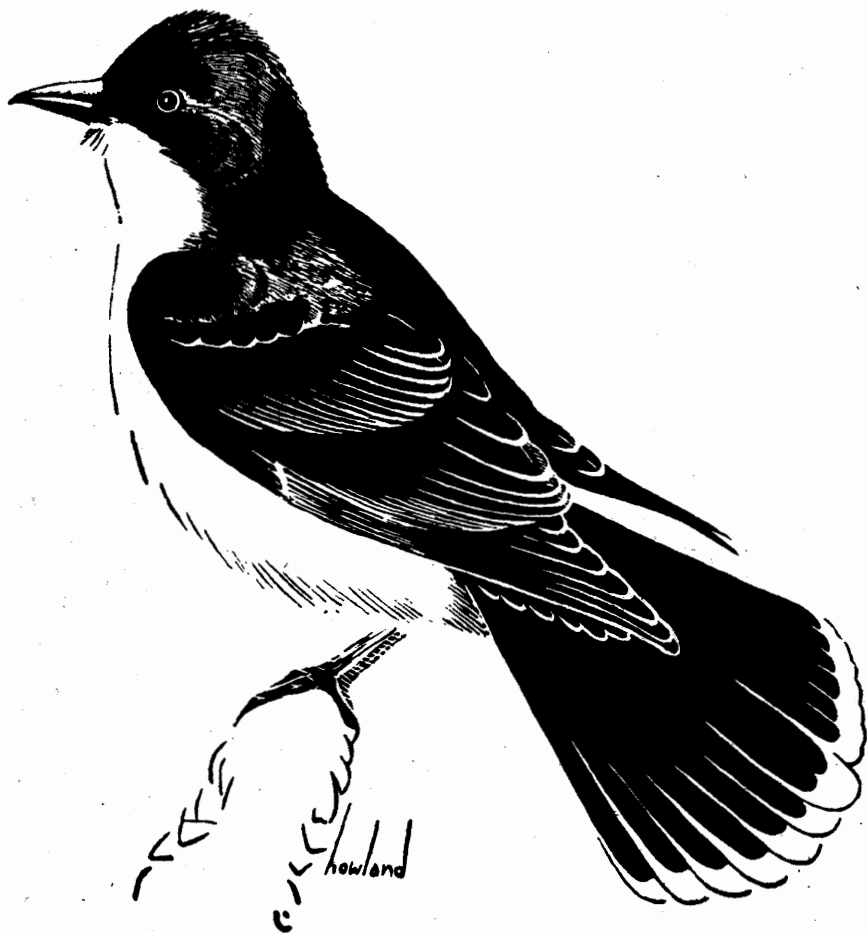


The KINGBIRD



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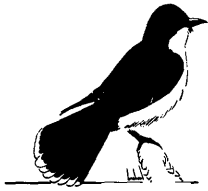
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Circulation Manager — Berna B. Lincoln

EDITORIALS

Donald A. Windsor
PO Box 604, Norwich NY 13815

MORE NAME CHANGES

The following changes that affect New York birds were adopted in the 40th Supplement of the AOU Check-list, published in the July 1995 issue of *The Auk* [112(3):819-830], which appeared in April 1996. The changes have become effective in *The Kingbird* starting with Volume 46, Number 1, March 1996.

Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) becomes *Ardea alba*.

American Swallow-tailed Kite becomes **Swallow-tailed Kite**

Rufous-necked Stint becomes **Red-necked Stint**.

Common Black-headed Gull becomes **Black-headed Gull**

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) becomes *Pluvialis dominicus*

Eurasian Skylark becomes **Sky Lark**

Gray-cheeked Thrush is split into **Gray-cheeked Thrush** (*Catharus minimus*) and **Bicknell's Thrush** (*Catharus bicknelli*)

Rufous-sided Towhee is split into **Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) and **Spotted Towhee** (*Pipilo maculatus*).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow is split into **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (*Ammodramus caudacutus*) and **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (*Ammodramus nelsoni*).

Northern Oriole is split into **Baltimore Oriole** (*Icterus galbula*) and **Bullock's Oriole** (*Icterus bullockii*).

Why? You may wonder. Why is there a seemingly unending parade of pesky name changes? For some excellent explanatory commentary on this latest batch, consult these recent articles.

DeBenedictis, P. A. 1996 Fortieth Supplement to the A. O. U. Check-list. *Birding Jun*;28(3):228-231.

Brock, K. J. 1996 A case for IMUs. [Identifiable morphological units] *Birding Jun*;28(3):239-240.

DeBenedictis, P. A. 1996 Recognizable forms. *Birding Jun*;28(3):241-243.

CALL FOR LONG RUNS OF DATA

Birders tend to gather great quantities of data, which, too often, are not readily available when needed. Data published in our Regional Reports appear one season at a time. On occasion, several years worth are provided, but such tabulations are rare. Bird club newsletters contain a wealth of data, but are not readily accessible; that is, an investigator cannot simply go into a nearby library and pull a newsletter off the shelf. A journal is a much better vehicle for posterity.

We have a good opportunity here to rectify this situation. I hereby extend a call for long runs of good, reliable data. In fact, I urge you. If you have such data, please consider publishing it. Any species. I am not looking for long-winded articles, but rather neat tabulations with adequate explanations. How long is a long run? At least a decade, but even that is certainly negotiable, depending on circumstances.

Whether a particular species is deemed to be increasing, decreasing, or stable may depend on the time span being analyzed. Cyclical fluctuations may not be noticed in short runs. Decades of observations are needed. Tabulations are preferred over other presentation formats, because they enable other researchers to analyze the data using different methods. Powerful techniques, such as metaanalysis, often cannot be applied to many important publications because the necessary data elements are absent.

So, please heed this call if you do have any data which might be suitable. If you have some doubts about the usability of your material, please ask me. Even non-quantitative data or data containing some gaps may be utilized, with proper caveats. If you have the data but do not have the time to write it up, let us talk. Chances are you may never get the time. What then will happen to your data? Will your heirs toss it out with the rest of your clutter? Share it now. Is there a risk to printing tabulations without detailed explanations? Sure, you bet. But there is an even greater risk to not publishing them. Unlike laboratory experiments which can possibly be done over again, field observations can not be redone because the environment is changing; they are historical records which, when they are lost, are gone forever. Let us preserve them before it is too late.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Receiving lots of letters seems to be a fringe benefit of being an editor. While I certainly enjoy hearing from the readers, let me broadcast a blan-

ket warning. Any letter to any editor is a possible candidate for publication. If you want to write me person to person, off the record, please declare that the letter is not for publication.

Having a vigorous letters section in every issue is one of my goals. As an active letters writer myself, the letters section in any periodical is the first place I turn. So, please keep those cards and letters coming. Just bear in mind that what you say may appear in print, where it will reside in libraries forever.

As a matter of policy, any comments about a *Kingbird* article will be sent to its author for a response and both the letter and the response will be published together, the article author having the last word.

LISTS

Several readers interpreted my comments in the previous issue to be anti-listing. Not so! Just for the record, I am pro-listing and I keep several lists. After all, I do administer the Federation's "200" and "300" patch program, which is based on New York State lists. But, I must admit, listing is not one of my high priorities and I tend to be tardy with the updates. Just out of curiosity, is there a cogent argument against listing? Any volunteers for articulating it?

CALL FOR ARTISTS

This issue has some unused white space between articles. Why waste it? The Federation probably has many artists among its members who draw birds or scenes of interests to birders. Perhaps we can turn these blank spaces into opportunities.

I invite artists to submit black and white drawings. No larger than half a page and preferably smaller. Photo reductions are fine, but you do them, not I. Make sure your signatures do not get reduced to oblivion. Artists must be Federation members. Which drawings get published depends upon the space to be filled and the appropriateness of the image. *The Kingbird* is not an art journal. These drawings are fillers, so the short, wide ones will have more occasions for use. Finally, just as *The Kingbird* authors are uncontaminated by financial remuneration, this privilege will be extended to artists as well.

RED-TAILED HAWK NEST ON A BUILDING IN TROY, NEW YORK

Harry F. Herbrandson
235 Walker Street, Lenox MA 01240

ABSTRACT — A pair of Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) nested on the third story of a building in Troy NY from April 12 through June 11, 1984. The development of their single chick is described from hatching through departure. Photographs are provided.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, interest has been expressed in the nesting of Red-tailed Hawk on buildings in an urban environment (Winn 1993, 1996). Excellent pictures of a pair of red-tails nesting on a Manhattan building were shown recently on television (CBS). Because of this interest, I should like to report on a pair of hawks who nested in 1984 on a building on the campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that is located in the middle of Troy, New York, a city with a population of about 53,000. One hundred photographs of the birds were obtained over the period of two months from April 12, 1984 through June 11, 1984, the final day before the single young that they raised left the nest.

METHODS

The nest was about 50 feet from a window at the top of an elevator well in Walker Laboratory. This permitted a completely uninterrupted view of the hawk's nest from a window at the northwest corner of the building that was left open during their period of residence. Part of the nest was obscured as it was around the corner from our vantage point. The pictures were taken with a Nikon F camera using Ektachrome film with an f 2.0 lens. Mounted in front of the lens, on a tripod, was a 10-power telescope. This gave sharply detailed pictures with no vignetting. Occasionally a 2-power teleconverter was coupled to this, but the combination gave a field of view that was more than completely filled by an adult bird with no view of its surroundings.

HATCHING

My colleagues and I first became aware of the hawks when we heard their "peep-peep" as they flew over the campus early in April. We discovered that they were nesting on a cornice of Walker Laboratory, a chemistry laboratory building located on the side of a hill overlooking Troy and the Hudson River valley. Pictures of their nest showing its location at the level of the third floor of Walker Laboratory about 75 feet above the ground were obtained from the adjacent Russell Sage Laboratory building at a higher level on the hillside (Fig. 1). Nesting began before I was able to obtain my first picture on April 12 and hatching occurred on or before April 30. There was no evidence that more than one young was ever hatched although red-tails are reported to lay and incubate "from one to three (usually two and occasionally four) eggs" (Bonney *et al.* 1981).

DEVELOPMENT OF CHICK

My first photograph of the downy, white chick in the nest was obtained on May 8 (Fig. 2). My best estimate is that it was 8-9 days old at this time. It grew rapidly and on May 14 was observed contributing to a tidy home by shooting excrement over the side of the nest. On May 17, while still in its downy coat with a few feathers evident on the tips of its wings, it was photographed being fed a rodent, a mouse, vole, or mole, by one of the adult birds, presumably the female (Fig. 3). Because of their apparently identical coloration it was possible to distinguish the adult female from the male only by size, most easily when they were together; as with many reptiles, some dinosaurs, and with other birds of prey, the female was notably larger than the male (Fig. 4) (Fischman 1993).

The male kept the nest in good repair, bringing large twigs and, on occasion, greens from a nearby tamarack tree. By May 23 the chick was able to stand quite well, but it still had a tendency to totter; white feathers had begun to appear on its tail. A torrential rain that led to concern for the health of the chick began on May 27 and continued through May 30 depositing a total of 4 inches of rain on Troy. The nest had been built in a copper rain trough contained in the cornice, adding to our anxiety. But, by the time the rain had ceased, the young bird's wings were almost completely feathered out and neither it nor the adults seemed to have suffered from the soaking. The male was not a notable attendant at the nest. At no time was an adult identifiable as the male seen feeding the chick, although he may be presumed to have provided much of the food

for his family. On May 31 a good picture was obtained that illustrated the female's technique for feeding her chick (Fig. 5.). The feathers of her prey, an unidentified bird but probably a pigeon, were plucked one-by-one from the corpse and dropped over the edge of the building. Then morsels held in her beak were fed to the young hawk with her head inverted, held upside down, so that her chick did not have to twist its head to either side. This method always was used when food was presented to her young whether it was from a rodent or a bird.

There still was much downy white on the young bird, but by June 4 brown feathers were on the crown of the young hawk's head. By then not only had it learned to keep its nest clean, but on the June 6 it was observed defecating over the edge of the cornice. Gradually more feathers covered its torso and tail; the feathers were brown, tinged with white, but there was no hint of any rusty red on its tail. On the seventh of June it was observed hopping and flapping its wings.

DEPARTURE

On June 11 a cold front passed through bringing strong northwest winds that the young hawk used to advantage as it faced into the wind, spread its wings and hopped, soaring many inches above the cornice. On this, the last day it remained with the nest, it had some down on its head and it looked very scraggly, still not completely feathered out. The next morning the young hawk was gone - it had flown the nest. Subsequently it was observed on the campus. The nearby tamarack tree, that had been topped a few years earlier by a line storm that passed through the campus, provided a perfect perch for plucking campus pigeons. A pair of Red-tailed Hawk continue to nest on campus buildings, but no longer on the cornice of Walker Laboratory. They have chosen less exposed nesting sites.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my gratitude to Robert P. Yunick for helpful discussions.



Figure 1. View of a nesting Red-tailed Hawk 75 feet above the ground on a building overlooking the city of Troy NY.

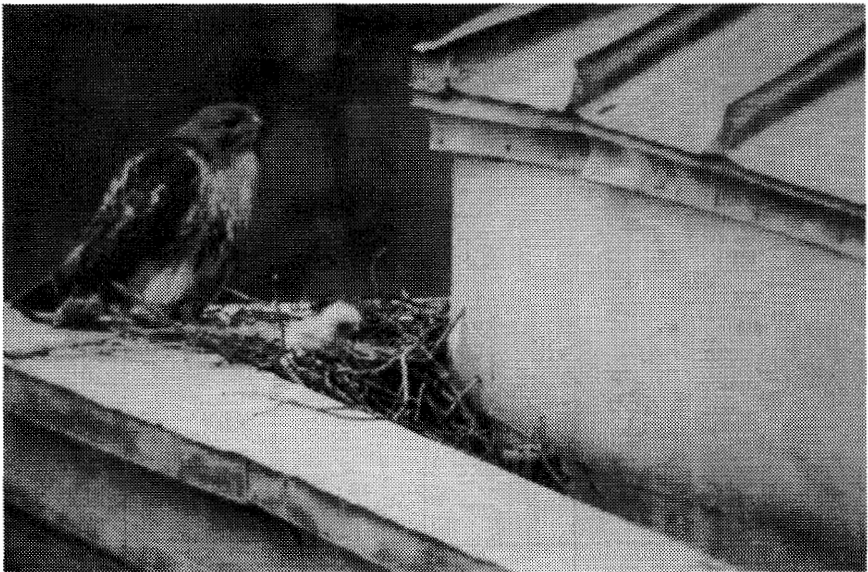


Figure 2. Red-tailed Hawk with 8-day old chick.

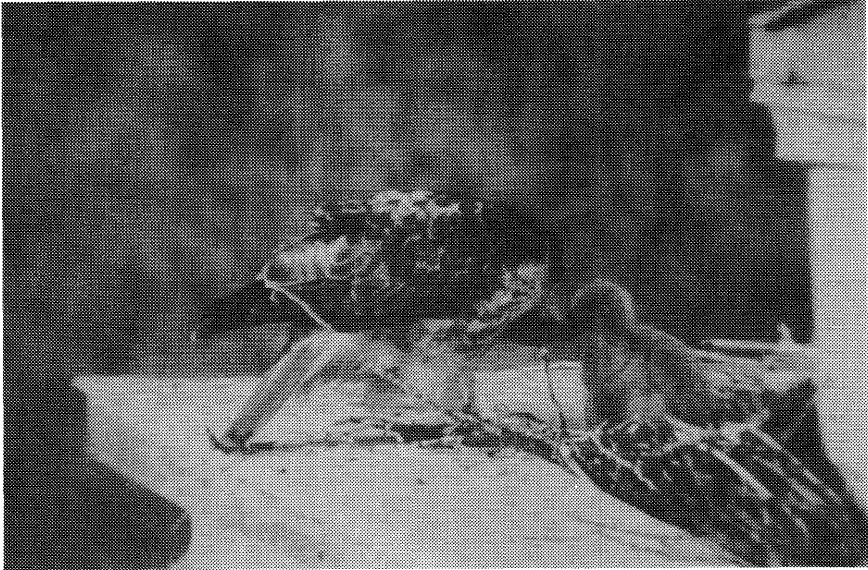


Figure 3. Feeding the 2 1/2 week old chick. The mother always inverted her head to feed morsels of flesh to the chick.

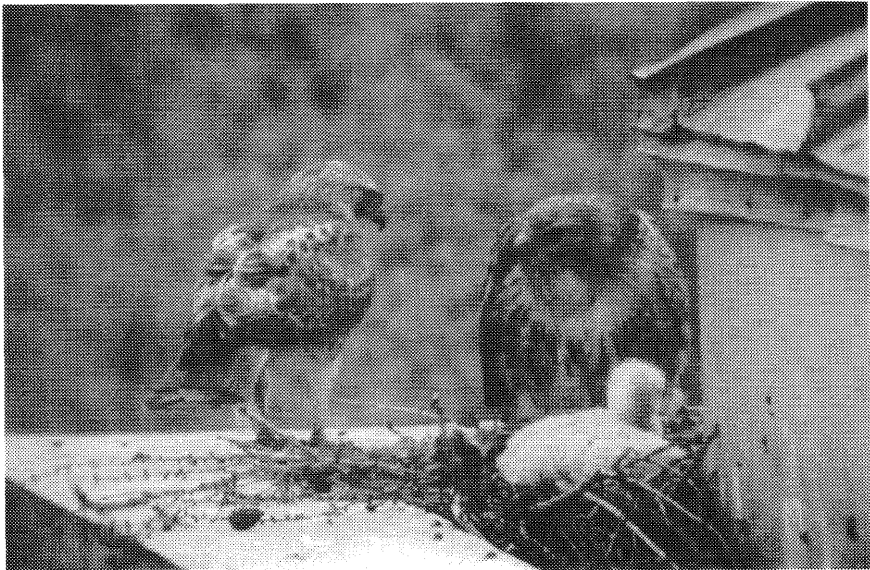


Figure 4. Compare the relative sizes of the male and female Red-tailed Hawk. The chick was about 3 weeks old.



Figure 5. Feeding the 4 1/2 week old chick. Note again the mother's inversion of her head.

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**DO DOWNY WOODPECKER ABANDON THEIR BREEDING
TERRITORIES IN WINTER AND RELOCATE
NEAR A PERMANENT FOOD SOURCE?**

Amy L. Gordon and John L. Confer
Biology Department, Ithaca College
Ithaca, NY 14850

ABSTRACT — In the winter in central NY the Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) commutes long distances (over 200 meters) from its breeding territory to a reliable, abundant food source.

INTRODUCTION

The Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) is the smallest woodpecker in North America and is very common and widely distributed. Our study of this species was conducted in Tompkins County, in central NY, during the winter of 1994-95. Analyses of banding returns suggests that downys do not migrate (Browning 1995), yet observations on the outer shores of Long Island suggest migratory movement (Bull 1974). Downys do maintain permanent territories which usually provide everything that a downy needs to sustain itself: winter food and shelter, a buffer around the nest and food for its young. Lawrence (1967) observed that the territory defended by an individual downy is nearly identical from year to year.

Downys excavate winter roost holes that are separate from their nest holes (Kilham 1983). Kilham observed downys excavating winter roost holes in logs that he placed in his yard in close proximity to a suet feeding station. In our study we examined the effect of an abundant, reliable food source on winter territorial behavior. We tested whether most downys abandon their territories and excavate winter roost holes close to a suet feeder, as Kilham noted, or stay on their territory in the winter and commute to an abundant food source. For this study we utilized a feeding station which has provided suet in both summer and winter for more than a decade and which is adjacent to a large forest.

Winter territorial behavior of Downy Woodpecker in the vicinity of this banding/feeding station has been studied before. One downy was seen several times on its territory in winter about 900 m from the feeder, yet it was also repeatedly seen at the feeder, which suggests that it routinely commuted from its territory. On the other hand, the territory of one

downy was determined on two consecutive summers about 1000 m from the feeder, yet that bird was seen entering a winter roost hole near the feeder throughout the intervening winter. Defense of territories in fall and winter was examined by playback of taped drumming and whinny calls. Downy Woodpecker responded to playbacks by flying towards the sound and giving a whinny call in fall. In both 1993 (J. Larkin pers. com.) and 1994 (T. Matthey pers. com.) downys ceased responding to taped playbacks in late October. The absence of a territorial defense in winter is compatible with the hypothesis that many downys abandoned their territory in winter and moved into the feeder. Yet in fall and early winter of 1994, Bajohr spent about 25 evenings trying to detect downys entering their winter roost hole. Despite this extensive effort, no downy roost holes were located.

These prior studies establish that some downys stay on their territory in winter and commute to a feeding station, while others excavate a winter roost hole near the feeder. In this study we hoped to determine which behavior was adopted by the majority of birds.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This banding/feeding station is located on a ridge with valleys on two sides and some open fields. Birds were caught in a net put up near the feeders. Downys were banded with an aluminum band and two colored bands. Each bird had its own color pattern and could be uniquely identified.

The downys were observed in the early evening from 4:30-6:30, close to the time that downys normally go into their roost hole for the night. The birds were observed from 27 January to 8 April 1995. Binoculars and a telescope were used to determine the banding of a bird at the feeder. After a bird was identified at the feeding station we tried to keep sight of that bird until it departed, as much as 30-52 minutes after feeding. The departure flight path for each bird was recorded on a xeroxed copy of a topographic map. From this drawing we determined the distance and compass angle of departure from the feeder to the point where it disappeared from sight. After we saw a bird depart once, we could anticipate its subsequent departure direction. Often we could observe a longer departure distance by having one person at the feeder watching the bird and another person ~100 m from the feeder in the direction previously taken by that the bird. Walkie-talkies were used to alert the person in the field when the bird was leaving the feeder and where to look for it.

RESULTS

Over 170 person-hours were spent observing the birds depart from a feeder on ~40 evenings. Nine volunteers spent 1-4 evenings each. At least 26 birds came into the feeders. Data were not collected on at least 5 of the birds using the feeder because they were not banded. We did not attempt to collect departure data on 3 banded birds because they were seen only 2-3 times each.

Angle of Departure - Most birds had a narrow range of departure angles (Table 1). For 13 birds for which we had two or more observations of departure, the range of departure angles varied from 15° to 110° with an average of 36°. For 10 birds the range of departure angles was between 15 and 30°. Only three had larger ranges of 57, 85 and 110°. Consistent departure directions by individual birds show that a bird is going to the same place each night after feeding. Different birds left in different directions, suggesting that individual birds were going to different places. We believe these birds were returning to their roost holes.

Length of Departure Flights - We never observed a bird land in a tree at the end of its departure flight. In every instance the bird vanished because it was so far away, or because it was flying through trees. Many of the birds were still very high and still flying when we lost sight of them. Most observations of short departure distances occurred while we were learning the departure flight path. We believe the mean departure distance underestimates how far the birds were going each night and suggest that the maximum distance is the best indicator of the distance to a downy's roost hole.

There are a great many trees with soft, dead wood suitable for excavation of roost holes near the feeding station so that the environment could have allowed all birds to roost within 100 m of the feeding station. Only four of 18 birds for which we determined even a single departure distance flew less than less than 200 m (Table 1) before disappearing. We did find one roost hole 100 m from the feeders which was occupied by an unbanded female downy. For 78% of the birds the maximum departure distance was over 200 m. Five departure distances exceeded 500 m. It seems implausible that birds would leave the feeder shortly before sundown, fly for hundreds of meters, and then turn around and return to the vicinity of the feeder to roost. These long departure distances provide further evidence that the birds are flying towards their roost hole. Departure distances over 200 m, as shown by most birds, strongly suggests that the majority of birds do not abandon their breeding territories in winter and do not build winter roost holes close to a permanent food source.

Three of the birds for which flight paths were observed were born last summer (1994). All of these subadults had observed flight distances over 200 m, and two had distances above 800 m. Even though younger birds have not established breeding territories and seemed more likely to build a roost hole close to the feeder, they all had long distance departures.

DISCUSSION

Certain birds were easier to follow because of their behavior. Such birds would come in to feed, move to the top of one of the largest nearby trees and stay there for a few minutes. Some birds preened briefly, climbed to the extreme tip top of the tallest branch in the vicinity, leaned in the direction of flight, and then departed. Such birds often took a very high flight path back to their territories, and were easy to follow because we could anticipate when they were going to leave and where they were going. Male IG/IG A for example, exhibited this behavior and we were able to observe him taking long flight paths on several occasions.

In contrast, female O/O A never moved to a tree top before she left. She always flew a mid-height from tree to tree through the forest. It was difficult to track her for long distances through the woods because she was easily lost in the trees. In April we found that female O/O A had a breeding territory which actually overlapped with the feeding station. Perhaps she never took high flight paths back to her roost hole because her roost hole was so near.

Some birds were difficult to follow because when they come in they stayed for a long time and got into fights with other birds. Fights included displacements, chases, and rapid circling around a branch. Identification of an individual bird is difficult to maintain. Downys move quickly when fighting and fights usually occurred high in the trees where the bands are very difficult to see.

The direction of departure also had an effect on our data collection. Some birds, like male IG/IG A, took flight lines over open hay fields. Long departure distances could easily be obtained because there were no trees or other obstructions blocking our view. Male A O/IB and female dB/W A also had flight paths over open fields. Both birds were observed flying very high until they became invisible. These two birds had very similar flight paths and often came in to the feeder and departed from the feeder within minutes of each other. We suspect they are a pair.

