

on WX which usually avg 300. Numbers normal elsewhere. Red-breasted Nuthatch: unusual numbers of last fall at Vassar persisted with 26 there on WX. Usually averages 1 or none. An unusual 17 on PX; FH had as many as 6 at his feeder at Accord at one time. Brown Creeper: numbers down. Carolina Wren: presumed kill of last year did not materialize. Numbers good thru region and period. At least 5 reports from Dutch in Feb. Gray Catbird: 5 on PCX and 5 in Rye Dec. 26. Brown Thrasher: 1 near Wappingers in Feb. and 2 at Rye Dec. 26. Another at Wurtsboro Dec. 17. Am. Robin: excellent. Flocks up to 100 in Dutch thru Jan. Flocks of 40-50 Dec. and Jan. in E. Ulst. **WOOD THRUSH**: 1 on RX well described by P. French, a very experienced birder. Hermit Thrush: 5 on PX, 1 Eldred Dec. 2 (Alice Jones), 1 Feb. 10-20 near P'kpsie (MJK). Eastern Bluebird: 12 wintered in Dutch and 8 were at Sleepy Hollow Cem. N. Tarrytown Jan. 30. Numbers inc by end of period. Kinglets: both species very scarce everywhere. N. Shrike: missed on RX but most other counts had at least one. Many reports from entire region thru period. Best numbers in memory. Starling: thousands roosting on Mid-Hudson Bridge, P'kpsie, and on the west end of Tappan Zee Bridge.

VIREOS-SPARROWS: ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER: 2 omitted from fall report. 1 MC Nov. 5 and another there Nov. 25 (TB). **COM. YELLOWTHROAT**: 1 on PX. E. Meadowlark: numbers very low. Only 1 on WX, absent from most other counts. Max 38 Depot Hill, Dutch (HM). Redwinged Blackbird: a few winter reports but no flocks thru end of period. Late returning. Rusty Blackbird: a few wintered near Stissing. Common Grackle: very late return. No Feb. flocks. Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 Wurtsboro Dec. 17-18 (MB). Evening Grosbeak: large flocks of fall gave way to few winter residents. Max 45 thru Feb. at Mohonk feeder (Don Theis). Purple Finch: numbers down, max 30 near Washingtonville Dec. 21 (BS). House Finch: a veritable explosion, record numbers everywhere. 324 on WX which had its first in 1965. Only 209 that count last year. 250 in one field at Wallkill Dec. 3. We must look for ecological effect of this marked increase. Pine Grosbeak: many reports of small flocks thru entire region for period. Max 47 near Rondout R. Feb. 4 (AB). Common Redpoll: many reports after mid-January. First Dec. 17 in Oran (BS). Max 100 Jan. 1 Goshen (BS). **HOARY REDPOLL**: 2 at feeder of John Gee at Rye. Arr Feb. 24 and remained into Mar. (mob). Pine Siskin: similar to C. Redpoll, most feeders have 40 or more thru end of period. Am. Goldfinch: numbers excellent. RX had a high of 486. Crossbills: both species on most Christmas counts, small numbers but widespread and continuous thru period. Rufous-sided Towhee: at least 5 reports of wintering birds across north part of region. Vesper Sparrow: app on RX for 4th time. White-crowned Sparrow: up to 3 wintering at Amenia again this year (WTS). 4 on WCC and 1 at Newburgh Dec. 17. White-throated Sparrow: a record high on RX of 485, numbers high everywhere thru period. Fox Sparrow: 3 Jan. reports in Dutch. Song Sparrow: PX had an unusual high of 163. Lapland Longspur: 2 near Millerton and 3 at Verbank from Feb. 11-20. Single birds reported at Blue Chip Farm, Wallkill, in late Jan. Snow Bunting: usual scattered reports of a few birds. Max 500 daily at Amenia thru Feb. More than 350 near Wallkill Jan. 29.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

