

Two Oregon Juncos were present at East Chatham late in the winter, and the birds were seen by many observers. The species was last recorded there on Mar 17. A White-crowned Sparrow was present at Burnt Hills from Dec 29 until Jan 19, and this bird, too, attracted many local observers. The White-throated Sparrow was reported as wintering at Niskayuna (Eddy) and Loudonville (French). Although Snow Buntings were reported in small numbers during the fall, there were no winter reports.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

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The winter period showed some weather abnormality. November was warm, followed by a warm and wet December. January was cold with a run on sub-zero temperatures from the 14th thru the 20th. Snowfall for the month was about normal. February was warm and dry with only 1/3 the amount of normal snowfall. March appeared to be about normal.

Throughout our Region there was one comment that was characteristic of our winter season — "No Northern Finches!" Evening and Pine Grosbeaks were almost non-existent during the period, while Purple Finches, Siskins and Crossbills were almost as scarce. It was a decided "off year" for this group. The Rough-legged Hawk was the only Northern visitor that occurred here in numbers, which were not high but nevertheless good for that species.

In contrast, the scarcity of northern visitors was greatly compensated for by the presence of an unusual number of wintering vagrants from the fall migration — birds that normally winter further south. This added new species to the winter lists and many late dates were recorded. Apparently the stable, fair weather of October and November influenced numerous migrants to linger longer than usual and finally "running out of migration fuel," they had no alternative but to attempt wintering. Most of these birds seemed to be in the counties bordering the Hudson River, with the greatest concentrations being in the lower part of the Valley. According to Wilber Carr, birding in Sullivan County was very poor in general.

To date the Spring migration has appeared normal and unspectacular.

Loons — Ducks: The Common Loon was seen off Grand View, Rockland Co., Dec 29 by David Hill, making a first record for this bird on a RAS Christmas count. At least two Great Blue Herons are known to have wintered. One about the vicinity of Tomahawk Lake in Orange Co. (Martha Earl) and another near New City (Dr. Katherine Fagan). Five were recorded on the RAS Christmas count, Dec 29. A first winter record for the Green Heron in the Bear Mt. area was made on Dec 22 by John Orth, John Kenney and Peter Smith. Another first winter record was a Black-crowned Night Heron found near Congers Lake, Dec 29, by RAS Christmas count participants, Katherine Dienemann and Dr. Marjorie Hopper. Some late staying Canada Geese were reported in the Region: 20 at the Cross River Reservoir, Westchester, Dec 28 (Wm. Russell). One bird on the Ashokan Res. in Ulster, Dec 29 and again Jan 9 (Al Feldman). Feldman reports early Spring migrants over the Ashokan Reservoir, Mar 12. A late Snow Goose was seen near Cornwall, Orange Co., Dec 5 (Paul Jeheber, fide Treacy). The wintering Duck populations seemed to follow the usual trend, some species up in numbers while others were down. Considerable shifting of these birds during mid-winter was undoubtedly caused by the freezing over of many lakes and streams. Nothing unusual has been reported on the Spring migrants.

Hawks — Owls: The first Turkey Vulture reported in the Region appeared near Mohonk Lake, Ulster Co., on Feb 15 (Dan Smiley). This is the earliest recorded date for that county. Bob Deed reports that in Rockland the wintering Hawks were scarcer than usual. In Ulster, the Red-tailed occurred in good numbers (Hough, Pyle). Rough-legged Hawks were reported in Ulster (Hough, Pyle et al), in Orange (Martha Earl) and in Westchester (Wm. Russell). No doubt better coverage would have turned up more reports on this splendid boreal Buteo since many areas of our Region supports a high population of field mice, which constitutes a chief item of fare on this hawk's diet. As long as there is little or no snow cover, Rough-legs are apt to remain about productive feeding areas. The various reservoirs located in the lower Hudson Valley are winter-time attractions for the Bald Eagle as well as the Hudson River. Reports seem to be increasing from these areas. Killdeers were found in Rockland (Bob Deed), and a small number lingered into Jan near Carmel, Putnam (Mabel Little). Also two were seen near Mt. Kisco, Westchester, Jan 27 (Andrew McWaters). So far as known, Killdeers have never been reported during Winter in the upper group of counties. Near Farmingdale, Orange Co., Mar 6, Martha Earl found a dead Woodcock in the road. It was probably an early migrant. Mrs. Earl also saw two Wilson's Snipe near Farmingdale on Mar 9. Little of special interest was noted concerning our Owls, except perhaps, the finding of a Long-eared Owl in New York City, Rockland on Dec 4 by John Price.

