overlooks the lower control dam, which is closed to hunting and trespassing. Closer to the marsh itself and at a lower elevation, it is an excellent location to view the nesting Mute Swan and Canada Goose. The resident Bald Eagle as well as Greater White-fronted Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, Caspian Tern, Black Tern and Osprey have been seen feeding at this location. In the late fall migrating Tundra Swans and rafts of puddle and diving ducks are present.

From this location return to Route 12 and stop at the large parking facility on Route 12. Many and varied aquatic plants of the marsh, such as wild rice, bur-reeds (*Sparangium* sp.), Arrow Arum (*Peltandra virginica*) and bladderworts (*Utricularia* sp.), grow here. The vegetation is thick since you are almost at water level but in summer nesting Black Tern, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, and Common Moorhen can be seen here. Black Tern nests in this area of the marsh, and they will fly by very close and have been known to mob an observer. Great Blue Heron can be seen out in the marsh. Spend at least 20 minutes to make sure you haven't missed an American Bittern in the cattails. This location is an excellent area to see migrating blackbirds and many kinds of waterfowl

in the fall. Fish and other reptiles may also be seen here. On warm days very large, but nonpoisonous, Northern Water Snakes (*Natrix sipedon*) often bask on the limestone riprap.

**VAAADI ROAD:** From this location go back toward Allen Road and turn right onto Vaadi Road at the red barn which is just before Allen Road. Be careful, as this is a heavily traveled road year round. Proceed down the Vaadi Road about 0.2 miles until you see the Waterfowl Check Station and a large red barn on the left. You may park here and examine the canals and dikes of the Middle Pool for waterfowl, long-legged waders and Northern Harrier. At or before sunrise, it is possible to hear four to five Great Horned Owl calling from all sections of the marsh at this stop. You will also notice in the fall and spring the movement of waterfowl back and forth the length of the marsh. In late October flocks of Brant sometimes follow the Perch River down through the marsh from Perch Lake, a resting area, en route to Lake Ontario and points south.

From the Check Station continue down the Vaadi Road to the Bill Mosenteen Memorial Stone and parking lot, about 0.6 of a mile, for a view of the Upper Pool and the dike system. You will also be able to see into the Stone Mills Pool, the most recently developed portion of the wetland complex from the main road at this point. Walking along the marsh edge on Vaadi Road here can produce both American and Least Bitterns, young Canada Geese grazing on the dam, Northern Harrier, and Black Terns, Marsh Wren and Swamp Sparrow. Double-crested Cormorant and Caspian and Common Tern, which nest on islands in Lake Ontario, frequently feed here. In season watch for swans coming off Stone Mills Pool. In April look for migrating raptors overhead if there are strong southeast or south winds. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, and Osprey have been observed in fairly high numbers from this site. A White-winged Tern nested unsuccessfully and did most of its feeding in Stone Mills Pool in 1992.

After returning to your car continue about 0.9 miles on Vaadi Road to the other end of the Stone Mills Dike past the house on the right and park on the road side for an overview of the Stone Mills Pool. You should see an Osprey nesting platform at this point and be able to view a good portion of the pool. Waterfowl, Osprey, Black Tern, and Mute Swan can be seen here, especially at the edge of the marsh. Check the dead tree stumps and nesting islands for Double-crested Cormorant, Ring-billed Gull, Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Osprey and resting and

feeding ducks. When Black Tern is present, you will have an excellent view of their feeding activities and can follow their return to their nest sites in the cattails below. As many as four Osprey can be seen hunting the Stone Mills Pool at one time.

After finishing here move on about 0.3 of a mile beyond the gated access road, which may or may not be open, to the wet meadow where Sedge Wren, Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows can be found. If the access road gate is open, drive in and park, then walk to the dirt pile and viewing platform, where you can get a good overall view of the marsh. Least and American Bittern, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Moorhen, Black Tern nest in this area, and various waterfowl species and shorebirds may be found. In the fall various species of warblers move along the hedgerow just behind the dirt pile.

**ANTHONY FLATS:** To get to the other side of the marsh at the Anthony Flats (Cook Road), return to Route 12, turn left toward Watertown, and continue about 1.1 miles to Carr Road, the second road on the left. Take Carr Road to Parish Road (County Route 16), turn left, and travel about 1.3 miles to the Wildlife Management Area Sign and Cook Road, which is unpaved. Turn left onto the Cook Road. About a mile down this road you will come to the marsh and again be at almost water level. Park in the large lot here away from the marsh and walk down to the marsh's edge. If the cattails are not too high, as they are by late summer, you can scan a large section of the marsh for Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Common Moorhen, Caspian Tern, Tree Swallow, Marsh Wren, and Swamp Sparrow. In the spring large numbers of migrant waterfowl, such as Canada Geese, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Ring-necked Duck, may be present. After viewing the marsh, stop at the old Spring House and walk along Cook Road. This section can provide good land birding. The Spring House was for the Anthony Farmstead, which was located in this hollow. The barn for the farm was between the two hills above and to the left of the Spring House. It was very large for its day and at one time was the largest barn in Jefferson County, and perhaps the entire North Country. You may also be interested in seeing the Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) and Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*) trees that line the cow pasture fence along this road. They are both tree species commonly found where limestone outcrops occur.

### **Lakeview Wildlife Management Area**

The Lakeview Wildlife Management Area is located on the Lake Ontario shoreline in the southwest corner of Jefferson County in the Town of Ellisburg. It is a large lake shore marsh complex separated from



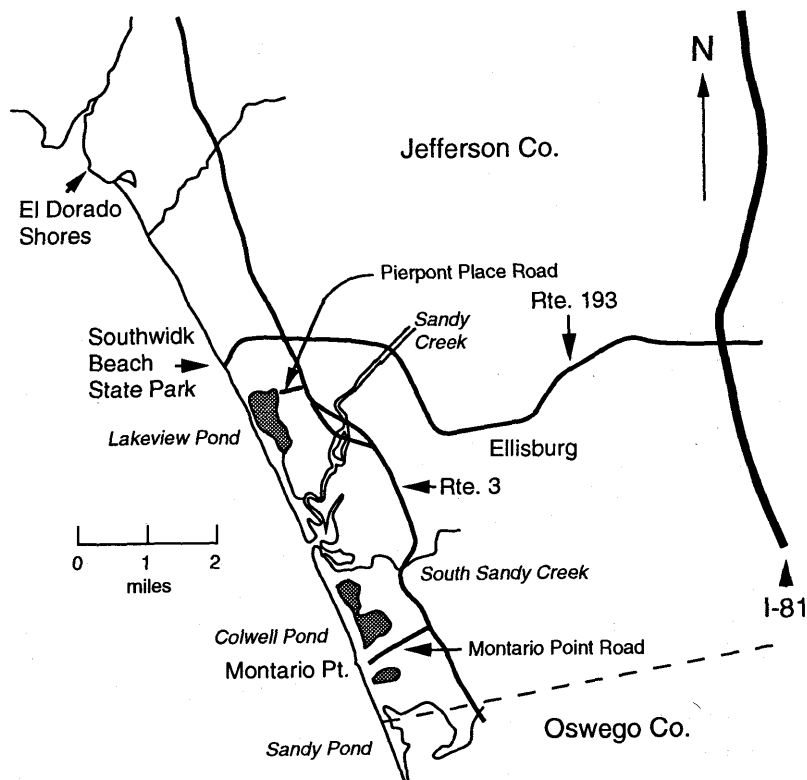


Figure 2. Road map of the Lakeview Wildlife Management Area. Some secondary roads, especially east of Rte 3, have been omitted. See text for further details.

Lake Ontario by a 2 1/2 mile freshwater barrier beach dune system. The area is about 3460 acres in size, with 2,400 acres of wetlands habitat. It is managed for waterfowl production and as a spring and fall feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl. A great variety of water birds occur here and many migrant land birds from hawks to swallows to warblers occur in spring and fall. Many times the first spring and early fall migrants are seen here, since the area lies in a major flight path along the Lake Ontario shoreline. This area is about four miles south of the Nature Conservancy's El Dorado Shores Preserve and both areas are readily visited on a single trip.

The marsh complex here supports nesting Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Black Tern, and both Marsh and Sedge Wrens. Common and

Caspian Terns feed along the Lake Ontario shoreline all summer. Unusual birds seen here include Great Egret, Tundra Swan, Mute Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, early arriving or late departing Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Sandhill Crane, Whimbrel (usually heard overhead), Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Little Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Common Raven, and Eastern Bluebird. The only Upstate record of White-tailed Tropicbird was obtained here.

To reach this area take I-81 to Exit 40 (Pierrepont Manor) then follow New York Route 193 west through the village of Ellisburg to New York Route 3 (The Seaway Trail) at the road leading to Southwick Beach State Park (Fig. 2). The Wildlife Management Area extends south from the park between Route 3 and Lake Ontario. Access to the wildlife management area is possible at several lateral roads off Route 3, and the barrier beach itself is reached either via the Southwick Beach State Park or via a walking trail at Lakeview Pond. The canoe enthusiast may access the area at Colwell Pond on Montario Point Road, at the South Sandy Creek Fisherman Access Launch on New York Route 3, or from Lakeview Pond on Pierrepont Place road off Route 3.

**LAKE ONTARIO BEACHES:** To access the beach from the north end of the Wildlife management area, continue west into Southwick Beach State Park (a parking fee is enforced from Memorial Day to Labor Day) and park at the beach area. A Dune Trail Interpretive Guide is available at the entrance station to Southwick Beach State Park. The public beach area generally is crowded on warm summer days, but walking south past the lakeside terminus of the Lakeview Pond trail will take you to less populated areas frequented by a variety of shorebird species during the spring and fall migration periods. Migrating land and water birds frequently are present in this area as well, especially early in the morning and on northwest winds. You should keep off the dune system itself and walk along the edge of Lake Ontario, where water in the sand increases its firmness. This dune system is a very fragile and rare ecosystem. Even one step can cause damage to the American Beach Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*), a plant necessary to hold the system together. Many rare plants, such as Heartleaf Willow (*Salix cordata*) and Tall Wormwood (*Artemisia* sp.), are found on the barrier beach system and this ecological community itself is very rare in New York State. Special regulations apply to the barrier beach area, and fires, picnics, taking plants and other natural materials, hunting, loud music and camping are prohibited there. Please also be forewarned that the area

has acquired a reputation for nude bathing due to its remoteness, and swimming is not allowed away from the state park.

**MARSH AND POND HABITATS:** To reach Lakeview Pond, take Route 3 about 1 mile south from the entrance to Southwick Beach State Park and look for Pierrepont Place Road on the right, at the beginning of a sweeping left curve in Route 3. At the west end of Pierrepont Place Road both Lakeview Pond and the barrier beach system across the pond are visible. The walking trail to the barrier beach leaves the parking lot at the front of the old white boathouse. Birding on the trail can be very productive at all times of year. Warblers can be very numerous in the small woodlot beyond the parking area. It is about 1 mile to the barrier beach from here. Poison ivy abounds along the trail and on the barrier dunes. A foot bridge and dune crossover structure at the end of this trail provide access to the beach proper.

The South Sandy Access site is about 3.5 miles beyond (south) on New York Route 3, again on a curve in the road just before the second metal bridge which crosses the South Sandy Creek. This is another dangerous curve, so be cautious when entering and exiting this parking facility. In the fall many salmon fisherman will be at this location and there is a toilet facility at this site. South Sandy Creek is the location of the Battle of Big Sandy, fought during the War of 1812 and which was to influence the British plan to attack Sackets Harbor and the American forces stationed there.

Colwell Pond is about 4.5 miles further south along Route 3 on the right (west) at Montario Point Road. A parking lot and the Colwell Hill Observation Tower are about 0.4 mile from Route 3 at the top of the hill. This tower gives you a panoramic overview of the total area and is an excellent area to see raptors in migration during the fall and spring periods. Looking north you will see Colwell Pond, which may be reached by traveling down Montario Point Road about another 0.5 mile to a parking area and small boat launch site for cartop and smaller boats. Visible south from the Tower are South Colwell Pond, North Colwell Pond, Goose Pond, Floodwood Pond and Lakeview Pond. The creek between North Colwell and Goose Ponds is called The Big Sandy as it exits the marsh through the barrier beach dunes, since the Sandy and South Sandy Creeks merge in the marsh at this point. You should plan to spend at least an hour at this location and a chair is recommended rather than observing from the tower. If the birds are high, as is often the case, you will need a brimmed hat or you may sit in the shade of the tower

itself. In the spring raptors flying on strong south and southeast winds, will be seen to your east heading for the forested Tug Hill area or may appear suddenly overhead. If the wind is southwest almost all birds will be to your east towards Tug Hill and at times difficult to identify. It is necessary to be constantly checking in all directions because the birds can slip by very fast and at high altitudes. Late fall and early winter observations from this location can be a very rewarding but a cold and windy experience, so dress accordingly.

*P.O. Box 139, Henderson, New York 13650-0139*

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK BIRD CLUBS, INC.**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
Oneonta, New York  
25-27 September 1992

President Stan Lincoln called the 45th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. to order at the State University of New York at Oneonta at 2:10 PM on Friday, 25 September 1992. The roll call of member clubs was answered by representatives of 33 clubs. A motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the 44th Annual Meeting (as published in *The Kingbird* 42 (2): 76-83) was approved, and those minutes were accepted.

The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Berna Lincoln for perusal by representatives prior to formal action on Saturday. The Auditing Committee (Dick Sloss and Norman Stotz) reported that they had examined and approved the Treasurer's records.

Stan introduced the members of the Executive Committee to the club representatives. He announced the names of recent Benefactors (donors of \$1000 or more): Robert Arbib, H. Everest Clements, Gordon Meade, and Marie Ward, and expressed the gratitude of the Federation.

Stan announced that he received a resolution on the Adirondacks from the Conservation Committee and requested that any additional resolutions be provided to the Committee on Resolutions (Barbara Butler and Bill Reeves).

Myrna Hemmerick reported for the Membership Committee: we now have 44 clubs and 714 individual members. The Baldwin Bird Club was dropped for lack of payment and North Fork Audubon recently resigned.

Berna reported for the Membership Promotion Committee that a request to presidents of member clubs last year resulted in only 6 lists of 961 names. Promotional materials were sent to those people, and 39 (4%) subsequently joined the Federation. She explained that we must continue to recruit since we lose about 15% of our members each year. Stan repeated the request to clubs to obtain their mailing lists for our solicitation. He noted that permanent representatives receive all mailings from the Federation, but only about half of the clubs have designated someone for the position.

Manny Levine reported for the Publications Committee. He is soliciting articles as Associate Editor of *The Kingbird*. The planned

revision of Bull's *Birds of New York State* is on hold. The current plan for *New York Birders* is to produce four issues a year. Paul DeBenedictis reported that short notes (one typed page) for *The Kingbird* are needed; he suggested topics such as a first county nesting record, notes on unusual bird behavior or a sighting of a bird rare for a particular area of the State.

The current members of the New York State Avian Records Committee are (with terms ending as shown): Robert Andrie, Chair (1993), Buffalo; Thomas Burke (1993), Westchester; Barbara Spencer (1994), Long Island; Kenneth Able (1995), Albany; Robert Paxton (1996), New York. Todd Culver is Secretary (as appointed by the Committee); he acknowledges receipt of reports. Chad Covey suggested that someone on this committee write an article for *New York Birder* with the report form and suggestions for reporting unusual birds. NYSARC report forms were made available to the group.

The following awards were announced: Todd Parsons of SUNY Binghamton and member of Delaware Otsego Audubon Society, was the winner of the Lillian Stoner Award. The John J. Elliot Award for the best paper published in *The Kingbird* in 1991 was given to Melinda Knutson for her article "Characteristics of Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*) Nesting Habitat at Lakeview Wildlife Management Area, New York". The Sullivan County Audubon Society was awarded a Member Club Grant for \$175 in support of their project to computerize Sullivan County bird records.

The Birding Foray at Finger Lakes National Forest concluded successfully according to a report sent by Charles Smith. The participants found 92 species on 26–28 June, and added a new species (Common Snipe) to the list of summer birds, bringing the total summer bird list to 126 species. Future forays are under consideration, and suggestions for locations are requested.

Harriet Marsi reported as Chair of the Conservation Committee (which consisted of Bob Connor, Chad Covey, Mike Peterson, Kathy Milliken and Gerry Smith.) The Committee was actively involved in representing the Federation in many state and national conservation issues. Representatives of the Committee appeared at public hearings on Open Space in January, supporting the NYSDEC. Letters were written to President Bush and Senators Moynihan and D'Amato protesting proposed changes in both the Wetlands Act and the Endangered Species Act. The Conservation Committee kept informed regarding the Hydro-Quebec situation. It expressed sympathy for the

DEC decision to grant a permit to the USDA allowing shooting of gulls at JFK airport; this "birdstrike reduction program" is deemed necessary to protect human life. Much of the Conservation Committee's efforts during the past year have been related to DEC Draft Management Plans for State Forests. Several were reviewed, local clubs were notified and representatives sent to hearings. The Lake Erie Bird Club contacted the Conservation Committee for assistance regarding a threat of clear-cutting 200 acres in Boutwell Hill State Forest (which will not have a management plan for 5 to 10 years). A letter was written to DEC Commissioner Jorling decrying clear-cutting and proposing selective cutting. After long debate and consideration, the Conservation Committee produced a Resolution regarding the Adirondack Park plan. Because there have been several different proposals and because the legislative process is in flux, the carefully worded statement supported *any* legislation that would stem the fragmentation of the Adirondack forests and safeguard the purity of Adirondack waters. Stan extended thanks to Harriet and the Conservation Committee for a job well done. He adjourned the meeting at 4:20 PM on September 25.

The following workshops were held on Friday evening: "Butterflies for Birders," by Ernest Williams; "How to Write a Book When You Don't Know How to Write a Book," by Dorothy Crumb; "Editing a Bird Club Newsletter," by Maxwell Wheat and Don Windsor; "Gull Identification," by Ned Brinkley; "Project Aves — Using Birds in Middle School Classrooms," by Todd Culver; and "Interacting with Elected Officials," by Bob Connor.

Stan reconvened the meeting at 9:00 AM on 26 September, and led the group in recognizing the years of service by Mary Ann Sunderlin, who most recently served as Corresponding Secretary, and who recently passed away. A moment of silence was held in her honor.

Walt Sabin gave a report on the 1992 Waterfowl Count: over 396,000 were counted, well above the usual number. The 1993 count period will be 16 to 24 January with a target date of 17 January .

Berna gave the Treasurer's report, including a 1991 Balance Sheet, statement of fund activity and balances, and general operating fund activity. In 1991 expenses exceeded income by about \$58; she projects that 1992 expenses will exceed income by about \$200 or \$300. After several questions were answered, the report was accepted.

Stan announced several new Federation initiatives. A "Kingbird Club" was created as a new class of membership for those who would

like to contribute \$100 for their annual dues. A committee headed by Don Windsor has been working on a design for a patch to be awarded to those who have seen 200 species of birds in New York State. In addition, the Federation is going to support "county listing" as organized by Berna Lincoln. Birders will be encouraged to report the numbers of species they have seen in any of the 62 counties of the state and in each of *The Kingbird's* Reporting Regions. This project for members or members of member clubs is intended to stimulate interest in birding and could promote the development of county checklists. Reporting forms, and participant names and totals will be published in *New York Birder*.

David Prosser announced that the 1993 annual meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn in Watertown on 10-12 September. Peter Dunne will be the banquet speaker.

The Nominating Committee (Harriet Marsi, Charlie Smith and Chad Covey, Chair) reported that they recommend that terms of all officers be renewed, and Carl Eastwood was nominated to fill the position of Corresponding Secretary. There were no further nominations from the floor, and a motion to cast one ballot was approved.

