

REGION 9 — DELAWARE - HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

The season was marked by frequent snowfalls which were light and relatively unimportant except for the fact that most of them occurred on weekends and kept many a birder at home. Through Dec, Jan and Feb there were 14 weekends with some kind of precipitation. In spite of the number of storms, the overall amount of precipitation was abnormally low, and did little to break the drought conditions which have prevailed for the past three years.

There were no extremes of temperature, but the weather bureau did report the season to be colder than average. The Hudson did not freeze till late in Jan, and was open again in Feb after a spell of above freezing temperature. Mar was abnormally cool when compared to Feb.

Northern finches failed to show with only a few Evening Grosbeaks reported. Not one Pine Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Redpoll or Crossbill was seen. Populations of those winter visitors that did arrive were low, but an influx of accidentals did add some "spice" to the birding.

Abbreviations used: First four letters of each county; RASCC—Rockland Audubon Society Christmas Count, Dec 26, Robert F. Deed, compiler; PCC—Peekskill Christmas Count, Dec 27, John Given, compiler.

Contributors: WBC—Waterman Bird Club; A&MB—Arlene & Martin Borko; GB—Gene Brown; PC—Pauline Chernick; RD—Roz Davis; ID—Iris Dean; ME—Martha Earl; JG—Jane Geisler; FG—Florence Germond; TG—Tom Gilbert; S&RG—Stan & Ruth Grierson; FH—Fred Hough; AJ—Alice Jones; M&JK—Mary & Jim Key; ML—Mabel Little; DL—Dorothy Lloyd; KN—Ken Niven; EP—Eleanor Pink; JR—Mrs. John Remensnyder; EDT—Edward D. Treacy.

Loons — Ducks: The annual waterfowl count in Jan took place with the usual bad weather, but with 21 species reported, it was the largest number of species recorded in any one year. The addition of American Widgeon, Shoveler and Old Squaw brought the all time total to 24 species for this event. The 2,217 individuals recorded was better than last year's 2,082, but considerably below the high of 3,306 in 1955. **Red-necked Grebe:** unreported most years; one in spring plumage, Binnewater Pond, Greenville, Oran on Mar 28 (ID). **Horned Grebe:** not reported by most contributors; four Hudson Riv reports from Dutch; earliest Mar 20 (WBC). **Mute Swan:** large numbers of last fall on Rockland Lake diminished to three in Jan, but by Feb 6, 65 were found there in a small area of open water (GB). **Canada Goose:** wintered in very sparse numbers, migrants appeared on Ashokan Res on Mar 14, and passed over the Region in good numbers thereafter. **Snow Goose:** one wintered on Rockland Lake, and about 20 appeared on the Hudson near Saugerties on Mar 31 (JR).

Most species of ducks moved in with the early thaw in Mar, but numbers were down for the most part. An exception was the Pintail, reported in unprecedented numbers in Oran. On Mar 25 better than 60 were observed at Goshen, and this number increased to more than 100 by the end of the period. About a dozen were still present in mid-Apr (ME). **Green-winged Teal:** only one reported wintering; good numbers throughout the Region during Mar. **Wood Duck:** only two wintering birds reported, both from Dutch; Mar migrants appear to be down in numbers. **Ring-necked Duck:** wintering numbers better than usual in West and Putn; migrants arrived on time elsewhere, but numbers were poor. **Canvasback:** the promising numbers found in fall migration on the Hudson were again reported this spring when 125 birds on Mar 13 increased to 500 on Mar 20 at Crugers Is, Dutch (WBC). **Scaup:** numbers down; only eight wintering birds reported on the lower Hudson, and Mar migrants were very few; unreported for much of the Region. **Ruddy Duck:** a heartening 107 birds on the

waterfowl count at Tappan Zee Bridge, and 181 on the PCC recalls the several hundred birds that usually wintered on the lower Hudson about ten years ago, and have been absent these recent winters. Hooded Merganser: no winter records outside of West; Mar migrants arrived on time and in good numbers.

Hawks — Owls: Turkey Vulture: one winter record of a bird in Dutch on Feb 18 (EP, FG); arr dates were normal, but numbers were very low till the end of the period. Accipiters: very scarce. Only three Sharp-shins reported, all from Dutch. Red-tailed Hawk: winter numbers down from previous years; most resident birds in usual nesting areas by mid-Mar. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one, apparently in good condition, was reported at Moore's Mills, Dutch on Dec 20 by a "careful birder" (JG); this report was carefully checked by Otis Waterman. Rough-legged Hawk: numbers not bad; reports from Ulst (two), Dutch (seven), Oran (two), Rock (one) and Sull (one). Bald Eagle: failed to return to the Basher Kill area of Sull for the first time in several winters; numbers still dropping throughout Region, not more than one or two birds reported wintering along the Hudson; one bird still returning to the Ashokan Res area of Ulst each winter. Marsh Hawk: no winter reports; only four Mar migrants, all from Dutch. Sparrow Hawk: numbers down thru the winter, but up to better than average at the end of the period.

