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SUCCESSFUL USE OF ARTIFICIAL NESTING STRUCTURE BY DARK-EYED JUNCO, WITH COMMENTS ON JUNCO SUMMER DISTRIBUTION IN NEW YORK

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On 8 August 2001, I found a nest of Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) built within an artificial nesting structure, approximately 3.8 km (2.4 mi) southwest of the Village of Dryden, Tompkins County, New York, at an elevation of 490 m (1608 ft). The artificial nesting structure was constructed of wood, included a roof, and was open in front. It was designed for use by American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and had been built to the specifications and dimensions recommended in Henderson (Undated, p. 29). The nest platform was attached to the north side of a house, with the base of the platform at a height of 2.5 m (98 in) above the ground. The junco's nest was constructed of grass stems and other dried herbaceous materials and built on top of an abandoned nest of American Robin from earlier that summer. The nest was located approximately 10 m from the edge of a second-growth forest dominated by planted Scotch Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), with an open understorey and no significant woody or herbaceous undergrowth. Dark-eyed Juncos occur in the immediate area throughout the year and fledged young have been present nearly every summer since 1988, when I began living there.

The nest contained three eggs on 8 August. On 22 August, the nest contained three young. The young had fledged by 29 August and were observed in shrubbery at the edge of the yard. Given the late date and smaller than average clutch size, it is likely that the nest was a second effort for the season. Nolan et al. (2002) report a modal clutch size of 4, "with 5- and 3-egg clutches not uncommon, latter especially near end of season."

Nolan et al. (2002) also report that elevated nests for Dark-eyed Junco are "not uncommon," with the greatest observed nest height being at approximately 15 m (49 ft) in a tree. Unusual nest sites reported by Nolan et al. (2002) include discarded rubber tires and empty food cans. Nolan et al. (2002) also describe "many reports" of Dark-eyed Junco using old American Robin nests, though they do not mention any use of artificial nesting structures designed for use by American Robin. However, Eaton (1968, 1988) comments that "The junco often builds in unusual situations." and describes use of a "wind-vane bird-feeder mounted on an 8-foot iron pipe" for nesting by Dark-eyed Junco. Eaton (1968) also mentions a nest "on a ledge beneath the gable of a house in Nova Scotia," attributed to Forbush. Eaton (1988) comments on the junco's preference for nesting near vertical structures. In July 2000, Crumb (2001) described the nest of a Dark-eyed Junco in a hanging flower pot about five feet above the ground

over the patio of a home in Manlius, NY. It is clear that the Dark-eyed Junco finds a wide range of settings suitable for nesting. However, it is probable that the nest described in this report is the first example of successful use of an artificial nesting platform by Dark-eyed Junco.

It seems useful to put this observation in a larger spatial and temporal context, given apparent changes in the summer distribution of the Dark-eyed Junco in New York over the past 100 years. Though widespread in New York, north and west of Westchester County, the Dark-eyed Junco's summer distribution is confined largely to the Adirondack and Appalachian Plateau ecoregions (Andrle and Carroll 1988). In the Cayuga Lake Basin, where it now is widespread and relatively common in suitable habitat during summer, it is noteworthy that Dark-eyed Junco historically was considered a "rare summer resident" (Reed and Wright 1909). In addition to the Adirondacks and Catskills, Eaton (1914) reported that the species was "fairly common as a breeding species in the highlands of western New York which lie above the 1200 foot [366 m] line." It now occurs (Smith and Byrne 1999) and nests (pers. obs.) on the Cornell Campus at an elevation of 265 m (870 ft), where it did not occur during summer in the early 1960s (R. Little, pers. comm.).

The current summer distribution for Dark-eyed Junco is similar to that mapped by Eaton (1910, p. 23), though Eaton's map suggests a more patchy distribution than we observe today. Because the Dark-eyed Junco is a nesting species of openings within forests and forest edges (DeGraaf and Yamasaki 2001), and the landscape of Eaton's day was largely devoid of forests when compared to our current forest-dominated landscape (Smith and Gregory 1998), it is not surprising to see a current summer distribution for the junco that is greater in extent than 100 years ago. Keller et al. (2003) included the Dark-eyed Junco as a member of a guild of breeding bird species that increased steadily on Connecticut Hill State Wildlife Management Area (near Ithaca, NY) after clear-cutting, up until six years after the initial clear-cut, after which their densities decreased steadily. The nest described herein was at a forest edge, with Hammond Hill State Forest (approximately 1457 ha, 3600 acres) to the south and Yellow Barn State Forest (approximately 500 ha, 1236 acres) to the north. The landscape surrounding both of these state forests is largely rural and agricultural, with growing mixed grass hay and pasturage of horses the primary agricultural activities. Comparing the first breeding bird atlas map (Andrle and Carroll 1988) with the current map for Dark-eyed Junco (NYSDEC 2006; K. Corwin, pers. comm.) suggests that the junco's statewide distribution in NY has increased by a bit more than 20% in the 20-year period between the two atlas projects. During the period from 1980 - 2004, Breeding Bird Survey data show that the population trend for Dark-eyed Junco in New York was neither increasing nor decreasing significantly. For the Appalachian Plateau ecoregion, where the nest described here was found, the junco's BBS trend showed a slight, but statistically insignificant increasing tendency (Sauer et al. 2005).

In summary, these observations emphasize the need to understand that breeding habitat associations for birds are dynamic, not static in space and time, and depend, in part, upon the spatial and temporal resolution applied at the time of study (O'Connor 1986), as well as a number of anthropogenic and

nonanthropogenic factors. O'Connor (1986) also provides evidence that some breeding bird species in Britain use a wider range of breeding habitats at higher population densities than observed at lower densities. It is likely that the Dark-eyed Junco and other songbird species are more adaptable to human-dominated landscapes than we appreciate, as illustrated by its use of a range of artificial nesting structures and residential settings.

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GRASSLAND BIRDS AT THE PLATTSBURGH AIRFIELD IBA: AN UPDATE

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In 1995 I published an article in *The Kingbird* describing a Grasshopper Sparrow colony I discovered in 1994 at the Plattsburgh Airforce Base (PAFB), Clinton County, while working there under contract with the New York Natural Heritage Program (Gretch 1995). In 1997 this site was identified by Audubon NY as one of the 127 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in New York State, defined as sites “essential for sustaining naturally occurring populations of bird species” (Wells 1998). Again in 2004, the status of this site was reviewed by the IBA program, and even though most of the grassland bird populations had declined to such a degree that they no longer met the “species at risk” thresholds, the site was still listed as one of the 136 IBAs in the state because of the number of Grasshopper Sparrows it supported (Burger 2005). Following the closure of PAFB in 1995, the site has been administered by a series of development agencies and finally the County of Clinton, under which it has been transformed into a county and international airport. There are plans to build a terminal, access road and parking facility along the runway (R. Hensel, pers. comm.). These plans may lead to further habitat degradation and disturbance at this site.

In 1995 I wrote, “With the impending change soon to occur at the base, I felt it was important to try to quantify the size and extent of the population.” It was hoped that these baseline data would be used to develop a wise management plan for this critical bird site. This unfortunately never came to pass, and now we are faced with the potential demise of this site as a breeding area for Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland birds. The present article is a follow-up to Gretch (1995), a summary of the current status of the site and its grassland breeding birds, and an account of efforts to protect and manage the site for long-term conservation purposes in the face of threats to develop it for commercial purposes.

METHODS

The survey described herein was intended to document the populations of grassland birds at the PAFB site for a decade (1994-2003); it was, however, truncated to only nine years because I was denied access to the property in 2003 by its new administrators, Clinton County, the Clinton County Airport, and the Plattsburgh International Airport—although I made them aware of how critical the tenth and final year of the inventory was, and despite a second request offering to delay the count to later in the season. Permission to access

the site to conduct the bird survey had previously been granted through the Airforce Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA), followed by the Plattsburgh Airbase Redevelopment Corporation (PARC).

The survey was performed each year from 1994 through 2002 on approximately the same date (between June 11-16) and the same time of day, starting between 7:30 and 8:00 AM, when bird song was still exuberant. Tall vegetation such as mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) was often used as singing posts by males. The standardized survey route conducted by car along a periphery road that parallels the runway. Stops were made every 1/10 mile and all birds heard and seen were recorded. Grassland bird species surveyed included Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow and Horned Lark. There were other species of birds recorded such as Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink and Northern Harrier, however they were not detected frequently enough to show any trend in abundance. I was aware that there was development pressure to place a new airport terminal along the western edge of the runway in the middle of the Grasshopper Sparrow colony. Therefore, I made very specific notations about the precise location of each Grasshopper Sparrow recorded during the surveys.

RESULTS

The numbers of grassland birds recorded for each species, as well as the total number of grassland birds for each year of the survey, are shown in Table 1. All four species declined over the period surveyed, and the three sparrow species in particular showed a precipitous decline. The first indication that the site was clearly changing was in the observed decline in numbers of Grasshopper and Vesper sparrows after 1996. A few years later, the same trend appeared in the Savannah Sparrow and Horned Lark data. It has been reported that Grasshopper Sparrow populations can fluctuate widely for reasons that are not understood (Smith 1997). However when one observes simultaneous declines in four species at the same site, it seems more reasonable to attribute a role to changes in the site itself, rather than to synchronous demographic fluctuations. Looking at these data, it is my carefully considered conclusion that the site is in serious decline. Graph 1 shows the declining numbers of Grasshopper Sparrows recorded during the nine years of the survey. Bar Graph 2 shows that numbers of Grasshopper Sparrows peaked at about 2.1 to 2.2 miles from the entrance gate, and diminished at the north and south ends of the runway habitat. Conditions are most favorable for this species in dry, well-drained soil with sparse tufts of grassy vegetation and exposed sandy soil—characteristics shown by the habitat toward the middle of the site.

Table 1. Counts of Grassland Birds at the Plattsburgh Airfield (1994-2002).

Year	Grasshopper Sparrow	Vesper Sparrow	Savannah Sparrow	Horned Lark	Total
1994	17	12	19	3	51
1995	12	11	22	6	51
1996	14	11	13	7	45
1997	7	7	19	7	40
1998	8	2	13	4	27
1999	6	4	16	6	32
2000	8	2	4	2	16
2001	2	1	8	0	11
2002	5	1	5	2	13

Figure 1. Counts of Grasshopper Sparrows at the Plattsburgh Airfield, 1993-2002.

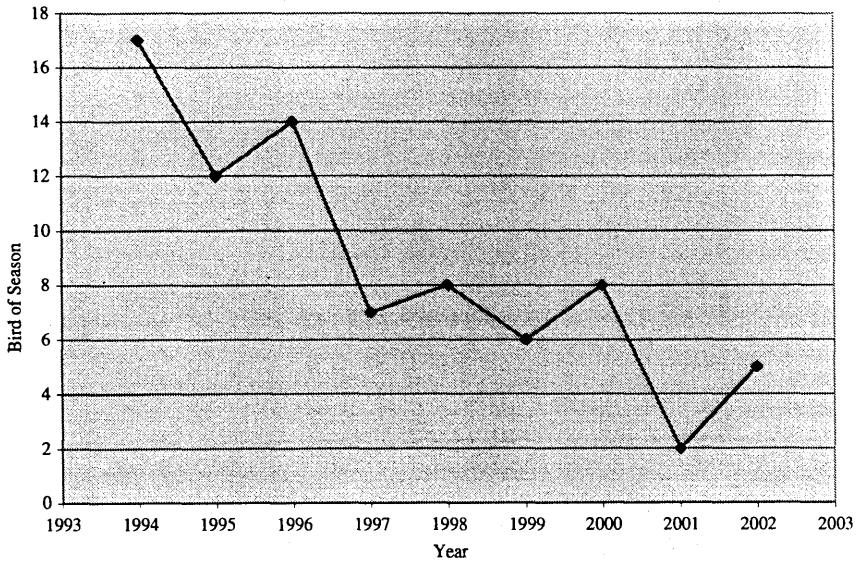
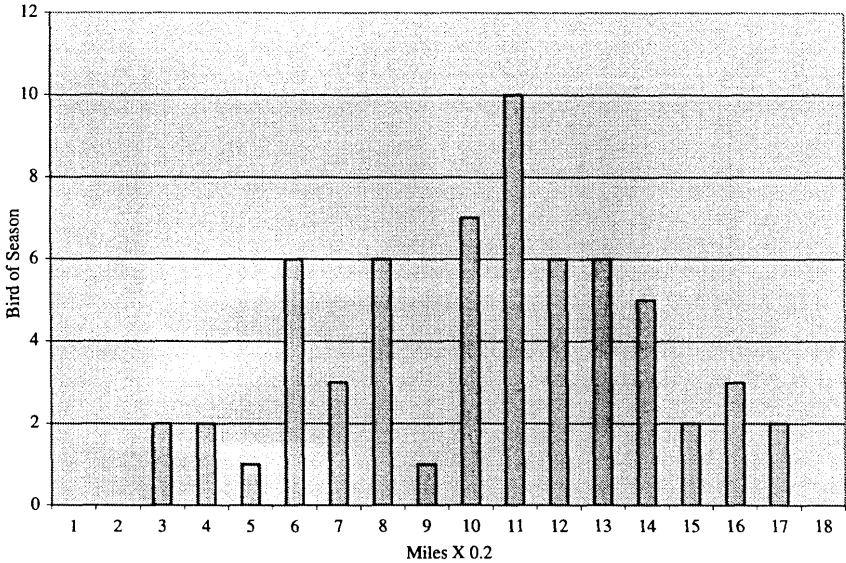


Figure 2. Distribution of Grasshopper Sparrows along runway at the Plattsburgh Airfield, 1993-2002 (annual counts pooled).



CAUSES OF DECLINE

Jones and Vickery (1997) stress the importance of restricting mowing during the breeding season. Recommendations in the Grassland Management Plan for Bradley International Airport include delaying mowing until August 15, when birds have fledged. These authors say Grasshopper Sparrows can raise two broods over the summer, and the second brood usually fledges in early to mid August (Jones and Vickery 1998). Although this information was provided to PARC, part or all of the grasslands around the runway were mowed when I visited on June 11, 1998, June 14, 2000 and June 15, 2001. I have asked whether these examples of early mowing reflected a deliberate change in the management regime for the site, following the base closure in 1995, but I have never received an answer. Whether the early mowing has been deliberate or inadvertent, the failure to develop a grassland management plan that includes a mowing regime consistent with the breeding season of these birds has jeopardized the site.

There have been other major disturbances to this habitat. In August of 1999 the base hosted a Phish Concert with attendance of about 100,000 people (Conley 1999). In July 1997 there was an Air Show with an attendance of 16,500 people. In addition, after the base closed, I believe traffic along the periphery road bordering the runway had increased due to environmental clean

up. In fact the reason I was denied access to the base in 2003 was because “the perimeter road is a designated haul route for a contractor working on a soil decontamination project” (Hensel 2003).

Until recently the west side of the runway was undeveloped with a long continuous narrow strip of land, over three miles, available for grassland birds to nest undisturbed. All major buildings occurred on the east side of the runway. As a member of the runway re-use committee I recommended that the new terminal be placed on the developed east side, reserving the west side for grassland birds. As of 2005 the terminal is planned for the northeast side of the runway (Ralph Hensel, pers. comm.), but without a grassland bird management plan for the site the populations are likely to continue to decline.

EFFORTS TO PROTECT THIS SITE

The first year of the survey I was under contract with the New York Natural Heritage Program, but after that I took full responsibility for conducting the annual survey and advocating for the protection of this site. The president of the High Peaks Audubon Society at the time (1994) and I met with PARC’s executive director and leveraged a seat on the Technical Advisory Committee. This was a committee that advised PARC on how the runway would be reused. I made numerous and major presentations to this committee trying to educate them about the valuable natural resources they had, and attempted to steer them in the direction of options that would minimize impact on the Grasshopper Sparrow colony; this included placement of the terminal and construction of a crosswinds runway. Despite promises to the contrary no mention was made of the site’s IBA status or ecologically sensitive nature in the interim or final report of the Plattsburgh International Airport Master Plan (PARC 1997).

After witnessing ongoing precipitous declines in several species of grassland birds, I issued a written “alert” and organized a meeting with PARC and others to see if we could agree on a management plan to protect this site. On November 12, 1999 this meeting was held with PARC, the New York State DEC, AFBCA, Audubon and local press in attendance. Jeff Wells, then Audubon NY’s Director of Bird Conservation, talked about the importance of the site for grassland birds. Among other things, we discussed finding a way to ensure that this habitat would continue to support a viable breeding population of grassland birds. It was agreed that we would make PARC aware of other airport management plans for grassland birds including those at Westover Airforce Base and Bradley International Airport. Following this meeting there were continuous attempts by Audubon NY’s IBA Program Coordinator to develop a management protocol for the airfield that would benefit wildlife without compromising the goals and mission of PARC. An additional management plan for Vermont airports was also sent for their review.

Even so, all efforts to date to develop a management plan have failed. After years of advocacy and communication, I have concluded that this significant bird habitat is not a priority with either PARC or Clinton County.

DISCUSSION

The IBA process has categorized at-risk species, and ranked the Grasshopper Sparrow as 'highly at risk' in New York State. This category includes species whose restricted distributions and modest populations place them at risk of local or regional extirpation (Burger 2005). The PAFB site was designated an IBA largely on the basis of its unique status as the only large colony of Grasshopper Sparrows in Clinton County.

In contrast, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this site seriously underestimates the value, quality and sensitivity of the grassland habitat bordering the runway, without any objective biological data to support the new interpretation. The EIS (1995) states, "Most of the land disturbance would occur on property supporting habitat of relatively low biological value." It continues, "The loss and alteration of wildlife habitats with the proposed action are not expected to significantly affect regional wildlife populations because of the low sensitivity levels of the species present.... In addition impacts are not expected to be significant because of the presence and quantity of suitable adjacent habitats." There is no suitable adjacent habitat of any quantity or quality for Grasshopper Sparrows to nest.

Although it seems pointless to debate the intentions underlying the EIS and its dismissive conclusions, the bottom line is very disheartening for the entire IBA program and the cooperative spirit on which it depends. If language such as that quoted above can emerge as decisive in planning for the future of a well-studied site, formally recognized as one the 136 most important bird sites in NY State, it seems to me that the conservation community must reassess its basic assumptions about the ability of objective data to influence policy decisions. Wells (1998) wrote, "Implementing conservation actions for grassland sites will clearly be a major challenge (Wells 1998)." My experiences at PAFB have tended to confirm this statement. It is also my conclusion that the IBA program, if it is to have any hope of success, depends on presenting a strong and united front by all concerned, from individual birders, to local and state bird organizations, and local and state environmental protection agencies. I therefore was glad to hear that a broad group of partners in New York State was recently formed with the purpose of working cooperatively to coordinate planning, monitoring, research, and conservation efforts for grassland birds in the state (Jillian Liner, pers. comm.).

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IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

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“The great chieftain of the woodpecker tribe,” proclaims Audubon.
Biggest woodpecker in America
feared gone with the Old Growth hardwoods of the Southeast

February 11, 2004:

kayaker in the “Big Woods” swamps of eastern Arkansas
glimpses this immense cartoon,
this Disney caricature that “hitches” behind tree in “herkey jerkey” motion,
icon that brings Cornell Lab ornithologists
secretly kayaking, canoeing the Cache River,
White River National Wildlife Refuges
with notebooks, binoculars, camcorders,
twenty-four autonomous recording units (ARUs) strapped on trees

They get sightings—convincing field marks:
wedge of white on trailing edge of lengthy wings,
double-knock drumming on tree trunks.
But are these conclusive?
Four-second video of woodpecker fleeing from tupelo is murky,
but measurements of film and tree trunk suggest right large size

After fourteen months discussing, debating seven sightings, the video—
The Announcement to the World:
“The Ivory-billed Woodpecker lives...” One

Since the last recorded sighting in 1944
how have birders been experiencing the “Lord God” bird,
(what birders shouted,
sighting this streamlined flying, red-crested woodpecker
with long bill of ivory sheen)?
So many unproved reports.
What have been the sightings, soundings
along the Congaree, Santee Rivers of South Carolina,
in the cypress swamps of Florida, bayous of Louisiana?

Fantasies? Apparitions?
Discernments from the dead?

Is this how our Seventh Generations will experience
West Indian Manatee? Northern Right Whale? Polar Bear?

The bunked-in yacht captain jumps awake from bump against hull,
rushes topside, flashes light on *floating ball*.

“Two big nostrils, I swear it,” he asserts.

“Manatee nostrils!”

There are no reports of West Indian Manatee

The pelagic birder balances herself aboard the pitching vessel,
grips binoculars against her eyes.

“I just saw a whale breach!” she shouts.

“Didn’t anyone see it?”

Its jaws like a cavern! It was a Northern Right!”

There are no reports of Northern Right Whale

The Inuit shaman

sights something solid, something big, furry,

something white vanishing into blizzard over what once was ice.

“Polar Bear,” he insists.

There are no reports of Polar Bear

Are these how our descendents will *see, hear*

Golden Lion Tamarin, Giant Panda, African Elephant,

Karner Blue Butterfly, Kemp’s Ridley Turtle, Siberian Sturgeon,

Bicknell’s Thrush, Spotted Owl, California Condor?

There will be no reports—no reports of thousands of species

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

AMERICAN REDSTART NESTING IN A BARN

As a columnist for local newspapers, I get frequent telephone calls from readers asking me if I am interested in some natural event they have noticed. On 30 July 2002, in response to a column I wrote asking for information on bird nests for the Atlas project, I had a call from Brian Beilen of Fredonia. "Are you interested," he asked, "in a redstart nest?" I told him that I was interested in any nest, so he said, "I have a pair nesting in my barn."

