

observed several times near Chester Elementary School, last week of Feb. Bobolink: one well-described bird near Pawling 15 Dec. could be a record late date for the region. Report submitted to NYSARC (SG). E. Meadowlark: a heartening 19 at Nichols Preserve in Armonk 13 Dec. and again 16 Dec. (BW); missed completely on most Christmas Counts. Brown-headed Cowbird: a "whopping" 2,300 in the Town of Northeast 16 Dec. on HCC. N. Oriole: one at Wawarsing until 2 Dec. Purple Finch: the only northern finch in good numbers. HCC had 52 in the Town of Northeast, Dutch. House Finch: astronomical increase; 342 on WCC was 30% higher than House Sparrow count. 814 on MCC, 698 on BCC were twice the House Sparrow counts. Red Crossbill: two at Pound Ridge Res. on 9-11 Dec. (Frank Nicoletti). Another pair was in spruces along Fir Brook north of Willowemoc on 23 Feb. (BW). Com. Redpoll: their scarcity makes any report suspect. Only report four at a feeder in Forestburgh in early Jan. Pine Siskin: almost totally absent from the southern portion. A number of small flocks reported from northern Sull on 23 Feb.; missed on every Christmas Count. Am. Goldfinch: numbers poor on Christmas Counts and at feeders, but they were out there. More than 50 in early Dec. at Twin Pds., Sull. Several flocks of 25-30 at Monticello in late Dec., and more than 200 at Rondout Res. 30 Dec., RCC had a high of 391. Evening Grosbeak: most reports from Sull. Most Christmas Counts had only a few or none.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 – MARINE

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It was a winter of sharp contrasts. It started with the warmest December on record. The warmest day of the month was the 29th, with a high of 70° F. The day's mean of 63° was 30° above normal. The month's average of 43.8° F. was 7.6° F. above normal. Ironically, the only significant snowfall of the month, 4.8 inches on the 27th, preceded the "heat wave." December's total precipitation of 3.26 inches was 0.55 below normal. The late December warm spell carried over into early January until temperatures dropped below normal on the 8th. The real arctic blast came, however, on the 21st when temperatures plummeted to two below zero. January's mean of 28.8° F. was 3.0° F. below normal. The new year continued the dry spell of late 1984 with January's total precipitation of 1.00 inches, 2.21 below normal. The only major snow was 4.1 inches on 17 January. The first nine days of February continued cool, but after that temperatures were mostly above normal with a record breaking high of 75° F. on the 24th. February's total precipitation of 2.41 inches continued on the deficit side, this time by 0.72 inches. The only measurable snowfall was 4.3 inches on the 2nd and 5.7 inches on the 5th-6th. (All weather data from New York City.)

Despite December's mild weather there seemed to be very few birds around. There were very few rarities, either on the Christmas Bird Counts or later. With the exception of Southern Nassau, most counts reported near or slightly below normal totals. Southern Nassau - 133, Montauk - 127, Brooklyn - 122, Queens

- 121, Captree - 119, Bronx-Westchester -118, Central Suffolk - 114, Orient - 110, Northern Nassau - 108, Quogue-Watermill - 102, Smithtown - 98, and Staten Island - 91. The Long Island counts reported a total of 175 species, three less than last year.

The mild weather did result in some lingerers and good numbers of some "half-hardies" such as lots of herons, wrens, kinglets, Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows and a good variety of warblers. Species setting new late records included Black Rail, Eastern Kingbird and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The less common gulls were also well-represented. On the negative side, no Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported and winter finches were nowhere to be found.

Species reported in about normal numbers, though there were variations from place to place, and not reported in the main body of this report are: Com. Loon, Great and Double-crested Cormorants, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, N. Shoveler, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Oldsquaw, Com. Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded and Com. Mergansers, Ruddy Duck, N. Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks, Am. Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Sanderling, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Com. Snipe. Laughing and Great Black-backed Gulls, Rock and Mourning Doves, Great Horned and Long-eared Owls, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Belted Kingfisher, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Fish Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Am. Robin, Gray Catbird, N. Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, Eur. Starling, Am. Tree, Field, Fox, Song, and Swamp Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, E. Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, House Finch, Am. Goldfinch and House Sparrow. Including the above, 192 species plus two identifiable races are recorded in this report, one less than last winter.

Rarities: Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Gyrfalcon and Common Murre.

