

hatch: not common but a few were in the Town of Denning, Ulst. in mid-season. Brown Creeper: one of a few species with a below normal count. Carolina Wren: came thru the period in excellent numbers. RCC had highest count since 1960. Mockingbird: highest counts this year were on RCC with 74. Last year's record count was 49. 65 on WCC beat previous high of 46 in 1973. Catbird: thru region in larger numbers than ever before. Brown Thrasher: always rare in winter, 1 Dec. 15 Forestburgh (Ed McBride). Robin: RCC was surprisingly low, but all other counts up. (see introductory remarks). Hermit Thrush: 2 winter reports: RCC had 6. Eastern Bluebird: WBC had 22 reports dur. Feb. Cedar Waxwing: 192 on WCC avg 30. Northern Shrike: only report 1 Amenia Dec. 12 (WTS). Loggerhead Shrike: 1 Mar. 29 Cruger's Is. Dutch (mob). Starling: tremendous inc. in Dutch. 5,000 on WCC was 3,000 more than avg.

**VIREOS-SPARROWS:** **Black-and-white Warbler:** 1 Dec. 20 Red Oaks Mill, Dutch (JMK). **Cape May Warbler:** 1 Dec. 4 Vassar Campus feeding in Scotch Pine. Yellow-rumped Warbler: reported every month from Dutch. Also wintered in better numbers than usual in Ulst. **Pine Warbler:** New to RCC. 1 at Stony Pt. Battleground (Nancy Single). **Yellow-throat:** 1 Dec. 13 Amenia (WTS). Icterids: more winter records than usual due to mild season: Red-winged Blackbird: very heavy influx from Feb. 20 on. 450 on RCC was new record. Rusty Blackbird: only 1 on WCC but 53 on RCC. 5 were at Stissing Feb. 17. Common Grackle: flocks of several hundred persisted at Highland Falls thru Dec. Major influx last week of Feb. thru last week of season. Cardinal: 107 on RCC was low for that count. **Indigo Bunting:** 1 male in molt coming to feeder at New Windsor Feb. 12-Mar. 31 (Paul Jeheber). Dickcissel: only 1 report Jan. 5-12 Pleasant Valley (EP, JD). Purple Finch: better than usual, at most feeders in Dutch. House Finch: record numbers on Christmas Counts. RCC had 139, prev. high 92 in 1971, first reported 1962. WCC had 94, prev. record 68 in 1973, first reported 1965. Pine Grosbeak: 3 Nov. 18 Cohecton (AJ). 1 on RCC were the only reports. Common Redpoll: 2 Mar. 14 East Park (Tom Gilbert) were the only ones reported. Pine Siskin: only a few; 10 Mar. 30 Stissing was all for Dutch. 25 Jan. 24 Welch Lk. 7 Nov. 18 Cohecton. Rufous-sided Towhee: usual few wintering. Savannah Sparrow: prev. record on RCC was 29 in 1972. This year 50, 46 of which were at West Nyack Dump (Eric Single). Field Sparrow: 75 on RCC, prev. high 43 in 1972. White-crowned Sparrow: 1 Dec. 11-13 at feeder in Dover; 1 Dec. 1 Amenia (WTS). Fox Sparrow: 3 reports all Dutch; 1 Dec. 2 thru Jan. Snow Bunting: Max 300 Dec. 29 Amenia., well reported thru region dur. period.

Spring reports due June 5.

Summer reports due Sept. 1.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

## REGION 10 – MARINE

HUGH D. MC GUINNESS

With a Ross' Gull to the north, a Yellow-nosed Albatross to the south, and Gyrfalcons in every direction, there is little wonder that regional reporters termed this season everything from "catastrophic" to "the epitome of boredom." But come on fellows, it wasn't all that bad! So what if seabirds were minimal; so what if half-hardies were low despite good conditions, and winter finches were less than casual; so what if most of the rarities were fall leftovers, or repeats from last winter; so what if the one truly outstanding record was found as a road-kill; there were still plenty of interesting occurrences. Admittedly, some may be a little sublime, but certainly none are too far-fetched to be appreciated by the aver-

age bird watcher. Read on—I'll show you!