Some birds, like male Pi/Y A and female O/O A, took flight paths that crossed over forests. These birds are very hard to track because they could not be seen through all the trees. After all measurements of depar-

tures were completed, male Pi/Y A was observed defending his territory with an unbanded female just beyond where his departure flights had gone.

Long flight paths that were observed were seldom straight lines, long flight paths often had lots of zig zags and turns in them. This contributes to the range of departure angles.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we found that the majority of the birds had narrow ranges of departure angles. This suggests they return to the same place each night after they feed. Most likely they return to their territory. Departure flight paths for most adults as well as young-of-the-year were over 200 m. Thus, it seems that most downys in our study area in central New York do not abandon their breeding territories in winter. Instead, they commute long distances to a reliable, abundant food source.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Karen Allaben-Confer for her time and help with this project. We appreciate that Jeff Larkin, Michele Bajohr, and Tim Mattey shared their results from previous studies. We also thank all the other volunteers, especially Tim Alefantis and Michelle Thornton, who helped observe the downys.

This paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs in Fredonia NY on October 7, 1995.

Table 1. Status of 18 color-banded Downy Woodpecker observed in this study. Banding codes read from left to right leg and top to bottom. For example, Pi/Y A stands for pink over yellow on the left and aluminum on the right. Angle and distance as described in text. Abbreviations: Ad = adult, Suba = born summer 1994, Unk = banded in 1994-95 but age not determined, n = number of times departure flight was observed.

Date Banded	Current Age	Sex	Bands	n	Angle		Distance		
					Mean	Range	Mean	Max	Min
9 Feb 90	Ad	M	A Y/Y	5	222	28	227	390	124
15 Nov 94	Ad	M	Pi/Y A	2	308	15	159	212	106
15 May 93	Ad	M	R/R A	1	295	-	177	-	-
6 Feb 93	Ad	M	A Pu/Y	2	12	24	186	195	177
20 Nov 94	Ad	M	A O/IB	9	24	85	383	920	71
23 Jan 93	Ad	M	Y/Pu A	2	205	20	585	850	319
12 Nov 93	Ad	M	O/O A	6	283	15	318	550	89
16 Feb 90	Ad	F	Y/IB A	1	326	-	230	-	-
29 Feb 89	Ad	F	IB A	4	293	20	182	230	106
12 Nov 93	Ad	F	O/O A	4	171	57	239	301	159
14 Nov 92	Ad	F	O/Y A	1	210	-	460	-	-
11 Feb 95	Suba	M	IG/IG A	4	240	17	593	832	89
11 Feb 95	Suba	M	dB/Y A	2	285	20	151	212	89
11 Feb 95	Suba	F	dB/W A	4	14	25	438	814	142
29 Jan 95	Unk	M	A Y/Pi	1	190	-	336	-	-
11 Feb 95	Unk	F	A Y/Pi	1	50	-	160	-	-
11 Feb 95	Unk	F	dB/dB A	4	325	110	111	212	35
11 Feb 95	Unk		dB/y A	5	287	30	167	195	124

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GULLS AS VECTORS OF *SALMONELLA ENTERITIDIS* IN THE LOWER MOHAWK VALLEY REGION OF NEW YORK

Blake Klauber

Department Of Biological Sciences, Union College
Schenectady, NY 12308

ABSTRACT - One hundred and twenty-five fecal samples were collected at Collins Lake, Village of Scotia, Schenectady County, and the Waterfield area, City of Cohoes, Albany County, from three different species of gulls: Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Great Black-backed Gull (*L. marinus*) and Ring-Billed Gull (*L. delawarensis*). Out of 125 samples, one was positive, one of the first reports of *Salmonella enteritidis* in gull fecal matter in the northeastern United States. This study is important because it focuses on a potential public health hazard which occurs when increasing numbers of gulls in the Mohawk Valley feed at landfills and overnight in public water supply reservoirs.

INTRODUCTION

Gulls (*Larus* spp.) have been documented as vectors of salmonellae in Europe, Japan and Canada with carrier rates ranging from 7 to 31%; 1% is more typical in other bird species (Fenlon, 1981). Salmonellae are found in the gut of warm-blooded vertebrates, some reptiles and various insects; they also appear in sewage, river, and sea water. Outside the host, salmonellae survival rates vary: at 11.5 °C (55 °F) for 1 hour, at 14 °C (60 °F) for 15-20 minutes (Parker *et al.*, 1983). The main way gulls acquire salmonellae is through eating infected food and they may carry the pathogen for several weeks without symptoms (Parker *et al.*, 1983). Rates of avian digestion vary between 2.5 to 12 hours, depending on amount and type of food (Pettingill, 1985), thus passage of food through the gut does not necessarily displace the pathogen (Parker *et al.*, 1983).

Peak numbers of gulls in the lower Mohawk Valley of New York currently number in excess of ten thousand. Heavily dependent upon sanitary landfills, this number also appears to be increasing. Another feature of local gulls is that they overnight at public water supply reservoirs. Thus gulls may be a problem in the region (Levesque *et al.*, 1993).

Departments of Health and other health related agencies in Pennsylvania, New York, and all states in New England, were contacted to learn that studies on the role of gulls as vectors of salmonellae have not been published, thus motivating the study at hand (Table 3).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Samples were collected at the Waterfield area, a broad and rocky expanse of the Mohawk River east of the Route 32 bridge, City of Cohoes, Albany County. This site is 100 meters from shore and on a flat, rocky island 40 x 25 meters in extent and usually 15 cm above water level. This island is regularly used as a perch for gulls and is about 3 km southeast of the Colonie Landfill, the largest in the region. A second collecting area was at Collins Lake, Village of Scotia Schenectady County, also in New York State. Samples were taken between the hours of 15:30 and 17:15 on February 2 and 17, April 3, 10, and 17, and May 5, 1995.

Fecal samples were collected from rock, snow, ice or sand surfaces, placed in sterile containers using sterile tongue blades and transported to the Microbiology Laboratory at Ellis Hospital, Schenectady, New York, in a cold chest with ice and/or snow. Samples were spaced at a minimum distance of one meter. Hektoen Enteric Agar plates were used and incubated at 37 °C (98 °F) for 72 hours following *Bailey and Scott's Diagnostic Microbiology* (Baron and Finegold 1990). All work was done under the supervision of experienced medical technologists at Ellis Hospital. Several authors, e.g. D.R. Fenlon, C.R. Fricker, Benoit Levesque and Sylvain Quessy, suggest processing gull feces on brilliant green agar plates incubated initially at 43 °C (115 °F) for 18 hours and at 37 °C (98 °F) for 24 hours. However more conventional methods practiced in most medical pathology laboratories were used here because they are more readily available to the public.

Number of individuals of each species of gull was counted prior to sampling to estimate source of fecal material collected (Table 2). Air and water temperatures, percentage cloud cover (Table 1), wind direction and speed, and water level were also recorded.

RESULTS

One hundred and twenty-five samples were collected on six dates under diverse conditions (Table 1); one sample taken on April 3, 1995 proved positive for *Salmonella enteritidis*. On this date, there were 465 gulls perching on the rock surface: 55% Herring Gull, 35% Ring-Billed Gull and 5% Great Black-backed Gull; cloud cover was 100% and air temperature 12 °C (54 °F). After the one positive sample was collected, sixty-four additional samples were taken from the same rock area. Freshness of samples was assured through moist and glistening appearance, deposition on fresh snow and crushed ice, deposition on rock surface that are repeatedly swept with running water, and deposition on freshly wave washed sand.

DISCUSSION

Numbers of gulls roosting on public water reservoirs with resulting bacterial and nutrient contamination have been increasing (Perrins 1976); the Capital Region of New York has not escaped this phenomenon. Gulls in increasing numbers scavenge at the Colonie Landfill, 2.5 miles away from the Waterfield area, then overnight during the warmer months on Tomhannock Reservoir, 8 miles to the northeast, one of the region's more important public drinking water sources.

Less than one percent of the collected samples demonstrate salmonellae with the technique used and this poses three main questions about the results. If the study was done in spring and summer following C.R. Fricker and R.W.A. Girdwood (1984), S. Quessy and S. Messier (1992) and B. Levesque *et al.* (1993) would more samples have been positive? If the fecal samples were processed using the methods of these same authors would the number of positive samples be influenced? Are certain gull species more prone to be vectors of salmonellae than others? Further investigation of the water will be necessary to determine whether salmonellae are present in the ambient water. State Health departments and other health related agencies were contacted to determine how serious they believed the problem of gulls as vectors for salmonellae was and were asked the question, "Is there any research being done on this topic?". Answers were generally no, because they had not considered salmonellae transmitted by gulls a human health problem nor did they know of others studying this question. In my opinion, due to the increase of gulls around public water supplies, salmonellae should be considered harmful to humans. It is important to educate people about the potential transmission by gulls, even though most humans do not consider it a necessity because they do not eat gull meat or eggs. This study only touches the surface of an issue which needs further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Carl J. George, Department of Biology, Union College, for guiding, challenging and showing me what it is like to be a Field Biologist. I would like to thank Dr. Twitty J. Styles for reviewing my thesis and offering suggestions. I would like to thank Dr. H. Singh, Ms. Nancy Anderson, Ms. Lynn Cartright and all of the experienced medical technologists at Ellis Hospital for their help and allowing me to use their laboratory. I would also like to thank Dr. Ward Stone for answering questions about safety hazards involved working with salmonellae. I would like to thank people whom I contacted at the various health agencies for answering my questions.

Table 1: Date, location, conditions and number for samples at the Waterfield, access from Clarke Ave., City of Cohoes, Albany County and Collins Lake, Village of Scotia, Schenectady County, New York. A single positive sample (+) was taken at the Waterfield on 3 Apr 95.

Date	Location	Conditions	N	+/N
10 Feb 95	Waterfield	Snow field 100% cloud cover Air temp. 9.5 °C (49 °F)	15	0/15
17 Feb 95	Waterfield	2 cm. snow on ice 0% cloud cover Air temp. 6 °C (42 °F)	20	0/20
3 Apr 95	Collins Lake	Sand beach 100% cloud cover Air temp. 11.5 °C (53 °F) Water temp. 9 °C (48 °F)	10	0/10
3 Apr 95	Waterfield	Rock surface 100 % cloud cover Air temp. 12 °C (54 °F) Water temp. 8 °C (46 °F)	16	1/16
10 Apr 95	Waterfield	Rock surface 80-90% cloud cover Air temp. 8.5 °C (47 °F) Water temp. 6.5 °C (43 °F)	19	0/19
17 Apr 95	Waterfield	Rock surface 5% cloud cover Air temp. 15 °C (60 °F) Water temp. 8.5 °C (47 °F)	20	0/20
5 May 95	Waterfield	Rock surface Light rain, 100% cloud cover Air temp. 13 °C (56 °F) Water temp. 15 °C (60 °F)	25	0/25
		Total	125	1/125

Table 2. Species of Gull and Waterfowl at Collecting Sites.

Date	Location	No. of Gulls	No. of Waterfowl
10 Feb 95	Waterfield	2,000 gulls 75%- Herring 25%- Great Black-backed	None
17 Feb 95	Waterfield	600 gulls 70% - Herring 30% - Great Black-backed	10 Am. Black Duck 1 Hooded Merganser
3 Apr 95	Collins Lake	50 Ring-Billed	None
3 Apr 95	Waterfield	65 gulls 55%- Herring 35%- Ring-Billed 5%- Great Black-backed	None
10 Apr 95	Waterfield	1100 gulls 50%- Herring 30%- Ring-Billed 10%- Great Black-backed	30 Mallard 7 Am. Black Duck 3 Double-crested Cormorant
17 Apr 95	Waterfield	350 gulls 85%- Herring 10%- Ring-Billed 5% - Great Black-backed	6 Am. Black Duck
5 May 95	Waterfield	225 gulls 80% - Herring 20% - Great Black-backed	None

Table 3. People contacted in Pennsylvania, New York and New England health agencies and status of research on role of gulls as vectors for *Salmonella enteritidis* (- = no research in process).

State	Agency	Respondent
PA	Dept. Health, Div. Epidemiology	Ms. Chris Wrick (-)
NY	Dept. Health, Div. Epidemiology	Mr. Peter Drabkin (-)
VT	Dept. Health, Div. Epidemiology	Dr. Robert Johnson (-)
RI	Dept. Health, Off. Food Protection	Mr. Ken Kohav (-)
NH	Dept. Agric., Div. Animal Ind.	Dr. Clifford McGinnis (-)
ME	Bur. Health, Dept. Human Services	Mr. Rob Taylor (-)
CT	Dept. Health, Div. Epidemiology	Mr. George Cooper (-)
MA	Dept. Health, Div. of Epidemiology	Dr. Pat Klude(-)

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Blake Klauber's current address is: 23 Fayette St., Boston MA 02116

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
48TH ANNUAL MEETING
FREDONIA, NY 6-8 OCTOBER 1995

William B. Reeves
107 Elberta Drive, East Northport NY 11731-5712

At 2:00 P. M., Friday, 6 October 1995 William Lee, President, called to order the 48th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs at the College Lodge of SUNY College at Fredonia.

Allen Benton, Chair of Lake Erie Bird Club's Arrangements Committee, announced several changes to the schedule of workshops and field trips for the meeting.

A quorum count by roll call showed that 83 delegates (24 in person and 59 by proxy), representing 31 of the 40 member clubs, were voting at the meeting. Nine additional delegates, including representatives of two additional clubs, arrived before the Saturday morning session began. In response to a question from Bob Budliger, the Recording Secretary reported that proxies represented more than half the votes and that a quorum was present.

The Council approved a motion to waive reading of the minutes of the 47th Annual Meeting, published in *The Kingbird* 45(2):92-99. The Recording Secretary reported the following amendments to the published minutes of the 47th Annual Meeting: (1) changing to the description of the Audit Committee's report reflect their review of 1993 instead of 1994 financial transactions and (2) adding presentation of the Gordon M. Meade Award for Distinguished Service to Harriet Marsi of the Naturalists Club of Broome County. Valerie Freer moved that the Council of Delegates approve the minutes as amended. Phyllis Jones seconded the motion and the Council adopted it unanimously.

The President appointed a Committee on Resolutions for this meeting consisting of Barbara Butler and Donald Windsor.

Bill Lee delivered the President's Report, which included the following items:

1. At quarterly meetings this year the Executive Committee has discussed several possible changes to the bylaws of the Federation. One such change involves adopting a new name for the organization. Another proposal would modify the provision that adoption of Federation positions on issues of public policy requires approval by the Council of Delegates.
2. Manny Levine, Editor, and Bob Budliger, Fund Raising Chair, for

Bull's Birds of New York State have accomplished a great deal to ensure publication of the book, scheduled for 1998. During 1995 the Federation received contributions of \$2,000 each from two member and one nonmember clubs and of \$500, \$100 and \$50 from three other member clubs toward costs of publishing the book.

3. To offset membership attrition of approximately 11 percent a year, a membership promotion campaign has begun. Scott Stoner and Berna Lincoln will be overseeing this campaign during the coming year. Bob Budliger has revised the Federation's membership application brochure.
4. The problem of public concern about the many Double-crested Cormorant on Lake Ontario and their possible impact on populations of game fish has received the attention of the Executive Committee during the past year.
5. Berna Lincoln represented us this year on the committee to identify and publicize sites in New York State for the Watchable Wildlife Observation Program.
6. Bill thanked the officers, members of the Executive Committee and chairs of committees for their work that made our programs successful during the past year.

In the absence of Myrna Hemmerick, Membership Chair, Berna Lincoln presented the following membership report for the year 1995 to date:

557 Annual Memberships (519 Renewals, 9 Reinstatements, 29 New)
85 Life Members
40 Member Clubs (Dues Paid)

Manny Levine, Publications Chair and editor of the new state bird book, reported on progress on *Bull's Birds of New York State*. An agreement between the Federation, the American Museum of Natural History and Cornell University Press has been drawn up and the museum is now reviewing it. We consider this a satisfactory agreement. Once the museum approves the agreement, representatives of the three organizations will sign it. The book will contain species accounts written by 60 volunteer authors. The state list now includes 445 species. The editor has 169 completed species accounts on hand. Authors have submitted an additional 105 species accounts, which the editor has reviewed at least once and returned to them for revision. The editor has not yet assigned 32 species to authors. Work on this project has been underway for two years. Manny hopes to receive all species accounts by the end of 1995. Next year about a half dozen authors will write introductory material and species accounts will be completed. The book may contain illustrations, depend-

ing on the success of fund raising efforts. (A 16-page color signature would add about \$10.00 to the estimated price of \$50.00 per copy.) We scheduled delivery of the manuscript to Cornell University Press for January 1, 1997. Our planned publication date is October 1998, when we will hold the 51st Annual Meeting of the Federation in Rochester. We expect a first printing of 2,500 copies. If the book sells well, we can arrange additional printings. Berna Lincoln said that the agreement under review is for a hardcover book. If demand warrants, a paperback version can be added. Manny and Berna reported that people who worked on the book will each receive a complimentary copy. In response to a question Manny said that the Federation and the American Museum of Natural History will share 7 percent of the price of the book as a royalty. The remainder goes to Cornell University Press. Berna explained that publishers usually make money on books and authors get only royalties. Our contract includes an advance of \$1500 against future royalties. Bob Budliger, Fund Raising Chair for *Bull's Birds of New York State*, discussed the funding status of the project. The President sent a letter with a prospectus, describing the costs involved in publication of the book, to all member clubs requesting donations to the book fund. The foreword of the book will contain a list of donors at three levels, reflecting gifts at or above \$500, \$1,000 and \$2,000. Bob will send a reminder to all clubs with a budget showing how we will allocate the \$80,000 cost of publishing the book. Bob pointed out that we must show that our own members and clubs are willing to contribute before we can convince outside organizations to donate. We have raised \$6,650 from clubs. He asked delegates to encourage their clubs to donate at any level to the book fund during the second round of contributions. Valerie Freer said that some clubs will be contributing to the fund during this meeting. She suggested that the President announce the names of clubs that have made donations at the banquet Saturday evening. Bob requested that delegates contact him if they know of business organizations or foundations from which we could solicit donations. We are using a list of "green companies" to identify possible donors. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has expressed willingness to contribute up to \$15,000 this year, but budgetary restrictions and changes in management of the agency have hindered receipt of these funds. DEC was an important source of funding and resources for the Breeding Bird Atlas project. We expect DEC to seek our support for the Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative. We will suggest reciprocal support during future discussions with DEC.

Manny reported the recent resignation of Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr. as Editor of *New York Birders*, our newsletter. Max has been newsletter edi-

tor since publication of the first issue. The President asked the Resolutions Committee to prepare a resolution thanking Max and expressing the appreciation of the Federation for his long and faithful service.

Bob Budliger said that the newly revised Federation membership brochures are available. He urged delegates to take a few to distribute to potential members. Bob also asked all those attending this meeting to recruit new members.

Bill Lee announced that we will hold our 49th Annual Meeting 6-8 September 1996 at the Holiday/Turf Inn on Wolf Road in Albany. The host club is the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. The banquet speaker will be Jack Connor. We will hold the 50th Annual Meeting at Lake Placid in October 1997. High Peaks Audubon Society will sponsor it. Hosts for our 51st Annual Meeting at Rochester in the fall of 1998 will be the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, the Genesee Ornithological Society and the Rochester Birding Association

Stanley Lincoln, Chair, presented the report of the Nominating Committee consisting of himself, Harriet Marsi and Chad Covey. Nominated to serve one year terms of office beginning at the end of this Annual Meeting were the following:

President:	Robert E. Budliger
Vice President:	Valerie M. Freer
Recording Secretary:	Scott J. Stoner
Corresponding Secretary:	William B. Reeves
Treasurer:	Berna B. Lincoln

Delegates made no nominations from the floor. A motion to close nominations and to ask the Recording Secretary to cast one ballot to elect the nominees was made, seconded and approved unanimously. President Lee declared the slate elected and congratulated the new officers.

Bill Lee reported for the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), consisting of Robert Andrle, Chair, Kenneth Able, Thomas Burke and Robert Paxton. He stated that a vacancy on this committee exists because a member moved out of the state last year. NYSARC has been effective in reviewing records of rarities reported during the past year. Bill said that revising the pelagic boundary of the state is a concern of Bob Andrle. Although the subject is under discussion by various people from New York and bordering states, they have achieved no consensus. The boundaries are important in determining which records to include in *Bull's Birds of New York State*.

Berna Lincoln distributed the Treasurer's Report so that the delegates could review it carefully before its formal submittal Saturday morning. Berna also distributed copies of the roster of member clubs.

Richard Sloss, Chair, presented the report of the Audit Committee. He said the financial statements examined by the committee fairly presented the financial condition and the operating results of the Federation for the year ended 31 December 1994. The other members of this committee were Irving Cantor and Norman Stotz.

John Confer, Chair of the Lillian C. Stoner Award Committee, announced that the recipient this year was Michael Brust of the Huntington Audubon Society. John said that the Lake Erie Bird Club, our meeting hosts, waived the registration fee for the awardee.

Bill Lee reported for Paul DeBenedictis, Editor of *The Kingbird*, that the recipient of the John J. Elliott Award for the best article in 1994 was William W. Watson for his article "Establishment of the Great Blue Heron Colony on Motor Island" in Erie County. The article appeared in *The Kingbird* 44(4):268-276.

Charlie Rouse of the Eaton Birding Society announced that this year's winners of the Elon Howard Eaton Memorial Award are Dr. John L. Confer and Karen Allaben-Confer.

Berna Lincoln reported that copies of the report of the County List Project were available for delegates to take to their clubs.

Don Windsor announced that the new 300 Species Patches are for sale at \$5.00 each. Those who have submitted lists showing that they have seen more than 300 species in New York State may purchase them.

The meeting recessed at 4:00 P.M.

The meeting of the Council of Delegates reconvened at 9:30 A.M. Saturday, October 6, 1995.

President Bill Lee introduced Laura Sommers of DEC, reporting for Bob Miller. Laura discussed her department's display on the status of rare, endangered and threatened species of birds, reptiles and amphibians in New York State. She also reported the following data on the status of several species of birds currently of concern to conservationists:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>
Peregrine Falcon	Breeding Pairs	25	19
	Successful Pairs (1 or more fledged)	19	18
	Young Produced	46	35
Bald Eagle	Breeding Pairs	23	18
	Successful Pairs (1 or more fledged)	19	12
	Young Produced	30	21
Eagles	Midwinter Survey		
	Bald Eagle	144 (new high)	116
Piping Plover	Golden Eagle	1	1
	Breeding Pairs	243 (preliminary)	209
	Young Fledged per Pair	0.96	1.34

Laura reported that DEC made intensive efforts in 1995 to help Piping Plover by using predator exclosures. They expect that additional funding for these efforts will become available because of settlement of the B. T. Nautilus New York Harbor oil spill litigation.

Long Island Colonial Water Bird Survey - The 1994 survey report has been published. It includes data on Piping Plover, all species of terns and Black Skimmer. In 1995 colonial nesting species surveyed included gulls, wading birds and cormorants. They are now compiling data for this year's survey.

Roseate Tern - The statewide nesting population continues to increase (1,647 pairs in 1994). A habitat restoration project on Gardiner's Point Island, a.k.a. Tyler's Island, led by Helen Hays of the American Museum of Natural History, has attracted the following numbers of breeding birds:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>
Common Tern	Breeding Pairs	60	12
Roseate Tern	Breeding Pairs	100	2

Black Tern - Currently DEC lists this species as a Species of Special Concern in the state. Listing Black Tern as an Endangered Species has been proposed. In the last statewide survey in 1994, an estimated 244 pairs bred. This number was 14 percent below the 1991 estimate of 284

breeding pairs. Breeding studies continue at key sites in Jefferson County and at the Tonawanda/Iroquois/Oak Orchard Wetland Complex. These studies include nesting success rates, habitat characteristics, monitoring of movements of banded adults and chicks and evaluation of the use of nesting platforms.

Common Tern - This species is listed as Threatened. DEC expects that it will remain so because of concern about upstate nesting populations. The Great Lakes population is currently a Category 2 candidate for federal listing. State management projects continue at Oneida Lake, on the St. Lawrence River and the Niagara Frontier. The numbers of nesting pairs for the current year are as follows:

Oneida Lake	511
St. Lawrence River	620
Niagara Frontier	811

Double-crested Cormorant - The annual survey of nesting cormorants at Little Galloo Island in eastern Lake Ontario recorded 3,745 breeding pairs in 1994, a very low count. In 1995 the survey counted 7,500 nests, a new high count. A task group representing various community interests developed management objectives for this species on Lake Ontario during 1995. DEC is currently working on accomplishment of these objectives and coordinating its efforts with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Province of Ontario.

Laura also discussed the federal Watchable Wildlife Observation Program. This is a project of the Federal Highway Administration and the NYS Department of Transportation. A team is currently preparing a proposal for an Interstate Transportation Enhancement Act grant. The state can use such grants for enhancement of public lands. The Watchable Wildlife Observation Team is interested in public suggestions concerning its objectives. Jean Gawalt of DEC is the contact person. The team is now refining the list of sites. Gaps exist in the Adirondack, Catskill, Southern Tier and West Central regions. DEC anticipates publication of the site guide during the spring of 1996. The state needs \$16,000 in additional private donations to fund the guide.

A DEC team has begun discussions concerning an Urban Wildlife Program. They are compiling a list of all wildlife education activities in the state and DEC involvement in these programs.

DEC has undertaken facility improvements at Ridge, Mongaup and

Tillman Road using 1995-1996 Public Recreation funds. The department has plans for facility work at Ausable, Braddock Bay, Deer Creek, Lakeview and Quogue.

