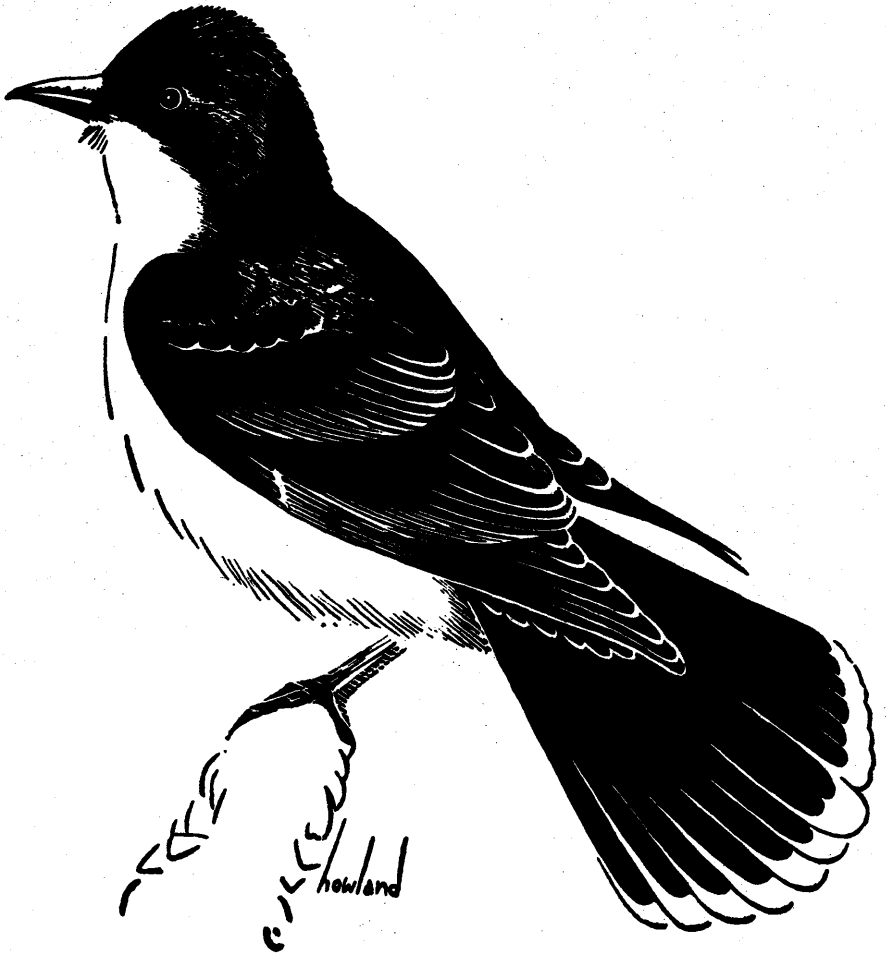


# *The* **KINGBIRD**



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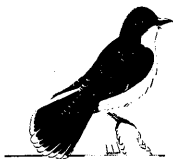
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# *The* **KINGBIRD**

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Figure 1. Slaty-backed Gull, third from left, with Herring Gull at Niagara Falls, Ontario/New York, 4 December 1992. Photograph by Robert W. Brock.

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF NEW YORK STATE RARITIES 59: SLATY-BACKED GULL

ROBERT W. BROCK

The Niagara Frontier is widely known as an outstanding place to view and study gulls. During the fall and winter, this area is one of the best in the world, sixteen species and one additional subspecies of gull having been recorded (Andrle 1977). That number jumped substantially in late November 1992 with the discovery of two new species: an adult California Gull (*Larus californicus*) and an adult Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*) in winter plumage. The former is native to western North America and is not quite as unexpected a discovery as is the latter, which is native to northeastern coastal Siberia.

The Slaty-backed Gull was first positively identified on 24 November 1992 by Rod and Marlene Planck (Paxton, Boyle and Cutler 1993). The first sighting was on a landfill just northwest of Niagara Falls, Ontario. It was subsequently spotted in several areas on or near the Niagara River above and downstream from the Falls. The bird developed a travel pattern which many mornings placed it on the seawall just downstream of the water control weir above the upper rapids at Niagara Falls, Ontario. It was at this location that Robert Andrle, Robert Brock and James Gregory sighted the bird at 8:45 AM on 4 December 1992. At a distance of between 75 and 100 meters and in relatively good light, the bird was studied carefully with telescopes and photographed with a Pentax PZl camera and a 600mm lens with 2X converter (Fig. 1). The bird was studied at rest, while preening, and ultimately as it lifted in flight and proceeded out over the river heading upstream toward the American shore in the direction of the north Grand Island bridge. Verification reports were submitted to the Buffalo Ornithological Society. The above sighting was later confirmed by two Ontario birders, Rohan and Marina van Twest, who were present at the same time and submitted a verifying writeup to the New York State Avian Records Committee. This report, which has been accepted by the Committee, indicates that the bird did fly over the international boundary into New York State, documenting it as the first record for the state. The gull was later observed at the Adam Beck power station in Ontario by Doug McRae, Lisa Enright, Don Sutherland and Jul Wojnowski on 16

December and also was seen to fly over the Robert Moses Power Plant parking area in New York State. A report was submitted by McRae to the NYSARC further documenting the first appearance of a Slaty-backed Gull in New York. The gull was spotted again on 20 December 1992 by Richard Byron, Barbara Byron and Dick Collins during the Christmas Bird Count conducted by the Buffalo Ornithological Society. During this sighting, the gull again flew over the international boundary into New York State and was seen flying in the area of Three Sisters Islands and Goat Island. A report was submitted to NYSARC. The last recorded date for this bird was 29 December 1992 (Bain 1993).

Identification of the Slaty-backed Gull requires great care due to its general similarity to other gulls in the area, especially the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) and the Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). The color of the mantle of the Slaty-backed Gull was a dark gray with a value somewhere between the black of *L. marinus* and the dark gray of *L. fuscus*, but given the variability of the latter two gulls, this is not definitive. The head coloration was also suggestive. This Slaty-backed Gull had a slightly streaked, white head with a dark area around a light eye. In comparison, *L. marinus* nearly always has a clean white head and the head of *L. fuscus* usually is heavily streaked in winter. Slaty-backed Gull is slightly larger in size than *L. fuscus* and considerably smaller than *L. marinus*, but this can be a difficult comparison if all of these species are not seen close together. This Slaty-backed Gull was compared to nearby Herring Gulls, which were close in size, thus ruling out *L. marinus*. The most definitive field marks are the coloration of the legs and feet and the wing pattern. The Slaty-backed Gull had deep red-pink legs, compared to the flesh color of *L. marinus* and the yellow of *L. fuscus*. The wing pattern, although difficult to examine when the bird was not in flight, was very distinct and diagnostic. Viewing was possible when the bird moved its wings during preening and when it flew. All of the primaries were white tipped. The first primary had a large white mirror and the second primary had a smaller mirror. Primaries three, four and five had black outer webs and black across both webs subterminally, and the sixth primary had a partial black subterminal mark. There was an area of white on the inner webs between the subterminal black and the dark gray of the wing which formed a white crescent shape between the two dark colors of the wing tip. It appeared as an extension of the broad white trailing edge to

the secondaries and the inner primaries. The underwing had a pattern similar to that of *L. marinus* but was distinctly gray, not black, under the primaries and secondaries. The wide white trailing edge to the secondaries was clearly noticeable when the bird was standing or sitting with wings folded.

The Slaty-backed Gull breeds on the western coast of the Bering Sea from the Gulf of Anadyr through Kamchatka and the Kurile Islands to Sakhalin and Japan. It winters as far south as Japan and the eastern coast of China (A.O.U. 1983). It has been recorded in the Pribolof and Aleutian Islands and on the coast of mainland Alaska (Terres 1980). Peterson (1990) notes it as casual in British Columbia and accidental in Missouri. The most recent prior U.S. sighting was at Brownsville, Texas in February 1992 (Lasley and Sexton 1992). The Niagara discovery was the first sighting east of the Mississippi River (Paxton *et al.* 1993). The uniqueness of this sighting was tempered somewhat by the discovery of another Slaty-backed Gull at Eastlake, Ohio on 28-29 December 1992 and at Lorain, Ohio on 8 February 1993 (Brock 1993). Further afield, reports of six Slaty-backed Gull, only two of which were acceptably documented, came from Sauvie, Oregon on 27 December 1992 (Tweit and Johnson 1993). These reports suggest that an exceptional incursion of the species into North America occurred that winter.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my appreciation to Robert Andrlé for his advice in the preparation of this article and to the birders who saw the Slaty-backed Gull and submitted verification reports documenting their sightings of the bird in New York State.

104 Fordham Drive, Buffalo New York 14216-3144

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# BREEDING ECOLOGY OF THE RED-SHOULDERED HAWK IN NORTH CENTRAL NEW YORK

GLENN JOHNSON AND ROBERT E. CHAMBERS

The northern subspecies of the Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus lineatus*), has exhibited a well documented decline throughout its range (Peterson 1969, Brown 1971, Henny *et al.* 1973, Fyfe 1976, Nagy 1977, Bednarz and Dinsmore 1981). New York populations have not escaped this phenomenon (Rusk and Scheider 1969, Temple and Temple 1976). In 1982, the Red-shouldered Hawk was added to the state's Threatened Species list. In 1985, we undertook a study of the status and nesting ecology of the Red-shouldered Hawk in north central New York (Johnson 1989, Johnson and Chambers 1990). Here we report on the breeding season chronology and reproductive performance of 39 nesting attempts between 1985 and 1987.

## STUDY AREAS

This study was conducted primarily in north central Oswego County, New York (Fig. 1). Sixty percent of the nest sites (n=28) were located in the Happy Valley Wildlife Management Area (HVWMA) and its immediate surroundings. Most of the remaining sites were located within 10 km of HVWMA. HVWMA is a state owned tract with several county and private holdings within its borders. This 3500 ha area is relatively flat with elevations ranging from 200–300 m. It lies in the Tug Hill Transition Ecozone (Will *et al.* 1982) and is characterized by mild summers and long cold winters. Two watersheds drain HVWMA, both of which eventually empty into Lake Ontario. The northern portion of the management area is included in the Little Salmon River watershed and the southern portion drains into the Oswego River. There are three large deep water impoundments created in the late 1930s on the area. Several small ponds were constructed by the state in the 1950s to favor waterfowl production (New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation 1980). HVWMA is characterized by second growth forests of northern hardwoods and mixed hardwood-conifer stands. The dominant tree species is Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*). Other important tree species include American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Yellow Birch (*Betula*

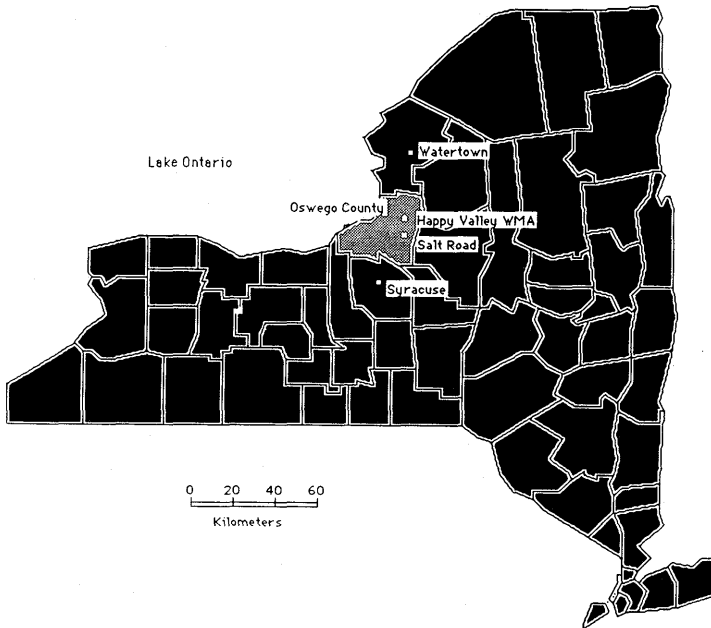


Figure 1. Locations of two Red-shouldered Hawk Study Areas (Happy Valley WMA and Salt Road) in Oswego Co., New York.

*alleghaniensis*), and Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*). Small (2 – 4 ha) stands of aspens (*Populus tremuloides* and *P. grandidentata*), conifer plantations, low-lying wooded swamps, alder (*Alnus rugosa*) stands, and old fields are interspersed throughout the area. A more thorough description of HVWMA is given by Parris (1986).

The other site, Salt Road, containing many of the nest sites is located 10 km south of HVWMA and 2.2 km north of the village of Constantia. It consists of approximately 3000 ha of mostly forested terrain with sparse residential development. It is contained mostly within two large private holdings. Vegetation, climate, and topography are similar to HVWMA.

Several nest sites were located outside of these two areas. They were included in the analysis because they occur in areas that are floristically and physiognomically similar to the two primary study areas.

Other raptor species known to reside and nest in the same region include the Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*), Northern Goshawk

(*Accipiter gentilis*), American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Barred Owl (*Strix varia*), and Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Raptors encountered on the two primary study areas, but not recorded by us as nesting, include the Red-tailed Hawk (*B. jamaicensis*), Cooper's Hawk (*A. cooperii*), Sharp-shinned Hawk (*A. striatus*), Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), and Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*).

## METHODS

Most nest sites used by Red-shouldered Hawk were found by systematic searching during leafless periods. These sites were checked in spring to determine activity status. Other nests were located by observing soaring adult hawks and intensively searching the surrounding area. Local landowners and other interested individuals provided locations of additional nest sites. All active nest sites discovered were monitored for use in subsequent years. All nest sites were plotted on USGS 7.5 minute topographic map quadrangles.

A nest site was considered active if it was occupied by a breeding pair and contained a nest in which at least one egg was laid. Alternate and "dummy" nests were not included in the analysis. A nest was considered active based on one or more of the following criteria: 1) flushing of an adult bird from a nest upon approach, 2) observation of an adult in incubation posture, 3) presence of down in the nest or "whitewash" around the base of the nest tree, 4) presence of nestlings, or 5) presence of eggshell fragments or nestling remains in or near the nest. Nests were not visited or approached closely prior to fledging of the young to minimize disturbance (Fyfe and Olendorff 1976).

A nest was considered successful if it produced one or more young that reached fledging age (Steenhof 1987). Productivity was calculated as the number of young that reach 80% of the average age of first flight (Steenhof 1987) since accurate counts were impossible once the young began to fledge.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Breeding Chronology:* Adult Red-shouldered Hawk were first observed in the area during the third week of March for the years 1985-1987, at which time nest "decoration" (lining of nests with fresh evergreen sprigs) was noted. By the first week of April, hawks were observed in incubation posture on nests. The latest period in which an adult was first observed in this posture was the fourth week of April. Hatchlings (Fig. 2)



Figure 2. Nestling Red-shouldered Hawk, Oswego Co., New York. Photograph by James Spencer.

were first observed in mid May. Young were fledged from all successful nests by 11 July and mean fledging age was 32 days. The nesting chronology we observed was similar to that reported by others from similar latitudes (Beardslee and Mitchell 1965, Bull 1974, Morris 1980, Janik and Mosher 1982, Crocoll and Parker 1989).

Lack (1950) and Immelmann (1971) suggested that the timing of avian breeding cycles evolved to coincide with maximum availability of each species' particular food requirements. Portnoy (1974) found the time of hatching for Red-shouldered Hawk in Massachusetts roughly corresponds with the emergence of juvenile Eastern Chipmunks (*Tamias striatus*), their principal prey. Morris (1980) reported a similar pattern in southwestern Quebec, and observations during this study agree.

The breeding cycles of some potential competitors observed at HVWMA appear to be separated temporally. Both Great Horned Owl

and Red-tailed Hawk began nesting earlier than Red-shouldered Hawk (Hagar 1957), whereas Broad-winged Hawk began nesting activity as much as a month later. Barred Owl and the accipiters breeding cycles overlap with that of the Red-shouldered Hawk. However, Barred Owl forages at different times of the day and appear to feed less on squirrels and chipmunks and more on mice, moles, and shrews (Devereux and Mosher 1984). Birds appear predominantly in the diet of accipiters (Mueller and Berger 1970, Reynolds and Meslow 1984, Kennedy and Johnson 1986).

*Nest Success and Productivity:* Of the 39 nesting attempts monitored, 7 of 9 (77.8%) were successful in 1985, 11 of 15 (73.3%) were successful in 1986, and 10 of 15 (66.7%) were successful in 1987. Mean nest success for 39 nesting attempts over the three year period was 71.8%. Fifty-four young were produced at the 28 successful nests over the period 1985–1987 for a mean productivity of  $1.92 \pm 0.47$  young/successful nest. Mean productivity was  $2.20 \pm 0.41$  in 1985,  $2.00 \pm 0.00$  in 1986, and  $1.73 \pm 0.65$  in 1987. If all nesting attempts (successful + unsuccessful) are included in productivity calculations, the mean is  $1.38 \pm 0.95$  young/nest attempt over the three year period.

Nest success reported here was higher than that reported from several other populations: 65.5% in California (Wiley 1975); 55.6% in western New York (Crocoll and Parker 1989); 52.9% in western Maryland (Janik and Mosher 1982); 67.6% in central Maryland (Henny *et al.* 1973). Success was lower than that reported in Iowa (87.5%–Bednarz 1979), Massachusetts (80.0%–Portnoy and Dodge 1980), Missouri (100.0%–Kimmel and Fredrickson 1981), and central Ontario (83.3%–Armstrong and Euler 1982). Caution is advised in interpreting these results due to small sample sizes in most cases. Henny *et al.* (1973) based their calculation on the outcomes of 74 nesting attempts and was the only other study with a sample size greater than 20.

Productivity (average number of fledglings per successful nest) reported here was among the lowest in published accounts. Bednarz (1979) reported productivity as great as 3.30 fledglings per successful nest at his study sites in Iowa, while others (Henny *et al.* 1973, Wiley 1975, Portnoy and Dodge 1980, Kimmel and Fredrickson 1981, Armstrong and Euler 1982, Crocoll and Parker 1989) reported values between 2.00 and 2.56. There appears to be no relationship between nest success and productivity.

Nest success and productivity are important measures to assess the status of threatened avian species. However, their values in any given

region must be judged carefully. Our study area was located in a region of New York identified as a stronghold for this species where the quantity and quality of suitable habitat does not appear limiting (Andrle and Carroll 1988). These values may differ in areas of poor quality habitat or along the fringes of a species' range. Variations observed over time may reflect actual population trends that can be related to such factors as forest changes, human disturbances, or management activities, or else they may simply be cyclic phenomena related to variations in food abundance or weather. Obviously, long-term studies are necessary to make important decisions about the management of a species, including adding or removing it from threatened species lists. Ultimately, the number of fledglings that reach breeding age and produce offspring is the most important parameter to the continued success of a bird species.

To date, there have been no published long-term population studies of Red-shouldered Hawk. However, some wildlife agencies may have accumulated such data. Some positive recent examples include the New York State Raptor Nest Information Database developed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (write to Endangered Species Unit, Division of Fish and Wildlife-NYSDEC, Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar, New York 12057-9767) and the Hawk Monitoring Protocol developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

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## BIRDING CRUGER ISLAND

DENNIS MILDNER

Cruger Island is a sixty acre bedrock promontory in the Hudson River located in the Town of Red Hook in northwestern Dutchess County. The island is owned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. It is part of both the Tivoli Bays Wildlife Management Area and the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve. The island itself and the rest of the wildlife management area, which includes Tivoli South Bay, Tivoli North Bay, and the forested uplands above it, are open to hunting during the legal season. Permission is not needed to visit the site.

The great lure of Cruger Island for the birder is the ecological diversity of the area, with tidal freshwater wetlands surrounding the island's woodland habitat. Sheltered coves on the leeward side of the island support a low marsh community characterized by spatterdock and pickerelweed, while adjacent shallows support submerged aquatic plant beds. Across the railroad tracks from the island and to the north is a three hundred acre tidal cattail marsh, Tivoli North Bay, where Marsh Wren, Least Bittern and Virginia Rail nest. In the autumn, tremendous flocks of Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and Brown-headed Cowbird pour out of the sky and into the marsh to roost for the night. Just southeast of the island is Tivoli South Bay, a shallow cove where waterfowl, wading birds, and, at low tide, migrant shorebirds can be found.