Dates of Christmas Bird Counts: Brooklyn, Montauk, Queens, Quogue-Watermill and Staten Island - 15 Dec.; Captree - 16 Dec.; N. Nassau - 22 Dec.; Bronx-Westchester - 23 Dec.; Central Suffolk and Smithtown - 27 Dec.; Orient - 29 Dec.; S. Nassau - 30 Dec.

Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; LI—Long Island; SI—Staten Island; SP—State Park; CRSP—Connetquot River State Park; HLSP—Hempstead Lake State Park; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park; mob—many observers.

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LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loons were found in about normal numbers on the CBCs, though one at HLSP 1 Jan. (SBD) was unusual away from the coast. Pied-billed and Horned Grebes were reported in near normal numbers and Red-necked Grebes were absent everywhere but at Montauk where one to three individuals wintered. It was a grebe winter, nevertheless. An **EARED GREBE** was discovered at JBWR on the Brooklyn

CBC (BB, MS) before drifting into the neighboring Queens count; since Brooklyn observers saw it first, and on their side of the line, it will be listed only on the Brooklyn CBC. A dark phase **WESTERN GREBE** was discovered at Ditch Plains on the Montauk peninsula 12 Jan. (JD, AM); seen that day and the next by many observers it could not be relocated after that weekend. N. Gannets were found in fair numbers on several LI counts: Montauk - 756; Quogue-Watermill - 730; and S. Nassau - 610. Undoubtedly due to the very warm Dec. the heron list resembles a summer report rather than a winter one. Am. Bitterns were reported on six LI CBCs with S. Nassau leading with nine; Brooklyn, Captree and Quogue-Watermill each had three; Queens - two and Montauk - one. Good numbers of Great Blue Herons were found on virtually all counts. Great Egrets seemed to be everywhere with 22 found on LI CBCs. Queens was tops with eight, followed by S. Nassau - seven; Brooklyn - five; Staten I - three; Captree and Montauk each had one, their first ever; two Greats wintered at HLSP (AW, SBD) and two were at JBWR 29 Jan. (NYRBA). Snowy Egrets were also well-represented on the counts: Queens - four, S. Nassau - three, and N. Nassau and C. Suffolk - one each. S. Nassau had a record four Little Blue Herons and one Tricolored Heron; single Little Blues and Tricoloreds were still at Tobay 6 Jan. (NYRBA). A Cattle Egret at JBWR 12 Dec. (WR) just missed the Queens CBC. Single lingering Green-backed Herons were found on the Captree and Queens counts. Brooklyn turned up a record three Glossy Ibis and S. Nassau, one. Tundra Swans were at their usual eastern LI locations: five at Hook Pd. 12 Jan. (JJR) and six at Mecox 20 Jan. (IC), probably the same birds in both locations. Mute Swans were in above normal numbers on virtually every count and for the first time were reported on every count in the region. Snow Geese were found in ones and twos on virtually every count, except for Brooklyn - 328 and Queens - 48, who benefited from the flocks at JBWR. S. Nassau's total of over 27,000 Brant again surpassed all other counts combined. Lingering Wood Ducks were on nearly all counts with C. Suffolk's 25 the most and a count record. A "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal returned to the Massapequa Preserve again this winter (NYRBA) and another was at Lawrence 23 Feb. (R. Kelly). N. Pintails were in above normal numbers on nearly all CBCs. S. Nassau had a record 14 Blue-winged Teals; the only other report was two on the C. Suffolk CBC. The two male Eurasian Wigeons reported in the fall continued at JBWR thru Dec. and were joined by a female (mob); another Eurasian was at the Massapequa Preserve from 30 Dec. on; others were singles at Hook Pd. 1 Dec. (JJR), Babylon 16 Feb. (JJR) and two in Lynnbrook during Dec. (NYRBA). Canvasbacks were well above normal on most counts with Queens ahead of everybody with 3,485 followed by Quogue-Watermill with 3,044. Redheads were a bit below normal on most counts. A Tufted Duck on the East R off Manhattan 3 Feb. was probably the bird that frequents the Central Pk. reservoir (NYRBA). After last winter's record number of Lesser Scaup, the Montauk CBC could only find two this year; elsewhere the species was reported in mostly above normal numbers. It is an odd winter on LI when King Eiders outnumber Com. Eiders, but it happened this year. Ten female Commons at Montauk 1 Dec. (JJR) were the most all winter; throughout the rest of the season the most seen at Montauk was two and the species was often missed; a male was at Shinnecock 18 Jan. (NYRBA). Small numbers of King Eiders were at Montauk all winter, peaking at seven 9 Feb. (NYRBA); other sightings included a male at Caumsett SP 8 Dec. (JP) and a female off Peconic 29 Dec. (JJR). The four Harlequin Ducks that appeared at Pt. Lookout in late Nov. spent the entire winter there; four or five Harlequins also wintered at Montauk (mob). Though above last year's numbers all three scoters were still below normal on most counts. Two Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported: a female at Caumsett SP 13 Jan. (T. O'Connor) and a male at Montauk 10 Feb. (BB, MS). Montauk had a count record 5,965 Red-breasted Mergansers; elsewhere the species was found in near to slightly above normal numbers.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Two Bald Eagles wintered at CRSP (mob) and individuals were seen over the Belt Pkwy, Brooklyn 23 Jan. (NYRBA) and Seaview Fields, SI 28 Feb. (NS, WS). Cooper's Hawks were widespread on the CBCs: Orient had three, Bronx-West, Brooklyn, Captree and S. Nassau each had two and C. Suffolk, N. Nassau and Quogue-Watermill