Laura described the Fish and Wildlife Funding Initiative. This federal proposal is a plan to provide funds for conservation, recreation and education programs through a surcharge on outdoor equipment purchases. It is modeled after the successful Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Acts which have low administrative expenses. Its objective is to benefit species with no regular funding mechanism (non-game, non-endangered species), most of our wildlife. Its goal is to raise \$350 million annually. New York State would be eligible to receive about \$17.5 million of this amount yearly. This initiative will probably be introduced and approved during the next session of Congress. More than 170 companies and organizations have endorsed it. A letter writing campaign to overcome opposition by some manufacturers and retailers of sports equipment has begun. These companies do not believe that consumers will be willing to pay the cost of the proposed surcharges. Supporters of the initiative encourage sending letters to L. L. Bean and other merchandisers of sports equipment. DEC expects to become more involved in explaining the initiative to the public and has developed, but not yet distributed, a slide program and a pamphlet for this purpose.

An Audit Committee consisting of Richard Sloss (Chair), Irving Cantor and Norman Stotz was elected unanimously. Bob Budliger responded to a question from the floor concerning the propriety of members of an organization auditing its financial records. He explained that not-for-profit organizations report their financial status to the NYS Department of State. The law does not require an outside audit unless income and net worth of the organization exceed certain values. The Federation's income and net worth are well below these thresholds. Only one of the three elected Audit Committee members is a member of the Executive Committee.

A Nominating Committee composed of William Lee, Chair, Stanley Lincoln and Chad Covey was proposed. Gerry Rising moved that the committee be elected. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by the Council of Delegates.

Berna Lincoln, Treasurer, presented the Annual Financial Report for the year ended December 31, 1994 and the associated explanation of the Federation's Balance Sheet. This report showed total assets of \$73,383.11, liabilities of \$3,845.20 and net worth of \$69,537.91. These totals reflected no material change in the financial status of the Federation during the past year. She reported that operating expenses for the year were

\$1,206.07 greater than income because of the cost of publication of the ten-year index of *The Kingbird*. A motion to accept this report was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Berna gave a brief synopsis of 1995 expenses to date. She explained that the *Bull's Birds of New York State* Fund had paid back a \$1,197.25 temporary advance from the General Memorial Fund. Berna stated that the Ann and Harry Reicher Foundation made a second \$5,000 donation, not restricted to funding the book, but intended for that purpose. Contributions of \$10,000 from the Reicher Foundation and \$6,650 from member clubs less approximately \$2,000 in expenses incurred to date leave a current balance of about \$14,500 in the *Bull's Birds of New York State* Fund.

Berna said that modifying the individual membership dues amount will be necessary in 1996. She expects the change will be elimination of the \$3.00 discount for timely payment. We raised individual membership dues from \$15.00 to \$18.00 per year in 1991. Prior to that, dues were last raised in 1982. Valerie Freer stated that the Federation did not raise annual dues for other individual membership categories (family, contributing and supporting members) in 1991. The cost of providing our services to each member is approximately \$20.00 per year.

Richard Sloss, Chair of the Bylaws Committee, read the proposed amendments to Article IV, Section 3 - Quorum of Council of Delegates Meeting and Article V, Section 3 - Terms of Office. The Executive Committee recommended adoption of these amendments and distributed copies to club presidents and permanent representatives as an enclosure to a letter dated July 9, 1995. The first proposed amendment modifies the requirement for a quorum at Annual Meetings of the Council of Delegates by reducing the required number of delegates from the present number to a lesser number allowed by New York State law. Proposed wording of Article IV, Section 3 is as follows: "Duly authorized delegates, present in person or by proxy pursuant to these bylaws, who collectively are entitled to cast one hundred votes or one-tenth of the total number of votes authorized to be cast in accordance with Section 1 of this article, whichever is lesser, shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be determined by the number present at the opening of the Council of Delegates meeting. A quorum shall not be destroyed by the departure of delegates after the opening roll call." The second proposed amendment specifies the beginning of the terms of office of newly elected officers. The proposed wording of Article V, Section 3 is as follows: "Officer-Directors shall be elected at each Annual Meeting of the Council of Delegates for terms that shall start immediately at the conclusion of said meeting at

which they are elected and shall continue until the conclusion of the next Annual Meeting of the Council of Delegates or until their replacements, if any, have taken office. No Officer-Director shall hold the same office for more than two consecutive years, except the Corresponding Secretary and the Treasurer. Nothing herein shall prevent the election to an office previously held if one year has elapsed between the holding of such office and the new term." A motion to approve these amendments was made by Stan Lincoln, seconded and adopted unanimously. Stan explained that the proposed amendments cannot take effect unless two-thirds of the 40 member clubs ratify them. Delegates at this Annual Meeting can certify approval if their clubs have authorized them to do so. Otherwise, their clubs will be informed by mail that the Council of Delegates has approved the amendments. We will request that these clubs notify the Federation's Recording Secretary of their positions concerning ratification.

Stan Lincoln stated that the Executive Committee and the Bylaws Committee are currently considering the definition of standing committees. The definition in our bylaws does not conform to New York State law concerning not-for-profit corporation governance.

Gerry Rising made and Stan Lincoln seconded a motion that the Executive Committee review and approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting prior to their publication in *The Kingbird*. Bob Budliger explained some problematic issues of governance of the Federation that the Executive Committee has discussed at some of its recent meetings. These relate to the privileges of individual members and member clubs, since clubs have votes at meetings of the Council of Delegates and individual members do not. Don Windsor said that organizations often find it difficult to identify people who are seriously interested in their activities and functions. He suggested that election of a committee to review the minutes of Annual Meetings might help the Federation to identify future officers and Executive Committee members. A majority voted against this motion.

A motion that the Council of Delegates empower the Executive Committee to review minutes of Annual Meetings prior to their publication in *The Kingbird*, with the Council retaining responsibility for their adoption at the next Annual Meeting, was then made by Laura Stenzler and seconded by Fran Rew. This motion was approved.

Bill Lee reported that Assemblyman Steven Engelbright has introduced a bill to make illegal the use of lead fishing sinkers in New York State. Bill said that a sponsor has introduced a similar bill in the State Senate. He asked whether the Council favored the intention of the Engelbright bill.

Gerry Rising moved that the Council endorse the Engelbright bill and its companion in the Senate. The motion was seconded and adopted unanimously.

Gerry Rising made and Laura Stenzler seconded a motion to endorse the Wildlife Funding Initiative. Don Windsor expressed his personal opposition to a new tax such as this. Bob Budliger explained that about 20 years ago a similar tax on purchases of photographic equipment was proposed. It provided no value to the purchaser and Congress rejected it. The Wildlife Funding Initiative benefits the purchaser by providing funds to support the objects of his or her interest, non-game wildlife species. Sportsmen have for many years paid license and duck stamp fees so that they may legally engage in their sport. Bird seed suppliers are among those opposing this initiative. The initiative proposes an added tax. The sportsmen do not want to share with us their present control of state and federal conservation bureaucracies and policies. All the beneficiary groups will want to share the benefits of this power. Bob said that this is a long-term project. It will probably be many years before Congress enacts a fee structure. He recommended that we continue to evaluate this proposal and authorize the Executive Committee to monitor its progress and make sure that it meets the objectives we seek as legislators modify it and introduce it in Congress. Gerry and Laura agreed to modify their motion to include the following:

- (1) The Council of Delegates authorizes the Executive Committee to study and monitor the progress of the Wildlife Funding Initiative to decide whether it meets the needs of the Federation,
- (2) we authorize the President to endorse the philosophy of this initiative, providing he is assured that it does not replace existing sources of funding for protection of non-game wildlife, and
- (3) we delegate to the President the power to appoint representatives of the Federation to advisory groups formed to deal with this initiative.

The Council of Delegates approved the amended motion unanimously.

Valerie Freer moved and Stan Lincoln seconded the motion that the Federation donate generously from its funds to the *Bull's Birds of New York State Fund* to set an example that will encourage contributions by member clubs and outside sources. Berna Lincoln said that we don't have adequate information to make a specific commitment of funds at this time. Manny Levine said that the Federation has agreed to underwrite the costs of the project and guarantee its completion to the limit of the value of its General Memorial Fund. Stan recommended that the Federation contribute a specific amount to be decided by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Treasurer. Valerie approved rewording of her motion to

incorporate Stan's recommendation. The Council approved the amended motion. Gerry Rising urged the Executive Committee to address the possibility of changing the name of the Federation. He pointed out that we are a federation of member clubs that provide only a small part of our operating budget and that individual members may or may not belong to a member club.

Bob Budliger, President-elect, encouraged the delegates to return to their member clubs and discuss with club officers and members the challenging questions concerning the objectives, governance and name of the Federation, i.e., who we are and what we want to be. Bob noted that 600 individual dues paying members currently have no direct voice in the decision making processes of the organization they support financially. He intends to write a letter to member clubs that will initiate discussion of these issues. He said we need to preserve the things we do very effectively and pledged to address the above issues this year.

Bill Lee announced that the Executive Committee will hold its next meeting at Sullivan County Community College at 9:30 A.M. Saturday, November 11.

Phyllis Jones made and Stan Lincoln seconded a motion to adjourn. A voice vote approved it. President Bill Lee adjourned the meeting of the Council of Delegates at 11:55 A.M.

The host club sponsored the following workshop presentations
Friday evening:

Sketching from Nature by Mark Baldwin of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute

Counting Migrants by Jim Stasz, Coordinator, North American Migration Count

Photographing Dragonflies by Ted Taft, Sr. of the Lake Erie Bird Club

Bluebird Conservation by Jeff Wells of the New York State Bluebird Society

During the papers session Saturday afternoon, moderated by Richard Miga of the Lake Erie Bird Club, the following papers were presented:

"Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) - Winter Territories and Suet Feeders, Do Downies Commute or Relocate?" by Amy L.

Gordon and John L. Confer

"Wood Thrush Nesting" by Gian Dodici

"Yes! We See Eagles, Osprey and Now and Then a Peregrine, The Story of an Evolving Hawk Watch, The Ripley Picket Line" by John Luensmann

"California Gnatcatcher and the Changes in the Coastal Race of the Cactus Wren" by Michael Fugagli

"Retired - A Paper Session Ends" by Allen Benton

At the banquet Saturday evening Joanne Goetz, President of the Lake Erie Bird Club, welcomed the delegates to the Annual Meeting and the banquet.

Bill Lee thanked the nine clubs that with donations prior to and during this meeting have contributed approximately \$9,000 to the *Bull's Birds of New York State* Fund. Three clubs, Capital District Audubon Society (not a member club), Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and Huntington Audubon Society have contributed \$2,000 each. Six clubs have donated lesser amounts, ranging from \$50 to \$500. They are Cayuga Bird Club, Genessee Ornithological Society, North Country Bird Club, Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, Rockland Audubon Society and Sullivan County Audubon Society.

The previously listed awards were presented and Phyllis Jones, President of the Sullivan County Audubon Society, accepted the Member Club Award for support of a project to computerize Sullivan County bird records.

Barbara Butler of the Resolutions Committee read the resolution thanking the Lake Erie Bird Club for its hospitality and management of this year's Annual Meeting. She also presented a resolution expressing the thanks and appreciation of the Federation to Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr. for his many years of dedicated service as Editor of *New York Birders*.

Bill Lee announced the appointment of Phyllis Jones as Editor of *New York Birders*.

The banquet speaker was Dr. Michael Reed, Assistant Director of Research, Biosciences Research Center, University of Nevada in Reno, who spoke on "Patterns of Extinction." Through his research Dr. Reed has developed methods of evaluating the status of species, hopefully in time to avert extinction. He explained that species are more vulnerable if they occupy small ranges or specialized habitats. Overgrazing is a particular threat to species dependent on riparian habitats. He also stated that migration poses a special threat because it involves several habitats: summer, winter and migratory. Human technology has resulted in other threats, e.g., modern transportation has made competition from introduced species more likely. Dr. Reed recommended use of surveys to identify those species that are likely to face difficulty in surviving. We can then take action before these life forms reach the brink of extinction.

Respectfully submitted,
William B. Reeves, Recording Secretary

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON 1995-96

Robert Spahn

716 High Tower Way, Webster NY 14580

By reading the regional reports, you will discover a host of ways to say it was a long, tough winter with much more colorful adjectives. With more or less expected variations, the pattern was similar across the state. A snowy November was followed by a very snowy, cold December and a first half of January which continued the snow and produced many record cold temperatures. Then came the Big Thaw, with record high temperatures set, rain storms with some lightning and thunder and high winds, and moderate to devastating flooding, as the deep snowcover melted in a rush. January temperatures averaged near normal, a useless statistic. February was tamer, with average to a bit less snowfall and precipitation and average to a little above temperatures. Many regions saw the start of spring migration for waterfowl, hawks, blackbirds, and assorted other species. In many places there were patches of bare ground showing before season's end.

The impact of the weather is often difficult to see in the reports. In several regions the season was split by the CBC period, with decent birding before and through, but birds hard to find later, actually not terribly atypical for winter. In addition to the weather effects, note of very poor wild food crops was universal. Yet, species counts were good for many CBCs across the state and Big January listers in Region 2 turned up an all-time high January list. However, total numbers of individuals was definitely down on most CBCs and the FWC. Still, some species were counted in record high numbers. Impacts of the various factors are never really simple; deep snow and frozen water may kill or push out birds, or it may concentrate them in the remaining usable habitat or at feeders where they are easily counted if the timing is right.

A scan through the checklist seems like a good way to capture the essence of this season. Most water birds were concentrated or pushed out by hard freezes in December through mid-January. This was reflected in most waterfowl counts. By mid to late February, they were on the move back into most Regions. Loons and grebes were scarce, except for the last of the loon counts in Regions 2 & 3 and Red-necked Grebe counts in Regions 3, 9, & 10. Eared Grebe was located in Regions 1, 2, 9, & 10. Double-crested Cormorant numbers were well down for the season. There were few notes relative to the herons and egrets, except for a very rare winter Tricolored Heron in Region 10. Tundra Swan and Snow

Goose were particularly widespread, being sighted in seven and six Regions, respectively. Mute Swan continues to spread, with observations in five Regions. For the second consecutive winter, an imm. Trumpeter Swan appeared in Region 2 for an extended period. [A hot-off-the press update is a newspaper article in Region 2 on a DEC confirmed nesting and hatching of four young on private land in Wayne County this May.] Rare goose reports included: Ross' Goose in Regions 3 & 9 and Greater White-fronted Goose and Barnacle Goose in Region 10. Puddle duck numbers were generally low, though all species except for Blue-winged Teal were located, some rare for the Regions reporting. Among the divers, again the raft counts seemed low. Good numbers, given their depressed populations, are: 12,000 Canvasback in Region 1 and Redhead at 5000 in Region 2 and 7000 in Region 3. There were also big numbers of Common Eider off Montauk point in Region 10. Rarer divers included: a regional first Tufted Duck in Region 2, as well as the usual few in Region 10; Harlequin Duck in Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, & 10; and Barrow's Goldeneye in Regions 6 (hybrid), 8, & 10.

Raptors, too, presented a general picture of reduced numbers for most species in most areas, yet good species diversity. On the positive side we find: wintering Turkey Vulture in seven Regions, including Regions 6 & 7 in January!; Black Vulture at a TV roost in Region 2, in addition to the usual birds in Region 9; Osprey late in four Regions; good winter numbers for both Bald Eagle and the rarer Golden Eagle; good accipiter numbers in most regions; Red-shouldered Hawk found in five Regions; Merlin, typically more than one report each from *nine* Regions, including a first in the winter in Region 4; Peregrine Falcon in five Regions; and Gyrfalcon in Regions 1, 5, 7, 9, & 10. There was also a rare "rufous morph" Red-tailed Hawk described in Region 3. On the down side were very poor numbers of N. Harrier and low counts for Rough-legged Hawk in all except Regions 4 & 8, where numbers were better.

The shorebird and gull/tern reports were even more dismal. There were only eleven total shorebird notes aside from a typical five Regions reporting Killdeer. The most interesting were: two very late Am. Golden-Plover in Region 10, a count of 200 Red Knot in Region 10, and a February Long-billed Dowitcher in Region 9. Generally gull numbers were low, but there was a good collection of Thayer's Gull reports from three Regions, Lesser Black-backed Gull in six Regions, and good numbers of Iceland and Glaucous gulls in nine and eight Regions, respectively. Other records of interest were: Laughing Gull in Region 8; very late Ross' Gull and Sabine's Gull in Region 1; Black-legged Kittiwake in Regions 1, 2, & 9; a late Common Tern in Region 10; and, amazing for both rarity and

date, a 10 December Least Tern in Region 1.

Owls made their best showing in many years, possibly being pushed to more accessible locations by deep snow and/or a low prey populations. Snowy Owl was present in very low numbers, except for Regions 6 & 10. N. Hawk Owl visited Region 6. Barred owl was reported in seven Regions. An influx of Great Gray Owl touched Regions 5, 7, 8, and 9, with multiple birds in some of these. Short-eared Owl was scarce in most Regions; records often seem to fluctuate in sync with N. Harrier using the same habitats. N. Saw-whet Owl was noted in all ten Regions, though often dead or in need of rehabilitation. A freshly dead Boreal Owl was picked up in Region 2 on 1 January. Finally, E. Screech-Owl and Great Horned Owl were both found in good numbers on CBCs.

Lumping together a forgotten few and picking up the woodpeckers, we note Wild Turkey in numbers reaching the nuisance level for farmers. Note a total for all CBCs in Region 4 of 2821 turkeys, four times the previous such high. A very late Yellow Rail was reported in mid-December in Region 10. Finally, among the woodpeckers, we find Red-bellied numbers particularly good in range expansion areas and Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker noted in eight Regions, wintering through in most of these. It is always interesting to study the passerine reports in any season, but especially the half-hardies in winter. Nearly all regular species were reported somewhere, often in multiple Regions. Studying the reports, a sample of what you should find includes: E. Phoebe in five Regions; a rare Say's Phoebe in Region 8; Tree Swallow to 30 Dec in Region 10; Carolina Wren still low, but increasing in most Regions; Winter Wren in six Regions; a very late Sedge Wren in Region 10; Marsh Wren in Regions 2 & 8; Ruby-crowned Kinglet in Regions 2, 4, & 8; some widespread concern over E. Bluebird numbers; Hermit Thrush scarce, but reported in six Regions; Am. Robin counts low relative to recent history; Gray Catbird in Regions 4 & 8; Brown Thrasher in Regions 1, 2, & 5; Am. Pipit in Region 10; only four Regions with Yellow-rumped Warbler, but Region 10 with six additional species of warbler, and Region 9 joining them with Palm Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat; Chipping Sparrow in Regions 1, 2, & 8; Field Sparrow in six Regions; Vesper Sparrow only in Region 10; Savannah Sparrow in Regions 2, 7, & 8; Dickcissel in Region 10; Sharp-tailed Sparrow (sp.) in Regions 9 & 10; Fox Sparrow in Region 7; Lincoln's Sparrow in Region 10; White-throated Sparrow counts low, but White-crowned high; and Baltimore Oriole found dead in Region 2 and also noted in Region 10. Certainly a good list for a difficult winter!

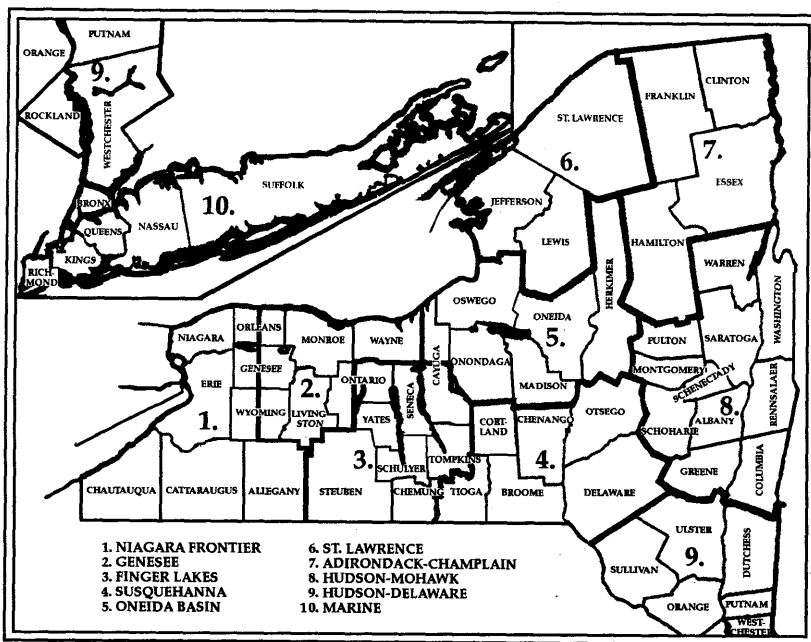
Among the more expected passerines at this season, special notes of interest include: Fish Crow expanding to five Regions; Common Raven in

seven Regions; Black-capped Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch invasions not large (see banding notes in the Region 8 account); Tufted Titmouse counts high in expansion areas; a good year for Bohemian Waxwing, reported in nine Regions, with some excellent numbers; and Cedar Waxwing less numerous. This season probably brought the greatest N. Shrike invasion yet recorded in the State. The invasion was statewide and numbers eclipse former highs for day counts and totals in most areas. Also on the upside were: good counts of Lapland Longspur - eight Regions; Snow Bunting - with counts of 1000+ in Regions 1, 2, 3, and 4; E. Meadowlark - six Regions; and Rusty Blackbird - five Regions. In contrast was the bust where we expected a Finch Winter. All species were recorded, Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak in decent numbers, but there were almost no crossbills, few Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak, and very few Purple Finch. The salvation of the finch story is Hoary Redpoll in six Regions, with multiple birds in most of these. It is interesting to speculate how much of this burst in reports comes from recent articles to the effect that: "You too can confidently ID Hoary Redpoll, even the many which look very much like Common Redpolls."

Truly, it was an interesting season for birds and birders; they all are in some way!! Wrapping it up, the BOTS Award must go to the wayward Northern Fulmar in Region 7, rehabbed and released later on the coast.

Standard abbreviations: Regional rarities appear in *bold italics*; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPERCASE 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; BBS — Breeding Bird Survey; CBC — Christmas Bird Count; CO — confirmed nesting; Com. — Common; E. — Eastern; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; juv — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; N. — Northern; NYSDEC — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township; W. — Western; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.

REPORTING 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.

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

REGION 1 - NIAGARA FRONTIER

Willie D'Anna

2257 Cayuga Drive Extension, Niagara Falls NY 14304-4522

December continued the cold snowy conditions from November and mid-winter reigned before the season even officially began. Sixty-one inches of snow fell in Buffalo, a full three feet above normal, making this the second snowiest December in history. A 24-hour record, 38 inches of snow, plastered the city on 9 and 10 December, the result of a very narrow and unwavering lake effect band. At Grand Island and Niagara Falls, just north of Buffalo, less than two inches fell on those days! The average temperature of 24.5°F was 4.6° below the norm, making this the coldest December in six years. With November and December combining for one of the harshest early winters in decades, it is not surprising that Lake Erie hit 32 degrees on 12 December, the earliest date ever. Amity Lake in ALLE began heavy ice cover on 17 November, also exceptionally early (VP).

In spite of the fact that the east coast's "Blizzard of '96" missed the Region, January saw the weather continue as one of the most frequent topics of conversation. The first two weeks of the month were bitterly cold with the thermometer falling to -10°F at Buffalo on the sixth. On the same date it reached -34°F at Cuba ALLE. The next two weeks brought warm air, rain, and major flooding on the Allegheny and Genesee rivers, the two largest drainage sources in the Region. As a result, a state of emergency was declared for ALLE and parts of CATT on 19 January. For the month snowfall was about normal at 25.3 inches, and the average temperature of 22.5°F was 1.1° below normal. The severity of winter to this point should have meant few half-hardies. Even though observer effort was about average, such was not the case. Many of the songbird sightings were at feeding stations, as might be expected, but many were also not.

February offered a respite from the intense weather preceding it. The 12 inches of snow were six below normal while the average temperature of 24.2°F was almost exactly normal. Conditions were often benign and the ground was bare in many parts of the Region through much of the month. A warm spell 7-11 February brought the first migrant Am. Robin, Red-winged Blackbird, Com. Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Nine Christmas Bird Counts were conducted in the Region 16 December to 1 January and were compiled by Gerry Rising. Although the species total of 113 was only average, it was seven more than last year,

during a much milder winter. Among the highlights were impressive numbers of waterfowl on the Buffalo count, including over 12,000 Canvasback, nearly 10,000 Common Merganser, and 308 Lesser Scaup. Studying groups of species shows hawks, gulls, and finches at six-year lows while woodpeckers and sparrows plus allies were at six-year highs. Species markedly down were: N. Harrier, Ruffed Grouse, Ring-billed and Herring gulls, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Com. Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird. House Finch was down 36% from the previous low, last year. It is commonly held that the major cause of this is an eye infection which many birders can notice on this species at their feeders. Many of the birds in the above list were undoubtedly down because of earlier departures than normal from the Region, an effect of the harsh weather. This may be particularly true of the gulls and the blackbird group. Species at significant six-year highs were: Red-bellied Woodpecker (about twice the previous high), N. Cardinal, White-crowned Sparrow, and Snow Bunting (five times the previous high). Wild Turkey was also way up at three times its previous best. Numbers of this species have been consistently increasing. There were few exceptional sightings. The best were: Merlin, the latest-ever Sabine's Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, E. Phoebe, Bohemian Waxwing, Chipping Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill.

