

Blackbirds — Sparrows: Several Meadowlarks were seen from Mar 20 to 28. Redwings came in about Mar 28, but one woman in Tupper Lake had a Redwing at her feeder all winter long. Crackles and Cowbirds arrived Mar 15. From Dec 6 on we have had Evening Grosbeaks in flocks from 50 to 100 at feeding stations. The number began tapering off around Mar 1, but there were still quite a few around. Pine Grosbeaks were present in small flocks during January and February.

Pine Siskins and Goldfinches were around in large flocks from early Dec on, but Redpolls were not noted until the latter part of Feb. One could see flocks of these birds feeding along the roadsides. This has been a fine year for the White-winged Crossbill. These showed up about Dec 1. Many flocks fed upon the gravel and sand in the roads, and as a result there were many casualties. Dr. Kingsbury, on a trip from Tupper Lake to Saranac Lake, counted 25 dead birds. Only a few small flocks of Red Crossbills were occasionally seen. One or two Purple Finches made regular appearances at the feeders. It was not until the latter part of March that they came in larger numbers and even started singing.

Tree Sparrows were not as plentiful this year as in other years. The first Fox Sparrow put in an appearance on Mar 31. No Snow Buntings were seen in this immediate area.

I would like to point out that my address is not Tupper Lake, but rather Sunmount.
Veteran's Administration Hospital, Box 63, Sunmount

REGION 8 — MOHAWK - HUDSON

JAMES K. MERITT

The winter season provided no real extremes from a weather standpoint, but general cold seemed to persist for extended periods. And almost constant winds added to the discomforture. However, the season was one which did provide a good bit of interesting birding. There were late holdovers and early arrivals among the small land bird population. The spring waterfowl season got off to a good start, and the Barrow's Goldeneye was a feature of mid-winter trips to the central Hudson.

Evening Grosbeaks were present in good numbers throughout, and the other winter finches were represented to a lesser degree. Robins appeared in flocks beginning in mid-January, and Purple Finches early in March became more conspicuous than they have been for years.

Forty species were seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count; thirty-seven were at Troy, and thirty-five were at Chatham, with an additional ten species being recorded on near dates at the latter locality.

Loons — Ducks: Ten species of waterfowl were observed on the Christmas count at Troy on Dec 27 (Schenectady Bird Club), possibly a record. Of especial interest was a male Barrow's Goldeneye; this bird remained for the Federation waterfowl count on Jan 18 but was not seen thereafter. This marks the third winter in the last four that the Barrow's Goldeneye has been seen along the Hudson above Albany. I would doubt that there was any other spot in the state that could boast of such regularity. Also of note at Troy on Dec 27 were a Pintail, a Lesser Scaup, a White-winged Scoter, and four Red-breasted Mergansers. Six Red-breasted Mergansers were seen on the count at Chatham also on Dec 27 (Alan Devoe Bird Club).

Other mid-winter records of waterfowl were scarce, but there was a notable movement of these birds along the Hudson in late March. The Hudson below Albany provided poor pickings until Mar 27 although it was largely free of ice after early in the month. On the 27th a group of some 60 Snow Geese was seen at Ravena (Madison). Two days later about 28 of these birds — probably part of the original group — were seen at Schodack Landing (Foote). This is the first spring record of the Snow Goose locally in several years. Among the other waterfowl species seen on Mar 27 along the lower Hudson were six Pintail, eight Wood Ducks, 600 Lesser Scaup, and 50 Hooded Mergansers. About ten additional Hooded Mergansers were seen that day along the Hudson above Albany and on the Mohawk River

near Schenectady (Hallenbeck, Meritt). This may be a record count for this species in the area. A few Red-breasted Mergansers were also observed on Mar 29. Four American Widgeon were at Tomhannock Reservoir on Mar 26 (Austin).

Hawks — Owls: The period's only report of the Goshawk is of one at Schenectady on Dec 20 (SBC). There were several reports of Rough-legs, but the incursion of these birds this year was relatively light. Three were seen on several occasions in late January at Castleton (Cook), and one was seen at Nassau on Feb 3 in aerial combat with a Redtail (Turner). A partial albino Redtail was at Schenectady on Jan 14 (SBC). There were two or three reports of Turkey Vultures from the southern part of the region.

Ruffed Grouse and Ring-necked Pheasants were inexplicably scarce. A few Bobwhite were reported, all from Columbia County in the southern part of the region where they are resident (but uncommon and local). Two Common Snipe were seen near Meadowdale Marsh on Dec 20 (SBC) and one present at the same locality on Mar 1 (Hallenbeck, Meritt) leads to the speculation that the species might have wintered. Fourteen Great Black-backed Gulls were seen along the lower Hudson on Mar 29 (Foote), and there were other reports of individual or small groups. White-winged gulls were unreported this winter. A flock of about 25 Mourning Doves was at Gallupville on Feb 28 (Zimmer).

A Long-eared Owl was reported from Delmar in December, exact date unspecified (Cahalane). There were many reports of the Screech and Great Horned Owls and several of the Barred. On Jan 1 a Barn Owl was seen at Old Chatham (Reilly).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: No Three-toed Woodpeckers were observed in the region this winter, but the resident Pileated was quite frequently seen. There were quite a few March Phoebe reports from Columbia County (ADBC) and on from Niskayuna (Angst); this species was unreported locally in March of last year. Horned Larks were quite widely reported during February and March. The first Tree Swallows of the season were two at Old Chatham on Mar 29 (Reilly). Red-breasted Nuthatches were very scarce again this winter. One was seen on the Schenectady Christmas Count (SBC), and the species was at Albany on Jan 25 (Thomas). One was seen at Ghent on three occasions in March (Erlenback). I know of no other reports. Several Tufted Titmice were reported. On Feb 1 one was at a Catskill feeder (Feldhusen), and another was at a Delmar feeder for some time after Dec 4 (Pense). Still another was at an Old Chatham feeder on Mar 20 and 21 (fide Reilly), and a fourth feeder report comes from Niskayuna, also during March (fide Bartlett). Brown Creepers were present in good numbers, 13 being seen at Schenectady on Dec 27 (SBC). It was definitely a bad winter for Carolina Wrens, there being far fewer reports than normal. Several Winter Wrens were seen.

