

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: A Rusty Blackbird near New Paltz, Ulster, on Jan. 30 (Dunbar, Cragin, Meng, Hayes) and three Rusties in Sullivan County on Feb. 18 (Hammond) were unusual, as were two Meadowlarks in Sullivan County the following day (Hammond). Wilber Carr was startled to find a male Baltimore Oriole at Ferndale, Sullivan County, on Mar. 20.

Records of Evening Grosbeak and Pine Grosbeak were too numerous to list in full. Notes of these species in Westchester and Putnam Counties are especially copious. In Ulster County, Fred Hough comments that the Evening Grosbeak population was lower than in some years, but the Pine Grosbeak was far higher — the reverse of the usual situation. Both were common in Sullivan County, spotty in their occurrence in Rockland and Orange. In the Highlands, for example, Pine Grosbeaks occurred for the first time on a Bear Mountain census, Jan. 2, then were not reported until Mar. 18 or 19, when Ranger Muz Jones at Lake Sebago described a large flock of "Canadian Robins" in the tamarack groves. Hough observed a preference of Pine Grosbeaks for tamarack and lilac buds and for the fruit of cedar and honeysuckle — but even more particularly for the winged seeds of the maples. He believes the abundance of maple seeds was a factor in attracting the birds this year.

Flocks of Evening Grosbeaks in Westchester ranged up to 60 on Jan. 2 at Katonah (William Russell), 11 on Jan. 8 at Mt. Kisco (Mrs. John Trainer), and 30 on Mar. 14 in Bedford (Letitia Morris). Notable records of Pine Grosbeaks in Westchester included 30 on Dec. 19 in Katonah (Mr. and Mrs. Frank McKown) and 50 on Dec. 23 in Katonah (Russell).

Purple Finches were less abundant than usual. In Ulster, Hough reports Pine Siskins also scarce, but the Rockland and Bear Mountain Christmas counts had by far the highest numbers ever. Redpolls were reported from Ulster only once, a flock of about 100 near Lake Mohonk (Pyle). A flock of 24 were seen in Sullivan County on Jan. 29 (McBride) and 60 at Carmel, Putnam County, on Mar. 20 (Mrs. Little). None in Rockland County.

No White-winged Crossbills were noted in Ulster County or in Sullivan, but elsewhere the flight was the best in modern times. In Putnam, a flock of 12 seen by Mrs. Little on Dec. 28 in Carmel grew to 25 or 30 by Jan. 4 and 5. A dozen were seen on February 6 in Bedford Hills by the John Kelly family and two were spotted on Feb. 20 in Bedford Center by Peter Ferret at Rippowam School, where Westchester's first record was obtained two years ago. Rockland's records included a flock of 20 on Jan. 30 (Mr. and Mrs. Edmund G. Barron) and a scattering of others to Mar. 24 (James Bloor).

A probable Pink-sided Junco was watched from Jan. 9 through 15 at the home of Frank R. Steffens, New City, Rockland. Many Towhees wintered. Snow Buntings occurred Dec. 26 for the first time on the Rockland Audubon Society Christmas count, and a flock of seven was seen on Mar. 27 in Sullivan County (Carr).

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REGION 10 — MARINE

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

Cold weather in early January sealed many lakes and ponds which reduced numbers of fresh-water ducks to a minimum. With practically all of the western bays frozen, Scaup and Black Ducks resorted to the ocean. The cold weather was short-lived, however, and by late January a thaw had set in. There has been little extremely cold weather since and no heavy snow fall all winter. Despite this the Anatinae remained scarce until spring migration.

A notable feature of the winter was the scarcity of late-winter birds, especially sparrows, along the grassy strips at Jones Beach. In years of bountiful seed harvest, many flocks resort these strips in March and April. Several factors contributed to the present sterility: the severe erosion of fall hurricanes caused by washing away of dune grasslands; fill operations for several miles at Gilgo; widening of the causeways from the mainland with removal of the side grassy strips; and extraordinary high March winds. The

latter caused the grass strips to be drifted with white sand resulting in very disappointing counts on the late winter surveys. Highlighting observations for mid-winter was Gerald Rising's excellently organized statewide Waterfowl Census, January 15-23, and the annual get-together of some half-dozen Long Island bird clubs at Montauk, January 29, sponsored by the Queens County Bird Club.

Winter-finch population continued good into February then fell off markedly. Sterility on the outer beaches was no doubt a contributing factor to the early departure of the Snow Bunting.

LOONS — DUCKS: There were fair numbers of Common and Red-throated Loons, numerous Horned Grebes, but few Holboell's and no Eared Grebe reports. The maximum Common Loons, January 15, in one area (Montauk to Amagansett) were 137. There was a good concentration of European Cormorants at Montauk into February and a small flight of Gannets at Atlantic and Jones Beaches in mid-March.

Counted on the census were 322 Mute Swans and two Whistling Swans. Particularly scarce among fresh-water ducks were Pintail (50 for the entire Long Island area), Green-winged Teal (17) and Shoveller (31). A good concentration of 908 Baldpate was found at Bridgehampton (C. McKeever) and 155 Ring-necked Ducks, around the Smithtown ponds, indicate the ever increasing influx of this species into the Northeast in recent years. The American Brant was confined principally to southwestern bays; 5,340 Canvas-backs comprised the major flock in the Little Neck Bay - Flushing Bay area. Scaup were by far the commonest and most widespread duck with 39,165 for Long Island and 16,473 for the rest of Marine Region 10. The Black Duck was next with 20,209 for Long Island and 912 for the rest of the region.

