

Catskill Feb. 25 (JB). Cedar Waxwing: a busy year for these, with reports from many places; numbers tapering off toward end of period. Northern Shrike: 23 reports incl. 12 from five CC's.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: Yellow-rumped Warbler: 10 Cox-Athens CC (RB).

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: Eastern Meadowlark: scarce as usual, reported on two CC's. Red-winged Blackbird: surprisingly absent—only one each on three CC's and scant other reports. Northern Oriole: one at Glenville feeder Dec. 23 thru Jan. 23. Rusty Blackbird: two Schen CC. Com. Grackle: numerous in contrast to the Red-winged Blackbird, somewhat the reverse of the usual trend. Cardinal: 480 total of six CC's down from 506 five years ago and 518 last year. Perhaps because of the rather mild winter leading up to the counts, folks weren't feeding birds yet, leading to the lower tally of this and some other species. Evening Grosbeak: considered not a significant flight year by many observers, but an impressive 2848 were counted on the six area CC's. Pine Grosbeak: scattered reports, mostly from the hill towns late Dec. thru Feb. 20. Common Redpoll: only reports were from Col. Co. in early Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: Chatham Dec. 16 and Jan. 7. Savannah Sparrow: only three reported by two CC's. Dark-eyed Junco: 587 reported on six CC's incl one "Oregon" Junco (EG & KD). Tree Sparrow: numerous comments about scarcity in late Dec. and early Jan. Field Sparrow: four from area CC's incl. one that returned to the Gorman feeder for the Troy count for the fifth consecutive year. White-crowned Sparrow: one each Chatham and Troy CC's; also one Feb. 20 Schoharie. White-throated Sparrow: 375 total of six CC's. Fox Sparrow: feeder reports from Troy (one) and W. Sand Lake (two) mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. Swamp Sparrow: four on CC's plus one Feb. 20 at Schoharie. Song Sparrow: 129 total of six CC's; compare with White-throated. Lapland Longspur: only one each from two CC's. Snow Bunting: 69 Troy CC; flock of 800-1000 Cossackie mid- Feb.

Visitors are reminded that they may receive or deliver messages of the latest birding news in the Hudson-Mohawk region by telephoning "Dial-a-Bird" at 518-377-9600.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

The drought of last fall continued thru Dec. and was not alleviated until the last week of the month when a snowfall of several inches occurred. For the next four weekends some form of precipitation fell, usually starting as snow and ending with an inch or two of rain. Since the rain washed away the snow, the ground remained exposed until Feb. when very cold temperatures prevented melting. By Jan. 25 more than 10.7 inches of precipitation had fallen, breaking the record for the month. Winter temperatures reached their depths the third week of February, when lower than -10° F was reported throughout much of the Region. Most lakes and streams did not freeze until just before the waterfowl count in mid-January, and the thaw took place in the last week of February. By the first week of March, the Hudson was free of ice in its lower reaches, and shallower ponds were beckoning to returning waterfowl—quite different from last year, when ice remained until the second week of April.

Compared with the winter season last year, this one was rather uneventful.

Very few winter finches were reported. Evening Grosbeaks were in good numbers thru December, but then dropped off to scattered flocks. A few Pine Grosbeaks appeared as did one or two redpolls. One White-winged Crossbill and a few siskins were reported—definitely not a finch year. Northern Shrikes were well represented however, continuing their influx of November. Canada Geese were extremely plentiful, and Common Mergansers were in record numbers. Canvasbacks were also very high. Although the resident raptors seemed to be low, there were two reports of Merlin, and two of Osprey; very good finds. The California Gull still frequents Rockland Lake, but is usually hard to find. The Lesser Black-backed Gull also continues to make appearances there once in a while. Even non-birders questioned where the Blue Jays were, with most Christmas counts recording less than half their usual numbers. Juncos and Tree Sparrows were also far below normal. The expected blackbird movements in February did not materialize, and migrants were not reported thru the end of the period.

Contributors and observers cited: Al Brayton, Martin Borko, Tom Burke, Robert F. Deed, Stan DeOrsey, Alice Jones, Ken McDermott, Al Merritt, John C. Orth, Eleanor Pink, Benton Seguin, John Tramontano, Ed Treacy, Otis Waterman.

Abbreviations: The first four letters of each county; BCC—Burroughs Christmas Count, Dec. 23; GSCC—Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Count, Dec. 17; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count, Dec. 16; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count, Dec. 17; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count, Dec. 29.