After a benign December which permitted most Christmas counts to proceed without too much discomfort on the part of observers, the weather was the news during January and February. January 13th, freezing rain coated trees and wires producing extensive damage. On the 20th, 17 inches of snow dropped on

top of the ice. On February 6th came the "neutercane." Neutercane? Weathermen explained that this hurricane with snow was a huge cyclonic coastal storm with an eye much like a hurricane, except it did not originate in the tropics. Two more feet of snow and severe beach erosion resulted. January was the wettest on record with 11.2 inches of precipitation instead of the normal three. February averaged 6° F below normal with the temperature going below freezing on 27 of the month's 28 days. In all, 59 to 69 inches of snow fell during the two months depending on where the yardstick was standing, compared to the norm of eight inches in each month.

While snow cover brought lingering land birds to feeders, waterfowl suffered less displacement this winter than last year, because harbor freezing was not so extensive. The cold February delayed the return of the early migrants expected mid-month, with no widespread movement noted through the period.

Learned adaptive behavior, apparently in response to last year's coastal freeze-out, was shown by hundreds of Brant feeding inland on parkway shoulders, golf courses, and sod farms even prior to the snowfall. Starvation did not appear to be the motivating force for this change in habitat as birds trapped by Department of Environmental Conservation biologists were "husky and healthy." It seems that pulling lawn grass is easier than pulling underwater eel grass.

Interesting, and perhaps unique, feeding behavior on the part of the immature Bald Eagle which wintered on the North Shore was described by Mill Neck Warden Bob Hornosky. The eagle was observed to "tread" with its feet in shallow water at low tide for eels still semidormant in the mud. When the bird encountered an eel with its feet, it seized and carried off its prize.

Christmas counts found wintering land birds generally scarce, with the exception of the Montauk count where Gardiner's Island provided a haven for semi-hardy species as well as waterfowl. Comparison of the contribution of Gardiner's Island to the whole Montauk count for several species illustrates the ratios: Carolina Wren 31/32, (down from 70 in 1974), Gray Catbird 14/16, Rufous-sided Towhee 20/23, Field Sparrow 55/61, and Swamp Sparrow 17/18. Montauk reported its third highest count with 123 species. Central Suffolk, with 118 species plus "Ipswich" Sparrow totaled their lowest count since 1969. Orient, 94, and Northern Nassau with 107 were lower than the past several years, yet about average over a 10 year period. New to the Montauk count was a Yellow-breasted Chat, new to Orient, Brant and a Murre (sp. ?). A high count of 818 House Finches on the Orient count is the latest figure in a steady progression from 7 birds in 1967. While the southern Nassau count was also lower than recent years, it had four new count birds in Louisiana Heron, American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel and Lark Sparrow.

The Federation pelagic trip February 19th traveled 40 miles south of Montauk aboard the Viking Star, and reported ten Gannets, four Iceland and one Glaucous Gull, and 311 Black-legged Kittiwakes. 83 large alcids, probably all Razorbills, were seen 30 to 35 miles out at a water depth of 30 fathoms.

An unprecedented February Sooty Shearwater was reported 75 miles south of Long Island flying in the wake of a Russian trawler. Observer Blair Nikula, in the area for three days aboard a Coast Guard cutter, also reported three to five Skuas, and a total of approximately 2500 Gannets. Alcids and fulmars were ab-

sent south of Long Island, although present east of the Cape.

Winter positives include: 1) good numbers of most waterfowl, 2) an excellent flight of redpolls, siskins, and crossbills, 3) good numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks and Marsh Hawks on Christmas Counts, 4) continued increase of Tufted Titmice, Cardinals, and House Finches in Suffolk County, 5) good numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Winter negatives: 1) many small land birds in low numbers, even common species such as junco and Tree Sparrow, 2) Brown Creepers, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, and towhees nearly absent in most areas, 3) loons and grebes low, 4) Snowy Owls exceptionally rare, 5) Little Gulls scarce, 6) some Barn Owl mortality (at least four picked up dead in Suffolk County).

Rarities include: Sooty Shearwater, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lark Bunting.