Coot: very few reported to date. Woodcock: one wintering bird at Monticello on Jan 12 (KN); migrants arr on time in expected numbers. Common Snipe: one winter bird on Dec 22 at Katonah, West (S&RG); migrants arr the first week of Mar in most areas. Most species of gulls normal. Great-Black-backed Gull: greatly increased; Feb 13, more than 56 on a bar in the Hudson off Cornwall with at least as many more in the distance on the river, by far the most numerous gull in that area that day (EDT). Iceland Gull: reported on the Mearns Bird Club Christmas Count and seen several times thereafter on the Hudson from Croton Pt to Newburgh. Mourning Dove: plentiful; Mabel Little had 43 at her feeder in Carmel for most of the winter. **Snowy Owl:** observed last on Dec 1 in Poughkeepsie and Dec 8 in Scotchtown, Oran. Short-eared Owl: one, Jan 31 at Standford, Dutch (AJ&DL).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Yellow-shafted Flicker: winter birds reported from Ulst in Jan (FH), and the "highest numbers in years" for the season in Dutch (WBC); spring birds very late in returning. Red-headed Woodpecker: resident birds remained in the Blooming Grove area of Oran; Dutch report of one bird on Jan 31 at Poughkeepsie (AJ). Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: several reported; WBC Christmas Count Jan 2 at Vassar College, and PCC Dec 27 at Kitchawan; two at GB feeder in Upper Nyack (no date). **Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker:** one vicinity of St. Joseph's Normal Inst at Barrytown Dutch from Jan 16 to Apr 5, seen in same place several times in the past few years; one at Red Oaks Mill (south of Poughkeepsie) Feb 9 thru that month, and again on Apr 6 (many observers both birds). Phoebe: late and scarce thru end of period. Horned Lark; probably wintered in the Greenville area of Oran, no reports elsewhere; migrants reappeared in favorite haunts in early Mar. Tree Swallow: very late throughout most of Region; not observed in most places thru end of period. Purple Martin: arr most locales on time; did not appear early in Walden area as it did last year. **Magpie:** one in the Monticello area from Feb 18 to 21, observed by Pauline Chernick, Ed McBride, and Ken Niven. Fish Crow: one, possibly two reported all winter in Dutch—only report. Red-breasted Nuthatch: very scarce, only two reported. Brown Creeper: numbers normal, heavy movement reported from Putn last two weeks of Mar.

Winter Wren: none reported for much of the Region; three Jan birds in Dutch, four on the PCC, and seven on the RASCC are maxima for the

season. Carolina Wren: slight improvement this season over the low of last year, but very few reported. Mockingbird: continues northward march; two winter reports from Ulst, and too many to mention in the southern portion. Catbird: only winter report, one at Marydell, Upper Nyack on Dec 20 (GB). Brown Thrasher: two Feb reports from Putn. Robin: wintered in good numbers throughout the Region; several flocks of notable size reported. Hermit Thrush: one at Mt Kisco on Feb 3, and one at South Salem on Feb 4 (SG). Bluebird: a very good winter for this species. Singles, and small flocks reported from most areas, and one flock of 30 at Mt Kisco on Jan 10. Nesting activity was reported in early Mar, and one pair returned to Sam Phelps' home in Walden on the early date of Feb 19. **Varied Thrush:** this accidental remained in the Liberty area of Sull from Feb 20 to Mar 30, and was seen by many observers both local and visiting. Golden-crowned Kinglet: normal early in the season; few Mar reports. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: few reports; maximum of eight on PCC. Pipit: none reported till Mar 31, when 25 or more were seen at Campbell Hall (ME). Cedar Waxwing: scarce in Ulst, but normal to better elsewhere; WBC reports 200 at Annandale on Mar 20, and 500 at Salt Point on Mar 21. Northern Shrike: sparingly reported; maximum of seven thru Jan and Feb in Dutch (WBC).

Vireos — Sparrows: Myrtle Warbler: one, Feb 28 at Poughkeepsie (M&JK); five on the RASCC and 16 on the PCC. Yellow-breasted Chat: one, Dec 7 at East Park, Dutch (TG). **Baltimore Oriole:** more winter reports than ever before; one at Vassar College Dec 30 to Jan 2 (M&JK); a pair at the feeder of Eleanor Towner at Middletown from Dec 20 to Jan 4; one at Washingtonville from Jan 10 to Feb 4 (ME); one at the feeder of GB in Upper Nyack on Jan 3 increased to two Jan 10; one at a feeder near Carmel for two days in Feb was photographed (ML). Rusty Blackbird: a few Dutch reports and several from Rock; one on the PCC. Grackle: a few winter reports from Dutch are unusual; in the southern portion, the 194 birds found on the PCC is more to be expected; migrants started north in early Mar and were numerous by mid-month. Cowbird: usual wintering population; migration was late.

