

A male Towhee was present near Scotia for about two weeks in mid-December (fide GB). On December 12 a well-marked Oregon Junco appeared at Mrs. Louis Novak's feeder in Niskayuna, and the bird has been seen there off and on throughout the winter. Several observers have confirmed the identification. Three Field Sparrows were seen near Troy on January 2 (SBC), an addition to the composite Christmas Count list there. Four White-throated Sparrows appeared at an East Chatham feeder on January 12 and were more or less regular thereafter (ER). There were one or two December reports for this species. Snow Buntings were observed in better than average numbers. The high count of 300 was obtained by Robert Yunnick at Sacandaga Reservoir on December 29. There were other reports from Fultonville, Vischer's Ferry, Rexford, Rotterdam, and Mechanicville.

901 State Street, Schenectady 7, New York

REGION 9 — DELAWARE HUDSON

ROBERT F. DEED

A delightfully crisp early winter, marred for waterfowling only by the heavy freeze even of the brackish Hudson, turned suddenly snowy in March. Even in Ulster County, high and northerly, the snowfall was insignificant through February; then 16 to 18 inches fell in two weeks (Fred Hough). Near New York City, December was 5.4 degrees below normal—coldest for the month in 29 years—without any extremely cold days; January and February were near normal in temperature, far below normal in precipitation.

Southerly counties of the region may have had more snow than northerly ones in March. Through February, for example, Rockland County had less than 3 inches of snow; in March and the first week or so of April, it had nearly 3 feet of snow.

This late snowfall caught many birds in transit. Such migrants as Mourning Dove, Robin, Phoebe, the blackbirds, and Fox Sparrow come to feeders in villages in such numbers that birders were deluged with phone calls from non-birders, asking for indentifications and explanations. Fortunately, we escaped severe icing conditions that might have taken a heavy toll of bird life.

Your compiler must make special note of the excellence of this season's reports from cooperators in the various counties: Mrs. William Grierson, Northern Westchester and Putnam; Wilber P. Carr, Sullivan; Fred Hough, Ulster; Edward D. Treacy, Orange; John C. Orth, Bear Mountain Park, and many Rockland Audubon Society members. Coverage was the best yet attained, as it was also for the January waterfowl count.

LOONS — DUCKS: A new reservoir, two and a half miles long and barely half a mile wide, started filling up in February between West Nyack and New City, in Rockland County. It replaces an area that was superlative for nesting Least Bitterns, Pileated Woodpeckers and other species, but local birders' sense of loss is eased by the readiness of waterfowl to take advantage of the open water. Through March, Mrs. Marjorie R. Hooper had seen the Canada Goose, Horned and Pied-billed Grebe, and ten species of ducks, including such "bay" ducks as Canvasback, Red-head and Bufflehead.

A Great Blue Heron at Rock Hill, Sullivan, on Mar. 29 was quite early (Furman). An American Bittern at New City, Rockland, on Mar. 18 was either very early or had wintered (Frank R. Steffens). Hooded Mergansers wintered in notable numbers in northern Westchester (Stanley Grierson et al.).

The waterfowl migration was in full swing by Mar. 10, on which date Ed Treacy found 11 species on Orange Lake, near Newburgh: Mallard 6, Black 112, Baldpate

6, Pintail (first he had seen in Orange County) 20, Ring-necked 59, Greater Scaup 13-15, Golden-eye 20-plus, Bufflehead 1 male, Hooded Merganser 6, American Merganser 50-plus, Red-breasted Merganser (rare inland) 1 male. On the same date, six Canada Geese were on Tomahawk Lake, south of Washingtonville and far from the Hudson River.

Blue-winged Teal appeared at Congers Lake, Rockland, on March 29 (Hopper), a new early date for the county.

HAWKS — OWLS: Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and the usual accipiters were about normally abundant. Ulster County had the only notable additions: a Goshawk spotted by Heinz Meng and others near New Paltz on Jan. 15, during the waterfowl count, and a Rough-legged Hawk found near Stone Ridge in mid-December by Fred Hough. The Rough-leg was studied at length by Hough and Daniel Smiley until Feb. 3; it did most of its hunting in one small field that was found to contain a high population of field mice. The hawk often hovered on a wind coming up the slope from the north. A five-inch snowfall on Feb. 2 apparently caused it to move on.