The last half of January saw a large concentration of waterfowl on the Niagara River between the ice boom on Lake Erie and the Peace Bridge at Buffalo. Red-breasted Merganser and Greater Scaup were present in the highest numbers. It is believed that Buffalo's Gyr Falcon, back for its fourth straight year, may have supplemented its Rock Dove diet with duck soup from this area. Several less than common species of ducks were found between the Peace Bridge and Niagara Falls, including a Harlequin Duck. After the superlative fall season for gulls, numbers dropped rapidly in December. On 20 Jan Gordon Bellerby had the unique experience of not finding a single gull or duck on the lower Niagara River! He attributed this to the muddied waters from the recent snowmelt. An influx of Mute Swan in February, both on the river and on Lake Ontario, was unusual. This species has not been regular in the Region since the long-lived individual of the Buffalo waterfront died a few years ago. Perhaps we are overdue to have this alien species establish itself here but its destructive tendencies toward other nesting waterfowl do not endear it to birders.

Wintering owls and Rough-legged Hawk were well down in numbers, especially Snowy Owl. N. Shrike, however, were more numerous

than I have ever experienced, being found throughout the Region.

Snow Bunting was widespread during the harsh weather, though usually not in huge flocks. When it turned mild they were difficult to locate. Am. Tree Sparrow was in well-above-average numbers as were Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper. Normally rare but regular on the Lake Ontario Plain in winter, White-crowned Sparrow was relatively numerous there with sightings elsewhere as well. Com. Redpoll and Evening Grosbeak were found in good though not high numbers, with the Southern Tier producing most of the sightings. Purple Finch and Pine Siskin were scarce. White-winged Crossbill and Pine Grosbeak were found at one location each while Red Crossbill was unreported.

Rarities not yet mentioned include Eared Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Peregrine Falcon, Black-legged Kittiwake, **Least Tern**, and **Hoary Redpoll**.

Contributors: Robert Andrie, Gordon Bellerby, William Bogacki, Robert Brock, Elizabeth Brooks, Doris Burton, Drew Campbell, Bruce Chilton, Willie D'Anna, Michael Davis, Dean DiTommaso, Marcy Foster, Walt Franklin, Joanne Goetz (JGz), Joe Gula, Barbara Henderson, Linda Holmes, Audrey Horbett, Hans Kunze, David & Marty Junkin, Ronald Lange, Michael Morgante, Judy Mosher, Terry Mosher, Catherine Mueller, Michael Pitzrick, Raymond Pitzrick, Vivian Pitzrick, Betsy Potter, Karen Rader, Frances Rew, Gerald Rising, Donald Roberson, Chuck Rosenburg, Olga Rosche, Kayo Roy (KR0), Bert Schweigert, Gail Seamans, David (Buffalo RBA) and Debra Suggs, Robert Sundell, Joe Thill, Michael Turisk, Roberta Vallone, Regina VanScoy (RVS), William Watson, Anita Wierzba, Peter Yoerg.

Abbreviations: BH-Buffalo Harbor; BRBA-Buffalo Rare Bird Alert; CBCs-nine combined Christmas Bird Counts, 16 Dec-1 Jan. DH-Dunkirk Harbor; INWR-Iroquois NWR; NF-Niagara Falls; NR-Niagara River.

LOONS-WATERFOWL: Red-throated Loon: no reports! **Com. Loon:** last NF 5 Jan. **Pied-billed Grebe:** up to five DH thru; one Buffalo thru; Olean 7,13 Jan (BS), rare CATT in winter. **Horned Grebe:** 1,2 DH 1,5 Feb (FR), only report after early Jan. **Red-necked Grebe:** last NF 4 Dec; two DH 13 Jan (BRBA); T Somerset 17 Feb, rare in winter. **Eared Grebe:** NR-Buffalo 2 Dec (RA!); rare. **Great Blue Heron:** three T Cold Spring 13 Jan (BS), exceptional number CATT for winter; max 31 Motor Is.-NR 17 Dec (WW). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** two returned to Buffalo back yard spruce tree thru 11 Jan (RB). **Tundra Swan:** max 28 upper NR thru; Jamestown 8 Feb (BRBA); only reports after Dec. **Mute Swan:** two Golden Hill SP 25 Feb (MM!); two T Wilson 25 Feb (MM!); four Buffalo-NR 25 Feb

(CM!,WW!), unprecedented influx. **Snow Goose**: max 13 white + two blue Oak Orchard WMA 2 Dec (WW); last blue T Porter 23 Dec (WD!). **Wood Duck**: last DH 28 Dec (TM). **Green-winged Teal**: last one Chestnut Ridge CBC 30 Dec. **N. Pintail**: Buffalo 5 Jan (MM), only report. **N. Shoveler**: last 46 Batavia Sewage Lagoons 2 Dec (WW). **Am. Wigeon**: arr Jamestown 28 Feb (BRBA). **Canvasback**: 12719 CBCs, very high total; *intro*. **Redhead**: max 146 upper NR 14 Feb (DR). **Ring-necked Duck**: max 24 Buckhorn Is. SP 22 Dec (BC); up to six upper NR thru; Olean 7 Jan (BS), rare CATT in winter; more than normal. **Greater Scaup**: *intro*. **Lesser Scaup**: more than normal NR; 308 CBCs total. **Harlequin Duck**: female returned Buffalo-NR to 18 Jan. **Surf Scoter**: ad male Buffalo 28 Jan (WD!) and Buckhorn Is. SP 18 Feb (MM!,PY!), same bird? **White-winged Scoter**: fairly common L. Ontario this winter. **Hooded Merganser**: seven Olean 13 Jan (BS), rare CATT in winter; more than usual NR and DH. **Com. Merganser**: 9923 CBCs; *intro*. **Red-breasted Merganser**: *intro*. **Ruddy Duck**: last three Batavia Sewage Lagoons 2 Dec (WW).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: arr Evangola SP 26 Feb (DD!), continues a trend of early sightings. **Bald Eagle**: adult with green wing-tag, at least 13 years old, returned to lower NR in Dec; multiple sightings included seven NR and three Chautauqua L, most ever recorded in winter. **Merlin**: Buffalo CBC 17 Dec (RL!), only report; the female at Univ. of Buffalo did not return for a sixth year. **Peregrine Falcon**: one chasing a Short-eared Owl Buckhorn Is. SP Dec (BRBA); pair downtown Buffalo through Feb (PY!). **GYRFALCON**: ad gray morph Buffalo Harbor returned for fourth winter 11 Nov, last reported 15 miles to south T Evans 17 Feb (CR!). **Ruffed Grouse**: *intro*. **Wild Turkey**: *intro*. **Am. Coot**: up to three Buffalo-NR thru; 376 Dunkirk CBC 1 Jan, exceptional Jan count. **Killdeer**: last Conewango WMA CATT 31 Dec (BS). **Purple Sandpiper**: DH 2 Jan (JG), only report away from NF. **Red or Red-necked Phalarope**: NF 3 Dec (BS); either species is rare. **Little Gull**: max 16 mouth of NR 24 Feb (GB), usual mid-late winter influx; two DH 10 Dec (TM); one Four Mile Creek SP 23 Dec (WD,DD), only reports away from NR. **Bonaparte's Gull**: max 16500 mouth of NR 2-21 Dec (GB); down to 0 on NR late Jan. **Thayer's Gull**: three Buffalo and NF 3-4 Feb (WD,DD), only NR report after Dec; second-winter T Somerset 17 Feb (WD,DD), rare away from NR. **Iceland Gull**: first-winter Chaut. L. where rare 3,4 Feb (BRBA), only report away from NR and Great Lakes. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: three reports, probably four birds, NR Jan and Feb, more than usual for after Dec. **Glaucous Gull**: only small numbers NR and Great Lakes. **Great Black-backed Gull**: 270 DH 1 Feb (FR), high count. **Black-legged**

Kittiwake: three NF 2 Dec (mob); ad Niagara Power Project-NR 3 Dec (PY!,BH), very rare plumage; last Lewiston-NR 1 Jan (WD!,MT!). **ROSS' GULL:** Buffalo 1 Jan (MF,DC), probably same bird seen here in Nov. **Sabine's Gull:** NF-NR 1-23 Dec (mob), latest ever. **LEAST TERN:** imm. DH 10 Dec (TM!,JM), extraordinary both for its rarity and lateness, same bird as seen 6 Nov?

DOVES -WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl:** Beaver Meadow CBC 16 Dec; T Wheatfield 17 Feb (WD), only reports. **Long-eared Owl:** two T Lockport 1 Jan (CR), only report away from L. Ontario plain; scarce. **Short-eared Owl:** max six T Lancaster 24 Dec (MM), only location away from lake plains. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** Jamestown CBC 17 Dec, only report. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** Jamestown CBC 17 Dec, only report. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 108 CBCs, highest ever. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Beaver Meadow CBC 16 Dec, only report.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **E. Phoebe:** Evangola SP 16 Dec (BC!); Jamestown CBC 17 Dec; T Java 19 Dec (DJ!), all very late. **Am. Crow:** 4363 CBCs, six year low belies burgeoning numbers in Region. **Tufted Titmouse:** 231 CBCs, second highest count ever. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro.* **Brown Creeper:** *intro.* **Carolina Wren:** max eight CBCs, only three on CBCs last year. **Winter Wren:** no reports after Dec. **Hermit Thrush:** Four Mile Creek SP 1 Jan (BP); T Porter 12 Jan (WD), only reports after Dec. **Am. Robin:** 90 T Porter 20 Jan (WD); only singles elsewhere, scarce **VARIED THRUSH:** Grand Island ERIE 11,12 Dec (AW,WBu!,ph), about the ninth Regional report. **Brown Thrasher:** East Aurora ERIE 25 Feb (MD), only report. **Bohemian Waxwing:** three T Porter 22,23 Dec (WD!); T Newfane 11 Feb (KR0), only reports fall and winter. **N. Shrike:** 47 CBCs, six-year high; *intro.*

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** ten Dunkirk CBC 1 Jan; T Lewiston 3 Feb (WD,BP); T Porter 17 Feb (MD,KR), only reports after Dec.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** 1514 CBCs, six year high. **E. Towhee:** six Jamestown CBC 17 Dec, high count; Williamsville ERIE at least through 7 Jan (BRBA), only reports. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** *intro.* **Chipping Sparrow:** Buckhorn Is. SP 4 Dec (BC!); T Wheatfield 25-31 Dec (WD!,BP); East Aurora 30 Dec thru (BRBA); Buffalo 8 Feb thru (PY!,BH), more than usual. **Field Sparrow:** five CBCs, six year high; T Great Valley all season (BS), rare after Dec. **Swamp Sparrow:** two CBCs; last Buckhorn

Is. SP 22 Dec (BC). **White-crowned Sparrow**: 43 CBCs, six year high; 28 T Porter 23 Dec (mob); Williamsville Glen ERIE 11 Jan (PY); T Somerset 17 Feb (BP); two Belmont ALLE 1 Dec through (DB), excellent showing. **Lapland Longspur**: three Beaver Meadow CBC 16 Dec; T Freedom 7 Jan (BS); max 39 T Somerset 12 Jan (WD), highest count in five years; DH 14 Jan (FR,AH), only reports. **Snow Bunting**: 3580 CBCs, six year high; 600 T Freedom 7 Jan (BS); 1000 T Somerset 14 Jan (PY,BH), max counts. **Red-winged Blackbird**: 23 CBCs, six year low; 28 T Tonawanda 13 Feb (WW), mix of wintering birds and migrants. **E. Meadowlark**: two T Wilson (D&DS), only report after Dec. **Rusty Blackbird**: arr T Leon 16 Feb (FR), only report. **Com. Grackle**: eight CBCs, six year low; four T Tonawanda 13 Feb (WW), mix of wintering birds and migrants. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: max 210 T Tonawanda 20 Dec (WW). **Pine Grosbeak**: ten 23 Dec (WD); seven T Porter 21 Jan (MD,KR), only reports. **Purple Finch**: T Great Valley 28 Jan (BS), only report after CBCs; *intro*. **House Finch**: *intro*. **White-winged Crossbill**: 12 St. Bonaventure CBC 16 Dec, only report. **Com. Redpoll**: 110 CBCs; 78 T Porter 1 Jan (MM, WD); 120+ five locations ALLE Jan and Feb, max counts. **HOARY REDPOLL**: ad male T Somerset (DD!,WD!), very rare. **Pine Siskin**: four CBCs, six year low; T Warsaw 1 Dec thru (HK); Greenwood ALLE 3 Dec (WF); T Wales 29 Jan (OR), only reports. **Am. Goldfinch**: 701 CBCs, six year low. **Evening Grosbeak**: counts of 25-100 ALLE, WYOM, CATT, scarce north of Buffalo.

REGION 2 - GENESEE

KEVIN C. GRIFFITH

61 Grandview Lane, Rochester NY 14612

The winter season had its usual interesting conditions. The typical seesaw in temperatures was noticeable during the bulk of the season. For the most part it was cold. A couple of periods of thawing, primarily in January and February, made it bearable. December's average temperature was 25.3°F, which was 3.8° below normal. January averaged 0.1° above normal at 23.7°F, and February's average of 24.6° was 0.1° below normal. Precipitation was not drastically different from normal. December showed the greatest deviation from the norm with 1.5", 1.23" below normal. January was just over an inch above normal at 3.18", and February was only slightly below normal at 1.72".

A key word for this winter must be snow. The continuous snowfall

was expected to severely impact the variety of bird species and numbers of individuals this season. December had a total of 20.5", January totaled 36.9", and February added 14.1" If you combine that with the overall impression of a poor wild food crop, then a dismal season was in the offing. This proved not to be the case. The total number of species was very high. The combination of the Christmas Bird Counts and another big January push by a number of area birders produced a very impressive list of species. The snow and cold seemed not to deter the birders.

The CBC results were about normal in terms of the number of species. The Letchworth-Silver Lake (16 Dec), Rochester (17 Dec), and Little Lakes (30 Dec) CBC's tallied 70, 94, and 72 species, respectively. A low-point was the lack of waterfowl due to the nearly complete freezeup of lakes, bays and ponds. Fortunately the days were pleasant enough to produce good numbers of other species.

It also seems that we are becoming better at finding birds in winter. As has been the case in recent years, Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids pursued Big January lists. Don and Donna Traver also pushed for a big total. These groups, along with the other regional observers, produced a record total of 133 species for January. This included seven species which do not even appear on our regular checklist.

The waterbird picture was actually quite good. Both loons and all the regular grebes were reported, plus an Eared Grebe was found by Allan, Dan and David Strong on Conesus Lake on 26 Dec. It was an unusual time of the year for this species which occurs here sporadically. An immature Northern Gannet at Hamlin Beach on 8 December was spotted by Brett Ewald and William Symonds. This followed several sightings in the fall. Most ducks were reported, with the highlight being a regional first Tufted Duck found by Mike Davids on 24 Dec in the Genesee River at Charlotte. The bird remained in the area for the season and provided many observers with an opportunity to see this species for the first time. Other waterfowl highlights included a Common Eider found by Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow at Oklahoma Beach on 21 Jan, two adult King Eider spotted by William Symonds at Hamlin Beach on 16 Feb, a Harlequin Duck discovered at Manitou by Richard O'Hara and Robert and Susan Spahn on 2 Dec, and three Harlequin Duck found at Sodus Point by Don and Donna Traver on 13 Jan. These latter, very cooperative birds, stayed through the month. Also of interest was a Trumpeter Swan which appeared at Irondequoit Bay in January. This is the second year in a row that an immature has wintered in the Region. The origin of this bird is still unknown. It is suspected that both birds have come from a reintroduction program in Ontario, Canada.

A Black Vulture was discovered roosting with Turkey Vulture at Letchworth State Park in December. This bird was observed into January. The raptor season was characterized by good reports of accipiters as well as above normal numbers of sightings of Peregrine Falcon and Merlin. Bald Eagle was well reported, but Rough-legged Hawk was noted only in the Retsoff area. Sora was reported only in February, Virginia Rail in both December and January. The latter has become a regular occurrence. It was a dismal winter for shorebird reports. Common Snipe was the only species reported. There were no late lingerers and not even a winter Killdeer report. Gulls on the other hand were plentiful. Bonaparte's Gull was reported in small numbers and Little Gull was fairly easy to find off of Durand-Eastman Park in December and even into January. There were two reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull in January and two in February. White-winged gulls were well represented this year. A max of 32 Glaucous Gull was counted at Charlotte by Bob Marcotte and Dick O'Hara from the 8-11 of Jan. A fish kill at the Russell Station power plant caused by a warm water discharge brought a high concentration of gulls in early February. Black-legged Kittiwake reports continued the fall trend, with three immatures being observed on the Rochester CBC by William Symonds. It was a first for that count. A single immature was discovered by Mike Davids at Irondequoit Bay on 28 Dec.

The owl picture was highlighted by the discovery of a dead Boreal Owl near the town of Perry in January by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids. Snowy Owl was scarce and Short-eared Owl also seemed down. The Davids and Tetlow team found five species of owls in Bergen Swamp on the first of January. This included Long-eared and Northern Saw-Whet owls. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was once again visiting feeders in the area. One was reported for the eighth year in a row, at times joined by a second, in Irondequoit and another was seen in Penfield.

Half-hardy passerine species were few this year. Those that were found were represented by single individuals. There were two Eastern Phoebe reported in December and one of those was seen again in early January. The first was seen at Hamlin Beach State Park on 2 Dec and the other was reported from the Conesus Lake area on 30 Dec. It is doubtful that they survived the winter. Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush and Brown Thrasher were also reported. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet in February was unusual. Bohemian Waxwing continued to be reported throughout the season. There were good numbers of Northern Shrike.

Sparrow reports included: Eastern Towhee at Hamlin Beach and in Perinton in December and January; Chipping, Field, and Savannah sparrows all located in January; good numbers of American Tree Sparrow;

and unusually high totals for White-crowned Sparrow, often outnumbering White-throated Sparrow. Observers also remarked that Snow Bunting and Lapland Longspur were easy to find and present in decent numbers.

Rusty Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and a dead Baltimore Oriole found in Piffard in January were the only icterid records of special note. The expected finch winter never really materialized, though there were reports of most species. Pine Grosbeak was fairly consistent in Webster Park, and two Red Crossbill were found in Durand-Eastman Park on 15 January by Dave Tetlow. Hoary Redpoll was observed in a number of locations, with two visiting my feeder in Greece during January.

All in all, you'd have to say that it was a pretty good winter season.

Contributors: John Boettcher, Braddock Bay Raptor Research (Jeff Dodge, Brian Sullivan), Carolyn Cass, Belma Cerosaletti, Gary Chapin, Anne Clarridge, Jerry Czech, Mike Davids, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Brett Ewald, Jeanine & Kurt Fox, Roy Grau, Kevin Griffith, Lucretia Grosshans, Ralph Guenther, William Hallahan, Harriet Hamilton, Greg Hartenstein, Jim Kimball, Allan & Sandy Klonick, John Lehr, Gerry Leubner, Bob Marcotte, Richard Mather, Robert McKinney, Richard O'Hara, Tom Painting, Mike Peter, Bill & Betty Powell, Dominic Sherony, Bob & Ruth Shone, Robert, Susan & Cathy Spahn, Paul, Sue, Dave & Jeff Spindler, Allan, Dan, David & Grace Strong, William Symonds, Dave Tetlow, JoAnn, Mike, Justin & Glenn Tetlow, Don & Donna Traver, Ann Watson.

Abbreviations: BB - Braddock Bay, CH - Charlotte, CL - Conesus Lake, DE - Durand-Eastman Park and adjacent waters, G - Greece, HB - Hamlin Beach State Park, IB - Irondequoit Bay, LP - Letchworth State Park, P - Perinton, R - Retsof, SB - Sodus Bay, W - Webster WL - West Lakeshore.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** max 407 HB 3 Dec. **Com. Loon:** one HB 13 Jan, few reports this year. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one SB 1,14-15 Jan, uncommon in winter. **Red-necked Grebe:** last two HB 15 Dec. **Eared Grebe:** CL 26 Dec (A,D,& DS). **N. Gannet:** one imm 8 Dec (BE,WS), late. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one G 21 Dec; one IB 22-26 Jan, late. **Tundra Swan:** max 74 CL 10 Dec. **Green-winged Teal:** singles Penfield, East Lakeshore, and CL various Jan dates, uncommon. **Mallard:** max 2000 Elba 1-31 Jan. **Redhead:** max 5000+ Canandaigua Lake 13 Jan (RO'H). **TUFTED DUCK:** male CH 24 Dec thru (MD,mob), first regional record. **Greater Scaup:** max 11,388 HB 7 Dec. **COM. EIDER:** Oklahoma Beach 21 Jan (MD,DT). **King Eider:** two ad HB 16 Feb (WS). **Harlequin Duck:** three Sodus Pt. 13 Jan D&DT,mob), rare. **Oldsquaw:** max 1477 HB

26 Feb. **Black Scoter**: one WL 25 Jan. **Surf Scoter**: one SB 24 Feb; one BB 25 Feb, scarce. **White-winged Scoter**: max 1590 HB 26 Feb. **Hooded Merganser**: max 100 CL 10 Dec. **Ruddy Duck**: one C 1-4 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: max 29 LP 29 Dec. **Black Vulture**: one LP late Dec- Jan, a first wintering record for the Region. **Bald Eagle**: 10 reports for the season, good total. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one imm DE 26 Jan (DT), uncommon in winter. **Rough-legged Hawk**: max 81 BB 24 Feb (BS). **Golden Eagle**: one BB 24 Feb (BS), early. **Merlin**: one R 16 Dec (J&KF); one IB 29 Dec (MD). **Peregrine Falcon**: first one G 26 Dec (MD). **Sora**: one Brighton 8 Feb (CC), very rare in winter. **Virginia Rail**: one G 17 Dec, uncommon. **Am. Coot**: max 127 IB 30 Dec. **Killdeer**: arr one Parma 28 Feb. **Com. Snipe**: one Hamlin 26 Jan; one IB 28 Jan, regular but uncommon. **Little Gull**: max 10 DE 31 Dec (DSh). **Iceland Gull**: max four P 10-31 Dec. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one ad IB 8,13,14 Jan (sev); one ad P 11 Jan (MP). **Glaucous Gull**: max 32 C 8-11 Jan (BM,Ro'H). **Great Black-backed Gull**: max 512 IB 28 Feb. **Black-legged Kittiwake**: three imm Rochester 17 Dec (WS); one imm IB 28 Dec (MD).

DOVES - WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl**: one Hamlin 6-11 Jan (KG, et al), scarce. **Long-eared Owl**: *intro*. **Short-eared Owl**: max 14 R 7 Jan. **BOREAL OWL**: one dead Perry 1 Jan (MD,DT). **N. Saw-whet Owl**: *intro*. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: *intro*.

FLYCATCHERS - STARLINGS: **E. Phoebe**: one DE 2 Dec; one CL 26 Dec - 1 Jan, *intro*. **Horned Lark**: max 400 HB 23 Feb. **Am. Crow**: max 20,000 Rochester 18 Feb (CC, RM). **Com. Raven**: one Springwater 31 Jan (DT). **Winter Wren**: several reports Jan. **Marsh Wren**: one IB 3 Dec (J&KF); one G 9 Dec (MD). **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one BB 21 Feb (MD), only winter report. **Hermit Thrush**: max five R 16 Dec. **Brown Thrasher**: one Hamlin 2,11 Jan (MD,DT); one W 11 Jan (D&DT), uncommon in winter. **Bohemian Waxwing**: max 22 Hamlin 13 Dec (BM). **N. Shrike**: *intro*.

VIREOS - WARBLERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: one Mendon Ponds 15 Jan (BM), first of the year.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS: **E. Towhee**: *intro*. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: max 202 WL 27 Dec. **Chipping Sparrow**: one Irondequoit 17 Dec; two Jan reports, unusual. **Savannah Sparrow**: one LP area 10 Jan (DT), only report. **Field Sparrow**: several thru. **White-crowned Sparrow**: max 19 R 3 Feb. **Lapland Longspur**: *intro*. **Snow Bunting**: max 1500 Caledonia 11 Jan. **E. Meadowlark**: max 11 R 31 Dec. **Rusty Blackbird**: one WL 11-12 Jan

(D&DT, et al), only report. **Pine Grosbeak**: max 20 WP 29 Dec (MD). **Red Crossbill**: two DE 15 Jan. **Hoary Redpoll**: one G 1,16 Jan; several Feb (CD-G, KG).

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

Steve Kelling

732 Old 76 Rd., Berkshire NY 13736

The winter weather that began early in the Finger Lakes Region in 1995 continued through December. At least an additional 10 inches of snow fell to add to the 30 inches already on the ground. Furthermore, temperatures were 4-5 degrees below normal which continued the cooler trend which began in November. January brought a mixed bag of winter weather; heavy snowfall, extreme cold, unseasonable warmth, heavy rain, and severe flooding all occurred during the month. Probably the most important factor during the month was the extended "January thaw" on the 18th and 19th when temperatures were 8 to 9 degrees above normal, and the snow pack rapidly melted. Interestingly, by the time January ended, both precipitation, and temperatures were at or only slightly below average. After the variety of weather conditions brought to us in January, it was nice to have a fairly uneventful February. February temperatures were normal for the month, but precipitation was slightly below normal.