had one each. It was a poor winter for N. Goshawks: Bronx-West found two and Brooklyn and Captree each had one; the only other report was of two in Pelham Bay Pk 20 Jan (NYRBA) and these were probably the Bronx-West birds. Two Red-shouldered Hawks on the N. Nassau and one on the Smithtown CBCs were the only ones reported. Rough-legged Hawks were even rarer than last winter with half the counts missing them. It was another good winter for Merlins, though not as good as last year; most counts had at least one, and one wintered at Jones Bch (mob). Single Peregrines were found on the Brooklyn, Captree, Montauk, Queens and S. Nassau CBCs. The gray phase GYRFALCON that appeared at Zach's Bay, Jones Bch in late Nov. spent the entire season there (mob). The only Ruffed Grouse reported were three on the Westchester portion of the Bronx-West CBC. I spoke too soon last year when I said the CRSP Wild Turkey flock had leveled off at 45; it increased to 63 this year on the Captree CBC; 56 on Gardiner's I on the Montauk count is within the normal range there. N. Bobwhites were up on all the eastern LI counts and about normal where they occur elsewhere. In Dec., 1983 four birders set a new late record for BLACK RAIL when they flushed two at Tobay; on 6 Jan. we had a repeat performance at half-strength: two of the same birders flushed a Black Rail from almost exactly the same spot (AW, S. Schiff). Do you guys supply maps? Most LI counts reported one or two Clapper Rails. Montauk found four Virginia Rails and Brooklyn, C. Suffolk, Orient and Smithtown each had one. The warm weather no doubt was responsible for single Com. Moorhens on Brooklyn, Queens and Quogue-Watermill. Am. Coots were up slightly from their low numbers in recent years. Black-bellied Plovers were widespread in good numbers; they were found on every count with S. Nassau tallying 304, followed by Queens - 120 and Captree -108. Greater Yellowlegs were also widespread in high numbers, S. Nassau once again leading with 45. Along with their Greater, S. Nassau found two Lesser Yellowlegs as did Bronx-West and Queens. A near record late Spotted Sandpiper was on the Captree CBC. Staten I had 65 Ruddy Turnstones and Orient 50, both above normal numbers. Two counts found Red Knots: S. Nassau - 81 and Queens - 14. Two or three Western Sandpipers were lingering at Zach's Bay 2 Dec. (SBD, *vide* NYRBA). The S. Nassau CBC found seven Long-billed Dowitchers; none were reported after that. The record breaking heat wave of 24 Feb. was probably the stimulus that had four or five Am. Woodcocks doing aerial displays at Pelham Bay Pk. that evening (JD, P. Malloy). Parasitic Jaegers are proving to be regular lingerers into Dec. in recent years with two on the Montauk CBC and one on Quogue-Watermill; one bird was still at Shinnecock 30 Dec. (JB). Montauk and S. Nassau each had one Little Gull; from one to four Littles were seen at Shinnecock all winter (mob). Queens and Staten I. each had one Com. Black-headed Gull; Shinnecock and Jones Inlets each had two Black-headed Gulls frequenting them mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. (mob); one of the birds at Shinnecock had a nearly full hood. There were over 5,300 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Montauk CBC and approximately 2,000 each on the Brooklyn and Captree counts; elsewhere they were about normal. N. Nassau set a count record with 7,190 Ring-billed Gulls; the species was in normal to above normal numbers on all counts. Brooklyn's total of 68,000 Herring Gulls broke the count record of 64,500 set just last year. Iceland Gulls were found on three CBCs: Montauk had two and S. Nassau and Quogue-Watermill each had one; at least two birds wintered in the vicinity of Shinnecock (mob); another two were on the East R, at 14th St., Manhattan 24 Feb. (FV). Gyrfalcon watchers were usually rewarded with views of the adult "Kumlien's" Gull wintering at the Boardwalk restaurant even when the Gyr was being