

six Stoney Creek, WarrensCo. Jan. 1 (RPY). Rufous-sided Towhee: two reported, one Jan. 5-Feb. 17 Schen. and one Dec. 15-Feb. 27 Meutekill, ColCo. Savannah Sparrow: two Feb. 13 Cox Flats. Vesper Sparrow: one Feb. 20 Colonie, only report. CHIPPING SPARROW: one at feeder Jan. 5 thru (DS). Field Sparrow: two at the E. Greenbush feeder where one has wintered the last five years (BG). White-throated Sparrow: 222 reported. Swamp Sparrow: three SoRens. CC. Song Sparrow: 118 reported. Lapland Longspur: only four reported. Snow Bunting: 138 reported monthly from ColCo.

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REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

EDWARD D. TREACY

It seems strange to think of this as a winter report. Where was the winter? Temperatures rarely went below freezing, and never approached 0° F. About two inches of snow fell Dec. 19, and that was it until Feb. 16, when about four inches fell. A one inch deposit on Feb. 22 finished the season. Precipitation was so scarce that a serious drought could occur this summer if spring rains don't make up the loss. For the first time in history, hiking trails in Palisades Park were closed in winter due to dryness. The New York Weather Bureau was quoting snowfall for the season in the amount of 8.2 inches when the average is about 30.3 inches. Lakes and streams were completely open until Dec. 31, when shallower ones froze. Most were open for the entire Waterfowl Count period producing record counts. The Hudson finally froze Jan. 31, but was open again by the end of the third week of February.

The mild weather and open water encouraged most species of waterfowl to remain rather than migrate for the season, and the lack of snow provided excellent food for many of the passerines, so much so that feeder counts were at an all time low. Winter finches were nonexistent, except for a few Evening Grosbeaks, and one report of four White-winged Crossbills. Birders who took to the field on Christmas Counts were well rewarded. Most counts broke records in numbers of species and individuals. The Federation Waterfowl Count was the biggest ever. The 14,862 individuals counted was four times larger than the previous high of 3,684 set in 1970, and the 25 species found surpassed the 21 species record set in 1965. Of course we will never know how much the mild weather and open water affected the count, or did the excellent coverage this year play a bigger role?

Several observers commented on the abundance of local hawks, and surmised that lack of competition from absent wintering northern visitors might have had some effect.

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Abbreviations used, and Bird Counts cited: CB—Cornwall Bay; CP—Croton Point; MC—Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; PL—Playland, Rye; BCC—Burroughs Christmas Count, Ulster Co. Dec. 22; BWC—Bronx-Westchester Christmas Count, Dec. 23; FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count, Jan. 6-13; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count, Orange Co., Dec. 15; PCCC—Putnam Co. Christmas Count, Dec. 29; PkCC—Peekskill Christmas Count, Dec. 15; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count, Dec. 23; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count, Dutchess Co. Dec. 29.

LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loon: one CB Dec. 18; none from Ashokan where they are often found in winter. Red-throated Loon: one at CB Dec. 1, 8, six off Rye on BWC. **RED-NECKED GREBE:** two Ashokan Dec. 9-31, one on BWC off Milton Pt. Horned Grebe: 10 on FWC, one or two birds reported from four different areas, Max 40 Ashokan Dec. 31. Pied-billed Grebe: 67 on FWC, with 59 of them in West. Great Blue Heron: 25 at PL thru Dec., inc to 32 by Jan. 26. Mute Swan: record high of 182 on FWC, first time on WCC, six birds. **WHISTLING SWAN:** four at Amawalk Res. Dec. 11. Canada Goose: 7,184 on FWC was six times prev high of 1974. Numbers peaked in Dutch Feb. 10 with 4,477 at Armenia. Brant: eight over Garrison on PCCC were quite unusual, 14 off PL Jan. 1 were more normal. Snow Goose: more than usual, max 16 CB Jan. 20, one or two at four other locations. Gadwall: 31 on FWC, prev high three in 1979. 11 on Croton R. Jan. 12, and 25 on Rockland L Jan. 1 are unprecedented numbers. Pintail: max 20 CP Dec. 17. Green-winged Teal: always rare in winter, one on FWC, two on PkCC, and one on Rio Res. Jan. 8. Am. Wigeon: 46 on FWC, 30 at PL thru Jan., 84 in Rye area on BWC. No. Shoveler: nine on FWC compared to three in 1965, ten on Rockland L. Jan. 1. Wood Duck: reported from three locations thru period, the usual one or two birds at each. Redhead: always rare, one CB Dec. 28 inc to three by Jan. 29 (BS), one near Kingston Pt. Dec. 23. Ring-necked Duck: three CB Jan. 27 were quite unusual there at that time. Canvasback: BW reports fewer on lower Hudson than in past years, but not true up-river. Max 800 at CB Feb. 27, groups of 20 to 200 at several locations, 1400 on FWC, prev. high 507 in 1975. Oldsquaw: one on Hudson at Lent's Cove on FWC, another at CB Jan. 27. White-winged Scoter: two at Haverstraw on RCC were the second record for 33 counts, Black Scoter: five CB Dec. 14. Ruddy Duck: one of the few species down on the FWC with only eight birds, seven of them in West., max 14 near Castle Pt. Dec. 1. None reported from Tappan Zee where a few years ago they wintered by the hundreds. Hooded Merganser: 124 on FWC, 98 of these on the Westchester Reservoirs. Prev. high 81 in 1958. Com. Merganser: 1,845 on FWC, prev. high in 1957 was 1,372. Max one locale was 400 CB Jan. 25. Red-breasted Merganser: two CB Dec. 17, one at CP Jan. 13.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: more than ever before in winter. Max 53 near Quaker Hill, Pawling Dec. 18, 45 there Jan. 2, three still there on Jan. 8. Scattered reports of individuals from elsewhere in Dutch. Began returning to Region third week of Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: one or two birds reported from each county, most wintering at feeders, feeding upon those who fed. P. French lost most of his many Cardinals to one of this species at his home in New City. Cooper's Hawk: at least one reported each month thru period. Red-tailed Hawk: in exc numbers thru period, max 51 on MCC. Pairing off by end of period. Red-shouldered Hawk: one on PkCC and another at Rye Nature Center from Jan. 11 on. **BROAD-WINGED HAWK:** one on PCCC; no details (Michael Gochfeld). Rough-legged Hawk: far fewer than usual. One Feb. 18 near Wallkill, one CP Jan. 22, and one in the Nanapanock-Wawarsing area Jan. 3, 10, one in Dutch Jan. 12. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** a pair of adults found Feb. 3 on Stillwell Res. USMA by James R. Treacy were identified by EDT, and observed daily for a week by mob. Last obs Feb. 15 and 22. Another found dead at Hawthorne Traffic Circle, West. Jan. 7 (Tom Carrolan), and another at Tamarack Swamp, Dutch Jan. 1 (Czecher Terhune). Marsh Hawk: a male at Galeville Airport Jan. 13. Am. Kestrel: exc numbers thru period, 38 on MCC. Bald Eagle: 3 reports from West, and a few elsewhere. The max was a whopping 28 produced by an aerial survey done by the NYSDEC from Port Jervis along the Neversink to the Sull Co. reservoirs on Jan. 15, 21 were ad and seven imm. Bobwhite: none this season. May be gone from the area. Turkey: continues to

inc. One at Saugerties Jan. 25 was quite east of the usual concentrations in Ulster. Clapper Rail: one rem at MC thru Dec. 23. **SORA**: an unusual record of one at Bedford, West, on the Greenwich Christmas Count of Dec. 16. Am. Coot: 20 at Iona Dec. 1 and 40 at CB Jan. 10. More than 350 wintered on Rockland L. Black-bellied Plover: one at PL Dec. 24. Iceland Gull: one second-year bird at CP Jan. 15, and another across the Hudson at Grassy Pt. Jan. 28. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one L. DeForest Jan. 10 was the third record for Rock and the first this year. Laughing Gull: unusual in winter, three reports, one at George's I. in the Hudson on PkCC, one at MC Dec. 9 and one at Piermont Pier was the third record for a RCC in 33 counts. Bonaparte's Gull: 37 at CB Jan. 12, and seven at Piermont Pier on RCC.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barn Owl: one on PCCC was the only report. Screech Owl: tape recorders in the field have made a great difference in reporting this species. RCC produced 16 thru its use. Short-eared Owl: one Rye on BWC was the only report. Failed to appear at Galeville Airport where they have often wintered in large numbers. Saw-whet Owl: one at Rye Nature Center was captured and treated for an eye infection that had left it virtually blind. It was released in good condition Jan. 12. Com. Flicker: sev. reported reg. in Dutch. Pileated Woodpecker: missed on WCC for the third year in a row. Indicates suspected loss in numbers in the past few years may be true. Red-bellied Woodpecker: usual few birds at suet feeders, no change in numbers. Red-headed Woodpecker: wintered in usual places, one in New Rochelle on BWC and another at Bedford Hills feeder all winter. One imm. at Pearl River dur Jan. was coming into adult plumage. Hairy Woodpecker: rep low in West., only eight on PCCC which had 30 in 1978.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **EASTERN PHOEBE**: one at MC Dec. 1, 2. Blue Jay: most obs felt numbers very low. WCC had 77, usual avg. is 200 or more. Com. Crow: Alice Jones reports between 2,000 and 2,500 at mid-Hudson Roost. Fish Crow: a few more than usual, seven on RCC was their sixth record in 33 years of that count. Two at Highland Falls Dec. 2 and one there Jan. 27. One at Vassar Jan. 11 and another Dutch record Jan. 26. Black-capped Chickadee: numbers up on most counts. Red-breasted Nuthatch: only report from BCC which had five in the Ashokan-Hurley area. **HOUSE WREN**: one at Ardsley on BWC remained thru mid-Feb., one at MC thru Dec. to Jan. 27. Winter Wren: only report, one on BCC. Carolina Wren: should not have trouble surviving this mild winter. The several reports thru Feb. would indicate this is true. **LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN**: one at CP Dec. 12-15. Mockingbird: cont to inc. Gray Catbird: one at Marion VanWagner's feeder in Pleasant Valley thru entire period. Brown Thrasher: one remained at MC thru Jan. Eastern Bluebird: better numbers than in many years, esp east of the Hudson. 35 on PkCC and 24 on WCC were unusually high. The latter count usually avges four. Golden-crowned Kinglet: missed completely on WCC for the first time. Cedar Waxwing: 373 on PkCC was unusually high. Many reports thru Dec., but scarce thereafter. No. Shrike: one Rondout Res. Jan. 6 and again there on Feb. 25. Starling: ab 10,000 roosting regularly on Mid-Hudson Bridge.

