

REGION 8 — HUDSON - MOHAWK

JAMES K. MERITT

The winter was a relatively mild one, with above normal temperatures recorded in Schenectady in each of the four months. February temperatures were no less than 4.6 degrees above the average. Precipitation was about normal in December, February, and March. January, however, was one of the driest months on record in the Schenectady area, with only .56 inches of precipitation recorded.

LOONS — DUCKS: A Holboell's Grebe was seen at Lake Saratoga on December 5 (Schenectady Bird Club). A Mute Swan was observed there on December 4 (Nelle Van Vorst) and on subsequent dates later in the month. A most interesting record is that of some 38 Snow Geese first seen by Walter Kaskin on March 26 along the Mohawk near Niskayuna. A male Wood Duck was seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count of December 26 (SBC). Another bird was reported that week from Watervliet Reservoir, just south of Schenectady. Several pairs of Hooded Mergansers were on the Mohawk at Scotia on March 20 (James Meritt). American Mergansers wintered wherever there was open water.

HAWKS — OWLS: A Rough-legged Hawk was seen near Scotia on December 12 (Esly Hallenbeck), and another was observed near Altamont on January 30 (Sam Madison). On February 1 and 4 one was reported from Delmar, near Albany (Walt Sabin). A Bald Eagle was seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count, and two adult Bald Eagles were observed along the Hudson below Albany on January 16 (SM, WS). Two Coots were observed at Saratoga Lake on December 31 (NVV), and one was seen on the Troy Christmas Count of January 2 (SBC). One or two winter Killdeer reports were received. A Woodcock was seen at Amsterdam on March 13 (Margaret Fitzgerald). A Great Black-backed Gull was seen along the Mohawk at Scotia on March 1 and 2 (Guy Bartlett) and again on March 27 (JM, NVV). Six species of owls were reported during the period. A Barn Owl was captured, photographed, and released at a Schenectady church on February 19 (Mildred Cray). A Screech Owl was seen under the eaves of a barn at Gallupville on January 31 (Grace Zimmer). Three Great Horned Owls were recorded on the Schenectady Christmas Count (SBC), and one was heard at Alplaus on January 21 (Adeline Heitkamp). A Snowy Owl was observed near Altamont on January 31 (SM, JM). On March 10 a Barred Owl was found dead along a road near Albany. The specimen was identified by Dr. Allen Benton. On January 16 a Short-eared Owl was seen near Catskill (JM).

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Pileated Woodpeckers were reported from quite a few localities. A Brown-capped Chickadee was seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count, and another individual was present throughout January at Lock 1 along the Hudson (SBC). On January 24 two Carolina Wrens were seen at Scotia (EH). A Brown Thrasher was observed at Scotia on February 15 (EH), and a Robin was seen there on January 3 (NVV). An interesting note concerns the Kinglets; not a one — of either species — was reported throughout the period. Several Northern Shrikes were observed, and a Loggerhead Shrike, well studied, was seen near Rexford on March 2 (EH).

VIREOS — WARBLERS: Nothing to report.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: During the last week of December two Baltimore Orioles were seen, one at a feeder in Amsterdam and the other at a feeder in Slingerlands (SBC). A lone Rusty Blackbird was reported from Loudonville on January 1 and February 17 (Mabel French). Two Cowbirds frequented an Amsterdam feeder in January (Margaret Fitzgerald). Cardinal records were unprecedented, and suffice it to say that anywhere from 8 to 10 individuals were reported. Last year's nesting may well be repeated. A Dickcissel, recorded on the Amsterdam Christmas Count of December 26, was present there to at least January 26. Evening Grosbeaks were reported throughout the winter from feeders in Amsterdam and Broadalbin and in several other areas. Purple Finches were extremely scarce; only four individuals were reported. In sharp contrast, it was a banner winter for Pine Grosbeaks. Flocks of up to 50 or so were reported until the beginning of the fourth week in January. Then, suddenly, the birds disappeared, possibly because of the relatively warm weather then prevalent. Redpolls were abundant throughout the area, with many reports received from many areas. Pine Siskins were present in fewer numbers.