I told Mr. Beilen that I would be up to look at this phenomenon, though I was quite sure that he had misidentified the bird. On the other hand, I could think of no bird he could mistake for a redstart, and he told me that he had seen both male and female and could hear nestlings peeping somewhere in the barn wall.

The next day my son Chris and I went up to the Beilen home. As we entered the barn, a fledgling redstart flew across and landed on a rafter. Although I was quite certain that it was an American Redstart, I said to Mr. Beilen that I wished I could see one off the adults. "Oh, that's easy," he said. "If I open the back door of the barn the male will fly right in."

Once again, I was doubtful, but he had been right once so I told him to go ahead and open the door. He did so, and withdrew to the front of the building, where Chris and I were standing. In just a few seconds, a male American Redstart flew through the door, but seeing two strangers there, he quickly flew out again.

A few days later, Richard Miga and I went back to see if we could locate the nest. Mr. Beilen knew about where it had been because he had heard the young, but our effort to find it were unsuccessful. Apparently it must have been somewhere in the outer structure of the barn, and without tearing the barn to pieces, we could think of no way to find it.

So far as we have been able to ascertain, this is the first records of this species nesting inside a building. There have been a few cases of redstart nests built on structures outside a building, rather than in a normal tree location.

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MORE LATE NESTING DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS

On 4 October 2005, unfledged Double-crested Cormorants were observed in seven nests at two sites in western New York State: five nests at Reef Lighthouse, near the source of the Niagara River, and two nests on Strawberry Island, in the upper Niagara River. The downy chicks in one of the Reef Lighthouse nests were determined to be 10 days old, and those at Strawberry Island were assessed as approximately two weeks old. These determinations were made by Connie Adams, a NYSDEC Senior Wildlife Biologist, as part of routine monitoring of the nesting colonies.

Double-crested Cormorants typically wander at 3-4 weeks, fly at about 5-6 weeks, and become independent at 10 weeks (Andrle and Carroll 1988), implying that the nestlings observed on 4 Oct would not be expected to leave their nests until at least 11-15 October, nor to fly until 25 October-5 November. These dates are considerably later than the published nestling period of 31 August - 19 September in New York State (Andrle, R. F. and J. C. Carroll. 1988. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY), but Watson (Watson, W. 1995. First successful nesting of Double-crested Cormorant in the Niagara Frontier Region. *Kingbird* 45:168) recommends, "Dates for unfledged juveniles in New York State should be extended to June 16 and October 8 based on the observations at Buckhorn Island State Park and the Reef Lighthouse." Even in view of the latter findings, the observations from October 2005 seem exceptional.

It should be noted that NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has been attempting to minimize cormorant reproduction on the Reef Lighthouse and Strawberry Island sites (USFWS Public Resource Depredation Order 50 CFR 21.48, section 10), and these management efforts very likely have prompted repeated re-nesting attempts and the unusually late nesting dates reported here. As management of large colonies becomes more common throughout the range of the Double-crested Cormorant, extended nesting and fledging dates are likely to be reported in the future, and may be artificially late due to disturbance on the observed or nearby colonies.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON – Winter 2005-06

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THE WEATHER

The most compelling aspect of this winter's weather was the extraordinary warm weather that persisted throughout the state from the last week of December through January. The first three weeks of December were colder than normal, leading to below average temperatures for the month, but this changed dramatically with the influx of warm air that followed. Statewide, January 2006 recorded the fifth warmest average temperature since 1895. The warm weather had a profound impact on avian observations. In particular, a remarkable number of "half-hardies" persisted through the early December cold snap and lingered to the Christmas Count season, and beyond into January.

WATERFOWL/WATERBIRDS

As usual, warm winter weather proved a mixed blessing for waterfowl observers. Open water and mild conditions allowed a number of species to remain further north than usual, but there were fewer birds concentrated at the usual open water locations. Winter holdovers were augmented by northbound migrants in February, in many cases arriving earlier than normal. A large concentration of Snow Geese was found in early February at the Savannah Mucklands on the border between Region 2 and Region 3, with up to 64,000 counted. Greater White-fronted and Ross's Geese were noted among the migrant Snows in Regions 2 and 3. Multiple Greater White-fronted Geese were also noted in Region 10, including an individual that spent about two months frequenting the same urban park pond in Queens as an even more unexpected Barnacle Goose. Another Barnacle Goose was found farther east on Long Island at Calverton. Cackling Geese were reported from five Kingbird regions during the season. Brant were reported upstate from Regions 2 and 5, and downstate flocks in Region 10 were spiced with several "Black" Brant and an "intermediate"-type. Trumpeter Swans were found in Regions 1, 2, 3, and 5, with a maximum of 5 in Region 3. Harlequin Ducks were reported from inland Regions 1 and 2 and coastal Region 10. Barrow's Goldeneyes were found in Regions 2, 3, 7, and 10, and Eurasian Wigeon in Regions 2, 3, 9, and 10. Common Eider were noteworthy at opposite ends of the state, as last season's Region 2 female Common Eider continued at Irondequoit Bay, while large numbers of Common Eiders were found in Region 10, with up to nearly 3000 counted on the Montauk CBC. Unfortunately, these high numbers may have been due to ecological problems to our north, as a late-winter die-off of Common Eiders turned up indications that birds were underfed and suffering from high parasite loads. Wood Ducks took advantage of the mild conditions and wintered in small numbers across the state. There

were reports from 8 of the 10 Kingbird regions. The Regional reports contain more details about waterfowl numbers and locally unusual ducks.

Several Red-throated Loons were deposited in interior Regions 3 and 4 in early December, following a cold front. Noteworthy loon reports this season included a Pacific Loon present on Cayuga Lake in Region 3 from late January through the end of the reporting season, and a fly-by Yellow-billed Loon in Region 2. The latter would be a first Regional and third State record, if submitted to and accepted by NYSARC. Red-necked Grebes were reported in low numbers across the state, appearing in 9 of the 10 Kingbird Regions. Eared Grebes made appearances in Region 1, at the Batavia Waste Water Treatment plant, an unprecedented January sighting at a traditional late summer and fall location, and in Region 3 at Aurora Bay on Cayuga Lake, the ninth consecutive winter one has been found there.

Two jaegers were reported this season, a Pomarine Jaeger in Region 2 and a Parasitic Jaeger seen at Montauk Point the day before the Montauk CBC. A pelagic trip out of Freeport, Nassau County in Region 10 on 11 February provided a rare opportunity to spend a winter's day offshore entirely in New York waters. The lucky participants were rewarded with a remarkable tally of winter alcids, including an offshore high count of 1,675 Dovekies; a Thick-billed Murre; 20 Razorbills; an Atlantic Puffin; and at least 20 Common Murres, a single-day high count for the state. Many if not most of the nine unidentified murres and 53 unidentified large alcids were likely Common Murres as well. The historical context of these alcid sightings is discussed in detail in the Region 10 report. The sixth Atlantic Ocean alcid, Black Guillemot, was well represented in Region 10 this winter, with three reports, including one unusually far west at Jones Beach and a cooperative individual which spent two and a half weeks at Culloden Point in Montauk. The 11 February pelagic trip also recorded a good count of 2000 Northern Gannets, although no Northern Fulmar or other tubenoses were seen.

RAPTORS

Bald Eagles continued their upward trend across the state as many regions noted increased wintering numbers; the comment from Region 7 was "virtually ubiquitous". Golden Eagles are less common in winter, but this season were reported in small numbers from Regions 3, 8 and 9. Rough-legged Hawk numbers varied across the state as typical patterns seemed somewhat disrupted by warm weather and atypical snow coverage. Several regions noted an above-normal number of Red-shouldered Hawks. Merlins have become more expected in winter than in past years and this season were found in six reporting Regions. Notable was a maximum of seven at the SUNY-Buffalo roost site in Region 1. Sadly, and no longer surprising, American Kestrel numbers continue to be down; this winter the species was only mentioned in six Regional reports and the comments were peppered with statements such as "low" and "scarce". Gyrfalcons were reported from Region 2, Region 7, and Region 10. The latter bird may have been present along the Jones Beach strip for up to a month before being discovered on the Captree CBC on 18 December. Sporadic sightings

occurred throughout its stay, during which unconfirmed rumors surfaced that a falconer's Gyrfalcon or Gyrfalcon x Peregrine Falcon hybrid may have escaped in the vicinity.

Snowy Owl counts were generally low, although good numbers were found in Regions 5 and 6, and Region 10 experienced a decent showing. Short-eared, Long-eared, and Saw-whet Owls were reported only in low numbers, perhaps because mild conditions allowed them to disperse more than normal. Three Long-eared Owls at the Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar, Albany County in Region 8 were likely killed by a resident Northern Goshawk. Northern Hawk-Owls highlighted the seasonal reports in Regions 1 and Region 6. The latter was unfortunately seen only by the original observer, but the individual at Yates, Orleans County in Region 1 lingered for two months following its discovery in early January. This was the fourth Regional record and the first documented since 1963.

SHOREBIRDS

Usually shorebirds don't warrant a separate section in the winter report, but this year, perhaps due to the mild weather, numbers and variety were higher than normal. Species reported inland included Killdeer in higher than usual numbers; Purple Sandpiper; Dunlin; Wilson's Snipe; and American Woodcock. Three American Oystercatchers lingered in Region 9 long enough to be counted on the Bronx-Westchester CBC on 26 December. Unusual winter shorebirds in Region 10 included Semipalmated Plovers at Jones Beach (two) and Dune Road; a Marbled Godwit with roosting shorebird flocks on Jones Beach during December and early January; two Willets at Point Lookout for the second consecutive winter; and wintering Red Knot, Western Sandpiper and Long-billed Dowitcher.

GULLS

January's unseasonably mild weather apparently prompted Ring-billed Gulls to move north earlier than usual. Large flocks were seen in Region 1 beginning in early February, about a month earlier than usual. Notable sightings from Region 1 included up to three Little Gulls, two reports of Black-headed Gull and the continuing California Gull at the Adam Beck Overlook, seen again in December after a month's absence. Region 2 reports were highlighted by a Regional-first Slaty-backed Gull, this coming during a winter season in which Slaty-backed Gulls were more widespread than usual across the continent. Hopefully a report will be submitted to NYSARC to ensure this record is documented for posterity. Other highlights from Region 2 were good numbers of the enigmatic Thayer's Gull, 1-2 Little Gulls, and a Black-headed Gull. Good numbers of Lesser Black-backed, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were reported from a number of Regions. The Region 10 account contains an interesting note regarding Lesser Black-backed Gull reports, listing 30 reports felt to pertain to 20+ individual birds. Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported inland from Regions 2 and Region 6, and from coastal Region 10, where reports included 100 counted

at Montauk Point on 16 December and a surprising low count of 12 on the 11 February Freeport pelagic, as well as scattered reports from various coastal locations.

WINTER FINCHES AND OTHER IRRUPTIVES

Overall it was a disappointing winter finch season. Low numbers and sporadic sightings were the rule, although all expected species were reported. Pine Siskins and Common Redpolls were generally found in low numbers, but several Regions reported larger flocks lingering at feeders. Hoary Redpolls were reported with flocks of Commons at Hamlin Beach in Region 2 and at feeders in Region 6. Crossbill numbers were lower than recent years with low numbers of each species reported from a handful of Regions. Evidence of Red Crossbill nesting was found in Region 6. One highlight was a slight increase in the numbers of Evening Grosbeaks in Regions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9, although several Regional editors commented that numbers still pale in comparison to those found 20 years ago. Pine Grosbeaks were found in small numbers in several Regions; the most regular birds seemed to be those frequenting Webster Park in Region 2.

Northern Shrike numbers fluctuated by Region and over the season. The best numbers were found in Regions 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7; in the latter Region, numbers were deemed "exceptional". Bohemian Waxwings were found in several Regions, including a major invasion into Region 7, where flocks numbered into the hundreds, and two seen on the Montauk CBC in Region 10, where the species is truly rare.

LINGERERS

As mentioned above, a common theme in the Regional reports this season was the presence of large numbers of lingering birds, helped by the exceptionally warm mid-season weather. The effects were seen throughout the state, as species normally found downstate occurred in greater than usual numbers there, and persisted upstate in small numbers as well. Most commonly mentioned were the typical "half-hardies" such as Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Fox Sparrow, and Field Sparrow. Other more unusual wintering birds included an *Empidonax* flycatcher in Region 7; Veery in Region 2; Wood Thrush in Region 7; Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in Regions 7 and 9; and Ovenbird, Nashville Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, and Clay-colored Sparrow in Region 10. Many species sometimes found on December Christmas Bird Counts, but rarely later in the season, persisted this year into January and February. The Region 10 report contains a nice discussion regarding the historical changes in frequency of some of these species, and all of the Regional reports contain many more details on species of local interest.

RARITIES

In addition to previously mentioned highlights, additional rarities seen across the state included Varied Thrush in Regions 1 and 2, the latter a long-staying individual at Webster Park in Webster. A “Patagonia picnic table” phenomenon occurred there, as observers searching for the Varied Thrush turned up a number of interesting records and lingering passerines. The lingering *Selasphorus* hummingbird in Region 1 was the only report of the season. A dead adult Purple Gallinule was recovered in Webster Park in January and delivered to the Cornell Lab as a salvage specimen. Boreal Chickadees were out of range at Webster Park (again!) in Region 2 and at a Palenville, Greene County feeder in Region 8. In Region 9, the season’s highlight was a Yellow-headed Blackbird found on 1 January in a roosting blackbird flock at Thompson Pond in Dutchess County, the fifth county record overall and first since 1989. Additional rarities in Region 10 included Black Rail, White-winged Dove, and Sedge Wren. Also in Region 10, what was perhaps the most remarkable bird of the winter was found on the productive 11 February pelagic trip out of Freeport. A dark-mantled gull thought to be a Lesser Black-backed Gull when seen resting on the water dispelled that notion when it lifted off and revealed bright pink feet, relatively broad white trailing edges to the wing, and, on closer inspection, a clean white head and heavy bill. As even casual birders know, identification of large gulls can be extremely tricky, and the exercise is further complicated by plumage oddities that can crop up in common species and by the specter of regular hybridization among large gulls. Even with these caveats, careful field notes, extensive photographs, and research and analysis, including comments from gull aficionados from the west coast and around the world, support the identification of the bird as Western Gull, a truly remarkable record for eastern North America. See the Region 10 report for more discussion about the circumstances of the sighting and follow-up.

BIRD OF THE SEASON

In a winter season of wide variety, there wasn’t a large number of exceptional rarities. Particular highlights included Pacific and Yellow-billed Loons, two each of Northern Hawk-Owl and Varied Thrush, and Slaty-backed Gull. I choose (perhaps somewhat selfishly, as I saw it!) the presumed Western Gull from Region 10. Reminiscent of the presumed hybrid *Tyrannus* flycatcher from Geneseo in November, 2003, this bird generated significant discussion on the online “ID-Frontiers” listserve. If the identification is supported by NYSARC, and by expert review of a detailed published report (in preparation), this would constitute a unique and very important record of a species barely known to wander from coastal western North America.

REGION 1 – NIAGARA FRONTIER

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December was the first month since May that wasn't warmer than average. The average temperature was 27.1° F, 2.1° F below normal. Monthly precipitation at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport was 2.36", 1.44" less than usual. There was 20.3" of snow, 5.2" less than usual with no large snow events. A strong Pacific flow resulted in extremely mild weather for January. The average temperature was 34.9° F, an amazing 10.4° F above normal and the fourth warmest on record. The monthly precipitation was 3.67", 0.51" above normal, with only 7.1" of snow, 19.0" below normal. February brought a return to more expected winter conditions, with an average temperature of 27.8° F, 1.9° F above normal. The monthly precipitation was 2.45", 0.03" above normal, with 26.3" of snowfall, 8.5" above normal.

With the unusual warmth in January, Lake Erie did not freeze over this winter, and there were fewer waterfowl than usual on the Niagara River and at Dunkirk Harbor. Waterfowl highlights included a lingering **Harlequin Duck** at both locations, plus a **Cackling Goose** and two wing-tagged **Trumpeter Swans** on the upper Niagara.

The prolonged mild weather and plentiful open water resulted in some extremely early waterfowl movement in early February. Several American Wigeons, Northern Pintails, and Hooded Mergansers observed at Oak Orchard WMA on February 2-4 were very likely returning migrants. Gadwalls and Ring-necked Ducks at Lake Flavia in Dayton on 17 February are also best categorized as very early migrants. It is unclear whether these facultative migrants remained through February or retreated to more hospitable areas when the weather turned colder.

The unseasonable mild weather also prompted an earlier movement of gulls. Willie D'Anna reported several large flocks of gulls, mostly Ring-billed, along the Lake Ontario plain on 5 February, about a month earlier than usual. In the ensuing weeks, several observers commented that large gulls, especially adult Ring-billed, were much more numerous along Lake Ontario and near the Niagara River mouth than expected for the date.

There were some other unusual patterns for gulls on the Niagara River this winter. As continued from November, there were more Bonaparte's Gulls and large gulls in the Buffalo-Fort Erie area than usual. After early January, there were very low numbers of gulls observed at the Niagara Power Project. Bonaparte's Gulls were absent for only a brief period in January. With the exception of the latter, these patterns were probably more attributed to prey availability than the weather. Notable gull sightings included two reports of **Black-headed Gull** and the **California Gull** was found only once after November.

Bald Eagles continue to increase in winter, with maximum counts this year of 12 at Allegheny Reservoir and nine at Strawberry Island on the Niagara

River. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were lower than usual, while winter Red-shouldered Hawk reports were up slightly. A maximum of seven **Merlins** was observed roosting at the SUNY-Buffalo Main Street campus this winter.

There were four reports of **Snowy Owls**, while Long-eared, Short-eared, and Northern Saw-whet owls were reported from two locations each. The season will be long remembered for a long-staying **Northern Hawk Owl** in the town of Yates, Orleans County. It was the Region's first documented sighting since 1963 and fourth ever. The bird was found on 7 January by Paul Schnell, Anne Terninko, and Mike Crane, who were out banding raptors. They banded the bird and then notified birders. Local homeowners indicated the owl was present at least two weeks before its discovery by birders. The bird was extremely cooperative as it stayed near a roadside location through 9 March allowing numerous birders and non-birders to observe it. Photos revealed the bird to be in its first year, but even despite being banded, the bird could not be reliably sexed due to overlap in measurements between the sexes. The photogenic owl gained considerable media attention, and a debate ensued after a few individuals fed mice to it even though the bird was catching numerous wild mice on its own.

The mild weather undoubtedly helped the persistence of numerous half hardies this winter. There was an unprecedented number of winter sightings for the following species: Turkey Vulture, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, **Eastern Phoebe**, Fox Sparrow, and Gray Catbird. Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, and Field Sparrow also had good showings for winter.

Finch numbers were low again. There were scattered reports of Pine Siskins, only two reports of Evening Grosbeak, and single reports of Common Redpoll and **Pine Grosbeak**. Purple Finch was scarce.

While participating in the Hamburg-East Aurora CBC on 1 January Mike Zebehazi spotted a **Varied Thrush** in the town of Hamburg. It was the 11th sighting for the Region, all of which have occurred since 1970. The bird could not be relocated.

The female **Rufous or Allen's Hummingbird**, as reported in the fall season, continued to visit a feeder in Glenwood until 9 December. The bird likely perished following the arrival of a cold spell that night.

With nearly annual reports at the Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant for the past ten years, an **Eared Grebe** is no longer considered unusual there. However, a report from January at that location was unprecedented. It was identified on 31 January by Elaine Dart and Doug Beattie.

It is with sadness that we report that Gordon Bellerby passed away at his home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario on 16 January. A long-time fixture of the Niagara River birding scene, Gordon collected valuable data by conducting counts of Bonaparte's Gulls as they departed the Niagara River at dusk en route to Lake Ontario.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Jordan, Al Kolodziejcdak, Jim & Karen Landau, Lynne Landon, Tom LeBlanc, Terry Mosher, Dave Neveu, Susan & Tom O'Donnell, Jim Pawlicki, Betsy Potter, Fran Rew, Gerry Rising, John Rosenburg, Richard Salembier, Paul Schnell, Debbie Sharon, Bob & Lorraine Sherman, Anne Terninko, William Watson, Peter Yoerg, Mike Zebehazi.

ABBREVIATIONS

AlSP – Allegany SP, CATT; AmSP – Amherst SP, ERIE; BeSP – Beaver I SP, ERIE; BuSP – Buckhorn I SP, ERIE; BWWTP – Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant, GENE; ChauL – Chautauqua Lake, CHAU; DH – Dunkirk Harbor, CHAU; FMCSP – Four Mile Creek SP, NIAG; FNSP – Fort Niagara SP, NIAG; GHSP – Golden Hill SP, NIAG; LBSP – Lakeside Beach SP, ORLE; NF – Niagara Falls, NIAG; NPP – Niagara Power Project on NR, Lewiston, NIAG; NR – Niagara R; OOWMA – Oak Orchard WMA; GENE/ORLE; PG – Point Gratiot – CHAU; SPNS – Sinking Ponds Nature Sanctuary, E Aurora, ERIE; TBNP – Times Beach Nature Preserve, Buffalo, ERIE; Tifft NP – Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo, ERIE; WTSP – Wilson-Tuscarora SP, NIAG.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: SPNS 5 Dec; Dayton CATT 11 Dec; last 6 Yates ORLE 28 Dec (PY).

CACKLING GOOSE: Buffalo NR ERIE 15 Jan (JL! LL!), only second Jan record.

Mute Swan: 4 LBSP 28 Dec; 2 Wilson 1-4 Feb; max 6 Olcott NIAG 4 Feb.