Swifts — Shrikes: Kingfishers apparently stayed in greater numbers. Bob Deed estimated at least six in Rockland and Martha Earl saw one off an on all winter near Farmingdale in adjacent Orange Co. Still higher up, in Ulster Co., one was seen along the Esopus Creek near Lomontville, Jan 11, by Henry and Ilse Dunbar. Strangely, the Flicker was only reported in Ulster Co. Of great interest in Rockland was the wintering of a Red-headed Woodpecker, first discovered by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens near Lake DeForest on Oct 13, 1956. An immature bird last fall, it has gradually changed into bright plumage with the coming of spring. A Sapsucker appeared at the home of Eugene Brown in Upper Nyack, Rockland, Dec 30, and was joined by another bird on Jan 10 and thereafter. The Phoebe was found on two occasions during the season. During the RAS Christmas count on Dec 29 one was found near Suffern (Homer Kelsey). Another Phoebe was discovered at Kyserike, Ulster Co. by Sanford Cross (fide Dunbars) on Jan 21. This bird stayed only a few days during which it was noted feeding extensively on sluggish flies that were crawling about the sunny exposed sides of some local buildings. Migrant Phoebes began to appear in various parts of the Region around Mar 10. Although a few Horned Larks were observed in Ulster during the winter they were for the most part very scarce in this Region.

A very late Tree Swallow was seen in Katonah, Westchester, Dec 20 (Wm. Russell). A spring migrant arrived at Kripplebush, Ulster, Mar 24 (Fred Hough). The Red-breasted Nuthatch was almost non-existent with only one report received, that coming from the Ashokan Reservoir area in Ulster (Al Feldman). Ordinarily we would never expect to get all of the mimic thrushes on a winter list in this region for any one year but it did occur this past season. One Mockingbird spent the whole winter about Mount Kisco, Westchester and was heard singing on Mar 24 (Paul DeLaura, Dr. Helen Braem). It frequently visited a local feeder and ate the wild bird seed offered. Two other Mockers were known to winter in Rockland, one at New City thru January and the other at Pomona (Mr. and Mrs. Craig Campbell) from mid-Jan to mid-Feb. A Brown Thrasher was found during mid-Dec near the Clove Chapel (below Mohonk Lake) in Ulster Co. by Rev. George Wood. The Catbird was found on several accounts in the lower part of the Region. A high of five was recorded on the RAS Christmas count Dec 29. One was seen at Congers on Jan 12 (Eugene Brown, Dr. Marjorie Hopper). In Westchester, a Catbird was found at Cross River, Dec 23 (Dr. Andrew Weir). Still another was observed in an area of Putnam Valley, Westchester, during latter Jan (Paul Wolf). The wintering Robin population in the Hudson Valley was not high this year and Bluebirds were generally scarce. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported from Ulster, Rockland and Westchester and seemed to be up in winter numbers. Influx of Northern Shrikes was small.