Two very late Turkey Vultures were seen over South Salem, Westchester, by Edward Kurka on Dec. 14. This species' absence was brief, since the first seven returning birds are reported for Feb. 23 at Orr's Mills, Orange (Treacy). By four days later, this roost had built up to 23 birds. The first Turkey Vulture noted in the Bear Mountain area was on Mar. 3, but more than 25 were present on the next day (Orth). Also on March 4, Wilber Carr saw Sullivan County's first four vultures at Pond Eddy.

A Bald Eagle was feeding on a dead deer at Kensico Reservoir, Westchester, at the end of December (William Russell). After a heavy, crusted snow on Mar. 22, Wilber Carr found an obviously hungry female Sparrow Hawk eating fat from a ham rind for half an hour at his feeder; other birds stayed out of sight for this time.

A Coot visited the Monticello lumber yard on Mar. 3, was caught by Mrs. Edward McBride and Mr. and Mrs. Atwell, banded by Kenneth D. Niven, and released at Mongaup Reservoir the next day.

Several reports of Great Horned Owls. Hough reports hearing Long-eared Owls in Ulster County a few times in January and the Saw-whet Owl several times in February, up to Mar. 2. In Mt. Kisco, Westchester, Mrs. H. A. Yoars saw a Saw-whet Owl eating a mouse on Dec. 12.

SWIFTS — SHRIKES: Carr reports Pileated Woodpeckers seen more often than usual in Sullivan County, and closer to habitations. One bird visited a feeder in Monticello (McBride).

Two Phoebees were noted in Rockland County on Mar. 10 by Eugene R. Brown. Such early arrivals had to endure a two-day, 18-inch snow on the following weekend, but they seemed to survive. The first Westchester date for Phoebe was Mar. 17 (Andrew McWaters), and the first for Fort Montgomery, Orange County, was Mar. 24 (Orth).

Horned Larks were scarcer than usual. A small flock of Tree Swallows on Mar. 6 at Rockland County's new reservoir was very early (Dr. Hopper, Ruth Steffens). Another apparent Raven (1956, *Kingbird* 5 (4):114) was seen at Congers on Dec. 5 by Dr. Hopper. Through December and January, a Tufted Titmouse frequented the feeding station of Mrs. C. A. Smith in Croton Falls, Putnam County — near the northern and inland range limit of this species in this area. A Carolina Wren turned up at Bear Mountain, Rockland-Orange, on Apr. 3 (Orth), showing survival through the March storms near its northern limit of range in the Hudson Valley. Ed Treacy found a Catbird at Highland Falls, Orange, on Feb. 5, and a Brown Thrasher visited the feeder of Mrs. Bradhurst Field, Jr., in Sloatsburg, Rockland, on a mild, sunny Jan. 15.

A spectacular feature of the winter in Rockland, Orange, and Westchester was the unprecedented number of Robins. Some of the larger flocks: Jan. 15, more than 300 at Rockland Lake (Eben Moore and party); late January, between 700 and 800 at Viola, Rockland County; Feb. 6, about 100 at Purdy's, Westchester (Kurka); Feb. 10, 40 in Pound Ridge, Westchester (Mrs. Murry); Feb. 25, about 100 at New Windsor, Orange (Treacy). Hough reports a few flocks wintering in Ulster County, too. Unlike their behavior in most winters, this year's Robins flooded into villages and fed on lawns and at feeders. The darker colors of the northern race were often noticed by even the most casual backyard bird-watchers.

A Hermit Thrush in Sparrowbush, Sullivan County, was noteworthy on Feb. 26 (Hammond). Hough reports Bluebirds scarce in Ulster.

It was a big winter for the Northern Shrike. The occurrences are worth listing

as an index of distribution, strongest in Ulster and northern Westchester:

Ulster County — Frequently encountered all winter, bare ground apparently favoring their hunting, as in the case of hawks and owls. During the Mar. 19 blizzard, Hough found a bird in full song at Stone Ridge. This Catbird-like song is rarely heard here.