Trumpeter Swan: Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; 2 Buffalo-NF NR 1 Jan – 22 Jan (FR! WD! mob), wing-tagged, photo.

Tundra Swan: 6 BWWTP 4 Dec; max 175 BeSP 17 Dec, traditional wintering area on NR; 5 Salamanca CATT 6 Jan (TBa).

Wood Duck: no Jan reports; arr 3 OOWMA 20 Feb (S&TO), early.

Gadwall: arr 2 Dayton CATT 17 Feb, early.

Am. Wigeon: 3 OOWMA 4 Feb (PY), likely early migrants.

Am. Black Duck: max 122 BWWTP 4 Dec; 76 DH 22 Dec.

Mallard: max 900 BWWTP 4 Dec.

N. Shoveler: 310 BWWTP 4 Dec (WW); SPNS 1 Jan (LH); only reports.

N. Pintail: 2 BWWTP 4 Dec; 2 Salamanca CATT 20 Jan; arr 6 OOWMA 4 Feb (PY), early.

Green-winged Teal: 8 BWWTP 4 Dec; 4 NF 6 Jan (DS); only reports.

Ring-necked Duck: 3 BeSP 17 Dec; 6 BuSP 22 Jan; max 8 Buffalo NR 2 Feb; arr 4 Dayton CATT 17 Feb; 6 DH 22 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: 3 BWWTP 4 Dec; 3 BuSP 22 Jan; max 6 DH 22 Feb.

Harlequin Duck: DH 3 Dec – 22 Feb (DN, mob); m NF 1 Dec.

Surf Scoter: Buffalo NR 24 Dec, only report.

Black Scoter: DH 1-22 Dec; Buffalo NR 2 Feb (PY!), only reports.

Com. Goldeneye: max 1050 NF 12 Jan (WW).

Hooded Merganser: max 600 ChauL 1 Dec (DN); 100 DH 15 Dec (DN); 3, 6 OOWMA 2-3 Feb, unusual location for date, early migrants?

Com. Merganser: max 1000 DH 10 Dec.

Ruddy Duck: 19 ChauL 1 Dec; max 135 BWWTP 4 Dec; BeSP 10, 16 Dec; 4 Buffalo NR 24 Dec; 4 DH 22-23 Feb (WW!, MG!).

Red-throated Loon: max 76 Wilson CBC NIAG 17 Dec; 63 FMCSP 27 Dec (WD); Somerset NIAG 7 Jan (J&KL, FR); Shadicee ORLE 4 Feb (WD).

Com. Loon: Olcott NIAG 4 Feb, only report past Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: BuSP 11 Jan; max 8 DH 22 Feb (WW).

Horned Grebe: max 68 DH 7-31 Dec; 15 Yates ORLE 8 Jan; BWWTP 31 Jan (ED, DB).
Red-necked Grebe: BuSP 3 Dec (S&TO); 6 Wilson CBC 17 Dec; GHSP 4 Feb (PY); only reports.
EARED GREBE: BWWTP 31 Jan (ED! DB), first Jan record from this location.
Double-crested Cormorant: NF 28 Jan; max 83 DH 22 Feb.
Great Blue Heron: max 40 Strawberry I NR 13 Feb (M&SG).
Turkey Vulture: Dunkirk CHAU 28 Dec (DN); Yates ORLE 19 Jan (FR!); Amherst ERIE 20 Jan (GR!); Porter NIAG 22 Jan (DS!); rare but increasing in mid-winter; arr Aurora ERIE 22 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 12 Allegheny Res CATT 29 Jan (TBa); 9 Strawberry I NR 20 Feb (M&SG); well reported from other traditional wintering and breeding areas.
N. Goshawk: Beaver Meadow CBC 17 Dec, only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Beaver Meadow CBC 17 Dec; St. Bonaventure CBC 17 Dec; 2 Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; Porter NIAG 27 Dec (BB); Ashford CATT 29 Jan (JR); uncommon in winter.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 6 Dayton 22 Jan (DN); fewer reports than most winters.
Merlin: max 7 SUNY Buffalo campus ERIE thru (PY!), traditional winter roost; NF 3 Dec; Beaver Meadow CBC 17 Dec; Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; SPNS 10 Jan (LH); Jamestown CHAU 12 Feb; Kenmore ERIE 12 Feb (JL!).
Peregrine Falcon: 1-2 Buffalo ERIE thru, only reports.
Am. Coot: 1000 ChauL 1 Dec (DN); 5 BuSP 11 Jan; Olcott NIAG 19 Feb; 46 DH 22 Feb, max beyond Dec.
Killdeer: last Jamestown CBC 18 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: 2 NF 3 Dec (PY), only report.
Dunlin: Buffalo NR 18 Dec (JL, BC), rare in winter.
Wilson's Snipe: 3 Jamestown CBC 18 Dec, rare in winter.

Little Gull: max 3 Lewiston NR 29 Jan, 4 Feb.
BLACK-HEADED GULL: Buffalo NR 4 Dec (WD); Lewiston NIAG 27 Dec; only reports.
Bonaparte's Gull: 17 ChauL 1 Dec; max 6,000 upper NR 22 Jan (WD).
CALIFORNIA GULL: ad NPP 28 Dec (RG, AG), only report since Nov.
Herring Gull: max 15,000 NF 18 Dec (WD).
Thayer's Gull: 2 NPP, 1 NF 3 Dec (WD); all sightings considered "probable" due to identification difficulties.
Iceland Gull: max 6 NPP 3 Dec; FMCSPP 24, 27 Dec; 3 NF 1 Jan, fewer on NR than usual beyond Dec; 2 Wilson NIAG 5 Feb; DH 23 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: BeSP 24, 28 Dec; max 8 NF 1 Jan (WD); Buffalo NR 2 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: FMCSPP 24, 27 Dec; max 4 NF 1 Jan; 1-2 DH 11 Jan -19 Feb; Wilson NIAG 5 Feb.
"Nelson's" Gull: ad NF 3 Dec (WD), Glaucous x Herring hybrid.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: 2 Lewiston Reservoir NIAG 7 Dec (PB); Olcott NIAG 24 Dec (BE); Yates ORLE 28 Dec – 15 Jan; DH 15 Jan (DN); Wilson NIAG 4 Feb; only reports.
N. HAWK OWL: Yates ORLE 7 Jan thru (PS, AT, MC, mob, NYSARC); 4th Regional record, first since 1963, *intro*.
Long-eared Owl: AmSP 6 Jan (RS); GHSP 4, 18 Feb, only reports.
Short-eared Owl: Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; 3-8 Porter NIAG 24 Dec thru; not reported from any other locations.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; AmSP 30 Dec, 2-20 Jan (RS); only reports.
RUFIOUS or ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD: female Glenwood ERIE thru 9 Dec (B&LS), continued from fall.
Red-headed Woodpecker: PG 22 Feb; 2 Dunkirk CHAU 23 Feb, only reports.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Lewiston NIAG 18 Dec (PY); 2 FMCSPP 18 Dec

(PY); Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; FNSP 1 Feb (MG, GR); NF 19 Feb (S&TO); 2 Dunkirk CHAU 23 Feb (M&SG); unprecedented winter showing.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Brant ERIE 4 Dec thru 8 Jan (DN); AmSP 24 Dec, 2 Jan (RS!); very rare in winter.

N. Shrike: below average reports.

Com. Raven: 2 Arkwright CHAU 25 Feb, only report outside of CATT or ALLE.

Horned Lark: max 200 Wilson NIAG 7 Jan.

Carolina Wren: moderate number of reports.

Winter Wren: 2 Wilson NIAG 16 Dec; max 3 FMCSP 27 Dec (WD, BP); BeSP 11 Feb.

E. Bluebird: max 11 E. Aurora ERIE 1 Jan; typical number of reports.

Hermit Thrush: Wilson NIAG 4-17 Dec; 2,1 FMCSP 27 Dec, 11 Feb; Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; LBSP 28 Dec; Tift NP 4 Jan; AmSP 6 Jan; Porter NIAG 15 Jan; TBNP 12 Feb; good showing.

Am. Robin: max 500 WTSP 31 Dec.

VARIED THRUSH: Hamburg ERIE 1 Jan (MZ! NYSARC), very rare; 11th Regional sighting; could not be relocated.

Gray Catbird: FMCSP 11 Dec; Wilson CBC 17 Dec; Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; 1-2 SPNS 23 Dec – 10 Jan; Hanover CHAU 24 Dec; TBNP 1 Jan; 2 BuSP 11 Jan; GHSP 10 Feb; Bethany GENE 12 Feb; unprecedented winter showing.

N. Mockingbird: 4 Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; BuSP 22 Jan; only reports away from NIAG.

Brown Thrasher: Belmont ALLE 18, 19 Feb (MJ), unusual in winter.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: BuSP 3 Dec; Buffalo ERIE 18 Dec; 2 LESP 8 Jan, only reports.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec (KF); Dunkirk CBC 1 Jan, only reports.

Chipping Sparrow: Bethany GENE 8 Dec thru (DB); Sheridan CHAU 17 Dec, only reports.

Field Sparrow: 3 Wilson NIAG 11 Dec; N. Tonawanda NIAG 13 Dec; Sheridan CHAU 17 Dec; 4 Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; Wilson NIAG 2,3 Jan; Bethany GENE 16,26 Jan; Pomfret CHAU 5 Feb (TM); good showing.

Fox Sparrow: Franklinville CATT 6-11 Dec (MD!); 2 Grand I ERIE 10 Dec (TBu); Orchard Park ERIE 17 Dec – 1 Jan (MZ! NV!); Jamestown CBC 18 Dec; Buffalo ERIE 11,12 Jan (PY!); Williamsville ERIE 18-25 Jan (AK); unprecedented winter showing.

Swamp Sparrow: max 6 Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: Lancaster ERIE 7 Dec; Eden ERIE 7 Dec; max 4 Porter NIAG 27 Dec; Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; Bethany GENE 28 Dec; 3 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 7 Jan; Somerset NIAG 10 Feb.

Lapland Longspur: 2 Dunkirk Airport CHAU 28 Dec; 3 Bliss WYOM 8 Jan; 3 Porter NIAG 14 Jan; max 23 Yates 15 Jan (WD).

Snow Bunting: max 1000 Yate ORLE 24, 28 Dec (S&TO, PY); 700 Wilson NIAG 8 Jan; 100 Bethany GENE 16 Jan.

Red-winged Blackbird: SPNS 1 Jan; 16 S. Buffalo ERIE 1-30 Jan; 14 Tonawanda ERIE 13 Feb; arr 21 Alabama GENE 20 Feb.

E. Meadowlark: 2 Youngstown NIAG 8 Feb (BB), rare in winter.

Com. Grackle: Shelby ORLE 15 Jan; arr SPNS 27 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 39 Porter NIAG 1 Feb.

Pine Grosbeak: 3 Bond L Park NIAG 27 Dec (MZ, DH), only report.

Purple Finch: 2 Porter NIAG 11 Dec; 3 Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec; Williamsville ERIE 22 Jan; 2 OOWMA 20 Feb; 2 Arkwright CHAU 20 Feb; only reports; low numbers on CBCs.

Com. Redpoll: 12 Oak Orchard CBC 27 Dec (DB), only report.

Pine Siskin: max 55 Wilson NIAG 1-31
Dec; six other reports in low numbers.

Evening Grosbeak: 28 Scio CBC 17
Dec; 3 AISP 3 Feb (TL), only reports.

REGION 2 – GENESEE

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Once again it was a winter of contrasts. December started things off with a cold 3 weeks. Temperatures averaged 5.5° below normal. The remainder of the month saw significantly higher temperatures, with an 8.5°F above normal average. The monthly average was 28.0°F, which was 1.4° below normal. Precipitation for the month measured a paltry 1.37". This was ½ the normal amount. Snowfall was meager with a total of 19.0". This was nearly 3" below normal. Conditions were better for this year's CBC's, but there was little open water for the earlier counts. By the end of the month there was little snow on the ground. January was quite a month. It was the 4th warmest ever. The average temperature was 35.5° F, a whopping 11.6° more than the historical average. Rain was the precipitation of choice for the month. Snowfall was a meager 14.0", 11.8" below normal. The total precipitation reached 0.08" above the normal reading of 2.42". February started out with the warmth of January, but ended with generally cold weather. The average monthly temperature of 28.4°F was 3.1° above normal. Precipitation amounted to 2.13", 0.09" more than normal. Snowfall was 28.8", 6.6" above average. The three-month average temperature was 30.7°F compared to the 26.2° norm. It was the 4th warmest in the last 50 years. Seasonal snowfall amounted to 69.6". This was about 9" below normal.

The season, birding wise, was quite good. There were some interesting highlights and events. The CBC's ran average to slightly above average. Favorable conditions led to a good number of half hardies that tarried into the season and were discovered on the counts. Even with the lack of open water, the waterfowl totals were decent. Webster Park turned out to be a hotspot. Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids located a Varied Thrush and a Boreal Chickadee at the start of the season, and the search for these led to many sightings of Hermit Thrush, Veery, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, and Eastern Towhee in the park through the winter. The Varied Thrush lingered through the season. The Veery set Regional record late dates and is one of few verified winter records for the State. An Eastern Phoebe found in Savannah on the last day of 2005 by Bob Spahn and William Gillette was record late; it was also seen by several on 2 January and another individual was located in Conesus.

Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids once again attempted a “Big January” with excellent results. Dave was able to devote a significant amount of time to this endeavor and eclipsed all previous totals with 149 species. The monthly total for the whole Region was only 150 species. Dave somehow missed one. The January highlight was most assuredly the Region’s first Yellow-billed Loon observed by both him and Mike.

The lakewatch at Hamlin Beach was slow during December, but the milder January produced some interesting waterfowl counts as well as a Pomarine Jaeger report.

Waterfowl totals for the most part were good. Wintering Canada Geese continued their big numbers with a smattering of Cackling Geese. The Savannah Mucklands, in the extreme southeast corner of our Region produced some good sightings, with Greater White-fronted Goose, up to 64000 Snow Geese, Ross’s Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, and a good variety of other puddle ducks. On the lake, Long-tailed Duck and Common Goldeneye were in good numbers. There were some decent concentrations of Redhead at various locations. Canvasback, both scaup species, White-winged Scoter, and Bufflehead were not reported at typical levels of abundance. A female Common Eider found in November at Irondequoit Bay Outlet lingered into December. Other highlights included Harlequin Duck and Barrow’s Goldeneye. An interesting find was a male Barrow’s X Common Goldeneye discovered by Jessie and Jim Barry at Sodus Point.

Lake Ontario observations from Hamlin Beach also produced good totals of Red-throated Loon as well as decent numbers of Red-necked and Horned Grebe. At the risk of being redundant, the highlight was indeed the Yellow-billed Loon observed at close range by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids on 4 January. Letchworth State Park and Oatka Creek Park hosted wintering Turkey Vultures. Forty-plus birds were seen at the latter location.

Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low. For the most part, other diurnal raptors were good to above average. Cooper’s Hawks were well reported, with a smaller number of Sharp-shinned’s seen. Merlins were widespread and, as has been the case in recent winters, Peregrine reports came from the traditional downtown Rochester birds and a sighting at the Savannah Mucklands. The raptor highlight for the season was a dark morph Gyrfalcon observed at the mucklands by Dave Tetlow and Mike Davids in January. Virginia Rail and Sora were found at the traditional Mendon Ponds wintering location in January. A somewhat bizarre find was an adult Purple Gallinule found dead by maintenance employees at Webster Park in January. The carcass was later retrieved and delivered to Cornell Lab as a salvage specimen. A very early Sandhill Crane was reported in Savannah in late January and February sightings. It was a five-shorebird winter. The usual lingering Killdeer were found. There were very cooperative Purple Sandpiper(s?) at Irondequoit Bay and Ontario Beach as well as a very late Dunlin at Irondequoit Bay. And the Big January searches produced a Wilson’s Snipe at the Caledonia State Fish Hatchery (present at the same spot for several years now) and 2 American Woodcock at Bergen Swamp.

It was generally a good gull season. The two best areas locally were Irondequoit Bay and the Perinton Landfill and adjacent Lake Edwards, formerly the Detection System's Pond. Mike Davids and Dave Tetlow at the latter location discovered the Region's first Slaty-backed Gull. This ranked right up there with Yellow-billed Loon for bird of the season. It was well described by the observers. Other gull highlights included good numbers of Thayer's Gull reports, lots of Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings, Black-headed Gull off Durand-Eastman Park, and good totals of white-winged gulls. A concentration of Bonaparte's Gulls gathered offshore of Durand-Eastman Park and included 1 - 2 Little Gulls from time to time. A Black-legged Kittiwake at Hamlin Beach was a good December sighting. A lingering Common tern at Ontario Beach was a December highlight.

Snowy Owl reports were few this season. Late in the season they went unreported. The 4 N. Saw-whet Owls found in the southeast corner of the Region on the Montezuma CBC were a good find. Short-eared Owls were in the usual locations but were down in number. Northern Shrike numbers fluctuated throughout the season; at times they were easy to find and at other times they were scarce. The only Red-headed Woodpecker report was an individual near Avon.

Common Raven continues to be reported each season with new locations surfacing almost yearly. A group of 19 observed in Rattlesnake Hill WMA on 10 January is a record count for the Region. The February Tree Swallow was a puzzle, early migrant or winter holdover? Winter and Marsh wrens were both located. American Pipit was reported in both December and January. Bohemian Waxwings were found in Webster Park and at Hamlin Beach. The only warbler reports were Yellow-rumped and Common Yellowthroat. The usual wintering sparrows were reported. Fox Sparrow was a good find. White-crowned Sparrow numbers were okay but didn't approach levels of recent years. All the winter finches were reported but in small numbers. A persistent flock of Common Redpolls at Hamlin Beach also included 1-2 Hoary Redpolls. Evening Grosbeaks continued their trend of scarcity.

December's total of 132 species was nearly 10 species higher than the 10-year average. It brought the 2005 total to 292 species. That's right about at the 10-year average but 7 species less than 2004. The January total was 150 species, which was significantly higher than the 10-year average.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BB – Braddock Bay, T Greece; BS -Bergen Swamp, GENE; CA – T Caledonia, LIVI; CH – Ontario Beach, Charlotte, MONR; CI - Conesus Inlet, LIVI; CL – Conesus Lake, LIVI; CO – T Conesus, LIVI; DE – Durand-Eastman Park, MONR; H - T Hamlin, MONR; HB – Hamlin Beach State Park, MONR; HP – Hogan Point, T Greece, MONR; HU – T Huron, WAYN; IB – Irondequoit Bay, MONR; K –T Kendall, ORLE; MP – Mendon Ponds Park, MONR; NR – Nations Road, T Avon, LIVI; PA – T Parma, MONR; PB- Point Breeze, ORLE; PE – T Perinton, MONR; R – City of Rochester, MONR; SA – T Savannah, WAYN; SP – Village of Spencerport, MONR; W – T Webster, MONR; WP – Webster Park, MONR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES
Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 SA 22-31 Jan (TL, mob); 2 SA 2 Feb (RS, BH).
Snow Goose: 20,000 SA 2 Feb (RS); max 64,000 SA 3 Feb (DT), very early for such large numbers.
ROSS'S GOOSE: 1 SA 2 Jan (DT).
Canada Goose: max 25,000+ SA 21-31 Jan (DT, MD).
Cackling Goose: 1 CL 28 Dec (DS); 1 IB 1 Jan (RS); max 5 SA 21 Jan (DT,MD); 17 total records Jan; total 7 Feb.
Brant: 1 HB – PB 12-31 Jan, 1 Feb.
Trumpeter Swan: 1-2 IB 1-20 Jan.
Tundra Swan: max 487 SA 21 Jan (DT, MD).
Wood Duck: max 6 G 18 Dec.
Gadwall: max 89 CL 18 Dec (PM).
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 SA 5 Feb (DW).
Am Wigeon: max 7 SA 30 Jan.
Am. Black Duck: max 250 SA 23 Jan.
N. Shoveler: 1 SA 30 Jan.
N. Pintail: max 7 SA 30 Jan.