uncooperative. Four Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported: one on the Brooklyn CBC and singles at Montauk Pt. 1 Dec. (JJR), the Central Pk. reservoir 3 Feb. (NYRBA) and Ditch Plains, Montauk 9 Feb. (NYRBA). Montauk had two Glaucous Gulls; Smithtown and S. Nassau each had one; a sick second-year bird was picked up at Moravian Cemetery, SI 24 Feb. and later died (*vide* AM). The Montauk CBC had 1,500 Black-legged Kittiwakes, but following this Kittiwake numbers there were not as good as last winter. A late Com. Tern was reported in the Montauk Harbor 12 Dec. (S. Saphire). Also at Montauk was a COMMON MURRE 30 Dec. (R. Roth, T. Battaley, C. Hartel, *vide* NYRBA).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Seven counts found Com. Barn-Owls: S. Nassau - five; Brooklyn - three; Captree and Staten I - two each; and C. Suffolk, Montauk and Queens - one. E. Screech-Owls were in normal or above numbers on most counts with Smithtown leading, as usual, with 31. Snowy Owls were relatively few and far between: three JFK airport 2 Dec. (HR); two Fort Tilden 17 Dec. (NYRBA); one Breezy Pt. 31 Dec. (M. Penzer); one Bay Pk. 1 Jan. (SBD); one JBWR 5 Feb. (NYRBA) and one irregularly at the West End, Jones Bch Dec. to Jan. (mob). Short-eared Owls have been virtually nonexistent on SI the last two winters due to habitat destruction according to one observer (AM); they were in about normal numbers on the other CBCs. Red-headed Woodpeckers did not repeat their invasion of last winter. Only two were reported; one at a feeder in East Islip thru the season (JM, MM) and another at a feeder in Westhampton thru 29 Jan. (S. Young). N. Nassau again claimed the high count of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 19 this year. Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers and N. Flickers were in normal to slightly below normal numbers on the CBCs. Bronx-West found a Pileated Woodpecker on the Westchester portion of the count.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Given the mild temperatures in Dec. it is surprising that only the Orient CBC had an E. Phoebe. One to two W. Kingbirds were on Jones Bch 1-25 Dec. (mob). A record late E. **KINGBIRD** was reported at Zach's Bay on the S. Nassau CBC (BB, MS). Staten I again took top honors for Am. Crow with 12,250; Captree was a distant second with a still impressive 5,662. Tufted Titmouse continues its increase on eastern LI: last year Montauk's 18 and Orient's 89 were count records, this year they had 66 and 157, the third consecutive year of record numbers for both. Red-breasted Nuthatches were notable for their almost total absence; Captree had the highest total, seven; some CBCs missed the species entirely. White-breasted Nuthatches were also down but not as sharply. Carolina Wrens were a bit above normal but other wrens were found in large numbers. An amazing five House Wrens were reported: singles on Bronx-West, Brooklyn, Captree, Orient and S. Nassau. Winter Wrens were way up with a total of 36 on all counts combined, 13 on Bronx-West alone. More counts found Marsh Wrens than missed them, a total of 19 on all counts. Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in normal numbers on all the eastern LI counts but were in record or near record numbers on all the western counts; Bronx-West had 137 Goldens and 28 Rubys; N. Nassau 80 Goldens and 24 Rubys. Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Douglaston, Queens 10 Dec. (GD) were a late record, but they were quickly surpassed by another at Wolfe's Pd, SI 20 Dec. (NS, WS). Montauk had three E. Bluebirds, Captree - two and Orient - one. N. Nassau reported a Swainson's Thrush in the same area they found one last year. The only Water Pipits reported were Queens - 16 and Bronx-West - six. Cedar Waxwings were reported in low to moderate numbers on nearly all counts, but Bronx-West had nearly three times its nearest competitor with 104. A N. Shrike on N. Nassau was the only shrike reported.