Sullivan County — One bird on Mar. 14 at Liberty (Chernick).

Westchester County — Dec. 5 and 8, Katonah (Stanley Grierson); Dec. 27, two in Katonah (William Russell); Jan. 14, Purdys (Mr. and Mrs. Grierson, John, Margaret and Edward Kelly); Jan. 15, Cornell Dam at Croton (same observers); Feb. 26, South Salem (Grierson); Feb. 27, Armonk (Grierson).

The Migrant (Loggerhead) Shrike also appeared in early spring. The species was carefully identified by Frank Steffens and Ed Treacy on Mar. 30 and Apr. 3 at different localities in Rockland.

VIREOS — WARBLERS: With a poor bayberry crop, Myrtle Warblers were scarce in Rockland and Westchester Counties. They are noteworthy in Ulster, and Hough reports one staying near his home throughout March; another was seen near High Falls on Mar. 25 by Hough, Mr. and Mrs. Henry K. Dunbar, and Samuel and Helen Hayes.

BLACKBIRDS — SPARROWS: In many ways, this segment of the checklist offered the winter's best sport. Blackbirds, as a family, were more prevalent than usual, and it was a good year for northern finches.

Even in Ulster County, a few Meadowlarks wintered (Hough). There were more than average in Rockland and Westchester. On Mar. 19, after a heavy snow, one sat on the window sill of Stanley Grierson's home in Katonah. At Ferndale, in Sullivan County, Wilber Carr had six Meadowlarks feeding on his patio on Mar. 17, the day after a heavy snowfall and freeze. They ate corn and wheat, perching on the back porch between feedings. One tailless bird stayed close to the door, perhaps to catch the heat that leaked out, and would move only when the door was opened. Carr remarks on the unusual number of birds this season with damaged or missing tails; he suggests the unusually severe winds of late winter may be responsible.

Red-winged Blackbirds returned Feb. 22 to the Nyack area and Feb. 23 to Katonah (Stan Grierson). During the subsequent storms, they came frequently to village backyards, along with Grackles and Cowbirds. Rockland Audubon Society had a record high count of 197 Red-wings on its Christmas census, Dec. 26.

An Orchard Oriole fed on suet at Pearl River, Rockland, from Jan. 31 through February (Mrs. Edward Backus, Mrs. Richard Weindling, Dr. Hopper). Six Rusty Blackbirds visited a feeder at Sparrowbush, Sullivan County, on Feb. 26 (Hammond).

The Mar. 19 blizzard brought no less than three Dickcissels and two Oregon Juncos to the feeder of Mrs. William G. Irving in West Nyack on Mar. 21. A Dickcissel was in Katonah, Westchester, on Jan. 18 (Mabel Melahn). Mrs. William Grierson in Katonah had a Pink-sided Junco at her feeder on Feb. 4 and thereafter; one had wintered in nearby Bedford a year earlier (Mrs. James Coyle). One was also reported at Kingston in February.

Evening Grosbeaks were abundant, widely distributed, while Pine Grosbeaks were relatively scarce. Five parties on the Rockland Audubon Society Christmas count, Dec. 26, reported a total of 27 Evening Grosbeaks; in January, Dr. Guy Deming counted about 30 in one tree near New City. Westchester records include: Dec. 9, small flock in Mt. Kisco (Mrs. Yoors); Dec. 11, 40 in Katonah (Robert Hamerslag); Dec. 15, 24 in Bedford (Peter Feret) and 65 in Katonah (Mrs. John Birch, Mrs. Clem Fowler); Dec. 27-31, 150 in Katonah (Russell). Jan. 13, 100 in Bedford (Mrs. Samuel Carter, III); Jan. 21, Bedford Hills (Mrs. James Cox); Jan. 27, 100 in Katonah (Mabel Melahn); Feb. 22, 20 in Katonah (Mrs. F. H. Lent); Mar. 3, Mt. Kisco (McWaters); Mar. 31, 50 in Katonah (Mrs. Lent).