The early snow cover had an effect on the number of over-wintering raptors and half-hardies seen through the winter period. When compared with 1995, a relatively mild winter, there were declines in reports of Northern Harrier (down 25%), Rough-legged Hawk (down 44%), and Short-eared Owl (down 64%). These declines may also be influenced by a cyclic drop in the rodent population. Conversely, Red-tailed Hawk numbers appeared similar to or higher than last year. Overwintering half-hardy passerines were reduced. Song and Swamp sparrow numbers were down dramatically, and there were no reports of Yellow-rumped Warbler for the period. Interestingly, an Eastern Phoebe made it through December to be recorded during the Ithaca Christmas Bird Count on 1 January. The "January thaw" seemed to have a dramatic impact on the Canada Goose numbers on Cayuga Lake. Prior to the thaw Canada Goose numbers seemed at or slightly below average, which is around 10,000. But after the thaw numbers skyrocketed to 14,000 on the 27th and

grew to estimates of up to 20,000 in February. The end of February ushered in the first of the returning migrants including Killdeer, blackbirds, and American Robin. Waterfowl also began pouring into the Region toward the end of the month, providing excellent viewing opportunities.

There were many bird highlights for the winter season. The deep areas of the south end of Seneca Lake hosted a rare Finger Lakes occurrence of both Harlequin Duck and Common Eider (J.J. O'Malley). With the influx of Canada Goose after the "January thaw", a Ross' Goose was present in the Cayuga Lake Basin. A rare western form of Red-tailed Hawk, a rufous morph was observed in Ithaca. The 1996 winter season was an excellent one for winter finches. All of the winter finches, except White-winged Crossbill were reported from the Region. Finally, Bohemian Waxwing, with one flock of 18, which is a very high count for the Finger lakes Region was observed in several locations in the Cayuga Lake basin.

Observers: Robert Amsel, Fred Bertram, John Bower, Jack Brubaker, Cayuga Bird Club, Chemung Valley Audubon Society, John Confer, Karl David, Sten Davies, Eaton Bird Club, John Fitzpatrick, John Greenley, Meena Haribal, Chris Hymes, Steve Kelling, Scott Mardis, Kevin McGowan, Tom Nix, Ralph Paonessa, Sandy Podulka, Bard Prentiss, Ken Rosenberg, Dave Russell, Larry Springsteen, Laura Stenzler, Jeff and Allison Wells.

Abbreviations: CL - Cayuga Lake, GE - Geneva, MP - Myers Point Lansing, SL - Seneca Lake, SP - Stewart Park Ithaca, DL - Dryden Lake.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** two MP 20 Dec (KD). **Com. Loon:** max 734 Taughannock State Park 2 Dec; singles CL, SL thru January. **Pied-billed Grebe:** 14 SL 29 Dec; 12 Ithaca 1 Jan, good counts for winter. **Horned Grebe:** scattered CL, SL thru. **Red-necked Grebe:** singles CL, SL thru; nine reports. **Double-crested Cormorant:** SL thru; SP 6 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** scattered entire Region thru Jan; max nine Cayuga 28 Jan. **Tundra Swan:** max 36 MNWR 1 Jan; CL thru. **Mute Swan:** Jan-Feb CL, an expanding presence. **Snow Goose:** singles SL, CL thru. **ROSS' GOOSE:** one ad CL 11-21 Feb (RP, mob, NYSARC). **Canada Goose:** SL, CL thru; max 14096 CL 27 Jan. **Wood Duck:** four IT 1 Jan; arr. SP 29 Feb. **Green-winged Teal:** two WG 15 Dec. **Am. Black Duck:** SL, CL thru; max 1307 CL 27 Jan. **Mallard:** SL, CL thru; max 10650 GE 17 Dec. **N. Pintail:** scattered CL thru. **N. Shoveler:** Union Springs 22 Jan (BP), good description). **Gadwall:** SL, CL thru; max 30 CL 27 Jan. **Am. Wigeon:** throughout Region thru; max 17 CL 1 Jan. **Canvasback:** SL, CL thru; max 100 MP 16 Jan. **Redhead:** SL, CL thru; max 7000 SL 22 Feb **Ring-necked Duck:** CL

thru; max 12 Sheldrake 27 Jan. **Greater Scaup** SL, CL thru; max 50 MP 16 Jan. **Lesser Scaup**: 25 MP 16 Jan; max 186 Geneva 17 Dec; three DL 28 Feb. **COM. EIDER**: one female WG 29 Dec-29 Jan (JO, mob, NYSARC). **HARLEQUIN DUCK**: one male WG 10 Dec-26 Feb (JB, mob, NYSARC). **Oldsquaw**: two GE 21 Jan. **Black Scoter**: SP 2-6 Dec. **Surf Scoter**: SP 2-7 Dec; two Canandaigua Lake 14 Jan. **White-winged Scoter**: SP 2 Dec-1 Jan. **Com. Goldeneye**: SL, CL thru; max 940 CL 21 Jan. **Bufflehead** SL, CL thru; max 190 CL 27 Jan **Hooded Merganser**: SL, CL thru; max 49 IT 1 Jan. **Com. Merganser**: SL, CL thru; ten CL 27 Jan; 11 Chemung River 28 Feb. **Red-breasted Merganser**: CL thru; max 14 CL 27 Jan. **Ruddy Duck**: seven GE 17 Dec; one GE 14 Jan; 1 Kashong Pt. SL 14 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: arr Ludlowville 27 Feb. **Bald Eagle**: five reports, ad. and imm. north end CL thru; one ad EL 28 Feb. N. **Harrier**: only six reports! thru; max 12 GE 17 Dec. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: eight reports thru; max seven IT 1 Jan. **Cooper's Hawk**: nine reports thru; max six IT 1 Jan. N. **Goshawk**: singles, eight reports thru. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: arr Dryden 8 Feb. **Red-tailed Hawk**: numerous over entire Region; max 66 IT 1 Jan. **Red-tailed "Rufous-morph" Hawk**: Reynolds Game Farm Dryden 29 Feb (KM, mob, NYSARC). **Rough-legged Hawk**: low numbers thru; max seven IT 1 Jan. **Am. Kestrel**: max 19 GE 17 Dec. **Merlin**: one IT 28 Feb. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: scattered GE, IT. **Ruffed Grouse**: max 30 IT 1 Jan. **Wild Turkey**: numerous over entire Region; max 163 IT 1 Jan. N. **Bobwhite**: one GE 1 Dec, probable escape. **Am. Coot**: SL, CL thru; max 337 SL 14 Jan. **Killdeer**: last MP 20 Dec; arr MP 28 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull**: two GE 17 Dec, late. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 568 CV 30 Dec. **Herring Gull**: max 500 Seneca Falls 21 Jan. **Iceland Gull**: SP 30 Jan-8 Feb. **Glaucous Gull**: 1st winter MP 4 Feb; ad. near SP 8 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull**: SL, CL thru; max 30 IT 1 Jan.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **Rock Dove**: max 1384 IT 1 Jan. **Mourning Dove**: max 797 IT 1 Jan. **E. Screech-Owl**: max 22 IT 1 Jan. **Great Horned Owl**: max 17 IT 1 Jan. **Barred Owl**: one IT 1 Jan; one Dryden 6 Feb, only reports!. **Short-eared Owl**: six reports, scarce; max seven Seneca Falls Airport 22 Dec. N. **Saw-whet Owl**: one Canoga 21 Jan- 17 Feb; one Trumansburg 18 Feb. **Belted Kingfisher**: scattered reports thru; max three IT 1 Jan. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one MNWR 23 Feb, good description. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: max 86 IT 1 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: Cayuga Lake Basin thru Jan. **Downy Woodpecker**: max 345 IT 1 Jan. **Hairy Woodpecker**: max 107 IT 1 Jan. N. **Flicker**: scattered across Region until 21 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **E. Phoebe:** one IT 1 Jan, very late. **Horned Lark:** max 100 King Ferry 29 Dec. **Blue Jay:** max 611 IT 1 Jan. **Am. Crow:** max 2000 GE 29 Jan. **Fish Crow:** four IT 1 Jan. **Com. Raven:** ten reports southern part of Region thru. **Black-capped Chickadee:** max 2076 IT 1 Jan. **Tufted Titmouse:** max 225 IT 1 Jan. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max 62 IT 1 Jan. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** max 308 IT 1 Jan. **Brown Creeper:** max 36 IT 1 Jan; widespread. **Carolina Wren:** five reports; max 4 IT 1 Jan. **Winter Wren:** four reports; max 2 IT 1 Jan. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** four reports; max 42 IT 1 Jan. **E. Bluebird:** seven reports; max 51 IT 1 Jan. **Hermit Thrush:** IT 1 Jan; IT 25 Feb. **Am. Robin:** three reports; max 20 King Ferry 8 Feb. **N. Mockingbird:** scattered reports; max 21 IT 1 Jan. **Bohemian Waxwing:** two Long Point State Park six Dec; 18 Mt Pleasant 23 Jan-4 Feb. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 150 Mt Pleasant 23 Jan. **N. Shrike:** 21 reports!; max seven IT 1 Jan, very high. **European Starling:** max 4631 GE 17 Dec.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: no reports.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** max 451 IT 1 Jan. **Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 270 IT 1 Jan. **Field Sparrow:** one Queen Catherine Marsh 28 Dec; one IT 1 Jan. **Savannah Sparrow:** one MP 21 Feb. **Song Sparrow:** a few thru Dec, then rare; max 16 IT 1 Jan. **Swamp Sparrow:** one Queen Catherine Marsh 29 Dec; 1 IT 1 Jan. **White-throated Sparrow:** scattered reports; max 35 IT 1 Jan. **Dark-eyed Junco:** max 357 IT 1 Jan. **Lapland Longspur:** six reports; six Pine Valley 1 Jan; six Varick 18 Feb; five King Ferry 29 Dec. **Snow Bunting:** 14 reports; max 1000 King Ferry 29 Dec. **Red-winged Blackbird:** last Chemung Valley 30 Dec; arr King Ferry 26 Feb. **E. Meadowlark:** four Fayette 24 Dec; three Montezuma 1 Jan. **Com. Grackle:** arr King Ferry 26 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** arr DL 28 Feb. **Pine Grosbeak:** one Hi-Tor WMA 25 Dec; four Union Springs 9 Feb. **Purple Finch:** 12 GE 17 Dec; five Chemung Valley 30 Dec; six IT 1 Jan, only reports!. **House Finch:** max 1474 IT 1 Jan. **Red Crossbill:** six IT 1 Jan; one Hammond Hill 17 Feb; 18 IT 29 Feb. **Com. Redpoll:** 26 reports; flock size typically <100. **Pine Siskin:** six reports; max 15 GE 17 Dec. **Am. Goldfinch:** max 168 IT 1 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak:** 12 reports; max 306 IT 1 Jan. **House Sparrow:** max 1211 IT 1 Jan.

stk2@cornell.edu

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

Mary Dobinsky
7 Spencer Drive, Oneonta NY 13820

Winter was a monstrous bully - mean, aggressive and forever. First the season elbowed its way in a month early to pelt Binghamton with 34 inches of snow, a November record. During each winter month thereafter, the powerful adversary hit with a variety of punches - snow, sleet, record cold, fierce winds and floods. Oneonta recorded 35.5 inches of snow the first 27 days of December, more than twice the normal amount. However, no snow fell the last four days of the month and temperatures moderated for that brief period, which was nice for BROO and TIOG Christmas Bird Counts. Average temperatures for December were 4.33°F colder than normal. Record cold temperatures dominated the first two weeks of January and most of the month's 31.60 inches of snow fell in that period, according to David Mattice, National Weather Service observer in Oneonta. Normal January snowfall is 17.9 inches. Mattice estimated 36 to 42 inches of snow on the ground 17 Jan when unseasonably warm temperatures and record rainfall over the next two days rapidly melted most of that snow cover, causing the devastating floods of 19 Jan. Several bridges and roads were closed after washouts and the Region was quickly declared a Federal Disaster Area. Total January precipitation was 4.86 inches, nearly twice the normal 2.54 inches. The mean temperature of 21.3°F for the month was two degrees colder than normal. Cold temperatures persisted through much of February with record lows on 4 and 6 Feb, but temperatures moderated the last 10 days and the only measurable snow after the 19 Jan flood was 1.7 inches on 14 Feb. Precipitation for the month was 1.57 inches, almost an inch below normal.

Winter weather conditions didn't target any particular bird species. They threatened them all, and, by early January, most birds had moved out. They were given a further push by the absence of wild foods. After last summer's drought, even trusty apples and crabapples were scarce, as were other fruits and berries, nuts, tree seeds, weed seeds.

There was little open water after mid December. American Black Duck and Mallard were scarce all period, but some uncommon individual ducks were reported and very high counts of all three merganser species were tabulated. Most raptors looked down on our forbidding snow cover and flew on. However, the Region had its first known winter reports of Merlin. It was a good year for Rough-legged Hawk, and Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, which favor small birds as prey, were often

reported near feeders. The mutilated carcass of a Golden Eagle was found in a ditch on Back River Road, Stamford DELA late February. The tail feathers and a leg had been removed from the bird, according to DEC biologists there. Further studies indicated the bird to be a young female with eggs, which might have been hit by a car at the scene or killed elsewhere and moved there.

Forced out of the woods in search of food, Wild Turkey adapted by flocking to manured fields and corn stubble. This made them more visible, of course, and might partly explain the record total of 2821 turkeys tabulated on the Region's five Christmas Bird Counts. The total quadruples the previous record of two years ago! Other birds seen this winter in high or near record numbers were American Coot, Mourning Dove, four species of owls reported, Red-bellied Woodpecker (for which range expansion is suspected), Horned Lark, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting.

Three reports of Winter Wren were a noteworthy surprise, as were the first Bohemian Waxwing in at least 16 years. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a late Hermit Thrush, a single Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird and Eastern Meadowlark were among less hardy species reported in December. By early January, most areas reported that even birds normally common in winter became scarce. These included Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco and, especially, American Goldfinch. Winter finches were a disappointment. A few Pine Grosbeak were reported in CHEN, and Common Redpoll counts were good, but most Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak left the area in December. Missed species included Ring-necked Duck, Eastern Towhee, Common Grackle, Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill.

Observers: Cutler and Jeannette Baldwin, Les Bemont, Bruce Bozdos, Peg Burnett, Mary Ann Cuff, John Davis, Sadie Dorber, Harriet Dowdall, Mary Dobinsky, Tom Fernandez, Martha and Arthur Gregory, Bob Grosek, John Gustafson, Elva Hawken, Jim Hoteling, Sara Kinch, Hugh Kingery, Gail Kirch, Margaret Layton, Harriet Marsi, Andy Mason, George and Evelyn Mead, Bob Miller, R. Pantle, Marie Petuh, Tom Salo, Joe Sedlacek, Eric Sullivan, Tom & Norene Tasber, Bill Toner, Chris Vredenburg, D. Weber, Don Windsor, Irene Wright.

Abbreviations: BCBC - Broome Christmas Bird Count, 31 Dec; Can Res- Cannonsville Reservoir; ChCBC - Chenango Christmas Bird Count, 16 Dec; CoCBC - Cortland Christmas Bird Count 25 Dec; DCBC - Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count, 16 Dec; FMHW - Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch site; J City - Johnson City; TCBC - Tioga Christmas Bird Count 31 Dec; UL - Upper Lisle, BROO; WPR - Whitney Point Reservoir.

LOONS - DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** Susquehanna R Endicott 14 Jan, only report. **Pied-billed Grebe:** Otsego L. 18 Dec (JD), only report. **Great Blue Heron:** 22 on five CBCs; only two reports Jan: one Feb, scarce. **Snow Goose:** eight Endwell 20 Dec (ES), uncommon in winter. **Brant:** 120 FMHW 2 Dec, late flight. **Canada Goose:** many big flocks over FMHW early Dec; max 1098 ChCBC; 150 + all winter Owego (C&JB) and Greene (BB), otherwise scarce Jan, Feb. **Egyptian Goose:** Grippen Pk Endicott all season (MOB), escape. **Graylag Goose:** Chenango R Norwich 22, 26 Jan "after the flood" (DW), escape. **Wood Duck:** four on three CBCs; two OTSE 14 Jan (AM); singles BROO 20 Jan (BG); TIOG 29 Feb (G&EM), more than usual. **Am. Black Duck:** 98 on five CBCs; 133 on FWC; 28 Boland Pd BROO 23 Feb, low counts. **Mallard:** 755 On five CBCs, low count. **N. Pintail:** WPR 5 Dec (JH); two Cherry Valley OTSE 27 Dec (HK), uncommon in winter. **Gadwall:** Chenango R Norwich 11 Jan (DW), first winter since 1991. **Canvasback:** Susquehanna R Binghamton 14 Jan, often missed. **Redhead:** six Otsego L from 18 Dec (MOB); Chenango Forks 25 Dec (BG), often missed. **Lesser Scaup:** Boland Pd 27 Jan (ES), first in five years. **scaup (sp?):** three Susquehanna R OTSE 14 Jan. **Com. Goldeneye:** 48 Unadilla to Waverly Susquehanna R Jan, good count; singles TIOG Jan, BROO Feb (T&NT). **Bufflehead:** singles WPR and Long Pd 5 Dec (JH); Chenango R. Norwich 18, 19 Dec, always scarce. **Hooded Merganser:** max 19 on WFCs; five on two CBCs; two reports Jan, max five; one Feb, best count in five years. **Com. Merganser:** 135 on two CBCs; 226 on FWC; late winter max 46 Westover BROO 15 Feb (JH), excellent count. **Red-breasted Merganser:** 12 BCBC; pair UL 27 Feb (ES), high count.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** BCBC, often missed. **Bald Eagle:** max 12 FMHW 2 Dec; W Burlington 27 Dec (TS); McGraw 25 Feb (TF); one/two reports a month from usual Delaware R areas, max four. **N. Harrier:** singles T Preston CHEN 6 Dec (EH); ChCBC; Endicott 14 Jan (SK), lowest count in nine years. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** six reports Dec; five Jan; four Feb, mostly at feeders. **Cooper's Hawk:** 13 on three CBCs; five-six/month, often feeders. **N. Goshawk:** six on four CBCs; J City to 17 Dec (JH); none Jan, Feb. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one BROO CBC, second successive winter, previously rare. **Red-tailed Hawk:** 89 on five CBCs, low count. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 20 on five CBCs; ten reports each month, max four, many dark phase, good count. **Golden Eagle:** *intro*; eight FMHW and one W Burlington 2 Dec, last migrants. **Am. Kestrel:** six on three CBCs; two singles Jan, Feb, average count. **Merlin:** BROO sites at

Westover 16 Dec (ES) and Port Dickinson 24 Dec (BG), first known Regional winter reports. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: one each on four CBCs; two W Burlington 31 Dec, 20, 24 Jan (TS); pair Davenport Center DELA 14 Jan (CV), good count. **Ruffed Grouse**: nine on four CBCs, scarce all season. **Wild Turkey**: *intro*; 2821 overall CBC total eclipses former high. **Am. Coot**: max 50+ Otsego L (MOB), high count second successive winter. **Killdeer**: arr Endwell 22 Feb (JS). **Ring-billed Gull**: max 11 CHEN 23 Feb (DW), scarce. **Herring Gull**: max 30 WPR and Long Pd CHEN 5 Dec (JH); scarce Jan, Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull**: six Mead Pd CHEN 23 Feb (DW), average count.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS: **Mourning Dove**: 1938 on five CBCs, record high count. **E. Screech-Owl**: nest box McGraw to 31 Dec; one dead McGraw barn 15 Jan (BT), same bird?; Wood Duck box Greene "voles and cardinal among prey found" (BB); singles BROO 14 Dec (MAC); second BROO site 9 Jan (SD); female T Preston 18 Dec, male there 19, 23 Dec, best count since 1991. **Great Horned Owl**: 23 on four CBCs mostly BROO, CHEN, high count. **Barred Owl**: singles UL 1 Dec (SK); ChCBC; TIOG Dec (JS); T Preston 1 Jan (EH), good count. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: Westover area BROO 14 Dec (MAC,MP, SK); feeder tray Oneonta home patio 12 Jan (HD), the owl had evidently caught a mouse there according to patterns in the snow found the next morning, only fourth report in 11 years. **Belted Kingfisher**: 12 on three CBCs, average. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: 27 on four CBCs, three times best previous record, widespread reports through period, territorial expansion n and e indicated. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: BROO CBC third successive winter. **Downy Woodpecker**: 268 on five CBCs. **Hairy Woodpecker**: 97 on four CBCs. **N. Flicker**: two each ChCBC, BCBC; Vestal Center through period (SD), low count. **Pileated Woodpecker**: 21 on four CBCs, good count; male feeding on grapes near McGraw Porch late Jan (BT).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **Horned Lark**: record 239 ChCBC; 40 TCBC; 40 n OTSE 27 Dec (HK); 20 BROO 10 Jan (ES); 40 Sherburne 14 Jan (DW); two small flocks Feb, excellent numbers. **Am. Crow**: 3691 on five CBCs; "big roost West Hill Norwich max 1100 on 6 Feb" (DW). **Fish Crow**: Owego daily Feb (C&JB), first winter since 1987. **Com. Raven**: Owego feeder 19 Dec (C&JB), at least one last four winters. **Black-capped Chickadee**: max 3196 on five CBCs, high count. **Tufted Titmouse**: 185 on four CBCs, third highest count in 16 years. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: 91 on five CBCs; two-three daily at many feeders, good year. **Brown Creeper**: 23 on five CBCs, average. **Carolina Wren**: five on two CBCs, continues

scarce. **Winter Wren**: one CoCBC; pair Chenango Bridge suet feeder 12 Jan (T&AG); Westover 15 Jan (JH,ES), only second winter since 1984. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: 57 on three CBCs mostly BROO, second highest count since 1984. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: six on two CBCs; one CHEN 2 Dec (EH), record winter count. **E. Bluebird**: BCBC, only one. **Hermit Thrush**: J City feeder 2 Dec (MP), only report. **Am. Robin**: 13 BCBC; TIOG Jan; arr Vestal 20 Feb (LB), scarce. **Gray Catbird**: CHEN CBC week, rare in winter. **N. Mockingbird**: ten on three CBCs; one TIOG Jan, Feb; Binghamton feeder after 4 Feb (ES), average count. **Bohemian Waxwing**: max 31 n of Cooperstown 4 Feb, "at top of large Ash in a stand of mature trees in an abandoned farm area; flock first seen 29 Dec" (JD), first report in at least 16 years. **Cedar Waxwing**: max 49 ChCBC; 15 Can Res 27 Jan; 30 Vestal 4 Feb, scarce. **N. Shrike**: 13 on four CBCs; T Preston 1 to 21 Dec max two (EH); nine other widespread reports Dec; CORT 1 Jan (JG); six singles Feb, record numbers. **Eur. Starling**: 4364 on CBCs, low.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal**: 384 on CBCs, second only to record 440 two years ago; scarce most areas Jan, Feb. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: 364 on four CBCs, average for last five years. **Field Sparrow**: two TCBC, often missed. **Song Sparrow**: 22 on CBCs, good count; Norwich through period; five reports BROO Feb max eight. **Swamp Sparrow**: TCBC, only report. **White-throated Sparrow**: ten on two CBCs, scarce all winter. **Dark-eyed Junco**: 425 on CBCs, low; mid winter max 26 CORT 22 Jan (BT), scarce most areas. **Snow Bunting**: max flock 1,000 TIOG Jan (C&JB); 176 ChCBC; 200 W. Burlington 18 Dec, 15 Feb (TS) and CORT 15 Jan (BT), highest counts of last 16 years. **Red-winged Blackbird**: only one per month. **E. Meadowlark**: max four Deposit 16 Dec (ES,BG); three singles Dec, often missed. **Rusty Blackbird**: two TCBC, rare early winter. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: two reports Dec, max two; one Jan, scarce. **Pine Grosbeak**: max 24 C KBC; two reports Dec; two reports Jan; max 15 on 26 Jan, all CHEN. **Purple Finch**: 12 on three CBCs; none Feb, poor season. **House Finch**: 2184 on CBCs, good count; lower seasonal numbers. **Com. Redpoll**: 77 on three CBCs; increasing counts by late Jan max 60+ T Preston 15, 23 Feb (EH). **Pine Siskin**: nine BCBC; singles Vestal 2 Jan, 7 Feb (LB), scarce. **American Goldfinch**: 79 on three CBCs, scarce all season. **Evening Grosbeak**: 406 on three CBCs; late season max 75 T Preston 22 Feb (EH), scarce most areas.

REGION 5 — ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

Dorothy W. Crumb¹ And Jim Throckmorton

1. 3983 Gates Road, Jamesville NY 13078

Winter 1995-1996 turned out to be the 4th snowiest ever recorded. It was the 5th snowiest December ever. The average temperature for the month was 24.2°F, which was 4.1° below normal. There were 45.1 inches of snow, which is 18.3" above normal. There was very little snowmelt for the month. January was another strange month. The average temperature was 21.7°F, which was practically normal. However, a few daily records were set. Temperatures on 6, 7, and 15 January were -24°, -11°, and -15°, respectively, all well below normal. And, of course, there has to be a January thaw. This year it came on 19 January with a record setting 64°F and heavy rain. This melted the snow so quickly that streams couldn't handle the runoff, particularly with the ground still frozen. There were floods everywhere. Adding to January weather problems, a terrible windstorm occurred on the 27th. A wind gust of 54 MPH was recorded in Syracuse at 9:47 am, with reports of hurricane force winds at higher elevations. Many trees, houses and power lines did not tolerate this storm. There were 36 inches of snow for the month, which is 6.4" above normal. February set no records with average temperature of 24.7°F and snowfall of 16.5 inches, nearly an inch below normal, a welcome change.