Stan named Richard Sloss, Norman Stotz and Irving Cantor to the Auditing Committee. A motion to renew the terms of the existing Nominating Committee was approved.

Eric Fried gave a report for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, beginning with the issuing of a permit to shoot Laughing Gulls at JFK airport in New York City. A colony of several thousand birds is close to a major runway, threatening the safety of airline passengers; over 10,000 gulls were shot this year. He reported that the National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and the Port Authority are all involved in this unusually complex situation. The "Fund for Animals" has filed suit against the DEC, charging that they did not follow SEQR procedures prior to issuing the permits. Much discussion followed his report. Eric also reported on cormorants on Little Galloo Island in Lake Ontario. Local fishermen believe that the Cormorants are having a deleterious effect on the fishing industry. The DEC believes that pollution abatement is gradually altering the lake's ecosystem, and that cormorants have little effect on the fish population. The Onondaga Audubon Society presented a resolution for the Federation's approval opposing any control of northeastern Lake Ontario Double-crested Cormorants without valid scientific data to



substantiate the actions. It also further resolved that all appropriate agencies are requested to pursue research, education and enforcement needs related to this matter, to the greatest extent possible. Following discussion, it was requested that the resolution be rewritten, with the order of sentences reversed to become more positive. The motion was approved (as revised). Eric also reported on the controversial DEC proposal to reintroduce the moose to New York State, including information on both sides of the issue. Public meetings have been held, and further public input is requested.

Stan next presented the report from the Resolutions Committee. The first resolution dealt with state land acquisition funding, calling for the establishment of a dedicated fund from sources such as bottle deposit residuals and/or an environmental trust fund. The resolution was read, moved, and approved. The next resolution expressed the thanks of the Federation to our hosts, the Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, the Chenango Bird Club and the State University College at Oneonta. The resolution was read, moved and approved. A resolution from the Conservation Committee supporting Adirondacks legislation was also presented. The resolution stated that the Federation "does hereby enthusiastically add its support to any legislation emerging from this (governmental) process which stems the fragmentation of the Adirondack forests and corrects and reduces the pollution of its lakes and streams; and, when long-range environmental and short-range economic considerations come into conflict with the Park, the Federation supports striking a balance in favor of protecting the priceless environmental amenities of the Park." This resolution was also read, moved and approved. Finally, a resolution brought by Bob Connor dealt with Sterling Forest in Orange County. It supported federal and state initiatives and funding to purchase the tract. The resolution was read, moved and approved. Stan urged all those who have resolutions for consideration next year to try to get them to him well before the annual meeting so they can be distributed to member clubs.

The New York State Office of Parks and Recreation report was given by George Steel, who spoke briefly about the production of bird checklists for each state park. The session ended with a brief report from Norman Stotz on the Audubon Council of New York State.

The Saturday afternoon sessions included the following papers: "Nocturnal Flight Calls of Migrating Birds," by Bill Evans; "Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch at Oneonta," by Ronald Milliken; "Nesting

Success of the Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) with Special Consideration of Nest Parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*)," by John Confer; "A Study of the Significance of New York's Forested Lake Shore Habitats as Critical Concentration Areas for Neotropical Migrants," by K. J. Schneider; "Breeding Dispersal and Survival of Eastern Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)," by Michael T. Murphy; "Acceptance of Several Nest Box Styles by Cavity Nesting Birds," by Kevin L. Berner; and "Readings," by Maxwell Wheat.

A long line of people waited patiently to have their field guides autographed by Roger Tory and Virginia Peterson. The banquet was attended by a record 302 people, and 80 more came after dinner to hear Dr. Peterson's entertaining presentation, which elicited a standing ovation from the appreciative audience.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie M. Freer  
Recording Secretary  
19 February 1993

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

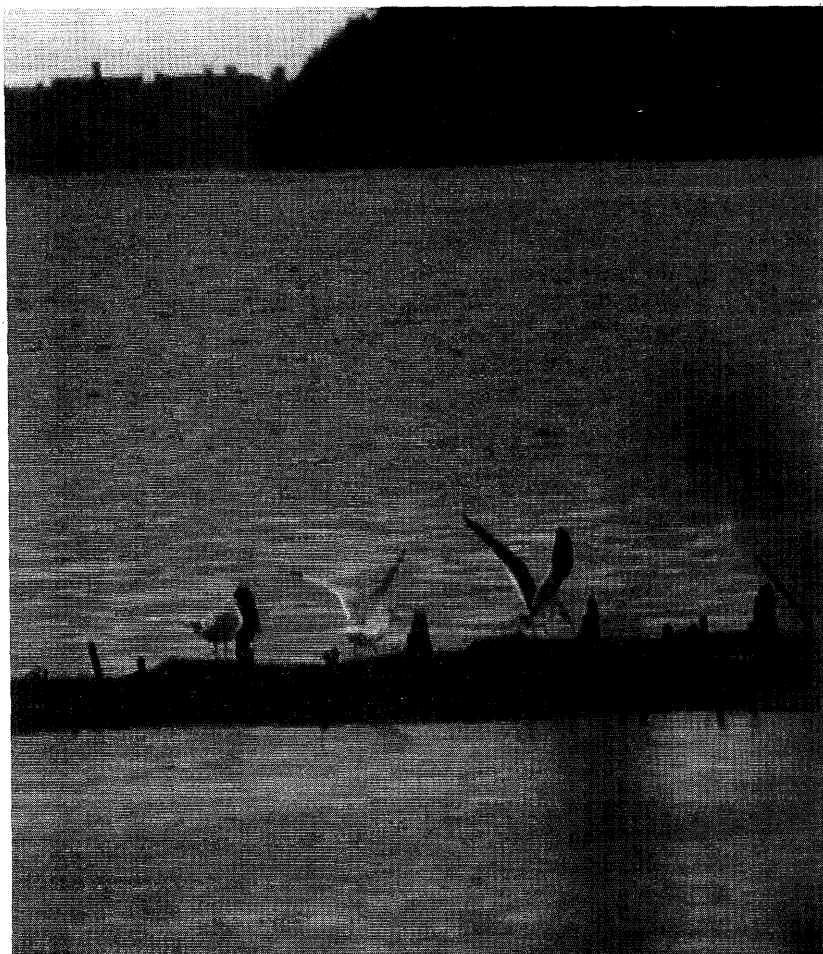


Figure 1. Black Skimmer (right) with gulls, Piermont Pier, Piermont, Rockland Co., New York, 23 November 1992. Photograph by Chuck Harten.

**First record of Black Skimmer for Rockland County, New York:** On 23 November 1992 at 9:20 AM I observed a Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*) on the end of Piermont Pier, in Piermont, Rockland County, New York. Piermont Pier extends about one mile out into the wide area of the Hudson River known as the Tappan Zee. The skimmer was flying around the southeast end of the pier near an old sunken barge. I

observed the bird through 7X50 binoculars and made the following observations in my note book:

The bird was in adult winter plumage and was quite distinctive. It was all white underneath with a dusky back and upper wings. The long pointed wings were also dark on top, with a white trailing edge. The head was white with a black cap. White ran down the back of its head but was not connected to the black back. The straight heavy bill seemed to have an orange red color but the bird was backlit at this point. The shorter upper mandible could be observed in profile. To clinch the identification, the bird "skimmed" the calm water near the barge.

I returned home and consulted *The Birds of Rockland County and the Hudson Highlands* and its supplement by Robert F. Deed. I also checked with the Rockland County compilers subsequent to Deed and determined that this was a first record for Rockland County. The only record in the area of which I am aware is of a Black Skimmer seen in Croton Bay, Westchester Co., on 30 August 1987. After calling several active Rockland County birders, I returned to the Pier at 11:30 AM with a Canon 35mm camera with a 300 mm lens mounted on a tripod (Fig. 1). The skimmer was still present and was resting on the exposed section of the sunken barge with several Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*). The bill and legs color now could be seen clearly. I took several photographs of the bird, which establish the locale as the familiar view from the end of Piermont Pier. Coincidentally, I had observed a late lingering Black Skimmer in coastal Rhode Island a little earlier in the month. This may indicate that skimmers were present in greater numbers than usual for this time of the year.

*Chuck Harten, 109 Swannekin Road, Blauvelt, New York 10913*

**Bivalent Singing by a Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*):** Bivalent singing by a Blue-winged or Golden-winged Warbler (*V. chrysoptera*) or their hybrids occurs when an individual alternately sings the primary or type 1 song (Ficken and Ficken, *Behaviour*, 28:149–181; 1967) of each species. Such singing has been reported for a Blue-winged (Short, *Proc. 13th Intern. Ornithol. Cong.*, 1:147–160; 1963), a Golden-winged (Russell, *Auk*, 93:178–179, 1976), and two "Lawrence's" Warblers (Gill and Murray, *Auk*, 89:625–643; 1972). Apparently bivalent singing is a rare event, since the scarcity of reports contrasts with the extensive literature on these species. A resident male Blue-winged Warbler with a blue-wing mate gave bivalent song in Oswego County, New York, during the 1992 breeding season. This male appeared to arrive on territory between 19 and 22 May. On 6 and 22 June we suspected that one individual was singing both songs. On 24 June three of us were able to keep this one bird in constant view as it alternately gave the type 1 song of each species. The plumage of this bird, as observed from 10 m with 10x binoculars, had the body coloration, and separate white wing bars of a typical, pure Blue-winged Warbler. The eye line appeared to be slightly thicker than normal for a Blue-winged, but was not nearly as broad as the eye patch of a Golden-winged Warbler. Although this bird generally resembled a pure Blue-winged Warbler, the thick eye line suggests the possibility of hybrid ancestry. We wonder if the capacity for bivalent song occurs in truly pure Golden-winged and Blue-winged warblers, or whether this capacity results from hybridization by some remote ancestor.

**Paul E. Allen, Lori Bushway, John L. Confer, Wendy Cruso and Julie Fisher.** Address correspondence to JLC, Biology Department, Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York 14850–7278.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

The winter 1992-93 began with a taste of recently past winters and ended with the flavor of an old-fashioned winter. December and January were relatively warm and free of snow cover, while February was 4-10°F below normal and with abundant snow in most Regions. A nor'easter hit Regions 9 and 10 on 11-13 Dec, causing significant shoreline damage, but few ornithological reports of note. With the general lack of storms and early cold, Christmas Bird Counts had many good finds and high totals. Given the harsh February, a decline in reports of half-hardy species and a lack of early spring arrivals was not surprising. There were too few comments on the winter food supply to draw general conclusions. The Region 1 report could be used as a model, if other editors have reporters providing such information. You can help your Regional editor by providing similar details for the areas you frequent.

Many bodies of water were open through much of January. This brought widely varying views on water bird impact. Variety generally seemed good in most Regions, and there were many notes of good counts. However, there was some consensus that abundant open water dispersed the birds, reducing totals for the Federation Wildfowl Count. Overall, reports from the waterfowl census seemed good. Loon and grebe reports were typical for the season, with Red-necked Grebe at a few more inland sites, including Region 7, than normal, and Eared Grebe in Regions 1, 2, and 10. Double-crested Cormorant was noted in above average numbers for winter, while Great Cormorant numbers were very high in Regions 9 and 10, especially inland in Region 9, and a straggler reached Region 8. Wintering herons, other than Great Blue Heron, were few, with American Bittern in Regions 2 and 9 and Tricolored Heron and Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Region 10 the rarest. Most waterfowl reports were typical of winter. Species reported in good numbers included Mute Swan, both along the Hudson and in western New York; Snow Goose, widely distributed including Region 7; Northern Pintail, in spite of poor fall numbers; Eurasian Wigeon particularly numerous in Region 10; Ring-necked Duck in Region 6; Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead in several Regions; and eiders and Harlequin Duck in Region 10.

Canvasback, Redhead, Oldsquaw, and scoter numbers were low in most Regions. Unusual reports included **Ross's Goose** in Regions 7 and 10; Greater White-fronted Goose in Regions 9 and 10; and a Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser hybrid in Region 1. A **Northern Fulmar** in Region 5 and high counts of Razorbill in Region 10 rounded out the water birds catching my attention.

Upstate, Turkey Vulture again wintered in Letchworth State Park and, downstate, Black Vulture was noted in Region 9. Bald Eagle was noted in all Regions, off a bit in numbers in a few. Winter counts were also down a bit for Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, and American Kestrel in most Regions. Notable raptor reports included Osprey into January and February in Regions 4 and 10, Broad-winged Hawk in Region 9, Golden Eagle nest building in Region 9, Merlin in eight Regions and Peregrine Falcon in five Regions, an invasion of **Gyr Falcon** with reports from Regions 1, 6, 7, and 9 and apparent Peregrine Falcon X Gyr Falcon hybrids in Region 10. You will find a few more reports of the nocturnal raptors than is typical for winter, though numbers were off for the winter invaders, Snowy Owl and Short-eared Owl. There were reports of Common Barn Owl in Regions 9 and 10 and of **Northern Hawk Owl** in Region 7, as well as scattered reports of other typical migrant and resident owl species.

**Sandhill Crane** added a species to the Region 3 winter roll, and an unidentified crane was in Region 8. Rails were better reported than usual, with Sora, Virginia Rail, and Common Moorhen found in Region 2 by listers pushing for a "Big January." Shorebirds are never a major factor in the winter reports and this season brought few surprises. Most interesting were very late Spotted Sandpiper in Regions 9 and 10; an amazing Ruddy Turnstone count in Region 9; late Dunlin in Regions 1 and 2; Long-billed Dowitcher in Region 10; and American Woodcock displaying in January in Region 10. Of course, in a league by itself was the state's first **Spotted Redshank** wintering in Brooklyn. In contrast, gulls are a group with high winter interest. Generally, finds were below expectations this winter. Little Gull numbers were very low in areas where they normally appear in Regions 1 and 2, Common Black-headed Gull was noted only in Regions 9 and 10; and wintering white-winged gull counts are still below those of a decade or so ago, probably in large part due to landfill closings. Saving the day were good numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gull scattered across the state (as a good example, note the effort to identify them to subspecies in Region 9.); a record high

inland count of Great Black-backed Gull in Region 6; Black-legged Kittiwake in Regions 1, 5, 6, and 10. Real gull rarities included **California Gull** in Region 1, **Mew Gull** in Regions 1 and 6, and a first state record for **Slaty-backed Gull** in Region 1. There was also a record late Caspian Tern in Region 2.

Wild Turkey was present in good numbers, doubling the combined totals for Ring-necked Pheasant and Ruffed Grouse in Region 1, though there were notes of concern over the effects of the late, deep snows elsewhere. An amusing account of its flying prowess is in the Region 8 report.

The bulk of the records and trends of interest comes from the passerines, mainly the half-hardy species. The winter incursive groups were virtually nonexistent. There were no big movements of chickadees or nuthatches; only isolated reports of Bohemian Waxwing from Regions 2, 6, and 10; few American Tree Sparrow and longspurs and only fair numbers of Snow Bunting; and very low winter finch numbers. A burst of Red and White-winged Crossbill reports from Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 added spice to late season birding. Half-hardy species produced a substantial number of interesting records: E. Phoebe in Regions 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10; Western Kingbird in Region 10; good numbers of Tree Swallow in Regions 2 and 10; Common Raven widespread, with outstanding counts in Region 7; good Carolina Wren numbers in many Regions; Marsh Wren in Regions 2 and 10; Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Regions 4, 5, and 10; **Mountain Bluebird** in Region 6; Wood Thrush in Region 10; a big American Robin roost in Region 2; and **Loggerhead Shrike**, now unusual at any season, in both Regions 1 and 9. As usual, warblers were few except in Region 10, but Yellow-rumped and Pine Warblers, Ovenbird, and Common Yellowthroat were found in multiple Regions. A Black-throated Blue Warbler in January was unusual even for Region 10. A very rare Painted Bunting and a Dickcissel were also tallied in Region 10, and the latter also graced Region 8. Sparrows of note included Chipping, Field, and Fox sparrows and Rufous-sided Towhee in four or more Regions; Vesper in Region 10; Savannah in Region 1; Sharp-tailed in Regions 9 and 10; Seaside in Region 10; "Oregon"-type Dark-eyed Junco in Regions 5 and 7; and a very cooperative **Harris's Sparrow** in Region 1. Eastern Meadowlark numbers were up a bit, with reports from five Regions; Rusty Blackbird was noted in Regions 1, 2, 9, and 10 and **Brewer's Blackbird** in Region 7; and Northern Oriole were found in Regions 4 and 9. All in all, this is a



good collection, but not particularly surprising given the weather of the first two-thirds of the season.

Looking back over all these notes, there are many great finds for winter, but the B.O.T.S. Award obviously goes to the very cooperative, long-staying Spotted Redshank in Region 10.

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

**Standard abbreviations:** Regional rarities appear in **boldface** in the introduction to each report and in **UPPER CASE boldface** type in the species accounts; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in **UPPER CASE** letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. **In species accounts:** number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! — details seen by Regional Editor; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; Am. - American; arr — arrival or first of season; CBC — Christmas Bird Count; Com. - Common; E. - Eastern; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; juv — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; N. - Northern; 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; W. - Western; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.

### **REPORTING DEADLINES**

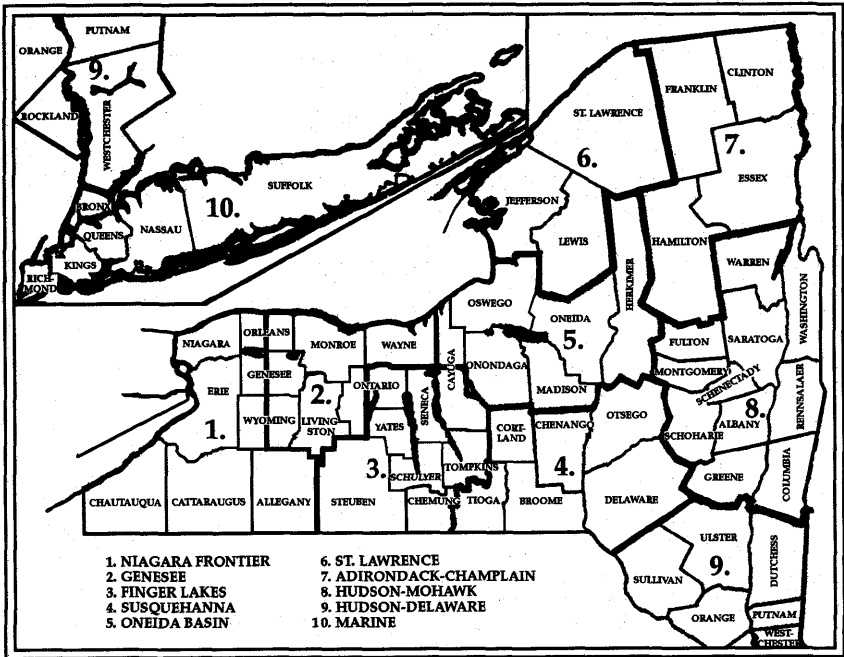
**Winter Season:** December, January, February  
Deadline is 7 March

**Spring Season:** March, April, May  
Deadline is 7 June

**Summer Season:** June, July, August  
Deadline is 7 September

**Fall Season:** September, October, November  
Deadline is 7 December

## REPORTING REGIONS



Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, *except at:*

Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties: the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia, NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19 from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County: the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64 from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21 from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County: the boundary is NY Route 31.

## REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

GERALD R. RISING

This winter was characterized by brightness following gloom. Two warm, overcast months preceded a record cold and mostly clear February. Mean temperatures with departures from historic averages provided by the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Buffalo are: December 32.1°F (+3.3°), January 29.5°F (+5.9°), and February 20.6°F (-3.8°). The temperature rose above 50° on 15 and 16 Dec and 3, 4 (62°F) and 5 Jan, and fell to 10°F only on 27 Dec. In February, on the other hand, the temperature fell below 10°F on 14 days and dropped below zero on 6, 7 and 27 Feb; it rose above freezing on only 12 days. Precipitation peaked in January when 4.4 inches fell, mostly as rain during warm spells, and leaving the snowfall of 13 inches a foot below average for that month. December had 16 inches and February 20 inches of snow, six and one inch more than normal, respectively. Most of December's snow fell on 10 and 11 Dec, but it rapidly melted and there was little snow cover a week later. There was little cover through January as well, but snow accumulated in February and from 17 Feb on, there was a half foot on the ground. No wonder! Despite much cold clear weather in February, it snowed every single day. But despite the snow, that February brightness dispelled an extended period of mostly gloomy, sunless days that ran from late November to the end of January.

In the Southern Tier, Vivian Pitzrick reported bountiful spruce, hemlock, Box Elder, sumac, and buckthorn fruits, but other wild food such as mast and Multiflora Rose hips was scarce. Steve Eaton noted Pine Siskin and Purple Finch eating White Ash and hemlock seeds off the snow after storms.

About 300 observers took part in nine Christmas Bird Counts across the Region, again providing a good snapshot of bird populations. Several compilers characterized this year's count as bland, but as always there were some interesting records. Among the 106 species (down nine from last year) were Northern Goshawk, **Gyrfalcon**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Common Raven, Winter Wren, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, and Common Redpoll. The overall count total of 118,798 was down a third from 1991, but native passerines were off only 12%. The major

decrements were in waterfowl, always a concern, and in gulls and introduced species, the latter groups subject to widely varying estimates from year to year. Happily the January Waterfowl Count produced contrasting results. Compared with the most recent six year average, the total was up a third with dabblers up 24% and divers up 31%.

The appearance of two or possibly three **Gyr Falcon** excited the birders of western New York. A dark brown bird which may have been an immature was seen by Debbie and Dave Suggs and Bob Andrlé at the east end of Lake Erie. Then a gray morph bird was identified by Dean DiTommaso, Willy D'Anna, Betsy Potter and others near the same location, all these observations from 1 to 6 January. Andrlé and others even had the great good fortune to watch one of these birds fly past a perched Peregrine Falcon on 2 Jan. That ought to win them the exciting-birds-in-the-binocular award. Then on 20 Feb still another Gyr Falcon turned up in the Town of Yates, where it was observed by many birders through the end of the month. Of interest is that close range descriptions of this individual range from gray to brown (the breast streaking appeared dark cinnamon to me), which again suggests the possibility that more than one bird was present. One may have been trapped and banded in the area. As one serendipitous result of the search for this northern falcon, birders found a **Harris's Sparrow** at a Yates feeder. It was observed by many from 26 Feb through the end of the period, and for some it partially made up for missing the elusive hawk.

The three exotic gulls that first appeared in the Niagara River gorge at the end of the fall season all were recorded in New York State early in December: the **Mew Gull** in Dunkirk Harbor on 3 Dec by Bob Sundell; the **California Gull** still in the gorge on 1 and 6 Dec by Bob Andrlé, Fran Rew and others, and the **Slaty-backed Gull** on 4 Dec by the Van Tursts and on 15 Dec by Dick Byron and Dick Collins (corroborative details are still lacking for the last species).

A few **Red Crossbill** were located in the Town of Ward by Elizabeth Brooks on 12 Jan and a dozen more were found in Phillips Creek State Forest by Willy D'Anna and others on 23 Jan. A pair in this latter flock was observed nest building so Brooks revisited the area on 24 and 29 Jan. On the last date the nest was more complete but she observed no crossbills nearby. Despite these and a trickle of other winter finches, this was once again a very poor year for them. Of particular note is the dearth of **Evening Grosbeak**.

There was no hint of a return migration by the end of the period.

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**Abbreviations:** BCBC - Buffalo CBC, 15 Dec; BMCBC - Beaver Meadow CBC, 28 Dec; BH - Buffalo Harbor; CCBCs - (nine) combined Christmas Counts, 20-29 Dec; DH - Dunkirk Harbor; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 16-24 Jan; GI - Goat Island at Niagara Falls; HCBC - Hamburg-E. Aurora CBC, 21 Dec; JCBC - Jamestown CBC, 20 Dec; NF - Niagara Falls; NFCBC - Niagara Falls CBC, 22 Dec; NR - Niagara River; OOCBC - Oak Orchard CBC, 27 Dec; SBCBC - St. Bonaventure CBC 14 Dec.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** last three BCBC. **Pied-billed Grebe:** max nine FWC. **Horned Grebe:** max two CCBCs, none in Jan; only one Celoron 11 Feb (RS), one DH 19, 28 Feb (BC, TM), scarce. **EARED GREBE:** one DH 31 Dec (BR); one DH 19 Feb (TM!). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 21 CCBCs. **Great Blue Heron:** max 51 CCBCs; 50

roosting NR 19 Jan (RA, WW, mob). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** two DH 12 Dec (CB, RBu), late; two Buffalo 25 Dec (RBr); one Buffalo 7, 9 Feb (RBr), early. **Tundra Swan:** max 154 Celoron 1 Jan (RS). **Mute Swan:** only record one DH 30-31 Jan (DK, WDA, DDT). **Snow Goose:** only record one DH through period (FR, mob). **Canada Goose:** max 4915 CCBCs, 4288 FWC, up 92% from last year and 125% from the six year average. **Wood Duck:** five CCBCs; one Jamestown 10 Jan (WDA, mob); only one FWC at Amherst 17 Jan (BBu). **Green-winged Teal:** only one JCBC; one DH 20 Feb (FR, RS), early. **N. Pintail:** last six NR BCBC, four FWC; arr four T Cold Spring (RS). **N. Shoveler:** last T Medina 3 Dec (GR), T Pomfret 18 Jan (TM!), DH 3 and 31 Jan (JG, JS; DK, WDA, DDT). **Gadwall:** max 42 FWC; only eight CCBCs. **Am. Wigeon:** six FWC; only other report one T Cold Spring 13, 14 Feb (RS). **Canvasback:** max 3621 FWC, up 10% from last year and 50% from six year average. **Redhead:** max 194 FWC, up from 15 last year and twice the six year average. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 14 FWC, down from 64 last year but near the six year average. **Greater Scaup:** max 6731 FWC, up from recent low of 127 last year and recent max of 3579 in 1991. **Lesser Scaup:** max 82 FWC, slightly above the six year average. **King Eider:** only one BH 1, 3 Jan (RC, D&DS, mob). **Oldsquaw:** max 1655 FWC, half of the six year average. **Black Scoter:** three FWC Lake Ontario, first on FWC since 1988; only other record NR 1 Jan (WDA, DDT). **Surf Scoter:** only record one DH 20 Feb (RS). **White-winged Scoter:** max 300 Pt Breeze 2 Jan (WL). **Com. Goldeneye:** max 3080 FWC, 18% above six year average. **COM. GOLDENEYE X HOODED MERGANSER:** one Black Rock Canal 23 Jan (BC!). **Bufflehead:** max 306 FWC, slightly above six year average. **Hooded Merganser:** max 23 FWC. **Com. Merganser:** max 3500 NR 2 Jan (BE, mob). **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 465 CCBCs; reduced to 331 FWC, up from 11 last year but still 16% below six year average. **Ruddy Duck:** last two DH 3 Dec (RS).

**Bald Eagle:** five reports of singles through the period. **N. Harrier:** max 21 CCBCs, up from 12 last year. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** max 29 CCBCs, same as last year. **Cooper's Hawk:** max 25 CCBCs, 30 last year. **N. Goshawk:** only records singles Cassadaga L 4 Dec (LDF, LP), HCBC, BMCBC, Eggertsville 4 Feb (AMK!). **Red-shouldered Hawk:** only records singles T Harmony 12, 13 Dec (JFJ, B&LOB), T Pomfret 13 Dec (FR!), T Gerry 16 Dec (TM), NF 19, 20 Dec (WDA, DR, mob!), T Westfield 20 Dec (JL), T Otto 2 Jan (RS!). **Rough-legged Hawk:** max 15

CCBCs, same as last year. **Merlin**: one Buffalo 5 Jan-24 Feb (ES, DS, mob!), third winter at this location; only other record T Ripley 30 Jan (FR!). **Peregrine Falcon**: only records ad BH 1, 2 Jan (D&DS, mob!); imm BH and Tiff Nature Preserve 3, 7 Jan (WDA, D&DS, mob!). **GYRFALCON**: *intro*. **Wild Turkey**: max 98 CCBCs, down from last year's spectacular 293, but still almost twice the number of pheasants and grouse together. **Am. Coot**: max 65 CCBCs, also down from last year's 387; 58 FWC near the six year average. **Killdeer**: one DH 4 Dec (WDA, DDT) late. **Purple Sandpiper**: two GI 8 Dec (GB) only December record; max and only others five GI 1, 17 Jan (WDA, BE, mob). **Dunlin**: only records two GI 1, 17 Jan (B&RaE, WDA, DDT!). **Com. Snipe**: only record two T Pomfret 20 Feb (LB, FR!). **Jaeger species**: one Fort Niagara SP 1 Jan (DDT, WDA!). **Little Gull**: max five NR and DH 31 Jan (mob). **Bonaparte's Gull**: max 9600 lower NR 16 Dec (GB); last count 5250 lower NR 26 Feb (GB), numbers down from last year but present later. **MEW GULL**: *intro*. **CALIFORNIA GULL**: *intro*. **Iceland Gull**: max four NR 1 Jan (WDA, TH, WW). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: max three NR 13 Dec (WDA, mob) and CCBCs, last 10 Jan. **SLATY-BACKED GULL**: *intro*. **Glaucous Gull**: max three CCBCs; January max two Bird Island Pier BH 23 Jan (BC); two T Celoron 17 Feb (RS). **Black-legged Kittiwake**: only records singles NR 12 Dec (WDA, mob!), NR 30 Jan (DDT!).

**Snowy Owl**: max and last three BH 2-9 Jan (mob). **Barred Owl**: only reports three CCBCs. **Long-eared Owl**: max six T Porter 3, 23, 26 Jan (WDA, BE, DR). **Short-eared Owl**: arr two T Carlton 9 Dec (WL); max seven T Somerset 13 Dec (B&RaE); seven T Porter 6 Jan (BE). **N. Saw-whet Owl**: arr NFCBC, six other records along Lake Ontario through period. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: only reports one Lakeside Beach SP 31 Dec (WL, MD) and three there 9 Jan (WDA, mob).

**Horned Lark**: max 300 T Yates 27 Feb (WW, MG, others), similar numbers through period. **Com. Raven**: one SBCBC; two Allegany SP 31 Jan (FL), only reports. **Hermit Thrush**: one HCBC, three other reports, none in January; last but, given the preceding weather, surely not a migrant T Somerset 20 Feb (WDA, mob). **Gray Catbird**: only record four HCBC. **N. Mockingbird**: max 30 CCBCs, twice last year's total. **Brown Thrasher**: one Mayville 31 Jan (NL). **N. Shrike**: arr T Carlton 19 Dec (WL); max 11 CCBCs, down from 34 last year; last T Ellery 20 Feb (RS). **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**: one CHAU 8 Dec (LDF, LP), very late.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** one wintering T Ransomville 19 Dec-14 Feb (BE); four Pt Gratiot and L Erie SP 18 Jan (WDA, DDT, TM). **Pine Warbler:** one T Alfred 2 Dec (EB!), late. **Ovenbird:** one Jamestown 5-6 Dec (PD, spm) found dead latter date.

**Rufous-sided Towhee:** at feeders Maple Springs 14 Jan and 14 Feb (BH); max two T Pomfret and T Sheridan 16 Jan (TM; FR, LB); one T Busti 19 Jan (S&SA). **Chipping Sparrow:** late migrant T Poland 14-22 Nov (JuH); max four CCBCs; last T E Aurora (WDA, DDT, M&SR!). **Field Sparrow:** one wintering T E Aurora after 6 Dec (LH). **Savannah Sparrow:** one T Lewiston 9 Jan (DDT, WDA, BE!), late, only report. **Swamp Sparrow:** max six CCBCs. **HARRIS'S SPARROW:** *intro*. **Lapland Longspur:** max ten T Yates 20 Feb (WDA, WW, mob). **Snow Bunting:** max 140 T Charlotte 5 Feb (FR). **Red-winged Blackbird:** max 29 CCBCs, down from 61 last year. **E. Meadowlark:** max eight CCBCs, none last year. **Rusty Blackbird:** last and only record T Stockton 3 Dec (RS). **Com. Grackle:** max 35 CCBCs; last T Tonawanda 31 Dec (PH). **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 185 CCBCs, double last year. **Pine Grosbeak:** only record two OOCBC. **Purple Finch:** max 215 CCBCs, double last year. **House Finch** max 4205 CCBCs, down from 4894. **Red Crossbill:** *intro*. **White-winged Crossbill:** only record one Golden Hill SP 20 Feb (WDA). **Com. Redpoll:** only records five HCBC; three Fredonia 16 Jan (AB). **Pine Siskin:** max 20 CCBCs. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 20 CCBCs, down even from last year's 189; only other reports three and one T Great Valley 13 and 28 Feb respectively (BS).

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## REGION 2 — GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

This was, indeed, a memorable winter. Strange, the term used by one area observer, may have been a better word. There was a mix of warm and cold days early. It rained and snowed. It wasn't until February that winter weather really arrived with persistent cold and snow that piled up to nearly two feet. This snow did not produce high levels of measurable precipitation. The meteorological data for the season showed the trends. December's temperatures were just above normal at 30.2°F, and January was a reasonably warm 27.5°F, nearly 4° above normal. On the other hand, February averaged 18.7°F, which was a chilly 4° below normal. Precipitation in December totaled 2.98 inches, only a fraction above the norm. January was also above average levels at 2.32 inches and February's measurable precipitation of 1.52 inches was below average.

December was not really exceptional ornithologically. The Christmas Bird Counts had low species totals. Numbers generally also were down. But by January, things seemed to change. Many area birders, led by Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow, made an all out effort to find 100 species during the month and were really aiming for 120. Both Davids and Tetlow just missed their goal of 120 species, but that total was quite exceptional for January in this Region. Many good birds were found. In fact, January turned out to be a banner month for oddities. February was dismal. While some of the unusual species persisted, many either disappeared or did a good job of hiding. For example, both loons and all three of the expected grebe species were reported in January, but none were reported in February. Total numbers were high and Red-throated Loon was unusual. An **Eared Grebe** in January was a good find. Double-crested Cormorant again wintered in the Region, but the group of 12 or so that wintered in Irondequoit was highly unusual. Mute Swan wintered in record numbers and Tundra Swan and Snow Goose persisted into January. Wintering ducks were mixed. Puddle ducks were found in good numbers and N. Shoveler was reported all winter. Canvasback and Redhead were reported throughout the season but only in low numbers. Scaup numbers were very high. Rafts of thousands could be seen just off shore. Scoter and Oldsquaw numbers were down considerably. A **Harlequin Duck** was a highlight.

Raptors produced a few surprises. Northern Goshawk reports were good and Merlin and Peregrine Falcon in winter are also notable. A Red-shouldered Hawk around Hemlock Lake was very unusual. The usual number of winter eagle reports were submitted this year with regular sightings of Bald Eagle. Turkey Vulture again wintered in Letchworth State Park. Wintering Rough-legged Hawk were scarce. Snowy Owl numbers were good even after last year's high totals. They did seem to move around regularly and not stay in one spot, and some observers missed this species. Short-eared Owl was present in low numbers. Northern Saw-whet Owl probably winters in the Region more often than noted, and reports from Conesus and Bergen supported that idea.

Of interest were the marsh birds that turned up during the season. The usual numbers of Great Blue Heron wintered here, but an American Bittern was unexpected. Virginia Rail, Sora and Common Moorhen were all sighted. The usual wintering Killdeer and Common Snipe reports were supplemented by Dunlin at two sites. A Parasitic Jaeger at Hamlin in December was quite late and the unidentified jaeger reported on the Rochester CBC was also a highlight. Gull reports generally were unnoteworthy. The only rare gull was a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Little Gull reports were down, as were Bonaparte's Gull numbers. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were reported regularly but in low numbers. A December Caspian Tern was a first Regional record for that month.

It was a pretty good season for woodpeckers with winter sapsucker and good numbers of the expected species. A persistent flock of Tree Swallow that chose Round Pond in Greece for a wintering location was monitored almost daily by Paul Spindler. Hermit Thrush was found in better numbers than last year, but they still seem off a bit from years past. A massive flock of American Robin roosted in the Mendon Ponds area, but they all but disappeared by February. The same area held a wintering Gray Catbird, and a Brown Thrasher was reported in Lima. Carolina Wren and Northern Mockingbird seemed to hold their own during the winter months. Only a single Bohemian Waxwing report came this season. A wintering population of Yellow-rumped Warbler was again reported from Spencerport, and Pine Warbler and Ovenbird were unexpected finds. Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting were not noted in high numbers, generally scattered. Sparrow highlights included Field, Fox and White-crowned Sparrows. White-throated

Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco numbers were unexceptional. Good numbers of Eastern Meadowlark were sighted and Rusty Blackbird sightings seemed up a bit. It was once again not a "finch" winter. Only Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin made the winter list.

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**Abbreviations:** BS - Bergen Swamp; CL - Conesus lake; EL- (East Lakeshore) Lake Ontario east of Rochester; HB - Hamlin Beach; IB - Irondequoit Bay; MPd - Mendon Ponds; RS - Russell Station; SB - Sodus Bay; WL - (West Lakeshore) Lake Ontario west of Rochester.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** max 47 HB 2 Dec (WS), good total so late. **EARED GREBE:** one SB 2 Jan (DS, NM, GC). **Red-necked Grebe:** max two SB 17 Jan. **AM. BITTERN:** MPd 10 Jan (MD). **Mute Swan:** max 11 WL 9, 16 Jan. **Snow Goose:** two Kendall 9 Dec (WS), two WL 6-22 Jan, two Byron 10, 23-26 Feb (PS), unusual for winter. **Brant:** one RS 4 Dec, late. **Wood Duck:** max 15 Penfield 1- 28 Feb. **N. Pintail:** max five Hamlin 7 Jan. **N. Shoveler:** male Greece all season. **Redhead:** max 500+ S Canandaigua L 26 Jan (RM). **Greater Scaup:** max 5000 WL 2 Dec. **HARLEQUIN DUCK:** male SB 28 Feb (R & RS), only report.

**Turkey Vulture:** two Letchworth SP 23 Jan. **Bald Eagle:** four singles. **N. Goshawk:** six reports. **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:** one Hemlock L 26 Dec, unusual in winter. **Merlin:** one Greece 11 Jan, one Springwater 1-28 Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** one WL 26 Jan (AC, D&DT). **Virginia Rail:** one Greece 20 Dec (MD, JS), one MPd 10 Jan (MD, DT), one Brighton 19 Jan (D&DT, CC, AC). **Sora:** one MPd 10-19 Jan (MD, DT, CC), one MPd 25 Feb (CC). **COM. MOORHEN:** one Irondequoit 2 Jan (MD, DT), one MPd 10 Jan (MD, DT). **Killdeer:** one Brighton 11-13 Jan, one IB 17 Jan. **Dunlin:** one-two Charlotte, RS 1-31 Jan (mob). **Com. Snipe:** max two

Brighton 1 Jan-15 Feb (CC). **Iceland Gull**: four reports. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one IB 15 Feb (CC, MD, PS). **Glaucous Gull**: reports of four individuals. **CASPIAN TERN**: one Charlotte 1-5 Dec (MD, CC), record late.