VIREOS-WARBBLERS: A lingering Solitary Vireo was found on the Orient CBC. Orange-crowned Warblers seemed to be everywhere: Bronx-West and Montauk each had three; Brooklyn, Captree and N. Nassau had one apiece. Three Nashville Warblers were found in Central Pk 16 Dec. for the Lower Hudson CBC. Yellow-rumped Warblers were below normal on most counts. Three CBCs found lingering Pine Warblers: Captree - two, Brooklyn - one and S. Nassau - one; another was at the Lea Estate, Queens 28 Dec. (A. Wagner). Palm Warblers were well above normal: C. Suffolk, Montauk and S. Nassau each had five, Brooklyn - four, Queens - three and Orient - one; lingerers were still at Montauk 12 Jan. (P. Cane) and HLSP 14 Jan. (SBD). A Black-and-white Warbler was at HLSP 16 Dec. (W. Belford) and another was on the N. Nassau CBC. An Am. Redstart was in Central Pk. 16 Dec. for the Lower Hudson count. A lingering Ovenbird was reported at Hunter's I, Pelham Bay Pk 20 Dec (NYRBA). Twenty Com. Yellowthroats were reported from all CBCs combined with Montauk once again having nearly half of them - eight. A male Wilson's Warbler was a first ever for the N. Nassau count and a record late date. For the first time in several years no Yellow-breasted Chats were reported this winter.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinals were in above normal numbers on most counts. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared at a feeder in East Islip 22 Dec. and remained there thru the period (JM, MM). While no count missed Rufous-sided Towhee, they were in low numbers on all of them and some only found one bird. Brooklyn reported six Chipping Sparrows; N. Nassau, Orient and Quogue-Watermill one each. The only CBC to report Vesper Sparrow was Orient with two, but Queens just missed them with singles at JFK airport 13 Dec. (HR) and Flushing Cemetery 14 Dec. (W. Astle). Most LI counts reported the usual small numbers of the "Ipswich" race of Savannah Sparrow. Sharp-tailed Sparrows were found by almost every CBC that had the habitat for them; a total of 30 on the LI counts and one more on Bronx-West. Seaside Sparrows lingered in much lower numbers but C. Suffolk, Queens and S. Nasasu each had one and Quogue-Watermill two. White-throated Sparrows were in record numbers on Bronx-West and C. Suffolk CBCs, 1949 and 798, respectively; elsewhere they were normal to a little above. A total of ten White-crowned Sparrows were on the LI counts with another at Bronx-West; one wintered on Jones Bch (AW) and another was at Great Kills, SI 27 Jan. (AM). Queens with nine was the only CBC to find Lapland Longspurs; they were scarce everywhere this winter. Snow Buntings were in above normal numbers on most CBCs. Both N. Nassau and C. Suffolk set new highs for Red-winged Blackbirds with 905 and 375, respectively; the species was above normal on most other counts also. Last winter I called 12 Boat-tailed Grackles in Broad Channel "astounding." I don't know what to call the 36 Boat-tails found this year on the Queens CBC; even this is less than the 39 there earlier in the month (WR, GD); most of this flock apparently wintered in the area. This year C. Suffolk had the big Com. Grackle roost with over 1,000 birds in one flock in Yaphank. Brown-headed Cowbirds were widespread with Orient and Montauk the leaders with 128 and 111, respectively. A N. Oriole was on the Montauk CBC; other singles were found near Stony Brook 28 Dec. (S. & S. Nord) and at a feeder in Bellrose Terrace in mid-Jan. (R. Craig). Apart from 13 Purple Finches on Bronx-West the species was virtually unreported. Winter finches were essentially absent from the region this winter. Aside from 25 Pine Siskins on the Montauk CBC the only other reports for the species were singles on C. Suffolk, and N. and S. Nassau. Bronx-West had one Evening Grosbeak; the only other report was of 12 at Ridge 2 Jan. (JJR).

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