The fall left rather slowly. December and half of January were once again mild, although a little less so than in recent years. The upshot of this was smaller numbers of many species whose winter populations are proportional to the mildness of the season, as indicated by their Christmas Bird Count (CBC) indices: e.g. Black-bellied Plover (73 counts: 417; 74 counts 241); Brown Creeper (54; 35); Long-billed Marsh Wren (13, 7); Robin (2050; 965); Hermit Thrush (63; 42); Red-winged Blackbird (5015; 1543); Rusty Blackbird (463; 70); Common Grackle (318; 94); Brown-headed Cowbird (954; 651); Sharp-tailed Sparrow (44; 13); Seaside Sparrow (31; 11); and Field Sparrow (389; 287). Notable exceptions to this were seen in the indices of herons, certain puddle ducks, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Winter and Carolina Wrens, all mimids, Water Pipit, and Rufous-sided Towhee. However, except for the Winter Wren, mimids, and pipit, each of these can be explained in as part of an overall range expansion trend, or increased coverage on CBCs. Continuing with the weather, it seems latter January and February reverted to the good-ole-days when winters were cold. Snowfall seemed almost average, for a change—although never lasting for very long—and continued through the period, intermittently into April. And finally, after seemingly interminable delays, March ended, and, despite its occasional hints of forthcoming spring, continued its reign as Region 10's month of languor.

Plusses for the season include: 1) higher numbers of Horned Grebe after last year's poor numbers; 2) higher CBC indices for every heron recorded; 3) puddle ducks like Gadwall, Pintail, American Wigeon, and both teal with higher numbers on CBCs and the Waterfowl Census (WFC); 4) Canvasback and Redhead higher on CBC and WFC; 5) good numbers of hawks including Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Harrier, Bald Eagle, and Merlin; 6) large winter populations of Killdeer, Purple Sandpiper, and Dunlin; 7) tremendous flock of Bonaparte's Gulls with a good number of Little Gulls mixed in, on the northbound migration; 8) a good year for Snowy and Short-eared Owl, and a Barred Owl on Long Island; 9) continued expansion of Red-bellied Woodpecker in the area; 10) high numbers of White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows on CBCs.

Minuses are: 1) low numbers of Ring-necked Duck and both eiders, and slight decreases in Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Oldsquaw; 2) Cooper's Hawk remains scarce; 3) Red-breasted Nuthatch very low for at least second year in a row (even missed on Montauk, and Smithtown CBCs); 4) all icterids low on CBCs (see data in second paragraph); 5) Winter finches—what a mess!: Pine Grosbeak and redpoll—absent; cross-bills—5 token birds on CBCs; siskin and Purple Finch—absurd; and Evening Grosbeak—few and widely scattered; 6) amazingly low numbers of common winter fringillids like junco, Tree and Fox Sparrow.

There is little doubt as to the outstanding rarity of the season: a Boreal Owl found dead along Ocean Parkway, on the Jones strip. Other rarities include Eared Grebe, Tufted Duck, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Abbreviations: CBC—Christmas Bird Count; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; WFC—Waterfowl Census.

Observers and Contributors: JTA—James T. Ash; JAB—John A. Black; BC—Barbara Connolly; JDC—Joe DiCostanzo; THD—Thomas H. Davis; SBD—Steve B. Dempsey; WF—Walter Friton; AJL—Anthony J. Lauro; BL—Brooke Lauro; DL—David Larsen; GSR—Gilbert S. Raynor; JJR—John J. Ruscica; BS—Barbara Spencer; mob—many observers.

Sub-regional Compilers: Thomas W. Burke; Fran File; Ralph Cioffi; Lore J. Schore.

LOONS—MERGANSERS: Red-necked Grebe: only three reports. Eared Grebe: thru Dec. 7 Great Kills, S.I. (mob). Great Cormorant: some rather interesting Long Island Sound reports; 35-40 Feb. 14 Pelham Bay Pk (JDC)—stayed all winter; 20+ wintered at Rye (TWB); 20+ Dec. 7 Sand's Pt (BS); also of note 325 Montauk CBC—mainly from

Gardiner's I. Double-crested Cormorant: many widely scattered reports, with 20 on all CBCs.