**Snowy Owl**: four reports. **Long-eared Owl**: one BS 16 Jan (MD, DT), rare in winter. **Short-eared Owl**: max 23 Retsoff 7 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: max two CL 26 Dec, 9 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one Irondequoit all season (GL), one Greece 1-31 Jan (D & JC).

**TREE SWALLOW**: max 19 Greece Dec (PS, mob), unprecedented. **Marsh Wren**: one Tryon P 1 Jan (MD), one IB 2-9 Jan (MD, RS). **Am. Robin**: 5000+ MPd 1-31 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: max two MPd 15 Feb. **N. Mockingbird**: max four Retsof 16 Jan. **Brown Thrasher**: one Lima 28 Feb (AC), only report. **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Sodus Pt 9 Feb (FD, R&JK). **N. Shrike**: reports of up to four/day.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**: max 20 Spencerport 26 Jan. **Pine Warbler**: one Pittsford all season (T & PS), two HB 1 Jan (MD, DT), one HB 18 Jan (MD, JS, DT). **OVENBIRD**: one Greece 1-28 Feb.

**Rufous-sided Towhee**: two Silver L 19 Dec. **Field Sparrow**: two Canadice 26 Dec, one-two Carlton 12, 28 Jan. **White-crowned Sparrow**: max six Pt Breeze 1-28 Feb (WL). **Lapland Longspur**: max 60 Hamlin 4 Feb (WS). **Snow Bunting**: max 250 WL 17 Feb, low. **E. Meadowlark**: max ten Avon 27 Dec (CC, JJ & AW), high. **Rusty Blackbird**: max eight Greece 20 Dec (KG). **Com. Grackle**: max two MPd 13 Jan (MD,DT). **Com. Redpoll**: max eight Webster 6 Dec (BC), scarce. **Pine Siskin**: max 16 HB 4 Jan (MD, DT).

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## REGION 3 — FINGER LAKES

C.R. SMITH AND C.K. MELIN

The winter was mild during the months of December and January, with warmer temperatures than average, and average snowfall and overall precipitation. A strong Nor'easter hit New York State on 11 and 12 Dec, but its effects were felt most severely in the southeastern part of the state and on Long Island, with no unusual birds appearing in Region 3 as a result. December and January brought the usual snow flurries, with the Region reporting 2 to 6 inches of snow on the ground by the end of January. February was colder than average with average to slightly above average amounts of precipitation. By the end of February, 6 to 10 inches of snow covered the ground across Region 3.

Most observers commented that this winter season was unremarkable, even downright dull. There were few reports of white-winged gulls, waterfowl numbers seemed about average, numbers of raptors were low, and winter finches were virtually absent for the second winter in a row. All three accipiter species appeared at feeders scattered throughout the Region the entire season. In mid February, members of the Cayuga Bird Club, led by Ned Brinkley, conducted the second Finger Lakes Region Short-eared Owl Census, confirming a general impression that raptor numbers were relatively low this winter. A total of 25 Short-eared Owl was counted (down from 76 last year), along with 13 Rough-legged Hawk (56 last year), 13 Northern Harrier (49 last year), 21 American Kestrel (15 last year), and 39 Red-tailed Hawk. This is a good example of the kind of project that can contribute to a better understanding of the distributions and abundances of birds in winter. Hopefully, this survey will continue in future years. Other bird clubs around the state might consider a similar winter project.

There were several reports of Common Raven from the region, with sightings of this species any time of year becoming increasingly likely for the alert observer. Particularly noteworthy observations for the period include **Sandhill Crane**, Iceland Gull, and Glaucous Gull.

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**Abbreviations:** CHWMA – Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area; CLSP – Cayuga Lake State Park; MNWR – Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; MtP – Mt. Pleasant, near Ithaca; QCM – Queen Catharine Marsh, Watkins Glen; SML – Seneca Meadows Landfill; SSW – Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary, Ithaca; TFSP – Taughannock Falls State Park; WGSP – Watkins Glen State Park.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** Cayuga L and Seneca L all winter. **Pied-billed Grebe:** Cayuga L and Seneca L all winter. **Horned Grebe:** max ten Cayuga L 16 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** one s end Seneca L 29 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one s end Seneca L mid Dec to mid Jan. **Great Blue Heron:** very small numbers all winter, max eight near MNWR. **Tundra Swan:** max 12 Cayuga L 21 Feb. **Snow Goose:** four Seneca L 17 Jan, six Cayuga L 19 Jan, one Cayuga L 13 Feb, only reports. **Brant:** one s end Seneca L to 3 Dec. **Canada Goose:** max 13,514 MNWR 1 Jan. **Am. Black Duck:** max 811 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Mallard:** max 394 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **N. Pintail:** 10+ Cayuga L throughout period. **N. Shoveler:** two Seneca R 12-13 Feb. **Gadwall:** max 16 Union Springs 18 Jan. **Redhead:** max 2400 Keuka L mid Jan. **Oldsquaw:** six Seneca L 17 Jan. **White-winged Scoter:** one Cayuga L 23-25 Jan. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 580 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Bufflehead:** 14 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** max 506 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Red-breasted Merganser:** six Seneca L 17 Jan, three Cayuga L 18 Jan.

**Bald Eagle:** ad near Ithaca 8 Dec; one MNWR 18 Jan; ad Elmira 11 Feb. **N. Harrier:** *intro*. **Red-tailed Hawk:** *intro*. **Rough-legged Hawk:** *intro*. **Merlin:** one Elmira 3 Dec, one Ithaca CBC 1 Jan, ad Seneca Falls 9 Jan, two Canandaigua mid Feb, one near Flint 15 Feb; exceptional number of reports. **Wild Turkey:** two first-year males at feeder near Dryden throughout Feb; widespread flocks of 25-30 frequently reported. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one King Ferry 19-22 Jan (D. McIlroy, mob). **Killdeer:** one Myers Point on Cayuga L 1 Dec, 2 CLSP 17 Jan. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 8011 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Herring Gull:** 146 Cayuga L 18 Jan. **Iceland Gull:** two (one Kumlien's) SML 20 Jan, one Cayuga L 24 Jan, one CLSP 25 Jan. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one Cayuga L 21 Feb. **Glaucous Gull:** one SML 20 Jan, one Cayuga L 24 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** nine Seneca L 11 Jan, 187 Cayuga L 18 Jan, one-five Chemung R all winter.

**E. Screech-Owl:** several reports of one-two birds. **Great Horned Owl:** nesting QCM late Feb. **Snowy Owl:** scattered singles throughout period. **Long-eared Owl:** two near Ithaca all winter, one SSW 20 Jan, one TFSP 19 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** *intro*. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one calling CHWMA late Feb.

**E. Phoebe:** one Chemung Valley CBC 2 Jan, very late. **Com. Raven:** two Elmira 1 Dec, 3 and 9 Feb; one MtP 1 Jan; two Hector 4 Feb; one WGSP 14 Feb. **Carolina Wren:** Elmira and Ithaca all winter. **E. Bluebird:** small flocks all winter. **Am. Robin:** several flocks reported all winter. **Brown Thrasher:** one overwintered Plum Pt, s Dresden. **N. Shrike:** singles near Sugar Hill 27 Dec, FLNF late Jan, Hector 4 Feb, only reports.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** six near Aurora 8 Dec, one near MNWR 1 Jan.

**Rufous-sided Towhee:** singles at Wellsburg, Horseheads and near Dresden all winter. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 50 Canoga 20 Feb. **Fox Sparrow:** one Southport after 12 Dec. **Swamp Sparrow:** several overwintered. **White-crowned Sparrow:** six near Fayette mid Dec, one at feeder Canoga 20 Dec. **Lapland Longspur:** one MNWR 1 Jan, 14 near Lodi 14 Feb, only reports. **Snow Bunting:** max 1000 near King Ferry 20 Jan. **Red-winged Blackbird:** small flock MNWR 25 Jan. **E. Meadowlark:** at several locations all winter. **Purple Finch:** scattered individuals and small flocks all winter. **Red Crossbill:** six FLNF 14 Feb (FB). **Pine Siskin:** two Elmira throughout period.

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## REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Until February it seemed that the winter of 1992-1993 would be our sixth consecutive mild, open winter. However, the double blast of heavy snowfalls and icy temperatures swept "ol' Man Winter" to power 1 Feb. He continued to reign the entire month, and well beyond as later records will show. December, contrary to most months of 1992, was warmer than normal. The average daily high of 34°F was 1.4° over the average. Precipitation totaled 2.97 inches, a trace above normal. Snowfall of 18.8 inches in Binghamton was an inch more than usual. A selective storm dumped up to 9.5 inches of snow on northern areas of the Region on 11 Dec, but that snow melted quickly. January also was a warm month, about 4.0°F above normal. Precipitation of 2.08 inches was about a third inch below average. Only 11.4 inches of snow fell during the month, 8 inches below average. February was frigid! In Binghamton, the mean temperature of 18.6°F was about 4° colder than normal, while in Cooperstown the mean was 7.3° below normal, according to national weather service reports. Most days were below freezing and subzero nights were common, with 13 in Cooperstown and 12 in Walton. Snowfall at Binghamton Airport measured 31.6 inches, almost double the norm, and was the most snow for February since 1972. Heavy snow cover persisted through the month.

Rivers were mostly wide open December and January. As a result, a total of 16 waterfowl species, the highest number since 1985, was found. Yet the annual waterfowl count early January was low. One participant believed that many ducks escaped detection because they were able to spread out in open water. They weren't concentrated at good observation points and frequented sites too far from the road to be seen. In February, the problem became finding open water.

Except for a scarcity of Am. Kestrel, hawks were seen in average to good numbers. An Osprey, a rare winter visitor, was spotted by George and Evelyn Mead along the Susquehanna River west of Owego on 7 Jan and 5 Feb and was also reported to the Tioga Bird Club by a pair of area fishermen. Eastern Screech-Owl behavior was noted by three observers. Edna Hawken reported one roosting in her son's Vestal roadside mail box (from which the door had been knocked off) on 17 Feb, but it was gone the next day. On a sad note, Jeannette Baldwin and Paul Worden each found a dead Eastern Screech-Owl in the trees in their TIOG yards. "Both birds had just the heads gone," wrote Jeannette.



"We live about eight miles apart and wonder if Great Horned Owls have done this." Rick and Harriet Marsi fittingly ushered in the New Year by tracking down a Snowy Owl. They acted on a tip from one of Rick's readers and found the bird at dusk on a telephone pole on Mt Hunger Road between Lisle and Nanticoke. The bird shifted twice "spreading out these enormous white wings...finally letting us approach as close as we wished," wrote Harriet. She returned the next day with three other observers and found "him/her but definitely an immature hunkered down against the blowing snow on a one-story house roof, so well camouflaged."

Numbers of half-hardy species such as Northern Mockingbird and Northern Cardinal were down. Carolina Wren, however, may have the secret for survival in a harsh winter. For them, a reliable suet feeder is the basic requirement. A sheltered roosting site at a building close by may be the second concern. Marilyn Davis had a pair spending nights in an old phoebe nest on her front porch. "Somehow they knocked the nest down 13 Dec and just flew off," said Marilyn. Garages were home to two pairs reported through last winter. Bob Saunders had even more interesting guests. His story read "Two wrens nested late last summer in a plastic juice container on the beam of our carport roof. Mid September young were practicing flying around the yard. Then they all disappeared. In January a pair arrived at our suet feeder. Now they feed daily and roost in the same juice container. Could they be the parents or the young?" he asks.

In addition to Osprey, reports of other summer residents seldom here in winter included Killdeer, Eastern Phoebe, Gray Catbird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Field Sparrow and Northern Oriole. Common Raven is still not at all common in our Region, so four at one sighting is impressive. Good sparrow counts were noted right through our severe February. Lapland Longspur, the first in five years, was reported. Missed species included Snow Goose, Common Snipe, and Swamp Sparrow.

Purple Finch and crossbills highlighted winter finch news. The 201 Purple Finch on five CBCs was the highest total in 10 years. They continued to be seen in small flocks all season, especially after mid February. Red Crossbill was found 11 Feb by Dave Messineo and the rarer White-winged Crossbill appeared on 22 Feb, both in the Otselc and Pharsalia areas of CHEN. This was the scene of the big incursion and confirmed nestings of the two species in 1985. According to Dave, single males and pairs of Red Crossbill were feeding in Pitch and Red Pine while small groups of White-winged Crossbill were in Norway Spruce. Males of both species were singing territorial songs and all were still

there at the end of the period. Despite abundant cones and tree seeds, other winter finches were almost nonexistent.

Region 4 will miss Judy and Don Bell, who have moved to Minnesota. Judy is a licensed bander and Don compiled records for the Tioga Bird Club

**Observers:** Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Reynolds Bennett, Bruce Bozdos, Marilyn Davis (MDv), Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, John Gustafson, Sara Kinch, Gail Kirch, Margaret Layton, Harriet Marsi, Rick Marsi, Andy Mason, Robert Miller, Ron Milliken, Susan Moran, Marie Petuh, Mike Porter (MPo), Steve Rice, Bob and Jean Saunders, Joe Sedlacek, Tom & Norene Tasber, Bill Toner, Norm Trigoboff, George Wade, Anne Whitaker, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

**Abbreviations:** BCBC - Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; CanRes - Cannonsville Reservoir; ChCBC - Chenango Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; CoCBC - Cortland Christmas Bird Count, 2 Jan; DOCBC - Delaware-Otsego Christmas Bird Count 19 Dec; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count; OPM - Oneonta, Portlandville, Milford; TCBC - Tioga Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; WPres - Whitney Point Reservoir.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** one BCBC 27 Dec; one Chenango Bridge 18 Jan (SM), rare after Dec. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Susquehanna R Oneonta 21 Jan (MD), first in four winters. **Great Blue Heron:** 15 on four CBCs; four OTSE 17 Jan; only one TIOG Feb. **Canada Goose:** max 1915 ChCBC; 783 CanRes 16 Jan (EH); 405 Otsego L 17 Jan (AM); only TIOG Feb. **Wood Duck:** one Dings Hollow Road BROO through 5 Feb (MDv); two other singles BROO Jan; one TIOG, uncommon. **Am. Black Duck:** 167 on five CBCs; fewer CanRes all season; at Oneonta and Chenango Forks all season, max eight; mixed flock of 400 (including Mallard) in cornfield near Homer 10 and 11 Dec (JG). **Mallard:** max 1743 on five CBCs, high; 504 FWC, scarce after early Feb. **N. Pintail:** one CanRes 16 Jan (EH), first in eight winters. **Canvasback:** TIOG Feb (RB), only report. **Redhead:** 12 CoCBC, good numbers. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 19 CoCBC; one BCBC; one CanRes 7 Feb. **Greater Scaup:** CoCBC only report. **Scaup species:** WPres 29 Jan (HM, BB). **Com. Goldeneye:** 103 CoCBC, high; one Vestal 26 Dec; five FWC, scarce but present through Feb. **Bufflehead:** eight CoCBC, scarce. **Hooded Merganser:** max 22 CoCBC; six ChCBC; two FWC, highest count in 15 years. **Com. Merganser:** 154 on four CBCs and FWC, high. **Red-breasted Merganser:** single TIOG Jan (GW, NK), often missed.

**Bald Eagle:** max nine CanRes 7 Feb. **N. Harrier:** max six on three CBCs; two Sidney 18 Jan (R&JS). **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** seven on three CBCs; one took House Finch at Vestal feeder (RM); three-four/month widespread through period. **Cooper's Hawk:** 13 on five CBCs; regular at feeders, "got a squirrel" 9 Dec; "missed a Mourning Dove 8 Jan" (MP); "wish I could be sure it has been the same one for four years" (SR). **N. Goshawk:** singles DELA 2 Dec (AM); ChCBC; Tiog 7 Feb (C&JB), good count. **Red-tailed Hawk:** 80 on five CBCs; 10 Susquehanna R 17 Jan; 26 Tioga to CanRes 7 Feb, high counts. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 25 on five CBCs; eight widespread reports Jan, max four; six Feb, best counts CHEN. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** three widespread reports/month, good. **Ruffed Grouse:** male displaying Oneonta Res 1 Dec; max five BROO 5 Dec (JS); one eating buds in cherry tree 16 Feb (T&NT); only nine on four CBCs, scarce. **Wild Turkey:** 154 on four CBCs, mostly CHEN, OTSE; scarce Jan-Feb. **Killdeer:** single CanRes 16 Jan (EH), late. **Ring-billed Gull:** 59 on five CBCs, good. **Herring Gull:** 74 on four CBCs, high. **Great Black-backed Gull:** one CoCBC, uncommon.

**E. Screech-Owl:** *intro.* **Great Horned Owl:** 19 on three CBCs, high. **Snowy Owl:** *intro.* **Barred Owl:** one Triangle 2, 3 and 17 Feb (T&NT), only report. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** heard BROO last week Feb (RM). **Belted Kingfisher:** 17 four CBCs, good; only one Feb report. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** record nine TCBC and good numbers there through period; also three ChCBC, uncommon that area. **N. Flicker:** singles BCBC, DOCBC; also on telephone pole BROO 4 and 14 Jan (MP), scarce. **Pileated Woodpecker:** five-six reports/month; max six BCBC, high counts.

**E. Phoebe:** one Vestal 4, 13 and 19 Dec (GK); one Tiog 31 Dec and 1 Jan (GW), very late. **Horned Lark:** max 75 Chen 20 Jan (EH); Willet 9 Dec and 5 Feb (MDv); 50 WPres 8 Feb (HM, BB, GK), rather low. **Am. Crow:** max 2,039 TCBC, a third of the total count. **Com. Raven:** four Franklin Mt Hawk Watch s Oneonta 6 Dec (AM). **Tufted Titmouse:** 114 on four CBCs, decline second year in a row. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 55 on five CBCs; low feeder counts through period. **Brown Creeper:** 24 on four CBCs; scarce Jan-Feb. **Carolina Wren:** *intro.* **Winter Wren:** one CHEN mid Dec, often missed. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 36 on five CBCs. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one Margaretville feeder 15 Dec (MPo), uncommon. **E. Bluebird:** max 10 BCBC; five CanRes 16 Jan; four Waterman Center 27 Feb. **Hermit Thrush:** arr "feeding multiflora rose bushes" T Maine BROO 27 Feb (JS). **Am. Robin:** 30 on five CBCs; flocks to 30 at five sites, mostly BROO, through period. **Gray Catbird:** one feeding in rose bushes Tompkins DELA 16 Jan (Broome Naturalists Club), rare. **Cedar**

**Waxwing:** max 508 on four CBCs, high count; fewer midwinter flocks. **N. Shrike:** max two DOCBC; singles CanRes 8 Jan (MP), WPres 15 Jan (HM), N. Pharsalia 28 Feb (DM), scarce.