VIREOS-SPARROWS: **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER**: one first obs at MC Nov. 19 was there thru Dec. 9. **NASHVILLE WARBLER**: one in Rye Nov. 3, 4 was followed by a much later bird on Dec. 2. Yellow-rumped Warbler: many reports from one to a few birds; two on MCC; at least three in Millbrook, Dec. 11; and five on WCC. Four different reports in Dutch at different locations thru Jan., two different reports of as many as four birds there in Feb. **PALM WARBLER**: one at MC Dec. 2. Eastern Meadowlark: continues to diminish as farm land disappears. Missed completely on WCC. Red-winged Blackbird: a small flock wintered at CP. Returning on Feb. 24. **NORTHERN ORIOLE**: two Oran reports: one Goshen and one Middletown were still present at the end of the period, one at Pkpsie Feb. 4-13. Rusty Blackbird: ab 10 wintering near Stissing. Com. Grackle: the usual few flocks wintering. Migrants obs Feb. 23, in good numbers by end of period. Cardinal: rep low in Dutch, but usual to better numbers elsewhere. **DICKCISSEL**: a male wintered at a feeder in Westtown, Oran. First obs Dec. 1. Evening Grosbeak: good numbers of Oct. petered out

to only a few small flocks, mostly in Ulst. House Finch: numbers off at feeders, probably foraging in the snowless countryside. Am. Goldfinch: most obs report numbers down. Only 47 on WCC which usually averages 150. White-winged Crossbill: only winter finch reported—four in Garrison Dec. 27. Did not stay for PCCC (Ralph O'Dell). Rufous-sided Towhee: more reports than usual, all at feeders. Ab a dozen birds scattered through region. Tree Sparrow: only 63 on WCC which usually averages ab 400. Field Sparrow: only three on RCC compared to 75 in 1974. White-crowned Sparrow: one at MC Jan. 1 was noted there thru month. White-throated Sparrow: ab one-third of usual numbers at Dutch feeders. Fox Sparrow: sev reports of wintering birds east of the Hudson in Dutch, Putn, and West. In all about a dozen birds. Lapland Longspur: two near Middletown at Warren Sod Farm. Dec. 2 was the only report. Snow Bunting: only report 150 at Warren Sod Farm Dec. 2.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 – MARINE

BARBARA J. SPENCER

The winter was relatively mild and snowless, with good weather conditions through the Christmas count period. Blossoms appeared in December on winter jasmine and persisted through January, until a cold snap discouraged them toward the beginning of February. At that time there was some freezing of shallow salt water areas. Strong northeast winds and high tides combined to cut a new inlet through the barrier beach just east of Moriches Inlet in mid-January. Heavy snowstorms passed to the south of us as semi-arid conditions developed. A drop to 10° F or lower on February 29 produced the coldest day of the season as March came in like a polar bear.

The season lacked excitement and change of pace as far as birds were concerned. Apart from scattered reports of some late-lingering individuals and the overwintering of some species, including at least fourteen species of shorebirds, most expected winter movements did not materialize. There were no "winter finches," few "white-winged" gulls, no feeder rarities, and sea and diving ducks were in low numbers. Apparently waterfowl and smaller birds felt little pressure to move south as far as our area.

Christmas Count Highlights

The Montauk count Dec. 15 tallied 130 species, one shy of the count record. (Although both totaled 130 species, the present count included Rock Dove.) While winter finches were absent, shorebirds filled in the gap. Turkey Vulture and Willet were new to the count, while Parasitic Jaeger and Western Kingbird had been reported only once before. Also of interest were two Yellow-breasted Chats. The absence of a Bald Eagle was unusual for this count. One generally winters on Gardiner's Island.

The Quogue-Watermill count, also held on Dec. 15, totaled 111 species including a first record of American Oystercatcher. Of interest were kittiwake, Laughing Gull, Black-headed Gull, and all three accipiters.