Green Heron: 6 on CBCs, 2 on both Bronx and Central Suffolk count; one bird remained thru Jan. 25 at JBWR (A Passero); these are excellent numbers for a bird quite rare in winter. Great Egret: 14 on 4 CBCs as compared with none on last year's CBCs; 8-10 thru Jan. 12 JBWR (JDC); 1 thru Jan. Oceanside Marine Nature Study Area (J Browne); Snowy Egret: 74 CBCs had 22, compared to 14 on 73 CBCs; 6 thru Feb. 2, and 1 thru Feb. 22 JBWR (JDC); 2 thru Jan. 11 Tobay (R. Kelly); 4 thru Jan. Oceanside MNSA (J. Browne); one Mar. 1 Montauk (AJL, GSR)—probably a very early arrival. Little Blue Heron: 11 found on 3 CBCs (Captree, Montauk, S. Nassau) new for each count; imm thru Dec. 7 JBWR; imm Dec. 14 Montauk (AJL, BL); 8 imm Dec. 15 Oak Beach (mob); 2 imm thru Dec. 28 Tobay and at least one, same locale, thru Jan. 22 (LJS, W. Baumann); an imm Mar. 2 JBWR (THD)—probably a locally wintering bird; these are unprecedented winter numbers, are possibly the third local winter record, and by far the latest occurrence. Yellow-crowned Night Heron: 2 on CBCs, both well seen; 1 imm Smithtown CBC (R Smolker); 1 imm Dec. 28 Jones (S Nassau CBC) (mob); also an adult thru Jan. 4 Southaven Co. Pk (JAB); these are the 8th thru 10th state occurrences.

Whistling Swan: 13 Dec. 7 Georgica Pd (GSR); after this 12-15 were present thru mid-March on eastern LI from Shinnecock to Hook Pd; at the latter location 12 were present daily until the freeze in early Feb. Brant: sizeable increases on both this year's CBCs (74: 24, 997; 73: 16, 358) and WFC (74: 16, 305; 73: 12, 251) however both of these are still low counts; e.g. the two counts which cover Jamaica Bay recorded a total of 900+ birds, in an area whose winter population is at least five to ten thousand; S Nassau reports 21,700. Black Duck: a good increase on CBCs, this despite the apparent paucity at JBWR's west pond, i.e. only 133 reported on Brooklyn CBC. Green-winged Teal: very large increase in CBC index (73: 417; 74: 735), and this seems to be due to Staten Island finding its teal; 300 in 74 as compared to 6 in 73. Blue-winged Teal: 4 Dec. 31 Tobay (BS); unprecedented winter numbers at Lawrence, 30 Jan. 12 (R Sloss); 22 Jan. 18 (R. Kelly). European Wigeon: drakes wintered at Halsey Pd; Fort Pd; and Hook Pd (1-2). Wood Duck: 20 N. Nassau CBC—excellent winter number.

Ring-necked Duck: CBC number down (255; 108), and caused comment from GSR compiler of Central Suffolk CBC where last year's 197 dropped to 31. Tufted Duck: pair Dec. 8—Jan. 18 (J. Machado). Harlequin Duck: notable only in its absence for the first winter in recent years. Common Eider: two years ago it looked like the days of eider as a rarity were gone, as upwards of a thousand birds could be seen at Montauk Pt; obviously this conclusion was hastily drawn as shown by this winter's statistics: max 3 wintered Montauk Pt; female Dec. 14 Hither Hills; female Dec. 14 Gardiner's I; 1 Orient CBC. King Eider: fared slightly better than Common: up to 16 wintered Montauk Pt (mob) including 2 adult males; only other reports Mar. 1 Shinn Inlet (GSR). Hooded Merganser: 100+ Dec. 1 Hempstead L State Pk (SBD); otherwise generally lower, as evidenced by both CBCs and WFC; especially low was Captree CBC from last year's national high, 260 to 120 this year. Common Merganser: excellent numbers at Hempstead LSP, where 40+ wintered (SBD), in contrast to central LI where GSR commented on its scarcity and Central Suffolk CBC missed it for the first time ever; also 14 Jan. 18 Montauk (GSR).