Green-winged Teal: total 6 various 15-22 Jan; 3 BB 3 Feb, early migrants.
Canvasback: max 32 G 18 Dec.
Redhead: max 9000 K 8 Jan (DT, MD).
Ring-necked Duck: max 18 G 20 Jan.
Greater Scaup: max 18,000 K 8 Jan (DT, MD).
COM. EIDER: IB 1-4 Dec, female, continued from the fall.
Harlequin Duck: 1 imm m HC 16-31 Jan (J&JB).
Long-tailed Duck: max 1000 G 20 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1660 HU 17 Jan.
Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 m PB 8-31Jan, 1-28 Feb (DT, MD, *et al*).
Barrow's X Common Goldeneye: 1 m SP 16-17 Jan (J & JB).
Ruddy Duck: max 12 CL 6 Jan.
YELLOW-BILLED LOON: 1 HB 4 Jan (DT, MD).
Pied-billed Grebe: max 16 CL 6 Jan.
Horned Grebe: max 350 WL 8 Jan.
Turkey Vulture: 42 Wheatland 5 Jan, good winter total.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: total 15 reports Jan.
N. Goshawk: 1 DE 18 Dec; 1 WP 29 Dec.
Red-shouldered Hawk: total 10 PA, Canandaigua 29-30 Jan (DT), high total for winter; 1 Avon 9 Feb.
Merlin: 1 DE 2 Dec; R 18 Dec; 7 reports Feb.
Peregrine Falcon: 3 R 7 Jan; 1 SA 21-31 Jan.
GYRFALCON: 1 SA 21 Jan (DT,MD), dark morph.
Virginia Rail: 1 R 18 Dec; 1 MP 17 Jan.
Sora: 1 MP 17 Jan.
PURPLE GALLINULE: 1 ad WP 24, 31 (RH,JM), photographed, picked up and delivered to Cornell Lab as specimen (RS).
Am. Coot: max 450 CL 6 Jan.
Sandhill Crane: 1 SA 31 Jan (DT), 5 Feb (DW), rare winter record.
Killdeer: 1 Rush 18 Dec; 1 GE 29 Dec; 1-2 CL 22-23 Jan; 2 HP 1 Feb.
Purple Sandpiper: 1 IB 1-22 Dec; 1 CH-RS 22 Jan - 8 Feb.
Dunlin: last 1 IB 2 Dec.
Wilson's Snipe: CA 1-31 Jan.
Am. Woodcock: 2 BS 12 Jan (DT).
Pomarine Jaeger: 1 HB 11 Jan (MD,DT).
Little Gull: 1-2 ad DE 4 Jan - 8 Feb.
BLACK-HEADED GULL: 1 DE 10 Feb (DT,MD).
Thayer's Gull: 1 imm PE 3 Dec (MT); 1 PE 5 Dec (MV), photos; 1 imm PE 7 Dec (DS); 1 imm PE 14 Dec (DS); 1 ad PE 26 Dec (M&JT); 1 2nd winter IB 1 Jan; 1 imm PE 19-23 Feb.
Iceland Gull: max 8 PE sev Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1-2 IB, PE all Dec; max 3 IB 13 Jan; 1-5 PE 1-28 Feb.
SLATY-BACKED GULL: 1 ad PE 11 Feb (DT, MD, M & JT!), 1st Reg record, good verbal descriptions, photos suggestive but not diagnostic.
Glaucous Gull: 1-5 PE 1-28 Feb.
Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 HB 27 Dec (WS), unusual in winter.
Com. Tern: 2 CH 1 Dec (DT,MD), record late.

DOVES - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: max 2800+ Mendon 17 Jan (DT, MD).
E. Screech-Owl: max 65 18 Dec R CBC.
Snowy Owl: 1 HE 3 Dec; 1 M 7 Dec; 1 R 18 Dec.
Long-eared Owl: 1 BS 12 Jan.
N. Saw-whet Owl: max 4 SA 31 Dec.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Nations Rd Jan (DT, MD); 1 Fowlerville 22 Feb (CP), only reports.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 SA 31 Dec (RS, WG), record late; 1 SA 2 Jan (DT, MD, R&SS); 1 CO 6 Jan (DT, MD).
N. Shrike: total 33 individuals sev loc 1-31 Jan.
Com. Raven: 2 Canadice 26 Dec; max 19 RH 10 Jan (MD, DT), Reg record high count.
Tree Swallow: 1 H 6 Feb (DT), early migrant?
BOREAL CHICKADEE: 1 WP 1 Dec (MD, DT).
Winter Wren: max 20 R CBC 18 Dec (DT).
Marsh Wren: 2 R 18 Dec; 1 CL 26 Dec; 3 CI 1-22 Jan; 1 DE 29 Jan.
Veery: 1 WP 4 Dec - 7 Jan (AG, SD, *et al*), record late.
VARIED THRUSH: 1 WP 1 Dec thru (MD, DT, mob).
Hermit Thrush: 1 max 8 WP 10 Dec.
Am. Robin: max 7300 H 7 Jan (DT).
Gray Catbird: max 5 WP 10 Dec; unusually high total for Dec; sev reports Jan.
Brown Thrasher: 1 DE 18-19 Dec; 1 Lima 26 Dec; 1 WP 31 Dec - 31 Jan.
Am. Pipit: 2 Byron 22 Dec, late; 1 Elba 19 Jan, late.
Bohemian Waxwing: 1-6 WP all Dec; 1 DE 30 Dec; 1 WP 1 Jan; 1 H 4 Jan, 1 Feb.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 DE 5 Jan.
Com. Yellowthroat: 2 CL 2 Jan; 1 CL 10 Jan.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 f WP 1-31 Jan;
Chipping Sparrow: 1 PA 7-31 Jan.
Field Sparrow: 1 SP 19 Dec, 1-31 Jan; 1
NR 15 Jan.
Savannah Sparrow: 1 K 31 Jan; 1 H 2
Feb.

Fox Sparrow: 1 W 5-7 Dec; 1 IR 18
Dec; 1 H 6 Feb.
Rusty Blackbird: 1 WP 3 Dec;
Pine Grosbeak: max 8 WP 10 Dec.
Red Crossbill: max 4 WP 29 Dec.
Com. Redpoll: max 52 HB 6 Dec.
Hoary Redpoll: 1 H 27 Jan (DT).

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES

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Winter effectively came and went in the month of December. At Ithaca, temperatures averaged 3.2°F colder than normal in December. January and February, however, were unusually mild, with positive departures from the norm of 9.3° and 4.2°, respectively. Nevertheless, it was cool enough to keep snow on the ground for much of the period. Snow was on the ground every day in December except the first day. Snow depth peaked December 16 with a 10-inch accumulation. January had 11 days with snow cover and February had thirteen days. Total precipitation was a little below normal for the season.

The particularly mild January may have induced geese to move into the Region early, with numbers beginning to build in late January and large numbers already achieved by 2 February. With the Snow Geese and Canada Geese came Greater White-fronted Geese, single Ross's Goose, and Cackling Geese. A Wood Duck lingering at the ponds in Union Springs; a Eurasian Wigeon, also at Union Springs; a Surf Scoter on Cayuga Lake at Taughannock Falls State Park; and a Barrow's Goldeneye on Keuka Lake at Branchport were waterfowl highlights. Observers in the Cayuga Lake Basin also noted a number of hybrids. Especially interesting was a Greater White-fronted X Snow Goose hybrid. Both American Wigeon and Canvasback numbers were up for the second consecutive year.

The bird of the season, for the Region, was a juvenile Pacific Loon on Cayuga Lake, first reported by Anne Marie and Tim Johnson 28 January. It stayed in the vicinity of Sheldrake and Kidders in the Town of Ovid through the end of the period. It was observed by many birders in February, but also frustrated many by remaining out of view of accessible sites and by diving so frequently as to make locating it difficult. A Red-throated Loon spent several days on Beebe Lake at Cornell University. A second Red-throated Loon appeared there briefly, and by the end of that day the first also departed. An Eared Grebe wintered for the ninth consecutive year in Aurora Bay.

The forty Great Blue Herons found on the Montezuma Christmas Bird Count was the highest count in the Region in the last eight years. A Black-crowned Night-Heron, reported at Taughannock Falls State Park in mid-December, was an exceptionally at an late date for this species. Turkey Vultures were reported from various places throughout the Region and throughout the winter.

A Gyrfalcon was in the Savannah Mucklands in late January to early February at the same time that Snow Goose numbers were building. A study of the correlation between Gyrfalcon occurrences and large concentrations of Snow Geese might prove interesting. Rough-legged Hawks were down in numbers, but the change did not achieve statistical significance.

Single Killdeer were noted on both the Corning and Elmira CBCs. The usual awinter gull species were present, including Lesser Black-backed, Iceland, and Glaucous gulls.

Only two Snowy Owls were reported. One was in Hopewell, Ontario County. The other was in the Savannah Mucklands on New Year's Day. Observers found small numbers of Short-eared Owls in scattered locations around the Region. A Red-headed Woodpecker was seen in mid-January and again in early February, but few seekers were able to find this elusive individual.

Both feeder watchers and field observers noticed that Blue Jays were present in very high numbers. This was confirmed by historically high counts on the Region's Christmas Bird Counts. Many passerines took advantage of the mild winter weather to linger. Those reported included Eastern Phoebe; Winter Wren; Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Hermit Thrush; Gray Catbird; American Pipit; Eastern Towhee; Field, Fox, and White-crowned sparrows; and four species of icterids. The presence of both goose and icterid species throughout the winter made it impossible to pinpoint the arrival of the spring migrants of those species. Bill Evans reported that a Common Yellowthroat was dwelling for a time inside the Home Depot building in Ithaca.

Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs were fairly observable in the Region, even though Snow Bunting numbers were down. A good variety of winter finches made appearances in small numbers. Evening Grosbeaks were present in larger numbers and more locations than in most recent years.

The following data include "+" and "-" notations indicating population increases or decreases of observed bird populations in the Region between winter 2005-06 and winter 2004-2005. Unless otherwise noted, the cited comparisons showed statistically significant changes ($X^2 > 3.84$; $P = 0.05$). A discussion of my methodology and its limitations can be found in the Region 3 report that appeared in the December 1999 issue of *The Kingbird*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AuB - Aurora Bay CAYU, CayL - Cayuga L, CU - Cornell University, GCBC - Geneva CBC, ICBC - Ithaca CBC, LCMF - Lettie Cook Memorial Forest CAYU, LPSP - Long Pt SP, MCBC - Montezuma CBC, MNWR - Montezuma NWR, MWC - Montezuma Wetlands Complex, SaMu - Savannah Mucklands SENE, StP - Stewart P TOMP, USPd - Union Springs Ponds CAYU.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: SaMu 22 Jan (TL); max 4 SaMu 3 Feb (GC), high; CayL 26 Feb (BoMc).
Greater White-fronted X Snow Goose: CayL 11 Feb (JaGr, JK, SR).
Snow Goose: max 60000 SaMu 5 Feb (SRBA), high.
ROSS'S GOOSE: MCBC 30 Dec (FMWC); SaMu 4 Feb (fide KM); SaMu 5 Feb (SRBA).
CAACKLING GOOSE: CayL 8 Dec (BoMc, DN); max 4 SaMu 4 Feb (fide KM), high; 2 Geneva 19 Feb (eB).
Trumpeter Swan: max 5 MWC 22 Jan (BGu, Lyn Jacobs), high.
WOOD DUCK: USPd 5 Jan.
Gadwall: max 168 MNWR 5 Feb (MiH, TL), high.
EURASIAN WIGEON: USPd 12 Feb (SD!); USPd 19 Feb (MAn, MiH, TL,

KR, GS); CayL 26 Feb (BoMc, DR, ph).
Am. Wigeon: max 72 CayL Basin 20 Feb (AsH, AMit), high, +.
Am. Black Duck: max 235 Farley's Pt CAYU 11 Feb, low, -.
Am. Black Duck X Mallard: Cass P 17 Dec (PHu).
Gadwall X Mallard: MNWR 5 Feb (MiH, TL).
Mallard X N. Shoveler: CayL 21 Feb (PHu, ph).
N. Shoveler: Union Springs 19 Feb.
N. Pintail: max 6 SaMu 22 Jan, -.
Green-winged Teal: max 3 AuB 5 Dec.
Canvasback: max 2800 Farley's Pt CAYU 11 Feb, +.
Redhead: max 5000 CayL WMA 28 Jan, -.
Ring-necked Duck: max 200 T Ovid P, -.

Greater Scaup: max 1000 SaMu 30 Jan (BoMc), high, +.

Lesser Scaup: max 1000 SaMu 30 Jan (BoMc), high.

SURF SCOTER: Taughannock Falls SP 30 Jan (BoMc), only report.

White-winged Scoter: Skaneateles L 5 Dec (MY); LPSP 8 Dec (BoMc, DN); AuB 27 Dec (JM), -.

Long-tailed Duck: CayL 13 Feb.

Com. Goldeneye: max 390 CayL 2 Jan, -.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: max 2 Branchport 21 Jan (eB), only report.

Ring-necked Pheasant: max 14 GCBC 1 Jan (EBS), high.

RED-THROATED LOON: CU 1 Dec (JE, DL); last & max 2 CU 5 Dec (DR), late.

PACIFIC LOON: CayL 28 Jan thru (AM&TJ!), thru (mob, ph).

Red-necked Grebe: max 2 Clute Memorial P SCHU 18 Dec.

EARED GREBE: AuB 8 Dec (BoMc, DN) - 20 Feb (AsH, AMit).

Double-crested Cormorant: max 2 Portland Pt TOMP 12 Feb.

Great Blue Heron: max 40 MCBC 31 Dec (FMWC), high.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: Taughannock Falls SP 15 Dec (SFi); GCBC 2 Jan (EBS).

Turkey Vulture: max 9 Route 13, Cayuga Heights 22 Feb (JM), high, +.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 5 MNWR 5 Feb.

N. Harrier: max 5 MCBC 31 Dec.

Cooper's Hawk: max 17 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Sapsucker Woods TOMP 4 Dec.

Red-tailed Hawk: max 172 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Peregrine Falcon: StP 20 Jan.

GYRFALCON: SaMu 21 Jan (SRBA); SaMu 4 Feb (BP)

Am. Coot: max 360 Portland Pt TOMP 2 Feb, -.

KILLDEER: Coming CBC 17 Dec; Elmira CBC 2 Jan.

Glaucous Gull X Herring Gull: StP 18 Dec (MAn, TL, ph).

Herring Gull: max 520 Watkins Glen CBC 31 Dec, -.

Iceland Gull: max 2 ICBC 1 Jan, -.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 2 ICBC 1 Jan, -.

Glaucous Gull: East Shore Sailing Club TOMP 11 Feb.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 88 GCBC 2 Jan, -.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

SNOWY OWL: SaMu 1 Jan.

Barred Owl: max 4 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Long-eared Owl: Dryden 8 Dec.

Short-eared Owl: max 6 CayL Basin 19 Feb, -.

N. Saw-whet Owl: max 4 Hammond Hill State Forest TOMP 13 Feb (eB), high.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: Aurora 13 Jan.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 186 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Downy Woodpecker: max 550 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Hairy Woodpecker: max 141 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. PHOEBE: CU 4 Dec (eB); MCBC 31 Dec (FMWC).

Blue Jay: max 1366 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high, +.

Fish Crow: max 15 StP 28 Jan.

Com. Raven: max 19 ICBC 1 Jan.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 3946 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Tufted Titmouse: max 442 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 106 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

White-breasted Nuthatch: max 544 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Brown Creeper: max 38 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

Winter Wren: max 4 MCBC 31 Dec (FMWC), high.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: LCMF 29 Dec (St&SuF); LCMF 2 Jan (BoMc, DN); LCMF 28 Jan (eB).

E. Bluebird: max 96 ICBC 1 Jan.
HERMIT THRUSH: Lansing 10 Dec (TL); ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC); South Hill TOMP 28 Jan (DN).
Am. Robin: max 211 GCBC 2 Jan. -.
GRAY CATBIRD: max 1 MCBC 31 Dec (FMWC); Gorham 27 Feb (Julie Horton).
AM. PIPIT: StP 7 Dec (TL); Myers Pt 22 Jan (AMit); AuB 12 Feb (BCa, MY).
BOHEMIAN WAXWING: LPSP 4 Feb (BoMc); LPSP 6 Feb (JM), -.
Cedar Waxwing: max 1500 CU 23 Feb (JM), high.

WARBLERS

COM. YELLOWTHROAT: Ithaca Home Depot 24 Dec (BEv), only report.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. TOWHEE: Cayuga Heights 17 Dec. (CaBC), only report.
FIELD SPARROW: max 2 ICBC 1 Jan (BBa), late.
FOX SPARROW: last Enfield 19 Dec (BBa), late.
Song Sparrow: max 114 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.

White-crowned Sparrow: Jerusalem 23 Dec.
Lapland Longspur: max 3 Genoa 8 Jan.
Snow Bunting: max 410 GCBC 2 Jan. -.
N. Cardinal: max 607 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.
Red-winged Blackbird: max 87 MCBC 31 Dec. -.
E. MEADOWLARK: Northeast Ithaca 22 Dec (JM), late.
Rusty Blackbird: max 2 Ellis Hollow TOMP 17 Feb.
Com. Grackle: max 32 Ithaca 17 Dec.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 120 Dryden 3 Jan. +.
Purple Finch: max 8 Corning 8 Jan. -.
Red Crossbill: max 2 Caroline 30 Jan (eB), only report.
White-winged Crossbill: max 3 Bear Swamp State Forest CAYU 10 Dec (JSi, MY); Caroline 18 Dec (KAC!).
Com. Redpoll: max 8 Corning 8 Jan. -.
Pine Siskin: max 15 Dryden 18 Feb.
Am. Goldfinch: max 838 ICBC 1 Jan (CaBC), high.
Evening Grosbeak: max 67 Summerhill 21 Dec. +.

REGION 4 - SUSQUEHANNA

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The winter was without extreme cold even though the first 3 weeks of December were colder than usual. At Binghamton, December was 3.4°F below the mean, with 24 days when the temperature did not reach freezing. Precipitation was 33% lower than normal that month. There were no significant snowstorms and little snow pack all winter. The greatest amount of snow that fell during a 24 hour period was 4.6" on 2 December. Snow depth reached a period maximum of 6-12" on 23 December, the day the cold snap ended. Warming the last week of December was a prelude to what was to come. January's mean of 30.8°F was 9.1° above normal. It tied for the second warmest January on record. Precipitation was 27% higher than

normal in January. What fell as snow soon melted. February temperatures were slightly high, 1.3° above normal. Precipitation for February was about half of average. The coldest temperature of the 3-month period was -6°F, which occurred on 14 December. There were no Binghamton records below 0°F during January and February.

The rivers and many large lakes were open much of the winter. Small and shallower lakes froze in December. Some of those resisted the January warmth and remained closed through the period. A couple of strong cold fronts may have impacted birds and birders. One arrived just in time for the annual waterfowl count. A high of 53°F on Friday 15 January gave way to a low of 6°F on the 14th. Another front on 17 February brought winds in excess of 50 mph causing widespread power outages.

Cones were scarce except for red pine. Overall, the mast and fruit crop was poor. However, ground foraging birds that pick through manure had a relatively good winter.

There were no big surprises during the annual waterfowl count. A Ruddy Duck was found on the Cortland Christmas Bird Count. It is rare in the Region and even more so in winter. Other notable waterfowl seen that are rare for the area in winter were 4 Wood Ducks on the Waterfowl Count and additional birds seen on four out of five CBC's; 1 White-winged scoter at Hillcrest Pits; 3 Redheads at the south end of Skaneateles Lake; and 1 Green-winged Teal at Whitney Point Reservoir in December. Other good waterbird sightings were a very unusual occurrence of 4 **Red-throated Loons** at various locations following a cold front and subsequent fallout in early December, 2 Horned Grebes, and a single **Red-Necked Grebe** at the south end of Skaneateles Lake on the Cortland Christmas Bird count. Additionally, 5 late Double-crested Cormorants were seen flying by Franklin Mt. Hawk Watch in early December. An early Killdeer was seen on Mark Tannis' farm in Pitcher on 17 February.

The Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society turned up a very respectable 17 Bald Eagles on their annual eagle trip to Delaware County. Turkey Vulture continue the recent trend of staying later and returning earlier. In fact, a roost in Cooperstown turned up a wintering group of a few Turkey Vultures. Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers were very close to equal on the Christmas Counts. Cooper's Hawks appear to be increasing in the Region and are now our dominant accipiter. A very respectable 7 Northern Goshawks were reported. A very high number of four Red-shouldered Hawks were reported. Most winter's there are 1-2 Red-shouldered Hawks reported. After good numbers were seen in early winter, Rough-legged Hawks were seen in below average numbers as the season progressed. A few Golden Eagles were present, which continues to give credence that the Region holds the only somewhat reliable wintering population in the state. Wintering Merlin reports are increasing in towns and cities across the state. Merlins were seen in Binghamton throughout winter near where they nested. The Binghamton nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons was seen through the period. Lastly, American Kestrels continue to be scarce in winter.

Only four species of owl were seen. The Region's only Snowy Owl was seen in East Freetown in mid February. The other three more common owls were seen in low numbers.

There were some nice songbirds finds for Region 4 during the winter. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was a very nice find on the Owego Christmas Bird Count. Northern Shrike numbers appeared to be slightly higher than usual across the Region, with 3-6 reported per month. A few Fish Crows continue in the Owego/Tioga areas. Common Ravens continue to increase in Region both as a nester and in winter.

Tufted Titmice continue to further establish themselves across this relatively high elevation Region. The Sherburne Christmas Bird Count set a count high for Tufted Titmouse. Carolina Wren numbers appear to be stable, with higher than usual numbers reported in Sherburne and Oneonta. A very high total of four scattered Winter Wrens were found. Scattered small flocks or individual American Robins wintered in the area as well. Eastern Bluebirds were seen in good numbers this year in comparison to last year's low number of sightings. Very unusual was the find of all three mimic thrushes in the Tioga County area. Additionally, one Hermit Thrush was also seen in Tioga County. A rare wintering American Pipit was found at Mark Tannis' farm in Pitcher.

There were reports of several rare-in-winter sparrows: White-crowned Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Field Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow. A late pair of Eastern Towhees was also reported in Chenango in mid December. Snow Buntings and Horned Larks were seen in decent to good numbers throughout the period. Another rare winterer was a Rusty Blackbird in Scott, Cortland County. There were only a few wintering Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds in the Region. A few migrating flocks of blackbirds returned to the area during the last few days of February.

Winter finches were present but in low numbers overall. Most were seen in very small numbers. Purple Finches were nearly absent, which was to be expected after last year's irruption. Conifers, except red pine, had poor cone crops. A single Red Crossbill was seen, which provided evidence that nesting birds from the last two years had largely departed the area. One flock of 25 White-winged Crossbills was seen in Greene the last day of February. Transient but fairly widespread small flocks of 2-10 Pine Siskins were present as were smaller flocks of 1-5 Common Redpolls. However, there were a few larger flocks of 15-40 Pine Siskins present throughout winter, and at least one large flock of 50-100 Common Redpolls was present at Tom Salo's in W. Burlington from mid January through February. There were small and fairly widespread flocks of Evening Grosbeak scattered throughout. The largest flocks noted were 35 in Otselic and 50+ in McDonough Chenango County. This was probably their best irruption since 2001-02. Even during irruption years, this species continues to be much harder to find compared to the 1970-90 period.