A Brown Thrasher was one of the highlights of the Schenectady Christmas Count. A few Robins were seen throughout the winter, and by mid-January flocks of 50 to 100 were reported from many areas. Such flockings continued in February. Their winter occurrence was a frequent subject of comment in newspaper columns. Late in March Bluebirds were reported in apparent normal numbers, unlike the spring of 1958. There were several reports of Northern Shrikes, and on Mar 31 a Loggerhead Shrike was carefully studied at the Albany Airport (Thomas).

Vireos — Sparrows: A lone Myrtle Warbler was near Chatham on Dec 16, and another was in the same area on Jan 14 (Radke). About ten were seen at Old Chatham late in March (Reilly). The Eastern Meadowlark was at Ghent on Dec 4 (Erlenback), at Schenectady on Dec 20 and Troy on Dec 27 (SBC), at Cropseyville on Feb 14 (Austin), and at Castleton on Feb 24 (Cook). The Redwinged Blackbird was also seen at Castleton on Feb 24.

It was again a good northern finch year. Evening Grosbeak flocks abounded, and anyone who put out sunflower seed had them. There were scattered reports of the Pine Grosbeak, principally from Columbia County in January and February (ADBC). A lone female was seen in Warren County on Feb 23 (Foote). There were a few reports of Pine Siskins and Redpolls, but the incursion of these birds this year was not comparable to some that have taken place in the past. A few Purple Finches were seen throughout the winter, but during February and March large flocks of these birds were commonly seen — at feeders and elsewhere. As one observer called it, it was a real explosion.

The Red Crossbill was reported from the Chatham area during the last part of December (ADBC) and again on Feb 22 and 23 (Reilly). On Mar 8 four White-winged Crossbills and three Red Crossbills were seen feeding along a roadside near the southern shore of Sacandaga Reservoir (Scott). The White-wings were singing. It is not often that one sees both species of Crossbill together. Cardinals were reported in good numbers, especially in the Mohawk Valley.

A Towhee was at Schenectady on Dec 20 (SBC), and another was at Chatham on Dec 27 (ADBC). No less than six were at Chatham on Jan 27 (LaPointe), and the species was reported continually there thereafter. A Vesper Sparrow was at a Nassau feeder on Jan 18 (Turner). Others were reported early in March from Columbia. From Feb 15 to 28 a Fox Sparrow was seen daily at a New Concord feeder (Radke) and most of the more frequent March reports of this species were of single birds. The wintering population of Slate-colored Juncos was down in the southern part of the area. An Oregon Junco put in an appearance at a West Sand Lake feeder in mid-January (Bordt). The bird was present there at least until the latter part of March and was seen by many observers. Snow Buntings were rather frequently and widely seen during January, February and March, with reports from Columbia, Greene, and Schoharie Counties as well as the capital district. Lapland Longspurs were again unrecorded.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE - HUDSON

FRED N. HOUGH

In this region we experienced a relatively open winter, smitten by a long run of cold spells that drove the frost deep into the barren ground. In spite of the constant cold there were no recordings of extreme sub-zero temperatures. In the lower elevations, at least, most of the winter snow was gained in March with up to a foot on the 12th and another 3-5 inches on the 27th, the latter topped with winter's last real chilly fling of 5 to 10 degrees above zero on the 29th. So spring came slowly, as was evidenced by the belated awakenings of the great chorus of Hylas which were, for the most part, unable to help initiate the return of spring in March by being kept in their cold winter beds longer than usual. Ungreeted as they were by the Hylas, many of the spring migrants arrived close to within normal limits.

Studies and general observations of the winter bird populations in our region showed a high number of lingering migrants from the fall migration and a low normality among most of the visitors coming from the north. Perhaps this status was best reflected in the tally of the various Christmas counts.

Loons — Ducks: With sharp eyes afieled the few Red-necked Grebes that occurred in the Rockland-Westchester areas this season didn't have much of a chance in escaping detection. John and Margaret Kelly first reported one on Croton Lake, Westchester County on Dec 14, after which none were reported until mid-March when there were several reports. On March 12 William Russell saw a pair on the Cross River Reservoir, Westchester, and following this report subsequent observations were made on the Hudson River and Stillwell Lake, Rockland Co. (Ed Treacy) and Lake DeForest, Rockland (Mr. and Mrs. Frank Steffens). Others reporting this specie were Joseph Malone at Croton Point and Martin Breck and Ralph Odell at Muscoot Reservoir, Westchester. Bob Deed says that this bird used to be fairly regular before 1949.

An American Widgeon was added to the RAS Christmas count for the first time, indicating a scarcity of this duck in our region during winter. The arrival of ducks to our waters in March was concentrated toward the latter half of the month. The beautiful Green-winged Teal seldom favors us with numbers and only one observation was reported — a pair by Stanley Grierson at the Tri-Loba Hill Sanctuary near Katonah, Westchester. On Dec 3 Mr. and Mrs. Bob Deed saw a sizable raft of