

REGION 6 — MOHAWK VALLEY

The first three months of the year were all above normal temperature, and March was much above normal in precipitation. January excess temperature averaged 9 degrees, February 8, and March 5, 6. Streams and lakes were open more and earlier than usual, with ducks and gulls not concentrated. Wintering individuals of summer species were above par in kinds and numbers, and most of the truly winter species were absent or scarce. Spring arrivals were much in evidence by early March; will be reported with spring migration report.

Loons — Ducks:

A Great Blue Heron was seen repeatedly at Collins Lake through January and February. The first local record of Blue Goose was obtained March 15 on State Farm Road (Van Vorst, Hallenbeck, et al). There was a flight of 200 Canada Geese February 3 at Niskayuna. An unusual variety of ducks was reported, but in small numbers, and from scattered locations. Thirty Pintails were reported at Vischers Ferry February 24. An Oldsquaw was seen at the Troy dam February 20, and two pairs of Hooded Mergansers at Saratoga Lake January 1.

Hawks — Owls:

There have been occasional reports of hawks, in some variety. Owls, as usual, were unreported. An unusual record of four Turkey Vultures was obtained March 29 at Indian Ladder (Scotland). Several Bald Eagles were seen in February and March.

Swifts — Shrikes:

A Killdeer spent January and February at Collins Lake. A total of seven Great Black-backed Gulls were seen at three locations along the Mohawk February 23 (Yunick) and three at Poentic Kill March 4 (Stone). Although Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were in less than usual numbers, 230 Herring Gulls were at Saratoga Lake February 23. There have been a few scattered reports of Mourning Dove, plus a flock of fifteen at Vischers Ponds January 17. Belted Kingfisher reported February 8 and March 4, and Yellow-shafted Flicker January 11 and March 8. Downy Woodpecker flocked at Vischers Ponds January 17. Canada Jay, rare here, was seen at Delmar March 15 (Van Vorst et al). American Crow was unusually scarce in December and January; and Winter Wren in less numbers than usual. There were isolated reports of American Robin, one each in December, January and February. Hermit Thrush was reported in January and in February. Golden-crowned Kinglets were fewer than usual, as were Cedar Waxwings.

Vireos — Sparrows:

Two Myrtle Warblers on February 23 represent the second local Winter record (Stone). Eastern Meadowlark was recorded on January 1. There were two records of Purple Grackle, two on January 1 and one on January 11. Local flocks of Evening Grosbeaks have been holding out well through March. Purple Finch was scarce, while Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin were observed in unusually large numbers. The shores of Collins Lake harbored four White-throated Sparrows in January and February, and four Swamp Sparrows in January. Five Lapland Longspurs were recorded at Niskayuna January 1, and two on February 22 at Six Mile Reservoir.

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REGION 7 — NEW YORK AND LOWER HUDSON VALLEY

This winter was one of the mildest on record. Even at the Bear Mountain weather station, 1,300 feet above sea level, the temperature never went down to zero. Snowfall was less than 50% of normal. However, rainfall set new monthly records in January and March; February was six degrees warmer than normal, with more than an inch deficiency in precipitation.

These statistics would scarcely explain the spectacular influx of northern visitors, notably Pine Siskins, Redpolls, and Crossbills. Yet there the northern birds were — all through February and March — with a sprinkling of Evening and Pine Grosbeaks. At the same time, many half-hardy species remained, making it possible though incongruous to list Towhee and Crossbill on the same date.