**Am. Tree Sparrow:** 301 on five CBCs; good mid winter counts, max 30 OPM 5 Feb. **Field Sparrow:** one Owego feeder through period (C&JB), uncommon. **Fox Sparrow:** arr Vestal 19 Feb (SD), very early. **Song Sparrow:** 26 on three CBCs; four singles/month Jan-Feb, good. **White-throated Sparrow:** 60 on five CBCs; at six widespread feeders through period; max 28 BROO 23 Feb (MP), highest numbers since 1985. **Dark-eyed Junco:** 556 on five CBCs; mid winter max 100 CanRes 15 Jan (EH), high. **Lapland Longspur:** two CHEN 20 Jan (Elva Hawken). **Snow Bunting:** max 60 McGraw 6 Dec (BT); 106 on three CBCs; three other Jan reports. **Red-winged Blackbird:** two singles early Dec; arr BROO 20 Feb, only reports. **Com. Grackle:** four singles. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max three DOCBC, scarce. **N. Oriole:** one Kirkwood 10 Jan (LB), first since 1989. **Purple Finch:** *intro*. **House Finch:** 1641 on four CBCs. **Com. Redpoll:** four DOCBC; one CoCBC, scarce. **Red Crossbill:** *intro*. **White-winged Crossbill:** *intro*. **Pine Siskin:** max 22 ChCBC; one DOCBC; one BROO 5 Dec; one TI0G Jan, scarce. **Am. Goldfinch:** 683 on five CBCs; 200 CanRes 16 Jan; fewer at feeders. **Evening Grosbeak:** 42 ChCBC; one TCBC, scarce.

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

GENE HUGGINS

It was a very long and bleak winter generally made worse by low numbers of birds. The average temperature for the three months was 25.2°F, near normal for the period. At the end of February, 125.5 inches of snow had fallen, 36.8 inches above normal. There was more ice and snow with no late winter thaw to herald the arrival of Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird and Com. Grackle. Little did we know it would get worse before it got better.

Observers reported 31 species of water birds including two noteworthy records for the Region, fourth Regional record of **Northern Fulmar** and the Region's eighteenth record of Harlequin Duck. Unfortunately, waterfowl populations were substantially down. The Federation Waterfowl Count indicated a poor total for the following species: Am. Black Duck 377, Greater Scaup 333, Com. Goldeneye 1812 and Com. Merganser 1190. In fact, it was the lowest record ever for Greater Scaup. Oldsquaw were at ridiculously low levels. Other water birds of interest include a record high seasonal count of Double-crested Cormorant at Oswego Harbor and on the waterfowl survey. Great Blue Heron are now appearing with increasing regularity on smaller rivers in the southern highlands through early January. The upper drainage systems of both the Unadilla and Sangerfield Rivers now have from 1 to 2 birds a season. No Common Snipe were found, largely due to the fact that most shallow wetlands were frozen early.

It was a very poor season for gulls. Large populations were not evident especially after the second week in January. At least two reasons can be attributed to the decline, the closure of landfills and the sustained buildup of ice along the Seneca and Oswego Rivers. The entire harbor at Oswego was clogged with ice from late January through the end of the period. White-winged gulls were noticeably scarce with only one report of Iceland Gull and four reports of Glaucous Gull. Three Black-legged Kittiwake at Derby Hill was the only unusual gull for this winter.

Among raptors, at least eight Bald Eagle were found along our major waterways. Rough-legged Hawk were few in number with only four reports all from OSWE. In regards to color morph of the Rough-legged Hawk, observers found six light morph and twelve dark morph birds. A **Merlin** was again found in the same city park for the third year in a row and established a first for the Syracuse CBC. Short-eared Owl went unreported from places near Scott Swamp and the fields south and east of Oneida Lake. On a more positive note was a Long-eared Owl observed near an active feeder on the campus of the SUNY College of

Environmental Sciences on 15 Jan. Perched only a few feet from the sidewalk, it was an unique opportunity to view this bird at close range. Only four Northern Shrike were observed, quite a decline from the average of 16 seen in three previous winters.

Half-hardy species such as American Robin, Song Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbird were down in total numbers. Concentrations of no more than fifty American Robin per day were the norm for localities near New Hartford ONEI and Cicero ONON. Compared to the 49 Song Sparrow reported last year, 34 were seen this year. American Tree Sparrow were scarce with no more than eight per day, except at Clay Marsh where almost 50 were noted in early February. Equally unimpressive were counts for both White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco at 20 per day for each species. With the onset of more snow accumulation toward the end of February, good numbers of Horned Lark and Snow Bunting were noted in the southern highlands. Among the flocks that fed along the edge of roads and in manured fields, only one Lapland Longspur was found. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was noteworthy both from the perspective of season and location. Pompey, where the bird was seen is a windswept hamlet amid some of the highest elevations in ONON. Eastern Bluebird continued to increase in the number of reports, compared to an average of nine in two previous winters. Encouraging were the approximately 200 Purple Finch reported from across the Region. In the southern portion of the Adirondacks, fair numbers of Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were seen, but these species seldom were located elsewhere.

One of the outstanding events for this winter was the minor incursion of both Red and White-winged Crossbills. Except for ones and twos of Red Crossbill at scattered locations, the highest count was found in the reforested hills south of Fabius ONON. As of 28 Feb, six males were actively singing and displaying, with observers assuming that females were on the nest. The same behavior occurred in White-winged Crossbill, of which over thirty were seen near Boylston OSWE situated on the Tug Hill Plateau.

Observers in the Region reported 114 species during the winter. The most unusual of these were **Northern Fulmar**, Harlequin Duck and **Merlin**. Other notable species reported were Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Tundra Swan, Mute Swan, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Purple Sandpiper, Black-legged Kittiwake, Long-eared Owl, Gray Jay, Com. Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Com. Yellowthroat, Rufous-sided Towhee, Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill.

A special thanks to Dorothy Crumb, Gary Lee, Bill Purcell, and Marge Rusk for their contributions to the introduction of this report.

**Contributors:** Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Dorothy W. Crumb, Paul De Benedictis, Bob Dorrance, Robert L. Evans, Craig Fosdick, William T. Gruenbaum, John Hanyak, Elva Hawken, Barbara Herrgesell, Gene Huggins, Mary Alice Koeneke, Gary Lee, Sheila Mc Combie, David Nash, Belle Peebles, Bill Purcell, Margaret S. Rusk, Maureen Staloff, Jim Throckmorton, Ken Zoller.

**Abbreviations:** Adks - Adirondacks; DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; LSB - Fairhaven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, CAYU; LOL - Lake Ontario Littoral, OSWE; NPT - northern Pompey Township, ONON; OnonL - Onondaga Lake, ONON.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** one Oswego H 7 Jan. **Com. Loon:** last Adks 2 Dec, max four Oswego H 20 Dec, none after 24 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles Oswego H 20 Dec to 4 Feb, Oswego R 1 7 Jan to 8 Feb, LOL 10 Jan. **Horned Grebe:** last five LOL 17 Jan. **Red-necked Grebe:** singles Oswego H 1 Jan, Fulton 1 7 Jan. **N. FULMAR:** one DH 3 Dec (JH). **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 59 Oswego H 20 Dec, last there 7 Feb; 34 on waterfowl survey 16-23 Jan. **Great Blue Heron:** 27 reports, max 11 Syracuse 19 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** ten Oneida L 19 Dec to 9 Jan. **Mute Swan:** imm OnonL 17-20 Jan. **Canada Goose:** max 800 LSB 17 Jan. **Wood Duck:** two Oswego H 1 Jan, Mohawk R 1 8-23 Jan, six reports. **Green-winged Teal:** max 17 Hookway Tract Syracuse 12 Dec, overwintered. **Am. Black Duck:** max 130 OnonL 15 Jan, four Dart's L and Big Moose L Adks all winter, *intro*. **Mallard:** max 1054 Oswego R 17 Jan. **N. Pintail:** two Hookway Tract Syracuse 12 Dec to 16 Jan, Seneca R 17 Jan, Chenango R 18 Jan. **Gadwall:** 31 reports, max 22 OnonL 20 Feb. **Canvasback:** two Oswego H 9 Jan, seven LSB 17 Jan. **Redhead:** 33 reports, max 16 Skaneateles L 16 Jan. **Ring-necked Duck:** singles LSB 1 Jan, Oswego H 9 Jan, OnonL 1 7 Jan. **Greater Scaup:** max 474 LOL 3 Dec; *intro*. **Lesser Scaup:** eight Skaneateles L 16 Jan, two Nine Mile Pt 7 Feb, one Oswego H 10 Jan. **Harlequin Duck:** imm male Oswego R at Phoenix 7-27 Jan, eighteenth Regional record. **Oldsquaw:** max 25 Oswego H 20 Dec, declined to eight a month later. **Surf Scoter:** one Oswego H 8 Dec. **White-winged Scoter:** one Oswego H 21 Jan. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 1037 LOL 17 Jan, *intro*. **Bufflehead:** max 140 Oswego R 21 Feb. **Hooded Merganser:** 62 reports, max 15 Skaneateles L 16 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** max 800 LOL 1 Jan, low. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 92 LOL 10 Jan. **Ruddy Duck:** one OnonL 20 Jan.

**Bald Eagle:** two ad, one imm Phoenix 9 Jan to 27 Feb; ad and imm LOL 9 Jan to 20 Feb; two Big Moose L to end of period; imm Seneca R 27 Feb. **N. Harrier:** seven reports. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 26 reports.

**Cooper's Hawk:** 18 reports. **N. Goshawk:** singles T Lee 14 Dec, Syracuse 19 Dec, Fabius 26 Jan. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 27 NY Thruway Canastota to Weedsport 17 Feb. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max six s ONON and MADI 9 Jan, *intro*. **Am. Kestrel:** 17 reports, max five Syracuse 19 Dec. **MERLIN:** one Onondaga P Syracuse 19 Dec-9 Feb. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** 18 reported for the period. **Wild Turkey:** max 110 s HERK 15 Feb. **Am. Coot:** two LSB 8 Dec to 1 Jan, two OnonL 15 Feb. **Purple Sandpiper:** one LSB 8 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** singles OnonL 19 Dec, Oswego H 20 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** one Oswego H 4 Feb, only report. **Glaucous Gull:** ad, imm Oswego H 10 Jan to 26 Feb; singles Phoenix 10 Jan, OnonL 19 Dec-17 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 616 OnonL 23 Jan. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** three DH 3 Dec (JH).

**Mourning Dove:** max 80 T Elbridge 2 Jan. **E. Screech-Owl:** eight reports. **Snowy Owl:** one Hancock Airport N Syracuse after 19 Dec. **Barred Owl:** five reported. **Long-eared Owl:** *intro*. **Short-eared Owl:** none. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** singles Erieville 9, 20 Jan, Baldwinsville 16 Jan. **N. Flicker:** 44 reports, max two s ONON 2 Jan.

**Horned Lark:** max 140 Fabius 28 Feb. **Gray Jay:** one N Branch Moose R mid Dec. **Am. Crow:** max 280 s ONON 2 Jan. **Com. Raven:** ten Old Forge 18 Dec, two Moss L 2 Dec. **Black-capped Chickadee:** max 62 Clay Marsh and Liverpool 10 Feb. **Boreal Chickadee:** two Old Forge 18 Dec. **Tufted Titmouse:** 31 reports, max two Camillus Valley 2 Jan. **Carolina Wren:** 13 reported. **Winter Wren:** singles Syracuse 19 Dec, Camillus Valley 2 Jan. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max five Beaver L 11 Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** one Pompey 25 Feb. **E. Bluebird:** 20 reports, max seven Chittenango 8 Jan. **Am. Robin:** max 46 Cicero 9 Feb. **N. Mockingbird:** 14 reports, max four Dewitt 7 Jan. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 189 T Brookfield 19 Feb. **N. Shrike:** *intro*.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** singles Syracuse 19 Dec, Skaneateles 2 Jan. **Com. Yellowthroat:** one Oswego-Fulton CBC 20 Dec.

**Rufous-sided Towhee:** singles Clay Marsh 6 Jan, Pompey 28-30 Jan. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 49 Clay Marsh 10 Feb. **Song Sparrow:** *intro*. **Swamp Sparrow:** one T Elbridge 2 Jan. **White-throated Sparrow:** max 21 Syracuse 4 Jan. **White-crowned Sparrow:** singles Herkimer, Erieville 15 Dec, Oneida 7 Feb. **Dark-eyed Junco:** max 20 OSWE 20 Dec; "Oregon" type singles Hastings 23 Dec to end of period, Skaneateles 2 Jan. **Lapland Longspur:** one Fabius 14 Feb. **Snow Bunting:** max 800 Canastota 6 Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird:** max 55 T Sterling 28 Jan. **Com. Grackle:** two Dewitt 18 Jan; singles Syracuse 19 Dec, Holland Patent 17 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** max 31 NPT 12 Dec. **Purple Finch:** max 43 Fabius 15 Dec, *intro*. **Red Crossbill:** arr Fabius 15 Dec, max 14 there after 26 Dec, *intro*; two T Brookfield 28 Dec, two



Georgetown 28 Feb; one Erieville 15 Dec. **White-winged Crossbill**: max 37 Boylston OSWE after 22 Dec, *intro*; 13 Selkirk Shore SP 5-15 Dec. **Pine Siskin**: max 50 Old Forge 18 Dec, almost absent outside Adks. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 84 Erieville 9 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 32 Old Forge 18 Dec, eight Boylston 27 Dec, one Hastings 4 Jan.

**CORRIGENDA**: Vol. 41(3):198. **N. Harrier**: date of max should read 27 Mar, *not* 27 May. Vol. 42(3):176. **Red-throated Loon**: Torpy Pd is in T Georgetown, *not* T Nelson. Vol.42 (3):177. *Delete* **Turkey Vulture** arrival date as it had already arrived T Verona ONEI 28 Feb. Vol. 42(3):179. **N. Shrike**: last three Mexico S Apr should read 5 Apr.

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## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

After a slow start, the weather brought a good old-fashioned winter, but without any notable influx of avian winter visitors. December was warmer than normal, with temperatures in the St. Lawrence Valley about 4°F above average. Precipitation was about normal, but snowfall was low. The storm of 11 Dec missed the Region, but snow on 26 Dec and monthly lows on 27 Dec were followed by a severe ice storm on 31 Dec. January temperatures were also 3-5°F above normal, and precipitation again was down. There was rain 21 Jan, major snowstorms on 14 and 27 Jan, and total snowfall ranged from 10 inches in the St. Lawrence valley to 60 inches on the Tug Hill. February's weather proved a marked contrast to the previous two months and recent years. Temperatures were 10°F below normal, with few mornings above the freezing point. Extreme readings were less than -30°F on 7 Feb. Snowfall was for February was greater than normal. There was a major storm on 11 Feb, and the whole Region saw accumulations of 30 inches by the end of the month. The deep snows must have taken their toll of Wild Turkey. Five frequented a barnyard in Canton in late February, and Peter O'Shea reported a flock of six to eight feeding on the snowless banks of a spring in Fine in late February.

The Massena-Cornwall CBC boasted 71 species, of which the New York side included record highs for Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Black-backed Gull, Northern Mockingbird, White-throated Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird; and seven new species — Pied-billed Grebe, Mute Swan, White-winged Scoter, Wild Turkey, Common Raven, and Swamp Sparrow — were found. The Watertown Count, with 39 species, was more remarkable for 18 species missed in 1992 but present in 1991, including Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike, and Evening Grosbeak. Two Field Sparrow there are of interest, but 10 Chipping Sparrow must be questioned. This was the first year for the New Boston count, which yielded 26 species and 1072 individuals. I received no report for the Thousand Islands CBC.

The Federation Waterfowl Count 16-24 Jan produced 13 species, including Wood Duck. American Black Duck numbers continue to decline. There were no Oldsquaw on the Federation Count, but they were present later in the winter. Judging from from Bruce Di Labio's regular surveys, numbers of wintering gulls at Robert Moses SP and

Moses-Saunders Dam were depressed and decreased through the period. High counts for Iceland Gull were in the twenties. There was single reports of Bonaparte's Gull, **Thayer's Gull**, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake. However the most unexpected report was a **Mew Gull**, alas, the day before Massena-Cornwall CBC!

There were small numbers of raptors but the 11 species provided good variety. About ten Bald Eagle wintered along St. Lawrence River, fewer than usual, and fewer eagles fed near Cranberry Lake this winter. Northern Harrier lingered inland in STLA. The 14 contributors and three CBCs produced seven reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk, eight of Cooper's Hawk, four of Northern Goshawk, and four of American Kestrel. All goshawk reports but one and all kestrel reports after 1 Jan were from JEFF. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were reported regularly taking Mourning Dove at feeders, and Chaimberlain reported both Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk preying on House Finch. Buteos were scarce, especially later in the period. In visits to Robert Moses SP, Bruce DiLabio saw no Rough-legged Hawk and a maximum of only two Red-tailed Hawk. Three unexpected falcons, **Merlin**, **Peregrine Falcon** and **Gyrfalcon**, were reported this winter. Five species of owl were reported, with small numbers of Short-eared Owl and very few Snowy Owl away from the Lake Ontario lowlands. Numbers of Northern Shrike were moderate, with five of 12 observers reporting 15 sightings in addition to three individuals seen on two of the four Regional CBCs.

Among winter residents, Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch were well reported. Blue Jay and Black-capped Chickadee were abundant. American Crow remained through the winter in most areas. There was only one Bohemian Waxwing report. Abundance of finches was greatest in LEWI and southern STLA. White-winged Crossbill was more widely reported than usual. Purple Finch, House Finch, and American Goldfinch numbers were generally strong, though Deb and Steve Litwhiler had few Purple Finch and goldfinch and no House Finch on their hill in Lorraine. I noticed that Purple Finch replaced House Finch during snow storms. Paul Kelly had a color-banded female House Finch in Ogdensburg and top counts of Purple Finch, House Finch and American Goldfinch. Evening Grosbeak was mentioned by only half of the respondents. As noteworthy as the above sightings was the dearth of Pine Siskin and absence of Pine Grosbeak and Common Redpoll.

On the other side of the ledger, a variety of half-hardy species was found, especially during the first part of the period. Late dates were set by Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and

Eastern Bluebird. Red-bellied Woodpecker were well-reported. Dick Brouse's two Carolina Wrens appeared every day, as they have since Oct 1991 and the species was also reported in Canton. Northern Mockingbird was seen at three sites, but a Brown Thrasher did not survive the winter. Common Grackle reports all were at feeders. Eastern Meadowlark lingered at three sites. There were several reports of White-throated Sparrow as well as a few Song Sparrow wintering throughout the Region.

A **Mountain Bluebird** feeding on insects on the outside of an old farmhouse on the Pt Peninsula on 21 (LBC), 23 (W. Powell), and 27 Jan (D. Prosser and P. Clark) was a first for the Region.

**Contributors:** Marilyn Badger, Richard Brouse, Lee B. Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Bruce M. Di Labio, Jim & Lori Farquhar, John Fritz, John Green, Michael Greenwald, Bob Hendrickson, Paul Kelly, Steve & Debbie Litwhiler, Peter O'Shea, Jim Shuman, Gerry Smith, Hayden Stafford, Bob & June Walker, Mary Beth Wood.