Cruger Island lies on the east side of the Hudson River a few miles north of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge (Fig. 1). Traveling north on NY Route 9G past the turnoff (NY 199) for the bridge, look for County Road 103 (Annandale Road) on the left two miles north of NY 199. Turn left on County Road 103, then immediately bear right at the village green in Annandale-on-Hudson. Travel north about a mile across the Bard College campus. When Annandale Road rounds a hard curve to the right, turn left. Drive down this rough dirt road, known locally as Cruger Island causeway, past the access gates and leave your car in the small parking area on the right.

The causeway from this point to the island is impassable to cars. It is also flooded twice a day at high tide, so a visit to the island should be

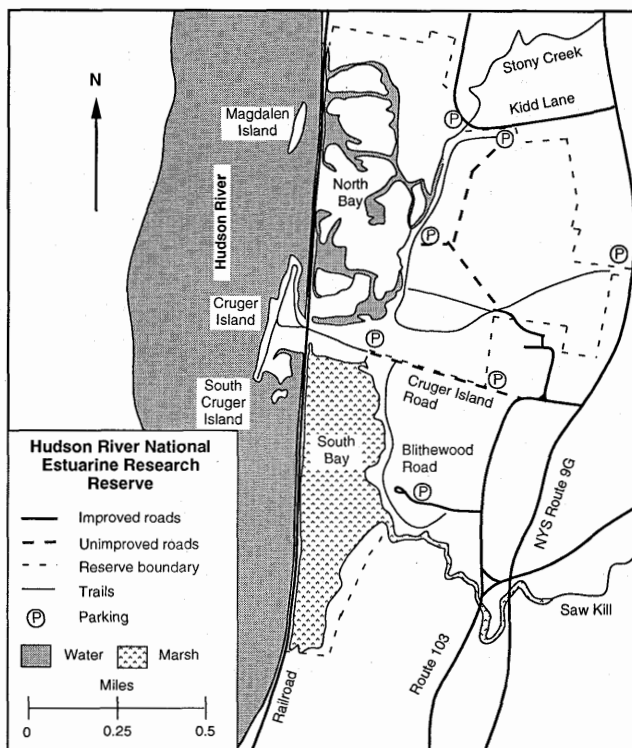


Figure 1. Map of Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

scheduled for the few hours surrounding dead low tide. The Education Coordinator at the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (c/o Bard College Field Station, Annandale, NY 12504) can provide you with tide charts for the area or help you coordinate your visit. At high tide, about two feet of water cover the causeway, which may be waded; at low tide the puddles remain on the roadway. At the western end of the causeway you will need to cross railroad tracks to get onto the island. This unsignaled crossing requires caution. The high speed passenger trains traveling on this line are quiet and can be on you within seconds after first hearing them.

The causeway is excellent birding, especially in early spring and again in late summer through early fall. The shrub and tree swamp community it passes through abounds with songbirds in season. Both Sora and Yellow Rail have been reported on the island. Osprey also frequent the numerous dead snags along the causeway during the spring and fall.

An informal network of trails rambles over the island's rocky bluffs and ridges through mixed deciduous forest. These trails are especially productive for forest dwelling neotropical migrants during the spring and fall. The northern and southern ends of the island are especially good sites for seeing congregations of waterfowl during autumn migration. From the northern overlook, an observer also commands outstanding views of the Catskill Mountains.

A visitor to the area should also consider canoeing Tivoli North Bay. This extensive cattail marsh is cut by numerous tidal channels, and birds abound. Least and American Bitterns, Great Blue and Green Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets, Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, and Swamp Sparrow are just a few of the species that can be found. Canoe access is via an informal launch on the Hudson in the Village of Tivoli, or at the Stony Creek canoe launch via the wildlife management area's Kidd Lane entrance. A free brochure is available from the Research Reserve's office that includes a map identifying access points and parking, hiking trails, scenic overlooks, canoe launches and other facilities.

*Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, Bard College Field Station, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York 12504*

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.**  
**46TH ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Watertown, New York**  
**10-12 September 1993**

President Stan Lincoln called the 46th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. to order at the Holiday Inn, Watertown at 2:40 p.m. on Friday, 10 September 1993. The roll call of member clubs was answered by 22 clubs (with 5 more attending on Saturday morning). A motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the 45th Annual Meeting published in *The Kingbird* 43(2):103-108 was approved with the following corrections: the Auditing Committee was elected (not named); and at the banquet the Gordon Meade Award for Distinguished Service was awarded (*in absentia*) to Bob Miller.

The Treasurer's Report was distributed by Berna Lincoln so that it could be carefully read prior to the formal report on Saturday. Norman Stotz reported for the Auditing Committee, which also includes Irving Cantor and Richard Sloss. They examined the 31 December 1992 balance sheet and financial records and reported that they fairly present the financial condition of the Federation.

Stan reported that he had found that the names of elected officers were not included in the minutes of 1986 and 1988 as published in *The Kingbird*. He therefore made the following motion to amend those minutes:

Inasmuch as the published and approved minutes of 39th and 41st Annual Meetings of the Council of Delegates failed to list the names of the officers elected at those meetings;

and as the minutes are the only official record of those elections;

it is therefore moved that the minutes of this 46th Annual Meeting correct for this oversight by showing the results of those elections to have been as follows:

The slate of officers presented and unanimously elected at the 39th Annual Meeting on 31 October and 1 November 1986 at Saratoga Springs were: President, Harriet Marsi; Vice President, Berna B. Weissman; Treasurer, Stanley R. Lincoln; Corresponding Secretary, Constance Wilkins; and Recording Secretary, Marilyn Schindler.

The slate of officers presented and unanimously elected at the 41st Annual Meeting on 16 and 17 September 1988 at Rochester were: President, Berna B. Weissman; Vice President, Chad E. Covey; Treasurer, Stanley R. Lincoln; Corresponding Secretary, Mary Ann Sunderlin; Recording Secretary, Øivind E. Jensen.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Stan read his President's Report, reprinted here:

As all retiring Presidents say, this has been a great year for the Federation. Our member Clubs and Individual Members are loyal and supportive; our finances are stable and capable of sustaining our operations; our many dedicated and hard working committee chairpeople and members continue to do a super job; to our publication editors and regional and seasonal *Kingbird* editors, we owe a special vote of thanks for another year of documenting the ornithology of the state and our many Federation activities in a very professional manner.

The Executive Committee of some 20 of the hardest working of our volunteers met in four day long and one evening session since we last were together in Oneonta last September. They have dealt with countless matters and made many plans which you will be hearing about as the meeting progresses.

I am delighted to report that all but one of our Annual Meetings are already spoken for by host clubs from now through our gala 50th Anniversary which will culminate with our 1998 annual meeting right back in Rochester where it all started. If you want 1997, which will technically be the beginning of our 50th year, better get your Club to speak up quickly.

If I say anything more I will necessarily be cutting into the many Committee Reports that will be shared with you during this meeting.

But there is one other matter I want to comment on. I mentioned our Executive Committee meetings, and I want to correct what I believe is true for some if not many delegates, namely that the Executive Committee is not well understood. We all owe a special vote of thanks to this great body that really makes the daily operations of the Federation go. Our Executive Committee is a somewhat unusual, though logical, organizational approach. It recognizes that you, the Council of Delegates, appointed by your respective Member Clubs, are the governing body of the Federation. That effectively rules against

a traditional, elected Board of Directors; though technically, for legal reasons, I presume, the five officers are also designated as Directors of the organization by our By-Laws. Some 15 years ago your predecessors, perhaps some of you here, wisely decided that there needed to be a structure to support the five officers in running the affairs of the Federation between annual meetings. You empowered the President to appoint up to 15, since reduced to 10, members-at-large to serve along with the officers as an executive committee. Traditionally, at least for the last 10 years, that body has been supplemented with all committee chairpeople, who also serve, technically in an *ex officio* capacity, on the executive committee.

I have realized only in recent weeks that somehow we have callously never published for all to see just who serves on our Executive Committee. We publish the Committee Chairpeople on each *Kingbird* but the Members-at-Large never get identified. I plead the point and urge our new team of officers to correct this glaring error. And I would like to start by calling on the members-at-large who have supported my presidency to stand and be recognized: Robert Connor, Chad Covey, Stephen Dempsey, Phyllis Jones, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, Richard Sloss, and Don Windsor.

I must end by stating as sincerely as I know how my personal thanks to all the officers, executive committee members and countless others that have made my two years as President both a delight and a source of great personal satisfaction.

*Stanley R. Lincoln*

Following the President's Report, Stan asked that he be given any resolutions under consideration, and he appointed a Resolutions Committee consisting of Barbara Butler and Bill Reeves.

Stan reported (for the Bylaws Committee) that Proposed Amendments to Article II, VI and VII of the Bylaws were sent to each member club president in April 1993. Following discussion, the amendments were approved unanimously by voice vote of the Council of Delegates. A form requesting ratification of the changes was distributed to each club.

Stan introduced Charles Rouse, of the Eaton Birding Society, who announced the creation of the Elon Howard Eaton Memorial Award.

The first award will be made at the 1994 Annual Meeting.

Myrna Hemmerick reported for the Membership Committee that there are now 39 member clubs and 606 individual members of the Federation. Regarding circulation, The Membership Promotion Committee report was given by Bill Lee. Membership in the Federation has declined since we did the Breeding Bird Atlas project. He discussed past (and possible future) promotions. He noted that the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club published Federation membership information in their newsletter, and he suggested that other clubs do the same.

Paul DeBenedictis reported that two *Kingbirds* are out, one is on the way, and the material for the last issue is in hand, but he needs lots of short notes. Paul asked for feedback on the type now being used in the regional reports. Berna reported that when the supply of *Kingbird* envelopes were used up, we started placing the mailing label directly on the magazine, and are now successfully mailing the journal without an envelope.

Max Wheat requested articles for publication in *New York Birder*, and Don Windsor reported that the *Kingbird* Index (1981-1990) should be completed this year.

In Manny Levine's absence, Stan reported on the revision of the state bird book. In July, the Executive Committee appointed Manny Levine as Editor, and asked him to work out details with an *ad hoc* committee consisting of Stan, Berna, Dick and himself. The copyright for the 1974 book is held by the American Museum of Natural History, and the *ad hoc* committee has been meeting with museum representatives to negotiate an arrangement for jointly producing an updated state book titled *Bull's Birds of New York State*. Our intent is to share the copyright ownership, as well as financial involvement, with the Museum. The Museum will provide Professional Review and publisher contacts; the Federation will provide the content. The target date is the 50th Anniversary of the Federation in 1998.

Stan introduced the following motion:

That the Executive Committee is hereby authorized to proceed with the proposed project to develop *Bull's Birds of New York State*, to enter into a working relationship agreement with the American Museum of Natural History, and with a selected Publisher, and to budget for and expend necessary and reasonable funds to accomplish same.



The statement was moved and seconded, and following discussion, it was unanimously approved.

Chad Covey, reporting for the Nominating Committee, proposed the following slate of officers: President – Bill Lee; Vice President – Bob Budliger; Corresponding Secretary – Valerie Freer; Recording Secretary – Bill Reeves; and Treasurer – Berna Lincoln. There were no nominations from the floor, and the slate was unanimously approved. At 4:30 PM the gavel was turned over to Bill Lee, who presided for the remainder of the meeting.

Bill reported for the award committees: John Confer sent notice that the Lillian C. Stoner Award is given to student Ed McGee from the Sullivan County Audubon Society. There is no Elliott award this year. Charlie Smith reported that a Member Club Grant of \$100 will go to the Genesee Ornithological Society in support of the Braddock Bay passerine banding project.

Walt Sabin announced that the dates for the 1994 waterfowl count are 15–23 January.

Phyllis Jones reported for the newly revived Bibliography Committee. They will produce a 1993 bibliography of New York State papers and books for publication in *The Kingbird*, and then will gradually work back on the years that were missed.

Phyllis also noted that as the Federation archivist she has made arrangements to deposit our valuable historical papers in the Cornell University Kroch Library, and is in the process of collecting and cataloging documents.

Don Windsor presented the “200 Club” patch design. This patch is available to those who have found 200 species of birds in New York State when a list of the birds is sent to Don (P.O. Box 604, Norwich, NY 13815). The charge is \$2 for Federation members and \$3 for non-members.

Paul DeBenedictis announced that there is a new secretary for the NYS Avian Records Committee: James Lowe, at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Berna reviewed the County Listing project. About 52 people participated (by sending their total numbers of species identified by county). Totals will be printed in an upcoming *New York Birders*.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 PM, and reconvened on Saturday at 9:15 AM. Charlie Smith spoke for the Research Committee about the development of checklists, the status of the 116 Breeding Bird Survey

routes in New York State, and the status of weekend birding forays in the Finger Lakes region.

Berna discussed the Treasurer's Report which showed that we broke even in 1992. Following discussion, it was moved that the report be accepted; the motion was approved.

In the absence of Harriet Marsi and Andy Mason, Bill reported for the Conservation Committee. He discussed DEC Forest Unit Management Plans, the Biological Survey, support for the NYS Museum, and the Environmental Assistance Fund.

Charlie Smith presented a Resolution honoring Orin Lehman, who for 18 years was Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and who was instrumental in forming the Birdlife Advisory Committee. The resolution expressed the gratitude of the Federation to Orin, and extended to him "lifetime honorary membership in the Federation in recognition of his leadership in behalf of the birds and birdwatchers of New York State." The Resolution was approved.

Bill announced the upcoming annual meetings of the Federation, to be hosted in 1994 by the Sullivan County Audubon Society, in 1995 by the Lake Erie Bird Club in Fredonia, in 1996 by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, and in 1998 by the three Rochester Clubs (who hosted the first annual meeting and every other year ending in 8).

It was moved that the three members of the Auditing Committee be reelected: Dick Sloss, Irving Cantor, Norman Stotz. The motion was approved. It was next moved that the Nominating Committee consist of the past three Presidents (as is traditional): Stan Lincoln, Chair, Chad Covey and Harriet Marsi. This motion was also approved.

Bob Miller, reporting for the DEC, noted that the Conservation Fund (from hunting and fishing licenses) and the "Return a Gift to Wildlife" fund (from tax returns) are both decreasing. He outlined the projects funded by Gift to Wildlife monies. Bob also reported on the shooting of Laughing Gulls at JFK Airport and the controversy over Double-crested Cormorants at Little Galloo Island. He also gave an update on the status of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon in New York state.

Following a resolution thanking the host club, the North Country Bird Club, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM.

The Friday night workshops were on "Passerine Banding at Braddock Bay" by Elizabeth Brooks; "Birds and Birding Spots of the

North Country" by Ken Crowell; and "Fall Shorebird Identification" by Paul DeBenedictis. The Saturday afternoon paper session emphasized conservation and management of birds in the North Country, and included the following talks:

Progress Report – Migratory Bird Study Along Lake Ontario—Kris Agard & Kathy Schneider

Long Term Trends and Reproductive Success of Common Terns Along the International Section of the St. Lawrence River—Lee Harper

Species of Special Interest Found in Northern NY Wildlife Management Areas—Paul Novak

Population Status and Diet of Double-Crested Cormorants in Eastern Lake Ontario—Kenneth Karwowski

Population Status, Distribution, and Ecology of Black Terns in Northern NY—Irene Mazzochi & Sandra Muller

Population Status of Migratory Songbirds in NY State w/Special Reference to the Adirondack Region—Charles Smith

On Saturday evening about 160 people attended the banquet, where they heard Pete Dunne (author of *Feather Quest*) tell the entertaining story of "An Unidentified Flycatcher Seen Yesterday. He Didn't Leave His Name."

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie M. Freer  
Recording Secretary  
19 February 1994

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**First Attempted Nesting of Ring-billed Gull and Possible Nesting of Herring Gull in Chemung County:** While checking one of my favorite spots on 8 May 1993, during the Migratory Bird Census, I discovered 209 Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) and a pair of Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) in an abandoned gravel pit along Newtown Creek and Route 13 in Horseheads, Chemung Co. While counting the birds, I noted that many of the birds were sitting on nests. A return trip on 15 May found the birds still there and on nests. The majority of the nests were on rocky islands, while the rest were on the sand piles along the shore. Photographs of the birds, nests, and eggs were taken on 28 May (Fig. 1, 2), and have been deposited with the New York State Avian Records Committee. However, on this date, the Herring Gull were present but not near a nest. A total of 49 possible nests were found, but only half of them seemed to be active. The majority of those on the sand piles were abandoned and those on the islands could not be checked. By early June, all nests on the sand piles were abandoned and only shell fragments were left. I hope these nests were victims of raccoons and not man. At the same time the nests on the islands still appeared active. However, no further activity was noted on the island nests, either. This report does, however, document the first known nesting attempt for Ring-billed Gull, and is the first suggestion of nesting by Herring Gull in Chemung County. The closest prior known nesting colonies of either species are on Oneida Lake to the north and along the Niagara River to the west.

*David Russell, 126 Roosevelt Avenue, Horseheads, New York 14845*

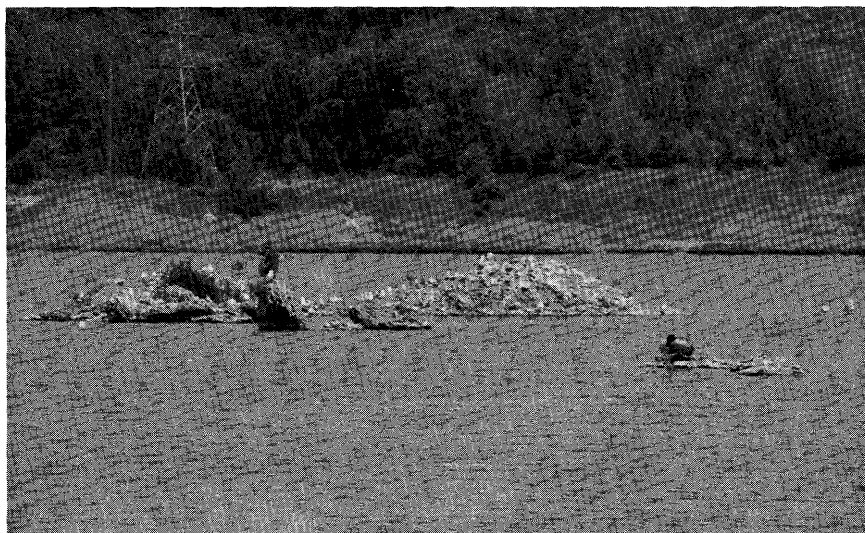


Figure 1. Ring-billed Gull nesting colony near Horseheads, Chemung Co., New York, on 28 May 1993. Photograph by David Russell.



Figure 2. Nesting Ring-billed Gull near Horseheads, Chemung Co., New York, on 28 May 1993. Eggs are just visible in both nests. Photograph by David Russell.

**Cerulean Warbler confirmed breeding and Acadian Flycatcher probable breeding on eastern Long Island:** In 1992, we reported the probable breeding of the Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) in East Hampton, Suffolk Co., Long Island (*Kingbird* 42(4):213-215). Definitive evidence of its breeding there finally was obtained on 6 July 1993 when an adult male was observed feeding a very young bird still retaining pin feathers and prominent gape. On 18 July, in the same territory, both the adult male and female were observed feeding two recent fledglings, and on 3 August a second pair of adults was observed carrying food at another suspected nesting area. This is only the second confirmed breeding record for Cerulean Warbler on Long Island (Andrle, R.F., and Carroll, J. 1988. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY). Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*) inhabiting the same territories as the Cerulean Warbler were also observed carrying food items and exhibiting agitated behavior. A single bird was seen at one location and a pair at the second location. Bull (1974. *Birds of New York State*. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY) reported this species to have last successfully nested on eastern Long Island in 1926, and he also noted an aborted attempt observed by Puleston and Raynor in Noyack in 1972. By at least the early 1980s, Acadian Flycatcher had returned to East Hampton (*vide* Jim Ash) and during the Atlas census (1980-1985) evidence of breeding was recorded at nearby Sag Harbor, Montauk, and along the Peconic River. Formerly uncommon but regular in this area, Acadian Flycatcher suffered an unexplained plummet in population in the late 1980s. After several years in which they could be found locally only in very low numbers, the species seems to be slowly reestablishing its population here (*vide* Jim Ash).

