

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: House Sparrow: numbers remain high thru the winter; large flock at Port of Albany, 621 on Greene Co CBC. E. Meadowlarks remained in the area thru the winter: 45 on Greene Co CBC Dec. 29, Col Co Jan. 6-23. Red-winged Blackbirds, Com. Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds reported at feeders in small numbers thru the winter months; 24 max for Cowbirds at Colonie Dec. 13. Mild Feb. weather brought back grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds to Schenectady at mid-month, about two weeks early (RY). **RUSTY BLACKBIRD:** two Selkirk Dec. 27 (RG), East Greenbush Jan. (DS). Winter Cardinal numbers seem to have been up, a carry-over from abundant numbers in autumn (RY). Winter finch numbers never materialized as expected. The following CBC numbers may indicate relative frequency: Cardinal 123, Evening Grosbeak 342, Purple Finch 7, House Finch 169, Pine Grosbeak 40, Com. Redpoll 12 (found feeding on birch seeds more often than at feeders), Pine Siskin, one, appeared to go south abundantly, but very few stayed locally (RY), Am. Goldfinch 95, probably more abundant than that number indicates. Only two reports of Red Crossbills for the period, from Jenny Lake: one Dec. 6, three Feb. 28. Rufous-sided Towhee: one from Greene Co CBC Dec. 29. Savannah Sparrow: two Greene Co CBC Dec. 29. Dark-eyed Junco: numbers were good, 243 on Greene Co. CBC. Tree Sparrow: wintered in good numbers in most areas. Field Sparrow: Schenectady CBC Dec. 20, Greene Co CBC Dec. 29, Delmar mid-Jan. (BB); East Greenbush thru (BG). White-crowned Sparrow: Ghent Dec. 20 (SO), Greene Co CBC Dec. 29 (AG). White-throated Sparrow: successfully wintered in good numbers; 249 Greene Co CBC. Fox Sparrow: appeared on at least three CBCs; not reported in Jan., reappearing Feb. 1-8 in Old Chatham (KD & EG). Swamp Sparrow: recorded on at least three CBCs in numbers as high as five; and Jan. 16-Feb. 21 in Ghent (B & HG). Song Sparrow: wintered in usual numbers; 20 on Greene Co CBC. Lapland Longspur: five min. wintered with at least 500 Snow Buntings on the Cox-sackie flats manure spreads.

Remember Dial-A-Bird for Hudson-Mohawk area bird news at 518-377-9600.

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REGION 9 – DELAWARE-HUDSON

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December 1980 was the driest on record, and very cold. Temperatures averaged 2.6° F. below average, rarely getting above freezing, and often going to 20° below zero in the northern portion. January averaged 6° F. below average, with precipitation of only .35 inches. February temperatures moderated by mid-month, and about six inches of warm rain removed most of the ice by month's end.

The lack of snow cover was blamed for the dearth of winter finches at feeders. Most were off feeding on the abundant weed seeds and fruit exposed upon the ground. With the exception of the crossbills, most species were reported, but in low numbers. A phenomenal number of "half-hardies" are recorded in the report, belying the nomenclature by having survived such low temperatures.

The deep freeze of December and lack of coverage in three counties reduced the high count of 14,000 individuals of 25 species counted last year on the Waterfowl Count in mid-January, to only 5,000 individuals of 12 species. The latter number of individuals was still twice the usual average count of individuals.

The Waterfowl Count bonus was the Region's first record of Ivory Gull, the details of which are in the report. Other rarities included are: Double-crested Cormorant, Golden Eagle, unusual numbers of Bald Eagles, Osprey, both "white-winged" gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Snowy Owl, House Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Swainson's Thrush, several species of warblers, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

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Abbreviations used: BMCC—Bear Mountain Christmas Count, Jan. 6; CB—Cornwall Bay, FWC—Federation Waterfowl Count Jan. 11; JBCC—John Burroughs Christmas Count, Dec. 20; MCC—Mearns Christmas Count Dec. 20; PL—Playland, Rye; PP—Piermont Pier; RCC—Rockland Christmas Count Dec. 21; WCC—Waterman Christmas Count Dec. 27.