**Abbreviations:** EDS - El Dorado Shores, T Ellisburg; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 16-24 Jan; MCBC - Massena CBC, 28 Dec; NBCBC - New Boston CBC, 2 Jan; WCBC - Watertown CBC, 19 Dec; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam; PRWMA - Perch River WMA, T Pamela and Orleans; PtPen - Pt Peninsula, T Lyme; ULL - Upper and Lower Lakes WMA; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park, T Massena; SLR - St. Lawrence River.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** one Massena 10 Dec. **Com. Loon:** five reports, max two Sacketts Harbor 19 Dec, three Massena 10 Dec; last SLR JEFF 16 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one MCBC. **Horned Grebe:** two Head Pd, Massena 10 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** one Head Pd 10 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** imm RMSP 27 Dec; two SLR JEFF 16 Jan. **Great Blue Heron:** nine reports, last Henderson 11 Jan. **Tundra Swan:** five PRWMA 2 Dec; seven PtPen 8 Dec. **Mute Swan:** six ad, six imm PRWMA 2 Dec; one MCBC. **Canada Goose:** 10345 MCBC; decline in numbers with freeze-up in early Jan; last two on Black River, T Dexter 18 Jan. **Wood Duck:** two MCBC; one injured bird Massena 20 Jan. **Green-winged Teal:** 48 FWC. **Am. Black Duck:** 48 FWC; max 50 Ellisburg 27 Jan, 60 Sandy Creek 8 Feb. **Mallard:** max StLA 141 MSD 16 Jan; 250 in spring-seep area Mixer Road Ellisburg 27 Jan. **Gadwall:** five MSD 27 Dec, one MSD 20 Jan, unusual in winter. **Am. Wigeon:** five FWC. **Ring-necked Duck:** 500 PRWMA 2 Dec. **Greater Scaup:** male SLR at Massena 10 Dec; max 6000 Black River Bay T Hounsfeld 2 Dec, none there Jan or Feb; 80 SLR 23 Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** two MCBC. **Oldsquaw:** four MCBC; max 500 Stony Pt 9 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** 45 EDS 5

Dec; three MCBC. **Scoter species:** 80 SLR FWC. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 900 MSD 2 Jan. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** two males, one female MSD 16 Jan, one male MSD 18 Feb, only reports. **Bufflehead:** numbers increased from seven PtPen 8 Dec to 600 Stony Pt 9 Feb. **Hooded Merganser:** one female MSD 2 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** 1800 MSD 10 Dec decreasing to 179 on 18 Feb.

**Bald Eagle:** *intro*; ad MSD 16 Jan, only sighting there; ad T Orleans 7 Jan; ad Lampson Falls T Clair 22 Feb; fourth-year bird T Piercefield 28 Feb. **N. Harrier:** female MCBC, one MSD 2 Jan, late for SLR. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** four MCBC. **Cooper's Hawk:** *intro*. **N. Goshawk:** *intro*. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max seven PtPen 21 Jan. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max 38 PtPen 21 Jan. **Am. Kestrel:** *intro*. **MERLIN:** one Cape Vincent village 4 Dec and 9 Jan (M&BW). **PEREGRINE FALCON:** PtPen 26 Feb (JF *vide* Dorothy Crumb). **GYRFALCON:** gray morph EDS 10 Dec (GAS); gray morph Stoney Pt T Cape Vincent 26 Feb (LBC). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** seven MCBC, four Brownville in Jan, eight PRWMA. **Gray Partridge:** numbers down, max 10 Cape Vincent 14 Feb. **Wild Turkey:** *intro*; 18 MCBC; 18 E. Martinsburg 27 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull:** 100 MSD 1 Dec (MB). **Mew Gull:** ad MSD 27 Dec (DSibley, mob). **Ring-billed Gull:** max 485 MSD 10 Dec, low. **THAYER'S GULL:** two MCBC. **Iceland Gull:** max 21 (nine ad, 12 imm) MSD 16 Jan; 26 there 18 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** four MSD 21 Feb (CW). **Glaucous Gull:** nine MSD 28 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 1713 MCBC; 968 MSD 28 Feb, mostly downstream near the Reynold's plant. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** ad MSD 10 Dec, second record there.

**E. Screech-Owl:** one Louisville 2 Jan; pair still resident Cape Vincent (MW). **Great Horned Owl:** several reports, pair calling Cape Vincent 3 and 5 Feb. **Barred Owl:** one calling Aldrich 2 Dec only report. **Snowy Owl:** *intro*. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** only one Massena 18 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** max 13 PtPen and seven Pt Salubrious 8-15 Dec (LBC); two Three-mile Pt T Lyme and three near Woodville T Ellisburg 25 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** PtPen 8 Dec, Watertown 29 Jan (RB), late. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** male Three-mile Pt T Lyme 23-28 Feb; one near Lafargeville 27 Feb; one Henderson through the period; singles Ellisburg 1 Feb, Woodville 28 Feb. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** frequently found feeding in dead conifers s StLA (PO'S). **N. Flicker:** RMSP 7 and 18 Feb, late. **Pileated Woodpecker:** singles reported by half of respondents; pair Cape Vincent.

**Horned Lark:** present through period Cape Vincent; max 100 Harrisburg 14 Jan. **Gray Jay:** five being fed at hunting camps near Aldrich T Fine 2 Dec. **Blue Jay:** very high numbers on Tug Hill, 50 on 4 Feb, feeder max 26 Lorraine 13 Feb. **Am. Crow:** max 100 E Martinsburg

27 Feb. **Com. Raven**: one Montague LEWI 2 Dec; two MCBC. **Black-capped Chickadee**: five to 12 per day at feeders. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: pair St. Lawrence Univ campus all winter; "more abundant than White-breasted" s STLA (PO'S). **Brown Creeper**: several reports; one taking suet at feeder Cape Vincent 27 Dec (MW). **Carolina Wren**: *intro*; one Canton 30 Jan and 15 Feb. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max eight NBCBC; three Stoney Pt 26 Feb. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one EDS 12 Dec, late. **Am. Robin**: small numbers through period; max 25 feeding on Red Cedar Stoney Pt 2 Feb. **E. Bluebird**: four Canton 13 Dec. **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD**: *intro*. **N. Mockingbird**: two MCBC; Cape Vincent 5 and 29 Dec and 7 and 21 Feb (MW); one in a Multiflora Rose bush T Henderson, 13 Dec-25 Jan, then on 13 Feb but not thereafter. **Brown Thrasher**: one found dead at a feeder Adams 23 Feb. **Bohemian Waxwing**: six Louisville 10 Feb. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 50 Stoney Pt 15 Feb. **N. Shrike**: *intro*.

**Field Sparrow**: *intro*. **Swamp Sparrow**: one MCBC. **Song Sparrow**: reported in small numbers. **White-throated Sparrows**: two MCBC; widely reported in small numbers. **Dark-eyed Junco**: small numbers at feeders; "Oregon type" Henderson 6-12 Dec. **Lapland Longspur**: two Cape Vincent 2 Dec, only report. **Snow Bunting**: numbers modest and irregular, increasing JEFF in late Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird**: one MCBC. **E. Meadowlark**: Cape Vincent to 18 Jan; two PtPen 23 Jan, one feeding on seed or insects in a row of magnum hay bails there 5 Feb; one Henderson 9 Feb. **Com. Grackle**: one at feeder Cape Vincent 5 Dec (MW), one Massena all winter (MB). **Brown-headed Cowbird**: mostly early and late in period, max 18 MCBC; ten Cape Vincent 10 Dec. **Purple Finch**: max 72 Ogdensburg 20 Feb. **House Finch**: max 80 Ogdensburg 23 Jan. **White-winged Crossbill**: 19 NBCBC; 50 Parishville 23 Feb; six Pinkney LEWI 2 Jan. Pine Siskin: two Pierrepont 25 Jan; small flock at feeder in Watson 17, 24, 27 Jan; two Ogdensburg 6 Feb. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 70 Ogdensburg 23 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 50 Lorraine. **House Sparrow**: seems to be increasing, 65 Henderson 16 Jan (LBC), most in five years.

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## REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

Canadian visitors, local dump-pickers, western strays, and the always dynamic winter finches added color to a winter slow in arriving, but brutal by the end. Early December saw temperatures in the 40s. After a light dusting of snow on 5 Dec, there was bare ground to perhaps a half-foot of snow in the woods for the Christmas Bird Counts. Monthly precipitation was an inch and a half below normal, and yearly precipitation ended up 2.86 inches below average. January began with bare ground below 1,000 ft elevation, temperatures reaching 50°F on 5 Jan, and a scanty half-inch snowfall on 11 Jan. The first major winter snowstorm left 6-7 inches at Plattsburgh and Westport on 13 Jan, and by the following day a foot of snow covered Elizabethtown and Plattsburgh AFB. Yet the ground was almost bare in Hami on 24 Jan. Late Jan-early Feb were bitter cold, with Elizabethtown -26°F on 7 Feb. Two storms left 15 inches of snow at Elizabethtown on 13 Feb and another 6 inches on 16-17 Feb. After another cold spell (-20°F at Plattsburgh on 19 Feb), a third monthly storm left another 52 inches at Elizabethtown on 22 Feb. It was the second snowiest February on record with a total of 33.8 inches at lower elevations (just 2 inches shy of the record), 36 inches in the woods of HAMI, and almost twice that at upper elevations of the High Peaks in ESSE. It was the fifth coldest February on record, as well, with an average temperature over 7°F below normal.

A total of 82 species, plus a hybrid, two color morphs, and a subspecies were recorded, short of the 90 species last winter and record of 96 species in 1983-84. The Elizabethtown CBC found a record 44 species on 26 Dec, however.

Some 4-5 thousand Snow Geese left Point au Roche SP on 4 Dec, leaving several thousand still there the next day. Numbers continued to decline thereafter, until the lake froze, with only 36 adults and 20 immatures remaining by 5 Jan, a much higher percentage of young than in early winter. Another six yellow neck collars were read 1-11 Dec and reported by Bill Krueger. Five were female Greater Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens atlanticus*) banded by the Canadian Wildlife Service on Bylot Island, District of Franklin, Northwest Territories, during late summer roundups of molting geese in August 1990-92. The other goose was marked in the St Lawrence estuary by researchers from the University of Laval during the 1980s. Three of the neck-collared Greater Snow Geese at Point au Roche during Nov and Dec had been spotted in October at the famous Cap Tourmente, Quebec, a gathering place on their way south.

The **Ross's Goose** remained at Point au Roche SP until 3 Dec, according to Krueger. Over 1,000 Canada Geese were on fields west of Malone on 4 Dec. Two leg-banded Canada Goose at North West Bay, Westport, on 18 Dec had hatched in 1986 or earlier and been banded in StLA in July 1987 and 1988. Two other banded Canada Goose seen at Westport the following day had been banded at Dead Creek GMA, VT, in July 1988 when they were still too young to fly. Canada Goose stayed later than the Snow and Ross's Geese, with four over Limekiln Lake, HAMI, 14 Jan extremely late inland, and 1,187 still present for the mid January Waterfowl Count. A drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** also was spotted on the Waterfowl Count.

Northern raptors also made a good showing. Terry Hall first reported a tardy Merlin at Point au Roche SP on 6 Dec, with Bill Krueger spotting the small falcon as late as 8 Jan. A white morph **Gyr Falcon** first seen at Cumberland Head remained for the 20 Dec Plattsburgh CBC (when it was seen at Treadwell Bay) and was later reported by Krueger on 1 Jan and last on 6 Jan between Cumberland Head and Point au Roche. Tom Barber and Bob Hagar found a gray morph **Gyr Falcon** being harried by two male Northern Harrier outside Whallonsburg on 19 Dec during the Ferrisburg CBC. The **Northern Hawk Owl** tarried on the Heart Lake Road outside Lake Placid, with winter reports from Greenleaf Chase on 17 Dec and John and Pat Thaxton on 20 Feb. Northern Shrike were rather scarce.

In the days prior to the 26 Dec Elizabethtown CBC, as many as a thousand gulls had been observed rising out of the new ESSE landfill in Lewis, thermalling and kettling, and then heading down the Boquet River towards Lake Champlain. Most seemed to be Herring Gull, but Great Black-backed and Ring-billed Gulls also were noted. Access to the dump was denied on the count day, but the periphery provided not only a number of gulls, but most of the record 55 Common Raven recorded. The last group of 100+ gulls were headed down the river late on the afternoon of 11 Jan, shortly before the lake began to freeze over near Westport.

Terry Hall and Dean Spaulding were surprised to find a **Common Yellowthroat** skulking in Gray Dogwoods along the Canadian Pacific tracks just north of Westport on the 26 Dec Elizabethtown CBC, where bluebirds had been feeding the day before. Candy and John Hess had an apparent westerner arrive at their Peru feeder 31 Dec and remain for the winter: a **Chipping Sparrow** in Alternate plumage, or suspended prebasic molt, apparently typical of western populations (Pyle *et al.* 1987. *Identification Guide to N. American Passerines* p.204. Slate Creek Press, Bolinas, CA). Two western Dark-eyed Junco showed up at the



Peterson feeder near Elizabethtown: a typical "Oregon Junco" was seen with six Slate-colored Junco on 2 Dec, while a "Pink-sided Junco" was banded there with seven Slate-colored on 14 Jan. Yet another displaced westerner was the **Brewer's Blackbird** at the Delehanty feeder at Tupper Lake from 7 to 16 Jan.

Except for goldfinches, which were abundant, most winter finches were in below average numbers. The only Pine Grosbeak report was in Dec. Purple Finch were found on all five counts, with maximum of 84 on the Elizabethtown CBC, and Mike Peterson banded 87 near Elizabethtown between 29 Dec and 23 Feb. Plattsburgh took House Finch honors, as expected. Red Crossbill were scarce. White-winged Crossbill seemed to be somewhat more abundant, with maximum of 66 on the Saranac Lake CBC and a pair near Paradox 4 Feb. More surprising were the three at Gary McChesney's feeder in Raquette Lake during Jan and the single White-winged Crossbill at the Adirondack Park VIC feeder in Newcomb on 19 Feb, reported by Gary Lee; spruce cones must have been in short supply, even in the central Adirondacks. The only Common Redpoll were on the Plattsburgh CBC, and no Hoary Redpoll were reported. Pine Siskin were on four counts, with 51 on the Elizabethtown CBC and a maximum of 75 at Tupper Lake on 23 Jan; Peterson banded 87 near Elizabethtown between 29 Dec and 23 Feb, including two green morphs on 16 Feb. By far the most abundant winter finch was American Goldfinch, found on all five counts, with a maximum of 354 on the Elizabethtown CBC. Between 29 Dec and 23 Feb, a total of 1,084 were banded near Elizabethtown. An American Goldfinch color-banded at Chateaugay, Quebec, on 13 Sep 1992 was captured and released near Elizabethtown on 14 Jan; another goldfinch color-banded at Chateaugay 18 Oct 1992 was netted and released near Elizabethtown on 16 Feb. Project Feeder Watch reports that huge areas of eastern Canada were infested with spruce budworm during the 1970s and early 1980s, with an accompanying bloom in Evening Grosbeak. Now that the infestation is on the wane, Evening Grosbeak numbers have returned to lower, more usual numbers and are expected to remain fairly stable. (One wonders if concurrent declines in other spruce budworm specialists like Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll Warblers might not be similarly explained, neotropical deforestation and temperate forest fragmentation notwithstanding. Sometimes the simplest answer is the best one.) Although recorded on four counts, Evening Grosbeak numbers were indeed down, with 156 on the Saranac Lake CBC and the maximum of 250 frequenting the Lake Clear feeder of Kip and Sharon Taylor the

highest numbers; just 17 were banded near Elizabethtown between 30 Dec and 28 Feb. Between 1975-85, the average number of Evening Grosbeak banded annually by Peterson was 243, but from 1986-92 that average dropped to just 30 per year.

**Contributors:** Bart & Isabelle Bailey, Merry Balcer, Thomas Barber, Dirck Benson, Geoffrey Carleton, Greenleaf T. Chase, Dewey & Joan Clark, Charlcie Delehanty, Robert Dorrance, Tom Dudones, Beth Edmonds, Greg Furness, Neil Gifford, Robert Hagar, Terry Hall, Judy & Roger Heintz, Candy & John Hess, Selma Isil, Hal Klein, William Krueger, Gary Lee, Ted Mack, Jo-Anne MacKenzie St Mahoney, Larry Master, Gary McChesney, Robert McKinney, Charles Mitchell, Keith Murphy, Dan Nickerson, Tom Oehlbeck, John & Susan Peterson, Alan Pistorius, Sue Reaser, Jerry Rosenband, Carole Slatkin, Dean Spaulding, Kip & Sharon Taylor, John & Pat Thaxton, Robert Wei.

**Abbreviations:** ECBC - Elizabethtown CBC, 26 Dec; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC, 19 Dec; OFCBC - Old Forge CBC; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 20 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC; WFC - Waterfowl Count.

**Winter reports:** **Red-necked Grebe:** Westport 18 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** Keeseville 11 Dec (B&IB); max three PCBC; Whallon's Bay 16 Jan (JP, RW) late. **Snow Goose:** *intro.* **Ross's GOOSE:** *intro.* **Canada Goose:** *intro.* **Canvasback:** 37 PCBC only report, scarce in recent years. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** CLIN 17 Jan (C&JH). **Red-breasted Merganser:** max five Willsboro Pt (WFC); hen Peru dock 24 Jan (HK, WK), late CLIN record.

**Bald Eagle:** ad Tupper L 4 Dec-22 Jan (CD); ad Ausable Pt 8 Dec-17 Jan (WK, SM); imm Tupper L 12 Dec & 22 Jan (CD); PCBC count week (SM); two ad Willsboro-Westport 22 Dec (Amtrak crew); SLCBC count week (LM); ad Westport 16 Jan (JP, RW); subad Peru dock 24 Jan (WK); imm Ausable Pt 24 Jan (WK); two ad Port Douglas-Willsboro Bay 25 Jan (Amtrak crew, JP); at least seven individuals. **N. Harrier:** *intro.*; Crown Pt 8 Dec; max six FCBC; three ECBC; Monty Bay CLIN 5 Jan (WK); New Russia 13 Jan (TO); ad male Beekmantown 22 Jan (HK), extremely strong and late showing here. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max four ECBC. **Merlin:** *intro.* **GYRFALCON:** *intro.* **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro.* **Herring Gull:** *intro.* **Great Black-backed Gull:** *intro.*; max 157 FCBC an exceptionally high number.

**N. HAWK OWL:** *intro.* **Barred Owl:** two Raquette L feeder all winter, both killed by Am. Crow late Feb (*fide* GL). **Belted Kingfisher:** one FCBC, one SLCBC reflect mild early winter. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** one-five daily Beaver L trail HAMI 2-5 Dec (GL). **N. Flicker:** two PCBC; returned to Spaulding feeder in Wadhams for *third* straight winter, subsisting on sunflower seeds.

**Gray Jay:** two Beaver L trail HAMI 4 Dec (GL); max four SLBCBC; two Raquette L feeder all winter (GM). **Com. Raven:** *intro.* **Boreal**

**Chickadee:** Red R HAMI 14 Dec; two ECB C, max eight SLCBC; one Phelps Mt 11 Jan; three Onchiota 27 Feb. **Tufted Titmouse:** one FCBC, two ECBC; one Tupper L feeder 14 Dec-28 Feb, first wintering record there; calling near Elizabethtown 15 Jan. **Winter Wren:** Beekmantown 20 Jan-15 Feb (HK), late CLIN record. **E. Bluebird:** four FCBC; six PCBC; eight Route 22 Westport 25 Dec; eight ECBC Wadhams 26 Dec; eight Sam Spear Road, Westport, 27 Dec; five Crown Pt after 4 Jan; two Essex 16 Jan; Miner Institute, Chazy, Feb; a remarkable winter showing. **Am. Robin:** five FCBC; max ten PCBC; four ECBC; one SLCBC especially noteworthy; also Beekmantown; a good showing for this berry eater. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 358 FCBC, 54 PCBC; 20 ECBC; 50 Essex 16 Jan eating berries with the bluebirds and robins. **N. Shrike:** max three SLCBC; second-year bird banded near Elizabethtown 15 Jan.

**COM. YELLOWTHROAT:** *intro* (DS).

**N. Cardinal:** max 15 PCBC and total of 31 on CBC down markedly from 95 last year. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** *intro* (ph on file). **White-throated Sparrow:** max four ECBC a good number here. **Dark-eyed Junco:** *intro*. **Red-winged Blackbird:** one SLCBC only report. **BREWER'S BLACKBIRD:** *intro*. **Com. Grackle:** 42 PCBC unusual. **Pine Grosbeak:** six PCBC, only report. **Purple Finch:** *intro*. **House Finch:** max 268 PCBC. **Red Crossbill:** three ECBC; "a few that sing" near Paradox; male near Elizabethtown 17 and 24 Feb. **White-winged Crossbill:** *intro*. **Com. Redpoll:** 32 PCBC, only report. **Pine Siskin:** *intro*. **Am. Goldfinch:** *intro*. **Evening Grosbeak:** *intro*.