The dry summer produced little food for wintering birds and the heavy snow covered what little was available. For the first time since they populated central New York, House Finch left feeders in droves for better weather locations. Some areas just to the west and south that had less snow still had House Finch. The conjunctivitis did not seem to cause permanent problems with these birds and overall numbers generally stayed the same. Most other passerine species moved out of the area as well. There were few Blue Jay, sparrows and finches. There were almost none of the regular birds in the woods. Red-breasted Nuthatch, even Black-capped Chickadee seemed to have abandoned their normal haunts. The only bird that appeared in good numbers was the Common Redpoll. It was a long, dull winter.

Tundra Swan put in winter appearances in a number of places. There were 15 at Shackelton Point, on the south shore of Oneida Lake on 8 December. Eight were on Onondaga Lake on 16 December, one 24 February. Seven were seen on 1 January at Baldwinsville. It is unusual for these large birds to stay in the winter because it is difficult to find shallow feeding areas that aren't frozen. The FWC found fewer of most

species. The maximum count of Redhead was 299, with 234 of those being on Skaneateles Lake. Canvasback was low. Greater Scaup was the lowest ever, with a high count of 238. Oldsquaw was also low. A pair of Harlequin Duck at Fair Haven on 25 February was the first time more than one individual has been found in the Region.

Four species appeared on the Syracuse Christmas Bird Count which had never been previously reported here in the winter: Snow Goose, Turkey Vulture, Peregrine Falcon and Bohemian Waxwing. There were sightings of Turkey Vulture throughout the winter season. The highest number was two and they were usually in the Fayetteville, DeWitt area where there is a large summer roost. The Peregrine Falcon pair that moved into the city of Syracuse spent the winter, increasing hopes that they will nest this year. Since Snow Goose numbers have been increasing, it was probably inevitable that some would try to winter. Bohemian Waxwing were at the right place at the right time to be counted.

Except for the Rome area, the three accipiters gave a good account of themselves this winter, with Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks appearing at many feeders. Marge Rusk reported an immature Red-shouldered Hawk in Syracuse on 15 February. Gerry Smith reported a subadult Golden Eagle in the Town of Remsen on 2 December. Three Merlin were at Onondaga Lake on 16 December and two were back at the winter roost at Onondaga Lake Park where only one was found the past few years. Probably the most exciting hawk for this dreary winter period was a sighting by Sue Boettger and Bill Gruenbaum of a gray morph Gyrfalcon at Fair Haven on 14 January. It was well described sitting on snow banks on the breakwall and flying low over the ice floes.

Wild Turkey seemed to be everywhere this winter and were reported by nearly every observer. The maximum was 350 at Holland Patent on 11 December, seen by Gary Lee. The birds are beginning to constitute a problem for farmers by raiding their corn cribs.

The first Lesser Black-backed Gull since 1993 delighted many birders at Baldwinsville from 23 December to 30 January. Bill Purcell located a Thayer's Gull in the same area on 22 and 23 December. A very secretive **Great Gray Owl** was found in a New Hartford city park on 22 February by Matt Perry. Dave Cesari was able to get several photographs before the bird disappeared. It was seen briefly another time, then hit by a car and killed on 18 March. There were very few Short-eared Owls this winter, probably because of the continuing deep snow. The only report was one seen in DeWitt on 9 December. This bird also moved on. Two Northern Saw-whet Owl were reported. One was at Beaver Lake Nature Center on 27 February, and another in Forestport 23 December through 3

January. This latter owl captured birds at a feeder and was captured itself on video tape. Only one Snowy Owl was reported for the entire winter season and that was near Holland Patent. None were found at the usual places such as the Syracuse airport or along Lake Ontario.

Common Raven was in the Old Forge area all winter. Twelve were seen at Lake Julia, Town of Remsen on 2 December. Dorothy Crumb had one near her home in Pompey on 2 January and toward the end of the period, a raven was seen several times only about 5 miles from that location. The two Fish Crow reported last year from Syracuse may have had a successful nesting because there were reports of three or four from the same place this winter.

A record number of 23 Red-breasted Nuthatch was found on the Syracuse Christmas Count, 16 December, but numbers decreased as winter continued. Golden-crowned Kinglet was in average numbers for the count, but was non-existent after that. Eight Bohemian Waxwing made their debut on the Syracuse Christmas Count and seven were seen in Hastings on 9 December. After that, they were only found in Madison and Oneida Counties with a high count of 150 in New Hartford on 30 January. Northern Shrike was seen in the best numbers ever this winter in many locations. The maximum seen in one day was eight in Baldwinsville 1 January. One observer had 17 different individuals in Madison County during the period. The 21 seen on 16 December broke the Syracuse CBC record. They apparently did away with the House Sparrow near the post office in Old Forge.

Sparrow numbers were very low throughout the season. Am. Tree and Song sparrows were below the average on 16 December and although 57 White-throated Sparrow were found that day, the maximum after that was four on 13 January. Horned Lark and Snow Bunting were also difficult to find. Although 200 Snow Bunting were found on 12 and 30 December, almost none were found in February when migration should have started. This might have been because warm weather melted the snow and birds were difficult to see in open fields.

Winter finches seemed to be the only regular bright spot. Common Redpoll was at feeders from mid-January well into March. As many as 200 were estimated at feeders in Pompey. One Hoary Redpoll was found there at the end of February, continuing into the first week in March. Although there was only one report of Pine Grosbeak in the Town of Boylston on 5 December, the birds were scattered throughout Madison and Oneida Counties through February, with 42 seen in the vicinity of Rome on 11 December. Evening Grosbeak was reported widely. There were 52 in the Town of Remsen on 2 December. Eight Pine Siskin and

nine Purple Finch were in that same location on that same date.

Although an extremely poor winter for every day birdwatching, there were definitely many pluses for the winter. Probably the highlight of the winter was the Great Gray Owl, only the 5th ever for Region 5. Gyrfalcon, Tundra Swan, Harlequin Duck, Common Raven in the Town of Pompey, Golden Eagle in the Town of Remsen, Hermit Thrush and Brown Thrasher are all unusual, at least for the winter season. Four species never seen on the Syracuse CBC before were found this year. Fish Crow continued to reside at a shopping mall in the north part of Syracuse. Good numbers of Bohemian Waxwing and some of the winter finches kept birders semi-occupied as they awaited spring arrivals.

Dorothy and Jim would like to thank all of the Region 5 observers who have faithfully sent reports the last two years. Mary Alice Koeneke and Bill Purcell will be the new co-editors starting with the spring report. Please continue to send them your seasonal observations.

Contributors: Sue Adair, Sue Boettger, Joe Brin, Dave Cesari, Dorothy W. Crumb, Paul DeBenedictis, Tom Dudones, Robert L. Evans, Natalia Garcia, William T. Gruenbaum, Gene Huggins, Mary Alice Koeneke, Gary Lee, Kay McIntyre, David Nash, Matt Perry, Bill Purcell, Margaret S. Rusk, Gerry Smith, Maureen Staloff, Molly Thompson, James Throckmorton, Judy Thurber.

Abbreviations: Adks - Adirondacks; CIM - Clay Marsh ONON; DeltL - Delta Lake State Park; DH - Derby Hill OSWE. LSB - Little Sodus Bay, Fairhaven, and vicinity; LOL - Lake Ontario littoral; HIWMA - Howland Island Wildlife Management Area; NPT - northern Pompey Township; OneidL - Oneida Lake; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; OswegH - Oswego Harbor area; SPd - Sandy Pond OSWE; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; SYRCBC - Syracuse Christmas Bird Count. UM - Utica Marsh.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** no reports. **Com. Loon:** only three reports. **Horned Grebe:** two reports, one OswegH 10 Feb; one OswegH 3 Dec. **Red-necked Grebe:** only one report, OneidL 25 Feb. **Double-crested Cormorant:** max 14 OswegH 3 Dec; only single reports after that. **Tundra Swan:** four reports; max 15 OneidL 8 Dec, record winter max (MR). **Snow Goose:** scattered reports across region; first ever on SYRCBC 16 Dec. **Canvasback:** low numbers. **Redhead:** max 234 Skaneateles Lake 13 Jan, highest winter max since 1977. **Harlequin Duck:** max two LSB 15-25 Feb, *first record of more than one in Region*. **White-winged Scoter:** max 54 LOL 24 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** max two SYRCBC 16 Dec, first overwintering report. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** max one IM Syracuse 15 Feb. **Golden Eagle:** one IM T. Remsen 2 Dec (GS). **Merlin:** max three OnonL 16 Dec SYRCBC. **Peregrine Falcon:** max two Syracuse through period; first ever on SYRCBC 16 Dec. **Gyrfalcon:** one LSB 14 Jan. **Wild Turkey:** record max 350 Holland Patent 11 Dec (GL). **Thayer's Gull:** one Baldwinsville 21-23 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** max five Baldwinsville 1 Jan (JB). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one ad Baldwinsville 23 Dec - 30 Jan. **Glaucous Gull:** max three OneidL 10 Feb.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **Short-eared Owl:** one report Dewitt 9 Dec, unusually low. **GREAT-GRAY OWL:** intro, New Hartford 22 Feb (Photo, MP). **Snowy Owl:** one Holland Patent 6 Feb (MP), unusually scarce. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** two reports, one Beaver Lake 27 Feb; one T. Forestport 23 Dec - 3 Jan (Video). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one New Hartford 16-27 Dec (MP).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **Horned Lark:** max 70 New Hartford 8 Dec. **Fish Crow:** max three Syracuse 22 Jan. **Com. Raven:** one NPT 2 Jan and last week Feb; max 12 T. Remsen 2 Dec. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max 23 SYRCBC 16 Dec, record for SYRCBC. **Carolina Wren:** three reports, one SYRCBC 16 Dec ; one LOL 30 Dec; one T. Cicero mid-Dec (Photo). **E. Bluebird:** scattered reports max five New Hartford 3 Dec. **Hermit Thrush:** one T. Kirkland 13 Jan, only report. **Brown Thrasher:** one T. Kirkland 2 Dec, only report. **Bohemian Waxwing:** eight SYRCBC 16 Dec, first ever on count; max 165 T. Kirkland 19 Feb; several other sightings. **Cedar Waxwing:** max 95 SYRCBC 16 Dec. **N. Shrike:** many reports; max 21 SYRCBC 16 Dec; *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 12 after 16 Dec, below average numbers. **Song Sparrow:** scattered reports max two. **Lapland Longspur:** two reports; max two T. Kirkland 8, 12 Dec. **Snow Bunting:** max 200 T. Kirkland 12, 30 Dec. **Red-winged Blackbird:** arr five LOL 27 Feb. **Pine Grosbeak:** numerous reports from Madison and Oneida co's.; max 42 Rome vicinity 11 Dec (MS). **Purple Finch:** max nine T. Remsen 2 Dec, only report. **Com. Redpoll:** max 100 NPT 27 Feb. **Hoary Redpoll:** one NPT end Feb, only report. **Pine Siskin:** max eight T. Remsen 2 Dec. **Evening Grosbeak:** widely reported; max 52 T. Remsen 2 Dec.

DWCcrumb@aol.com

REGION 6 — ST. LAWRENCE

Kenneth L. Crowell
256 Morrill Rd, Canton NY 13617

The weather, as summarized by Lee Chamberlaine and Northeast Regional Climatic Center in Ithaca, was generally cold and snowy. December temperatures were 4-7 degrees below normal and snowfall was up to 40 in. above normal. Storms and lake effect snow 7, 9-10, and 11 Dec dropped 20 to 40 in. snow on parts of LEWI. In January a pronounced thaw the 17-19th brought temperatures in the 50's, thunder, rain and subsequent flooding. February brought sub-zero temperatures early in the month, but thaw and rain the last week of the month. Gnats were active on 23 Feb., and Lake Ontario was open 25 Feb.

A total of 95 species was reported for Region 6 by 13 contributors, the Massena, Watertown, and New Boston CBCs, and the FWC. Lee Chamberlaine reported that birding on Point Peninsula JEFF was the poorest ever. Bruce Di Labio called it a "very quiet winter highlighted by an abundance of snow and heavy ice conditions on the St. Lawrence, in which sub-zero conditions limited visibility". In the species accounts, his seasonal maxima for waterfowl and gulls at Moses-Saunders Dam are compared with those from several other observers for the Thousand Islands region and Lake Ontario. Large numbers of Am. Black Duck and Mallard use the Lake Ontario Lowlands, where Gadwall was absent. Redhead, Greater Scaup, and Oldsquaw are uncommon in Massena, while Com. Goldeneye and Com. Merganser are present in large numbers. Wintering gull concentrations are also larger near the dam. However, Dean DiTommaso reported both Iceland and Glaucous gulls from Ogdensburg on 29 Dec, and Gerry Smith found seven Iceland Gull on 13 Jan upstream between Jacques Cartier SP and Oak Pt. These are new locations for these two wintering gulls, but not at all surprising. Spring arrivals of waterfowl appeared the second week in Feb in Jefferson County. A pair of N. Pintail was seen near Ellisburg with Am. Black Duck and Mallard, and there were four Ring-necked Duck at Perch River WMA 27 Feb.

In common with the rest of the Northeast, this period was marked by unusually high numbers of winter visitors, including: Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, N. Shrike; and, unlike recent years, Pine Grosbeak, Com. Redpoll and other winter finches. N. Hawk Owl was present in Massena, and there were several reports of Hoary Redpoll. Mary Wood reports four (!) at her feeder in Cape Vincent on 2 Jan; singles elsewhere

in Cape Vincent 25 Jan and 28 Jan; one Clayton early Feb; Lee Chamberlaine reports one LB 7 Feb (*vide* G Smith); LBC writes "Carefully observed flocks of Com. Redpoll contained none, although variability in commons as to size was significant in some flocks ...a very light colored and larger Redpoll ...no white rump to make it a definite Hoary ... photos taken." Other winter rarities included **Tundra Swan**; **Barrow's x Com. Goldeneye hybrid** and **Black-legged Kittiwake**, both at Moses-Saunders Dam; and **Gray Jay**. Ten species of *Falconiformes* and six owls were reported, but numbers of typical wintering raptors such as Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl were not high. Reports included frequent sightings of Bald Eagle on SLR, but only one male N. Harrier at Pt Peninsula on 2 Dec. Accipiters were strong, with six contributors reporting at least ten Sharp-shinned Hawk, five reporting Cooper's, and seven tallying at least 11 N. Goshawk. Two **Merlin** were sighted in Cape Vincent, one on Wilson Rd on 1 Dec and an immature one on Valley Rd 23 Dec. Seven persons reported Snowy Owl, with over a dozen sightings in the Cape Vincent area by Mary and Brian Wood. Great Horned, Barred, and E. Screech-Owl are usually reported in small numbers each period, whether or not cited in the Regional Report. Three persons reported Short-eared Owl in the vicinity of Cape Vincent, mostly singles with a high of five on 8 Dec. Gerry Smith found a N. Saw-whet Owl being mobbed by chickadees at Barnes Corners LEWI ca. 7 Dec.

Birds-out-of-season included: Turkey Vulture in Massena 20 Jan, Killdeer at Stony Pt T Henderson on 1 Dec, Com. Snipe on NBCBC 28 Dec, Belted Kingfisher in T Hounsfield on 12 Jan; four N. Flicker, one on 5 Dec, a pair 14 Jan, and another single 26 Jan, all at different locations in Henderson; "unprecedented numbers " of E. Bluebird with 20+ near Ellisburg 15 Dec and five at Stony Pt, Henderson 15 Dec through 25 Jan; a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Stony Pt 18 Dec, where Lee Chamberlaine had two a few years ago during a mild December; a Com. Grackle in Adams 28 Feb; several sightings of E. Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird and Song Sparrow; and two White-throated Sparrow in Watertown throughout the period.

With regard to resident species which have expanded their ranges, there were at least nine reports of Red-bellied Woodpecker in JEFF and four Tufted Titmouse in JEFF, including a pair on Wellesley I, plus two in STLA, one in Potsdam and one in Massena, a new location, on 16 Dec. Six contributors reported N. Cardinal, with up to nine in the village of Cape Vincent. The seven who bothered to report common residents had one or two pair of Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, 10-20 Black-capped Chickadee, and White-breasted Nuthatch at their feeders. Peter O'Shea

commented on the lack of Downy Woodpecker and nuthatches at his feeder in Fine, in spite of their presence at Wanakena. There were five reports of Red-breasted Nuthatch with a maximum of two to three per day in Adams. Both Red-breasted Nuthatch and chickadees were way down on the NBCBC. Brown Creeper was reported from four locations, probably normal for an inconspicuous bird. Lee Chamberlaine reported 80 House Finch in Dec, but "they really moved out in Jan", as did House Sparrow, leaving only five in Feb. Paul Kelly reported sick House Finch feeding with Com. Redpoll in Adams. Mary Wood reported 50-100 House Sparrow at a feeder in Cape Vincent.

Lee Chamberlaine commented on the importance of Red Cedar berries as a carbohydrate source for finches, Am. Robin, E. Bluebird, Eur. Starling, and waxwings, observing that little of the good crop remained for spring migrants. Preservation of Red Cedar barrens is therefore vital as a source of food and cover for wintering birds. Buckthorn and bitter-sweet berries were also favored foods of both Bohemian and Cedar waxwings. Peter O'Shea reported four Wild Turkey feeding harmoniously with deer at a feeder in Colton in Feb. Gerry Smith found a small crow roost near Barnes Corners, LEWI. Interesting predation events included a Sharp-shinned Hawk attacked by a crow as it twice pounced on unidentified prey, presumably a mouse, in the snow at Paul Kelly's feeder; Cooper's Hawk at the Brouse's Kelsey Creek taking two Mourning Dove and a Eur. Starling, and the following from Lee Chamberlaine in Henderson: "small" sharpie catching a House Finch at feeder 8 Dec and Cooper's Hawk catching Mourning Dove, House Finch, and Downy Woodpecker.

Contributors: Joanne & Nobi Ackermann, Tom Aubertine, Marilyn Badger, Marion & Richard Brouse, Sheila & Bob Cerwonka, Lee Chamberlaine, Ken Crowell, Bruce M. Di Labio, Dean DiTommaso, Thelma Emery, Bettye Hughes, Paul Kelly, Nick Leone, Debbie & Steve Litwhiler, Frank Mueller, Peter O'Shea, Gerald A. Smith, Mary & Brian Wood.

Abbreviations: CV — T Cape Vincent JEFF; HB — Henderson Bay, T Henderson JEFF; KC — Kelsey Creek T Watertown; HB — Henderson Bay JEFF; LB — Lake Bonaparte Swamp area, T Diana LEWI; LOL — Lake Ontario Lowlands, JEFF; MCBC — Massena CBC, 16 Dec; MSD — Moses-Saunders Dam, T Massena; NBCBC — New Boston CBC LEWI, 28 Dec; Pt Pen — Pt Peninsula, T Lyme JEFF; RP — Reynolds Plant, SLR, T Massena STLA; SH — Sackets Harbor T Hounsfield; SLR — St. Lawrence River; WI — Wellesley I, T Alexandria Bay JEFF.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** max three HB JEFF 8 Dec. **Pied-billed Grebe:** two Pt Pen 2 Dec. **Double-crested Cormorant:** single im HB 8 Dec and Pt Pen 17 Dec. **Great Blue Heron:** last of six singles CV 29 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** 11 flying over Lake Ontario, Wilson's Bay, CV JEFF 22 Dec; six ad, two imm SH 18 Dec; five Pt Pen 1 Jan; two ad, 2 im PRWMA 27 Feb. **Mute Swan:** one Fisher's Landing SLR JEFF 2 Dec. **Brant:** six SLR JEFF 2 Dec. **Canada Goose:** many Dec reports of 20-100, max 400 Ellisburg 6 Dec; then none 10 Jan to 11 Feb and max 2500 PRWMA 27 Feb. **Am. Black Duck:** *intro*; 250 Ellisburg JEFF 11 Feb. **Mallard:** *intro*; 800 Ellisburg 11 Feb. **N. Pintail:** pair Ellisburg 11 Feb. **Gadwall:** 87 MCBC; absent from Lake Ontario lowlands. **Redhead:** 28 SH 5 Dec, only report. **Ring-necked Duck:** four Perch River WMA 27 Feb. **Greater Scaup:** *intro*; two RP 2 Dec, 13 Jan and 8 Feb; 2000 SH 5 Dec. **Oldsquaw:** *intro*; max 50 HB 5 Dec. **White-winged Scoter:** one MSD 8 Dec, only report. **Com. Goldeneye:** *intro*; 742 RP 8 Feb; 100 Pt Pen 28 Feb. **BARROW'S X COM. GOLDENEYE HYBRID:** male SLR Massena 8 Feb, first seen on Ontario side 13 Jan. **Bufflehead:** max 40 Pt Pen 17 Dec. **Com. Merganser:** *intro*; 802 MSD 8 Dec; 300 Pt Pen 7 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** Massena 20 Jan.. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*; one ad T Pamela Jeff 8 Jan, unusual location; max 16 total for FWC from Black Bay to Massena, with ten SLR T Hammond and Morristown 13 Jan. **N. Harrier:** one male Pt.Pen 2 Dec, only report. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** at least ten reports. **Cooper's Hawk:** reports from five observers. **N. Goshawk:** at least 11 reports. **Red-tailed Hawk:** good numbers in Dec; then sparse; max six southern JEFF 31 Jan; increasing in Feb; **Rough-legged Hawk:** max nine T Hounsfield 8 Dec; otherwise mostly singles. **Am. Kestrel:** singles in Dec; none after 1 Jan. **Merlin:** one CV 1 Dec; imm CV 23 Dec. **Gray Partridge:** flocks of up to ten CV. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** three MCBC; several reports LOL and WI, max five Adams Center 11 Jan. **Wild Turkey:** six reports including new STLA locations in T Russell and Massena; max 56 T Rutland JEFF 14 Jan. **Killdeer:** one Stony Pt. 1Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one NBCBC 28 Dec. **Bonaparte's Gull:** MSD none; max 14 WI 2 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** Ogdensburg 29 Dec (GD); seven SLR upstream of Oak Pt 13 Jan (GS); many MSD thru (BD). **Glaucous Gull:** Ogdensburg 29 Dec (GD); many MSD thru (BD). **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** ad winter plumage Hawkins Pt, Massena 16 Dec, inland record of ad unusual.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **E. Screech-Owl:** *intro*. **Great Horned Owl:** *intro*. **Snowy Owl:** seven obs reported over a dozen sightings. **N. HAWK**

OWL: Massena. **Barred Owl:** *intro*. **Short-eared Owl:** three reports CV, mostly singles; max five CV 8 Dec. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Barnes Corners LEWI 7 Dec, mobbed by chickadees. **Belted Kingfisher:** T Hounsfeld 12 Jan. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** nine+ reports, range expansion species. **Downy Woodpecker:** *intro*. **Hairy Woodpecker:** *intro*. **N. Flicker:** one Henderson 5 Dec; pr Henderson 14 Jan; one Henderson 26 Jan, all different locations.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **GRAY JAY:** two ad Massawepie Mire, T Colton 1 Jan. **Am. Crow:** small roost near Barnes Corners LEWI (GS). **Com. Raven:** continued sightings in SLR Valley; one Madrid 29 Jan; one Hammond 9 Jan; two Massena 20 Jan; two, a pair? WI 18 Jan; one possible Henderson 16 Feb; one WI 19 Feb. **Black-capped Chickadee:** *intro*. **Tufted Titmouse:** pr Wellesley I; two STLA; one Potsdam; one Massena 16 Dec, a new loc for this range expansion species. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro*. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** *intro*. **Brown Creeper:** four loc, normal?. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** four reports, max eight Louisville STLA 16 Dec. **E. Bluebird:** 20+ Ellisburg 15 Dec; five Stony Pt., Henderson 15 Dec-25 Jan, unprecedented numbers for winter. **Am. Robin:** using Red Cedar berries. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING:** several reports over 50, with 130 near Limerick Cedars, T Brownville JEFF 18 Jan; 350 T Henderson; 150 T Rodman 8 Jan, high counts. **Cedar Waxwing:** *intro*; max 200 T Henderson 25 Dec, 6 Jan. **N. Shrike:** unusually high numbers [ed: no details].

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** one Stony Pt. 18 Dec, *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** six obs reported, max nine, good for this range expansion species. **Song Sparrow:** *intro*. **White-throated Sparrow:** two Watertown thru. **Lapland Longspur:** three CV 24 Dec, remnants of high Fall numbers. **Snow Bunting:** counts of 20-150 CV through period; max 300 Henderson 6 Dec. **E. Meadowlark:** *intro*. **Com. Grackle:** one Adams 28 Feb. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** *intro*. **House Finch:** 80 in Dec (LC), dropped quickly in Jan. **White-winged Crossbill:** 37 NBCBC, only report. **Com. Redpoll:** widely reported; max 150 Adams 13 Feb. **HOARY REDPOLL:** four at feeder CV 2Jan; singles CV 25,28 Jan; one Clayton early Feb; one LB 7 Feb (LC,GS). **Pine Siskin:** max and last three Henderson 11 Jan. **Evening Grosbeak:** reports from eight contributors; generally 20-50, max 75 LB. **House Sparrow:** max 50-100 at feeder CV (MW).