VULTURES—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: Dec. 29 Lawrence (E. Levine *et. al.*). Goshawk: a better than average winter, although not nearly as good as the preceding two winters; 4 on CBCs, Watermill, N Nassau—2, and Bronx; thru Dec. 9 JBWR (JDC *et. al.*); Dec. 14 Watermill (JDC)—(this was bird on CBC), and what was probably the same bird, an adult seen in the Sagaponack to Halsey Pd area thru Feb. 9 (JTA); Jan. 5-Feb. 9 Muttontown Pres., and Jan. 6-10 Brookville (both BC)—probably N Nassau's birds; Jan. 12 thru month end Jones (R. Kelly). Cooper's Hawk: early Jan.-Mar. 1 Muttontown Pres, and Jan. 17 Brookville (both BC); two reports on CBCs. Red-shouldered Hawk: 9 on CBCs as compared with last

year's 4; of interest is the return of the pair that nested unsuccessfully, due to an apparent vandalism, in Bronx Pk. This year the birds have nested further south within the confines of the Bronx Zoo, and so should be well protected. Rough-legged Hawk: GSR reports a "scarcity," and little wonder as more and more Long Island habitat suffers from human encroachment; in general, however, it was a rather good winter for Rough-legs, especially on Staten and Gardiner's Islands where 13 and 12, respectively, were recorded on CBCs. Bald Eagle: what a relief to finally have this bird wintering in the region, after an absence of a couple of years; imm Dec. 14 Gardiner's I (B&J Trimble *et. al.*); imm Dec. 7-Feb. 8 Quogue (GSR, L Wilcox); ad & imm Dec. 26, imm remained thru early Mar. Mastic-Southaven (GSR *et. al.*). Merlin: 13 reported on CBCs—even if this number should be taken with a grain of salt, this bird continues to prove itself a regular, although rare winter resident; also Feb. 15-Mar. 16 Tobay (AJL, R. Kelly); Jan. 2 Upton (DL). Peregrine Falcon: on Cent Suffolk and Orient CBC; Jan. 24 Columbia Univ. (Warburton).

Ruffed Grouse: Dec. 14 Hither Hills S P (JDC); nice to know this bird is still to be looked for in this locale. King Rail: thru period at Tobay (mob). Killdeer: this year's CBC index (969) almost triples last year's (363). Common Snipe: 24 and 19 on Cent Suffolk and Staten I CBCs are notable concentrations. Red Knot: Dec. 14 Montauk (P Polshak, M. Chamberlain); 4 Dec. 14 Shinnecock (L. Wilcox *et. al.*); Feb. 15 Dem Pt. F I (AJL). Marbled Godwit: Dec. 8 Shinn Inlet (THD, AJL, BL, JDC, BS)—second latest fall occurrence. Northern Phalarope: Dec. 3 Captree (WF)—latest fall occurrence by 10 days; bird was leisurely studied at up to 20 feet, all field marks noted, and was probably blown to shore by the previous day's fierce northeaster.

Iceland Gull: 12 (8 1st yr., 2 2nd yr., 2 ad) Feb. 17 Central Pk Res. (E. Mills)—new regional maxima. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: 1 present occasionally thru Mar. 16 Jerome Res (mob). Black-headed Gull: 7-10 individual present late Jan.-mid Mar., from Eastport to Shinn Bay (mob); also imm Jan. 26 JBWR (E. Salzman). Bonaparte's Gull: 10,000+ from mid-Mar. thru period end Jones Inlet (mob)—same concentration noted last year at approximately the same time. Little Gull: imm Jan. 26-Feb. 17, ad Mar. 1 Quogue (THD, GSR); ad Jan. 26 Mecox (AJL); 2 ad Feb. 16 Moriches Inlet (AJL); ad Mar. 1 Fire I Inlet (AJL); 8 (7 ad & 1 imm) Mar. 16 Jones Inlet (JJR, DL); imm Mar. 1 Shinn (GSR)—these are largest numbers in recent years.

Razorbill: 9 on CBCs, including 6 at Montauk, were the only reports. Thick-billed Murre: Dec. 15 off Fire I (M Kleinbaum). Dovekie: only 2 reports. Barn Owl: 9 Orient CBC—excellent. Snowy Owl: at least 8 birds wintered in the region as follows: 2 Dec. 14 Gardiner's I; thru Jan. 12 Rob't Moses SP; thru Jan. 11 West End, Jones; thru Dec. 15 Tobay; thru Feb. 22 Cedar Beach; Dec. 13-Jan. 20 Moriches Inlet; thru Dec. 17 Great Kills, S I; also single reports include Jan. 15 Mecox; Dec. 26 Bay Ridge, Bkln (B. McGrath); Dec. 21 Pt Lookout; Jan. 12 Cupsogue Beach; Jan. 21 Oceanside MNSA. Barred Owl: Dec. 27 Lower Nissequogue R (W. Sabin *et. al.*)—heard calling before dawn; despite some rather good habitat, such as this locale, Barred Owl continues to be quite rare on LI, this being the first record in years. Short-eared Owl: after a strong fall flight, the CBC index (73: 13; 74: 31) indicates that good numbers—at least better than the last few years—wintered. **Boreal Owl**: Jan. 15 Cedar Beach (K. Feustel); this bird, new to the regional list, was found dead along Ocean Parkway, and the specimen now resides in the American Museum of Natural History.