Fourteen Red Crossbills and a group of some twenty White-winged Crossbills were seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count (SBC). A small group of White-winged Crossbills was reported from Ballston Lake in late February and early March (NVV). The first local record of Oregon Junco was made on January 9 near New Scotland when Mr. and Mrs. Byran Hipple carefully studied one which was with a group of Slate-colored. In late March two "suspicious-looking" juncos were reported from a feeder in Amsterdam, but specific identification could not be made before the birds departed. A White-throated Sparrow was seen at Scotia on January 24 (EH). Several groups of Snow Buntings were reported, with an estimate of 1,000 near Scotia on March 8 being especially noteworthy (Mr. and Mrs. J. Voght). Two Lapland Longspurs were recorded on the Troy Christmas Count of January 2 (SBC).
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REGION 9 — DELAWARE - HUDSON

ROBERT F. DEED

Most of this winter's snowfall was packed into March and late February. After a nasty November, the season led off with a mild, wet December. Then came a deceptively rigorous January; most people seemed to think it was a mild month, yet records showed that it was much colder than average, as well as the driest in Weather Bureau history.

The more violent weather of late February and all of March — with coatless days interspersed with windy 20-degree days, and thunderstorms mixed with snowstorms — didn't seem to affect the spring migration one whit. On Feb. 16, migrant robins and grackles appeared at Nyack in numbers, and song sparrows and cardinals burst into full song — all on a cold, blustery day. On Feb. 19, redwings appeared in flocks of up to 200 in the interior of Rockland County; on Feb. 26, flocks of Canada geese headed northward; on Mar. 9, robins and fox sparrows flooded into Rockland County in great numbers.

Waterfowl population remained about normal in Ulster County, but was regarded as subnormal in Rockland, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester until the northward migration began. Then the ducks were more than satisfactory.

Northern finches apparently went farther south, too, like the waterfowl. They were abundant in early winter, though less so than in 1951-52; most were absent in January and early February, reappearing then in good-sized flocks. Brown-capped Chickadees were a rare treat of the winter. Red-breasted Nuthatches wintered in modest numbers.

LOONS — DUCKS: A Common Loon on Orange Lake, Orange County, Mar. 26 to 28 was early (Edward D. Treacy). At Lake Gleneida, Putnam County, Mrs. George W. Little got a high count of nine Pied-billed Grebes on Jan. 17. Rockland County had a Great Blue Heron on Mar. 19, a new early date (Dr. M. R. Hopper, Eugene R. Brown); in Katonah, Westchester, Mrs. Ruth G. Grierson found one on Mar. 29, and her husband Stanley saw one at Cross River the next day.

The waterfowl census in Ulster County on Jan. 23 turned up a Canada Goose on Ashokan Reservoir — very unusual (Henry and Ilse Dunbar, Fred Hough). The reservoir also held an outstanding number of 650 Black Ducks at the same time, although all but 30 or 40 acres of the lake was frozen.

Numbers of the beautiful Ring-necked Duck are evidently still rising. On the waterfowl census, Jan. 15, Mr. and Mrs. Grierson and John and Edward Kelly counted 262 on Titicus Reservoir in Westchester; in early March, more than 125 were on Congers Lake in Rockland; four were even on the Hudson River at Cornwall, Orange County, from Dec. 27 through Jan. 3 (Treacy).

Canvasbacks, too, were widely distributed in the lower Hudson Valley. The Rockland Audubon Society Christmas count found more than 250 at Stony Point; only 75 were still there on Feb. 27, but others were scattered up and down the river from Piermont to Cornwall. Redheads appeared on Congers Lake for the first time in recent years, six of them from Mar. 9 to Mar. 31 (Dr. Hopper). Buffleheads also moved inland: to Lake Gilead and Lake Gleneida at Carmel, Putnam County, on