Red-breasted Mergansers were plentiful on western bays, but very scarce on the sound near the city and on both forks of Long Island except at Montauk. On the Orient peninsula, in the township of Southold, Roy Latham found three species — 1,650 Black Ducks, 1,425 American Golden-eye and 1,250 Old-squaws to exceed the combined 1,127 of all three Scoters. No great scoter concentrations were listed, except one of about 8,000 at Jones Beach. Some 6,000 unidentified scoters, however, brought the White-winged Scoter count (6547) down considerably lower than it actually was and permitted the American Golden-eye to take third place on the list with a count of 8,416. Maximum Buffle-head: 403, Nicoll Point to Smith Point (R. Arbib, Jr.). Maximum Ruddy Ducks: East River, near Hunt Point, 122 (Elliott).

HAWKS — OWLS: A Bald Eagle was seen at South Haven; Accipiters were scarce; Red-tailed Hawk was reported from four locations; the Rough-legged Hawk was rather uncommon — the latest, Brookhaven, March 20. A Red-shouldered Hawk was present at Pelham in mid-December. The Duck Hawk was extremely rare, and Gyrfalcons absent this winter.

There were two King Rail records in January from eastern Long Island, several of Virginia Rail through the winter and about a half dozen Wilson's Snipe at Tackapausha Preserve near Seaford consistently for several months. Good winter records of Red-backed Sandpipers and Sanderlings came in, and several breakwaters, eastward to Montauk, harboured Purple Sandpipers. Iceland Gulls were rather scarce. There were four or five records of Glaucous; several of Kittiwake; 250 Bonaparte's at Rockaway, Dec. 11. Four Black Skimmers were seen flying low over the water at Atlantic beach, Jan. 2 (J. Bull, A. Penberthy). Several Razor-billed Auks appeared off eastern Long Island; a Black Guillemot was reported from western Long Island (Mayer, Rose), and a Brunnich's Murre at Atlantic Beach, Dec. 21 (J. Bull). A flock of about 25 Mourning Doves spent part of the winter at Tackapausha Preserve, flying in at night to roost. The Snowy Owl flight was comparatively light with maximum numbers around the end of the year. Several records of Short-eared Owls came in from Jamaica Bay; two of Long-eared, Mar. 17 at North Hills, and a Great Horned Owl was present at Orient, Feb. 21 (R. Latham).

SWIFTS — TANAGERS: Kingfishers and Flickers were rather scarce; Tree Swallows wintered at Jones Beach in the Cedar Beach area with goodly numbers of

Myrtle Warblers, both subsisting on the fair crop of bayberries (Myrica). Several records of Brown-capped Chickadees came in, one of two present at North Hills into mid-March. Several Mockingbirds were seen; a few Bluebirds wintered; Pipsits were scarce — the latest; one at Orient, Dec. 23. Orange-crowned Warblers appeared at Babylon and Manhasset, and a Western Tanager was observed at a feeding station at Locust Valley into early April (Mrs. E. Wright).

FINCHES — SPARROWS: Cardinals were fairly common and appeared to winter well. Evening Grosbeaks were casually reported to the first of the year. Pine Grosbeaks and Redpolls infrequently reported, but Red and White-winged Crossbills were abundant into the new year with drastic reduction of numbers by late January. The Ipswich Sparrow was regular at Short Beach; three were reported around Jamaica Bay and several elsewhere in spite of sterile conditions on the outer beaches. Early optimistic reports of Snow Buntings faded with poor feeding conditions and the latest record was a lone bird, March 12, at Atlantic Beach. A few Lapland Longspurs were reported in late fall, but apparently didn't linger.

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Notes From Here and There

COOPER'S HAWKS

This winter we had two extremely good opportunities to study hawks at close hand.

In January, I discovered a Sharp-shinned Hawk in the largest of the poultry houses. It had found its way into one of the top-floor windows, but evidently was too puzzled by the tip-up to make an exit. I was able to corner and pick it up. We banded it that evening and released it the following day.

The hawk showed absolutely no fear of humans, and its heartbeat during handling was not obviously increased, as seems to be the case with many smaller species of birds which we have raised. It seemed quite content to perch the afternoon out in a large aviary in our kitchen. The interest it displayed whenever the refrigerator and oven doors were opened was extremely amusing. Evidently the automatic lights in the daytime proved an irresistible attraction. When it was turned loose in the house, Mrs. Carr had no difficulty in retrieving it from the floor or from the backs of chairs where it perched. Human-raised, probably?

Again, on February 18th, I found a hawk, this time a Cooper's, under similar circumstances. This fellow was intent on making short shrift of one of our plump Leghorn hens. Early in his career of predation, he must have feasted — with, no doubt, a great deal of opposition — on a rabbit. A thong of rabbit skin with some fur still adhering to the hide was wound around the toes of one foot. So tightly had the hawk's toes become interlaced that two toes had atrophied and dropped off.

About six inches of the thong still dangled hazardously, but the contact portion of the hide was so deeply imbedded and so steel-hardened that I had no choice but to cut partially into the toes to remove it. Some slight bleeding occurred, but apparently no serious damage resulted. This chap was also fearless but certainly not tame. We took several good snapshots after banding him. Since his release, we have observed two of his species