Vireos — Warblers: Myrtle Warblers were probably quite common all along the Hudson Valley. Reports came from most areas and the bird was decidedly more

common in Ulster as compared to most years. A first New York State winter record for the Kentucky Warbler was made when one was discovered at Stone Ridge, Ulster, Dec 5 (Fred Hough). It was seen frequently up to Dec 27 when it suddenly disappeared. A surprising number of Yellow-breasted Chats remained into the winter. They rarely occur at this season. In Rockland Co. three or four were found. Katherine Dienemann observed one at Stony Point several times during latter Dec and early Jan. Another appeared at New City on Dec 25 and Jan 5 (Mrs. George Hudson and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens). A third was at the home of Thomas Dow in Grand View, Dec 30 and 31. Miss E. L. Crawford also had a Chat at her home in Nyack from Jan 13 through the rest of the month. The Dow-Crawford birds could be the same. Up in Ulster there was one record of a Chat. It appeared at the feeder of Mr. George Long (identified by Dr. Arthur Cragin and the Dunbars) in Kingston, Dec 6 and remained until about the 18th of Jan when it disappeared. Mr. Long provided daily feedings of crushed Hickory nuts which he scattered on the ground under some bushes.

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Meadowlarks were more abundant than usual and Mrs. Wm. Grierson states that some of the birds in Westchester went right into horse barns to feed upon the manure. Although the Redwings often winter in small numbers in the lower counties they are seldom reported farther up. This year, however, over two hundred were found in the New Paltz area of Ulster Co. on Dec 29 by Christmas count party. The first flock of probable spring migrants recorded in the Region was seen at South Nyack on Jan 28 (Mrs. Robert Deed). In Ulster, on Jan 17 a Baltimore Oriole was seen at a feeding station in New Paltz and was identified by Dr. Robert Pyle. Rusty Blackbirds were found in very small numbers near New Paltz, in mid-winter (Robert Pyle). Others were noted on the Bear Mt. Christmas count party. The first flock of probable spring migrants recorded in Hudson Valley have been increasing and expanding. Extremely poor flight year for both the Evening and Pine Grosbeaks in this Region. Purple Finches occurred in very small numbers and there were no records of any Redpolls. One Pine Siskin record; near Minnewaska, Ulster, Jan 30 (Robert Pyle). A pair of Red Crossbills appeared in Kingston, Ulster, Mar 17 (Sam and Helen Hayes) and is the only record.

The Towhees failed to drain completely out last fall and consequently several remained to stick out the cold and snow. Most of them were found down state but there was one Ulster Co. record. One female appeared at a feeder in Kingston (Mrs. Ella Arnold) on Jan 21 and remained for the rest of the season. In Rockland, five were seen on the RAS Christmas count, Dec 29; two at Pearl River (Mrs. Carl Paulson) on Dec 30; one at Congers (Bob Deed) Jan 6. All through January Dr. Marjorie Hopper had four males and two females. In Westchester, Towhees visited feeding stations (Mrs. F. H. Lent, Mrs. Wm. Grierson) during early Dec and on Jan 13 Mrs. Randall Trumpy found an ill male near Pound Ridge. Oddly enough, a long human hair was found in its throat. The hair was removed, the bird recovered and was released by Stanley Grierson in Katonah, Jan 16. Small numbers of Savannah Sparrows were found about the New Paltz flats, Ulster, during Dec and early Jan (Robert Pyle, et al). A first Regional winter record for the Vesper Sparrow was made on the RAS Christmas count Dec 29. The bird was found near Lake DeForest (Dr. Robert Burkhart, James Bloor). A small flock of Field Sparrows was reported near Monticello, Sullivan Co. on Dec 10 (Chernick). Even the White-crowned Sparrow was added to the winter list. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stansbury located this bird at Tallman Mt., Rockland, Dec 29, while on the RAS count. White-throated Sparrows remained in good numbers. An early migrant Fox Sparrow was seen near Mohonk Lake, Ulster, Feb 28 (R. Pyle). Song Sparrows were high through most of the main valleys of Ulster and were probably correspondingly high in many areas of the other counties. Snow buntings were very scarce or non-existent.

Special Note: Although not included in the scope of our Region, the rare Harlequin Duck found along the Connecticut shore near South Norwalk deserves mention. It was first seen Dec 28 (Don Reynolds, Ruth Grierson) and on Dec 30 (Dr. Harrison Coombs & Mrs. Charles Gortner). Again on Dec 31 (Bristow) and Jan 1 (Heustuss Poor, Mr. and Mrs. John Kelly and son Edward).

Accord 1, N. Y.