

streaks had changed to patchy black spots apparently part of the black breast band of the adult male. The double wing bars, too, showed signs of merging, and the crown had an olive cast.

During the mild weather of March 2 and 3, he was constantly circling the old house next door in search of the awakening cluster flies, visible in large numbers inside the windows. On March 8, a warm day with flies abundant outside, his preferred perch became a corner of the porch roof where he would sit and wait for his victim to draw near, dart out and then fly to his favorite lilac or willow again and again. He dined so well that day that I was able to study him for fifteen minutes with a 20-power Balcope while he rested on a nearby branch.

Hendy Creek runs just behind the Long property in a narrow valley with steep wooded slopes and a thick patch of evergreens nearby, affording good cover. These conditions, together with the mild winter and available food, apparently made the location an attractive refuge for this wanderer.

My identification was verified by Noel Cutright and Douglas Kibbe of Cornell University. Chemung Valley Audubon Society members also observed the warbler.

Note: According to Tom Davis (NYC Rare Bird Alert) this is the fourth record of the Audubon's Warbler in New York State.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WINTER SEASON

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Maybe things do balance out after all. The recent mild winter with low snowfall and unbelievable warm spells offers a counter to the series of savage winters the state has had recently. The numerous wet, warm spells following each snowfall left minimal snow cover and the numerous comments re this attest to the easier driving and better birding local birders had this past season. A wealth of half-hardies peppered the state with a spotting of Hermit Thrush, a streaking of Brown Thrasher, and an array of sparrows (Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp, and Song) well in excess of the usual wintering numbers. It would have been fascinating to learn what half-hardies stayed in the "banana belt" (southern Region 9, Region 10) of the state but, alas, their reports are unavailable.

Despite the extraordinarily mild weather, wintering waterfowl seemed very low with the greatest deficits in Greater Scaup (2,3,5,8) and all three species of mergansers (only numbers of Common Mergansers reported in 6). The higher numbers of wintering Canada Geese, though less than in '71-'72, (3,5) on the Finger Lakes is definitely a new phenomenon.

Goshawks were noted in increased numbers (2,3,4,5,6,8) and evidence of a massive (for Goshawk) return flight was developing at Derby Hill in March. Rough-legged Hawks were noted as scarce in 3,4,5, & 6 but somewhat better numbers were noted in 8. The open weather induced some few rails (2,3,5) to winter upstate but proof of season-long survival was not forthcoming.

White-winged gulls were very scarce in 2 and 5, unreported in 3, but with somewhat better numbers in 6; none were reported from the Mohawk-Hudson Rivers areas. Numbers of other gulls, especially along Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes, seemed low (3,5) and concentrations at the unusual larine feeding areas (dumps, fall) were small.

Monk Parakeets appeared in 3,4, and 8 — a bad portent for possible future control.

No flight of Snowy Owls developed although one — two birds/region were reported (2,3,4,5,8); somewhat better counts were achieved in 6 where wintering Snowy Owls are regular. Short-eared Owls appeared in a few places (2,3,5,6) but, like the Rough-legged Hawk no large flight ensued.

Common Raven appear to be expanding in the Adirondacks (7) and should be looked for at dumps and disposal areas at the Adirondack periphery. Boreal Chickadees staged a mini-irruption (2,3,5,6) but Black-capped Chickadees seemed almost scarce this winter. Tufted Titmice continue to expand (2,3,8); however, numbers appear to be low but stable in Region 5. Red-breasted Nuthatch were widely noted (3,4,5,7) and in numbers, with spruce plantations and feeding stations the major wintering habitats. The mild weather induced both Winter Wren (3,4,5) and Long-billed Marsh Wren (3,5) to attempt overwintering but no evidence of winter-long survival was obtained. Wintering Robins were present but scarce; M. Rusk suggests the openness of the winter failed to concentrate them at the known half-hardy areas (springs, swamps, cedar thickets) making them appear scarcer than they actually were.

Bohemian Waxwings showed up in limited numbers (2,5,6), usually in the company of Cedar Waxwings; it would be interesting to know if any were observed along Lake Erie or along western Lake Ontario this winter but the Region 1 summary is not at hand.

An invasion of Northern Shrike was evident in 2,5, and 6, but little or no evidence of extension of this flight into the Southern Tier or in

the Mohawk — Hudson area was noted. And in the same category as the increased half-hardies attempting to winter must be placed the pseudohalf-hardies (? quarter-hardies?) such as the multiple upstate Myrtle Warblers (2,3,5,6,8) — or rather Yellow-rumped Warblers, Yellowthroat (3), Pine Warbler (5), and Ovenbird (5). Virtually none of these birds survived the winter, mild as it was, and where survival was documented, it was usually of a feeding station supported bird. Brown-headed Cowbird wintered in excessive numbers early on in the period (4,5,8) but numbers of this species and virtually all other wintering Icterids had sharply declined by early February. The major wave of spring Icterids did not hit until the first week of March, surprisingly late in view of the very mild weather. Such tropical half-hardies as Baltimore Oriole (2) and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (2,5) occur just often enough to make one listen to feeder reports of “funny birds” showing up — maybe one will be a Bullock’s Oriole or a Black-headed Grosbeak. Strangely not one sector mentioned wintering Dickcissel — compare this to the multiple reports of the last two or three winters.

Winter finches dominated the reports this season with large incursions of Evening Grosbeaks (2,3,4,5,6,7,8) and Pine Siskin (2,3,4,5,6) and excellent numbers of Pine Grosbeaks (2,3,4,5,6,8); both Crossbills, though reported, seemed scarce and irregular with Reds (2,3,4,5,6) far outnumbering the few White-wingeds reported. The Purple Finch picture was mixed — some sectors had high counts, others virtually none and no pattern is evident. House Finch continue to spread (3,4,5,8) and their “chub-chub” flight call may become as familiar as the Purple Finch’s “tick — tick” note in the next decade. God knows there are acres of suburbia House Finches could invade in upstate New York. Wintering Tree Sparrows and Slate-colored Juncoes were noted as in average numbers (3), or possibly reduced (4,6,8), or frankly scarce (5); half-hardy sparrows seemed to do very well and most sectors reported at least a few of each. Snow Buntings were generally scarce (2,3,4,5,6,7,8) but occasional large flocks were seen briefly in some sectors (2,5); no major spring migration was detected and one concludes that most of this species population wintered north or west of us.

Winter rarities seemed less numerous this year — Oh:— for that d — Region 10 report: — and, aside from a spate of northern species, showed no irruption pattern — Eared Grebe (5), Yellow-crowned Night Heron (2), Common Teal (5), Common Eider (2), Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker (6), Northern Three-toed Woodpecker (3), Gray Jay (3), Common Raven (2,7), Black-billed Magpie (4 — but see report), Audubon’s Warbler (3 — now treated as a subspecies of the Yellow-rumped Warbler — *Sic transit gloria mundi*:), and Harris’ Sparrow (3).

So much for winter, on to spring — and warblers:

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