**Addendum:** eight LITTLE GULL with six Bonaparte's Gull Monty Bay CLIN Oct (NG).

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## REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

ALAN MAPES

The season did a flip flop from much warmer than usual to much colder this winter. Warm temperatures kept water open through most of December and January. December was 3.3°F above normal and January full 6°F above. The change came in February, which ran 5.2°F below normal. Precipitation was about normal in December and January, but with less snow than usual. On 13 Jan, however, an 11 inch snowfall was the single heaviest storm dating back to February 1988, and was a sign of things to come. February was the fifth snowiest on record, with 28.6 inches recorded at Albany, more than twice the norm. A dramatic freeze of water bodies pushed waterfowl south.

The cold weather did not bring winter finches to the area, though. Purple finches were fairly numerous, but there was an almost complete lack of other irruptive migrants. Purple Finch was widespread, with several flocks of 20-30 birds at Jefferson throughout the period. House Finch was scarce in Yunick's Schenectady yard and absent most of period, and low numbers (6-8) frequented Five Rivers Center feeders where there are usually 20-40 present. Similar comments came from ten Dial-a-bird reports. Evening Grosbeak was almost entirely absent.

Helped by the warm early season, the Catskill-Coxsackie Christmas Bird Count tallied 82 species on 17 Dec, a record high number despite rain falling most of the day. Lots of open water yielded 19 species of waterfowl for the count. Other CBCs recorded average to above average numbers of species.

Northern Harrier was scarce at the Five Rivers Center, where it is regular during most winters. It was a good winter for raptors in the area of farm fields east of Fort Edward. A single Snowy Owl was present during the period, and was observed chasing a Rock Dove and catching it in the air with no difficulty. The observers on a 7 Feb field trip led by this reporter were treated to a spectacle of raptor behavior for the next 45 minutes. After making its kill, the owl immediately was chased by a dark morph Rough-legged Hawk, and the two birds flew out of sight. They were relocated quickly, but by then the owl had lost the dove to a Red-tailed Hawk. As the Red-tailed Hawk fed on the ground, the owl repeatedly flew off his perch on a dead stub, each time making a low pass over the hawk and continuing on to harass the Rough-legged Hawk, which was perched on a nearby fence post. The Red-tailed Hawk

stood his ground and eventually flew off after eating its fill. The owl pursued as it left. To the watchers' surprise, the owl could easily overtake either hawk in the air, and showed itself to be a very competent flier.

Yunick reported that open water on the rivers favored gulls as well as waterfowl. At Lock 7 of the Mohawk River and the Niskayuna Landfill, gull numbers were the highest in his long experience.

It was a slow, disappointing winter at feeders in Schenectady and Jenny Lake, as observed by Robert Yunick. Wintering populations of feeder birds such as Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches were lower than average. Wintering American Robins were abundant at some locations during the mild weather of December and January. A night roosting area of young conifer trees at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar had not its usual 50 or so robins, but a noisy group of 3300 which appeared every evening though the last week in December. The flock then left the location entirely. On a Schenectady industrial plant lawn, feeding robins increased through December and January to a total of 200 on 29 Jan, and declined thereafter, with 35 on 12 Feb. However, there was not a repeat of the widespread reports of robins on suburban lawns that were received the previous winter. Finches were scarce.

While at the Tomhannock Reservoir on 6 Dec, Able, Ellison and Martin observed a Wild Turkey attempt to fly across the reservoir, a distance of over 1/2 mile. The bird ran out of steam before reaching the far shore, however, and splashed down in the water. It then swam to shore and walked out of the water.

Several very unusual species were reported this season. A first for the Region was an immature **Great Cormorant** seen on the Hudson River during the Catskill-Coxsackie Christmas Bird Count on 17 Dec and again a short distance up the river on 26 Dec. On 1 Jan an immature was seen on the Mohawk River near the Colonie landfill. Presumably a single bird had worked its way north. An immature **King Eider** was found with a flock of goldeneye on the Tomhannock Reservoir on 6 Dec. An adult male **Barrow's Goldeneye** was present on Saratoga Lake during December with a flock of Common Goldeneye. It was last seen on 20 Dec during the Saratoga Springs Christmas Bird Count. A **crane** of uncertain species was seen near Germantown on 4 Dec by Berna Lincoln. This report raised speculation that the escaped Common Crane seen the past winter in that area might have returned. On 17 Jan Owen and Carol Whitby observed a crane in that same area, flying and feeding. They tentatively identified it as a Sandhill Crane. Poor light and long distance kept them from seeing positive field marks for the species. Two

experienced birders, Bill Lee and Robert Yunick, walking the bike path in Niskayuna on 13 Dec heard a bird call which had all the attributes of Carolina Chickadee. The bird was in the company of two Black-capped Chickadee but stayed hidden in brush and was never seen. Yunick is especially familiar with this species from his banding work in New Jersey and West Virginia. Several return visits to the area failed to turn up the bird. While in COLU scouting for an upcoming Christmas bird count, Ken Able and party found an **Orange-crowned Warbler**. The bird was seen 15 and 16 Dec, but could not be relocated for the count the following day. A female **Dickcissel** was seen regularly at a Ghent feeding station from 25 Dec to 2 Jan. The bird fed on the ground with sparrows and juncos, and would usually continue to feed steadily when the other birds spooked and flew off. A European Goldfinch of unknown origin frequented a feeder near Schuylerville from 13 to 17 Jan, reported by Barb Putnam. One wintered at a feeder near Albany the previous winter.

**Contributors:** Ken Able, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC), Dial-a-Bird RBA (DAB), Bob Boehm, Tim Colborn, Paul Connor, Walter Ellison, Richard Guthrie; Bill Graham, Gale Halm, Bill Lee, A. Mapes (AAM); Andrew Mason (AM); Nancy Martin, Laura Meade, Dave Nelson, Ray Perry, Barb Putnam, Alice Ross, Paul Saffold, Owen Whitby.

**Abbreviations:** ACCBC - Albany County Christmas Bird Count, 20 Dec; CCCBC - Catskill-Coxsackie Christmas Bird Count, 17 Dec; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar; L7/NL - Lock 7 and Niskayuna Landfill; SaraL - Saratoga Lake; TomRes - Tomhannock Reservoir; SCBC - Schenectady Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; SSCBC - Saratoga Springs Christmas Bird Count, 20 Dec.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** last Lock 7 Mohawk R SCHE 16 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** two reports, one SaraL 6 Dec (NM), last Hudson R SRCCBC 27 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** one Hudson R Germantown RENS 18 Jan (ADBC) only report. **GREAT CORMORANT:** *intro* (NYSARC). **Double-crested Cormorant:** last Lock 7 SCBC, only report. **Mute Swan:** 123 Hudson R CCCBC, dramatic jump in wintering numbers. **Snow Goose:** max 150 Niskayuna 5 Dec (BL), last Hudson R 17 Jan (ADBC). **Brant:** 24 Fox Creek SCHO 13 Dec (BB) only report. **Canada Goose:** max 2000 TomR 13 Dec (TC). **Wood Duck:** one Hudson R near Fort Miller 9 Jan (DB), two ALBA 23 Jan (RG) apparently wintering. **N. Shoveler:** last two SaraL 6 Dec (NM). **Gadwall:** last two Round L 6 Dec (NM). **Canvasback:** Hudson R at Germantown COLU 18 Jan and 27 Feb (ADBC). **Redhead:** one Hudson R COLU 2 Jan (ADBC). **Lesser Scaup:** max 14 SaraL 6 Dec (NM). **KING EIDER:** *intro*. **Oldsquaw:** last Rexford

SCBC. **White-winged Scoter**: one SaraL 6 Dec (NM) only report. **Com. Goldeneye**: max 65 SaraL 6 Dec (NM). **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**: *intro*. **Hooded Merganser**: max 50 Alcove Res ACCBC, last Hudson R at Gansevoort SARA 14 Feb (BP). **Com. Merganser**: max 190 Round L Sara 6 Dec (NM). **Ruddy Duck**: one TomRes 13 Dec (TC), last FiveR 14 Jan (AAM), first record for the site.

**Bald Eagle**: 20 reports, wintering in increasing numbers on Hudson R and Mohawk R; max three (one ad, two imm) SaraL 18 Dec (RP). **N. Harrier**: max seven Fort Edward 24 Dec (BP), disappeared when deep snow cover arrived second week of Feb (BP). **N. Goshawk**: two reports, one Jefferson 16 Jan (AM), imm Peebles I ALBA 1 Jan (NM). **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one ACCBC; one Saratoga SP 13 Jan (GH), wintered for the second consecutive year. **Red-tailed Hawk**: scarce Niskayuna (RY). **Rough-legged Hawk**: lower numbers than average, very few in SCHO and MONT farm lands (BB), max six Fort Edward 30 Jan (NM). **Merlin**: two reports, one Colonie 6 Dec (NM), one Fort Edward Feb 7 (AAM). **Wild Turkey**: max 50 Gallupville on several occasions during Feb (BB); *intro*. **Crane species**: *intro*. **Am. Woodcock**: one CCCBC only report. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 500 L7/NL 5 Dec (RY), declined sharply to 2 by 19 Dec, none thereafter. **Herring Gull**: record numbers during fall L7/NL (RY), max 2500 5 Dec, 1540 10 Jan, 1700 31 Jan, dwindled to 150 on 28 Feb. **Iceland Gull**: ten reports, Hudson R, Mohawk R, Moreau landfill SARA. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: third year TomRes 6 Dec (NM); one ad, one first year, one second year Mohawk R ALBA 9 Dec (KA); ad Mohawk R Cohoes 1 Jan (NM); one Hudson R GREE 23 Jan (RG), one Cohoes 27 Feb (BL). **Glaucous Gull**: five reports 4 Dec-23 Jan.

**Mourning Dove**: unusually large numbers at feeders in Gallupville, same reported by other feeders operators in the area (BB). **Snowy Owl**: one Albany 12 Dec (DAB) seen taking a pigeon; one Fort Edward 16 Jan to end of period (mob), *intro*. **Great Gray Owl**: one WASH 4 Dec (GH) unverified. **Long-eared Owl**: two reports, one SCBC, one Gallupville 9 Feb (BB). **Short-eared Owl**: 6-15 Fort Edward after 21 Dec, max 15 on 7 Feb (AAM, mob). **N. Saw-whet Owl**: three reports, one Knox ALBA 21 Feb (DN), one Stuyvesant 17 Dec, one Niskayuna 19 Dec. **Belted Kingfisher**: 15 reports, present to through freeze up in Feb. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: increasing number of reports from CBCs. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: only reports one ACCBC, one Coxsackie 28 Feb (NM).

**E. Phoebe**: one CCCBC, last Becker Corners SCHO 10 Jan (BB). **Horned Lark**: relatively plentiful for the period, max 78 Florida Mont 20 Feb (NM). **Blue Jay**: scarce, only three found on SCBC. **Fish Crow**: one to five throughout the period at L7/NLF and in Schenectady (RY), max 50

Mohawk R Waterford 27 Feb (BL). **Com. Raven:** four reports. **E. Bluebird:** wintering in increasing numbers, 104 CCCBC, 109 ACCBC; 30 Silver Bay 3-4 Feb (LM) very early migrants? **Am. Robin:** abundant during mild weather Dec- Jan, 3300 FiveR 20 Dec; *intro.* **Gray Catbird:** three reports, one Stuyvesant 19 Dec (ADBC), one Vischer Ferry 9 Jan (DAB), one Niskayuna 6 Feb (NM). **Cedar Waxwing:** max 60 Castleton 13 Dec (PC). **N. Shrike:** only reports one Fort Edward 21 Feb (PS), one SARA 14 Jan (TC).

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** *intro.* **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** a few wintering reports, one Stuyvesant 17 Dec (ADBC).

**DICKCISSEL:** *intro* (OW!). **Rufous-sided Towhee:** one Glenville 25 Jan (DAB) only report. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** more numerous than usual at banding locations in MONT and SCHE (RY). **Vesper Sparrow:** one SSCBC only report. **Savannah Sparrow:** two reports, three Coxsackie 17 Jan and 28 Feb (NM), three WASH 3 Jan (BP). **Fox Sparrow:** three reports, one Rexford SARA 6 Dec (DAB), one Kinderhook 14 Feb (ADBC), three Coxsackie 17 Jan (NM). **White-throated Sparrow:** max 145 Coxsackie/Athens 17 Jan (NM). **Lapland Longspur:** only reports one WASH 30 Jan and 5 Feb (BP), two Florida MONT 20 Feb (NM). **Snow Bunting:** max 190 Bethlehem ALBA 14 Feb (NM). **E. Meadowlark:** max seven Fort Edward 30 Jan (NM). **Purple Finch:** *intro* (AM) **House Finch:** *intro.* **Red Crossbill:** only reports 15 GREE 2 Jan, one ALBA 27 Jan (both DAB). **White-winged Crossbill:** five ACCBC only report. **European Goldfinch:** *intro.* **Pine Siskin:** not an invasion year, max 50 GREE 2 Jan (DAB), two at feeder in Petersburg through the period with increasing numbers in late Feb (AR), two Jenny L SARA 14 Feb (RY). **Evening Grosbeak:** only reports one Hague 26 Feb (LM), 20 at feeder Petersburg 6 Dec through end of period, five Schodack Center 10 Feb (PC).

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## REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

JOHN P. ASKILDSEN

December's weather was slightly warmer than normal, ending a nine month long cooling trend. Precipitation was well above normal due largely to the nor'easter that struck the Region 11 through 13 Dec. Northern ULST received 12 inches of snow on 13 Dec, boosting their monthly total snow accumulation to 22 inches. Their total precipitation reached 4.5 inches in December. Further south, the Westchester County Airport recorded almost 2.5 inches of rain on 11 Dec, totaling over six inches of rain but only five inches of snow for the month. That's quite a contrast! The storm devastated the Long Island Sound shore in WEST, destroying beaches and parks, leveling houses, and most saddening was the loss of several lives. January was the most placid of the three month period. The "January thaw" came on 5 Jan with a monthly maximum high of 62°F at the Westchester County Airport. Precipitation levels were one inch below average at 2.74 inches for the Region. The Poughkeepsie Airport reported an average temperature of 21.7°F for February, down 4.8° from the norm. The coldest day was 7 Feb, with a reported -6°F. Many locations in the lower Hudson Valley reported below normal precipitation levels.

**Great Cormorant** was detected in the highest numbers ever recorded inland in New York. This editor and Andrew Guthrie found 20 Great and one Double-crested Cormorant at Peekskill-on-the-Hudson during the waterfowl survey. Jim and Mary Key reported two Great Cormorant from Dutchess-on-the-Hudson on 6 Jan, providing a third county record. The last time one was recorded in DUTC was 1969!

The annual residency by the pair of **Golden Eagle** in Pine Plains DUTC is even more noteworthy now that they have constructed a nest! The paired adult and subadult began construction of a large stick nest in a White Pine in early December and completed work on it about mid January. There are historical records of Golden Eagle nesting in the Adirondacks as late as the early 1960s. Winter nest building is part of the courtship process for Golden Eagle. Although it would be nice to have them back as nesters, we should not count on it. This Editor would like to take a moment to comment on birding ethics. Although no incidents have been reported as of yet, I must remind all readers that these birds are extremely sensitive to human disturbance. If you do travel to see these majestic creatures at any time, please give the birds a break and keep your distance. The NYSDEC has been notified of this development and hopefully will protect the birds from harassment if they do nest. If

you see anyone near the nest when you visit, you should take action to see that intruders are removed from the area. Eighty-two Bald Eagle were counted in Region 9 on 19 Jan. Most probably, many more wintered than were counted

The local Mute Swan population continues to escalate at an alarming rate. *The New York Times* reports that the species has become so sedentary that our local New York City reservoirs are showing signs of elevated bacteria counts. A total of 618 were counted in Region 9 during the winter waterfowl survey. Approximately 550 were enumerated in West and Putn. Surf and White-winged Scoters were reported in small numbers from Rye, but Black Scoter was absent this season.

Once again winter finches, especially Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, were almost completely absent.

Rarities reported for the season were more or less what is to be expected but with just a few quality winter specialties. Among them are **Greater White-fronted Goose** and **Barrow's Goldeneye**. The **Tufted Duck** continued through mid December at Playland Lake in Rye. Approximately ten days before the local CBC it was chased off by a human intruder to the lake's edge. Luckily, it returned for the count day, but its appearances were much less frequent in Rye after the incident. Six **Black Vulture** were reported, and there were three different, but poorly documented, reports of **Gyrfalcon**. Probably the most unusual report of the season was of a **Common Black-headed Gull**. There were four reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, one apparently of the rare dark race *fuscus* from Scandinavia. Two Snowy Owl were reported. A **Loggerhead Shrike**, meticulously examined and identified by Richard Beemer(!) on 26 Feb, was possibly an early spring migrant. More expected seasonal highlights were Eurasian Wigeon, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Barn and Long-eared Owls and Orange-crowned Warbler. Species found out of season included Great Egret, Broad-winged Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Eastern Phoebe, House Wren, Pine Warbler, Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow and Northern Oriole.

**Contributors:** John P. Askildsen, Andrew Baldelli, James A. Beemer, Michael Bochnik, Doug Bloom, Frank Bonanno, J&D Bradley, Thomas W. Burke, Mark De Dea, Georges Dremeaux, Alan Fowler, Dr. Valerie Freer, Roger Frost, Nancy Graza, Lindsay Green, Andrew Guthrie, Carol Jack, Anthony Lauro, Helen Manson, Thomas H. Meyer, Barbara Michelin, John Moyle, Drew Panko, Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, James Riordan, Dr. Selden J. Spencer, Langdon Stevenson, Dr. Andrew Taylor, Edward D. Treacy, Henry Turner, Michael Usai, Dorothy Wohlbach.

**Abbreviations:** BDR - Black Dirt Region, T of Florida, ORAN; EGR - Edith G. Read Sanctuary, Rye; LIS - Long Island Sound, WEST; MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** max three Rye Feb. **Com. Loon:** scarce, max two EGR, no inland reports. **Pied-billed Grebe:** well reported WEST, scarce elsewhere. **Horned Grebe:** average numbers from LIS, max 41 on 17 Jan (TWB). **GREAT CORMORANT:** *intro*; 62 LIS 27 Dec. **Am. Bittern:** one chased by Great Horned Owl MC 8 Dec. **Great Egret:** two Larchmont 27 Dec (DP, DB), late. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** singles EGR and MC through period. **Mute Swan:** *intro*. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** two Tamarack DUTC 13 Dec (Dot Fleury). **Snow Goose:** small groups reported throughout Region. **Brant:** groups up to 25 reported from LIS. **Canada Goose:** about 15,500 WFC. **Green-winged Teal:** ten Rye 27 Dec. **Am. Black Duck:** scarce. **N. Pintail:** up to four Rye all season. **N. Shoveler:** 11 s WEST Jan. **Eurasian Wigeon:** one MC through late Dec (TWB). **Canvasback:** max 2946 Dutc 16 Jan. **Redhead:** one Rye all season, two there 17 Jan. **Ring-necked Duck:** low numbers reported. **TUFTED DUCK:** *intro*. **Greater Scaup:** 2,200 on LIS 16 Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** 185 LIS 16 Jan. **Oldsquaw:** up to 100 seen moving past EGR 27 Dec (AL, AB), a very high count for w LIS. **Com. Goldeneye:** 68 EGR 16 Jan; 60 DUTC 17 Jan. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** female Edith G. Read Sanctuary Rye 28 Feb (TB!). **Hooded Merganser:** 221 WEST 16 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** thousands on Hudson R 16 Jan, perhaps as many as 4,000 birds in WEST alone.