**Patricia Lindsay and Tom Vezo**, 16 Raeburn Court, Babylon, New York 11702

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

ROBERT SPAHN

The weather was the major factor behind most of the birding highlights this winter season. There are many comments by the Regional editors on the persistent harsh conditions. This was one of the coldest, snowiest winters on record for the State, the most prolonged cold and the longest period of continuous snow cover for most of the State in well over a decade. However, the first three weeks of December were warm and basically snow free. Possibly concentrated by the snow and cold, the survivors from this period set late records and good species counts continued into January. Records decreased in February, an unspecified combination of the toll of the harsh weather on avian survival and on reduced observer effort. It will remain until the breeding season reports and next winter's counts to see the real impact of this winter, particularly on species at the limits of their range in New York.

Most of the high counts and late departure records fell within the first three, warm weeks of December or in the following couple of weeks as winter increased its icy squeeze. The best way to summarize these seems to be a pass through the checklist. Loons were reported much more widely than in most winters. Heron reports were sparse, but this was the second consecutive January with American Bittern in Region 2 and the fourth consecutive winter with Black-crowned Night-Heron in Region 1. High waterfowl counts included 41 Tundra Swan in Region 6; 1002 Snow Goose in Region 8; at least ten Eurasian Wigeon in Region 10; 200 and 300 Common Eider in Region 10; and 530 Hooded Merganser in Region 1. Brant overwintered in Region 2, and Blue-winged Teal lingered in Regions 2, 5, 9, and 10. Harlequin Duck enlivened Regions 1, 7, and 10; and Barrow's Goldeneye in six Regions, including four reports of females were noteworthy. Among the raptors, records of interest included Osprey in Regions 4, 6, and 10; great Bald Eagle counts in Region 9; five Regions noting Red-shouldered Hawk; Golden Eagle in Regions 6, 8, and 9; Merlin in six Regions; and *Gyr Falcon* in Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7. With shorebirds scarce, American Oystercatcher in Region 10; Spotted Sandpiper setting late dates in Regions 9 and 10; and Western Sandpiper tarrying in Region 10 are of special note. Forster's Tern to 17 Dec in Region 10 was a record late date. As expected, Region 10 produced the

only alcid reports of note, Common and Thick-billed Murres and Razorbill. The number of owl reports generally was up, though numbers were still small. Of special note are Barn Owl in Regions 2 and 9, Great Gray Owl in Region 7, and low counts noted for Short-eared Owl when it was mentioned at all. Eastern Phoebe was found in Regions 1, 9, and 10. Perhaps just more concentrated this year, Horned Lark counts were up in several Regions. Tree Swallow persisted late in Regions 2 and 10, though not as late as last winter. Good American Crow roost counts appear in Regions 2, 4, and 5, and Common Raven reports from *seven* regions are remarkable. Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Northern Cardinal counts were particularly high in many Regions. Late House Wren in Regions 3 and 9, record late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Region 10, Veery in Region 10, late American Pipit in Regions 9 and 10 upped the season's species count. Bohemian Waxwing appeared in six Regions, and there were a few Northern Shrike reports in each of Regions 1 to 8. *Nine* warbler species were reported in Region 10 and Palm Warbler was found in Regions 1, 2, and 10, Ovenbird in Region 9, and very rare winter records for Northern Parula and Wilson's Warbler in Region 10. An Indigo Bunting persisted in Region 7. Counts for most sparrows were low, but Chipping, Savannah, Sharp-tailed, Fox, and "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco were all good finds at this season. Lapland Longspur is noted in nine Regions, and Snow Bunting numbers were good, with some actually reaching feeders as conditions worsened. Low blackbird counts made Brewer's Blackbird in Region 2, 90 Boat-tailed Grackle and a "Bullock's" Northern Oriole in Region 10, especially interesting.

As one would expect from such a winter, there are numerous notes and anecdotes in the Regional reports specifically related to the harsh weather. There was a major movement and many groundings of grebes, particularly Red-necked Grebe, as Lake Ontario approached 80% ice cover. This is noted in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9. Region 1 gives the most detailed summary of numbers brought to rehabilitators. Totals for Red-necked Grebe included nearly 100 in Region 1 and 105 in Region 3, all in mid February. The freezing of most inland bodies of water concentrated the remaining birds of many waterfowl species to small areas of deep water, moving water, or warm ponds, such as those at power plant outlets. This brought many interesting reports and some high counts, but also led to an outbreak of the viral disease DVE in



Region 3. Fortunately it was late enough that the birds were able to disperse soon after with spring's arrival. Shorebird reports were very few, except in coastal Regions, and gull concentrations were well down.

Raptor concentrations also were generally poor, with the exception of good Rough-legged Hawk counts in Regions 4, 7, and 8. Stories supporting the weather's impact on raptors include Northern Goshawk hunting in downtown Ithaca, American Kestrel and Red-shouldered Hawk at suet feeders in Region 9, and many raptors found dead, also in Region 9.

Last Fall had brought some promise of a "finch winter," though reports were decreasing by that season's end. Generally, this winter saw sparse reports of all these finches except redpolls, whose numbers remained high in many Regions throughout the winter. Some very high Common Redpoll counts include 2017 in Region 1, 3000 in Region 2, 4000 in Region 3, and 1594 in Region 7. Nine of the ten Regions reported *Hoary Redpoll*, an unprecedented influx and reporting event. Incidentally, I feel that this bird probably is far *under* rather than *over* reported and that it is not quite as difficult to identify as many would have us believe, *if* the observer knows what to look for and has a really good look. Hopefully most of these reports will be submitted to the NYSARC. Region 7 observers noted over a dozen individuals, with five of at least six present at one feeder banded. There was also a carefully observed "Greater" Common Redpoll present at that same feeder.

A major thaw during the period 17-20 Feb brought the first big push of early spring migrants to remind us that even such a brutal winter finally comes to an end. With this came several good early records, including Turkey Vulture and Fox Sparrow in Region 1, Long-billed Dowitcher in Region 10, and a very high early count for such a winter of American Woodcock in Region 6.

Among the many rarities reported this season, those which especially caught my eye were: the *Western Grebe* in Region 9, the state's first winter record for *American White Pelican* in Region 10, the immature Trumpeter Swan of unknown origin in Region 2 after mid February, the second return of Brooklyn's *Spotted Redshank* in Region 10, the *California Gull* on cue for the gull workshop field trips in Region 1, the *Ivory Gull* in Region 2, and *White-winged Dove* in Region 10. One could develop personal arguments for any of these, or even for the great influx of *Hoary Redpoll*, to be labeled the B.O.T.S. How would you vote?

716 High Tower Way, Webster, New York 14580

**Standard abbreviations:** Regional rarities appear in *bold italics*; 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.

## REPORTING DEADLINES

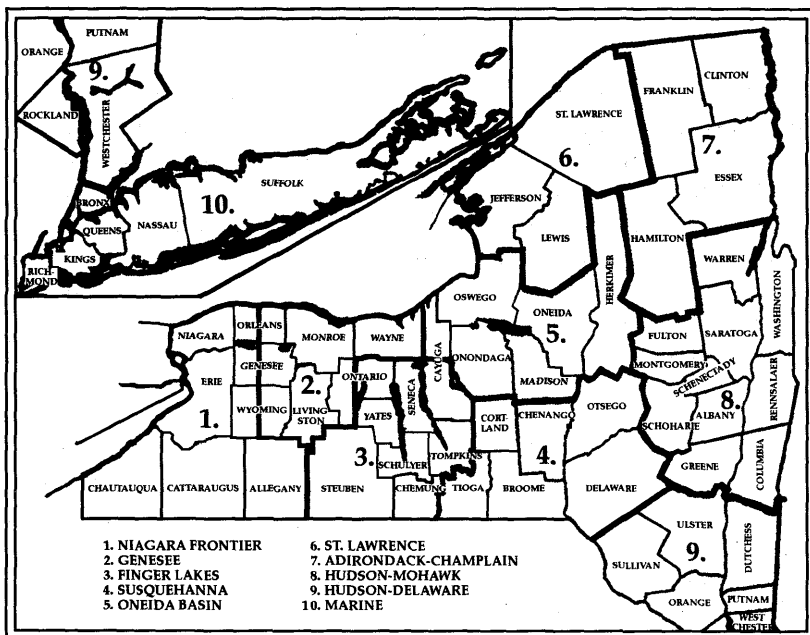
**Winter Season:** December, January, February  
Deadline is 7 March

**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

WILLIE D'ANNA

This winter could be characterized by one word - brutal - for birds. But it also was brutal for birders, who had to endure knee deep snow along with bitter wind chills. Most of December was benign, with warmer than normal temperatures and below average precipitation. In the last week of December, however, the weather did an about face and the lake effect machine dumped fifteen inches of snow on Christmas eve alone and wind-chills fell to  $-35^{\circ}\text{F}$ . That bitter week brought the temperature average and precipitation total for Buffalo to near normal for the month. January was the coldest month since January 1982. Its snowfall totaled 35 inches, ten inches more than normal and the most since December 1985. The average temperature of  $17.2^{\circ}\text{F}$  was a whopping  $6.4^{\circ}$  below the norm and, combined with frequent strong winds, it made outdoor activities for the unprepared downright dangerous. Weather details for the month include a high of  $-1^{\circ}$  on 19 Jan, only the second subzero high in 60 years; a 41 hour stretch of below zero temperatures from 18 to 20 Jan, the longest such period since February 1934; a record low of  $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$  on 19 Jan, the coldest temperature in twelve years, and it was much colder away from L Erie; and an average temperature of just  $4^{\circ}\text{F}$  for the week of 15-20 Jan. As bad as it was in Buffalo, the snow belts south of the city endured worse, getting soaked with an additional two feet of snow on the 7 and 8 Jan. With Lake Erie frozen solid, the snow moderated somewhat in February but still totaled 21.6 inches compared with a norm of 18.4. The average temperature of  $22.8^{\circ}\text{F}$  was  $1.7^{\circ}$  below normal. A dry 11 Feb ended a string of 55 days with at least a trace of precipitation at Buffalo and a welcome thaw on 17 to 21 Feb produced the first spring migrants and, less welcome, some flooding due to ice jams on a few creeks. For the period it was the coldest winter in twelve years.

By far the most obvious effect of the severe weather was the downing of Horned and Red-necked Grebes on land and water. Data was supplied by Mark Kandell with assistance from Gail Spann, both of the Department of Environmental Conservation. Reports from wildlife rehabilitators to the DEC indicate that at least 206 birds were picked up on land, including 188 Horned Grebe, ten Red-necked Grebe, two Eared

Grebe (one in West Seneca and one in Holland, both in ERIE), two Common Loon, two merganser species, and one "Arctic Jaeger" (no details for the latter nor, other than location, for the Eared Grebes). Many of these birds were picked up in the snow belt south of Buffalo during and following the bitter week of 15-20 Jan. Fortunately, most were uninjured and required just a few minnows before being returned to open water, specifically the upper Niagara River, Dunkirk Harbor, and the Allegheny River. The dates of recovery, with the number of individuals of all species in parentheses, are: 6 (one Eared Grebe), 14 (one), 16 (one), 17 (two), 18 (five), 19 (56), 20 (61), 21 (31), 22 (39), 23 (three), 24 (nine), 25 (three), 26 (two), and 31 Jan (one), and 10 (one Red-necked Grebe), and 11 Feb (one Red-necked Grebe). Birders added some other observation. On 22 Jan, 26 Horned Grebe were counted at Dunkirk Harbor with slowly diminishing numbers there through January and February. Incredibly, the maximum count on the Niagara River was only two, indicating that the "released" birds were not simply content with open water. Red-necked Grebe was much more successful at finding open water on its own, and they liked what they found. After the first sighting on the Allegheny River on 16 Jan, birds were found in numbers starting on 10 Feb. Sightings increased to record levels of this species on 15-21 Feb, with 53 seen along the Niagara River, 33 at Dunkirk Harbor, four on Lake Ontario, and five on the Allegheny River. The reason that the grebes were migrating at this time is believed to be the rapid and extensive freeze of all of the Great Lakes, not just the shallow Lake Erie. What is intriguing, however, is that numbers of Red-necked Grebe are simply not recorded on the Great Lakes during most (all?) winters! Why would they be there this year?

The American Birding Association (ABA) held its biennial convention in Niagara Falls, Ontario 2-6 Dec. Claudia Wilds and Rick Blom gave an excellent program on gull identification and the following day, 5 Dec, Richard Knapton discovered a *California Gull* on one of the ABA field trips at the Robert Moses Power Plant on the Niagara River, the same area where the Regional first was found last year.

Once again Gerald Rising compiled the nine Christmas Bird Counts in the Region. Among the highlights were the Chestnut Ridge CBC's second consecutive *Gyr Falcon*; one Common Snipe, 16 Bohemian Waxwing, 1 *Palm Warbler*, and 17 White-winged Crossbill on the Jamestown CBC; 24 Pine Grosbeak on the Niagara Falls CBC; and four

Red-shouldered Hawk. Species with high count totals were 398 Wild Turkey (a dead turkey, probably starved, found by Baird in January may, however, portend a bleaker future), 653 Great Black-backed Gull, 53 Red-bellied Woodpecker, 5169 Black-capped Chickadee, 270 Tufted Titmouse including 103 on the Chestnut Ridge CBC - incredible numbers, 162 Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1391 Northern Cardinal, 2070 American Tree Sparrow, and 3142 Common Redpoll. On the down side were 124 Canvasback, a very low total though their numbers increased in January, and 836 Bonaparte's Gulls.

Ever since the discovery of Gyrfalcon along the Niagara-Orleans Countyline Road in the Towns of Somerset and Yates last year, birders have checked these extensive and heavily manured fields on a regular basis. This winter, in addition to hundreds of Snow Bunting and Horned Lark (mainly of the northern race, *Eremophila a. alpestris*) there were a few Lapland Longspur and both Short-eared and Snowy Owls. In the previous spring this area hosted several Rough-legged Hawk, a Peregrine Falcon, several Snow Goose, and numbers of migrant dabbling ducks. These fields bear watching at all seasons except perhaps summer.

Other hotspots were the Niagara River near the Peace Bridge and Dunkirk Harbor. Two of the very few large bodies of open water, these areas harbored, in addition to the aforementioned grebes, an abundance of diving ducks, in particular Greater Scaup, Redhead, Canvasback, and Common Merganser, as well as a sprinkling of rarities.

A spring migration burst occurred during the warm spell of 17-21 Feb. Flocks of Canada Goose, American Robin, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird were noted as well as smaller numbers of Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, and Rusty Blackbird. Unexpectedly early were Turkey Vulture and Fox Sparrow.

In spite of the frigid conditions and low numbers of passerines this winter, birders still managed to find a good variety of birds and an excellent assortment of rarities. The best of the rare birds were Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, *Northern Gannet*, Harlequin Duck, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, *Gyrfalcon*, *California Gull*, Black-legged Kittiwake, *Eastern Phoebe*, Bohemian Waxwing, *Palm Warbler*, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and *Hoary Redpoll*.

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**Abbreviations:** DH - Dunkirk Harbor; INWR - Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge; NF - Niagara Falls; NR - Niagara River.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** two DH 22 Jan (WD!, FR!); one DH 18-19 Feb (BC!, FR!). **Com. Loon:** one NR Buffalo 19-20 Feb, only report after Dec. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Salamanca 6 Feb (TB), only report away from DH. **Horned Grebe:** *intro.* **Red-necked Grebe:** *intro.* **Eared Grebe:** *intro.* **Northern Gannet:** imm NR Lewiston 16 Dec (RA!, DR!); same bird at NR mouth 17 Dec (GB!), seventh Regional record. **Double-crested Cormorant:** a few entire period at DH and upper NR. **Great Blue Heron:** CBC total 114; second max only 15 at Motor I NR 16 Jan (MH). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** as many as six in a large spruce tree in residential area of Buffalo (RBr), fourth straight year that overwintering birds have roosted here. **Tundra Swan:** six Strawberry I NR 21 Jan (RA, JT), the only wintering birds; arr 15 T Yates 19 Feb (WD). **Mute Swan:** DH 22 Jan (WD!), 6 Feb (WW!, MG), only report. **Snow Goose:** one white morph Salamanca 20, 26 Feb (TB!, BS!), only report. **Wood Duck:** max six CBCs; arr T Clarence 21 Feb (WW, MG). **Green-winged Teal:** last two Buffalo CBC 17 Dec. **N. Pintail:** CBC total 13; arr Stillson's Pd CATT 13 Feb (BS). **N. Shoveler:** last two Batavia 3 Dec (WL). **Am. Wigeon:** a few above Niagara Falls as expected; arr five Tiff Nature Preserve 20 Feb (WW, MG). **Canvasback:** max 1091 upper NR 22 Jan (DR, KC), *intro.* **Redhead:** max 291 NR Buffalo 19 Feb (WW, MD), a good winter count. **Ring-necked Duck:** 2-1 NR Buffalo after 1 Jan; arr DH 18

Feb (LH). **Greater Scaup:** *intro.* **Harlequin Duck:** NR Buffalo 3 Jan-27 Feb (mob). **Black Scoter:** DH 22 Jan (RS, FR, WD!), late. **Surf Scoter:** last NR Niagara Falls 1 Jan (MG). **White-winged Scoter:** NR Buffalo 5 Feb (MG, WW); five DH 18, 19 Feb (LH, FR); rare on L Ontario this winter, the only expected locality after Dec. **Hooded Merganser:** 530 Chautauqua L 7 Dec (RS), 46 Allegany SP 4 Dec (BS), good counts.

**Turkey Vulture:** arr INWR 20 Feb (PY!, BH), record early. **Bald Eagle:** ad Allegheny Res 12 Dec (BS); ad T Hamburg 2 Jan (MH); ad, imm lower NR after 5 Dec (mob); two ad Navy I NR 19 Feb (RM), the last Regional nesting site before INWR and which probably sees too much recreational use for the eagles to try again. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** good numbers, most at feeding stations. **Cooper's Hawk:** ditto. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** two T Gerry 21 Dec (RS!) may have been lingering; Salamanca 16 Jan (BS!); Bliss WYOM 30 Jan (DJ!&MJ); this species is probably regular in winter, especially south of Buffalo; arr East Aurora 22 Feb (LH). **Rough-legged Hawk:** good numbers CATT and CHAU, scarce on L Ontario plain. **Merlin:** Best Street Buffalo 20 Dec (BC!); a different bird returned to Univ. Buffalo for second year 21 Dec-25 Feb (ES!, DS!). **Peregrine Falcon:** two ad Buffalo through the period, DEC is trying to encourage these birds to nest by installing a box on a downtown building. **Gyr Falcon:** gray morph Buffalo Harbor intermittently 28 Dec-11 Feb (RV!, mob). **Wild Turkey:** *intro.* **Am. Coot:** 28 DH where regular, only wintering report; arr 26 Feb Tonawanda WMA (MG). **Killdeer:** arr Cheektowaga 18 Feb (RA). **Purple Sandpiper:** last two NF 5 Dec (RA), first time in several years that none overwintered. **Little Gull:** max only three lower NR on several dates. **Bonaparte's Gull:** only one or two left at NR Lewiston after early Jan. **California Gull:** *intro.* **Iceland Gull:** two DH 27 Feb, only report away from NR. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** at least five birds on the NR in Dec; one ad upper NR 6, 11 Feb (RA!, FR!). **Glaucous Gull:** DH 27 Feb (GS); Chautauqua L 28 Feb (RS), only reports away from NR. **Great Black-backed Gull:** continues to increase, *intro.* **Black-legged Kittiwake:** NR Buffalo 2 Jan (WD!, BP), only report.

**Snowy Owl:** at least six birds seen this winter. **Barred Owl:** one in suburban Lackawanna 10 Feb (MZ), very unusual location. **Long-eared Owl:** only two singles T Porter and Wilson-Tuscarora SP after 27 Dec (BP). **Short-eared Owl:** CBC total 22, scarce afterward. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** none for the first winter in several. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** *intro.* **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** two Dunkirk CBC 2 Jan.