All in all, there were 105 species reported for the winter period.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCBC - Binghamton Christmas Bird Count; BPd- Boland Pond ; BUNP – Binghamton U. Nature Preserve; CVSP – Chenango Valley State Park; CCBC - Cortland Christmas Bird Count; DOAS – Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society; FMHW - Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch; LHNC - Lime Hollow Nature Center; NCBCWW - Naturalists' Club of Broome County Weed Walker; OnCBC - Oneonta Christmas Bird Count; OtL – Otsego Lake, OTSE; OwCBC - Owego Christmas Bird Count; SCBC - Sherburne Christmas Bird Count; SkanL - Skaneateles Lake; TBC - Tioga Bird Club, WhP-Res – Whitney Pt. Reservoir.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 500 FMHW 5 Dec; numerous "early" northbound flocks early Feb.

Canada Goose: 1807 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; max 2000 CCBC Dec 17.

Mute Swan: 2 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; 1 BPd & 1 Hillcrest Pits thru.

TUNDRA SWAN: 1 Miller Beach Tioga 10 Feb (SK); 1 Susq R Vestal 28 Feb (DW), rare in winter.

WOOD DUCK: 4 NYSOA Waterfowl Count 18 Jan; unusually found on 4 of 5 Reg CBC's

AMERICAN WIGEON: 1f BPd Dec-Feb joined by m Feb, rare in winter.

Am. Black Duck: 183 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; max 31 BCBC 1 Jan.

Mallard: 491 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; max 600 CCBC 26 Dec.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL: 1m WhP-Res TIOG 12 Dec, rare in winter.

REDHEAD: 3 SkanL 17 Dec (MY).

Ring-necked Duck: max 15 SkanL Jan-Feb.

Lesser Scaup: 1 SkanL 17 Dec, only report.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: 1 Hillcrest Pits 6 Jan (DW).

Bufflehead: few scattered reports SkanL & BPd Dec-Feb.

Com. Goldeneye: max 47 SkanL 17 Dec; few other scattered reports.

Hooded Merganser: max 41 OtL & tribs mid-Jan; 49 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan.

Com. Merganser: max 213 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; good numbers on most sizable rivers.

RUDDY DUCK: CCBC 17 Dec (MY), rare.

AMERICAN COOT: max 28 OtL NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; few BdP early Dec.

Ring-necked Pheasant: max 4 BCBC 1 Jan.

Ruffed Grouse: max 10 SCBC 17 Dec; scattered reports.

Wild Turkey: max 427 OnCBC 17 Dec.

KILLDEER: 1 Pitcher 17 Feb (MT), early.

RED-THROATED LOON: 1 Cortland Quarry 6-17 Dec (JM); 1 LHNC 6 Dec; 1 Endwell 6 Dec (DW); 1 WhP-Res 6 Dec (DW); rare, unusually high fallout.

Com. Loon: few scattered reports; 1 SkanL 17 Dec.

Pied-billed Grebe: 1 CCBC 17 Dec; 1 Endwell 1 Jan; 1 Bing Plaza 18 Feb.

HORNED GREBE: 1 WhP-Res 7 Dec (WW); 1 OtL 4 Dec; rare in winter.

RED-NECKED GREBE: 1 SkanL 17 Dec (MY&JS); rare.
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: 5 FMHW 4 Dec; rare.
Great Blue Heron: max 13 BCBC 1 Jan.
Turkey Vulture: first migrant late Feb; birds at Cooperstown OTSE roost Dec-Feb; 1 Norwich CHEN 9 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 17 DELA DOAS trip Jan 28; concentrated in Delaware River basin; reported from all areas; regular in BROO and becoming more regular CHEN, DELA, CORT.
N. Harrier: Max 2 OwCBC 30 Dec; few scattered throughout.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: max 5 BCBC 1 Jan; average numbers throughout.
Cooper's Hawk: max 8 BCBC 1 Jan; regular and numbers increasing thru.
N. Goshawk: 7 reports scattered about; continues to be a bit under-reported.
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK: 1 TIOG; 1 OwCBC 30 Jan; 1 Barker 28 Jan; high.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 44 BCBC 1 Jan; average numbers.
Rough-legged Hawk: 12 OwCBC 30 Dec; slightly low to average numbers.
GOLDEN EAGLE: max 15 FMHW 4 Dec; 2 SCBC 17 Dec; 1 CORT Jan; Region continues to have state's only consistent wintering population.
Am. Kestrel: max 8 OwCBC 30 Dec; scarce after Dec.
Merlin: 1 occasional CORT Dec-Feb; 1 BROO; 1 Chenango; Binghamton thru.
Peregrine Falcon: Binghamton thru, 2 at times, expected.
Am. Coot: max 28 NYSOA Waterfowl Count mid-Jan; Otsego Lake all season.
Ring-billed Gull: max 196 CCBC 17 Dec, low.
Herring Gull: max 58 CCBC 17 Dec, low.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 58 CCBC 17 Dec, low.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: max 1991 BCBC 1 Jan.
Mourning Dove: max 909 BCBC 26 Dec.
E. Screech-Owl: max 3 OnCBC 17 Dec;

numbers from lowlands below 1200'.
Great Horned Owl: 5 BCBC 26 1 Jan; good number of reports.
SNOWY OWL: 1 E. Freetown CORT mid-Feb (RS), only report.
Barred Owl: scattered reports throughout from wet woods and swamps >1300'
Belted Kingfisher: 1 found on 4 of 5 Reg CBC's; a few other reported.
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: 1 OwCBC 30 Dec.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 16 OwCBC 30 Dec; wintering numbers still largely confined to river valleys >1500.
Downy Woodpecker: max 147 BCBC 1 Jan; high numbers on all CBC's.
Hairy Woodpecker: max 45 BCBC 1 Jan; good numbers on all CBC's.
N. Flicker: 3-4 reported on local CBC's; scarce in Reg thru.
Pileated Woodpecker: max 4 BCBC & OwCBC.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 3 SCBC 17 Dec; scattered inds throughout Reg; reported numbers of 3-5 per month in Reg. were slightly above average.
Blue Jay: max 522 BCBC 1 Jan; high numbers on all CBC's.
Am. Crow: max 2859 CCBC 17 Dec, all birds counted on CCBC presumed to roost in City of Cortland.
Fish Crow: few Town of Tioga & Vestal, local.
Com. Raven: max 17 FMHW 6 Dec; 1-4 seen on all area CBC's; scattered birds throughout Reg thru; larger flocks of 5-10+ presumed to be immature birds occasionally seen in Reg in winter.
Horned Lark: max ~200 CCBC 26 Dec; many reports of good numbers thru.
Tufted Titmouse: max 193 BCBC 1 Jan; 29 SCBC, record high for count; continues to expand.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 19 BCBC 1 Jan.; low to average numbers; many birds at feeders and not woods which is indicative of poor cone crop.
Brown Creeper: max 12 BCBC 1 Jan.
Carolina Wren: max 18 BCBC 1 Jan; pr Scott CORT Dec-Feb (MY); stable to

increasing numbers reported throughout Reg; expanding slightly in villages of Sherburne & Oneonta.

Winter Wren: 1 BCBC 1 Jan; 1 CVSP Jan; 1 Reynolds Dec; 1 Norwich CHEN 26 Feb; rare in winter.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 7 BCBC 1 Jan; low numbers.

E. Bluebird: max 42 BCBC 1 Jan; good numbers compared with last year.

HERMIT THRUSH: 1 BCBC 1 Jan.

Am. Robin: max 50-100+ SkanL Jan-Feb; scattered small numbers wintered throughout

GRAY CATBIRD: 1 Vestal Jan; 1 OTSE Jan (KR), rare in winter

N. Mockingbird: max 6 BCBC 1 Jan; better numbers than last year.

BROWN THRASHER: 10 Dec BUNP (BK), only report, rare in winter

European Starling: max 1860 SCBC 17 Dec.

AMERICAN PIPIT: 1 Pitcher 12 Dec-thru (MT), only report, rare in winter.

Cedar Waxwing: max 241 OwCBC 30 Dec; 180 upper Lisle Feb (JW).

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. TOWHEE: pr Chen 11 Dec.

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 164 OwCBC 30 Dec.

FIELD SPARROW: 1 Triangle 12-28 Jan; 1 Middletown DELA 21 Jan (JD); rare in winter.

FOX SPARROW: 1 W. Burlington OSTE 3 Dec; 1 Union TIOG 7 Dec; rare in winter.

Song Sparrow: max 13 BCBC 1 Jan; good numbers on CBC's.

SWAMP SPARROW: 1 Cort early-Dec; 1 SCBC 17 Dec; rare in winter.

White-throated Sparrow: max 33 BCBC 1 Jan; good numbers on CBC's.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: 3 reports TIOG & OTSE; 1 Norwich CHEN 11 Dec; rare in winter.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 393 OwCBC 30 Dec.

Snow Bunting: max 150 Plymouth Dec-Feb; 150 Preble CORT 8 Jan (MY).

N. Cardinal: max 185 BCBC 1 Jan; fairly well established even at higher elevations.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 14 W. Burlington OSTE 26 Feb; few northbound migrant flocks late Feb; 8 SCBC 17 Dec; few wintered in Region.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: 1 Scott CORT 17 Dec; 1 BROO 6 Dec.

Com. Grackle: singles wintered in area; few returning migrants late Feb; 5 OwCBC 30 Dec.

Brown-headed Cowbird: few wintered in area; few returning migrants late Feb; few on 4 of 5 Reg CBC's.

Purple Finch: max 7 BCBC 1 Jan; only a few scattered here and there, typical of most years.

House Finch: max 386 BCBC 1 Jan.

Red Crossbill: 1 Pharsalia late Feb, only report; nesting birds from past 2 year's mostly departed (MY).

White-winged Crossbill: 25 Greene CHEN 28 Feb (MT), only report.

Com. Redpoll: max ~100 W. Burlington OTSE mid Jan-thru; 15 Bing 17 Jan; ~10 Virgil thru Feb; numbers of scattered reports of 1-5 throughout Region Jan-Feb.

Pine Siskin: max 83 OnCBC 17 Dec (LB); few larger flocks of 15-40 present; widespread small numbers of 2-10 throughout Region; more widespread than redpolls and slightly higher numbers than usual.

Evening Grosbeak: max 20-50 McDonough Dec-Feb; ~20 on both OnCBC & SCBC; small flock of 6-12 Truxton CORT Dec thru (MY); 10-30 Northwest Corners CHEN Dec-Feb; small flocks of 5-10 scattered DELA & TIOG Dec-Jan (AM); best showing since winter 2001-02, but nothing compared to 1970-1990.

Am. Goldfinch: max 300 CCBC 17 Dec; average numbers thru.

House Sparrow: max 582 BCBC 1 Jan.

REGION 5 - ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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The first three weeks of December were very cold, but then temperatures moderated to bring the warmest January on record at Syracuse. That pattern held into early February. The December average temperature was 26.2°F, 2.4° below normal, with 2.56 inches of precipitation, 0.56 inches below normal, and 53 inches of snow. In January the temperature averaged 33.4°, 10.7° above normal, and there was 2.96" of precipitation, 0.36" above the average. There was only 12.1" of snow for the month. The February average temperature of 27.2° was 2.7° warmer than normal, and there was 1.66" of precipitation, 0.46 inches below normal, with 34.8" of snow.

Large areas of ice developed on Oneida Lake by mid December, but significant open water remained through January, and the lake did not freeze solidly until the last week of February. Oswego Harbor and the Lake Ontario shore line were open much of the winter. Almost no birds returned to the area during the record January warmth, but by the end of the month wetlands and ponds were beginning to open and the local Canada Geese were establishing territory, if only temporarily. The last three days of February were the coldest of that month refreezing most open water and creating a large ice shelf along Lake Ontario. There was very little snow on the ground for most of the period, and even in northern Herkimer County Gary Lee recorded a maximum depth of only 14 inches. Sustained winds of 40-50 MPH on February 17 damaged many unoccupied Great Blue Heron and Red-tail Hawk nests, but no one reported that Great Horned Owls on nests had been disturbed.

Observers reported that food stocks over most of the Region were in very low supply. Brenda Best said, "Locally here, food is located sporadically. Some conifers have cones, but most don't. Same with catkins on birches. Berries and fruit are almost nonexistent (no waxwings, few starlings except at the landfill...) , even Tree Sparrows and Juncos seem hard to find." Gary Lee said, "Very little winter food, berries practically nonexistent, poor cone crop."

Snow Goose and Tundra Swan returned in February although some of them had wintered close by. There were several Brant reports in December. Trumpeter Swans spent time at their usual location in Fair Haven, and one wing-tagged Trumpeter wintered in Oswego County. There was more open water than usual during the mild January, and waterfowl took advantage of that in different ways. Canada Geese moved into wetlands that are usually locked up, and Common Mergansers that winter on Onondaga Lake stayed on Oneida Lake for a long time. Waterfowl concentrations rarely developed on Lake Ontario, and counts for most species were low. Three Northern Shovelers in January were the most unusual sighting among the waterfowl.

Red-throated and Common Loons departed in January. Great Blue Herons were found around Onondaga Lake through the season, but they were uncommon elsewhere. There were two Turkey Vulture reports from the southwestern part

of the Region, some distance from the eastern Syracuse suburbs where they are expected. Bald Eagle was common along the open waterways, Northern Harrier was scarce after the snowy December, and accipiters were seen in good numbers. We had two Red-shouldered Hawks this winter. Rough-legged Hawks were scattered, with the only concentration in Verona. Merlin reports were up, and Peregrine Falcons stayed in Utica and Syracuse.

Ring-necked Pheasant numbers were up, but they are still considered to be put-and-take. Killdeer, Dunlin, and Purple Sandpiper all lingered into December. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were both common for much of the season and especially so in February. Lesser Black-backed Gull is still uncommon in the Region, so two in December and up to three in February may be a sign of increasing numbers. There was only a single Bonaparte's Gull seen after December. Still a common winter bird, Great Black-backed Gull numbers seemed to be low. Snowy Owls were numerous, with reports from traditional areas such as Fairfield, Oswego Harbor, and the Syracuse airport. There were also four in Stockbridge, one hilltop east of the Fenner site where they have been found in some recent years. Most Short-eared Owls left during the snowy December. There was one report of N. Saw-whet Owl and none for Long-eared Owl.

Northern Shrike was somewhat common in December, but it was much harder to find after the onset of warm weather in January. Two flocks of Fish Crows in Syracuse may have been the same birds, but their numbers are expanding. Half-hardy species included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark. Several Winter Wrens and a Gray Catbird were still present at the end of February. There was also a late American Pipit, a species generally not accorded half-hardy status here.

Reports of Carolina Wren and Northern Mockingbird came from established areas, where the population seems to be at least stable if not on the rise. Tufted Titmice wintered in Old Forge, a good year to try, and they continue to push their limits in the Region. American Robins usually winter in the southern parts of the region where snowfall is less, but a late January flock in Morgan Hill State Forest at 1540 feet was well above where they are normally found. There were no warblers for the season. Sparrow numbers were generally low, as they were able to roam far and wide due to the lack of snow. We had no Rusty Blackbirds and just two Common Grackles.

Finches were mixed. There were no Red Crossbills, only one Pine Grosbeak, and just a few Purple Finches over the winter. Evening Grosbeak numbers were higher than in most recent years although nothing reminiscent of 1980's numbers. Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins persisted at some feeders but were sporadic at most. Both species were only infrequently found away from feeders. The White-winged Crossbills that found their way to the Region used what was available, and there were two examples of birds away from the typical forests: a pair of crossbills at Sylvan Beach were utilizing a few spruces laden with cones in an otherwise deciduous woods and scrubland area and a flock in Herkimer that spent a few days in a cone-laden spruce grove on a college

campus with only a mature climax woodland nearby.

There was a total of 124 species seen for the season. Less common species included: Northern Shoveler, Red-shouldered Hawk, Purple Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull; Fish Crow, Gray Catbird, American Pipit, Bohemian Waxwing, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and White-winged Crossbill.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bvllc – Baldwinsville; CM - Clay Marsh; DeR – DeRuyter; FH - Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay, and vicinity; Geo – Georgetown; HIWMA – Howland Island WMA; LOL - Lake Ontario Littoral; MCL – Madison County Landfill, T Lincoln; OneiL - Oneida Lake; OnonL - Onondaga Lake; SCH – T Schroepfel; SFNS - Spring Farm Nature Sanctuary, Kirkland; Skan – Skaneateles; SSSP - Selkirk Shores State Park; SVB – Syvan & Verona Beaches; Syr – Syracuse; TRWMA - Three Rivers WMA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 300 Bridgewater 3 Dec; 70 SFNS 4 Feb, early return; 200 Van Buren 22 Feb; 250 Skan 23 Feb; 100 SSSP 27 Feb.
Brant: 40 Third L 3 Dec, unusual location; last Oswego 15 Dec.
Canada Goose: last large-scale migration 9 Dec.
Mute Swan: max 7 FH to 13 Jan.
Trumpeter Swan: max 3 FH 7-15 Jan; wing tag 807 wintered LOL.
Tundra Swan: max 32 FH 5 Dec; 25 Bridgeport 26 Dec; 4 OnonL 19 Feb, arr or had they even left?
Wood Duck: last Fulton 15 Dec; arr Fulton Feb 24.
Gadwall: max 9 FH 7 Jan.
Am. Wigeon: arr 4 FH 11 Feb.
Am. Black Duck: max 55 Oneida 15 Jan.
N. Shoveler: 3 Brewerton 9 Jan.

N. Pintail: m Seneca R after 11 Dec.
Green-winged Teal: 2 Syr to 30 Jan; 2 W Eaton 16 Jan.
Canvasback: 1 OnonL after 12 Jan; max 3 OnonL 11 Feb.
Redhead: max 10 DeR 10 Dec; 6 Otisco L 2 Jan.
Ring-necked Duck: max 50 DeR 10 Dec; 15 Otisco L 2 Jan.
Greater Scaup: max 250 Oswego 6 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: 8 FH 20 Feb.
White-winged Scoter: max 26 Mexico 8 Jan.
Black Scoter: 1 Oswego to 24 Dec.
Long-tailed Duck: max 170 LOL 8 Jan.
Bufflehead: max 28 FH 7 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: max 700 FH 19 Feb.
Hooded Merganser: max 60 OneiL 6 Dec; 45 Otisco L 2 Jan; 14 FH 20 Feb.
Com. Merganser: max 2400 OneiL 9 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 190
Oswego 24 Dec.
Ring-necked Pheasant: max 10 SVB
1 Jan.
Wild Turkey: max 177 DeR 3 Jan.
Red-throated Loon: OnonL 10 Dec; last
Oswego 10 Jan.
Com. Loon: max 6 Oswego 24 Jan; last
Oswego 22 Jan.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 6 OnonL 17
Dec; 1 Fulton thru.
Horned Grebe: max 23 Mexico 8 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: OnonL 28 Dec;
Oswego 21 Feb.
Double-crested Cormorant: 35 Oswego
Harbor end of season.
Great Blue Heron: max 11 OnonL
17 Dec.
Turkey Vulture: Fulton 12 Jan; Camillus
2 Feb; Fayetteville 23 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 2-3 OnonL thru;
6 Redfield 23 Feb; to 5 per day
LOL.
N. Harrier: 3 Jan-Feb reports.
N. Goshawk: 5 reports.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Utica 17 Dec
(VB); Hannibal 18 Dec (JB).
Rough-legged Hawk: max 9 Verona
1 Jan.
Am. Kestrel: max 8 Oneida CBC 1 Jan.
Merlin: reports from 7 locations.
Peregrine Falcon: FH 5 Dec; Syr &
Utica thru.
Am. Coot: max 6 FH 13 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: FH 5 Dec.
Dunlin: FH 5 Dec.
Bonaparte's Gull: last FH 21 Jan.
Ring-billed Gull: max 4200 Oswego
19 Feb.
Herring Gull: max 900 Oswego R 24
Dec.
Iceland Gull: 2-3 per day Oswego R
after 17 Dec; 3 MCL 2 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 2 Oswego R
15-24 Dec; 1 Bville after 21 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: 1-2 per day Oswego R
& MCL.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 220
Oswego R 18 Dec.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Great Horned Owl: 16 Oneida-
Durhamville 1 Jan, very high number.
Snowy Owl: max 4 Syr airport 10 Dec &
Stockbridge 2 Jan; reports of 7 others at
5 locations.
Barred Owl: 1 Skan after 2 Jan, unusual
site.
Short-eared Owl: Phoenix 19 Dec; last
Skan 2 Jan.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Skan after 23 Feb.
Belted Kingfisher: OnonL thru.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 6 Fulton 18
Dec, increase in that area.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: last Pratt's
Falls 3 Jan.
Black-backed Woodpecker: Old Forge
3 Jan.
N. Flicker: low-average CBC numbers.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 18+ individuals for season,
only 5 after 8 Jan.
Blue Jay: max 232 Skan CBC 2 Jan.
Am. Crow: max 5218 Syr 17 Dec.
Fish Crow: 9 Onondaga Park Syr 17
Dec;
max 13 OnonL 4 Feb.
Com. Raven: max 16 Big Moose 15
Feb; reports from MCL, Oswego and
TRWMA.
Horned Lark: max 100 Bridgewater 6
Jan.
Tufted Titmouse: 3 Old Forge thru,
unexpected; 18 Rome CBC 17 Dec, new
high.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 11 Utica
South Woods 17 Dec.
Carolina Wren: persists at established
sites.
Winter Wren: max 3 CM 18 Dec; CM 2
Jan; Fulton 10 Jan; 2 Skan thru.
E. Bluebird: max 20 Green L SP 3 Jan.
Hermit Thrush: SFNS 1 Dec; Utica 2
Dec, only reports.
Am. Robin: 55 Fabius 29 Jan, where
unusual; 200 SFNS 21 Feb, local origin;
40 Oneida 26 Feb, possible migrants.
Gray Catbird: 2 Fayetteville 17 Dec;
Utica Marsh thru.