LOONS—DUCKS: RED-NECKED GREBE: one, Rondout Cr. and Hudson R confluence, Jan. 2 (AB). **Horned Grebe:** 20, Ashokan Dec. 14 (AB). **Pied-billed Grebe:** one at PL thru Jan. 6. **Great Blue Heron:** Dec. saw more than 18 at PL with last in mid-Jan. **Mute Swan:** 28 on MCC was a record high. Only 18 last year. **Canada Goose:** numbers continue excellent. Down while water was frozen, but returning in record numbers by late Feb. 1,682 on Bronx-Westchester Count in Rye, Dec. 23. **Snow Goose:** one remained at Rock thru period. One Blue morph at MC Jan. 6. **Gadwall:** two at Round Pond, Dutch Dec. 17 were unusual. **Pintail:** a few into Dec. at Mongaup, Rockland L. and Stissing. **Blue-winged Teal:** three at Washington L, Newburgh, on MCC were new to that count. **Wood Duck:** more than usual, but still only a few. A female wintered on Rockland L. **White-winged Scoter:** a male at Cornwall Bay Jan. 23 (BS). **Ruddy Duck:** one Tomahawk L, Oran on MCC was new for that count. **Hooded Merganser:** wintered in better than usual numbers. Several in Dutch and Oran where they are rarely found in winter. **Common Merganser:** wintered in better than average numbers. 234 on RCC was the best count since 1955. More than 150 wintered on Rondout Res. **Red-breasted Merganser:** 476 at PL Dec. 23. One at Cornwall Bay Dec. 11-12 was far from salt water.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** three in Dutch and one in Harriman Park dur. period. **Goshawk:** one on BCC, one Pleasant Valley Jan. 24, and two other reports from Dutch dur. Dec. **Sharp-shinned Hawk:** the usual two or three locally around feeders dur. period. **Cooper's Hawk:** four Dec. records in Dutch, one on BCC and one harassing a Rough-legged at Galeville Airport Jan. 6. **Rough-legged Hawk:** usual few in the usual wintering places. Max four at Galeville. **Bald Eagle:** the Sull and Ulst reservoirs continue to be what is probably the best wintering location in the lower 48 states. Four at Rondout and at least ten in the Rio-Mongaup area. The DEC people feel that at least 35 are circulating between reservoirs in the area. **Marsh Hawk:** four Dec. reports in Dutch, and one at MC Jan. 26. **OSPREY:** one Staatsberg Jan. 12, and two reported on RCC possibly the same bird. **MERLIN:** one Hamptonburg Dec. 30 (KM) and another Jan. 7 at Olive Bridge (Ann Altshuler). **Bobwhite:** five birds continue to hold on near Stissing. **Turkey:** fewer than last year in Sull; appeared in new areas of E. Oran and Dutch. **Clapper Rail:** four at MC Dec. 23; one remained

thru Jan. 27. Sora: one Dutch report Dec. 17. Killdeer: one on WCC was the second in 21 years of that count. Black-bellied Plover: one at PL standing beside a Ruddy Turnstone was a good find on the GSCC. Common Snipe: in better than usual numbers thru Dec. Purple Sandpiper: 55 at PL and 20 more in Rye Dec. 23. Dunlin: one Cornwall Bay on MCC was new to that count. Iceland Gull: one on Ramapo Landfill near Sloatsburg Dec. 30; two at Rondout Res. Feb. 4 reduced to one there Feb. 10. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: the bird of the fall at Rockland L was there again Jan. 14 (Larry Holland, ET). **CALIFORNIA GULL**: this previously reported bird was last seen on Dec. 17. Bonaparte's Gull: 120 on RCC was fifth time for that count in the last six years. Could the Hudson be getting cleaner?

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **SNOWY OWL**: one P'kpsie Dec. 23 (Phil Kavanagh). Short-eared Owl: one on WCC was the first count record. Max 9, Galeville Airport Dec. 12 (H. Weber, C. Davis). Saw-whet Owl: one on MCC at Hamptonburgh was new to that count. Common Flicker: winter numbers down in recent years. Several reported from Dutch, but missed for only the second time in 32 counts on RCC. Red-bellied Woodpecker: continues to hold in usual locations but does not increase. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one at Rye Jan. 16-18, one near Cornwall Feb. 25.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **Horned Lark**: reports would indicate better than usual numbers. Blue Jay: numbers down in all areas. Several Christmas Counts reported the worst numbers ever. Common Crow: Alice Jones reports ab. 2500 Dec. 28 at Hudson Valley Roost in Dutch. Although these numbers are down, she suspects another roost has been established nearby. Black-capped Chickadee: generally down in numbers, but 270 on MCC was their highest count since 1963. Tufted Titmouse: most reporters felt numbers were lower. 54 on MCC was the fourth lowest count in 20 years. WCC had a record high of 125. Winter Wren: wintered near WKNY tower in Kingston. Carolina Wren: one continues to use old robin's nest reported last fall. A Gray Squirrel tore it apart, but a few scraps of cloth and yard with a few safety pins had it repaired and still in use at the end of the period. Mockingbird: numbers appear to be leveling off. 94 on WCC. Gray Catbird: one along with a Brown Thrasher was present at MC thru early Jan. Another Brown Thrasher was at Middletown Res. Feb. 14. Am. Robin: numbers good thru period, but far lower than records reported in 1976. WCC reported 98. Eastern Bluebird: 15 on WCC was far above previous high of ten in 1974. Florence Germond's efforts are paying off. That count usually averages two to five. **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**: one on RCC on Gene Brown's front porch in Nyack at noon was amazing! Cedar Waxwing: 50 thru Jan. near Pleasant Valley and 25 the same month at Red Oaks Mill. Northern Shrike: the movement indicated last fall materialized with excellent numbers from all areas. Reported on most Christmas Counts. Loggerhead Shrike: one on Purgatory Rd. Hamptonburg on MCC was new to the count. Starling: more than 5000 are in a P'kpsie roost, and 6438 on MCC was their highest in 20 years.

