

REGION 8--LONG ISLAND

Modified weather in mid-November gave way to a startling change with terrific easterly winds on November 25, 26. Great erosion took place in the narrower and more exposed tracts along the ocean beaches, such as the washing out of good migrating and wintering areas at Gilgo. Following this, to the first of the year the temperature was above normal with little snow, and on January 1 an Audubon Bird Count of 109 species for southern Nassau County broke all previous records. The western Long Island count came within several of this total.

During the rest of January mild weather prevailed. February was far less stormy than usual with very little snow in either month. The mild winter was conducive to the over-wintering of large numbers of Loons, Anatinae Ducks, and Coot. Greater numbers of other beach and marsh dwellers suffered less hardship and a wide dissemination of Myrtle Warblers out of their preferred bayberry habitat was noted.

Loons-Herons:

Maximum winter count, Montauk, January 27, 100 Common and 75 Red-throated Loons and 45 Horned Grebes, by several observers. Holboell's Grebe uncommon; usual number of Pied-billed Grebes; among the more pelagic birds were 150 Gannets at Montauk, January 1; on the same date and location, were four European Cormorants, along with six at Moriches Inlet. There were several wintering records of American Bittern and 28 Great Blue Herons were flocking on the north side of Jones Beach Sanctuary pond, December 9. A very late American Egret stayed at Gilgo to November 11.

Geese-Ducks:

A tremendous flock of 2,000 Brant on western bays

throughout winter; fair numbers of European Widgeon (to Babylon), Shoveller, Gadwall on western Long Island; Harlequin Duck at East Rockaway, early winter and two at Montauk, January 27. Ruddy Duck, Hooded and American Merganser were comparatively uncommon. Maximums: 115 American Eider at Montauk, January 1; 150 Buffle-head at Idlewild, February 12. A late winter movement with 10,000 Scaup passing down the coast at Atlantic Beach occurred on February 10.

Hawks - Rails:

First Goshawk, Montauk, December 3, few since; most Red-tailed Hawks observed on eastern Long Island; Bald Eagle at Idlewild on December 20 and in late February; Rough-legged Hawk scarce and but one or two Duck Hawks reported. Unusual was a Pigeon Hawk at Gilgo, March 3.

A King Rail was present at Idlewild from December 30 to January 6; Yellow Rail, same location, December 2, was late; maximum Coot, 400, Water Mill, January 27.

Shore Birds:

Late departures, Semipalmated Plover, Montauk, December 10; two White-rumped Sandpipers, December 2 at Idlewild. Wilson's Snipe wintered at Seaford; Red-backed Sandpipers and Sanderlings were wide-spread with 60 of former at Mecox, January 27.

Gulls - Doves:

White-winged gulls relatively scarce; Kumlein's Gull at Montauk, January 27. Laughing Gull lingered at The Narrows (New York Bay), with nine on December 3; on December 2 a Black-headed Gull was present there and 500 Bonaparte's Gulls; Kittiwakes appeared off the western breakwaters on several occasions early in the period during or following stormy weather. The late November storm brought numerous Brunnich's Murres and Dovekies, with reports well

spread over the island from Atlantic Beach to Montauk and in the Rockaways. Numerous Murres were picked up exhausted, were treated, but most died. About a dozen Razor-billed Auk records, most of them of oiled birds, were reported; maximum Mourning Doves: western Long Island, 11 on January 1.

Cuckoos through Blackbirds:

Late Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Oakdale, November 11: only one or two records of Snowy Owl, Idlewild, late December-January 6; Barred Owl comparatively scarce, eastward at Orient, January 5; several fall records of Saw-whet Owl, one, January 1 at Greenport. Most unusual was a Burrowing Owl, fully identified, found dead at Westhampton Beach, October 27. Late Arkansas Kingbird, Riis Park (Rockaways), on November 19; also Phoebe, same place, January 14. Maximum Horned Larks 400-500 at Orient in early January; Red-breasted Nuthatch, scarce in fall, no winter report; Caroline Wren resident on eastern Long Island with apparent increase since deep snows of several years ago. Mockingbirds were reported around the end of the year at Jones Beach and one at Bridgehampton on January 1. Several reports of Catbirds and one or two of Brown Thrashers were reported on Western Long Island. The Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce after early winter; several records of Migrant Shrike came through in January. Warbler rarities were: Orange-crowned, Seaford December 21; Yellow-breasted Chat, Jones Beach, February 27. There was a Baltimore Oriole at Orient, November 29, and at Baldwin one remained from December 17 to January 21. Several Red-wing and Cowbird flocks wintered.

Finches - Sparrows:

Several Cardinal reports, all on western Long Island and only one report of Purple Finch, but House Finch present in all former locations and reportedly spreading on the north shore (western end). Only one report of Evening Grosbeak,

Pine Grosbeak, Red-Crossbill; Siskin scarce during migration, and, very unusual, only one winter record; on November 11, 10 Ipswich Sparrows were found in two flocks on a mile of dune strip at Gilgo and three were reported in the southern Nassau Christmas census and several elsewhere. Single individuals of Lapland Longspurs were reported in three locations into early January, and one since; maximum Snow Bunting, 250 at Idlewild, January 1 -- John J. Elliott, 3994 Park Avenue, Seaford, Long Island, New York.

REGION 9 -- CENTRAL NEW YORK

The records obtained during this period represent a few of the late fall migrants in addition to the normal quota of winter residents for this area. The more unusual species include wintering of Cardinal, Mourning Dove and Coot (40-50) in numbers, Catbird and Purple Sandpiper (2/17/51). Red headed Ducks are present in about average numbers (5000±). Geneva Christmas census yielded 37 species; Spofford reports Syracuse census included 31 species.

Loons - Herons.

Common Loon on Seneca Lake November 2; few Horned Grebes present Seneca Lake all winter (none seen in spring plumage). One Great Blue Heron observed 3/1/51.

Geese - Ducks:

Canada Geese seen on November 11 and 55 Snow Geese on November 25. Mallard, Black Duck, Redhead, Canvas Back, Ring-necked, Greater and Lesser Scaup, American Golden-eye, Buffle head, Old-Squaw, Ruddy Duck, American and Red-breasted Merganser are present on Seneca Lake during winter. Redheads far outnumber any other ducks on Seneca Lake, as this is an important overwintering habitat of this species.