N. Mockingbird: Stockbridge 7 Jan.
Am. Pipit: Elbridge 16 Dec (MV), late.
Bohemian Waxwing: 2 Old Forge
28 Dec (GL).
Cedar Waxwing: max 150 SFNS 16 Feb;
50 Fayetteville 22 Feb.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: SCH 22 Feb.
Am. Tree Sparrow: one flock of 78 Skan
2 Jan, high; mostly less than 10 per day
and scarce at feeders.
Field Sparrow: Bville 24 Dec; Oneida 1
Jan.
Fox Sparrow: New Woodstock CBC 18
Dec; Pulaski 29 Dec - 8 Jan.
Song Sparrow: max 4 Sterling 10 Dec.
Swamp Sparrow: 2 Van Buren 6 Dec; 2
Syr CBC 17 Dec; last HIWMA 7 Jan.
White-throated Sparrow: max 5-10 per
day, generally scarce.
White-crowned Sparrow: imm T
Onondaga 2 Jan.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 30 Waterville 19
Dec.

Lapland Longspur: max 3 Bridgewater
1-4 Feb; 7-8 other individuals.
Snow Bunting: many lingered well into
Jan; max 1250 Stockbridge 6 Jan.
N. Cardinal: 2 Old Forge to 21 Dec.
Red-winged Blackbird: 15 Skan 4 Dec;
2 W Winfield 2 Feb; arr 30 Green L SP
26 Feb.
E. Meadowlark: W Winfield 10 Jan.
Com. Grackle: Rome 17 Dec; Fabius 19
Feb, early migrant?
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 Skan
4 Dec.
Pine Grosbeak: Geo 22 Jan, only report.
Purple Finch: 2 Fulton 8 Dec.
House Finch: max 100 Hannibal 26 Dec.
White-winged Crossbill: 2 SVB 1 Jan;
30 Herkimer 21-22 Jan; 30 SSSP after
28 Jan.
Com. Redpoll: to 40/day mostly N of
Oneil after 1 Jan.
Pine Siskin: max 35 Hastings 24 Jan.
Evening Grosbeak: max 75 Boylston 12
Jan; small flocks Tug Hill and southern
highlands.

REGION 6 - ST. LAWRENCE

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Weather data for Watertown indicate a winter that was 3.3° F warmer than average, with 1 inch of precipitation more than is the norm. But these statistics don't tell the whole story. The season began during a cold snap that ended two days before Christmas. As a result, December was 2.1° colder than normal, and by Christmas a deep snow pack covered much of the Region, especially near Lake Ontario. This cold stretch was followed by five weeks of remarkably mild weather, with temperatures rising as high as 57° during mid-January. The mean temperature in Watertown for January was 11.1° warmer than average, and by the end of the month most of the Region, including parts of the reliably snowy Tug Hill, had no snow cover remaining. February alternated between very cold and relatively mild. The coldest night of the season, -25° in Watertown, was February 27, but mean temperatures for the month were within half a degree of normal.

Waterfowl departed the interior portions of Region 6 during the cold snap that coincided with the beginning of the reporting season. As a result, few ducks and geese were reported away from Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. A Cackling Goose at Upper and Lower Lakes WMA in early December was presumably one of two birds first reported in November. Other waterfowl highlights included a raft of 600 Redhead on the St. Lawrence River found on the DEC waterfowl count and 5000 Long-tailed Ducks on Lake Ontario in mid-February. Nick Leone noted that this was the first winter in years he was unable to find a Barrow's Goldeneye. Other waterbirds and waders of note included a single Red-necked Grebe on the St. Lawrence River in January and several Great Blue Herons observed as late as mid-January.

The heavy snow and cold temperatures during the first half of December appeared to push out many raptors, especially in Lewis and western Jefferson Counties where the heaviest lake effect snow fell. Raptors were reported in good numbers at the beginning of December, but many had left the area by the middle of the month and were reported in lower than normal numbers through the middle of January. Northern Harrier and American Kestrel were virtually absent from Jefferson County during this period, although small numbers of kestrels wintered in northern St. Lawrence County where snowfall was somewhat lower. As the snow pack disappeared in January, Northern Harriers and Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks filtered back into the Region, suggesting that they had not moved very far in response to the snow.

Only two Snowy Owls were reported in Jefferson County before mid-January, but a late winter invasion occurred in the traditional raptor wintering areas in the northern part of the county. Snowy Owl numbers peaked during the last two weeks of February, when at least 9 owls were present in Lyme and Cape Vincent. Other notable owl reports included a **Northern Hawk-Owl** found in the Adirondacks by Peter O'Shea, but which could not be relocated, and Short-eared Owls in Cape Vincent, Potsdam, and Waddington.

Participants on the Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count found a good assortment of gulls, including 3 Iceland Gulls, 7 Glaucous Gulls, and 1 **Black-legged Kittiwake**. The kittiwake was the fourth record for this Christmas Bird Count. Single Iceland and Glaucous gulls were reported from below the Moses-Saunders Dam through mid-February, but gull numbers generally declined as the season progressed.

The picture was mixed with respect to half-hardies. Several reporters felt that half-hardies were present in unusually low numbers, especially in western Jefferson and Lewis counties, where the heaviest snow fell. In St. Lawrence County, Gray Catbirds were found in Massena and Potsdam, Eastern Bluebirds in Canton, and American Robins in several locations along the St. Lawrence River. Northern Flickers were reported in higher than usual numbers throughout the Region. One observer noted that this was the first winter in many years that he found no Song or White-throated sparrows.

Bohemian Waxwings and several species of northern finches put on a good show this winter. Several flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were reported from the Canton and Potsdam area, where sightings became increasingly frequent as the season progressed. Joan Collins found evidence that Red Crossbills were

nesting in a red pine stand in the northern Adirondacks. Common Redpolls were widespread in generally modest numbers, although Joan Collins had large flocks at her feeders, which also hosted **Hoary Redpolls** twice. I received no other reports of Hoary Redpolls this winter. Pine Grosbeaks were observed on the Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count and in Canton during mid-January but otherwise were not reported. Evening Grosbeaks were widespread and, at least on the Tug Hill, more numerous than in recent years.

The ongoing increases in the populations of Bald Eagle and Common Raven were noted by many observers this winter. Daily totals of 5-10 Bald Eagles have become expected along the St. Lawrence River, and this species can now be found virtually anywhere in the Region during winter. The spread of ravens into the Lake Ontario plains and St. Lawrence Valley continues as well, as evidenced by the count record 4 ravens on the Watertown Christmas Bird Count and a group of 12 along the St. Lawrence River. Not many years ago any ravens at these locations would have been considered extremely unusual.

I received reports of 93 species for the winter period. Highlights included the late season Snowy Owl incursion, the Northern Hawk-Owl, Black-legged Kittiwake, Bohemian Waxwings, and good finch numbers. Disappointments included generally poor waterfowl numbers, with some exceptions; low numbers of raptors for much of the winter; and the absence of many half-hardies from much of the Region.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeff Bolsinger, Dick & Marion Brouse, Carol Cady, Joan Collins, Bruce DiLabio, Harold Ellingsen, Jr., Lee Harper, Bob & Ellie Long, Peter O'Shea, Chris Reidy, Gerry Smith, Eve Sweatman, Bob & June Walker, MaryBeth Warburton, Tom & Eileen Wheeler, Matt Young.

ABBREVIATIONS

CV - Cape Vincent, JEFF; FD - Fort Drum Military Reservation; KC - Kelsey Creek, T Watertown, JEFF; MCCBC - Massena-Cornwall Christmas Bird Count; PilPt - Pillar Pt, T Brownville, JEFF; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park, T Massena, STLA; SLR - Saint Lawrence River; ULLWMA—Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton, STLA; WCBC - Watertown Christmas Bird Count.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES
CACKLING GOOSE: 1 ULLWMA
3 Dec, where 2 found in Nov (JB).
Tundra Swan: max 156 Sacketts Harbor
15 Jan.
Am. Black Duck: 194 PilPt 2 Dec;
90 RMSP 1 Jan.
Mallard: max 900 RMSP 1 Jan.
N. Pintail: max 5 SLR Massena 11 Feb.

Redhead: max 600 SLR CV 15 Jan.
Greater Scaup: 1500 PilPt 13 Jan.
Long-tailed Duck: max 5000 Stony
Point mid-Feb.
Bufflehead: 68 PilPt 2 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1300
SLR between Cape Vincent and
Alexandria Bay 27 Jan.
Com. Merganser: max 1000 RMSP 7 Jan.

Red-necked Grebe: Cedar Pt. SP 27 Jan (JB), only report.
Double-crested Cormorant: 2-5 per day SLR Massena thru.
Great Blue Heron: 6 reports late Dec and Jan; last ULLWMA 16 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 3-5+ per day SLR; lower numbers reported throughout Region.
N. Harrier: absent from most of Region Dec and early Jan; scattered singles late Jan; 2-4 per day late Feb.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: ave numbers.
Cooper's Hawk: ave numbers.
N. Goshawk: 2 reports Tug Hill.
Red-tailed Hawk: 10-12 per day N Jeff Dec, declining to 6 per day Jan and Feb; 3-6 per day rest of Region thru; max 33 WCBC, unusually high compared with rest of Region.
Rough-legged Hawk: 2-5 per day St. Lawrence Valley; 10-20 per day N Jeff thru mid-Jan, increased Feb.
Am. Kestrel: only 2 reports STLA; none Jeff after late Dec.
E. Screech Owl: 1 dead on road Barnes Corners Dec.
Snowy Owl: 2 rep N JEFF Dec and Jan; 4 arr N JEFF 9-11 Feb; up to 9 by late Feb.
N. HAWK OWL: Piercefield 14 Feb (PO), could not be relocated.
Short-eared Owl: 1-3 per day CV Jeff thru; Potsdam 10 Jan; 2 Waddington early Jan.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Colton 4 Feb.
Herring Gull: max 2056 MCCBC.
Iceland Gull: max 3 MCCBC 27 Dec; ad SLR Massena 15 Dec.
Glaucous Gull: max 7 MCCBC 27 Dec; at least 1 Moses-Saunders Dam thru early Feb.
Great Black-backed Gull: max 489 MCCBC.
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 1 MCCBC 27 Dec (BD).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: max 638 WCBC, high.
Belted Kingfisher: KC 14-18 Jan.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: widespread reports from E JEFF.
N. Flicker: 10+ reports; max 4 WCBC.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 1-4 per day in open areas throughout Region; declined JEFF but not STLA after Dec.
Gray Jay: 2 near Sevey's Corners 28 Jan.
Com. Raven: 4 WCBC, high; 12 Blind Bay SLR mid-winter.
Horned Lark: widespread reports of 5-50 from open country throughout Region thru.
E. Bluebird: max 4 MCCBC 27 Dec; Potsdam 21 Dec; 2 ULLWMA 8 Jan.
Am. Robin: mid-winter max 12 RMSP 14 Jan.
GRAY CATBIRD: MCCBC 27 Dec (BD); Potsdam 2-4 Jan.
Bohemian Waxwing: numerous reports of 30-100+ STLA 16 Dec thru.
Cedar Waxwing: max 20 RMPD 14 Jan.

WARBLERS

No reports.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Savannah Sparrow: PtPen 11 Feb.
Dark-eyed Junco: 10-15 KC thru.
Snow Bunting: max 500 FD 10 Jan.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr ULLWMA 25 Feb.
Pine Grosbeak: 16 MCCBC; 5 Canton 16 Jan; 1 Canton 22 Jan; only reports.
RED CROSSBILL: 12-15 Colton 11 Feb thru, nesting suspected (JC); 4 Barnes Corners early Feb (GS).
Com. Redpoll: numerous reports; max 350 at Potsdam feeder 23 Jan (JC).
HOARY REDPOLL: 2 each at Potsdam feeder on 26 Dec, 18 Jan (JC), only reports.
Pine Siskin: KC 13, 20 Dec.
Evening Grosbeak: scattered reports of 5-12 per day Tug Hill; max 75 Barnes Corners Jan and Feb.

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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The winter of 05-06 was mild overall with little snow cover. December was the coldest month of the season, with an average daily temperature of 26.7°F at Albany International Airport. Total precipitation was average, however frequent. Some form of rain or snow fell on 20 days in December. January was uncharacteristically mild, 9.3 degrees warmer than average. Twenty-five days rose above freezing. The highest temperature reached 61° F on 21 January. Precipitation was 2.04 inches greater than average, and most occurred as rain. February continued mild, with six days exhibiting temperatures greater than 50° F.

Warm weather equals open water in our part of the state, and Christmas Bird Counts across the Region tallied above average number of ducks. Most Regional CBCs recorded high species diversity on the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, except for Southern Rensselaer CBC, which was shrouded in dense fog on 26 December. Numerous Great Blue Herons and a single **American Bittern** on the Schenectady CBC were products of suitable foraging conditions for waders.

White-winged gulls have increased in frequency and abundance over the last decade in Region 8, and multiple individuals of Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls now appear as regular and annual visitors regardless of prevailing weather conditions. Strong gathering areas include the Mohawk in Schenectady County, the Federal Dam at Troy, and especially the shallows near Cocksackie and Coeymans on the Hudson's estuary. Causes for this influx are poorly known, but it is interesting to see a broad range of age classes this season.

Most years pass without any sightings of Golden Eagle, so it's notable that observers found four this winter. The birds each appear to be different individuals, 3 adults and 1 immature, and are apparently not associated with the population at Stissing Mountain in Dutchess County. Three Long-eared Owls were discovered on 30 December roosting near Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar, Albany County. Unfortunately, it is believed that all three were killed by a resident Northern Goshawk. When Bob Yunick visited the grove on 6 January he found two piles of feathers near the owls' roosting spot. A month later, he found a third pile of feathers. Flight feathers were collected and brought to the NYS Museum in Albany to confirm that they were from separate owls, apparently one adult long-eared and two immatures. On 3 January one of the owls was observed being harassed by a large raptor, likely one of the resident goshawks.

Short-eared Owls appeared in typical numbers (1-6) at local well-known wintering grounds in Greene, Montgomery, and Washington counties. Thomas Salo reported an interesting anecdote, however, of an adult emerging at dusk from a farm shed on 28 February. The owner of the property claimed that the

birds were present on the land in summer, but he may have been erroneously referring to Northern Harriers that are known to nest there. I have found no other reports of Short-eared Owls roosting in man-made structures in Region 8.

Larry Federman photographed a **Boreal Chickadee** which visited his feeder in Palenville, Greene County on 16 January. This bird represents the second record for Greene County. The last appeared in 1975 during a particularly heavy invasion year. In 1975, Boreal Chickadees appeared in Columbia, Rensselaer, and Saratoga counties. Outside of the scarce reports from the Adirondacks in Warren County, Boreal Chickadees have not been reported in the southern portion of the Region since the mid-1980s.

The mild winter also delivered some half-hardies, particularly on Regional CBCs. **Gray Catbirds** were well-represented this year, with four sightings in December. The Bolton Landing CBC reported a **House Wren**, although I have not reviewed details and I can't rule out the possibility that it was a Winter Wren. Birders from the Alan Devoe Bird Club provided good details for an **Eastern Towhee**, which is particularly uncommon in Region 8 in December, despite many winter reports of this species downstate. Sparrows were numerous and diverse this winter, with higher than expected numbers of Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, and Song Sparrows. Although many of these species pop up annually on CBCs, it is uncommon to see them tarry into January and February.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Larry Alden, Bill Cook, Jane Graves, Rich Guthrie, Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Geoff LeBaron, Bill Lee, Andrew Mason, Joyce Miller, Roger Miller, Gail & Rich Nord, Barbara Putnam, Will Raup, Thomas Salo, Alison Van Keuren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

ALB – T Albany ALBA; AUS – T Austerlitz COLU; CAT – T Catskill GREE; CHA – T Chatham COLU; COX – T Coxsackie GREE; FtE – T Fort Edward WASH; HR – Hudson Ri; JL – Jenny Lake SARA; MR – Mohawk Ri; NBA – T New Baltimore GREE; NOR – T Northumberland WASH; TR – Tomhannock Res. RENS; SCH – T Schenectady SCHE; TRO – T Troy RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry NHP SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 3000 TR 4-8 Dec;
2790 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec.

Wood Duck: 2 ALB CBC 18 Dec;
Collins L SCHE 15 Jan.

Gadwall: 6 VF 3 Dec; 4 ALB CBC
18 Dec.

Am. Wigeon: 12 ALB CBC 18 Dec.

N. Shoveler: 2 VF 3 Dec, only report.

N. Pintail: CHA CBC 17 Dec, only report.
Green-winged Teal: SCH CBC 17 Dec;
Salem CBC 19 Dec.

Canvasback: 70 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec;
TRO CBC 31 Dec; max 200 HR at West
Camp 21 Jan.

Redhead: 5 Saratoga L 1 Dec; 6 ALB
CBC 18 Dec; Salem CBC 19 Dec; TRO
CBC 31 Dec.

Ring-necked Duck: max 40 Saratoga L 1 Dec; arr AUS 28 Feb.

Greater Scaup: TRO CBC 31 Dec, only report.

White-winged Scoter: MR at Fultonville 15 Jan (RM), uncommon mid-winter.

Long-tailed Duck: ALB CBC 18 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 350 TR 8 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: TR 4 Dec;

Ruddy Duck: 10 TR 4 Dec; CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 10 ALB CBC 18 Dec.

Com. Loon: Saratoga L 1 Dec; Bolton Landing CBC 17 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec; HR at Ft. Miller WASH 18 Dec; HR at Germantown COLU 8 Jan.

Pied-billed Grebe: Hudson Falls CBC 18 Dec; HR at Troy Federal Dam 20 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: ALB CBC 18 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: 1 TR 8 Dec.

AM. BITTERN: SCH CBC 17 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: Gansevoort SARA 5 Feb; Ravena ALBA 22 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Harrier: max 9 COX area 6 Jan.

N. Goshawk: harassing long-eared owl Five Rivers ALBA 5 Jan, remains of owls found the next week.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 2 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 2 SCH CBC 17 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec.

Rough-legged Hawk: 3 Rensselaerville RENS 11 Dec; FtE 15 Dec; 4 NOR 18 Dec; Cox 20 Dec; max 10 NOR 20 Jan.

Golden Eagle: AUS 9 Dec; CHA CBC 17 Dec; 1 Salem RENS 17-19 Dec; imm Fiver Rivers ALBA 4 Feb.

Merlin: 2 SCH CBC 17 Dec; S RENS CBC 26 Dec; TRO CBC 31 Dec; Slingerlands ALBA 6 Jan; Easton WASH 12 Jan.

Peregrine Falcon: dozens of single reports Dec thru.

Am. Coot: Chatham COLU 11 Dec-1 Jan; 2 Salem CBC 19 Dec.

Iceland Gull: 3 imm COX boat launch 4 Dec; ad COX 13 Dec; 3 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec; S RENS CBC 26 Dec; 2 yr MR 29 Dec; 2 TRO CBC 31 Dec; imm Coeyman's Landing ALBA 9 Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: imm COX boat launch 4 Dec; CHA CBC 17 Dec; ad MR 29 DEC; 2 TRO CBC 31 Dec; ad Coeymans ALBA 22 Jan.

Glaucous Gull: 2 CHA CBC 17 Dec; ad MR 29 Dec; 2 TRO CBC 31 Dec; imm COX boat launch 6 Jan; 2yr MR SARA 15 Jan; 2 Crescent SCHE 21 Jan.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: 3 Five Rivers ALBA 30 Dec-3 Jan, *intro*; 2 Black Creek Marsh ALBA 29 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: 2 FtE 4 Dec thru; 2 Plank Rd COX 13-14 Dec; 3 NOR 18 Dec, max 6 Ripple Corners Minden MONT 28 Feb; 6 other reports of singles.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Berne ALBA 22 Feb.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 8 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; CHA CBC 17 Dec; Saratoga Springs CBC 17 Dec; 1 SCH CBC 17 Dec; 3 ALB CBC 18 Dec; 2 TRO CBC 31 Dec; 4 mile pt. GREE 8 Jan; NBA 19 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: Rensselaerville RENS 13 Dec-27 Jan; Saratoga Springs CBC 17 Dec; SCH CBC 17 Dec; Polo Club SARA 24 Dec; 2 FtE 2 Jan; Duaneburg SCHE 10 Jan.

Fish Crow: 2 SCH CBC 17 Dec; 2 Coeymans ALBA 21 Jan; 6 Peebles I SARA 22 Jan.

Horned Lark : max 500 FtE 18 Dec.

BOREAL CHICKADEE: Palenville GREE 16 Jan, 1st Greene County record, photographed, NYSARC report encouraged, LF.

Carolina Wren: max 14 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec.

HOUSE WREN: Bolton Landing CBC WARR 17 Dec.

Winter Wren: 1 New Salem ALBA 12 Dec; 2 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 3 SCH CBC 17 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec;

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 11 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec, several reports of singles.