**GOATSUCKERS—SHRIKES**: Red-headed Woodpecker: after two consecutive strong fall flights, it is disappointing to find only one wintering individual; sub-adult Dec. 14 Gardiner's I (H. McGuinness, B. Trimble). Red-bellied Woodpecker: seems to be continuing its expansion throughout the area; 73 CBCs recorded 9, 74 CBCs total, 23. Phoebe: N Nassau CBC. Empidonax sp: Dec. 1 Lawrence (JTA)—this exceptionally late date is intriguing since the possibility of a western stray cannot be overlooked. Horned Lark: 800 Jan. 12 Sagaponack (JTA)—good concentration. Tree Swallow: recorded on Smithtown and

S Nassau CBCs. House Wren: Dec. 14 Gardiner's I (SBD). Carolina Wren: 70 Dec. 14 Gardiner's I (mob)—very nice concentration, and probably a low count. Water Pipit: wintered at a number of locations, including JBWR; West End, Jones; and Mecox. Northern Shrike: Smithtown CBC; imm Dec. 14 Gardiner's I (H. McGuinness); Dec. 14-Jan. 4 Montauk (M. Cashman, JAB)—possibly two different birds. Loggerhead Shrike: Orient CBC; thru Dec. 21 Great Kills, S I (mob).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Orange-crowned Warbler: Jan. 17 Tobay (WF); Jan. 26 Watermill (JJR). Nashville Warbler: Dec. 28 Alley Pd Pk (SBD, Al Bell *et. al.*)—fifth winter occurrence. Palm Warbler: 7+ Jan. 21 Mecox (GSR)—good winter number. Yellow-breasted Chat: S Nassau CBC; also Dec. 24 New Rochelle (B. Harris); Jan. 7 Riis Pk (A. Richards)—found dead.

BLACKBIRDS—BUNTINGS: Yellow-headed Blackbird: adult male Dec. 22-Jan. 6 Van Cortlandt Pk (mob)—only the second state winter occurrence. Northern (Baltimore) Oriole: at least 11 reports for the period. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: N Nassau CBC. Dickcissel: Mar. 9-16 Roslyn Hts (fide RC); Mar. 15 Plandome (O. Dunning). Winter finches: what are they? Grasshopper Sparrow: Dec. 14 Montauk (R. Paxton). Vesper Sparrow: outlook in this region continues to be glum; 73 CBCs total was a mere 12, and this year the number shrank to four. White-crowned Sparrow: comparative CBC indices show a dramatic increase (73: 20; 74: 36), this despite the fact that N Nassau's best area (10 White-crowns in 73) was annihilated during the year and didn't produce one bird this year; notable were the 12-20 Baxter Creek, Bronx (JTA, H. McGuinness), and 14 from Smithtown CBC (F. Fairchild *et. al.*). White-throated Sparrow: tremendous increase over last year's CBC index, (4159 vs 2611). Lapland Longspur: mainly in widely scattered small, nomadic flocks; also 150 Jan. 12 Sagaponack (JTA). Snow Bunting: largest flock reported 200 Jan. 12 Sag (JTA).

Well, maybe it wasn't all that exciting after all.

CBC dates: Brooklyn—Dec. 22; Captree—Dec. 15; Central Suffolk—Dec. 26; Montauk—Dec. 14; Northern Nassau—Dec. 14; Orient—Dec. 28; Queens—Dec. 28; Quogue-Watermill—Dec. 14; Smithtown—Dec. 27; Southern Nassau—Dec. 29; Bronx-Westchester—Dec. 22; Staten Island—Dec. 22.

22 East 8th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

The job of compiling Region 10 is changing hands with this issue. We wish to thank Hugh McGuinness for the valuable work he has done and sincerely hope that he will continue to contribute to *The Kingbird*. The new editors for Region 10 are:

Dr. Barbara Spencer  
154 Dayton St.  
Sea Cliff, New York 11579  
and  
Anthony J. Lauro  
9 DeSoto Rd.  
Amityville, New York 11701