**E. Phoebe:** T Gerry 21 Dec (RS!), first Regional winter record. **Horned Lark:** max 150 T Somerset 22 Jan and 300 on 26 Feb (WW), 145 T Freedom 26 Feb (BS). **Com. Raven:** CBC total four; five reports CATT and ALLE where resident. **Black-capped Chickadee:** *intro*. **Tufted Titmouse:** *intro*; up to 20 at a feeding station Belmont ALLE in Jan (BB fide VP), phenomenal count; will this species continue its success after this harsh winter? **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro*. **Carolina Wren:** only three reports ERIE. **Winter Wren:** T Ward 2, 23 Jan (EB), only report. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** fewer than usual. **E. Bluebird:** two reports in Dec, seven reports in Jan, four reports in Feb. **Gray Catbird:** Chestnut Ridge CBC 2 Jan; T Porter 8 Jan (WD), only reports. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*; T Somerset and 11 Golden Hill SP 4 Dec (WD!); T Machias 5 Dec (BS!), third CATT record, last season's CATT record was actually the second and not the first as reported; Fort Niagara SP 29 Jan (WD!); remnants of the fall incursion. **Cedar Waxwing:** 165 Fort Niagara SP 29 Jan (WD) and 110 T Hamburg 24 Feb (RA), good winter counts. **N. Shrike:** five reports this winter, below average.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** three L Erie SP 22 Jan (WD), only report. **Palm Warbler:** Jamestown CBC 19 Dec, unverified.

**N. Cardinal:** *intro*. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** *intro*. **Chipping Sparrow:** NF feeding station 7, 24, 27 Feb (DR!), rare in winter. **Savannah Sparrow:** with large flock of Am. Tree Sparrow T Porter 8 Jan (WD!), second consecutive winter for one on L Ontario plain. **Fox Sparrow:** arr T Great Valley 26-28 Feb (BS!), early. **Swamp Sparrow:** E Aurora 20 Jan-14 Feb (LH), only report. **White-crowned Sparrow:** CBC total seven, only records. **Lapland Longspur:** four Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; T Sheldon 16 Jan (WD,BP); T Machias 26 Feb (BS); only reports away from L Ontario plain; max 15+ T Somerset 12, 23, 30 Jan (BC, TH). **Snow Bunting:** max 700 T Somerset 12 Jan (BC) and 375 T Freedom 22 Jan (BS). **Red-winged Blackbird:** 20 Tift Nature Preserve, only wintering birds; arr 20 T Hamburg 19 Feb (RA). **E. Meadowlark:** six Jamestown CBC 27 Dec, only report. **Rusty Blackbird:** CBC total two; Grand I 13 Feb (MG,WW); arr E Aurora 21 Feb (LH); only reports. **Com. Grackle:** arr four T Hanover (RA), four T Great Valley (BS), and two T Sheridan (R&CB), all on 20 Feb. **Pine Grosbeak:** up to 24 T Porter 5-27 Dec (mob); 11 INWR 20,25 Feb (PY,BH); *intro*; good counts, especially considering these were the only reports. **Purple Finch:** CBC total 37, scarce. **Red Crossbill:** none. **White-winged Crossbill:** *intro*. **Com. Redpoll:** 2017 on the Oak Orchard CBC

27 Dec is a great count; widespread, an invasion year. **Hoary Redpoll:** Beaver Meadow WYOM 13 Jan (DJ!); T Sheldon 14,15 Jan (JS, GR!, DR!, MH!); T Elma 20 Jan (JD!); INWR 26 Feb (MG!); first records in twelve years. **Pine Siskin:** max 280 Scio CBC 18 Dec; up to five Warsaw WYOM through the winter (HK), only other report. **Evening Grosbeak:** several flocks of up to 50 s and e of Buffalo.

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## REGION 2 — GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

This was a winter to remember. It was cold! It was snowy! There were 14 inches of snow in December, 43 in January and 35 in February. It was one of the snowiest winters in years. The snow cover was nearly continuous from late December through the period. December's average temperature of 28.9°F was 0.7° below normal. Measurable precipitation for the month 58 percent of normal at 1.6 inches. January saw a below average temperature reading of 14.9°F, almost 9° below normal. Precipitation was 0.6 inches above normal at 2.68 inches. February's average temperature was 21.1°F, which was 3.5° below normal. The 1.63 inches of precipitation was 0.47 inches below normal.

The winter didn't seem to have a big effect on birding, and it was a good winter for some birds. This was particularly true of the species count. The continuous snow cover may have brought more birds to feeders. The only respite was a brief period during February. There was very little open water away from Lake Ontario, and ice along the lake's edge was substantial at times. The warm water flow from the Russell Station Power Plant in Greece provided a gathering spot for waterfowl and produced some interesting records. A bubbler on Irondequoit Bay also kept water open.

Coverage was good in December and January. January saw several birders pursuing big January lists, so the species total was quite good. The winter's toll began to be apparent by February. Birding activity seemed to wane a bit and reports were fewer.

Of interest were Red-throated Loon reports in January and February. Red-necked Grebe was found in the Region during February. Both species are highly unusual in winter. Once again an American Bittern was found at Mendon Ponds in January. While this seems to be a rare event, it wasn't until recently that observers began to hunt for this species in January. Great Blue Heron was scarce this season. Waterfowl in general were pretty good, but Oldsquaw and scoters were scarce near shore. The origin of an immature Trumpeter Swan at Russell Station is unknown. It was a first for the Region. On the plus side were scaup and goldeneye. A Barrow's Goldeneye in January was a highlight for the season.

Once again Virginia Rail and Sora were located in January. Both species seem to be found from year to year at Mendon Ponds. It was a poor year for wintering snipe and Killdeer, but a January Purple Sandpiper was a nice find. The bird of the winter was the second Regional record and the first WAYN record of *Ivory Gull*. Other gull observations included *Thayer's Gull*, Lesser-Black-backed Gull and a smattering of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls. Bonaparte's and Little Gull pretty much left with the first blast of winter.

Raptor reports were varied. Turkey Vulture wintered again. Accipiter reports were about average, particularly at feeding stations. There were a couple of reports without details of Red-shouldered Hawk, which is very scarce here in winter. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were down. A real highlight was the *Gyr Falcon* seen by Jerry Czech on 12 Feb in Webster and one seen by Jeanne Skelly in LIVI on Jan 1. A Barn Owl was a highlight. This species is a rare bird in the Region, and truly exceptional in winter. Snowy Owl was found regularly at some locations. Short-eared Owl numbers were off a bit. Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls appeared along Manitou Beach Road late in the season. Northern Shrike was very hard to find.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wintered again at Gerry Leubner's feeder in Irondequoit from 25 Dec to 31 Jan. It was fond of bananas, apples and oranges, not its normal winter fare. The passerine season was quite varied. Last winter's Tree Swallow invasion was not repeated, but birds were seen until 10 Dec. The few Winter Wren reports were normal. American Robin was down from recent years, but recent winters weren't like this one. Late lingering species included Gray Catbird, Pine Warbler, a first winter *Palm Warbler* for MONR, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow and a rare January record of Savannah Sparrow. The expected wintering

sparrows were down in number. White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco were scarce, and Song and Swamp Sparrows were hard to find. Snow Bunting were scarce until late in the season, and there were only a smattering of Lapland Longspur. Eastern Meadowlark went unreported. This also doesn't happen often. Winter pluses included reports of Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll and a *Brewer's Blackbird*. Except for redpolls, finch counts were mediocre at best. A few *Hoary Redpoll* were observed. Most reports were early in the season. Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were down considerably, and Purple Finch was very scarce.

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**Abbreviations:** BB - Braddock Bay; CL - Conesus Lake; DEP - Durand Eastman Park, Rochester; DRd - Doran Road, Lima; HB - Hamlin Beach; IB - Irondequoit Bay; MPd - Mendon Ponds; RS - Russell Station, Greece; SB - Sodus Bay; WL - Lake Ontario littoral west of Rochester (West Lakeshore).

**Winter records:** **Red-throated Loon:** max two WL 3 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Rochester 23 Jan, only report. **Red-necked Grebe:** max four RS 5-28 Feb, four HB 21 Feb. **Horned Grebe:** max 30 HB 4 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** last RS 18-19 Jan, down from last winter. **Am. Bittern:** one MPd 15 Jan (MD), near last winter's report. **Trumpeter Swan:** *intro*. **Tundra Swan:** max 11 SB 6 Jan. **Mute Swan:** max 16 BB 14 Dec. **Snow Goose:** max six Elba all Jan. **Brant:** one IB after 16 Dec. **Green-winged Teal:** last Greece 12-13 Feb. **Blue-winged Teal:** one BB 5 Dec (MD), very late. **N. Shoveler:** max four IB 2 Jan. **Gadwall:** max two IB 9 Jan. **Am. Wigeon:** max two Elba 24 Jan. **Redhead:** max 360 Greece 19 Feb, good winter. **Ring-necked Duck:** max eight IB 1 Jan. **Black**

**Scoter:** one SB 3 Jan, late. **Surf Scoter:** one Greece 5 Feb, only report. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** female Rigney's Bluff Greece 21-22 Jan (DT, DS, GC). **Ruddy Duck:** two CL 26 Dec, one CL 1-3 Jan, uncommon during winter season.

**Turkey Vulture:** max 15 Letchworth SP 2 Jan. **Bald Eagle:** one Letchworth SP 18 Dec, one IB 24 Dec, ad CL 2 Jan. **N. Goshawk:** max three Caledonia 8 Jan (MD), high for a winter with few reports. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one Norway Road 31 Dec (MD), very unusual in winter. **Merlin:** one Greece 14 Dec, uncommon in winter. **Virginia Rail:** one Greece 19 Dec, late (MD), one Brighton 17 Jan (MD). **Sora:** one MPd 6-9 Jan (RMc), uncommon in winter. **Com. Moorhen:** last DEP 19 Dec, Greece 19 Dec. **Killdeer:** last Greece 25 Dec, arr WL 5 Feb. **Purple Sandpiper:** one RS 17-18 Jan (GC). **Am. Woodcock:** last two DEP 19 Dec, late. **Little Gull:** max 12 DEP 17 Dec. **Thayer's Gull:** one IB 8 Jan (D&DT), carefully studied. **Iceland Gull:** max two IB 22 Feb. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** ad IB 5 Feb (R&SS). **Ivory Gull:** imm Sodus Bay 2-3 Jan (Don & Donna Traver, mob, ph).

**Barn Owl:** one Greece 19 Dec (R&CS), one Greece 1 Jan (R,S&CS), same bird. **Long-eared Owl:** arr Manitou 20 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** max 13 DRd 15 Jan (DH), not a good winter. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Bergen 25 Jan (D&DT), nests in this location; arr Manitou 19 Feb. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** *intro*, return from last year.

**Horned Lark:** max 1300 WL 5 Feb. **Tree Swallow:** last two Greece 10 Dec. **Am. Crow:** max 14,000 Rochester 22 Dec (CC), high. **Winter Wren:** three IB 27 Dec (MD), one WL, DEP 8 Jan, good winter total. **Hermit Thrush:** one Shore Acres 1 Jan, two HB 16 Feb, scarce. **Gray Catbird:** one DRd 9, 15 Jan, few reports this winter. **Am. Pipit:** last two BB 7 Dec. **Bohemian Waxwing:** two DEP 1 Jan (CC), three Penfield 14 Feb (TLC), scarce after good showing in fall.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** two HB 21-22 Feb, overwintered? **Pine Warbler:** one IB 27 Dec (MD), unusual in winter. **Palm Warbler:** one DRd 10 Jan (D&DT). **Com. Yellowthroat:** one Webster 8 Dec (CG), one BB 19 Dec (RS), late.

**Chipping Sparrow:** last Warsaw 16 Dec (PS). **Field Sparrow:** one DRd 31 Jan (D&DT), unusual. **Savannah Sparrow:** one DRd 9 Jan (MD), very late. **White-crowned Sparrow:** max eight Kent 29 Dec. **Lapland Longspur:** max 14 Hamlin 31 Jan. **Snow Bunting:** max 3000 Hamlin 31 Jan (BS), good total. **Rusty Blackbird:** one Greece 31 Dec; one DRd 3, 10

Jan, uncommon. **Brewer's Blackbird**: one Avon 1 Jan (D&HL). **Com. Grackle**: arr two Greece 19 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: arr four Greece 19 Feb. **Pine Grosbeak**: max 18 HB 4 Dec. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 40 Springwater 1-28 Feb (HH). **Com. Redpoll**: max 3000 29 Jan, good total. **Hoary Redpoll**: one HB 4 Dec (BM, RS); three HB 6 Dec (WL), one Irondequoit 4 Jan (GL).

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## REGION 3 — CAYUGA LAKE BASIN REGION

STEVE KELLING AND CHARLES SMITH

Memories of the winter of 1993-94 will long be with us. Characterized by record breaking snowfall and cold temperatures, it was a tough time for birds and birders alike. Overall, the winter season was the fifth coldest for New York State in the past 99 years. December began deceptively mild, with temperatures near or above normal for the Region until near Christmas, when an Alberta Clipper brought record breaking cold temperatures. Minimum temperatures dropped to -12 to -15°F across the Region on 27 Dec, following passage of the strong cold front, leaving us with the coldest December since 1989. December precipitation remained normal to slightly below normal for the Region. However, snowfall averaged 5 to 10 inches above normal, setting the stage for January. This was the second coldest January in 100 years of record keeping (the coldest was 1918) and the wettest in the last 15 years. For the Region, temperatures ranged from 8 to 11°F below normal 30-year averages. January snowfall ranged 10 to 20 inches above normal for the Region. Major snowfalls occurred on 4 and 5 Jan, when 12 to 16 inches covered the Region. February's temperatures were average to slightly below average for the Region. From 18 to 21 Feb, an unseasonably warm period brought a welcome, spring-like respite from the bitter winter weather, with 55 to 65°F temperatures ranging 15 to 25° above normal for Region 3. February precipitation also was average to slightly below average for the region. The month closed with another 5 to 9 inches of fresh snow on 26 Feb. By the end of February, total seasonal snowfall amounted to 50 to 75 inches across the Region, averaging 30 inches above expected values (weather information for the

Region summarized from monthly reports provided by the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University). The season's heavy snowfall contributed to a wetter than average winter, with precipitation totals ranging from 90 to 130% of normal values.

The results of the cold winter and heavy snows on resident species with increasing populations, like Wild Turkey, Carolina Wren, and Black-capped Chickadee, remain to be seen. Half-hardy species remained in the region through December. CBCs from Elmira, Ithaca, and at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge reported Carolina and Winter Wrens, a *House Wren*, and Field, Song, Swamp, and White-throated Sparrows. Hermit Thrush was reported from Ithaca and Geneva. Good numbers of Horned Lark and Snow Buntings and a scattering of Lapland Longspur were evident in fields, especially before the heavy snows. However, after the heavy snowstorm of early Jan many of these species were not seen, or were seen in dramatically reduced numbers. Also disappearing from the Region at this time were Belted Kingfisher and Great Blue Heron.

Wild Turkey was reported during the CBCs in record numbers. The Ithaca CBC observed 229, a number that is 4 times higher than their past high. As the season progressed and the snow cover increased, Wild Turkey flocked in larger groups, and were commonly seen in manure fields, or even coming to feeders.

There was a small gull invasion in the Town of Ulysses as first noted by Bill Evans in late Feb. The gulls seemed to be attracted to the unusual manure being spread on some fields in the area. Several immature Iceland Gull, and at least one immature Glaucous Gull, were seen in the larger flock of Herring, Ring-billed, and Great Black-backed Gulls.

Overwintering hawks were seen in good numbers throughout the region. Very late Red-shouldered Hawk were seen on the Ithaca CBC. Several observers commented on the high numbers of dark morph Rough-legged Hawk in the area. These birds generally nest in the western Arctic regions and usually are not seen in high numbers in the Region. Red-tailed Hawk was prevalent throughout the Region. Bernie Guirey reported that during his winter Raptor Survey between Cayuga and Seneca Lake there was a 30% increase in Red-tailed Hawk numbers between this year and last. Accipiters appeared to be stressed by the weather conditions in the Region. For example, Cooper's Hawk was commonly seen hunting near feeders, and in late Jan. an adult Northern Goshawk was observed catching a rat in broad daylight in front of

several startled shoppers in downtown Ithaca. Northern Harrier was present in decent numbers during the Region's CBCs, but Bernie Guirey reported a 90% decline in their numbers during his Raptor Survey conducted in late January and early February. This decline most likely is due to the snow cover prevalent after mid Jan. Several Bald Eagle overwintered in the Cayuga Lake Basin. Snowy Owl made its appearance in low and scattered numbers throughout the Region, especially north of Cayuga Lake, and in the Chemung Valley. Short-eared Owl populations continued to be low in comparison to the numbers reported 2 winters ago.

Numbers of wintering finches and other northern passerine invaders were mixed this year. This was an invasion year for Common Redpoll. They were present in high numbers throughout the entire winter period. A single *Hoary Redpoll* was observed. Evening Grosbeak was present, but only in widely scattered flocks. Pine Grosbeak was erratic with occasional small flocks briefly appearing for very short periods. Only a single White-winged Crossbill was reported. The few numbers of Crossbills reported may be due to the light conifer cone crop. Finally, there were several reports of Northern Shrike with several being fairly site specific.

Waterfowl numbers seemed to remain about average. On Cayuga Lake, American Black Duck numbers were lower this year than the previous 2 years during the Federation's Waterfowl Count, while Greater Scaup were seen in higher numbers. Large numbers of Canvasback and Redhead appeared in Seneca Lake in mid February, and remained through the period. Of special interest and concern was the occurrence of duck viral enteritis (DVE) on Keuka, Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. The disease spreads when waterfowl congregate in large numbers. The cold temperatures this winter, reduced open water in the Region which concentrated the population. It was estimated by the DEC that between 3000 and 4000 ducks, primarily Mallard and American Black Duck would die from DVE.

One of the most noteworthy events of the season was the grebe fallout that occurred throughout most of the Northeast and coastal mid-Atlantic States. Due to the unusually frigid weather, most of Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario froze. Many Red-necked Grebe overwinter in the centers of the Great Lakes. With the freeze up, grebes overwintering on the Great Lakes were forced to move. In Region 3



evidence for a fallout of Red-necked Grebe began on 10 Feb. Numbers of Red-necked Grebe on both Seneca and Cayuga Lakes increased rapidly after this date, and remained extremely high throughout the rest of the winter season. A maximum of 105 Red-necked Grebe were counted by Ned Brinkley and Bill Evans on 19 Feb between Myers Point in Lansing, and Aurora. Numbers of Horned Grebe were also high due to the Great Lakes freeze. Over 100 Horned Grebes were counted on Cayuga Lake in mid February, and their numbers continued high through the rest of the period. Finally, another grebe that most likely made its appearance in Region 3 due to the freeze up of the Great Lakes was an *Eared Grebe*.

**Contributors:** Cayuga Bird Club, Chemung Valley Audobon Society, Eaton Bird Club, Schuyler Co. Bird Club, Fred Bertram, Ned Brinkley, Jack Brubaker, Carl David, Bill Evans, Andy Farnsworth, John & Sue Gregoire, Bernice Hilfiker, Steve Kelling, Barbara LeGendre, Kevin McGowan, Bob Meade, Sara Morris, Tom Nix, David Russel, Scott Suttcliffe.

**Abbreviations:** CL - Cayuga Lake; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 20 Jan; CV - Chemung Valley; ECBC- Elmira CBC, 1 Jan; FLNF - Finger Lakes National Forest; KHF - Kestral Haven Farm, Burdette; ICBC - Ithaca CBC, 1 Jan; MCBC - Montezuma CBC, 1 Jan; SLFWC - Seneca Lake Federation Waterfowl Count, 22 Jan; SL - Seneca Lake; WG - Watkins Glen.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** max three CL, SL, overwintered. **Red-throated Loon:** one SL 4-14 Feb. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles overwintered CL, SL. **Horned Grebe:** max 100 CL 20 Feb, *intro*; five SLFWC, one Elmira 12 Feb. **Red-necked Grebe:** max 105 Meyers Pt 19 Feb, 36 WG 13 Feb, two Elmira 19 Feb, *intro*. **Eared Grebe:** single WG 15 Feb. **Tundra Swan:** four MCBC, 15 SL 28 Feb- 4 Mar. **Mute Swan:** single all winter WG. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** two SL SP 23 Dec. **Snow Goose:** single Aurora after 30 Jan. **Canada Goose:** max 29,162 FWC, 374 SLFWC. **Wood Duck:** overwintered WG. **Green-winged Teal:** single Mill Street Pd Elmira 1-29 Jan. **Am. Black Duck:** max 1598 SLFWC, 580 FWC, 43 Horseheads 12 Feb. **Mallard:** max 1614 FWC, 1159 SLFWC. **N. Pintail:** two SL 21 Dec-22 Jan, two Meyers Pt 9 Jan. **Gadwall:** max 28 FWC, 11 SLFWC. **Am. Wigeon:** one WG 17 Dec. **Canvasback:** max 1800 SL SP 10 Feb; overwintered CL, SL. **Redhead:** max 2500 SL SP 10 Feb; CL, SL all winter. **Ring-necked Duck:** two ICBC, two FWC. **Greater Scaup:** max 201 ICBC; overwintered CL. **Lesser Scaup:** 15 Sheldrake 18 Feb, two Union Springs 21 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** three Sheldrake 17 Feb.

