

REGIONAL REPORTS

HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER 1955 THROUGH MARCH 1956

This was, as one regional editor put it very well, a rough winter. December was cold in some regions, extremely cold in others. Those in western and southern New York who were bothered by frozen ponds, marshes, rivers and bays should note the 28 day average temperature of -2°F . in the Champlain Region. Some regions witnessed more raw faces than species on Christmas Counts. Snowfall records were set in Regions 3 and 5, and the entire state was blanketed with a heavy mid-March fall. This late blizzard delayed many early migrants and showed evidence in some regions of exacting a toll of those which did arrive on time.

Warblers give perhaps the best evidence of the severity of the early winter cold. Early records are good: a Chat Dec. 1 on Long Island, a Yellow Warbler Dec. 18 at Cortland. But there is only one record of a possible wintering warbler upstate: a Yellow-throat at Rochester (found by a peregrinating Buffalo group. Even southern areas found the Myrtle in only small numbers. Snowy Owls and wintering hawks were also down. Purple Finch populations were very poor in most regions with no build-up in March.

Contrary to expectations herons were reported in five of the eight upstate regions, Wood Ducks in three. A Yellow-crowned Night Heron was found on the waterfowl count on Long Island. Shrike counts were good; Robins surprising. Regions 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9 found Robins in unprecedented numbers. Evening Grosbeaks were state-wide in large numbers; one of the best items of evidence: Sally Hoyt banding over 700. There were good populations of other finches except Purple. Six Towhees evidently wintered in widely scattered parts of the state, and although fluctuations were apparent Snow Bunting populations appeared to be very good.

Other good records: a Kittiwake and late Little Gulls in the Niagara Gorge; a Magpie on Long Island; a Barrow's Golden-eye near Albany.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

CLARK S. BEARDSLEE

This was a period of severe winter weather, particularly during the first half. December was the coldest in eleven years and during January the temperature at no time reached 40° . February was a trifle warmer than average, due more to lack of below-zero days than to the presence of warm days; and March was never-ending disappointment to those who were looking for two nice days back-to-back. Early March migrants such as swans, geese, Robins, Red-wings, and Killdeer, were treated to some mighty stiff weather soon after their arrival, and their powers of endurance were severely tested. Difficult to explain in light of this unusually cold winter was the presence of Bonaparte's Gulls on the Niagara River all winter, something which has happened rarely in the past and then only during a very mild win-