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

John M.C. Peterson

Discovery Farm, RR 1 Box 230, Elizabethtown NY 12932-9721

The Canadian invasion winter of 1995-96 went from brutal to balmy. The start of the season was cold and icy, with a storm 9-10 Dec adding several inches of fresh snow and bringing the accumulation to a foot at Paul Smiths. A brief, cold high was followed by another 6" snowfall 14 Dec, when Plattsburgh fell to 0°F. By the 23 Dec Elizabethtown CBC, Dec snowfall was already the fifth highest on record, with observers forging 19 miles on skis and three miles by snowshoes through up to 30" of fresh powder to reach Hurricane, Giant, and Jay range territories. Christmas week saw more snow, and the following weekend participants in the Saranac Lake CBC traveled a similar 22 miles on cross-country skis in 18" of snow. January began cloudy and cold, with a 12" snowstorm in southern Essex Co. 3 Jan, followed by a frigid blast of Arctic air: Saranac Lake was -22°F on 4 Jan, -26°F on 5 Jan, -37°F on 6 Jan, -26°F on 7 Jan, not rising to zero until noon on 8 Jan. Hardly a flake of the "Blizzard of '96" fell here, however! After a moderate week of clouds and snow, thermometers plunged briefly 15-16 Jan. Finally, a January thaw provided a respite. Plattsburgh thermometers climbed to a record 65°F on 19 Jan, with thunderstorms in Essex Co. the same day, continuing with rain and severe flooding along rivers into the next week. By 1 Feb, Champlain was 98.54', up over four feet from mid January. The month began clear and cold (-25°F at Saranac Lake 4 Feb), but there were many mild days and little snow. Plattsburgh reached 17°F on 15 Feb and a balmy 50°F on 21 Feb. High winds hit on 25 Feb, with 22" of snow falling at Lake Placid, but none in the shadow of the High Peaks at Elizabethtown. Leap Day was sunny and moderate, closing out what began as a hard winter with expanses of bare ground.

In contrast to the bumper crop of wild food last winter, this year saw trees and shrubs nearly bare. Yet if frugivores and half-hardies were in short supply, their loss was more than compensated for by the continued invasion of birds moving down out of northern Canada beginning in the fall. December began with the surprising sight of a **Northern Fulmar** being harassed by crows along the shoulder of Sentinel Road, Lake Placid. Spotted by David Brant, the bird was rehabilitated by Dr. Nina Schoch, then transported to Tufts U. 11 Dec for evaluation, banding, and coastal release. (Interestingly, yet another fulmar was at Ottawa 6 Dec!)

Other northern visitants included a dark morph Gyrfalcon near Essex

in Dec and a gray morph gyr back at the mouth of the Saranac River in Plattsburgh in Jan-Feb for the **fourth** consecutive winter. Both white-winged gulls were present: the first-winter Iceland Gull at L. Flower stayed into Dec, while a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was at Westport later the same month, a second ESSE record. A Great Gray Owl appeared at the Inlet golf course in late January. Bohemian Waxwing continued to stage a major invasion, with active observers encountering up to four flocks daily. Some birds visiting a Wadhams yard even ate offerings of dried fruit. Highest densities, as usual, were in the Champlain Valley (672 on the NYS side of the Ferrisburg CBC), although a few wandered as high as Bloomingdale and Lake Flower. Northern Shrike also continued to move down in extremely high numbers for that solitary species. The five Christmas Bird Counts combined for a total of 21 shrikes, only hinting at the numbers undoubtedly present over the four northeastern counties this winter. Lapland Longspur is so infrequently reported that five on the Plattsburgh CBC was noteworthy. This was also a good winter for Snow Bunting, with 606 on the Ferrisburg CBC in Dec and 500+ near Westport later in the month, in addition to other reports of large flocks. More surprising northern visitors to a freshly-manured Wadhams field in mid-Jan were three Pine Grosbeak. Also surprisingly, of the **414** Pine Grosbeak reported on Christmas Counts, **302** were on the Plattsburgh CBC, perhaps drawn to city and campus ornamentals with fruit. Given the failure of the cone crop, crossbills were more difficult to find. There were just three reports of Red Crossbill, from Eighth L, Hurricane Mt, and Tupper Lake, plus only two of White-winged Crossbill from Gabriels and the Saranac Lake CBC. Certainly, the most abundant winter finch was Common Redpoll, with a high of 729 on the Saranac Lake CBC and flocks of 100+ at some feeders by Feb. As expected, Hoary Redpoll showed up among the feeder flocks; several were in Lake Placid during Dec, while others were banded near Elizabethtown during Jan-Feb.

Lake Champlain never completely froze. By the mid Jan Federation Waterfowl Count, open water was only found between Whallon's Bay and Valcour Island, plus a few inland rivers (thus concentrating Bald Eagle), but more open water was available after the late Jan thaw. A Red-throated Loon appeared at Westport in mid Dec, while a late inland Common Loon was on Seventh L earlier in the month. A record-late Double-crested Cormorant lingered at Westport until the end of the year. Four Great Blue Heron stayed in ESSE and HAMI into Dec. As mentioned, eagles became fairly numerous in stretches of open water as Champlain tried to close. An engineer on Amtrak's "Adirondack" counted four adults and an immature between Willsboro Bay and Wickham

Marsh 29 Dec, while observers on the 13-14 Jan FWC similarly noted 4-6 adults and an immature between Valcour Island and Whallon's Bay (with Willsboro Bay frozen by then). There were also inland sightings from Limekiln, Seventh L, and Tupper Lake, where Charlcie Delehanty had two adult Bald Eagle and an immature feeding on a deer carcass on the ice of Big Tupper 22 Feb.

In addition to the aforementioned shrikes, a number of other diurnal raptors frequented feeders, and nocturnal hunters paid daytime visits, as well. Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Northern Goshawk were frequently observed chasing doves, chickadees, and redpolls. Barred Owl also watched feeders at Elizabethtown, Keene, Lewis, and Tupper Lake during the day, suggesting that microtus populations in the surrounding forests were down, or under deep snow prior to the thaw. Also noteworthy were feeder-watcher Northern Saw-whet Owl at Elizabethtown (found dead after two days) and New Russia (which threw a pellet, suggesting it was eating), plus three taken in for rehabilitation in the Tri-Lakes area in Dec, according to Dr. Schoch.

If northern vintants dominated the winter of 1995-96, there were a few surprising exceptions. Tom Dudones was amazed to spot a Turkey Vulture crossing the Blue Ridge Road two miles west of the Elk Lake turnoff in early Jan, providing a "nice close view as it flew low over road." Wild Turkey numbers finally took off here, with flocks of 19 near Westport, 24 in a Willsboro Point yard, and 30+ at a Malone manure pile. Trudy McNeil's Ellenburg feeder on Green Valley Rd was the woodpecker hotspot, with a **Red-bellied Woodpecker** present from Dec-Feb, plus an immature **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** spotted there in early Jan by Daphne Kutzer. No less unexpected was the **Field Sparrow** that turned up at Dean Spaulding's feeder in Wadhams, only the second late-Dec ESSE record.

The total of 98 seasonal species (plus a hybrid) was well above the 90 species reported during the bumper food crop of the previous winter and even above the 96 species of 1993-94, another season of severe food shortage. Go figure.

Contributors: David Brant, Bill Brown, Geoffrey Carleton, Laurel Carroll, Joan Clark, Charlcie Delehanty, Marian Delehanty, Anthony & Jeanne-Claire Deobil, Tom Dudones, Beth Edmonds, Maureen French, Donna Frenyea, Mark Gretch, Robert Hagar, Terry Hall, Judy & Roger Heintz, Candy Hess, Selma Isil, Marshall Kinne, Bill Krueger, Daphne Kutzer, Richard MacDonald, Theodore Mack, Larry Master, Trudy McNeil, Matt Medlar, Dan Nickerson, Lydia & Paul Osenbaugh, John & Susan Peterson, William Peterson, Alan Pistorius, Mary Purcell, George

Roberts, Denise Scheinberg, Nina Schoch, Carole Slatkin, David Smith, Dean Spaulding, Trisha Spaulding, Irma Teittinen, John & Pat Thaxton, Jan Trzeciak, Robert Wei, Hollis White, Uta Wister.

Abbreviations: CICBC - Champlain Islands CBC, 17 Dec; ECBC - Elizabethtown CBC, 23 Dec; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC, 16 Dec; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 17 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC, 30 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** Westport 16 Dec (LC,TD), a good find. **Com. Loon:** Seventh L 5 Dec (TD), late inland. **Red-necked Grebe:** found alive Cedar R Rd HAMI 7 Feb (GL), died shortly after. **NORTHERN FULMAR:** Lake Placid 2 Dec (DB), *intro.* **Double-crested Cormorant:** Westport 16 Dec (JP,mob) to 30 Dec (MM), record late. **Great Blue Heron:** Seventh L 5 Dec (TD), late inland; Westport 16 Dec (DS), last Champlain. **Snow Goose:** three with yellow neck collars Pt au Roche 1 Dec (BK). **Canvasback:** drake Cumberland Bay 20 Jan (PT), only report of this once abundant diver. **Ring-necked Duck:** 128 PCBC, high. **Red-breasted Merganser:** Whallon's Bay 8 Jan (TD), good find.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **TURKEY VULTURE:** Blue Ridge near Boreas R 8 Jan (TD); *intro.* **Bald Eagle:** at least 5-7 along lake in CLIN & Essex, plus at least five inland in FRAN & HAMI throughout winter, a strong showing. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Inlet, Tupper Lake, and Wadhams feeders; plus five on CBCs. **Cooper's Hawk:** eight reported is high here. **N.Goshawk:** pursuing Mourning Dove Elizabethtown & Inlet feeders; five on CBCs; one rehabilitated Saranac Lake Jan (NS). **Red-tailed Hawk:** Tupper Lake 26 Dec and Utowana L 5 Jan (TD), unusual inland in winter. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 13 on three CBCs relatively low, given the Arctic invasion. **Merlin:** Lake Shore Rd CLIN 2 Dec (BK), usually unreported in winter. **Gyr Falcon:** dk morph flushed Cross Rd ESSE 8 Dec (DS); gr morph mouth Saranac R 19 Jan (GR) and 11 Feb (J&RH), 4th straight winter there where puddle ducks congregate on open water. **Wild Turkey:** 19 Westport 24-26 Dec (J&SP, WP); 24 Willsboro Pt 13 Jan (FWC); 30+ Malone 4 Jan (JT); 26 PCBC, high numbers; plus two inland at an Inlet feeder 1 Dec-29 Feb (GL). **Am. Coot:** four PCBC, noteworthy. **Bonaparte's Gull:** 2 PCBC, only report. **Herring Gull:** L Flower 9 Dec (TD), late inland. **Iceland Gull:** 1st winter L. Flower from late Nov - 4 Dec (RH). **GLAUCOUS GULL:** 1st winter Westport 16 Dec (LC,TD,*et mult al*) to 17 Dec (RW), an excellent find. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 231 PCBC.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **E. Screech-Owl:** one ECBC, only report (rehab Champlain picked up in VT). **Barred Owl:** six daytime sightings - Blue Mt L, Elizabethtown, Keene, Lewis, Plattsburgh, Tupper Lake. **Great Gray Owl:** Inlet golf course 21 Jan (GL). **N. Saw-whet Owl:** ECBC; SLCBC; Elizabethtown feeder 28-30 Dec (when found dead); three rehabs Saranac Lake area Dec (NS); New Russia feeder 9 Jan (SI), extremely high number. **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:** Ellenburg feeder 17 Dec (TM) to 13 Feb (J&RH, DK), exceptional here. **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:** imm same Ellenburg feeder 7 Jan (DK), no less unexpected. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** "everywhere" HAMI Dec (GL); one SLCBC flushed to imitated Barred Owl call; male Connery Pd Trail, Wilmington, 8 Jan; female Baxter Mt and Keene 2-4 Feb (PT). **N. Flicker:** three FCBC; one PCBC, or about half as many as 1994-95 winter.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **Horned Lark:** 112 FCBC; 20 CICBC; 48 PCBC; count week ECBC; 100+ Westport 24-25 Jan (J&WP); 10+ Westport 13 Jan (JP, RW), exceptional here. **Gray Jay:** fed HAMI Dec (GL); max eight SLCBC; three Bloomingdale Bog 30 Dec (RM, MP, RW); Bloomingdale 1 Jan; pr Raquette L 16 Jan getting grit along highway (TD); two Baker feeder Saranac Inn 9 Feb thru, a strong showing. **Com. Raven:** max 35 ECBC. **Boreal Chickadee:** "hard to find" in HAMI Dec (GL); one ECBC and three SLCBC, only other reports, supporting Lee's experience. **Tufted Titmouse:** a dozen on three CBCs exceptional; plus other Dec reports from Crown Point, Inlet, Tupper Lake, and Westport. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** max 58 SLCBC; generally scarce in forests, but found at lowland feeders where not regular. **Brown Creeper:** similarly scarce; max eight SLCBC. **Carolina Wren:** one PCBC, only report. **Winter Wren:** MRRA 2 Dec (GL), quite a good find. **Golden-crowned Kinglet:** max 12 SLCBC, generally scarce. **Am. Robin:** Wadhams 8 Dec; plus 15 on four CBC's, the only reports. **N. Mockingbird:** two FCBC at Essex (JP,RW) and Westport, only sightings. **Bohemian Waxwing:** 705+ total recorded on four CBC's hints at numbers present; most records came from eastern ESSE (Essex, Keeseville, New Russia, Wadhams, Westport, Whallonsburg), with others in ne. ESSE (Bloomingdale, L Flower) and se. CLIN (Plattsburgh). **Cedar Waxwing:** 142 with no details PCBC, only report since the last two were seen in Tupper Lake back on 20 Sep; the same count reported 35 "waxwing (sp.)," but only 103 Bohemian. **N. Shrike:** total 21 on 5 CBCs, *intro*; imm Elizabethtown feeder 20-21 Dec, 7 Jan, banded 7 Feb (JP); an exceptional winter.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** max 78 PCBC. **Am. Tree**

Sparrow: max 129 PCBC. **FIELD SPARROW:** Wadhams feeder 29 Dec (DS), a fortunate find, but seen only one day. **Fox Sparrow:** one PCBC, also unusual. **Song Sparrow:** one each ECBC and SLCBC, low. **White-throated Sparrow:** three PCBC, only report. **Dark-eyed Junco:** max 131 PCBC; a few interior birds lingering at Inlet, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake. **Lapland Longspur:** five PCBC, rarely reported. **Snow Bunting:** max 606 FCBC; 500+ Westport late Dec; other large flocks included: 200 Westport 17 Dec, 250 Whallonsburg 8 Jan, and 150 Westport 13 Jan; even seen in HAMI 26 Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird:** max three SLCBC; Wadhams 27 Dec (DS); Albee Rd feeder 1 Jan thru (TD). **Com. Grackle:** max seven PCBC; plus one ECBC, only reports. **Brown-headed Cowbird:** 21 SLCBC, only report! **Pine Grosbeak:** *intro*; a dozen reports in addition to 414 found on four CBC's; a roadkill at Essex 18 Jan had a wing chord 108 mm and bill 10 mm, suggesting it belonged to the more southerly and expected *Pinicola enucleator eschatosus* subspecies (JP/DS). **Purple Finch:** virtually absent, except for 13 with no details PCBC and 2 at a feeder in the forests of Lewis on the ECBC. **House Finch:** max 303 PCBC; a CLIN rehabilitator reported the eye disease in Dec (DF). **Red Crossbill:** flock Eighth L 2 Dec (GL); two on Hurricane Mt. ECBC (J&PT); two Tupper Lake 24 Dec (CD), only sightings. **White-winged Crossbill:** 25 Gabriels 4 Dec (TD); ten SLCBC, only reports. **Com. Redpoll:** max 729 SLCBC; *intro*; 198 banded near Elizabethtown in three days between 17 Jan-15 Feb (JP), suggests magnitude of numbers at some feeders; also seen feeding on tamarack MRRA, yellow birch Connery Pd, and paper birch near Elizabethtown. **Hoary Redpoll:** one SLCBC, with several at Lake Placid count week; two banded Elizabethtown 17 Jan and 7 Feb (JP). **Pine Siskin:** 12 PCBC; eight SLCBC, only reports and illustrate scarcity of this often-abundant finch. **Am. Goldfinch:** total of 229 on five CBC's; plus two other reports from Elizabethtown and Tupper Lake, but nowhere abundant. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 279 ECBC, part of a total of 697 tallied on four CBCs, but absent from many feeders.

Addendum: Lapland Longspur: L Flower ESSE & FRAN 29 Nov 1, 1995 (TD), with 30 European Starling.

REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

Jane Graves

Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs NY 12866

Long, bleak, and brutal are words that accurately describe the winter just past. As reported from the Albany County Airport, December's mean temperature was 23.9°F, 2.6 ° below normal. Only two days rose over 40°F, and every daily minimum was below freezing. Sunshine averaged 34%, 5% below normal. There were 25.1 inches of snowfall, 10 inches above normal, with the first snowstorm on 14 December. January averaged a normal 20.6 degrees. The first half of the month was very cold and the second half mild. Both record low (-19°F on the 6th) and record high (60°F on the 19th) temperature records were set. It was a cloudy month, with only 39% sunshine, 7% below normal. It was the ninth snowiest January on record, with 28.4 inches of snowfall, 12.3 inches above normal. Most of this fell in the first 13 days of the month, with virtually all of it melting after the 14th. In addition, there were 1.67 inches of rain on the 19th which caused severe flooding in many areas. February averaged 25.2 °F, 1.7° above normal, with 47% sunshine, 5% less than normal. Snowfall totalled 5.8 inches, 8.5 inches below normal.

Robert Budliger reported that it was the worst birding winter in his 23 years in the area. Heavy snows followed by unprecedented cold followed by more snow followed by a thaw, heavy rain and record floods, and a series of February weekends featuring high winds meant that bird-er activities were curtailed and that birds reported were scarce. The early snow cover and freeze-up of large bodies of water after 14 December led to the lowest number of individuals counted in years for the twelve reporting CBCs although species numbers were high. The Federation Waterfowl Count on 14 Jan produced only 14 species compared with last year's 17 and 2610 individuals compared with 10,002.

The lack of natural food crops due to last summer's drought combined with the early winter heavy snow cover meant a hard winter for resident birds. Karl Parker reported seeing Wild Turkey feeding with difficulty in snow-covered corn fields. Robert Yunick observed turkeys feeding on frozen crabapple fruit in close proximity to humans in Schenectady. Many were found starved and frozen as the winter progressed. Wintering Bald Eagle were concentrated in those few areas where open water remained, but were present in good numbers. Gulls were to be found mainly in the Colonie/Cohoes area at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-

backed gulls were all reported throughout the season.

The big bird news of the season was the presence of **Great Gray Owl** for the first time since the great invasion of 1979. Between December 23 and February 29 four birds were reported. Only one of these individuals was actually seen by area birders, but property owners on whose land the other three birds stayed were cooperative about filing NYSARC reports with identifiable photographs.

Robert Yunick's reports from Jenny Lake indicate that the fall irruption of **Black-Capped Chickadee** fizzled in December with only 27 individuals banded, another 15 in January, and 10 in February. Noteworthy was the high percentage of adult birds (79% in December and 80% in January and February). There were low numbers of **Red-Breasted Nuthatch** banded as well.

The 125 species reported was down from last year's 129 species and included 26 waterfowl, 12 hawks, 8 gulls, 7 owls, and 8 fringillids. Rarities not already mentioned included **Tundra Swan**, **Ross' Goose**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Laughing Gull**, **Thayer's Gull**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Varied Thrush**, **Bohemian Waxwing**, and **Hoary Redpoll**.

Contributors: Ken Able; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Laurie Freeman; Jane Graves; Rich Guthrie; Ron Harrower; Cliff Lamere; William Lee; Andy Mason (AM); Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Frank Murphy; Karl Parker; Barbara Putnam; Jim Sotis; Douglas Steele; Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations: ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 17 Dec; CCCBC - Catskill-Coxsackie CBC, 19 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 16 Dec; Coll - Collins Lake, SCHE; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward area, WASH; FtPCBC - Fort Plain CBC, 20 Dec; GCBC - Galway CBC, 30 Dec; GI - Green Island, ALBA; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 30 Dec; HR - Hudson River; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 26 Dec; MR - Mohawk River; NASTP - North Albany Sewage Treatment Plant, Menands, ALBA; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 14 Jan; SaCBC - Salem CBC, 30 Dec; SaraL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 16 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, SARA; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 16 Dec; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 23 Dec; TCBC - Troy CBC, 30 Dec; TomRes - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VFPS/L7 - Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7, SCHE.

LOONS-WATERFOWL: **Red-throated Loon:** no reports. **Com. Loon:** one SaCBC, only report. **Pied-billed Grebe:** no reports. **Horned Grebe:** one TCBC, only report. **Red-necked Grebe:** one HR Troy Dam 25 Dec (RPG to BEN); two FWC. **Double-crested Cormorant:** no reports. **Great Blue Heron:** 21 on nine CBCs; high count 12 CCCBC; three wintering over ColL (RP). **Tundra Swan:** one SSCBC, first since 1993. **Mute Swan:** 130 HR on four CBCs; six Cohoes ALBA Jan (RB, WE, WL, NM); one VFPS/L7 FWC, first time observed at this location; four Stillwater NYSWC. **Snow Goose:** high count 500-600 TomRes 2 Dec (WL), down to 27 by 10 Dec (WE); 70+ Muitzeskill RENS 3 Dec (PC); 11 on three CBCs. **Brant:** one MR Lock 9 SCHE through 3 Dec (RP). **Canada Goose:** high count 3000 TomRes 10 Dec; 2952 ChCBC; only 303 FWC. **ROSS' GOOSE:** one TomRes 2 Dec (WL!), second regional record. **Wood Duck:** one ChCBC; pair NASTP 24-28 Dec (WE, CF, NM); one MR SCHE thru (RP). **Green-winged Teal:** three FtPCBC; one MR Binnekill SCHE thru (RP). **Am. Black Duck:** 1894 on 12 CBCs; 688 FWC. **Mallard:** 6023 on 12 CBCs; 1146 FWC, low numbers. **N. Pintail:** one TomRes 10 Dec (WE); one CCCBC; four TCBC; one SRCBC; one GI 16 Jan (DS). **Gadwall:** one SRCBC; one HR Catskill GREE 26 Dec (RG to BEN); one MR Binnekill SCHE 15 Jan (RP to BEN); arr four VFPS/L7 28 Feb (RP). **Am. Wigeon:** no reports. **Canvasback:** seven SaraL 2 Dec (LF, JG); one GI 3-19 Jan (RB, WL, DS). **Redhead:** one CCCBC, only report. **Ring-necked Duck:** one ACCBC; one Cohoes Falls ALBA 7 Jan (CB); arr Stockport COLU 23 Feb (ADBC). **Greater Scaup:** one TomRes 10 Dec (WE); 30 SaCBC. **Lesser Scaup:** one TomRes 10 Dec (WE); four SaCBC; one TCBC; one GI 1-18 Jan (RB, WE). **Oldsquaw:** one 5 Dec Copake COLU (ADBC); one ACCBC. **Black Scoter:** one HR Catskill GREE 26 Dec (RG to BEN). **White-winged Scoter:** one TCBC; one GI 1 Jan (RB). **Com. Goldeneye:** 115 on six CBCs; 167 FWC; 50 HR Stillwater SARA 20 Feb (RB), low numbers. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** one CCCBC. **Bufflehead:** four Dec; two Jan reports. **Hooded Merganser:** max 150 SaraL 2 Dec (LF, JG); ten FWC. **Com. Merganser:** high counts 154 TCBC and 273 FWC. **Red-breasted Merganser:** one TCBC; one GI 7-18 Jan (RB, WE, DS). **Ruddy Duck:** one SaraL 2 Dec (LF, JG), only report.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** arr T Root MONT 26 Feb (KP). **Bald Eagle:** 16 on four CBCs; at least 16 ad, nine imm Conklinville Dam, HR, MR, L George, Hoosic R all season; max five ad, seven imm Conklinville Dam 20 Dec. **N. Harrier:** one Poestenskill RENS 3 Dec, 1 Jan (J. Marx to BEN); eight on six CBCs; one Coxsackie GREE 1 Jan (RG to BEN); one 27 Feb Schodack Ctr RENS (PC), numbers dramatically lower than last year.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 36 on 12 CBCs; 13 reports of singles, high numbers. **Cooper's Hawk:** 28 on 11 CBCs; 16 reports of singles, high numbers. **N. Goshawk:** 11 reports. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** two Dec. reports; one overwintered Galway SARA. **Red-tailed Hawk:** max 107 TCBC; 71 CCCBC; 64 SRCBC. **Rough-legged Hawk:** 24 on eight CBCs; max ten FtPCBC; eight FtE thru; three Stone Bridge Rd SARA 10 Jan (CF); eight reports of singles. **Am. Kestrel:** 25 on ten CBCs; ten other reports. **Merlin:** no definite reports. **Peregrine Falcon:** two downtown Albany 14 Dec thru; one FtE 7 Jan (B. Bidwell to BEN); one Kiskatom GREE 21 Jan (P. Rappleyea to BEN), taking a Mallard; one Amsterdam MONT 29 Jan (T. Palmer to BEN); one Stanton Pd ALBA 18 Feb (K. Budliger *fide* RB); one FtE 30 Jan (CB). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** nine on five CBCs; seven other reports. **Wild Turkey:** high counts 486 ACBC; 330 ChCBC; 441 FtPCBC; also *intro*. **Am. Coot:** only two reports. **Am. Woodcock:** one Jefferson SCHO 7 Jan (AM), very rare in winter. **LAUGHING GULL:** one imm TCBC, first since 1991. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 125 Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (WE). **Herring Gull:** max 6000 Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (WE); down to 200-300 Jan-Feb (RB), 90% adults. **Thayer's Gull:** two HR Cocksackie GREE 26 Dec (RPG to BEN); two TCBC. **Iceland Gull:** five MR Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (KA, WE, et al.); three HR Cocksackie GREE 26 Dec (RG to BEN); two imm Crescent ALBA 26 Jan (B. Brooks to BEN); one New Baltimore GREE 12 Feb (RG to BEN). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one ad, one first w Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (KA, WE, et al.); one TCBC; one HR Troy Dam 25 Dec (RG to BEN). **Glaucous Gull:** one 1st yr, one 3rd yr Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (KA, WE, et al.); one GI 7 Jan (WE); one imm FWC. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 600 Crescent ALBA 2 Dec (WE); only 200 or so Jan-Feb (RB); 90% adults.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS: **Mourning Dove:** high counts 1094 ChCBC and 818 SCCBC. **E. Screech-Owl:** 44 on nine CBCs; seven other reports. **Great Horned Owl:** 40 on 11 CBCs; twelve other reports. **Snowy Owl:** one Hillsdale COLU 20 Jan (ADBC); one FtE 27 Jan (S. O'Brian to BEN). **Barred Owl:** five on four CBCs; widely reported as diurnal feeders thru. **GREAT GRAY OWL:** one Eagle Mills RENS 23 Dec (G. Goodness/FM!), seen before this date by local farmers; one T Salem WASH 16-18 Jan (P. Sauer! to BEN); one Saratoga Springs c. 12-29 Feb (L. Clark! to FM); one T Fort Ann WASH 27 Feb-23 Mar (M.B. Butler! *fide* BP); first reports since 1980. **Long-eared Owl:** two SSCBC. **Short-eared Owl:** no reports for the first time in several years. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one Hague WARR 24 Jan (LM); one found dead FtE Jan (B. Bidwell *fide* BP). **Belted Kingfisher:** 15 on 11 CBCs; scarce after Dec. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 45 on nine CBCs,