**Com. Goldeneye:** three Elmira 13 Dec; overwintered CL, SL. **Bufflehead:** three Elmira 1-16 Jan; overwintered CL, SL. **Hooded Merganser:** all winter CL. **Com. Merganser:** 41 ECBC, more than usual; overwintered CL, SL. **Red-breasted Merganser:** small numbers overwintered CL.

**Bald Eagle:** max three MCBC, all winter CL. **N. Harrier:** max seven MCBC, no reports after mid Jan. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** overwintered Elmira, Ithaca; five between SL and CL Jan- Feb. **Cooper's Hawk:** overwintered Elmira, Ithaca, CV; 21 between SL and CL Jan-Feb. **N. Goshawk:** two ICBC, one KHF 16 Jan, one Ithaca 26 Jan, one Elmira 8 Feb, one Kings Ferry, 19 Feb, one Geneva 13 Feb, six between SL and CL Jan-Feb; *intro*. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** four ICBC, late. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 117 ICBC, 31 ECBC, good numbers overwintered. **Rough-legged Hawk:** max 26 ICBC, both light and dark morphs overwintered Ithaca, Elmira, MNWR, CV. **Am. Kestrel:** max 13 ICBC, overwintered CV. **Merlin:** one Elmira 9 Dec, one KHF 25 Feb [*?details-The Editor*]. **Great Blue Heron:** overwintered CV, six Cayuga 9 Jan. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** low numbers overwintered Ithaca, CV, MNWR. **Ruffed Grouse:** eight ICBC, four ECBC, one MCBC. **Wild Turkey:** max 229 ICBC, 138 ECBC, 150 Middlesex 10 Feb; *intro*. **Am. Coot:** overwintered CL, SL. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 424 ICBC. **Herring Gull:** max 621 MCBC. **Iceland Gull:** three imm Ulysses 22 Feb. **Glaucous Gull:** imm Ulysses 22 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 64 MCBC.

**E. Screech-Owl:** 18 ICBC, ten ECBC, four MNWR 1 Jan. **Great Horned Owl:** 10 ICBC, 7 ECBC, 2 MCBC. **Snowy Owl:** singles Elmira 10-13 Dec, Tyre mid Dec, Horseheads 1-14 Feb, Seneca Airport Feb. **Barred Owl:** one ICBC. **Long-eared Owl:** last CV 15 Jan. **Short-eared Owl:** five Scipioville all winter, three Fayette 16 Dec, two Seneca Airport mid Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** Ithaca, CV to 15 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** four ICBC. **N. Flicker:** max 14 ICBC, four ECBC, six MCBC, last 15 Jan. **Pileated Woodpecker:** max 22 ICBC, four MCBC.

**Horned Lark:** max 500 Kings Ferry 28 Dec, 110 MCBC, 52 ICBC, 100 Pine Valley 30 Jan. **Com. Raven:** overwintered KHF. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** many reports from Geneva and WG, few reports from Ithaca and CV. **Carolina Wren:** max 14 ECBC; overwintered CV, Ithaca. **House Wren:** one ICBC [*?details-The Editor*]. **Winter Wren:** singles Ithaca, CV, WG before 1 Jan. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** single KHF 30 Jan. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** scattered overwintered Ithaca, CV, WG. **E. Bluebird:**

max 25 Ithaca 1 Jan, scattered reports WG, Geneva all winter. **Hermit Thrush:** singles Geneva 19 Dec, Ithaca 9 Feb. **Am. Robin:** max 37 MCBC. **N. Mockingbird:** max 31 ECBC, 22 ICBC. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 69 ICBC, 17 MCBC, one ECBC, scarce all winter WG. **N. Shrike:** singles Freeville 23 Dec to mid Jan, Caroline after 22 Jan, Veteran 29 Dec, KHF 29 Jan.

**Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 122 ICBC, 94 MCBC, 69 ECBC. **Field Sparrow:** two ECBC, one ICBC. **Song Sparrow:** last Ithaca, Elmira, MNWR, Geneva 1 Jan. **Swamp Sparrow:** two ICBC, one MCBC, one ECBC. **White-throated Sparrow:** max 25 ICBC; one FLNF 12 Dec; single Elmira until 22 Jan. **Lapland Longspur:** six Canoga 9 Jan, one Pine Valley 29 Jan. **Snow Bunting:** max 523 MCBC, 300 Kings Ferry 9 Jan, 75 CV 28 Jan. **Red-winged Blackbird:** max 120 MCBC, scattered reports all season. **Rusty Blackbird:** two ICBC, two Canoga 9 Jan. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** one Canoga 9 Jan. **Pine Grosbeak:** two Ithaca mid Dec, eight Ithaca 14-21 Feb, one Southport 24 Jan. **Com. Redpoll:** max 200 FLNF 12 Dec, 75 ICBC, 73 MCBC, 125 Gorham entire winter, 160 Ovid 11 Feb, 96 Romulus 20 Feb. **Hoary Redpoll:** one Virgil 18 Jan [?details-The Editor]. **Pine Siskin:** scattered and scarce all winter CV, none elsewhere. **White-winged Crossbill:** one Aurora 9 Dec. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 200 ICBC, 60 Caroline all winter, 50 Mecklenburg all winter, scattered reports all winter CV, Naples.

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## REGION 4 — SUSQUEHANNA

MARY DOBINSKY

Once underway, this was a brutal, relentless winter. However, the first three weeks of December were seasonally mild. Temperatures hovered near or slightly above normal and the ground was generally free of snow. Enter the Winter Solstice 21 Dec! Immediately we flipped into nine weeks of continuous cold and snow. The combination of the two really set this winter apart. It was the fifth coldest winter of the century and the coldest since 1935-36, according to Harold Hollis, National Weather Service observer in Cooperstown. For the three month period, the

average daily temperature of 17.6°F was 5.4° below normal. January, the coldest month, had seven successive subzero nights, 15-21 Jan, including a -25.4°F reading at Oneonta on 20 Jan that broke the 1970 record of -22°F. Only five days of the month had temperatures above freezing. Total snowfall measured 87.8 inches, according to Hollis, making it the fourth snowiest winter of record. The season's major winter storm hit the Region 17 Jan with about a foot of snow. However, periodic falls of two to six inches started 21 Dec. By 9 Jan, snow cover over the fields averaged three feet. Snow banks along streets and highways towered to eight feet or more. Nothing changed until the "Big Thaw" 17 to 20 Feb, when temperatures finally rose into the 50s. The thaw ended too soon and more snow and cold rounded out the period.

Open water and mild December weather created ideal conditions for the four Christmas Bird Counts. Record or near record totals were tabulated for Canada Geese (1588), Am. Black Duck (308), Mallard (1856), Red-tailed Hawk (176) and Wild Turkey (719). Several summer residents lingered and winter finches had arrived. By early January, all that good stuff was crushed by the harshness of the winter of '94. Lakes and most creeks froze solid; rivers were mostly frozen. Heavy snows buried wild foods. Evergreen trees bore few cones. Trees retained few seeds. Even manure-spread fields were a casualty of the heavy snows. Apples, sumac, Multiflora Rose and Cranberry Viburnum were among the few fruits available. Most birds disappeared, hopefully escaping to warmer climates.

Horned Grebe, however, was one species in a crisis situation across the state as the birds searched for new feeding areas. In Region 4, twelve grebes were hopelessly grounded 19 and 20 Jan when they confused our blanket of snow with open water. Concerned citizens notified the DEC office in Stamford and wildlife personnel rescued the floundering grebes at 10 sites between northern OTSE and southern DELA. The birds were subsequently released into an open channel of the Susquehanna River at Oneonta. But did they survive? And how many birds perished after landing unnoticed in that vast area? Broome Naturalist Club reported similar grebe rescues in their area.

Great Black-backed Gull may also have been frozen out of usual feeding areas. One or two is our Region's normal winter count, but 89 were spotted in a stretch of open water in the Tioughnioga River CORT 21 Jan. (GWø). Another CORT report of 15 birds was listed for Feb (BT).

Earlier, eight had been reported on two CBCs. A few other water birds and Bald Eagle found the scant pockets of open water in the rivers.

Wild Turkey had more than feeding problems. Their habit of roosting in trees left them dangerously exposed to the extreme cold. Reports indicated many birds, especially young, were found frozen to death at roost sites. One has to marvel, however, at the resourceful survivors.

Hawks, seen in fair to good numbers all season, obviously made the necessary kills. Cooper's Hawks were indicted for killing at least four Northern Cardinal. Northern Shrike was not as successful hunter as the larger predators. The last of four was sighted 3 Jan.

My symbol of survival was a Northern Mockingbird, alone and far from the range of most of his species. He spent the entire winter in a thicket of wild rose bushes in a field on the edge of Oneonta and seemed to feed mostly in sumac bushes. He may not have been happy but he was still there 1 Mar. The barnyard was another refuge. At Burlington Flats OTSE, Nancy Weissflog reported about 30 Snow Bunting "swirling over our cornfields early in the season. As snow piled higher they moved close to the barns and would sit on snow banks and ground feed on cracked corn we put out for our domestic geese and ducks." Three Horned Larks joined them 11 and 12 Feb. Several half-hardy species overwintered, including an unprecedented number of Northern Cardinal; Marie Petuh reports, "I'm inundated; eight to ten every day, max 29 on 8 Feb, mostly females." Cedar Waxwing and sparrows were scarce. Even Dark-eyed Junco, normally a winter stalwart, "pretty much disappeared after the heavy snows" (MP). Except for Common Redpoll, few winter finches were reported after December. Most noticeable was the paucity of American Goldfinch at feeders all season. In assessing winter bird populations for other species, however, one must consider the limited access to birding areas most field observers had. Driving and parking were often dangerous. Hiking was impossible. Don Windsor chose skiing when he checked Whaupaucu State Forest CHEN 25 Dec. His reward? "I spished in about 300 Pine Siskin, an incredible sight. I felt like St. Francis." Winter rarities included Horned and Red-necked Grebe, Mute Swan, Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and *Hoary Redpoll*. Missed species included Ring-necked Duck, both scaup species and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Except for one flock of Red-winged Blackbird, there were no early spring arrivals.

**Observers:** Cutler & Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Mary Ann & Marty Cuff, Marilyn Davis (MDv), Delhi Bird Club (Christmas feeder count), Mary Dobinsky, Sadie Dorber, Doris Elliott, Tom Elliott, M. Gregory, John Gustafson, Jim Hoteling, Spencer & Catherine Hunt, Sara Kinch, Andy Mason, Robert Miller, Sue Moore, Robert Pantle, Marie Petuh, Steve Rice, Marnie Schrader, Joe Sedlacek, Tom & Norene Tasber, Ron & Irene Tomek, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, Nancy Weissflog, Don Windsor, Glenn Wolford, Irene Wright, Jane Young.

**Abbreviations:** BCBC - Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, 26 Dec; CanRes - Cannonsville Reservoir; CCBC - Chenango Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; DOCBC - Delaware-Otsego Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch site; TCBC - Tioga Christmas Bird Count, 31 Dec. WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** one TIOG 31 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** *intro*. **Red-necked Grebe:** two Susquehanna R Vestal 11-13 Feb (SK); one upriver at Westover 12-13 Feb (M&MC), first winter report since 1987. **Great Blue Heron:** 18 on four CBCs, good count. **Mute Swan:** one BCBC, first winter report in more than 15 years. **Snow Goose:** five FMHW early Dec (CV); CHEN mid Dec. **Canada Goose:** *intro*. **Wood Duck:** two on two CBCs. **Green-winged Teal:** four BCBC, first winter report in five years. **Am. Black Duck:** *intro*. **Mallard:** *intro*. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 59 TCBC 31 Dec. **Bufflehead:** two Susquehanna R OTSE 18 Jan, always scarce. **Hooded Merganser:** three BCBC 26 Dec and Otsego L 3 Jan; five Unadilla to Cooperstown 18 Jan, good count. **Com. Merganser:** 119 on three CBCs; mid winter max 45 Vestal 11 Feb. **Red-breasted Merganser:** four BCBC; one Otsego L 3 Jan; two others Jan, high.

**Osprey:** imm DOCBC (RM), fourth winter in 10 years. **Bald Eagle:** max five CanRes 22 Jan (DOAS field trip); singles TCBC; Susquehanna R TIOG, OTSE Jan; BROO Feb. **N. Harrier:** seven on three CBCs; one TIOG Jan; one BROO Feb, good count. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** six on three CBCs; three to five reports/month max two. **Cooper's Hawk:** *intro*. **N. Goshawk:** one CCBC; singles TIOG, two BROO sites Jan; chasing pigeons at feed mill Norwich Feb (DW). **Red-tailed Hawk:** *intro*. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 82 on three CBCs, best count in five years; five to six reports/month Jan, Feb, especially CORT. **Am. Kestrel:** singles several BROO, CHEN sites through period (JH). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** five on two CBCs; two CORT Feb (BT), average count. **Ruffed Grouse:** 32 on

four CBCs, good count. **Wild Turkey:** *intro.* **N. Bobwhite:** covey of 12 T Union BROO 9 Jan (DE); five same area 14 Feb; four Endwell 7 Feb (JS); TIOG feeder Feb, first in seven winters. **Am. Coot:** Susquehanna R Vestal 11 Feb (SK), often missed. **Com. Snipe:** CCBC, first in seven winters. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 200 WPR 1 Dec. **Herring Gull:** 104 on three CBCs. **Great Black-backed Gull:** *intro.*

**Mourning Dove:** 1,070 on four CBCs. **E. Screech-Owl:** four TCBC, only report. **Great Horned Owl:** 13 on three CBCs; five widespread Jan. **Snowy Owl:** CCBC 18 Dec: one w Owego Jan (MS), not seen every year. **Barred Owl:** singles DOCBC, CCBC; two TIOG 5 and 11 Dec (JS). **Belted Kingfisher:** nine on four CBCs; only two/month Jan, Feb. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** TIOG Feb (S&CH). **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 12 on three CBCs; at feeders BROO, CORT, TIOG through period, good counts. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** three DOCBC 18 Dec; one Binghamton feeder 23 Jan and 8 Feb (SM), first in 11 winters. **N. Flicker:** four on four CBCs; BROO feeder through period (JH); one other report. **Pileated Woodpecker:** record 22 on three CBCs.

**Horned Lark:** four CCBC; flocks Penelope CORT 20 Feb (JH) and 25 Feb (MDv); Greene Airport 25 Feb (MG); *intro.* **Am. Crow:** 3,990 on four CBCs, high count. **Com. Raven:** two Catatonk TIOG 12 Dec (JS), third winter record, second successive year. **Tufted Titmouse:** 223 on CBCs, second only to 263 in 1990. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** record 40 DOCBC; previous high 30 in 1972. **Brown Creeper:** 26 on four CBCs. **Carolina Wren:** 17 on two CBCs; good counts Jan, only one Feb. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** 26 on three CBCs; five sites Jan; only CHEN feb. **E. Bluebird:** max eight TCBC; several sightings Death Valley Road Binghamton Dec, Jan, max five (JH); four BROO 6 Feb (JS). **Am. Robin:** three reports/month Jan, Feb BROO, TIOG max 35. **N. Mockingbird:** *intro.* **Cedar Waxwing:** 22 BCBC; max 50 Binghamton 4 Jan, scarce. **N. Shrike:** *intro.*

**N. Cardinal:** 440 on four CBCs, record high; *intro.* **Rufous-sided Towhee:** Owego 8 Jan (C&JB); one other TIOG (SH). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** 211 on five CBCs; six to seven widespread reports a month max nine, several singles, scarce. **Chipping Sparrow:** only CCBC. **Song Sparrow:** seven on three CBCs; one Binghamton through period (SR); only two others. **White-throated Sparrow:** 19 on three CBCs; at several BROO, TIOG feeders max five, scarce. **Dark-eyed Junco:** *intro.* **Snow Bunting:** *intro.* **Red-winged Blackbird:** large flock TIOG 19 Feb (SH). **E. Meadowlark:**

only one TCBC. **Com. Grackle:** singles DOCBC and TIOG Dec/Jan. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** TIOG 13 Jan; BROO 23 Feb, only reports. **Pine Grosbeak:** 22 on three CBCs; flock Norwich 15 Dec (DW); 12 "feeding on ornamental crab fruits" Oneonta 19 Jan (MD). **Purple Finch:** 161 on four CBCs, mostly BROO; otherwise scarce, only three singles all period, so some CBC birds may be the next species. **House Finch:** 1881 on five CBCs; high numbers in selective areas. **Red Crossbill:** one CORT Dec (BT). **Com. Redpoll:** 607 on four CBCs, ties high of 1980; common Jan max 100 BROO 2 Jan, "feeding on birch catkins" (JY), fewer Feb. **Hoary Redpoll:** singles two BROO sites 17 Jan (JH) and 24 Feb (SD), no details. **Am. Goldfinch:** *intro.* **Evening Grosbeak:** 813 on five CBCs mostly CHEN; "a few occasionally midwinter but not common" (DW).

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## REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

DOROTHY W. CRUMB AND JIM THROCKMORTON

In an area of New York where snow and cold are not unusual, this winter season put all of us at the verge of finding warmer climes for our birdwatching efforts. Weather was *the* story of this winter season. The first three weeks of December, 1993, were relatively mild with little snow. The cold, snowy weather started with heavy snow storms on 21 Dec, 26 Dec and a record 8.6 inches on 30 Dec. A total of 34 inches of snow fell during the month, which was 8.1 inches above normal. Even with the mild start, December averaged 26.9°F, a full 1.4° below normal. January 1994 was the coldest January on record for Syracuse, averaging only 12.7°F, almost 10° below normal. The thirteen days with temperatures of zero or below was also a record. There were record lows set on 10 (-10°F), 16 (-21°F) and 27 Jan (-16°F). Record low daily highs were set or tied on 19 (0°F), 20 (8°F) and 26 Jan (8°F). On top of the cold, this was the fourth snowiest January on record, with record snowfalls of 18 inches on 4 Jan and 8.4 inches on 5 Jan. A total of 57 inches of snow fell during January, which was almost two and one-half feet above normal! This was the official total at the Syracuse airport. Snowbelt areas on the east and southeast ends of Lake Ontario easily doubled that total. In all, 26 of January's 31 days had at least a trace of



snowfall, and 18 of those days had measurable amounts of snow. As only one example of the impact of the cold and snow, The Automobile Club of Syracuse received nearly double the number of emergency road service calls it received in January of 1993. The 23,700 calls for the month were the most received by the club in its 93-year history. February continued the cold and snow, although not at record paces. February averaged 19.2°F, 4.8° below normal. A total of 30.8 inches of snow fell during the month, which is 5.6 inches more than normal.

The extended cold and snow cover had a massive effect on the birdlife. For the first time in at least 15 years, Lake Ontario was at least 80% frozen. All the area lakes and rivers were frozen solid or there were only small open areas near power stations or stream outlets. The period 5 Jan to 18 Feb set a record for consecutive days with a foot or more of snow on the ground. Unfortunately, bird populations did not have AAA to call to help in an emergency. Many, many species that are commonly seen in the Region during the winter season were not seen after the stormy weather started, or were seen only in very small numbers. Double-crested Cormorant, Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Horned Grebe and Red-necked Grebe were all observed before the storms but not at all or in small numbers through the rest of the period. The freezing of Lake Ontario took away the source of food and ultimately caused a massive flight south of these lake dwelling species. During the forced migration, many weakened birds landed on the small portions of open water. The seven Red-necked Grebe seen on Onondaga Lake on 12 Feb were the most seen since 1958, and a few appeared at two other sites on the same date. Three different rehabilitators around the Region received weakened Horned Grebe that were found in parking lots and on sidewalks. At least 18 Horned Grebe were reported from the fallout and we suspect hundreds more fell in remote locations and were unreported. Six Eastern Screech-Owl received by rehabilitator Cindy Page during January and February were in such bad condition that only three survived.