Hermit Thrush: Ramshorn GREE 4 Dec; 4 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 2 ALB CBC 18 Dec; S RENS CBC 26 Dec; TRO

CBC 31 Dec; VF 20 Feb.
GRAY CATBIRD: 1 NBA 13 Dec;
CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; CHA CBC 17
Dec; TRO CBC 31 Dec; high number of
reports for winter.
Am. Pipit: CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec;
TRO CBC 31 Dec.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 Athens
GREE 8 Jan, only report, scarce for the
second consecutive winter.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. TOWHEE: AUS 12-20 Dec.
Chipping Sparrow: 4 CAT-COX
CBC 14 Dec.
Field Sparrow: CHA CBC 17 Dec;
SCH CBC 17 Dec; ALB CBC 18 Dec;
Livingston COLU 23 Dec.
Savannah Sparrow: 2 COX 13 Dec;
3 CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; 4 Saratoga
Springs CBC 17 Dec; FtE 18 Dec; TRO
CBC 31 Dec; Livingston COLU 4-10 Jan.
Fox Sparrow: Claverack COLU 4-10
Dec; CAT-COX CBC 14 Dec; Hillsdale
COLU 19 Feb, unusual in Feb.

White-crowned Sparrow: Port of RENS
18 Jan.

Lapland Longspur: Easton WASH 18
Dec; 2 NOR 26 Jan.

Snow Bunting: 13 COX 13-14 Dec; max
150 FtE 20 Dec; 75 NOR 25 Jan.

E. Meadowlark: max 7 FtE 15 Dec.

Rusty Blackbird: Copake COLU 4-5
Dec; Gansevoort SARA 16-20 Dec.

Purple Finch: 21 ALB CBC 18 Dec; E.
Greenbush RENS 19 Dec.

White-winged Crossbill: 8 Corinth
SARA 4 Jan.

Com. Redpoll: E. Greenbush RENS 19
Dec; 72 TRO CBC 31 Dec; 100 Burnt
Hills SARA 1 Jan. 35 Livingston COLU
2 Jan; several other reports of flocks <10
birds Dec thru.

Pine Siskin: 8 Partridge Run WMA
ALBA 4 Dec; 12 CAT-COX CBC 14
Dec; scattered reports of flocks
<6 birds thru.

Evening Grosbeak: 8 Partridge Run
WMA ALBA 12 Dec; max 50 Berne
ALBA 20 Dec.

REGION 9 - HUDSON - DELAWARE

Michael Bochnik

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The first three weeks of December were much colder than normal. A deep, deep freeze arrived early on 14 - 15 December, with lows each day in the single digits in Westchester, -5° in Poughkeepsie and -9° in Rock Hill, Sullivan County. Many bodies of water froze early and remained frozen for the first weekend of Christmas Bird Counts. It looked like it was going to be a long, hard, cold winter. But then, the last week of December started a long warm trend that lasted into February. Lakes and ponds started to melt out on the last two weekends of bird counts. December still ended 2.6° colder than normal with slightly above precipitation. January was extremely warm. It was one of the warmest on record. Temperatures were spring-like and the weather acted as so. Spring-like blustery cold fronts hit on the morning of 15 January and the day of 18 January. The passage of these fronts brought high winds with gusts reaching over 50 miles per hour. Many trees were felled. White Plains had only three days of below average temperatures and Poughkeepsie only four. It hit sixty or above in both cities on 18, 21, and 30 January. The month averaged

8 to 9° warmer than normal. Precipitation was above normal, but no real snow fell in most of the Region. As expected, the state waterfowl count saw more open water than in years past. Even small ponds iced out in the southern parts of the Region.

Winter returned with a vengeance as a major snowstorm hit the New York City area on 11, 12 February. Over twenty inches of snow accumulated, mainly in the southeast section of Region 9, east of the Hudson and south of Dutchess County. Westchester County saw 15 to 20 inches, while amounts in Putnam County ranged from 18 inches at Putnam Lake to 24 inches in Brewster. By contrast Poughkeepsie saw only 2 inches.

Despite the storm, February was still dry and warm. Poughkeepsie saw only an inch of rain. Normal is 2.5 inches. Temperatures were 1.3 to 3.3° warmer than normal for the month.

The most interesting bird of the season was a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** found on the first of the year by Chet Vincent. The bird was in a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds ready to go to roost at Thompson Pond. Dutchess County has five previous records of Yellow-headed Blackbird. This is the first since 1989.

Long-tailed Duck made a few appearances inland. The only report of Eurasian Wigeon came from Edith G. Read Sanctuary in Rye. The sanctuary also hosted 2-3 Red-necked Grebes in December, and a Great Egret lingered to mid December. Two Red-necked Grebes were on the Pawling Count.

Merlins made a few appearances this winter. One was found on the Rockland CBC. Two of the four reported from the Bronx-Westchester CBC were in Region 9. In January there was a sighting in Dobbs Ferry on the 25th and another in Pawling the same day.

Dunlin and American Oystercatchers made the Bronx-Westchester Count. John Haas reported seven Iceland Gulls at the Monticello Landfill on 17 December. There were four first winter, one second winter, one third winter, and one adult. Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Glaucous Gulls also made appearances at the land fill. A Lesser Black-backed Gull was found by Chet Vincent in Dutchess in February, representing the second record for the county.

Northern Shrikes made numerous appearances in Sullivan County, but the birds were not reported elsewhere. An unidentified swallow was the highlight of the Bronx-Westchester count. The bird was seen briefly in New Rochelle 26 December, but it failed to cooperate for long enough views to permit identification.

Half-hardies were very evident on the CBC's. Eight of ten count circles had **Gray Catbird** for a Region total of **136**. All counts had **Carolina Wrens** totaling a whopping **500** birds. Three circles had new high counts for Hermit Thrush. Seven Chipping Sparrows were reported on the Rockland count. Two Rose-breasted Grosbeak lingered into December, the first at feeder in Wappinger Falls on 13 December and a second on the Rockland CBC on 18 December. John Haas had a Lapland Longspur in Chester, Sullivan County on 24, 25 January.

Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeaks made numerous appearances in Sullivan County. Only a few redpolls and siskins strayed further south and east.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP-Croton Point Park, EGR-Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, MC - Marshlands Conservancy, NYBW - Bronx-Westchester CBC, NYDC - Dutchess County CBC, NYEO - East Orange County CBC, NYHV - Pawling (Hidden Valley) CBC, NYMT - Monticello CBC, NYPC - Putnam County CBC, NYPE - Peekskill CBC, SGNWR - Shawangunks Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 500 Callicoon 4 Dec; 500 Fishkill 16 Dec.
Canada Goose: 3500 Rudd Pd 5-8 Dec.
Mute Swan: 62 Rockland Lake 15 Jan.
Gadwall: 35 Rockland Lake 15 Jan.
Eurasian Wigeon: EGR 29 Jan, 20 Feb (TBu).
Am. Black Duck: 348 Rio Res 4 Dec.
Canvasback: 800 Staatsburg 15 Jan; 17 EGR 24 Feb.
Redhead: 11 Rockland Lake 2, 5, 15 Jan.
Ring-necked Duck: 30 Rudd Pd 2 Dec; 60 Sylvan Lake 5 Dec; 3 Piermont Pier 15 Jan ; 32 Lake Walton 8 Feb.
Greater Scaup: 4000 EGR 12 Dec.
Lesser Scaup: 250 EGR 25 Jan; 500 EGR 18 Feb.
Surf Scoter: 2 EGR 25 Feb.
White-winged Scoter: 2 Rye 26 Dec; EGR 1 Feb.
Long-tailed Duck: 2 Redwing Park, Beekman 3 Dec (B&AM); Lake De Forest 16 Jan (JWo); NYDC 17 Dec; count week NYEO 17 Dec; 60 EGR 23 Feb.
Com. Goldeneye: 2000 Bristol Beach
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State Park 15 Jan.
Com. Merganser: 3645 NYHV 1 Jan; 310 Lake Tappan 15 Jan; 510 Lake De Forest 15 Jan.
Ruddy Duck: 500 Piermont Pier 13 Jan.
Wild Turkey: 214 NYDC 17 Dec.
Red-throated Loon: 12 EGR 1 Feb.
Horned Grebe: 6 EGR 2 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: 3 Rye 26 Dec; 2 EGR 30 Dec, 6 Jan; 2 NYHV 1 Jan.
N. Gannet: EGR 5,30 Dec; 3 EGR 31 Jan.
Great Blue Heron: 24 EGR 22 Dec.
Great Egret: EGR 12 Dec (TBu).
Black-crowned Night-Heron: EGR 2 Jan.
Black Vulture: 33 NYPE 17 Dec.
Turkey Vulture: 48 NYPE 17 Dec

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 15 Lake Tappan 5 Jan; 14 Neversink Res 15 Jan; 16 DUTC 16 Jan; 26 Croton to Verplanck 19 Feb.
N. Harrier: 6 SGNWR 9 Jan; 4 SGNWR 28 Jan.
N. Goshawk: Parksville 18 Dec; Pawling 1 Jan.

Rough-legged Hawk: Narrowsburg 26 Dec; SGNWR 9 Jan; 2 SGNWR 28 Jan.
Golden Eagle: 1-2 Stissing Mtn 23 Dec, 4-27 Jan, 1,6,24 Feb; Town of Northeast 18 Jan.

Am. Kestrel: Jeffersonville 7 Jan.

Merlin: NYRC 18 Dec; 2 NYBW 26 Dec; Dobbs Ferry 25 Jan (BD); Pawling 25 Jan.

Virginia Rail: 2 MC 26 Dec, 6 Jan.

Am. Coot: 34 Rockland Lake 15 Jan; 100 Sylvan L 22 Jan.

Am. Oystercatcher: 3 Mamaroneck 26 Dec (DB).

Purple Sandpiper: Piermont Pier 4 Dec (CW,VK); 25 EGR 10 Dec.

Dunlin: MC 26 Dec (TBu).

Am. Woodcock: Amenia 23-27 Feb; MC 26 Feb.

Bonaparte's Gull: 8 EGR 27 Dec.

Iceland Gull: Indian Lk, Northeast 5, 6, 8 Dec (DF CV,K&CF); 7 Monticello Landfill 17 Dec; 3 Apollo Plaza, Monticello 24 Dec (LV); Woodbourne 8 Jan (RD); 2 Monticello Landfill 7, 28 Jan (JH).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Monticello Landfill 4, 28 Dec, 7,14 Jan (JH); Hyde Park 26 Feb (CV).

Glaucous Gull: Monticello Landfill 10 Dec (JH).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Long-eared Owl: MC 5 Dec; Pawling 1 Jan; 2 CPP 27-29 Jan Red Hook 14 Feb.

Short-eared Owl: 2 SGNWR 9 Jan.

Red-headed Woodpecker: NYPE17 Dec

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: NYEO 17 Dec; EGR 23, 25 Dec (TBu).

N. Shrike: Geiger Road, Cape Pond 7,21,26 Dec; Davis Rd, Bethel 10,12 Dec; Bashakill 12,13 Dec; Monticello 1 Jan; Westbrookville 2 Jan.

Horned Lark: 200 Chester 25 Jan; 100 Stanford 25 Jan.

swallow, sp: New Rochelle 26 Dec (DP, TBa).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 6 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 7 Jan.

Carolina Wren: 26 NYEO 17 Dec; 46 NYRC 18 Dec; 12 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 7 Jan.

House Wren: NYPE17 Dec.

Marsh Wren: MC 26 Dec.

E. Bluebird: 46 NYMT 28 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: 9 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 7 Jan; 11 NYEO 17 Dec; 24 NYHV 1 Jan.

Gray Catbird: 2 NYEO 17 Dec; 11 NYRC 18 Dec; 2 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 7 Jan.

Brown Thrasher: NYPE17 Dec; NYPC2 Jan.

Am. Pipit: Monticello 3 Dec; NYPE17 Dec; NYRC 18 Dec; EGR 25 Dec; Rye 26 Dec; 6 Chester 25 Jan.

WARBLERS

Yellow-breasted Chat: Hasting-on-Hudson 7 Jan (MB,KJ).

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: 24 Piermont Pier 13 Jan.

Chipping Sparrow: 7 NYRC 18 Dec.
White-throated Sparrow: 200 Esopus Bend Nature Preserve 7 Jan.

White-crowned Sparrow: 3 Sharon Station 6 Dec; 6 NYDC 17 Dec; 5 NYEO 17 Dec; NYRC 18 Dec; Vassar Farm 2 Jan; 3 imm Vassar farm 4 Feb.

Lapland Longspur: Chester 24, 25 Jan (JH).

Snow Bunting: 11 Monticello Landfill 28 Dec (JH); CPP 17 Dec; 5 NYPC2 Jan; 15 SGNWR 9 Jan (JWe).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: at feeder Wappinger Falls 13 Dec (EH,CP); NYRC 18 Dec.

E. Meadowlark: NYPE17 Dec; 3 SGNWR 9,27 Jan.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Thompson Pd 1 Jan, with Red-winged Blackbirds (CV).

Rusty Blackbird: 10 NYDC 17 Dec; NYPE 17 Dec; 44 NYPC2 Jan 13 Amenia 15 Feb.

Com. Redpoll: Claryville 9 Dec; Burlingham 16 Dec; Cape Pond 16 Dec; 3 Livingston Manor 17 Dec; 2 NYPE17

Dec; 36 NYMT 28 Dec; 8 Pawling 1 Jan;
12 Cape Pond 15 Jan; Roscoe 15 Jan; 3
Baryville 15 Jan;
6 Stanford 15.16 Jan; Claryville 23 Jan;
3 Monticello 25,26 Jan; Amenia 1 Feb.
Pine Siskin: Pomona 4-18 Dec; 8 Hazel
10 Dec; 4 NYDC 17 Dec; NYRC 18 Dec;
12 Claryville mid Dec; 4 Pawling 1 Jan;
3 NYPC2 Jan; 4 Thompson pond 4 Jan;
30 Roscoe 15 Jan; Rye 27 Jan; 6 Tomkins
Cove 26 Feb.

Am. Goldfinch: 50 Woodbourne early
Dec.

Evening Grosbeak: 13 Roscoe 4 Dec;
8 Claryville 17 Dec; 67 Neversink
26 Dec; Neversink 7 Jan; 12 Parksville
8,9 Jan; 9 Barryville 15 Jan.

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REGION 10-MARINE

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December was slightly cool and very dry, with a mean temperature of 33.5° F, 2.2° below average, and 2.95" of precipitation, about 2" below average. In contrast, average January temperatures of 37.5° (Islip) and 40.9° (Central Park) were astonishingly warm, 6.6° and 8.8°, respectively, above normal. Precipitation for January was absolutely average at about 4.5". February's temperatures were just about average, 32.3° (-0.1), but precipitation totals of 2.43" were about an inch below average. A major storm 11-12 February dropped 12-24" of snow across the Region, but the snow cover did not persist for long.

The cold weather in the first half of December seemed to concentrate large numbers of half hardies in our Region. Several species, notably Winter Wren and Gray Catbird, were found in record-breaking numbers on the CBCs. Catbird counts of 79 and 74, tallied this year at Montauk and Southern Nassau County, would have defied the comprehension of birders just fifty years ago. During the period 1941-1960, the average totals for this species on these two venerable CBCs were just 1.5 and 2.2 catbirds per year. Similarly, Montauk's 2005 total of 27 Winter Wrens could not have been imagined by the dedicated birders who gleaned just 0.5 birds per year from Montauk's thickets from 1941-60. Nor could Southern Nassau's tally of 21 have been predicted by the mid-20th Century observers who found only 1.2 birds per year there over that same historical period. To put these shifts in perspective, consider the case of American Robin. From historical (1941-1960) averages of just 11 per year at Montauk and 21 per year at Southern Nassau, far below our contemporary tallies of Gray Catbirds, this species has now emerged as one of our most abundant winter landbirds, with individual CBC totals reaching the thousands. Thus, one of yesterday's scarce winter residents has come to dominate our winter landbird community;

several of yesterday's half-hardies have emerged as regular winter residents; and many of today's half-hardies could scarcely have been imagined in winter even a few decades ago, e.g., Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Nashville Warbler, Ovenbird, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Whereas the early December cold snap seemed to concentrate scarce landbirds in our area, the exceptionally mild January undoubtedly allowed many of them to remain and survive here longer than usual. This winter witnessed an Ovenbird as late as 31 December; House Wren, Marsh Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Baltimore Oriole from mid-late January; and February records of Eastern Phoebes, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Palm Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, and Dickcissel.

Landbirds were not the only birds to make news this season. A pelagic trip out of Freeport on 11 February found a very narrow window of ideal weather nestled within the relentless cycle of fair weather winds and northeast storms typical of mid winter. It also found some amazing birds. It is difficult to comprehend now, but for almost a century, **Thick-billed Murre** was considered the most numerous large alcid south of New England. A single bird of this species six miles southeast of Jones Inlet on 11 February was, in fact, the least expected individual alcid seen that day. The explosive expansion of wintering Razorbills south of Cape Cod since ca. 1990 deserves more detailed analysis than space here allows, but suffice it to say, a real generation gap has developed among contemporary observers, between blasé neophytes accustomed to scores or hundreds of Razorbills per season and frost-bitten veterans who recall how difficult it was to find this species locally even twenty years ago. The 11 February trip's tally of 20 Razorbills was considered, by the current standard, very disappointing even though it exceeded the sum total of definite Long Island records known to Griscom in 1923! At least **20 Common Murres** were carefully identified on 11 February, an all-time single-day maximum for New York State. Furthermore most of the nine unidentified murres and some of the 53 unidentified large alcids seen that day were probably referable to this species. As surprising as these numbers seem, they are consistent with recent observations from the shelf waters immediately to our east, i.e. waters south and east of Block Island and the southwest edge of Cox's Ledge, where Common Murres have been carefully documented on many occasions and in comparable numbers over the last ten years or so (*Field Notes of Rhode Island Birds* 357: 5, 383: 7, 395: 10, 408: 8, 417: 26). The lesson emerging from these data is that Common Murres should be sought during February in Long Island shelf waters ca. 10-30 miles offshore over ca. 10-25 fathoms. The total of **1,675** Dovekies recorded that day is by a large margin the all-time offshore single-day maximum for New York State. Historically, it is exceeded only by the spectacular, storm-related wreck of 19 November 1932. The day's fifth species of alcid was perhaps the only one whose tally was more or less in line with expectations; a single **Atlantic Puffin** about 65 miles southeast of Jones Inlet was a fair expectation for birders lucky enough to get themselves there at this time of year.

The total of 2,000 Northern Gannets, almost all adults, was impressive, especially in contrast to the general scarcity of this species in inshore waters

during mid winter. In contrast, just 12 Black-legged Kittiwakes and zero Northern Fulmars were disappointing numbers. Although the foregoing account of this trip is probably too long already, a few more words must be devoted to the most remarkable bird of the day, a gull that by appearance and all analysis to date seems likely to be accepted as the first documented **Western Gull** for the Atlantic Ocean! Frank Gallo called attention to this dark-mantled gull as the ship's captain inspected a wreck about 70 miles southeast of Jones Inlet. The bird was slightly paler than a Great Black-backed Gull and roughly the size of a Herring Gull, ingredients that New York birders are familiar with cooking up into Lesser Black-backed Gulls. But this bird had a white head, a heavy bill, and a darkish iris. Views of the bird in flight revealed broad wings with relatively broad white trailing edges and bright pink feet! As the almost incomprehensible prospect of a Western Gull assembled itself before our eyes, Paul Guris and his crew of leaders spared no effort in outlining the identification puzzle, studying the bird closely, and photographing it extensively. Beautiful photos by Angus Wilson (see Figs. 1 & 2), Andy Guthrie, and Martin Lofgren documented the features described above and revealed details of the wingtip pattern and orbital ring color that were difficult to discern in the field. With the help of Paul Guris and the other leaders (Frank Gallo, Andy Guthrie, Rich Guthrie, and Angus Wilson), I drafted an analysis of the various identification candidates, including several hybrid combinations. Photos and preliminary analysis were posted on Angus Wilson's website (<http://oceanwanderers.com/unidBBGull.html>), and comments were solicited from gull experts from the west coast and elsewhere. As of this time, most opinions support the identification as Western Gull as astonishing as this sounds. Obviously, a record of this rarity will require full review, not only by NYSARC (Four of seven members of which saw the bird!), but by a broader pool of experts before it can be considered acceptable.

Arctic-breeding geese make news every winter nowadays, and this year featured multiple Greater White-fronted Geese, "**Black**" **Brant**, and **Cackling Geese**; two **Barnacle Geese**; and a "**Grey-bellied/Intermediate**" Brant. The latter two forms remain very controversial in New York State, the former owing to concerns over provenance and the latter owing to concerns over taxonomy and potential hybridization.

Another controversy surrounds a series of reports of a young gray-morph **Gyrfalcon** from various South Shore locales through 5 January. Although first gaining widespread attention when seen independently by several parties on the Captree CBC on 18 December, photos and accounts emerged suggesting that this bird was present in the Jones Beach area from at least mid November. It was last reported from Wantagh Park on 5 January. Rumors that a falconer's Gyrfalcon or Gyrfalcon x Peregrine Falcon hybrid had escaped in the vicinity surfaced only after the bird's presence along the Jones Strip had been well publicized. It is our understanding that falconers are required to report lost birds within days of their escape, and falconers would seem to have every personal motivation to adhere to this policy anyway. Thus, the absence to date of any evidence that such a report was made during a period consistent with this bird's appearance in the wild renders the rumors of a captive origin problematic. Anyone who saw and or photographed this bird, or who has

knowledge concerning its origins, is encouraged to send the documentation to NYSARC to aid in the evaluation of this potentially important record.