Three Pine Grosbeaks appeared on the Rockland Christmas count, Dec. 26. Ed Treacy found 17 birds at West Point on Feb. 18. The only Pine Grosbeaks in Ulster County were reported by Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar and Tom Morgan. None were reported in Sullivan. In Westchester: three at Amawalk Reservoir on Dec. 3 (Dr. Andrew Weir and Stan Grierson); one in Katonah at the end of December (Russell); three in Bedford Center on Jan. 20 (Grierson); about 12 at Salem Center on Feb. 26 (Stan and Ruth Grierson); 15 at Cross River on Feb. 28 (Grierson).

Redpolls were common in March, with flocks of well over 100 (Orth). Purple Finches were scarce in Ulster (Hough). A few White-winged Crossbills: Dec. 10 and almost daily from Mar. 26 to Apr. 3 at Fort Montgomery (Orth); two in Sullivan County on Mar. 19 (Niven), and one in Katonah on Mar. 24 (Russell).

A male Towhee spent the entire winter in Forestburg, Sullivan County, sleeping at night in a clothespin basket against a house (Winterberger). Another Towhee was seen at Pond Eddy on Mar. 4 by Wilber Carr. Fox Sparrows were unusually abundant during March. Snow Buntings were generally scarce, but Kenneth Niven counted 100 at Monticello on Feb. 21.

50 Clinton Ave., Nyack, N. Y.

REGION 10 — MARINE

JOHN J. ELLIOTT

Cold December weather brought a freeze-up with many ponds and large parts of the bay closed; these opened to some extent with a January thaw which permitted better counts of Anatinae. Early winter snows were light on western Long Island with a mid-January fall of several inches on the western half; this developed into 11 inches in eastern Suffolk county woodland, and snow-drifts to the top of snow fences bordering the wind-blown rye fields around Water Mill.

The real heavy snowfall of the winter came March 16-19 with eastern Long Island again taking the brunt and huge drifts tying up trains and traffic. Later the weather was cold and backward into early April. Early spring migration progressed until the mid-March snowfall when the northern movement slackened and many reports come in of hungry birds at feeding stations. Excellent coverage by numerous observers on the Audubon Christmas Bird Count resulted in large number of species identified. In some cases numbers were down, but Mourning Doves, Robins, Hermit Thrushes and Cowbirds were plentiful on western Long Island along the north shore.

January highlights were the Federation's second annual waterfowl count, January 15-22 and the third annual Montauk rendezvous of birders, sponsored by the Queens County Bird Club, which was well attended and helped augment records at this slow time of the year. Regarding the waterfowl count, some 65 observers gave excellent cooperation in covering the Long Island-New York City region. Clubs well represented by individuals were: Linnaean Society, Brooklyn Bird Club, Lyman Langdon Audubon Society and Queens County Bird Club. This year's poor approach to the 1955 count of 202 Common Loons was 70, while the 1955 count of 128 Pied-billed Grebes almost doubled this year's total of 67. The 83,336 Greater Scaup listed in the entire Marine Region, over last year's 55,638, was almost 59 percent of the total of all 38 species listed.

The extended hunting season seemed to affect Black Duck, American Golden-eye, Buffle-head and Red-breasted Merganser which were drastically down from last year. Scaup on the other hand were in safe or semi-protected waters with seven-eighths around New York City wharfs and harbors, in Jamaica Bay and on the western bays of the north shore.

LOONS — DUCKS: There were large numbers of Horned Grebes; no Eared Grebes and Red-necked were rather scarce. Five Gannets were present at Montauk, Feb. 28; over 25 European Cormorants rather regularly reported at the point and several in three or four locations westward. There were also two records of Double-breasted Cormorants, one bird each. Herons: fair numbers of Great Blue; three American Egrets in the Hempstead region, Dec. early Jan., with one on Feb. 13 at Hempstead Lake State Park (D. Guthrie); one Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Lindenhurst, Jan. 14 (M. Nichols). Only one Whistling Swan reported: Brookhaven, early