By the end of the period, the birds that remained in the Region, were struggling to find food. For example, the normally grain eating Mallard and Canada Goose were observed eating Gizzard Shad on 7 Feb in an open area of the Seneca River in Baldwinsville. Great Black-backed Gull was observed eating Mallard in the same area. The crow roost in Pompey attracted at least 1500 American Crow, the most observed in this season

since 1972. Presumably these were birds forced south from points north and attracted to the manure spreads and sumac bushes of the area. Wild Turkey was seen in many locations and in flocks of up to 66 as they concentrated where fields were swept relatively snow free by the wind. Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull and Great Black-backed Gull were compressed into the south end of Onondaga Lake, the small open areas in Oswego Harbor, the Seneca River near Baldwinsville, and refuse transfer stations near Syracuse and Jamesville.

Many other species were impacted by the weather. Wood Duck, Common Grackle and Purple Finch were not reported in the Region. Oldsquaw, which normally winter in the Oswego Harbor in large numbers, was absent from most reports. Merlin, recorded for the fourth consecutive winter in a Syracuse park, was not seen after the storms. There was only one report of Belted Kingfisher after the waters froze. Brown Creeper was reported only three times, American Robin only twice, no Song Sparrows were reported and House Finch was reported in much lower numbers than usual after the middle of January. Golden-crowned Kinglet was scarce after the storm and White-throated Sparrow was rare throughout the period. American Tree Sparrow continued its decline of recent years, while Carolina Wren was noted only on scattered reports after mid December. Northern Cardinal was observed more than usual as this species was forced to rely on feeders because of the weather.

There was a bright side to this seasons bird reports. Joe Brin found a *Eurasian Wigeon* in Baldwinsville on 29 Dec. The bird lingered until 3 Jan, giving many observers their first look at this species since 1989 and our first winter season record ever. John Hanyak located an Oregon-type Dark-eyed Junco on 27 Jan at a feeder in Elbridge. There were three different sightings of Bohemian Waxwing, marking the first winter since 1991 with records here. Pine Grosbeak was widely scattered, with records coming from 10 locations. Common Redpoll was, well, common across the Region and reported in large numbers for the first time since 1972. There were two sightings of *Hoary Redpoll* in Pompey.

The Syracuse CBC on 18 December was favored with open waters and mild temperatures which produced six new maximum records including 2652 Common Merganser and 13 Carolina Wren. Two species vied for the honor of taking home a toy stuffed owl symbolic of The Bird of the Count: a Common Yellowthroat was found for the first time

since 1987, while a Blue-winged Teal was only the second recorded on the 45 year modern records of the Syracuse count.

The annual New York State Waterfowl count in January was hindered by lack of open water and mist due to the bitter cold temperatures. All waterfowl except Redhead were reported in low numbers.

Derby Hill's new hawk watcher, Brian Sullivan, started counting on 15 Feb. On 16 Feb, he saw a dark immature *Gyr Falcon* (NYSARC) for only the third Derby Hill record and the first in the Region since 1985. Through 28 Feb a total of 117 raptors had migrated over Derby Hill. Welcome Brian!

Highlights of the season were *Eurasian Wigeon*, *Gyr Falcon* and *Hoary Redpoll*. Interesting also were multiple occurrences of Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak and the significant invasion of Common Redpoll. Overall, 25 hardy contributors noted 108 species, one subspecies and one hybrid (an apparent Mallard x American Wigeon), compared to 113 and 115 forms the previous two years. Bill Purcell summed up the season best when he reported: As February rolled on with no relief, it became very easy to find other things to do on days with minus windchills rather than see the same birds in ever dwindling numbers.

**Contributors:** Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Joseph Brin, Dorothy Crumb, Paul DeBenedictis, Robert L. Evans, Craig Fosdick, Bill Gruenbaum, John Hanyak, Elva Hawken, Gene Huggins, Mary Alice Koeneke, Gary Lee, Dave Longley, David Nash, Bill Purcell, Steve Rulison, Marge Rusk, Jeanne Ryan, Maureen Staloff, Brian Sullivan, Jim Throckmorton, Judy Thurber, Glen Wolford, Judy Wright, C. Kendall Zoller.

**Abbreviations:** DH - Derby Hill, OSWE; LSB - Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, CAYU; NoyS - Noyes Sanctuary, OSWE; ONON; OnonL - Onondaga Lake, ONON; OswH - Oswego Harbor, OSWE.

**Winter reports:** **Red-throated Loon:** *intro.* **Com. Loon:** *intro.* **Horned Grebe:** *intro.* only other report one OnonL 30 Jan - 12 Feb. **Red-necked Grebe:** *intro.* **Double-crested Cormorant:** *intro;* max ten OswH 19 Dec. **Snow Goose:** max seven Clay Marsh ONON 27 Jan. **Canada Goose:** *intro.* **Wood Duck:** none. **Mallard:** *intro.* **N. Pintail:** only four sightings, max four Webster Pd Syracuse 22 Jan. **Blue-winged Teal:** *intro.* **N. Shoveler:** last LSB 5 Dec. **Gadwall:** max 42 LSB 10 Dec. **Eurasian Wigeon:** *intro.* **Am. Wigeon:** max 42 LSB 10 Dec; arr four DH 20 Feb. **Canvasback:** max 11 OnonL 12 Feb. **Redhead:** *intro;* max 35 LSB 5 Dec. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 15 LSB 5 Dec. **Greater Scaup:** max 3500 (high) Scriba 12 Feb.

**Oldsquaw:** *intro*; max 27 OswH 6 Feb. **White-winged Scoter:** only three sightings of singles OswH and Fulton 5 Dec through 23 Jan. **Hooded Merganser:** max 16 LSB 10 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** *intro*. max 1000 OnonL 7 Feb. **Red-breasted Merganser:** max 43 OswH 23 Jan.

**Bald Eagle:** max four Phoenix after mid Jan. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 17 reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** 13 reports. **N. Goshawk:** only four reports away from DH. **Rough-legged Hawk:** only eight reports away from DH, max 6 Mexico 29 Jan. **Am. Kestrel:** scarce during winter. **Merlin:** *intro*. **Gyr Falcon:** *intro*. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** scarce through winter. **Ruffed Grouse:** scarce through winter. **Wild Turkey:** *intro*. **Am. Coot:** max 12 LSB 5-10 Dec, only report. **Killdeer:** none wintered; arr sw ONON 19 Feb. **Com. Snipe:** three reports, singles only. **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro*; max 1800 Oswego 6 Feb. **Herring Gull:** *intro*; max 600 OswH 29 Jan. **Iceland Gull:** five reports, single birds. **Glaucous Gull:** two Jamesville 25 Jan, two OswH 29-30 Jan, one OnonL 30 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** *intro*.

**E. Screech-Owl:** *intro*; only five reports. **Snowy Owl:** two Syracuse airport through mid Jan; one OnonL 8 Dec; one Scriba 1 Jan. **Barred Owl:** only reports two Beaver L ONON through period, one Baldwinsville 4 Feb, one NoyS 6 Feb. **Short-eared Owl:** max three Verona Beach 12-28 Dec. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** singles T Marcellus 2 Feb, DH 20 Feb, only reports. **Belted Kingfisher:** *intro*. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one at feeder Wampsville after 13 Dec. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** one s Oriskany Falls 21 Feb minor expansion s of its known range. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** three early winter sightings.

**Horned Lark:** max 250 Fabius 27 Feb, highest max since 1980. **Gray Jay:** one at feeder Forestport February, one T Remsen early Jan. **Am. Crow:** *intro*. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** one-four widespread at feeders. **Brown Creeper:** *intro*. **Carolina Wren:** *intro*. **Winter Wren:** only two reports in Dec. **Marsh Wren:** one Clay Marsh ONON 18 Dec. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** *intro*; max 12 Whiskey Hollow T Van Buren 23 Dec, only three reports after 4 Jan storm. **E. Bluebird:** one Baldwinsville 19 Feb, one Camillus 25 Jan, six Jamesville 6 Feb, only winter reports. **Hermit Thrush:** last Syracuse 18 Dec. **Am. Robin:** *intro*. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 60 Dewitt 18 Dec. **N. Shrike:** only three reports.

**Common Yellowthroat:** *intro*.

**Northern Cardinal:** *intro*; max 75 Tully 21 Jan, high. **Rufous-sided**

**Towhee:** only two reports at feeders, Chittenango and Elbridge. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** *intro*; max 38 Marcellus 2 Jan. **Field Sparrow:** only report two Wampsville 24 Jan. **Song Sparrow:** *intro*. **White-throated Sparrow:** *intro*. **Lapland Longspur:** max four Elbridge 5 Feb. **Snow Bunting:** max 250 Fabius 13 Jan. **Rusty Blackbird:** only report one Marcellus 2 Jan. **Pine Grosbeak:** *intro*; max 15 Scriba 14 Dec, scattered reports from 10 locations. **Purple Finch:** *intro*. **House Finch:** *intro*. max 227 Syracuse CBC 18 Dec. **Com. Redpoll:** *intro*; max 450 Hannibal 19 Dec. **Hoary Redpoll:** one in a European Larch (*Larix decidua*) plantation n Pompey Twp 11 Jan (DWC); one at feeder Pompey after 19 Jan (mob, NYSARC, ph). **Pine Siskin:** five reports of single birds, max three Oswego 18 Dec. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 65 Cazenovia through period, other counts low. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 31 Erieville 5 Feb, few other scattered reports.

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## REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

KENNETH L. CROWELL

Most of December was on the mild side. Although the statistics indicate about normal temperatures and precipitation, it was the coldest December since 1989. The last week gave a prelude to January, with temperatures exceeding -30°F on 27 Dec. In January winter got down to business. With mean temperatures 11-15° below normal, it was the coldest January since 1918. Over 20 days had highs below freezing and lows below zero. Snowfall was well above normal. A thaw and rain the last week of the month resulted in local flooding. Cold and snow continued for the first half of February but temperatures reached the low 60° range on 20 and 21 Feb. The month ended with 10-44 inches of snow on the ground.

The extreme weather left little open water for water birds and poor hunting for raptors and birders alike. Numbers of wintering ducks and gulls were down at Moses-Saunders Dam. Herring Gull dropped from a max of 570 between Massena and Cornwall one 5 Dec to none on 22 Jan. By 18 Feb, two Herring Gull and nine Ring-billed Gull, apparently migrants, had arrived according to Bruce Di Labio. Great Black-backed

Gull remained abundant. Snow cover seemed to result in many reports of raptors at feeders and in the villages. In Potsdam on 15 Jan the Cerwonkas observed a Cooper's Hawk kill and eat an European Starling while a Sharp-shinned Hawk perched in shrubbery nearby and a second Cooper's circled overhead. Sightings of Bald Eagle were up along the St. Lawrence River. Barred Owl were seen hunting by day in the Clarkson University woods, Potsdam, and frequently at feeders in Parishville and Canton, a sign of poor hunting. Snowy Owl was found regularly in small numbers.

The four regional CBCs produced good numbers of species and individuals with 16 new highs for Massena-Cornwall CBC. Aside from some half-hardies, six Canvasback on the Thousand Islands CBC was the sole species reported only on CBCs.

Many of the trends for winter visitors noted by Gerry Smith in the Fall report continued. Common Raven and Boreal Chickadee were reported in the St. Lawrence River Valley. There were incursions of Bohemian Waxwing and Common Redpoll. At Stony Point on 2 Dec, Gene McGory observed a Bohemian Waxwing regurgitate a red berry and feed it to a Cedar Waxwing which had made no sign of begging. The first Pine Grosbeak in years were widespread through the Region and period. Very few Pine Siskin and only small flocks of Evening Grosbeak were reported.

Species at the limit of their range included Red-bellied Woodpecker at four JEFF sites, a pair of Carolina Wren at Kelsey Creek (R&MB), where they have been since Oct, 1991; and two in Canton until 11 Jan, and one in a shed, T Henderson! There also was a Tufted Titmouse at Kelsey Creek. Horned Lark wintered along the east end of Lake Ontario and there were scattered sightings of Lapland Longspur with them in JEFF.

The 84 species reported included 18 waterfowl, 9 hawks, 7 gulls, 5 owls, all four corvids, and 9 fringillids. Among rarities were *Thayer's Gull*, *Gyr Falcon*, and *Hoary Redpoll*.

**Contributors:** Marilyn Badger, Richard & Marion Brouse, Sheila & Bob Cerwonka, Lee B. Chamberlaine, John Confer, Ken Crowell, Paul DeBenedictis, Bruce M. Di Labio, Dean DiTommaso, Theresa Emery, John Green, Bettye Hughes, Paul Kelly, Steve & Debbie Litwhiler, Gene McGory, Peter O'Shea, David Prosser, Michael & Sue Sheard, Shirley Van Benschoten, Bob & June Walker, Brian Watson, Mary Beth Wood.

**Abbreviations:** CV - Cape Vincent; EDBP - El Dorado Beach Preserve, T Adams; KC - Kelsey Creek, Watertown; MCCBC - Massena-Cornwall CBC, 18 Dec; MSD - Moses-Saunders Dam/Hawkins Pt, T Massena; PtPen - Pt Peninsula, T Lyme; TICBC - Thousand Islands CBC, 2 Jan; SLR - St. Lawrence River.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** max three Black R Bay, three Henderson Harbor 8 Dec; one T Lyme 17 Dec, late; ad Basic plumage Reynold's Pt, SLR 18, 20 Feb may be an early migrant. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Henderson 8 Dec. **Horned Grebe:** 14 PtPen 6 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** max 41 T Lyme 16 Dec (LBC), "unprecedented numbers". **Am. Black Duck:** max 71 SLR Massena 31 Dec. **Com. Goldeneye:** max 530 SLR Massena 5 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** male MSD 31 Dec, female 9 Jan, both present to 20 Feb. **Bufflehead:** 57 Lyme, 60 Henderson 8 Dec. **Hooded Merganser:** six Louisville 16 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** max 180 MSD 11 Dec, very scarce.

**Osprey:** Louisville Louis 9 Jan, very late. **Bald Eagle:** max 27 (12 ad, 15 imm) TICBC; 14 SLR 19 Feb; a few feeding on deer inland in StLA. **N. Harrier:** scarce. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** *intro*; cited in nine of 19 reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** 11+ birds in eight of 17 reports. **N. Goshawk:** five reports. **Rough-legged Hawk:** numbers down along end of lake in T Lyme, Brownville, and Cape Vincent; max 30 20 Feb. **Golden Eagle:** first year imm PtPen 6 Dec, second recent winter record. **Am. Kestrel:** scattered reports JEFF only, max 20 CV and Pt Pen 28 Dec. **Gyr Falcon:** one dark, one light bird Cape Vincent 14 Feb; dark bird EDBP 25 Feb. **Gray Partridge:** numbers up in JEFF, max 43 CV 29 Jan. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** four reports, including one in village of Potsdam. **Am. Woodcock:** arr 30 Martinburg 27 Feb, on road in dark. **Bonaparte's Gull:** three Millen's Bay, T CV 12 Dec. **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro*. **Herring Gull:** *intro*. **Thayer's Gull:** ad MSD 5, 31 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** max six MSD 26 Jan; four Basic II, two Basic I on 29 Jan. **Glaucous Gull:** max 12 MSD 9 and 22 Jan. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 1722 SLR 31 Dec.

**Mourning Dove:** up to 50 at feeders JEFF. **E. Screech-Owl:** one CV site as usual. **Snowy Owl:** max four CV-PtPen 28 Dec. **Barred Owl:** *intro*. **Short-eared Owl:** max 13 CV 27 Dec; max only four PtPen. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Louisville 10 Feb, one calling Pierrepont 21 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher:** MCCBC and TICBC only. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** *intro*. **N. Flicker:** one Louisville 12 Dec.

**Horned Lark:** small flocks JEFF in Dec, fewer in Jan, increasing to 100s in Feb; max 83 CV 29 Dec, 96 Brownville 7 Feb. **Gray Jay:** singles

Hopkinton 17 Feb, Massena 4 Dec, unusual; max six T Fine 2 Dec. **Com. Raven:** singles Massena 3 Dec, 5 Feb, Hammond 23 Jan, very unusual, indicate expanding winter range; max 12 Fine 22 Feb. **Boreal Chickadee:** one Ogdensburg 24 Dec. **Tufted Titmouse:** *intro*. **Carolina Wren:** *intro*. **Bohemian Waxwing:** *intro*; reported throughout Region and period; max 200 Watertown 2 Dec, 300 Henderson 16 Feb, eating road salt and grit. **N. Shrike:** 13 reports of fewer birds from 10 of 17 observers.

**N. Cardinal:** max 23 at feeder Watertown 11 Feb; reports from Tug Hill noteworthy. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** numbers down. **Song Sparrow:** two singles plus TICBC. **Swamp Sparrow:** one CV 28 Dec (JC). **White-throated Sparrow:** only three singles. **White-crowned Sparrow:** imm Henderson 1-28 Dec, another 4 Jan-28 Feb. **Lapland Longspur:** max 15 CV 6 Feb. **Com. Grackle:** TICBC and MCBC only. **Snow Bunting:** 100s/day JEFF. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** reported widely JEFF, increasing in Feb. **Pine Grosbeak:** max 40 Massena 9 Dec. **Purple Finch:** two Pillar Pt 12 Feb only JEFF report; several from MB, max six Louisville 10 Jan and 28 Feb. **House Finch:** numbers down. **Red Crossbill:** only one Louisville 28 Dec. **Com. Redpoll:** max 4-500 T Oswegatchie 6 Dec; max 4000 one flock PtPen 9 Dec. **Hoary Redpoll:** singles Ogdensburg 11 Jan, 22 Feb; Henderson 4-7 Jan; PtPen 20 Feb.

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## REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

"I survived the Winter of '93-'94" might be the motto of the few hardy birds and birders who braved the season in the North Country. Although the early Christmas Bird Counters enjoyed bare ground, snow depths on the later, higher-elevation counts ranged up to 20 inches. Seven of the last eight days of Dec were below 0°F at Inlet, with Ray Brook at -31°F on 27 Dec and Piseco -22°F on 29 Dec. January was quite wintry, with above average snowfall (third snowiest on record at 56+ inches) and much below average temperatures (third coldest, with an



average 9°F, or less). There were at least 21 days below zero, and Lake Champlain froze over completely, reportedly for the first time since 1981. Inlet was -40°F on 16 Jan, while a National Weather Service station at Crown Point saw the mercury drop to a nippy -48°F on 27 Jan, and only six days saw clear skies. February wasn't much better, with 16 to 34 inches of snowfall depending upon elevation, and again just six clear days. Coldest day was 10 Feb, when thermometers read -26°F at Saranac Lake and -30°F at Inlet. By way of summary, Inlet observer Gary Lee reported 41 days below zero between late Dec and the end of Feb, with 37 snowfalls during the entire season.

The perennial winter complaint of "Where are all the birds?" was widely heard, yet observers managed to find 96 species, an apparent exotic, two color morphs, and a subspecies, which either ties or breaks the old record of 96 species set a decade ago in the winter of 1983-84, depending upon how one chooses to count. Certainly, the lack of wild foods meant there were far fewer birds in the woods and much less variety at feeders. But the rare northern visitors and flocks of redpolls of various persuasion more than made up for the paucity of the usual winter finches.

Arctic and subarctic birds continued to arrive, verifying fall suspicions of a Canadian invasion. A first year drake *Harlequin Duck* was observed on Plattsburgh Bay, CLIN, 19 Dec by Bill Krueger and Pat Taber, remaining until 24 Dec and seen by many observers. Although there are six records from the Vermont side of Lake Champlain between 1929-85, this is a first county and second Regional record, the other also a first year male in 1986. Rich MacDonald, Mike Peterson, and Bob Wei spotted a hen *Barrow's Goldeneye* swimming and diving just off the tip of Willsboro Point, ESSE, on 15 Jan. Although only up to three Rough-legged Hawk per day could be found by all the Christmas Counters, Hollis White tallied a dozen while driving across the little birded expanses of northern FRAN during early Jan.