Abbreviations: Tobay—JFK Wildlife Sanctuary, Jones B.—Jones Beach State Park, R. Moses—Robert Moses State Park, Muttontown—Muttontown Preserve, CC—Christmas Count, Hemp. L.—Hempstead Lake State Park.

Initialled contributors and observers: Jim Ash, Albert M. Bell, Thomas W. Burke, Ralph Cioffi, Thomas H. Davis, Stephen B. Dempsey, Fran File, Robert Giffen, Anthony J. Lauro, Alan Lindberg, Gilbert S. Raynor, Paul Stoutenburgh, Alvin Wollin.

LOONS—DUCKS: Red-necked Grebe: three Dec. 17 Montauk CC, one Jan. 12 Montauk (GSR). **SOOTY SHEARWATER:** one Feb. 2 75 miles south of L.I. 39° 54.5' N. 71° 32' W. (B. Nikula). Common Egret: two Dec. 20 Jones B. (AW) were late, as were Snowy Egrets: one Dec. 18 Southampton on the ice with gulls at a nearly frozen pond, and one Jan. 28 in a marsh in Riverhead (GSR). Also late leaving were Louisiana Herons reported, one Dec. 24, at Tobay (AW) and one Jan. 2 at the Lawrence Marsh (H. Hirshbein), and the two Glossy Ibises reported Dec. 10 at Tobay (O. Dunning), and one Jan. 2 on the S. Nassau CC. A flock of 6 Whistling Swans wintered in the Mecox Bay area as did a maximum of 4000-5000 Canada Geese. Two **FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCKS** stayed at Hemp. L. to Dec. 4. Single Common and King Eiders Dec. 26 reported on the Central Suffolk CC were rare for the area. 200+ Common and 8 Kings wintered at Montauk where they are more regular, as did a female Harlequin Duck. Two pairs of Harlequins were present during Jan. and Feb. at Shinnecock Inlet. A drake **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** was located Jan. 7 at Napeague Harbor by a party working on the waterfowl survey (GSR). Eight Common Mergansers were found at Manorville Dec. 26 (GSR).

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Sharp-shinned Hawks were present in Suffolk in the best numbers in years (GSR) with more than ten reports. Single Cooper's Hawks were seen in Orient Dec. 28, and in Brookville where an individual wintered in the area (B. Conolly, S. Melum, AL) as did a Goshawk. A Red-shouldered Hawk wintered at Muttontown (AL). Rough-legged Hawks were present throughout the region in near normal numbers. Marsh Hawks seemed more numerous than in recent years with 37 reported on the Central Suffolk CC. Several Merlin reports came in from various localities; three wintered along the Jones B. strip (C. Ward). A sub adult **GOLDEN EAGLE** was seen Dec. 11 at Hemp. L. (J. Ash). An immature **BALD EAGLE** was first reported Jan. 15 in Mill Neck by Jim Madden. It remained in the area through the period, enjoyed by many observers. A very late Osprey was seen at R. Moses Dec. 13 (JA). Wintering Common Gallinules are uncommon: one Feb. 28 in Riverhead (R. Adamo). Four American Oystercatchers remained until Jan. 14 and one until Feb. 5 at Jones B. Eight Am. Golden Plovers lingered to Dec. 15 and Jan. 13 at JFK airport (S. Chevalier), while a Whimbrel found Jan. 2 on the S. Nassau CC at Jones B. (H. Pemberton) was a first record for January. Two Willets were last seen Dec. 18 at Amityville (AJL). A single Northern Phalarope seen Dec. 1 in Jones Inlet was very late (JA). Three to five