**BLACK VULTURE:** three WEST (!), one ROCK, and two ORAN. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** more than 20 at one location in BDR; 36 Galeville ULST 24 Jan. **N. Goshawk:** scattered reports throughout Region. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one Yonkers 26 Dec (RF!), one Bear Mt SP 4 Jan (EDT). **Red-tailed Hawk:** heavy influx to region in mid Jan; 49 BDR 23 Jan. **Rough-legged Hawk:** arr ORAN 15 Dec (EDT); 13 (11 light, two dark morph) ORAN and ULST 24 Jan; two reports DUTC, one report PUTN. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** *intro*; two overwintered SULL. **Merlin:** two reports ROCK Dec and Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** ad female wintered on Beacon-Newburgh Bridge; imm ORAN 23 Jan. **GYRFALCON:** one PUTN, two DUTC (mob). **Clapper Rail:** one MC Dec. **Virginia Rail:** several MC throughout period. **Am. Coot:** Up to 30 coastal WEST; up to 80 Sylvan L DUTC all season. **Black-bellied Plover:** one LIS 27 Dec. **Killdeer:** 21 LIS 27 Dec. **Spotted Sandpiper:** one Rock 20 Dec. **Ruddy Turnstone:** 53 LIS 27 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** 23 EGR 27 Dec. **Dunlin:** 31 LIS 27 Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one WEST 27 Dec; one DUTC 14 Feb. **Am. Woodcock:** scattered reports throughout Region until late Dec. **Laughing Gull:** one EGR 30 Dec (TWB). **COM. BLACK-HEADED GULL:** one Kiamesha L SULL 26 Dec (VF!).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** 12 EGR 13 Dec; two Hudson R ROCK 20 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** one Basic II Cornwall ORAN 22 Jan (J&D Bradley *fide* EDT); one Yonkers 27 Dec; one Monticello 5 Feb (VF). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one *graellsii* Hudson R at Haverstraw ROCK and two *graellsii* LIS Rye all winter; ad winter *fuscus* Hudson R at Haverstraw ROCK 26 Jan (ET, JS, FB!). **Glaucous Gull:** one Basic II ORAN 23 Jan (AG, JPA), ad EGR 17 Jan (TWB); one Monticello 6 Feb (BL).

**Barn Owl:** one at MC 6 Dec (AG, JPA); one found dead n WEST 25 Dec (AT). **E. Screech-Owl:** red morph DUTC all season, uncommon. **Snowy Owl:** one near Galeville Airport ULST for a two week period (mob!); one atop a ROCK mountain, tree-covered save for a small grassy patch, 24-25 Jan (PD). **Long-eared Owl:** one-three Thompson Pd DUTC all season. **Short-eared Owl:** two Galeville ULST all season (JPA, AG); up to six BDR during late Feb (EDT). **N. Saw-whet Owl:** three DUTC. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** two WEST early Dec, one lingered for about a month; one ULST at regular breeding locale. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** numbers increasing in the Catskills.

**E. Phoebe:** one Scarsdale WEST 27 Dec (JM), late. **Horned Lark:** over 1000 at Warren Turf Farm ORAN in mid Jan. **Am. Crow:** 10,000+ at roost ROCK again this year; 5,000 at Poughkeepsie DUTC roost. **Fish Crow:** one report PUTN; several reports WEST, many reports ROCK. **Carolina Wren:** large numbers reported from all areas of Region. **House Wren:** one MC 27 Dec, late. **Marsh Wren:** three MC 27 Dec. **Hermit Thrush:** high numbers reported. **Cedar Waxwing:** well reported. **Am. Pipit:** three Piermont Pier ROCK 14 Dec. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** *intro*.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** one near Hudson R ULST through late Jan (MDD). **Pine Warbler:** one visiting feeder n WEST early Dec (THM). **OVENBIRD:** one in a birder's backyard DUTC 4-6 Dec (Dorothy Wohlbach). **Com. Yellowthroat:** one Rye 27 Dec. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Yonkers 27 Dec (RF!). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one MC 27 Dec (TWB). **Rusty Blackbird:** reports scattered throughout Region, seemed to be more numerous this winter. **N. Oriole:** one at a n WEST feeder early Dec for one week (THM). **Evening Grosbeak:** scattered reports from n border of Region; one large flock SULL.

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## REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

December's weather was mild, but still managed to have four days below 20°F. January was "warm," almost 5° above normal, while February was 2.8° below normal and relatively dry, with just over half its normal precipitation. December was the wet month, with 5.5 inches of rain almost two inches above average. In spite of the warm start to the winter, snow accumulations totaled 12.5 inches in New York City through February. Although this is considerably shy of the normal snowfall of 28.3 inches for this period, we're just not used to seeing snow after the last few winters. January's warm weather may have been responsible for reports of American Woodcock displaying on 21 and 31 Jan.

December's excess of water all seemed to arrive suddenly, coupled with high tides and strong winds. On 11 Dec a major winter storm with sustained 70 mile per hour winds hit the coast of Long Island. It arrived at a full moon high tide, doing considerable damage to the shoreline and caused more destruction to the shore than any single hurricane of recent time. Sand washed away from the beaches along the entire length of the South Shore and parts of the North Shore. The fragile barrier beach at Westhampton Beach's Dune Road was breached in two places. One opening had filled by period's end, but later storms reopened it. The other opening, over a half mile wide at last report, continued to widen, bringing the sea surge and ocean salinity into the inner bay and tidal wetlands. Silting of Fire Island Inlet required that buoys be relocated in the channel. At Shinnecock Inlet some of the fishing fleet can exit their berths only at high tide. Access to Orient Point was unavailable. On Staten Island, the sea broke through the dam and flooded freshwater Wolfe's Pond, leaving the pond to partly drain at low tide. Subsequent "normal" storms during the winter exacerbated these problems. This may mean that some of our birding sites may remain closed or inaccessible for the spring migration. Time will tell what repairs, if any, will be done and what significance this beach alteration will have on wildlife, including the birds.

Many of the Christmas Bird Counts in our area reported increased numbers of species normally present only during the fall and mild winter periods. Also, comments by our contributors and our own

observations suggest that the larger sized species are faring well. An exception is the Herring Gull, which is decreasing as a result of the closing of land fills.

Winter Great Cormorant numbers continued to rise in relation to Double-crested Cormorant. Where the latter once was found 50 to 1, ratios now are more like 2 to 1. In addition, Great Cormorant are seen in more and more areas. This is probably a combination of their increased numbers and more careful observation by birders. Canada Goose numbers also were up, and Brant were plentiful. Unusually large numbers of Wood Duck, typically uncommon in winter, were seen. Eurasian Wigeon, an uncommon winter visitor also was seen in increased numbers this season. Fewer Purple Sandpiper were reported this winter. There were some in Long Beach, but they were missing from the Jones Beach/Point Lookout jetties much of the winter.

The most frequently reported raptor this season (excluding Red-tailed Hawk) was Cooper's Hawk. This species is probably the most common uninvited bird around feeders. It is especially noticeable because of its proclivity to visit back yards in suburban areas and because of its large size. The smaller raptors (Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin) were less often seen, and remain uncommon to rare. This is in marked contrast to prior years, when Cooper's Hawk was uncommon even on migration. Red-tailed Hawk undoubtedly was the most numerous raptor across the Region, with a total of 57 seen on the Staten Island Christmas Bird Count, mostly at the dump. Henry Flamm and George Bouquio saw 31 there. Flamm noted that "everywhere there was a perch you would find a Red-Tail. No Rough-legged."

No less than *The Wall Street Journal*, in large type, under the Leisure & Arts headline announced "Very Rare Red-Legged Bird Visits Brooklyn Marina". This story was accompanied by a drawing by bird artist John C. Yrizarry of a **Spotted Redshank** drawn from life. John and his wife Mary found the bird on 6 Dec while making a preliminary check of locations prior to the Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count. At the head of a small marina at Knapp Street and Avenue X, eight Greater Yellowlegs shared a winter roost with this rare European straggler. This bird, new to New York State, was seen by hundreds and photographed by many. At the season's end, it was still in its drab Basic plumage. This season's other star was a **Bohemian Waxwing** found by Pat Jones and Peter Joost in a flock of Cedar Waxwing at Tackapausha Preserve in Wantagh on the

Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count on 3 Jan. It stayed to 7 Jan. A female **Painted Bunting** was found at the Montauk dump on the Montauk Christmas Bird Count on 19 Dec by Andy Baldelli and David Mizrahi, and remained until 28 Dec. On 7 Feb, your editors carefully studied a winter loon in the ocean at Tobay which was neither Common nor Red-throated. We could not determine if it was an **Arctic** or a **Pacific Loon**. The bird had a clear white face, the proper shape and tilt of bill, and a straight but not sharp line of demarcation between the white neck in front and the dark neck behind. It did have a white flank patch which is supposed to be diagnostic of Arctic Loon. No chin strap was visible. As a group these birds are variable and the literature is not clear. Caution is advised in their identification afield.

In the Fall report we discussed our unease with various Gyrfalcon sightings in the last few years. On 15 Feb, a gray Gyrfalcon was reported at Jones Beach West End. On 28 Feb the editors and Manny Levine closely studied a pair of very large pale gray falcons flying about and roosting on the Jones Beach water tower. These birds were not the resident Peregrine Falcon pair, which consists of a small male and a very dark, very large female. The dark black hood of these birds contrasted with the pale body. The birds were seemed to be some kind of Peregrine Falcon, but matched no known race. A subsequent study of the extensive falcon collection at the American Museum of Natural History by Levine failed to shed any light on the subject. We suspect that these birds were a Peregrine Falcon X Gyrfalcon cross.

A note from Janet Gillen, Queens Ranger, indicated that a pair of Great Horned Owl may be nesting within Forest Park, in Queens. If so, this will be an extension of range westward from the time of the Atlas period. This pair wintered there this season, also a recent first (reported from 13 Dec by Robert Schulz). Almost all sites within the Region which have resident Great Horned Owl also have resident Eastern Screech-Owl, but the latter has not yet been reported from Forest Park.

**Contributors:** Howard Boltson, Jean Bourque, Thomas W. Burke, Ralph Cioffi, James Clinton, Sr., Henry F. Flamm, Lester Feldman, John J. Fritz, Janet Gillen, Paul H. Gillen, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Peter Martin, David Mizrahi, Joan Quinlan, Herbert H. Roth, John J. Ruscica, Barbara Scherzin, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Robert Schulz, Steve Walter, Alvin Wollin, John Yrizarry.

**Abbreviations:** BCBC - Brooklyn CBC, 19 Dec; CB - Cedar Beach; CRSP - Connetquot River SP; CSCBC - Central Suffolk CBC, 27 Dec; New York State; FBF - Floyd Bennett Field; FP - Forest Park, Queens;

HLSP – Hempstead Lake SP; HPd – Hook Pond, Easthampton; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JFKWS – John F. Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary (Tobay); JBCH – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; MCBC – Montauk CBC, 19 Dec; MPt – Montauk Point; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; NNCBC – Northern Nassau CBC, 26 Dec; OCBC – Orient CBC, 2 Jan; QWCBC – Quogue–Watermill CBC, 19 Dec; QCBC – Queens CBC, 19 Dec; RMSP – Robert Moses State Park; ShIn – Shinnecock Inlet; SNCBC – South Nassau CBC, 3 Jan; SICBC – Staten Island CBC, 19 Dec.

**Winter reports:** **PACIFIC/ARCTIC LOON:** *intro*. **Red-necked Grebe:** one MPt mid Dec-late Jan, four MCBC, one Pt Lookout 17 Jan (NYRBA), . **EARED GREBE:** one MCBC (Paul Buckley), persisted to 1 Jan. **N. Gannet:** 4000+ MPt 5 Dec (NYRBA). **Great Egret:** overwintered at several locations. **Tricolored Heron:** one Quogue 3–27 Dec (NYRBA), one Island P 21 Jan (EL, LF). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** last SNCBC. **Tundra Swan:** two wintered HPd (mob), one Island P 21 Jan (EL, LF). **Mute Swan:** increased sightings Staten I (HF). **Greater White-fronted Goose:** imm Calverton 12 Jan (JR) moved to Grumman 16–31 Jan. **Snow Goose:** four NNCBC, one blue morph Yaphank 3 Dec (JR), CSCBC, four OCBC. **Ross's GOOSE:** one Short Pd, Watermill 30 Jan (AL) to 1 Feb. **Green-winged Teal:** one Eurasian race JBWR (BCBC). **Blue-winged Teal:** one SNCBC, one Deep Hole Creek, Cutchogue 23 Jan–28 Feb. **Tufted Duck:** one wintered Calverton (JC), pair at Grumman moved to Calverton mid-Jan to mid-Feb. **Com. Eider:** 750 MPt 5 Dec, 1000 there 12 Jan, 750 on 17 Jan, large numbers all winter. **King Eider:** four MPt 5 Dec, two MCBC, one PT 6 Jan, three–five MPt 17–20 Jan. **Harlequin Duck:** group wintered PT/Jones Inlet, max 13 on 10 Feb. **Oldsquaw:** much more numerous this season JBCH. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** female wintered Throgs Neck Bridge (SW), female Moriches 17 Jan (JC).

**Osprey:** one BCBC, late. **Bald Eagle:** one BCBC, two Gardiner's I 19 Dec, imm Beaver Lake, Mill Neck 1 Feb (Helen McClure). **N. Goshawk:** a few reports. **Red-tailed Hawk:** *intro*. **Rough-legged Hawk:** singles JFKWS 8 Dec (JF, JQ), Zachs Bay 10 Jan, Three Mile Harbor; none at FBF (JB). **Peregrine Falcon:** *intro*, one at LILCO stacks in Northport in Jan; a pair wintered at the JBCH water tower. **N. Bobwhite:** 12 QWCBC, 148 CSCBC, 23 OCBC. **Clapper Rail:** one Cow Meadow 7 Jan (PM). **Virginia Rail:** one SICBC, two NNCBC, two CSCBC. **Sora:** one ShIn 6 Feb (NYRBA). **Semipalmated Plover:** one CB 1 Dec (JQ), 12 NNCBC, two Bay P 20 Feb (Matt Bayer). **Am. Oystercatcher:** one SNCBC at Zachs



Bay. **Greater Yellowlegs:** *intro*, others also overwintered. **SPOTTED REDSHANK:** *intro*. **Spotted Sandpiper:** one Massapequa pds 18 Jan (JF), very late. **Purple Sandpiper:** a few on the jetties at Rockaway and at Jones Inlet, less common than usual. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** seven SNCBC. **Am. Woodcock:** *intro*. **Laughing Gull:** one Tappan Beach 13 Dec (HR), one SICBC, one NNCBC 26 Dec, three CSCBC 27 Dec. **Little Gull:** one ShIn 6 Dec (NYRBA). **Com. Black-headed Gull:** one Bridgehampton Mall 23 Jan–28 Feb (mob). **Herring Gull:** *intro*. **Iceland Gull:** a half dozen wintered, mostly in eastern SUFF. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one SICBC, first count record; three MCBC, one HLSP 31 Jan, one HPd 31 Jan, one wintered Dosoris Pd, Glen Cove. **Glaucous Gull:** one Star I, Montauk 12 Dec (JF), one Bridgehampton 24 Jan, one HPd 30 Jan (NYRBA). **Black-legged Kittiwake:** one MPt 12 Dec (JQ), a few others. **Black Skimmer:** two Canarsie Pier, Brooklyn (BCBC). **COM. MURRE:** one MPt 2 Jan (NYRBA), eight oiled birds treated by Okeanos early Jan. **Razorbill:** 30 MPt 12 Dec, various sightings there to 14 Feb; 250+ seen going NE into Block I Sound (AL, mob).

**Barn Owl:** max eleven BCBC. **E. Screech-Owl:** albino in Laurel Hollow (HB). **Great Horned Owl:** *intro*. **Snowy Owl:** one Democrat Point 20 Dec, one overwintered Staten I, two overwintered Breezy Pt, one–two CB 1 Dec–mid Jan, one–two JBWE 5 Dec–15 Feb, one overwintered Shinnecock, one JBWR 24 Jan–28 Feb (MOB). **Long-eared Owl:** singles FBF entire period (JB), SNCBC, JFKWS 4 Feb (PM). **Short-eared Owl:** missing from FBF first time in 12 years (JB), scarce elsewhere, almost all reports JBWE. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** a few reports. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one overwintered Central P, one BCBC at Dyker P. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** a few reports.

**E. Phoebe:** singles BCBC, MCBC, NNCBC, OCBC, SICBC, SNCBC, five CSCBC, several overwintered. **W. Kingbird:** one RMSP 1–6 Dec (JQ, mob), one CB 9 Dec, one BCBC at Ft Tilden. **Tree Swallow:** 13 MCBC, four CSCBC. **Fish Crow:** outnumbered Am. Crow on the Staten I dump 5:1 (HF). **House Wren:** one MCBC, two BCBC. **Marsh Wren:** one NNCBC, two CSCBC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 107 CSCBC, 53 OCBC, more than usual. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** a few reported. **E. Bluebird:** overwintered Suff. **Wood Thrush:** one Central P 28 Jan–6 Feb (Tom Fiore, mob), very late. **Am. Robin:** more than usual. **Brown Thrasher:** one QWCBC. **Am. Pipit:** one QCBC. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** *intro*.

**Solitary Vireo:** one Pelham Bay P 6 Dec (NYRBA). **Orange-crowned Warbler:** one Prospect P 13 Dec, two SNCBC. **BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER:** one OCBC (Myrna Hemmerick). **Yellow-rumped Warbler:**

exceptionally large numbers throughout the Region, in flocks on lawns at beach sites. **Pine Warbler:** one CRSP 20 Dec (JQ), one CSCBC, one SNCBC. **Palm Warbler:** two QWCBC. **Com. Yellowthroat:** one SNCBC. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one Smithtown 8 Dec; singles BCBC, MCBC, SNCBC; one wintered at the entrance to JBWR (mob).

**PAINTED BUNTING:** *intro.* **Dickcissel:** one overwintered at feeder Pt Lookout (mob). **Chipping Sparrow:** two MCBC, singles QWCBC, NNCBC, CSCBC. **Vesper Sparrow:** two BCBC. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one SICBC, first count record since 1953; two QWCBC, 14 CSCBC, SNCBC. **Seaside Sparrow:** one QWCBC, one CSCBC. **Fox Sparrow:** a few reported. **Lapland Longspur:** one CB 5-9 Dec, two MCBC, two Fire I 14 Feb, two JBWE 16-28 Feb (NYRBA). **Snow Bunting:** fewer than usual. **E. Meadowlark:** some wintered. **Rusty Blackbird:** three QCBC, two NNCBC, three CSCBC, SNCBC. **Boat-tailed Grackle:** record max 499 QCBC; 300 flying to a roost in Jamaica Bay 28 Jan (NYRBA). **Com. Grackle:** 1000+ Yaphank 2 Dec (JR), five QWCBC, 732 CSCBC, SNCBC, flock Alley Pd P late Jan (SW). **Purple Finch:** 12 NNCBC, ten CSCBC, two OCBC. **Red Crossbill:** two CB 8 Dec (NYRBA), 30 Pt Lookout 13 Jan (EL). **Pine Siskin:** one JBCH 5 Dec, two CB 8 Dec, one QCBC (NYRBA), one OCBC.

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