There were four reports of *Gyr Falcon*. A gray Gyr Falcon between Whallonsburg and Whallon's Bay, ESSE, on the 18 Dec Ferrisburg CBC was still present the next day. A white Gyr Falcon was seen in an orchard northwest of Peru, CLIN, 23 and 31 Dec by Holland Fitts, and possibly the same white morph was seen two months later by Elizabeth Fltts some three miles away near Schuyler Falls 26 Feb. Another gray Gyr Falcon was reported by many observers including Bob Budliger, Krueger, and Taber

from open water areas with various waterfowl at the mouth of the Saranac, the Cumberland Head ferry landing, and even across the lake at the Grand Isle landing from 3 Jan through the period; this might be the same Plattsburgh Gyrfalcon spotted 3 Nov, and could conceivably be a returning bird from the same locale last year. Anne LaBastille spotted another striking white Gyrfalcon flying over fields near Wadhams, ESSE, 20 Jan.

There were five Snowy Owl scattered across four counties from late Dec to Feb, a good showing here. A *Great Gray Owl* paid daytime visits to the Runyan feeder in Keene Valley 9-10 Feb, to watch the Red Squirrels. There were reports of just two Northern Shrike to add to a single Nov bird.

Bohemian Waxwing persisted in spite of dwindling food supplies, with a max of 110 near Westport 18 Dec and 45 still near Wadhams 26 Dec, remaining there through Feb. The Shermans located an impressive 50 Lapland Longspur, seemingly a Regional record, mixed in a large flock of Horned Lark near Peru for about two weeks in mid February. Although they must have experienced much the same food shortage as did Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak remained widespread, with a dozen or more sightings from all four counties. The most dependable spot was among ornamental crabapples on the SUNY Plattsburgh campus, where they remained through Feb, in spite of a Peregrine Falcon who moved into the neighborhood in mid January.

The redpoll invasion that began in late Oct continued to intensify as the winter wore on. The Saranac Lake CBC on 2 Jan set a new count record with 1,594 Common Redpoll, plus a carefully identified and photographed *Hoary Redpoll*, as well as two other possibles. Most feeding stations, especially those offering niger seed, hosted greedy flocks of 100-150 Common Redpoll. A total of 236 were banded near Elizabethtown between 29 Dec-8 Feb. Five of at least six *Hoary Redpoll* at the Peterson feeder near Elizabethtown were banded and photographed: the first on 29 Dec, another 16 Jan, and three on 8 Feb. In fact, on 8 Feb there were at least five *Hoary Redpoll* at this feeder simultaneously (the 3 newly banded, the one banded 16 Jan, and at least one unbanded bird), almost certainly a NYS maximum. There were other reliable reports of Hoary Redpoll from Hogansburg, Plattsburgh, and Wadhams. Between 1-3 *Hoary Redpoll* were seen daily at the Peterson feeder through the end of Feb and picked out by a number of

visiting birders. A much larger and darker redpoll seen by the editor at the same feeder on 17 Jan appeared to be a "Greater" Redpoll (*C. f. rostrata*). A leucisitic redpoll at a Tupper Lake feeder (Delehanty) on 11 Dec had a pure white head, hot pink partial cap, white nape, partially white breast, and black eyes.

In spite of the northern flavor to the winter, there were interesting half-hardy species to lend spice to the season. The two Carolina Wren that arrived at the Hagar feeder in Saranac Lake on 25 Oct survived until a mid Jan freeze. A Pine Warbler visited a Saranac Inn seed and suet feeder 10-17 Dec, according to Bob Hagar, for a first FRAN and second Regional wintering record. The subadult, male *Indigo Bunting* which arrived at the Lee feeder in Inlet 25 Oct lingered to 6 Dec. Given the conditions, it's a wonder we didn't lose any half-hardy birders.

**Contributors:** Robert Budliger, Dwight Cargill, Dick Clements, Charcie Delehanty, Evelyn Dunning, Don Fasking, Elizabeth & Holland Fitts, Dot French, Robert Hagar, Terry Hall, Russ Koch, Bill Krueger, Anne LaBastille, Selma Isil, Ignatius Lacombe, Charlotte Ladwig, Gary Lee, Richard MacDonald, Ted Mack, Steve Mahoney, Mark Manske, Larry Master, John & Susan Peterson, Craig Provost, Jean Redmond, John Runyan, Ann & Linwood Sherman, Dean Spaulding, Diana Stahl, Pat Taber, John & Pat Thaxton, Don & Donna Traver, Robert Wei.

**Abbreviations:** ECBC - Elizabethtown CBC, 26 Dec; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC, 18 Dec; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 19 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC, 2 Jan; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count.

**Winter reports:** **Red-necked Grebe:** max three PCBC; grounded Camp Kilcare, Raquette L, HAMI, 22 Jan, died at rehabilitator's. **Great Blue Heron:** three on CBCs continued trend of lingering. **Snow Goose:** last 13 Point au Roche 2 Jan. **Canvasback:** three PCBC slightly encouraging. **Redhead:** two FWC ditto. **Harlequin Duck:** intro. **Com. Goldeneye:** one SLCBC a surprise. **Barrow's Goldeneye:** intro. **Red-breasted Merganser:** eight FWC were a 20-year record.

**Bald Eagle:** imm Tupper L 9-10 Dec (CD); ad literally eating crow on ice of L. Flower 15 Dec (RH); count week PCBC; Port Douglas 22 Dec (Amtrak crew); one-two Westport 3-15 Jan; ad Schuyler & Valcour Islands 12 Jan; 2 ad Essex harbor & Willsboro Pt 15 Jan (JP); ad feeding on deer carcass Big Tupper L week of 20 Feb (RK); chased by Raven Seventh L 25 Feb (GL). **N. Harrier:** four on CBCs, a good showing. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** two at feeders. **Cooper's Hawk:** feeding on

Mourning Doves at Wadhams feeder 22 Dec to Feb; female banded FRAN barn Jan; two other reports from CLIN. **N. Goshawk**: 1 FCBC; Peru feeder 13 Feb. **Red-tailed Hawk**: 23 on four CBCs. **Rough-legged Hawk**: *intro*. **Am. Kestrel**: max three PCBC. **Peregrine Falcon**: *intro*.; feeding on Rock Doves SUNY Plattsburgh 14 Jan-5 Feb. **Gyr Falcon**: *intro*. **Gray Partridge**: 15 Ingraham 9 Dec (CH). **Wild Turkey**: 12 Wadhams thru (JR); at deer feeding station HAMI all winter (GL); three PCBC; tom at deer feeding station Mt Home Road HAMI 29 Dec; six Hoffmeister HAMI 5 Feb (D&DT), good numbers. **Iceland Gull**: mouth Saranac R 31 Dec; Plattsburgh ferry 16 Jan (BK, CM), second and third CLIN records.

**Snowy Owl**: *intro*.; Jay late Dec (LS); Reynolds Road CLIN 26 Jan (BK); 1-87 Peru 3 Feb (DF); Seventh L HAMI most of Feb (GL). **Great Gray Owl**: *intro*. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: Elizabethtown 19 Dec, only report. **Belted Kingfisher**: one PCBC; one SLCBC were hardy birds. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: male Chubb R Swamp 20 Feb (DC), only report. **N. Flicker**: Spaulding barn near Wadhams, not the same bird that fed on sunflower seeds at feeder there for past three winters.

**Horned Lark**: 20 ECBC; 50 Hogansburg 6 Jan and regular between there and Malone all winter (HW); max 200 Peru for two weeks mid Feb (A&LS). **Gray Jay**: two Saranac Inn feeder all winter, only report. **Com. Raven**: max 17 ECBC. **Boreal Chickadee**: L Placid Dec (CL); max four SLCBC; Moose R Recreation Area 13 Dec (GL). **Tufted Titmouse**: max nine French feeder, Elizabethtown Dec, an exceptional number here; two others on FCBC and PCBC. **Carolina Wren**: *intro*. **Am. Robin**: max seven ECBC, scarce. **N. Mockingbird**: one PCBC count week only report. **Bohemian Waxwing**: *intro*. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 20 FCBC; 11 PCBC, only reports. **N. Shrike**: singles ECBC and SLCBC, only reports.

**Pine Warbler**: *intro*.

**N. Cardinal**: max 24 PCBC and total of 67 on five CBCs, an improvement over last winter. **Indigo Bunting**: *intro*. **Fox Sparrow**: French Road feeder, Hoffmeister, HAMI, 2930 Dec (D&DT), quite uncommon here in winter. **White-throated Sparrow**: max five ECBC, an exceptional showing. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 31 PCBC and found on four Counts, but scarce after Dec. **Lapland Longspur**: *intro*; Ingraham (CH); Little Chazy R CLIN 11 Jan (BK, CM). **Snow Bunting**: max 137 SLCBC, with scattered reports of smaller numbers, including a few at feeders. **Red-winged Blackbird**: max six PCBC; feeder reports from Keene Valley, Raquette L, and SLCBC, but one at a Peru feeder 18 Feb

may have been an early arrival. **Com Grackle**: max five SLCBC most unexpected. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: two wintered Raquette L feeder, where extremely rare in winter. **Pine Grosbeak**: *intro*; max 17 PCBC. **Purple Finch**: max 41 PCBC; four FCBC, only reports. **House Finch**: max 137 PCBC; recorded on five CBCs. **Red Crossbill**: three PCBC, only report. **White-winged Crossbill**: 17 Sugar Bush FRAN 12 Jan (DF), only report. **Com. Redpoll**: *intro*. **Hoary Redpoll**: *intro*. **Pine Siskin**: max 10 SLCBC; grand total of just 26 reported, none after 2 Jan. **Am. Goldfinch**: max 64 PCBC; total of just 91 reported, none after 2 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak**: max 289 ECBC; increasingly scarce after 2 Jan, with 25 Tupper L 3 Feb considered exceptional numbers.

**Exotic**: A **Ruddy Shelduck** sheltering in a Chazy CLIN barn 16 Jan was taken in for rehabilitation 19 Jan (DS); a duck of the same Eurasian species was seen at Monty Bay CLIN 20 Dec 1987 and Point au Roche CLIN 18 Dec 1988. There is an earlier record from Hardwick L in the "Northeast Kingdom" of Vermont 30 Aug-11 Sep 1974 (which the editor watched attack an Osprey in flight). More recently, one was shot by a hunter on Lac Saint-Louis in nearby southern Quebec 7 Oct 1989. Are these all escape artists?

**Addendum**: Two neck-collared (Greater) **Snow Goose** at Point au Roche CLIN 28 Oct 1993 had been banded and collared 10 Aug 1993 southwest Bylot Island, District of Franklin, Northwest Territories; both were females, hatched in 1991 or earlier.

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## REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

JANE E. GRAVES

The Region endured one of the harshest winters on record. December was warmer than normal until the first below freezing high occurred on 24 Dec. From that date through the end of the month below normal temperatures were experienced. The mean temperature was 27.4°F, 0.9° above normal. Sunshine averaged 45%, 7% more than normal. January averaged 12.7°F, 7.9° below normal, making it the third coldest on record.

It was also somewhat sunnier than normal, with 51% possible, 5% greater than usual. The "January thaw" occurred on 28 and 29 Jan, with a high of 48°F, 71° higher than the record setting low of -23°F on 27t Jan. February averaged 18.2°F, 4.3° below normal, with 65% sunshine, 13% greater than normal. With so much sunshine, it is hard to know where all that snow came from, but come it did. December produced only 6.1 inches, 9 inches below the normal 15.1 inches. January, however, was the second snowiest on record, with 42 inches, 25.7 inches greater than normal.. Snow fell on 25 days, with significant amounts on 4, 7, and 17 Jan. And none of it melted! Snowfall in February totaled 20.2 inches, 6.1 inches more than normal. The Dec-Feb winter was the ninth coldest on record and the coldest since 1969-70.

The weather had a major impact on both birds and birders. The earlier CBCs had both still and running water open. The later ones had still water frozen, but the rivers were open. By the end of the first week in January, virtually all bodies of water were completely frozen and stayed that way. The Troy CBC totaled 70 species and 32,157 individuals, the highest numbers for both ever recorded on that count. This was partly due to the concentration of waterfowl in the still open sections of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. By the time of the waterfowl count on 16 Jan, low numbers were reported, a total of 1118 individuals of eight species.

Gulls were generally concentrated on the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers between the Colonie Landfill and Cohoes. Around 2500 Ring-bills, 1600-1800 Herrings and 700-800 Greater Black-backs were to be found there during January and February. On 19 Feb John Askildsen and Andrew Guthrie counted eighteen Iceland and twelve Glaucous gulls roosting on the ice among a flock of 3000 gulls on the Hudson River at Green Island.

Due to the deep snow cover, numbers of wintering raptors were low. The exception was Bald Eagle. An estimated ten individuals were present throughout the season at the Mohawk River between Crescent and Cohoes, Stillwater, and Conklinville. Apparently the limited amount of open water concentrated these birds into confined areas.

Despite the brutal weather, half-hardy species were reported throughout the period. Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, and Swamp Sparrows were all present, many individuals coming to feeders.

Paul Connor reported that from 19 Jan to 11 Feb, two Carolina Wren sheltered beneath a rolled-up awning above his back door in Schodack Center RENS. The birds were observed flying from this shelter to a feeder 15' away.

Numbers of Black-Capped Chickadee were high in early December. At Jenny Lake SARA Robert Yunick banded 86 individuals in December, with 44 of those banded on 4 Dec. CBCs also had high totals, with 727 on the Chatham CBC and 498 on the Albany County CBC. Numbers dropped significantly in early January.

Except for Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak, winter finches made a poor showing. There were no reports of Red Crossbill and only one of White-winged Crossbill. Rarities for the period included Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Bohemian Waxwing and *Hoary Redpoll*.

**Contributors:** Ken Able; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Bill Graham; Jane Graves; Bill Lee; Alan A. Mapes (AAM); Andy Mason (AM); Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Frank Murphy; Barb Putnam; Jim Sotis; Robert Yunick.

**Abbreviations:** ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 19 Dec; BCWMA - Black Creek Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, ALBA; BCRes - Basic Creek Res, ALBA; BLCBC - Bolton Landing CBC, 17 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 18 Dec; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward, WASH; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 18 Dec; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 27 Dec; L7/NL - Lock 7 and Niskayuna Landfill, SCHE; SaraL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 18 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, ALBA; SSCBC - Saratoga Springs CBC, 19 Dec; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 26 Dec; TCBC - Troy CBC, 2 Jan; TomRes - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VFNP - Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, SARA.

**Winter records:** **Red-throated Loon:** one SaraL 4 Dec (D. Beeler). **Com. Loon:** six SaraL 4-5 Dec (BP); two BLCBC. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Stillwater 19 Feb (WE, NM) only report. **Horned Grebe:** one Cohoes 17 Jan (BL); one grounded Schenectady 19 Jan (BEN). **Red-necked Grebe:** one Lock 5 Hudson R SARA 19 Feb (WE); one Hudson R FtE 26 Feb (BP). **Great Cormorant:** ad Hudson R at Nutten Hook COLU 18 Dec (R. Guthrie, K. Schneider); also seen GREE 25 Dec (R Guthrie) second year in a row. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one Ft Miller 4 Dec (BEN) only report.

**Great Blue Heron:** fifteen reports including one Schenectady 18 Jan (BEN), one Albany 30 Jan (BEN), one Ghent 2-12 Feb (ADBD). **Mute Swan:** twenty Stockport Station COLU 18 Dec (ChCBC); eleven Four Mile Pt GREE 2 Jan (RB); 22 Catskill 28 Feb (PC), standing on ice. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** three SaraL 2 Dec (W Corbett), found while censusing Canada geese. **Snow Goose:** max 1002 SaraL 4-7 Dec (BP). **Brant:** SaraL 7 Dec (BEN). **Canada Goose:** max 12,160 TCBC. **Wood Duck:** five ScCBC; one FiveR 1 Jan (BEN). **Green-winged Teal:** five ACCBC. **N Pintail:** three ACCBC; two TCBC; arr Hudson R at Mechanicville 22 Feb (D. Beeler). **Gadwall:** five ACCBC; three TCBC; three SI 16 Jan (BL). **Redhead:** five TomRes 15 Dec (BEN); three Stillwater 6 Feb (BEN). **Ring-necked Duck:** ten ACCBC; three Stillwater 19 Feb (WE, NM); female L7/NL 21 Jan-15 Feb (BL, RY). **Oldsquaw:** two SaraL 22 Dec (BEN). **Black Scoter:** female Cohoes throughout period (RB, WE, BL, NM). **White-winged Scoter:** one HFCBC; one Vischer Ferry Power Station SCHE 6-21 Feb (BY); one L7NNL 19 Feb (WE). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** imm male Cohoes 5 and 18 Feb (WE, NM); ad male Stillwater 18-19 Feb (WE, NM). **Hooded Merganser:** six reports, including 25 BLCBC. **Com. Merganser:** max 93 TCBC. **Red-breasted Merganser:** one Cohoes Falls ALBA 20 Feb (BEN).

**Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** nine FtE 11-18 Dec (BP); one Guilderland 4 Jan (WE, NM); last FtE 7 Jan (BP). **N. Goshawk:** imm Kingsbury 1 Jan (WE, NM); one Conklinville Dam SARA 17 Jan (BEN); ad w Saratoga Springs 29 Jan (BY); one Greenwich 3 Feb (BEN); one Canajoharie 5 Feb (AM); one Sabbath Day Pt WARR 14-15 Feb (LM); one Chatham 23-26 Feb (ADBC) feeding on woodpeckers and mourning doves in a backyard. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one ACCBC; one SSCBC; imm Cape Cod Village WARR 15 Jan (LM). **Rough-legged Hawk:** 22 Canajoharie 5 Feb (AM); max twelve FtE 19 Feb (WE, NM). **Golden Eagle:** one JGCBC. **Merlin:** three reports, one Athens 2 Jan (BEN); one Westerlo ALBA 8 Jan (BEN); one imm Kingsbury 6 Feb (BL, BP, mob). **Peregrine Falcon:** four reports, one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie); one Wyantskill RENS 24 Jan (BEN); one Corning Preserve ALBA 16 Feb (BEN); one Glens Falls 15-16 Feb (BP). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** two reports. **Wild Turkey:** many reports of large flocks throughout period. **Am. Coot:** one Mohawk R at Niskayuna RR Station SCHE 18 Dec (BY); one Green I ALBA 18 Feb (WE, NM). **Killdeer:** one ChCBC; one flying upriver, calling Stillwater 18 Feb (WE, NM), early. **Iceland Gull:** two



imm Waterford 6 Dec (WE, NM); imm SRCBC; ad Cohoes 17 Jan (BL); ad Crescent 1 Feb (RB); 18 Green I ALBA 19 Feb (J. Askildsen, A. Guthrie); imm Fort Miller 19 Feb (WE, NM); imm Crescent 22 Feb (RB). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad Cohoes 4 Dec (WE, NM); one ACCBC. **Glaucous Gull**: one TCBC; two Green I RENS 24 Jan-Feb (BEN); three Cohoes 1 Feb (BEN); twelve Green I ALBA 19 Feb (J. Askildsen, A. Guthrie); imm Crescent 22 Feb (RB).

**Snowy Owl**: one ScCBC count week. **Barred Owl**: one ACCBC. **Long-eared Owl**: one FiveR 9 Feb (AAM). **Short-eared Owl**: max five FtE 8-18 Dec; four Cocksackie Flats GREE 28 Dec (R. Guthrie); two FtE 20 Jan (BP). **Belted Kingfisher**: four ChCBC; one Loudonville 11 Jan (FM). **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: eight reports, max 16 ChCBC; one Cohoes 17 Feb (PC). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one imm Schodack Center 28 Dec (PC); one Clermont 16 Jan (ADBC).