Skuas were observed Feb. 2, 75 miles south of L.I. (B. Nikula). Single Glaucous Gulls were reported from Shinnecock Jan. 7 and from Montauk Jan. 7 and Feb. 11 (GSR). One Iceland Gull (Kumlien's) was in residence at the restaurant at Jones B. (AJL). Others were reported from Shinnecock Dec. 10, Moriches Inlet Dec. 26, Dec. 31, and Montauk Feb. 11 (GSR). Last fall's large numbers of kittiwakes persisted at Montauk through late Dec.; 2000 Dec. 17 (THD), 130 Dec. 31, 200 Jan. 7, and one Jan. 12 (GSR). Four kittiwakes were seen Dec. 26 at Moriches Inlet (GSR). Black-headed Gulls were seen Dec. 20, one at Jones B. (AW), and one Dec. 26 at Moriches Inlet (CC). Perhaps the same bird was reported Feb. 19 at Westhampton. Single Little Gulls were reported on the Central Suffolk CC Dec. 26, and on the Captree Count Dec. 18. In recent years Little Gulls have not been too hard to locate in large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls in the various inlets, but they were scarce this year. Single Razorbills were reported Dec. 17 (THD, TWB), and Dec. 31 (GSR) from Montauk. Up to 83 were seen Feb. 19 on the Federation pelagic trip 35 miles south of Montauk.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Muttontown Preserve is a consistent wintering place for Long-eared Owls with up to 12 present this year (AL). Four Long-ears were present in Port Washington Jan. 21 (B. Forquer) where they probably hunt over the controversial local dump. Short-eared Owls were reported in about normal numbers from suitable localities. Snowy Owls were scarce along the beaches, but single birds were reported Jan. 2 at Orient Pt. (A & F Bisk), Jan. 29 at Mecox (JA), and Feb. 13 and 18 at Muttontown (AL).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Two Western Kingbirds lingered until Dec. 4 at R. Moses; one was seen Dec. 11 at Montauk (M. Cooper). Carolina Wrens were scarce but several maintained themselves at feeders. A Tree Swallow was seen Jan. 18 in Rockville Center (AW). At least three Eastern Bluebirds were reported from Southaven Jan. 23 and from Brookhaven Feb. 20. A Northern Shrike remained at Montauk until Dec. 4 (JA); one was in Mastic Dec. 26 (CC) and an immature was present at Jones B. Feb. 20-25 (J. Bull). Several Loggerhead Shrikes were reported: one to Dec. 17 at Montauk, one Dec. 17 N. Nassau CC, and one Dec. 18 JFK airport (JA).

VIREOS-WARBLED: A late Pine Warbler was present at a suet feeder in Shinnecock Hills Dec. 18 (GSR). Lingering Com. Yellowthroats were found on the Orient, Montauk and Central Suffolk CCs.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: Several Northern Orioles wintered at feeders in Suffolk County. An outstanding feeder bird was the immature male **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** at the Otero feeder in Centereach from Feb. 19 through the period for a fourth winter state record. A second individual (female) was seen once accompanying the male at a later date. Jan. 18 a Dickcissel appeared at the Rowley feeder in Brookhaven and was present for about a week. Perhaps the prize feeder bird was the male **LARK BUNTING** first seen by Bob Benjamin in Elwood Jan. 14, and viewed by many through the period. Common Redpolls were widely reported from mid-Jan. through the period. The largest flock numbered 300 in mid-Feb. at Gilgo. Pine Siskins were also present throughout in good numbers. Red Crossbills were reported from a number of localities, among them 36 Dec. 24 R. Moses (THD) 17 Feb. 17 Muttontown (AL) 50 Feb. 18 Gilgo (GSR). There were scattered reports of White-winged Crossbills including 15 at Oyster Bay (B. Forquer) and a flock of 125-150 at Gilgo until late Feb. One Lark Sparrow remained until Jan. 8 at Hemp. L. (SBD). Another was also seen Jan. 8 at Mattituck (R. Tuthill). A Clay-colored Sparrow was found Dec. 10 at Montauk (GSR).

154 Dayton Street, Sea Cliff, New York 11579

[Eds. Note: Tony Lauro, either by himself or in conjunction with Barbara Spencer, has been Region 10 editor since July 1975. He now finds himself unable to continue in that capacity.

Barbara Spencer, who herself had to bow out about a year ago, has graciously consented to step in again.

Thanks, Tony, for a great job.]