VIREOS-WARBLED: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: one Jan. 22 Pleasant Valley; one Dec. 25-26 Verbank. Palm Warbler: one on OCC campus Middletown Dec. 13 was a surprise (JT). Common Yellowthroat: one in good health at MC thru Jan. 7.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: House Sparrow: 989 on MCC was highest since 1964. Are they making a comeback? Red-winged Blackbird: these along with the grackles did not return in late Feb. as expected. Usual few at feeders in the southern parts thru period. Northern Oriole: one at KM's home in Newburgh. Cardinal: down at all feeders. 18 in the Dover Plains area Dec. 23-30. **BLACK-HEADED GROSB**: one from mid-Dec. thru Jan. at Tarrytown home of M. Schaffner. Evening Grosbeak: numbers exc. in Dec. Far fewer in Jan. and Feb. House Finch: from 20 to 40 at most feeders. Christmas counts were high. MCC reports 174, a 54% increase over last year's high. BCC in the northern part also had 174. Hans Weber was regularly feeding 75 of this species and also 75 Am. Goldfinches at his home in New Paltz. Pine Grosbeak: numbers plentiful in Dutch dur. Feb. Only a few reports elsewhere. Common Redpoll: only report 1 Feb. 10 at Wappinger's Falls (Tom

Storey). Pine Siskin: only a few reported. White-winged Crossbill: one near Washington Lake, Newburgh, Feb. 1 was the only report (BS). Rufous-sided Towhee: reports from 5 different areas. Three on RCC. Savannah Sparrow: one Jan. 28, Croton Pt. Tree Sparrow: numbers down. Most areas have half the usual counts. Field Sparrow: KM had two thru first two weeks of Feb. Fox Sparrow: two on RCC and five on MCC. Song Sparrow: eight at Croton Pt. Jan. 28. Lapland Longspur: one Dec. 26 Hamptonburgh, feeding with a flock of 12 Horned Larks. Snow Bunting: good numbers in Dutch thru period. About 50 wintered at Stewart Airport.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

The weather was relatively mild through December and January, following a warmer than usual fall. Sparse land bird migration left few birds to winter in the area. Most Christmas counts enjoyed favorable conditions although the Orient count on December 28 proceeded in 28 degree F. weather with almost gale-force winds out of the north. A protracted cold spell began February 7, freezing bays and harbors solid, concentrating lingering waterfowl in the open areas around inlets and displacing others into the ocean. Moderating temperatures during the last week in February moved the ice out gradually. Larger than usual numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds wintered in the area and were singing in early February. Returning migrants were not in evidence through the period.

GREAT GRAY OWL

The event of the season was the finding of a Great Gray Owl in Lloyd Harbor January 8 by David McNicholas, the first Great Gray Owl seen on Long Island since 1902. This bird, perhaps the southernmost individual present in a year marked by a widespread invasion of Great Grays, frequented a lightly wooded fringe along the edge of a salt marsh, and hunted over the marsh and in nearby Caumsett Park. It was seen eating Norway Rats. The responsibility of hosting such a rare and vulnerable species was assumed by the Huntington Audubon Society, coordinated by Sallie Ruppert. Guides, guards, and taxi service were provided to protect the bird and property owners from the encroachments of overzealous observers. The presence of the bird was not announced on the RBA tape until Tom Davis had made arrangements with the local police for parking, and supervision of the traffic generated by visiting birders and non-birders. Hundreds of people visited this fearless and accessible rarity.

The bird was present through February 6 when the bitter weather filled the marsh with ice. A dead Great Gray, picked up on the beach in nearby Centerport on March 12, was presumed to be the Lloyd Neck bird. On March 27, a woman called the Rupperts to report that the owl was alive and well in her backyard; apparently there were at least two Great Grays on Long Island although the possibility exists that the Centerport bird was washed ashore from some other area. The Lloyd Neck bird was last observed on March 28.