**Fish Crow**: two Waterford (WE, NM) three L7/NL 18 Dec (RY); one Cohoes Falls 5 Feb (WE, NM); one Cohoes 17-18 Feb (RB); one Delmar 24 Feb (RB). **Com. Raven**: six reports, max six+ Nassau Landfill RENS 13 Jan (PC). **Black-capped Chickadee**: *intro*. **Winter Wren**: one ACBC. **Carolina Wren**: fifteen reports, including several at feeders during Jan-Feb; *intro*. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: four reports. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one ChCBC. **E. Bluebird**: good numbers, max 99 ChCBC; 13 Guilderland 20 Jan (BEN). **Hermit Thrush**: one Watervliet 8 Dec (BEN); one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie); one Clermont 16 Jan (ADBC). **Am. Robin**: arr Menands ALBA 19 Feb (FM). **Gray Catbird**: two ChCBC. **Brown Thrasher**: one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie). **Cedar Waxwing**: 66 ChCBC; 455 ACBC; 90 Brookview 25 Dec (PC); 80 Mariaville 25 Jan (BEN). **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Whitehall 2 Dec (WE, NM); two Saratoga Spa SP 21 Feb (G. Hanson). **N. Shrike**: one Guilderland 7 Jan (WE, NM), only report.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** one Chatham 30 Dec-25 Feb (ADBC).

**Chipping Sparrow**: one at feeder Nassau 16 Feb (BEN); one at feeder Saratoga Springs 20-26 Feb (JG). **Field Sparrow**: four ACBC; one at feeder FiveR 1-29 Jan (RB); one Ghent 15 Jan-16 Feb (ADBC). **Savannah Sparrow**: one Delmar at feeder 18 Jan (S. Madison). **Fox Sparrow**: one Kinderhook 3-29 Jan, 9-24 Feb (ADBC). **Swamp Sparrow**: two COLU 18 Dec (ChCCC); one Burgoyne Road SARA 15 Jan (C. Fostick). **White-throated Sparrow**: one Rotterdam 17 Jan (T. Colburn). **White-crowned Sparrow**: one Austerlitz 2-7 Dec (ADBC). **Lapland Longspur**: one Stuyvesant 18 Dec (ChCBC); four FtE 27 Jan through Feb (BP). **Snow**

**Bunting:** one BCRes 2 Jan (RB); 70-80 Ann Lee Pd ALBA 14 Jan through Feb (RB); many reports at feeders Jan-Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird:** arr Ghent 21 Feb (ACBC). **Rusty Blackbird:** one Chatham 18 Dec (ChCBC); one Ghent 17-31 Jan (ADBC). **Com. Grackle:** three at feeder Hannacroix 26 Feb (BC). **Brown-headed Cowbird:** arr Ravena 11 Feb (W. Raup). **Pine Grosbeak:** reported nine localities, 3 Dec through period; max 21 FiveR (RB). **Purple Finch:** few reports, two ACCBC. **White-winged Crossbill:** seven JGCBC, only report. **Com. Redpoll:** many reports throughout period; max 579 on HFCBC. **Hoary Redpoll:** one Northumberland 19 Dec (BG, BP); one Ravena 18 Dec (W. Raup). **Pine Siskin:** five reports, low numbers. **Am. Goldfinch:** noted absence during period. **Evening Grosbeak:** present in moderate numbers, max 189 JGCBC; 75-100 Locust Grove Road SARA throughout period (JG).

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## REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

JOHN P. ASKILDSEN

The winter of 1993-94 will long be remembered as one as the most brutal in many years. Extreme cold and heavy precipitation in the form of snow, rain and ice crippled the Region from late December through the end of the period. The lowest temperature reported in the Region was -29°F from Millbrook, northern DUTC on 21 Jan.

The birds did not have it any better. Many strange occurrences were reported, some of which could be perceived as acts of desperation. An American Kestrel and a Red-shouldered Hawk were seen raiding a suet feeders and gulping down hunks of fat at different feeding locations. At some feeders, there were so many accipiters that the invited species didn't have a chance! An Ovenbird was seen at another feeder scratching about in hopes of finding something to eat in mid December. Record numbers of reports were received of birds being found in all parts of houses, from the attic to basement. Many birds not prepared for the severe weather conditions were found dead. Of note in this category were Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks and Barn Owl. Half-hardy species such as Northern Mockingbird, Gray Catbird, Carolina Wren

and Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers plummeted as compared to other winters.

There was a bright side to this past winter. It came in yellow, red and pink. Finally! Winter Finches! Yes, the long awaited winter finch movement finally happened. The Region's birders were treated to excellent numbers of Common Redpoll, which was the most abundant of the winter finch species reported. Flocks were reported as high as 300 were reported. Other species discussed in this report are Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Hoary Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak. In contrast, this winter's Bohemian Waxwing invasion never made it to Region 9. Purple Finch was noticeably absent from the southern part of the Region, and generally restricted to feeders in the northern section.

With all the water up north frozen this winter (not to mention down here), Bald Eagle was reported in record numbers throughout the Region. Any deer carcass found on a reservoir was guaranteed to be surrounded by Bald Eagle within a day. A total of 86 Bald Eagle was tallied on the one day DEC count along with a lone Golden Eagle. Perhaps another 30 to 40 birds patrolled the Hudson River in Region 9, which is a conservative estimate from the data received. Add to that the minimum 17 found feeding on a deer carcass on a northern Westchester Reservoir in mid January. Then add the voluminous reports from other reservoirs, lakes and rivers, the total count would appear to be about 225.

A massive grebe fallout consisting primarily of Horned and Red-necked Grebes was reported from upstate Regions in mid February, when they were picked up dead and dying on roads and in parking lots. Only one such incident was reported in Region 9. Four to five Red-necked Grebe were found on a roadway in western Sull on 11 Feb. All except one were found dead, with clumps of ice on their feet. The live bird was saved and released into open water, where it recuperated for several days.

Despite the harsh weather and hazardous roads conditions, the list of rarities is rather impressive. A *Western Grebe* was reported by two observers at the Edith G. Read Sanctuary in Rye on 3 Dec. Unfortunately, it could not be relocated the following day despite intensive searching. A lone Northern Gannet (TWB) was seen on Long Island Sound off Rye on 4 Dec (TWB). The previously reported Tufted Duck (TWB) retreated from Playland Lake to the waters of Long Island Sound in Rye when the lake

completely froze over on 9 Jan (TWB). A female Barrow's Goldeneye (TWB) put in a brief appearance at the Edith G. Read Sanctuary on 14 Feb (TWB). Four Lesser Black-backed Gull (TWB, JPA, AG, S&BL, FB, EDT) were reported from the Region. A number of *Black Vulture* were seen in the Region this winter. A *Boreal Chickadee* (Hunter Pollack, SG, mob) spent almost the entire winter from 22 Dec at a feeder in Patterson, PUTN, to the delight of hundreds of visiting birders. A Dickcissel visited a Rye feeder from 1-13 Jan (TWB). A *Hoary Redpoll* was reported from a PUTN Feeder in February. Fortunately, the feeder watcher was a birder and immediately noticed the difference between it and Common Redpoll and took notes (SBI, NYSARC). In addition to those rarities are the following unexpected species were reported: Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Common Moorhen, Spotted Sandpiper, Sora, Barn Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Lapland Longspur, House Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Northern Oriole, Chipping Sparrow and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

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**Abbreviations:** BDA - Black Dirt region, w ORAN; BWCBC - s WEST portion of Bronx-Westchester CBC, 26 Dec; EGR - Edith G. Read Sanctuary; EOCBC - Eastern Orange County CBC, 18 Dec; LMACBC - Lake Mohonk-Ashokan Res CBC ULST, 18 Dec; MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PCBC - Putnam County CBC, 1 Jan; PLL - Playland Lake, Rye; PP - Piermont Pier, Rock; RCBC - Rockland County CBC, 19 Dec.

**Winter reports:** **Com. Loon:** one-three Rye all winter. **Red-throated Loon:** one-four Rye all winter. **Pied-billed Grebe:** singles on WEST coast in Dec; nine PCBC. **Horned Grebe:** 27 EGR 6 Feb. **Red-necked Grebe:** two EGR all winter. **W. Grebe:** intro (EDT, JS, no details). **N. Gannet:** intro. **Great Cormorant:** 20 Hudson R WEST 15 Jan; up to eight Kensico Res WEST all winter. **Double-crested Cormorant:** three BWCBC; two EOCBC. **Great Blue Heron:** 36 EGR 26 Dec. **Black-crowned Night-**

**Heron:** one DUTC 18 Dec. **Snow Goose:** 3000 Wallkill ORAN 14-16 Dec. **Brant:** 25 on Hudson R. late Jan (THM), rare inland in winter. **Green-winged Teal:** 30 Woodlands L WEST through mid Dec (LS); 34 BWCBC. **Blue-winged Teal:** EOCBC. **N. Shoveler:** 16 BWCBC; 50 RCBC. **Eurasian Wigeon:** Rock L SP 2 Dec (EDT, JS). **Redhead:** 19 EGR 9 Jan. **Tufted Duck:** *intro*. **Greater Scaup:** 6000 PLL and EGR all season. 20,000 counted by DEC in Long Island Sound mid Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** 350+ PLL in Dec. **Surf Scoter:** one EGR 29 Jan (AG). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** *intro*. **Ruddy Duck:** 700 total s WEST late Dec.

**Black Vulture:** one LMACBC; one Haverstraw area Rock throughout the season, four there 29 Jan (EDT); one Mt Peter ORAN 6 Feb (EDT); one in a roost with about 60 Turkey Vulture in Chappaqua late Feb (Anne Swaim). **Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** five at roost BDA. **Rough-legged Hawk:** less numerous this winter, max five BDA, three PP 16 Jan; singles widespread. **Golden Eagle:** two Pine Plains DUTC all winter; three N Sull all winter (JW). **Am. Kestrel:** 18 EOCBC. **Merlin:** one s WEST 15 Jan (TWB); two Rock all winter (FB, CW). **Virginia Rail:** three MC 26 Dec. **Sora:** one BWCBC. **Com. Moorhen:** one feeding on cracked corn at pond edge ULST late Dec-early Jan (*fide* EDT). **Spotted Sandpiper:** PLL 5-17 Dec. **Ruddy Turnstone:** 43 EGR 18 Feb. **Purple Sandpiper:** 40 EGR 4 Dec. **Dunlin:** 55 EGR 3 Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one DUTC 18 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** 53 BWCBC. **Iceland Gull:** two imm L. Gleneida PUTN (S&BL), unusual; one Highland ULST early Jan (*fide* JPA). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** two Rye; one Kensico Res WEST; one Haverstraw Bay Rock; one Croton Bay on The Hudson 18 Dec, probably the Rock bird.

**Barn Owl:** one found dead Rye 27 Jan (TWB). **Barred Owl:** one Scarsdale BWCBC (John Moyle). **Long-eared Owl:** one MC through end of Jan; two DUTC 18 Feb, one n DUTC 5 Dec, one s ORAN 11 Jan. **Short-eared Owl:** one EGR 6 Jan; one PP 12-13 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one LMACBC. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** one at feeder Sull daily.

**E. Phoebe:** one DUTC 18 Dec, one WEST 26 Dec. **Am. Crow:** Rock roost disbanded; White Plains roost of 2000 not previously reported here. **Com. Raven:** four PCBC, first count record. **Boreal Chickadee:** *intro*. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** numbers down sharply. **Carolina Wren:** population less than half of last winter's. **Marsh Wren:** one n DUTC 31 Dec. **House Wren:** one found dead in an ULST house late Feb. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** numbers down. **N. Mockingbird:** numbers down. **Am. Pipit:** one PCBC, one WEST 5 Jan. **Cedar Waxwing:** 600 in one flock, n WEST late Jan.

**Com. Yellowthroat:** one Rye BWCBC. **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** numbers way down. **Ovenbird:** one Rock feeder 29-30 Dec (Judy Pollack). **Dickcissel:** *intro*. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Rye 23 Dec (LB, JPA). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one Rye BWCBC. **White-crowned Sparrow:** two BDA 14 Jan (EDT). **Lapland Longspur:** one BDA 14 Jan (EDT); one Rye 22 Jan (TWB). **Snow Bunting:** 50 n WEST 16 Jan (THM), uncommon. **Rusty Blackbird:** one PCBC. **N. Oriole:** Baltimore type EOCBC. **Pine Grosbeak:** 18 s ULST 10-25 Dec. **White-winged Crossbill:** one at feeder PUTN Jan (mob). **Hoary Redpoll:** *intro*. **Pine Siskin:** max 16 MC feeder, almost completely absent elsewhere. **Am. Goldfinch:** good numbers at feeders. **Evening Grosbeak:** scattered small flocks throughout n section of Region.

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## REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

We can sum up the weather this season by saying, "We ain't used to this much snow." The weather pattern this year has finally come close to the long term average. There was more snow and more freezing cold than we have seen for some time. The average temperature was considerably colder than normal in each month and the precipitation total was much higher than normal. The winter gave us 14 snow falls, all producing road related problems. The ponds were frozen, the bays were frozen, and to make matters worse for birders, Jones Beach parking lots were unplowed and inaccessible for much of February. At its peak there was an accumulation of close to two feet of snow on the ground from a succession of storms. While not unusual for upstate New York, we have not seen this amount of snow or cold here in at least the last ten years. The combination of frozen normally open bodies of water, inaccessible roads, parking lots filled with ice and snow, and rainy January weekends made birding very different this winter.

The season had two separate birding periods, one ending with the Christmas Bird Count period and the other occupying the rest of the winter. The first was mild like recent winters and the second like the

"good old days." Early reports included several lingering insect eaters, in addition to our usual half-hardy species. No less than nine species of warbler were found on various Christmas Bird Counts, but only Yellow-rumped Warbler was found thereafter. Other late birds recorded on counts were two Eastern Phoebe and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Later reports had significantly fewer small birds and the usual early migrants. Because of the snow cover, birders spent more time at the beaches and less in the woods, where it was more difficult to walk. This probably biased the content of the reports this period.

There were significant numbers of Red-necked Grebe this winter, both in Long Island Sound and off the South Shore. This influx occurred in mid February, with a max of nine at Shinnecock on 20 Feb and eleven in Jones Inlet on 27 Feb. This was followed by huge numbers in March, to be covered in the next report.

The fall also was the first in some years when we saw a significant movement of migrating northern finches. However, only Common Redpoll remained in numbers. For the most part, they were erratic and moved around quite a bit. In the Jones Beach West End area, as many as 150 stayed for the first part of the winter. They were almost always seen in association with the resident House Finch flocks. Other Common Redpoll reports came from Van Cortlandt Park, Staten Island and all parts of Long Island, east to Montauk. Some remained through the period.

The Southern Nassau Christmas Count held on 2 Jan 1994 consisted of nine parties plus a boat in the inland waterways. Five of those parties reported a trio of *American White Pelican* flying along the barrier beach. These birds successively passed each group along the barrier beach. Each group then believed they had seen "the bird of the day." This event marked the first winter record of American White Pelican, which is very rare at any time of year. It was unusual that large groups of isolated observers got to see them. The *Spotted Redshank* in Brooklyn was seen until the end of January and duly noted on the Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count of 18 Dec.

We note the passing of our good friend Richard Edes Harrison on 5 Jan 1994. Rickie's wit and skills made any field trip he was on a birding experience. We will miss him.

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**Abbreviations:** BCBC – Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; CCBC – Captree Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; CB – Cedar Beach; CP – Central Park, Manhattan; JBch – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; LI – Long Island; MCBC – Montauk Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec. MPt – Montauk Point; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; NNCBC – Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, 26 Dec; PtL – Point Lookout; QCBC – Queens Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; RMSB – Robert Moses State Park; ShIn – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island; SNCBC – Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, 2 Jan.

**Winter reports:** **Red-necked Grebe:** *intro.* **Am. White Pelican:** *intro.* **Great Egret:** one SNCBC. **Glossy Ibis:** singles BCBC, QCBC, late. **Tundra Swan:** six Mattituck 16 Jan. **Wood Duck:** several on CBCs. **Blue-winged Teal:** one SNCBC. **Eurasian Wigeon:** ten birds Brooklyn to Montauk. **Com. Eider:** 300 MPt 18 Dec, 200 mid Jan, a few at period's end (NYRBA). **King Eider:** one MPt 23–24 Jan (NYRBA). **Harlequin Duck:** several along the South Shore max nine PtL, one Great Kills Harbor 18 Dec (HF, George Bouquio). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** one Stony Brook Harbor Jan 3 (Paul Steineck), one Tiana Beach, Shinnecock 20–26 Feb (NYRBA).

**Osprey:** one CCBC (NYRBA). **Bald Eagle:** two Gardiner's I 18 Dec, two CCBC (found 7 Dec), one JBch 16 Jan (NYRBA). **Rough-legged Hawk:** 10–12 scattered across the entire South Shore, more than usual. **Wild Turkey:** 62 MCBC. **Virginia Rail:** one BCBC, four MCBC, one SNCBC. **Semipalmated Plover:** one QCBC. **Am. Oystercatcher:** seven BCBC, others present. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** one QCBC, late. **Spotted Redshank:** *intro.* **Spotted Sandpiper:** one SNCBC, very late. **W. Sandpiper:** four SNCBC. **Purple Sandpiper:** low numbers again this year. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** two Massapequa Preserve 27 Feb (NYRBA). **Little Gull:** one ShIn 27 Feb (MB). **Com. Black-headed Gull:** one BCBC, one PtL after 15 Jan (NYRBA). **Iceland Gull:** 6–8 scattered throughout the Region (NYRBA). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one NNCBC, one Islip 10 Jan, one Islip 11 Jan (JF), one Sunken Meadow SP 14 Feb (NYRBA), one JBch 20 Feb (SS, mob). **Glaucous Gull:** two MCBC. **Forster's Tern:** one MPt 17 Dec (NYRBA). **Com. Murre:** one Ditch Plains 17 Dec (AB), one Jones Inlet 5–6 Feb (SW, mob).



**Thick-billed Murre:** one MPt 17 Dec (Hugh McGuinness). **Razorbill:** 36 MCBC; two BCBC; four SNCBC; three MPt 24 Jan, 19–21 Feb, one Shinnecock 20–21 Feb (NYRBA).

**White-winged Dove:** one CB 19 Dec (Bob Kurtz). **Snowy Owl:** Dec reports from Gardiner's I, Breezy Pt, Democrat Pt and JBWE; Jan reports from JBWE; Feb reports from JBWE, JBWR and one on a building in lower Manhattan 24 Feb (NYRBA). **Long-eared Owl:** a few Jan reports only. **Short-eared Owl:** scarce, one JBWE 30 Jan, one JBWR 19 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one MCBC, one CB 24 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** eight SNCBC.

**E. Phoebe:** *intro.* **Tree Swallow:** three MCBC, two BCBC. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** *intro.* **Veery:** one JBch 13 Dec (JF, JQ), late. **Am. Pipit:** one CB 4 Jan, two RMSP 4–5 Jan (JF, JQ).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** singles BCBC, QCBC. **N. Parula:** one Montauk dump 17 Dec (AB). **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** *intro.* **Pine Warbler:** two MCBC, one SNCBC, two RMSP 12 Dec (JQ) and 5 Jan (JF). **Palm Warbler:** three RMSP 17 Dec (JQ). **Black-and-white Warbler:** one CCBC. **Com. Yellowthroat:** one MCBC. **Wilson's Warbler:** male BCBC (NYRBA). **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one SNCBC.

**Dickcissel:** one JBWE 12 Dec–9 Jan (MOB). **Fox Sparrow:** mostly Dec reports. **Dark-eyed Junco:** one Oregon type in a flock JBWE 12 Dec (SS, AW). **Lapland Longspur:** few reports, two SNCBC, one Long Beach 30 Jan (NYRBA). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** 90 QCBC 18 Dec. **N. Oriole:** one NNCBC 26 Dec; one *Bullock's* race in Tanglewood 2 Jan (mob). **Com. Redpoll:** *intro.* **Pine Siskin:** a few small flocks LI (NYRBA) and SI (HF).

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*The Kingbird* publishes papers on all aspects of the ornithology of New York State. Manuscripts must be typed single-sided, double-spaced with at least one-inch margins on all sides. Follow similar articles in recent issues as guides to style. Names of bird species follow the most recent A.O.U. Check-list and its supplements. Place tables on a separate page each. Figures should be drawn in black ink. Photographs should be submitted as 35 mm slides or as black-and-white glossy prints. Place all captions on a separate page. Submission of manuscripts on computer diskette (3.5 inch preferred) is encouraged, but identification of the word processing software (including its version) used and printed copy must accompany such submissions. Manuscripts may be submitted to The Editor of *The Kingbird* or to the Chair of the Publications Committee.

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