Cardinal: numbers continue to climb; Christmas counts in the southern portion show one or two hundred each. **Black-headed Grosbeak:** a male arr at the feeder of Eleanor Pink in Pleasant Valley on Jan 23 and remained thru April 1 (many observers and photographs)—first record for Dutch. Evening Grosbeak: absent from most areas; a few singles and small flocks reported; only large concentration was in the Monticello area of Sull where 86 birds were counted on Jan 28 (PC, A&MB). Purple Finch: numbers very low; only a few winter reports, scarce to the end of the period. Pine Grosbeak: none. House Finch: usual numbers in Rock, but 25 at the feeder of Mrs. Javius Matsumoto in Chappaqua, West; a few reports from southern Oran as the species spreads north. Goldfinch: usual numbers to less in certain sections. Rufous-sided Towhee: the usual wintering birds. Savannah Sparrow: scattered winter reports; numbers improving through Mar. **Lark Sparrow:** another first record for Dutch; one at the feeder of Mrs. C. Terhune near Salt Point from Feb 5 to Apr 2 (many observers and photographs). Oregon Junco; two Dutch records of "black hooded" birds, one Jan 3 thru Feb 7 at Poughquag and one Jan 17 thru Feb at Stantora-ville (many observers); two "grey-headed" birds (pink-sided) reported, one at Poughquag from Jan 3 thru Feb 7 (many observers) and one at Tillson, Ulst on Jan 24 (Mrs. Geo. Dunn). Tree Sparrow: much lower numbers this year; local Christmas Count numbers were half their usual amount; departed on schedule. Field Sparrow: usual wintering numbers, few and local. White-crowned Sparrow: one, Dec 1 thru Mar 31 at Millbrook, Dutch (FG). White-throated Sparrow: few all winter; numbers down, even during migration. Fox Sparrow: heavy migration reported thru most of the Region; a few winter birds. Snow Bunting: unreported from most

areas; two individuals, one in Jan and one in Feb, Dutch; a flock of 40 were reported from Millerton on Mar 20 (RD).

Note: Spring reports are due by June 5

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

PETER W. POST AND GUY A. TUDOR

The winter season was characterized by slightly warmer than average temperatures during Dec and Feb. In contrast, Jan temperatures averaged well below normal.

The combined total of the 12 Christmas Counts which were taken wholly within Region 10, was 163 species (not including several additional species present during the count period). The four "biggest" counts were: Southern Nassau—124; Central Suffolk—110; Bronx-S. Westchester—106; and Captree—104.

In general, the current period was distinguished by a noticeable scarcity of birds. "Half-hardy" species were especially low in numbers as soon as the winter set in, when compared with last year. Even such a normally common wintering species as Tree Sparrow was extremely scarce, as were Field and Swamp Sparrows. "Winter Finches" were very low; for example, only two Evening Grosbeaks were seen on all the Christmas Counts.

The only group of birds that was more numerous than usual were the birds-of-prey commonly associated with open country, numbers being confined to the coastal marshes. Rough-legged Hawks were even more abundant than last winter. It was apparently the greatest flight year ever recorded in our Region; in the Orient area, as many as 15 individuals were seen in a day. Marsh Hawks, Snowy and Short-eared Owls, and both species of shrikes were present in well above normal numbers. On Jan 5, Ward saw 25 hawks of five species along the Jones Beach strip: one Red-tail, five Rough-legs, 12 Marsh, one Pigeon and six Sparrow.

Although temperatures for March averaged only slightly below normal, most spring arrivals were well behind schedule, or reduced in numbers. Norse remarked that this March was one of the poorest in recent years in Inwood Hill Park. The first major landbird movement did not occur until the last few days of the period. Although such species as Robin and Fox Sparrow had appeared earlier in March, they did not arrive in numbers until the 28th along the coast and the 30th in the city parks.

Notably rarities consisted of Common Murre, "Spotted" Towhee (present since Nov 25) and Brambling. There were also extremely late occurrences of Little Blue Heron, Scarlet Tanager, and Black-and-white and Blackpoll Warblers.

Much of our information comes from the local Christmas Counts. Those abbreviated are as follows: BkCC—Brooklyn; BXCC—Bronx-S. Westchester; CaCC—Captree; CCCC—Central Suffolk; MkCC—Montauk; NNCC—Northern Nassau; QnCC—Queens; SmCC—Smithtown; SNCC—Southern Nassau.

Abbreviations used: max—maximum one day count during the period; mob—many observers; LLASB—Lyman Langdon Audubon Society Bulletin; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; CC—Christmas Count; S. I.—Staten Island; imm—immature.

Contributors frequently cited: IA—Irwin Alperin; RA—Robert Arbib; AB—Albert Bell; NB—Ned Boyajian; PB—Paul Buckley; JB—John Bull; IC—Irving Cantor; GC—Geoffrey Carleton; RC—Richard Cohen; TD—