high count 15 CCCBC; 15 reports of singles, many coming to feeders; one T Kingsbury/Argyle WASH 2 Dec (BP), fourth winter in a row. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one Schodack Ctr RENS 9, 14, 20 Dec (PC); one Glenville SCHE 22 Dec (RP), both at feeders. **Downy Woodpecker**: max 105 ChCBC. **Hairy Woodpecker**: max 44 CCCBC. **N. Flicker**: 63 on nine CBCs; three Jan, one Feb reports. **Pileated Woodpecker**: max ten SCCBC; nine CCCBC; ten reports of singles.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **E. Phoebe**: one FiveR 17 Dec-30 Jan (ACCBC, RB, DS); two CCCBC. **SAY'S PHOEBE**: one NASTP 23-30 Dec (CF, JG, RG!), probably present after this date when plant was closed to birders, second regional record. **Horned Lark**: max 884 ChCBC; 608 FtPCBC; seen widely in good numbers. **Fish Crow**: 21 TCBC; four Jan, five Feb reports. **Com. Raven**: max 11 SRCBC; 35 other reports, incl eight JL (RY). **Black-capped Chickadee**: max 779 CCCBC; 728 SRCBC; 695 SCCBC. **Tufted Titmouse**: max 155 CCCBC; 154 SCCBC; 113 GCBC. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: 86 on ten CBCs; max 24 JGCBC. **White-breasted Nuthatch**: max 110 SCCBC. **Brown Creeper**: 41 on 11 CBCs; max 12 AcCBC. **Carolina Wren**: 14 reports; many reports of successful overwintering at suet feeders, incl two Meco FULT (LF). **Winter Wren**: max five CCCBC; four other Dec reports; one Jefferson SCHO 28 Jan (AM). **Marsh Wren**: one CCCBC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: 30 on eight CBCs; five other reports. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one SCCBC, only report. **E. Bluebird**: max 94 ChCBC; 73 TCBC; 68 ACCBC; present in moderate numbers thru. **Hermit Thrush**: one CCCBC; one Chatham COLU 6 Jan (ADBC); one Coxsackie GREE 11 Jan (P. Rappleyea to BEN). **Am. Robin**: 205 CCCBC; 145 ACCBC; 111 ChCBC; wintered in small numbers, began to reappear after 9 Feb. **VARIED THRUSH**: one ad m Clothier Rd T Corinth SARA 1-8 Dec (RB, CF, JG mob), not reported since 1984. **Gray Catbird**: one SRCBC; one CCCBC. **N. Mockingbird**: max 23 SCCBC; scarce after Dec. **Bohemian Waxwing**: 122 FtPCBC; 75 GCBC; 32 JGCBC; 6-8 T Saratoga 5 Dec (CF), irruption year. **Cedar Waxwing**: high counts 123 SCCBC; 117 CCCBC; 47 ChCBC; c.40 Castleton RENS 12 Jan (PC); 40+ VFPS 1 Jan (RY); 20 Warrensburg WARR 25 Feb (M. Di Pietro to BEN). **N. Shrike**: 31 on 10 CBCs; 55 reports of singles, exceptionally high numbers. **European Starling**: high counts, 6273 TCBC; 7972 SRCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC; one TCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal:** high counts, 210 CCCBC; 185 SCCBC; 113 TCBC; 94 TCBC; first singing noted Broadalbin FULT 24 Feb (LF). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** max 568 HFCBC; 467 SaCBC; 437 ChCBC; 334 SCBC, good numbers generally. **Chipping Sparrow:** one New Baltimore GREE 7 Dec (J. Coe to BEN), very late. **Field Sparrow:** eight on five CBCs. **Savannah Sparrow:** one CCCBC; one SSCBC. **Song Sparrow:** 59 CCCBC; 31 ACCBC; few reports after Dec. **Swamp Sparrow:** singles on FtPCBC, SCCBC, SRCBC; two Cohoes Falls 28 Dec (CF). **White-throated Sparrow:** max 76 CCCBC; few reports after Dec. **Dark-eyed Junco:** 293 SCCBC; 291 ChCBC; 267 ACCBC; reported in good numbers thru. **Lapland Longspur:** two ACCBC; eight FtPCBC; two HFCBC; five SSCBC. **Snow Bunting:** max 877 FtPCBC; 425 SaCBC; 500+ T Saratoga 11 Jan (RB, JG); 500+ T Argyle WASH 30 Jan (BP). **Red-winged Blackbird:** 12 ChCBC; 18 TCBC; arr FiveR 22 Feb (DS); generally present throughout Region after 27 Feb. **E. Meadowlark:** five FtPCBC; one FtE 16 Dec (BP); one FtE 26 Dec (WE, NM). **Rusty Blackbird:** two ChCBC; three FtPCBC; one Ghent COLU 27 Feb (ADBC). **Com. Grackle:** one TCBC; arr FiveR 26 Feb (DS). **Brown-headed Cowbird:** 33 on five CBCs; 26 Stone Bridge Rd SARA 28 Feb (JG). **Pine Grosbeak:** six ChCBC; 38 FtPCBC; 13 JGCBC; six SaCBC; seven Corinth SARA 23 Dec (RY); 20 E. Berne ALBA 31 Dec (KA); heard Schodack Ctr. RENS 30 Jan, 1 Feb (PC); 30 Galway SARA 20 Jan (G. Recer to BEN). **Purple Finch:** eight ACCBC; eight ChCBC; three HFCBC; five SCCBC; absent after Dec. **Red Crossbill:** one JGCBC, only report, left over from last year? **White-winged Crossbill:** no reports. **Com. Redpoll:** high counts, 428 ACCBC; 215 CCCBC; 102 ChCBC; widely reported throughout period, especially N. SARA. **Hoary Redpoll:** one m Berne ALBA 29-30 Jan (KA); one f Berne 4-5 Feb (KA); one FtE 31 Jan (D. Beeler to BEN). **Pine Siskin:** 40 GCBC; present in small numbers thru. **Am. Goldfinch:** high counts, 196 CCCBC; 168 SCCBC; 147 FtPCBC, low numbers generally. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 544 JGCBC; reported widely in moderate numbers.

internet: jgraves@skidmore.edu

REGION 9 - HUDSON-DELAWARE

Michael L. Usai

70 Virginia Road Apartment 18A, North White Plains NY 10603

The winter of 1995-96 was the snowiest on record across the Region and one of the coldest and windiest. This winter was marked by heavy snowfalls followed by rapid melting such as produced the devastating flooding in the northern and western parts of the Region from the snow melt of the "Blizzard of '96". Several deep freezes in January and February froze most of the freshwater and some saltwater lagoons driving waterfowl out of the Region.

Despite, and possibly because of, the harsh winter several rarities appeared in the Region. An invasion of **Great Gray Owl** to the far north and west of the area produced one for our Region. This was first seen on private property in Port Jervis on 20 Jan. The owl remained in the area for approximately two weeks. An immature gray morph **Gyr Falcon** was briefly seen in Peekskill and may have been the large falcon reported in the vicinity a couple of weeks later. Rye produced an **Eared Grebe** and three Eurasian Wigeon with one wigeon at Rockland Lake State Park for another winter. A late February **Long-billed Dowitcher** is a nice find for the time of year. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was again at the usual spots in Rye, and a few were reported from the Hudson River. A couple of **Iceland Gull** were found; one each at Newburgh along the Hudson River and the New Paltz landfill. The invasion of **Northern Shrike** continued strongly this winter with the total number of reports exceeding 80 for the Region. Bald Eagle numbers were high along the Hudson River and the Mongaup-Rio Reservoirs, SULL, and the Delaware River.

Other species of special note included: Northern Gannet, Black Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Vulture, Virginia Rail, Rough-legged Hawk, Yellow-breasted Chat, Common Redpoll, and Sharp-tailed Sparrow (sp.?)

Contributors: John Askildsen, Thomas Burke, Jeff Daley, Andrew Farnsworth, Valerie Freer, Helen Manson, Heinz Meng, Christopher Nadareski, Frank Nicoletti, Shelden Spencer, Ed Treacy, Mike Usai, Hans Weber

Abbreviations: EGR-Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, PCBC-Peekskill Christmas Bird Count (16 Dec), GSCBC-Greenwich-Stamford CBC (17 Dec), EOCBC-East Orange CBC (16 Dec), DCCBC-Dutchess Co CBC (17 Dec), UCCBC-Ulster Co CBC (17 Dec), RCCBC-Rockland Co CBC, BWCBC-Bronx-Westchester CBC (23 Dec), PCCBC-Putnam Co CBC (30

Dec), PCBC-Pawling CBC (1 Jan), LHVBL-Lower Hudson Valley Bird Line, JBNHS- John Burroughs Natural History Society, RTWBC-Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, MP-Milton Point, Rye, MC-Marshlands Conservancy, RLSP-Rockland Lake State Park, KRes-Kensico Reservoir, WBranch-West Branch Reservoir, Ash-Ashokan Reservoir

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: one L. Gleneida 24-30 Dec. **EARED GREBE:** one Kirby Mill Pond, Rye 13-15 Jan (TB). **N. Gannet:** one EGR 1 Dec. **Great Cormorant:** 13 Peekskill Bay 4 Dec - thru, good number. **Double-crested Cormorant:** two EGR 2 Dec. **Snow Goose:** one Buttermilk Pd DUTC 23 Feb (JD); one MP 7 Jan. **Canada Goose:** 8000 EOCBC. **Eurasian Wigeon:** three Rye BWCBC; one RLSP 5 Dec, sporadic. **Redhead:** up to 13 EGR; ten New Croton Res WEST 4 Jan (FN); up to six KRes 10-20 Jan. **Greater Scaup:** up to 4000 EGR thru. **Oldsquaw:** 45 Peekskill Bay 14 Dec, good number for location. **White-winged Scoter:** one EGR 28 Dec (TB); one Hudson R. BWCBC. **Com. Merganser:** 2000+ WBranch Res 6 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Black Vulture: 11 Galeville Airport 4 Jan; one Bedford Hills WEST 4 Jan; up to nine Haverstraw Dump 4 Jan; four Bear Mt 18 Feb. **Osprey:** one Kres 6 Dec, late. **Rough-legged Hawk:** four Galeville 12 Dec. **Golden Eagle:** one Armonk 26 Dec (JA); Stissing Mt thru; one adult Mine Rd ORAN 29 Dec (ET). **GYREALCON:** one imm gray morph Peekskill 5 Jan (JA, MU). **Virginia Rail:** one MC 5 Dec (TB). **Purple Sandpiper:** up to 80 EGR thru. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** one MC 23-24 Feb (TB). **Bonaparte's Gull:** 18 PL 7 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** one Hudson R, Newburgh 7 Feb; one New Paltz Landfill UCCBC (HW). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one PL thru, sporadic; one Hudson R, Haverstraw 23 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barred Owl: three MC BWCBC thru; movement early Mar. **GREAT GRAY OWL;** one Pt Jervis 20 Jan. **Long-eared Owl:** two BWCBC. **Short-eared Owl:** 13 Galeville Airport 13 Dec. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** two BWCBC. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one 2,16 Feb DUTC (RTWBC):

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Fish Crow: one MC 10,15 Feb; one PCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Palm Warbler: one EGR 8 Dec (MC). **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one EGR 8 Dec:

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Sharp-tailed Sparrow (sp.): one MC BWCBC. **White-crowned Sparrow:** three Greigs Farm DUTC 4 Jan and four there 30 Jan. **Common Redpoll:** scattered reports; migrating in late Feb.

REGION 10 - MARINE

Seymour Schiff¹ & Alvin Wollin²

1. 603 Mead Terrace, S. Hempstead, NY 11550

2. 4 Meadow Lane, Rockville Centre, NY 11570

We started the year with extreme drought; we ended it with the most snow recorded in a winter at the measurement sites of New York City and Brookhaven National Laboratory. The temperatures averaged 4.2F° below normal in December, 1.0° below in January, and a mere 0.5° above in February. On the early date of 10-12 December, the fresh water ponds in Hempstead Lake State Park and other places on Long Island froze over during the first sustained cold snap of the season. The ponds were again mostly frozen in mid-Jan during the FWC period.

The cold ensured that the 12.14 inches of precipitation for the three month season (2.46 inches above normal) mostly came down as snow. There were three snowfalls before the Christmas Count period, four during and sixteen afterwards, some well beyond this reporting period. A lot of snow!

The largest snowfall was 7-8 January, with a total ranging from 15 to 27.5 inches over the Region. Total snowfall for the entire winter was 68 inches at New York City and 94 inches at Brookhaven (including over a foot on 10-11 April). The early December cold and the number of snowfalls appeared to divide the season into two parts separated by the CBCs. Before and during the counts there was a lot of birding activity; afterwards, less.

The Southern Nassau CBC with 141, highest in the state, had its largest list ever. Other CBCs also had high numbers. While winter visitants and northern finches were mostly absent, few, or in some cases none, of the usual half-hardies were missed. This produced large lists with few surprises.

Not new for the CBCs, but certainly unusual, was eight **Black Skimmer** seen by Pat Caro and Jeff Kirk 30 December at Short Beach on the west end of Jones Beach on the S Nassau CBC. Ken and Sue Feustel combing the Oak Beach marshes on the Captree CBC 17 December found a **Yellow**

Rail and a **Sedge Wren**. Other rarely seen count birds were Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Razorbill, **Black Guillemot**, Eastern Phoebe and **Bohemian Waxwing**. This last species was seen by Tom Burke (*et al.*) west of Montauk Pt on 16 December and by Jim Ash on 17 Dec, and the same or another was observed by (Doug

Futuyma *et al.*) in a flock of European Starling on Dune Road west of Shinnecock 1-2 January.

An **Eared Grebe** was found at Pt. Lookout 21 January, which stayed with the 100 + Horned Grebe flock in the inlet and adjacent ocean through the period.

A magnet for rare gulls has always been the Bonaparte's Gull flocks in the South Shore inlets. This year the flocks in Jones, Fire Island and other inlets were much diminished. A large flock (for this year) numbered in the low hundreds, whereas formerly this would have been considered a small group. Rarities are generally seen only when Bonaparte's numbers are large; there were no real rarities this season. In addition, the Bonaparte's flocks departed early this year.

A major event of the season was the *largest invasion* of Northern Shrike ever to be reported in our Region. The influx started in the fall (as reported last season) and widespread reports were still coming in well beyond the end of the season. The CBC's offer the best guide to the magnitude of numbers involved, as they are separated in location and take place over the short period of just over two weeks. If an assumption is made that there was little geographical movement during this time, the total from the Regional CBCs is an impressive 42 individuals. Included were reports from Staten Island to Gardiner's Island, Montauk and Orient Pt. Many of these birds were off the beaten track and discovered only during the intensive searching of the counts, but many were located in places where they could easily be observed. By period's end, anybody who wanted to find one could and probably did.

Contributors: Bob Adamo, Howard Boltson, Hugh F. Boyle, Paul A. Buckley, Thomas W. Burke, James Clinton, Sr., Lester Feldman, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Ken Feustel, Paul H. Gillen, Robert J. Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Peter Martin, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Eric Salzman, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Steve Walter, Alvin Wollin.

Abbreviations: CB-Cedar Beach; XCBC-Christmas Bird Count, where X= B-Brooklyn, C-Captree, F-Central Suffolk, G-Sagaponack, M-Montauk, N-No. Nassau, Q-Queens, S-So. Nassau, T-Staten Island; CLP-Clove Lake Park, SI; CP-Central Park; FBF-Floyd Bennett Field; FP-Forest

Park; * GKP-Great Kills Park, SI; HP-Hook Pond, East Hampton; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; JIN-Jones Inlet; LI-Long Island; MP-Montauk Point; NYRBA-New York Rare Bird Alert; PP-Prospect Park; SHIN-Shinnecock Inlet; SI-Staten Island.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-necked Grebe:** several dozen birds distributed SI to MP mid Dec thru, more evident this season than usual. **EARED GREBE:** DuBoise Pt 18 and 25 Dec (SW); JIN and adjacent ocean 10 Jan thru. **Tricolored Heron:** SCBC 30 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** six HP to 19 Dec; three 29 Dec; two CCBC 17 Dec. **Mute Swan:** continue to increase, as reported on various CBCs. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** two HP 17 Dec; Kelly's Pond, Water Mill 4 Feb. **Barnacle Goose:** MP to 16 Dec (of unknown origin). **Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal:** Short's Pond, Bridgehampton 3 Dec; Mill Pond, Bellmore 1 Jan (PM). **Eurasian Wigeon:** three HP 5 Dec to 20 Jan and 24 Feb; CCBC 17 Dec; Cutchogue to 31 Jan; PP 18 Feb; Peconic 29 Feb. **Tufted Duck:** JBWR 3 Dec; Riverhead mid-Jan; Westhampton Beach 23 Jan; Bay Park, NASS 13 Feb, most years have only single reports. **Com. Eider:** est. of 2-5000 MP 3 Dec to 24 Feb; others in small numbers. **King Eider:** two and then one MP 11 Dec to 27 Jan. **Harlequin Duck:** seven wintered PL jetty; two Mattituck 29 Dec (PG); Fort Schuyler, Bronx 21 Jan (SW *et al*). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** two Lake Montauk 16 Dec (PB); off Wolf Pond Pk; SI 11 Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** Mecox to 4 Dec and Mill Neck 9 Dec (Barbara Conolly), late birds; arr 4 Feb (LF), early [or a wintering bird?]. **Bald Eagle:** SCBC 30 Dec. **N.Goshawk:** a few wintered. **Rough-legged Hawk:** scattered individuals along the South Shore of LI. **Merlin:** a few wintered. **Gyrfalcon:** a gray morph was seen at various times and places and may be the same bird; at the same time a very large *tundrius* subspecies of Peregrine Falcon, which might be confused with this bird, was on the Jones Beach strip. The following reports are considered reliable: Centerport 24-25 Dec (photos by A. Wilson); Meadowbrook Dump 11, 25 Feb; Cedar Beach 12, 15 Feb. **YELLOW RAIL:** Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (Ken & Sue Feustel). **Am. Golden-Plover:** two Mecox 1-7 Dec. **American Oystercatcher:** six SCBC 30 Dec. **Red Knot:** 25 BCBC 16 Dec; 200 SCBC 30 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** MP, PL, Atlantic Beach. **Little Gull:** reports from Breezy Pt., PL, and SHIN. **Black-headed Gull:** two MCBC 16 Dec; PL 6-25 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull:** numbers much decreased this winter, most left the area early, and there were few or no lingering flocks into the spring. **Iceland Gull:** dozen reports SI to Orient Pt. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:**

half a dozen reports SI to MP. **Glaucous Gull**: SI 16 Dec; PL 17 Dec; MP 23 Dec; NCBC 23 Dec; Babylon 1 Jan to 4 Feb; JBWE 2-4 Feb. **Common Tern**: SI 16 Dec (Bob Clermont). **BLACK SKIMMER**: Pat Caro and Jeff Kirk eight SCBC 30 Dec. **Razorbill**: MP max ten 11 Dec-21 Jan; two SCBC 30 Dec. **BLACK GUILLEMOT**: MP 16 Dec (T. Burke *et al.*).

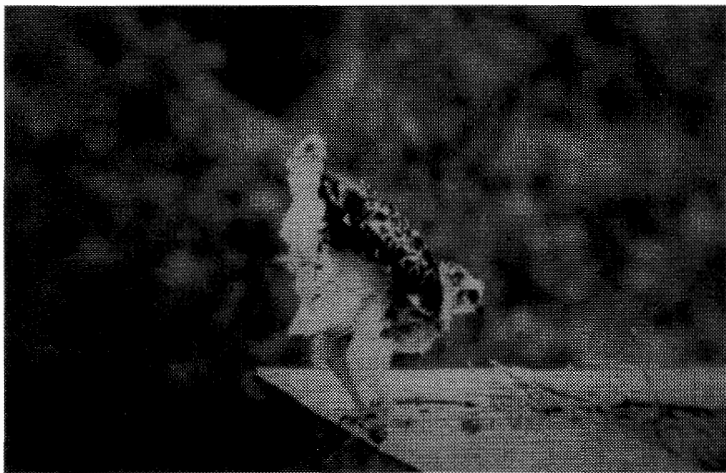
PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl**: Atlantic Beach 16-18 Dec; Breezy Pt 17 Dec; JBWE 18 Dec (PM); PL 31 Dec-22 Jan; Cupsogue Co Park; Moriches 1 Feb; Dune Road, Shinnecock 11 Feb; on balcony 116 St and Riverside Dr, Manhattan 22 Feb (Robert Paxton). **Long-eared Owl**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Short-eared Owl**: a half dozen widely scattered wintering birds on South Shore marshes. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: two JBWR 10 Dec; PP mid Dec; four BCBC 16 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec; two SCBC 30 Dec. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: CP entire period.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **E. Phoebe**: SI 16 Dec; two MCBC 16 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec. **Tree Swallow**: SCBC 30 Dec. **SEDGE WREN**: Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (Ken & Sue Feustel). **Marsh Wren**: Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (RK). **Eastern Bluebird**: 65 BCBC 16 Dec. **Swainson's Thrush**: CP 17 Dec. [Ed: no details!] **American Pipit**: SI 16 Dec; JBWE 5 Feb. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: west of MP 16 Dec (TB *et al.*), 17 Dec (Jim Ash); the same or another in a flock of European Starling on Dune Road west of Shinnecock 1-2 January (Doug Futuyama *et al.*). **Northern Shrike**: *many birds*, many locations, thru; CBC summaries: for 16 Dec: thirteen MCBC, six BCBC, two TCBC; for 17 Dec: seven CCBC, two GCBC; for 23 Dec: two NCBC; for 30 Dec: nine SCBC, one Quogue CBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Orange-crowned Warbler**: SI 16 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec; DuBoise Pt, Rockaway 1 and 21 Jan. **Nashville Warbler**: CCBC 17 Dec. **Pine Warbler**: Long Beach feeder early Jan (NYRBA). **Palm Warbler**: CB 17 Dec. **Com. Yellowthroat**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: JBWR to 16 Dec.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel**: Willowbrook, SI feeder 27 Dec to Jan (Jeff Stetson *vide* HF). **Vesper Sparrow**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: SI 16 Dec. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: Mill River, Rockville Centre 4 Jan (SS,AW). **White-crowned Sparrow**: six at feeder Jamesport (BP). **Lapland Longspur**: SI 16 Dec; two FBF 20 Dec; four after 14 Jan; Breezy Pt 14 Jan; PL 14 Jan; JBWE 6-19 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird**: four Twin Lakes Preserve 1 Jan (PM), 14 Jan (SS,AW). **Boat-tailed Grackle**: SI 16 Dec; four Ponquogue Bridge 6 Dec and one 6 Jan (PG); Shinnecock 19 Feb. **Common Grackle**: Kissena Park, Queens 1 Jan (Ian Resnick).

Baltimore Oriole: two MCBC 16 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec. **Red Crossbill:** 12 JBWE 2 Dec (RK). **Com. Redpoll:** MP 4 Dec; CP 3 Dec; two CP 25 Dec; BCBC 16 Dec; JBWR 4 Feb; SI feeder 18 Feb (Gloria Deppe).
syschiff@ascensionet.com



Five-week old Red-tailed Hawk contributing to a well kept home.



At six weeks of age the young Red-tailed Hawk tries its flying skills before leaving the nest the following day.

Photos by Harry F. Herbrandson

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