Besides those mentioned above, various noteworthy trends were evident this winter. Common Eiders moved into Long Island waters in big numbers, recalling counts from a decade ago. But this year's flocks included unprecedented numbers west of Shinnecock Inlet and many flocks inside bays and inlets, historically unusual settings for this species in our Region. On 18 March, Beth Milke posted a message to the Massachusetts Bird List (<http://birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/MASS.html>) describing a late-winter die-off of Common Eiders just to our north and east. She noted that emaciated corpses found on Martha's Vineyard were afflicted with "extremely high acanthocephalan parasite loads (thorny-headed worms)." Her statement that the "larval form of this parasite is often found in lower quality prey items (including non-native species), and may indicate a larger ecological problem" could provide a sobering explanation for the unusual explorations of Common Eiders in our Region this winter. On a more positive note, Redheads were found in exceptional numbers during February, Red-shouldered Hawks were unusually numerous and widespread in Region 10, and Tree Swallows over-wintered in small numbers along the immediate coast. Myrtle Warblers did not share the fortunes of their fellow bayberry aficionados and were reported as scarce by nearly all observers.

In addition to those mentioned above, this winter's rarities included an apparent scaup x Tufted Duck hybrid, Black Rail, White-winged Dove, Song Sparrow, and Bohemian Waxwings.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP – Alley Pond P; BBG – Brooklyn Botanical Garden; BNL – Brookhaven National Laboratory; BP – Breezy Pt; CBM – Cedar Beach Marina; CCP – Cupsogue County P; CHP – Conference House P, Staten I; CLP – Clove Lakes P, Staten I; CP – Central P; CSP – Caumsett SP; DP – Democrat Pt; EEB – East End Birds email summary; EH – E Hampton; EP – Eisenhower P; FBF – Floyd Bennett Field; FP – Forest Park; GA – Gabreski Airport; GE – Grace Estate, Easthampton; HLSP Hempstead L SP; HSP – Hecksher SP; JBSP – Jones Beach SP; JBWE – Jones Beach SP West End; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; LI – Long Island; Mass – Massapequa Pres; MB – Mecox Bay; mi – miles; MI – Moriches Inlet; MLP – Mt Loretto P, Staten I; MP – Montauk Pt; MS – Maple Swamp; NYBG – NY Botanical Gardens, OMNSA – Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area; OP – Orient Pt; PB – Pike’s Beach, PBP – Pelham Bay P, PL – Pt Lookout; PP – Prospect Park; RMSP – Robert Moses SP; Shinn – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten I, SIN – Staten I Naturalist; SOFO – South Fork Natural History Society; SPCP – Smith Pt County P; VCP – Van Cortland P; WNWR – Wertheim NWR; WSP – Wildwood SP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: South Beach, SI 6 Dec (SBo); 3 (ad, 2 imm) Hook Pd and vicinity, four dates 15-31 Dec (mob); Captree CBC 18 Dec; ad Bridgehampton 31 Dec (K&BR) thru at least 11 Jan (mob); EP mid Dec to 5 Feb at least; Mattituck In 29 Dec (MWA); Schonian’s Ice Pd, SI 9 Jan (CB); *intro*.
Snow Goose: max 200+ flying over SI 3 Dec (HF); wintering flocks incl 67; one “blue” morph, Bridgehampton 11 Jan; 60 JBWR 17 Jan; 18 Cutchogue 18 Feb.
“BLACK” BRANT: Wantagh P 8 Jan (AG, AWi!), ph; WPP 7 Jan (via SIN); Seguine Beach, SI 18 Feb (MSh).
“GREY-BELLIED/INTERMEDIATE” BRANT: Wantagh P 4 Feb (PL, SM!), ph, *intro*.
BARNACLE GOOSE: EP early Dec thru (CC, mob!); Calverton 27 Jan (AB).
CAACKLING GOOSE: Further Lane, EH 31 Dec (PL, SM!), ph, and 21 Jan (HM); Old Town Pd, Southampton 24 Jan (HM); PP 28 Jan (PD); Calverton area 28 Jan (TWB, GB, AJL) and 13 Feb (DH, BM); Bridgehampton 23 Feb (SSI).

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Mute Swan: 394 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.

Tundra Swan: 6 MP 10 Dec (A&KO); 3 Georgica Pd 21 Jan (HM, KR) and 4 Feb, probably same inds as 3 Bridgehampton 5 Feb; JBWR 28 Jan (P&JT, K&AMi).

Wood Duck: 3 overwintered CP (mob); 9 Sag Harbor 2 Jan (HM).

Eurasian Wigeon: 3 m FBF 11 Dec (AWi), at least one continued thru; m JBWR 11 Dec (NYRBA); SI 14 Dec (J&RB); 1-2 m Eastport 1-22 Feb (MWA et al.).

Blue-winged Teal: m,f Saw Mill Creek P, SI 9 Jan (DJ); f Lily Pd EH 21 Jan (K&BR).

Redhead: m, 2f GKP thru 11 Dec (SIW), unusual location; max 115 Capri Pd West Islip 4 Feb (PL, SM); 104 Eastport Pd 25 Feb (PL, SM), high counts.

Lesser Scaup: 2500 Swan L, Patchogue 25 Feb (PL, SM), high count.

TUFTED DUCK X SCAUP SP: Capri Pd, West Islip 4 Feb (RK et al.).

King Eider: sub ad MP 16 Dec (HM et al.); ad m Montauk CBC 17 Dec; pr Sore Thumb, Babylon Captree CBC 18 Dec,

from fall; m Culloden Pt 28 Jan (TWB, GB, KF).

Com. Eider: max 2967 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; up to 250 Shinn Bay, unusual location, with many more on ocean side of inlet; 115 S Nassau CBC 1 Jan, all time max; ca. 20 BP 24 Dec-22 Jan (TF, PSh); *intro* relative to losses in neighboring areas and potential longer term implications for NY.

Harlequin Duck: 1 or more near Montauk Pt thru; 2 Bayville from fall (BR) to 13 Jan at least (JMa); Quogue-Watermill CBC 17 Dec; f Captree CBC 18 Dec (K&SF); 2 Riis P 1 Jan thru 7 Feb at least, (mob); m Mattituck 2 Jan (PG); pr Jones In 20 Feb (K&SF).

Surf Scoter: max 5000 MP 31 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: max 1727 Montauk CBC 17 Dec, lowest maximum count since 1995.

Black Scoter: max 6404 Montauk CBC 17 Dec, high count for this CBC.

Com. Goldeneye: f CP 12 Dec (TF), unusual location.

Barrow's Goldeneye: m Mattituck 2 Jan (PG); f Orient Harbor 16 Jan - 5 Feb (SM, mob).

Hooded Merganser: 64 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.

Wild Turkey: NYBG 8 Dec; PBP 26 Dec; 35 former Grumman property 20 Jan thru (DH); 23 Southampton farm 18 Feb (JS).

N. Bobwhite: 24 Quogue-Watermill CBC 17 Dec; 12 Orient CBC 31 Dec; only reports.

Red-throated Loon: 229 Montauk CBC 17 Dec.

Com. Loon: 660 Montauk CBC 17 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: about a dozen reports 11 Dec-21 Jan.

N. Gannet: 2000+ 50 mi se of LI 11 Feb.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN:

Hook Pd, EH 14-15 Dec (HM).

Am. Bittern: Dune Rd and JBWR thru; Mass 3 Dec; Cutchogue 4 Jan.

Great Egret: 2-4 Sag Harbor 13-16 Dec (RW); Dune Rd 20 Jan (PS); 2 Noyac 22 Jan (WB); Dune Rd 19 Feb (JO).

Tricolored Heron: OMNSA 17 Dec (MF).

Turkey Vulture: CP 16 Dec, 28 Jan, & 6 Feb (TF); Brooklyn, count week for 17 Dec CBC; former Grumman property 22 Feb (AB).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: Captree CBC 18 Dec.

Bald Eagle: ad CP 17 Jan; imm CP 13 Feb; a half dozen reports of imm from e LI.

N. Goshawk: imm SI 2 Dec (HF); Wading R 12 Dec (NYRBA); MP 16 Dec (HM, *et al*); Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec; ad Montauk CBC 17 Dec; Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Montauk CBC 17 Dec; 4 Staten I CBC 17 Dec; 7 Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec; MP 10 Jan (SBi); ad Montauk 15 Jan (CW *et al.*); ad f SI 30 Jan (HF); imm and ad GKP 4 Feb (PQ *et al.*); unusually numerous and widespread.

Broad-winged Hawk: Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec, extremely rare in winter.

Red-tailed Hawk: 50 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.

Rough-legged Hawk: 12 Montauk CBC 17 Dec, 10 of these on Gardiner I; Staten I CBC 17 Dec; PBP 31 Dec; Im former Grumman property 4 Jan (AB); dm SI 6 Jan (HF); dm Montauk 19 Jan (HMa, LS); Peconic 20 Jan (RWi); GKP 11 Feb (RJ); dm SI 18 Feb (MSh); Im Napeague 27 Feb (K&SF).

Am. Kestrel: 1 Montauk CBC 17 Dec, low; pr copulating Manhattan 5 Feb (JPO).

GYRFALCON: imm at various locations along barrier beach 18 Dec-1 Jan, relocated at Wantagh P 3 and 5 Jan (TL, TT), possibly seen JBSP as early as mid Nov (AMac!); natural status uncertain, *intro*.

BLACK RAIL: Dune Rd 14 Feb (PSt), during a flood tide.

Clapper Rail: present Dune Rd thru, as usual.

Virginia Rail: 7 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; 2 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; 2 Mass 1 Jan.

Sora: Calverton 21 Jan (MWA).

Semipalmated Plover: 2 Jones In 1 Jan (WR); Dune Rd 28 Jan (J&GF) and 30 Jan, rare in winter.

Killdeer: 1 Montauk CBC 17 Dec, low; first migrants e LI 8 Georgica Pd 4 Feb (G&JF, HM).

Am. Oystercatcher: wintered sw LI shore, e.g., 12 Jones In; Montauk CBC 17 Dec, unusual winter location.

Greater Yellowlegs: 10 Mass 4 Dec; small numbers reported from Dune Rd, Gilgo thru.

Willet: 2 Pt Lookout 5 Dec, returned for the third winter, thru 4 Jan at least (SS).

Marbled Godwit: JBSP 3 Dec - 7 Jan at least (mob).

Ruddy Turnstone: 40 Shelter I 10 Jan (NH).

Red Knot: 10 JBSP 4 Jan (AG).

Western Sandpiper: 2 S Nassau CBC 1 Jan.

Long-billed Dowitcher: 8 Mass 4 Dec - 7 Jan at least, then smaller numbers reported thru (mob); JBSP 4 Jan (AG).

Wilson's Snipe: typical sites in small numbers: Mass, Forge R, Eastport creek outfall, Mecox.

Am. Woodcock: small numbers at many sites thru; 2 MLP 22 Jan (RV, CM), "peenting".

Parasitic Jaeger: ad MP 16 Dec (HM et al.).

Laughing Gull: ad Maidstone P EH 15 Jan (AWi), rare in Jan.

Little Gull: ad Montauk CBC 17 Dec; Fort Pd, Montauk 17 Jan (AB et al.).

Black-headed Gull: MP 3 Dec (IR, et al); 2W Georgica Pd 21-22 Jan (HM, BK, VB), also 4 Feb; 1W MP 4 - 23 Feb (TWB, GB).

Bonaparte's Gull: virtually absent from PL again this year and scarce elsewhere; 400 Georgica Pd 21 Jan (HM, VB, BK), about 100 continued thru.

Iceland Gull: ad Shinn 1 Jan, same ind has returned to winter here for many years; 3 ads, 1 2W, pelagic se Jones In 11 Feb; a handful of other reports e and w 16 Dec- 18 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: about 30 reports from 13 locations, involving probably 20 inds throughout; Shinn

faithful seems to have disappeared after being found in October.

WESTERN GULL: ad ca. 70 mi se Jones Inlet 11 Feb (PGu!, mob!), well documented, *intro.* - -

Glaucous Gull: Hook Pd EH 15 Dec (AJL); Georgica In 16 Dec (HM, et al); Montauk CBC 17 Dec; 1W Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; Shinn 23 Dec (PG); Agawam L, Southampton 25 Dec (JS); 2W Shinn 16 Jan (JS); 1W BP 17 Jan (TF); imm Shinn 29 Jan thru (JG, SA); PBP 31 Jan (M&NL); 1W Riis P 20 Feb (TF).

Black-legged Kittiwake: 100 MP 16 Dec (HM, et al); 12 offshore Jones In 11 Feb; small numbers reported from MP and other offshore vantage as usual thru.

Caspian Tern: Staten I CBC 17 Dec, very late.

Dovekie: 1675 30-70 mi se of Jones In 11 Feb, exceptional count, offshore max by a large margin, *intro.*

COMMON MURRE: 20 8-35 mi se of Jones In 11 Feb (PGu!, mob), *intro.*

THICK-BILLED MURRE: three reports from MP - 17 Dec (CBC), 27 Dec (SA, MSh, SIW), and 2 Jan (AB); Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; 6 mi se of Jones In 11 Feb (PGu!, mob).

Razorbill: max 100 MP 16 Dec (HM, et al); 20 MP 20 Dec (DF); numerous reports of smaller numbers from South Shore inlets, e.g. 5 S Nassau CBC 1 Jan; 20 10-50 mi se of Jones In 11 Feb; MLP 20 Jan (TF), unusual on Staten I.

Black Guillemot: MP 25 Dec (VB); JBSP 4 Jan (AG, SS); Culloden Pt, Montauk 11 Jan (PL, SM, mob) thru 29 Jan when hunters disturbed it.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN: 1W 65 mi se of Jones In 11 Feb (PGu!, MLo!, mob).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: 276 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: JBWE 5 Dec (JF).

Monk Parakeet: reported from Brooklyn as usual thru.
E. Screech-Owl: max 21 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count; S Nassau CBC 1 Jan, first in nine years.
Great Horned Owl: JBWE 4 Dec (SJ), very rare on barrier beach; 11 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count; 2 PBP 1 Jan (PeG).
Snowy Owl: many reports from Napeague and Cartwright Shoal 17 Dec-27 Feb, probably involved 2 birds; Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec; JBWE 23 Jan; Cupsogue CP 29 Jan (S&TBi); Lake Grove, ph on a rooftop 30 Jan (SD), unusual location; Dune Rd 14 Feb (G&JF).
Long-eared Owl: Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; Peconic 28 Dec.
Short-eared Owl: max 3 Dune Rd 3 Dec.
N. Saw-whet Owl: CP 18 Dec-22 Jan (mob); 2 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; PBP 1 Jan (PeG).
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: widespread in small numbers; max 6 Montauk CBC 17 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: MLP mid Dec-5 Feb; 2 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; Staten I CBC 17 Dec; Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; SOFO property Bridgehampton 9, 16 Jan (JA), very late; Calverton 10 Feb (PS), exceptional date.
N. Shrike: CP 18 Dec (fide L&SaS), only report.
Blue-headed Vireo: BBG 10 Dec (AxW).
Fish Crow: max 100 Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec, in one location.
Horned Lark: small flocks and inds reported from parks and beaches throughout Region; 85 St.Charles Cemetery, Suff Co 26 Feb (PL).
Tree Swallow: widespread reports of wintering birds - FBF 14 Dec; 18 Montauk CBC 17 Dec (17 on Gardiner I); 6 Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec; 2 BP 17 Jan (TF); 14 GKP 22, 28 Jan (via SIN); JBWE 28 Jan (SS); 2 JBWE 4 Feb (DK,

BM); 21 SI Feb 3 (SA, et al); 3 BP 20 Feb (TF).
Brown Creeper: wintered in small numbers throughout; 9 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count; 7 S Nassau CBC 1 Jan.
House Wren: Montauk CBC 17 Dec; Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; Shelter I 28 & 31 Dec (NH); South Hampton 10 Jan (G&JF), late.
Winter Wren: unprecedented numbers on CBCs, e.g. 27 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; *intro*.
SEDGE WREN (R10): Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Marsh Wren: 7 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; BP 2 Jan-4 Feb (TF, PSh).
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: latest Shelter I 2, 12 Feb (OB).
E. Bluebird: max 18 former Grumman property 8 Jan.
Am. Robin: 1448 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.
Gray Catbird: unprecedented numbers on CBCs, e.g. 79 Montauk CBC 17 Dec; *intro*.
Brown Thrasher: max 9 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Am. Pipit: widely reported on CBCs 17-18 Dec; max 40 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; latest Montauk 20 Jan.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING (R10): 2 Montauk CBC 17 Dec (TWB).

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler: about 10 reports 17 Dec-11 Jan; max 4 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Nashville Warbler: Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: lower than usual numbers reported from barrier beach and CBCs.
Pine Warbler: CP 14 Dec (NYRBA); Montauk CBC 17 Dec.
Palm Warbler: later reports incl Watermill 1 Jan (JS); Mecox 8 Jan (AB); Montauk 7 Feb (VB), rare in Feb.
Ovenbird: Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; Orient CBC 31 Dec.

N. Waterthrush: CP thru 13 Dec (NYRBA).
Com. Yellowthroat: Manhattan 13 Dec; Montauk CBC 17 Dec; 2 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Yellow-breasted Chat: CP 16 Dec (NYRBA); Staten I CBC 17 Dec; Montauk CBC 17 Dec; CLP 10 Jan (SIW, MSh) to 11 Feb.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: 12 Poxabogue Pd 11 Jan (JA, HY); 11 Calverton 4 Feb (TWB, GB); CP 18 Dec-12 Feb (TF, mob), still unusual in winter away from central and e LI.
Clay-colored Sparrow: Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; Orient 28 Jan (AJL); rare in winter.
Vesper Sparrow: JBWE 28 Dec (G&JF).
Savannah Sparrow: a half dozen reports of "Ipswich" as usual, from Montauk, Sagaponack, Shinn, the Jones Beach strip, and BP.
Seaside Sparrow: Staten I CBC 17 Dec; 6 Dune Rd 13 Jan (RG); 15 Dune Rd 4 Feb (TWB, GB), unusually high counts for season.
Fox Sparrow: max 62 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec.
Lincoln's Sparrow: JBSP 16 Jan (G&JF), very rare in Jan.
White-crowned Sparrow: max 8 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec; noted as scarce

this year after a decade of large winter numbers.
Lapland Longspur: GKP 17 Dec (SIW, MSh); Calverton 15 Jan (AB); max 7 JBWE 1 Jan.
Snow Bunting: 20 Miller Field, SI 17 Dec (SIW, MSh); 24 Brooklyn CBC 17 Dec; 23 Crooke's Pt, SI 28 Jan; 40 JBWE 28 Jan; noted by many observers as low this season.
Dickcissel: drab f Poxabogue Pd 11 Jan (JA, HY); imm m SI feeder 12 Feb (E&ZJ).
Red-winged Blackbird: arr Sag Harbor 4 Feb (HM).
E. Meadowlark: max 20 former Grumman property 19 Feb (JG).
Rusty Blackbird: wintered in small numbers throughout; max 20+ Shu Swamp 18 Feb (DK).
Com. Grackle: 10,855 Sagaponack CBC 18 Dec, high count.
Boat-tailed Grackle: 12 Dune Rd 28 Dec (AM), up to 15 seen thru; 3 Gilgo 4 Jan (AG).
Baltimore Oriole: Staten I CBC 17 Dec; Brooklyn feeder 19 Dec - 1 Jan at least (MJS); Manerville feeder 1 Jan (BM); PL 7 Jan (IR); CHP 10 Jan (SIW, MSh).
Purple Finch: widespread reports of small numbers.
Pine Siskin: Shelter I feeder 19 Dec (NH); CP 12 Jan, 13 Feb (KW, TF)



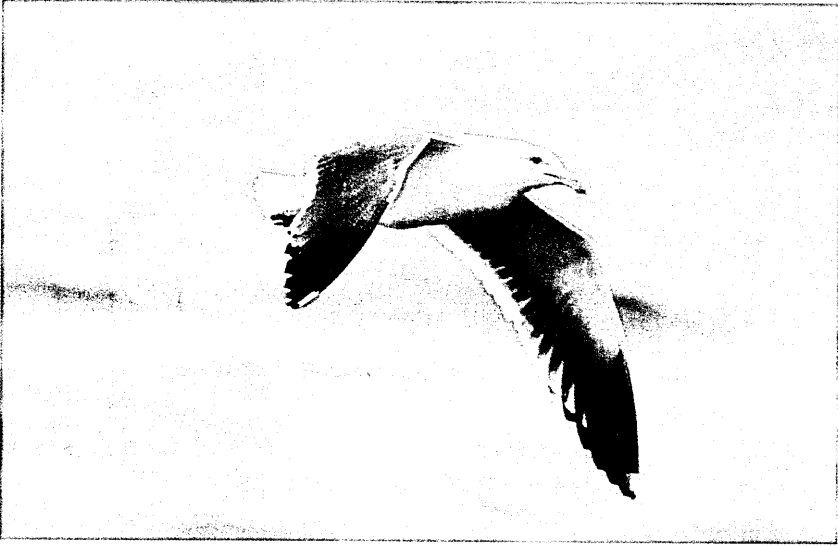


Fig. 1. Probable Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*)
Hudson Valley Shelf, NY, 11 February 2006.
© Angus Wilson



Fig. 2. Probable Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*)
Hudson Valley Shelf, NY, 11 February 2006.
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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Regional rarities appear in **BOLD**; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in **UPPER CASE** letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. In species accounts: number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! - details seen by Regional Editor; ad - adult; Alt - Alternate plumage; Am. - American; arr - arrival or first of season; BBS - Breeding Bird Survey; BOTS - bird of the season; 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;Ri - River; SP - State Park; spm - specimen; subad -subadult; T - Town of; thru - throughout period; 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

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