LOONS—DUCKS: Loons: TB reports both species continued their winter decline of the past several years in the marine areas of West. There were only four Com. Loons reported there in Dec., and one in Jan. Three reported on RCC was only the second time for that count in 32 years. Red-throated Loon: one was found by Helen Manson in a small creek in Dutch. The bird was bloody-toed from attempting to fly from frozen ground. It was captured and released in the Hudson R. slightly the worse for wear. Red-necked Grebe: only report, one Ashokan Jan. 23. **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT**: rarely reported in winter anywhere, and especially inland. One near Newburgh Jan. 19 (BSe). Great Cormorant: in usual winter numbers near PL, as many as 25 there thru period. Great Blue Heron: wintered in more than usual numbers considering the intense cold of the period. Several reporters speculated they were living on small mammals; fish being unattainable. Waterfowl: down from highs of last year, but still good. Withdrew completely from most areas to open water of lower Hudson and returned with the thaw in late Feb. Canada Goose: max 1200 at CB Jan. 1. Brant: 45 at PL Dec. 28 continued tendency of last few years to winter on L.I. Sound off West. Snow Goose: two in Rye Jan. 3. Gadwall: two at MC Jan. 3, left only to return Feb. 14 with the thaw. Pintail: one reported at Verbank dur Jan. Blue-winged Teal: one at PP Dec. 19, was unusually late. No. Shoveler: four at RL on RCC inc to 47 on Dec. 19. A male at Stissing Jan. 9 and 13. Wood Duck: at least three were wintering in Rock. Redhead: one late bird at PL Jan. 1, and two at MC Dec. 28, Ring-necked Duck: seven on Rye L. during Jan. Canvasback: increasing to new highs reminiscent of the 1950's. 340 on the Hudson at Stony Pt. Dec. 18; 427 on RCC was the highest number for that count since 1959. 728 on MCC was the highest for that count. Lesser Scaup: 40 at PL Feb. 28. Com. Goldeneye: 45 off PP Jan. 6 was the largest flock on Rock in recent years. Ruddy Duck: one Dec. 8 CB, and two Feb. 26 Orange L. Com. Merganser: continues to increase in winter. More than 900 on Cross River Res. Dec. 7. 800 on the Hudson off Stony Pt. Jan. 19 was the best count there since 1955. 450 at Ashokan Feb. 28 was the high for that location. Red-breasted Merganser: seven on RCC was the eleventh time for that count, and one on Hudson off Dutch on WCC was the first in 23 counts.

HAWKS—ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: more wintering birds than ever before. Single birds and small flocks of four or five reported from all areas thru the period. Usual excellent numbers by mid-March. Goshawk: more than ever before in winter. Single birds reported in almost every county. Sharp-shinned Hawk: five reports of birds working feeders. Cooper's Hawk: three reports. One observed circling over a feeder in Newburgh, apparently checking it out for prey. Could it be that these accipiters can be conditioned to the presence of feeders? Red-tailed Hawk: excellent numbers: about 60 on WCC which usually averages about 35. Red-shouldered Hawk: several reports of single birds. Rough-legged Hawk: present

in unprecedented numbers. Ten on WCC which usually averages an occasional single bird. Four wintered on the Harriman estate in Orange. **GOLDEN EAGLE**: an adult at CB Jan. 25 (BSe). Two at Thompson Pd., Dutch Jan. 4. One Dec. 31 at Clove Valley was still there for WCC, a first for that count. **BALD EAGLE**: three birds on ice flows near Iona I. Jan. 23 reminded birders of the old days when a dozen or more could be seen there and farther south to the Jersey line. Birds were said to have been there for several weeks. Two adults were at Bashakill Dec. 13, and an imm was at Newburgh Jan. 24. The DEC census on Feb. 17 revealed at least 30 birds along the Delaware and Neversink Rivers. At least four ad and two imm were in the Rondout Res. region for most of the period. Marsh Hawk: more than usual, with one or two observed wintering in each county. **OSPREY**: an extremely late bird at CB Dec. 24 and again Dec. 28 (BSe). Ruffed Grouse: RCC had a new high of 19. Ring-necked Pheasant: five males and twelve females spent Dec. near Stissing, Turkey: continues to spread thru Dutch. Reported as close as two or three miles from P'kpsie; max 30 at Forestburgh, Sull Jan. 11, and another 30 Jan. 5 near Wassaic. Clapper Rail: one at MC Jan. 1. Ruddy Turnstone: one at Milton Pt. Rye Jan. 11 inc to three Feb. 1. Am. Woodcock: displaying at MC Feb. 22. Early!! Two at Blue Chip Farm Wallkill Feb. 24. Spotted Sandpiper: one PP Dec. 10 a new late date. The old one was Nov. 23, 1969. Purple Sandpiper: about 150 at Milton Pt. Rye on Feb. 1. Gulls: a survey in Rock on Dec. 18 revealed 20 Great Black-backed at Rockland L. and 40 in the Haverstraw Stony Pt. area. 300 Herring Gulls were also at the latter location, with about 3000 Ring-bills. "White-winged" gulls: one Glaucous and one Iceland Gull were repeatedly found at the Haverstraw landfill near the Hudson thru Feb. (EDT). A Glaucous was at Ashokan Feb. 14, a first record for that county (FM). Another was at New Harnburgh Feb. 1, and on the Hudson just below P'kpsie Feb. 15. A first year Iceland was at Rye L. Jan. 26, 27. Another was at Newburgh Jan. 18. California Gull: the Rockland L. bird returned in Oct. and Nov., and made the RCC for the second time. **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL**: one Rye L Jan. 26 was a different bird than the one in Mamaroneck Harbor Dec. 28 thru Jan. 1 and again Feb. 13 thru 15 (TB). Bonaparte's Gull: six at PP Dec. 18, 16 CB Dec. 3. **IVORY GULL**: 1 imm obs on the Hudson R. at Newburgh sewage disposal plant discovered by BSc and EDT, and simultaneously but independently by BSe, who also reported an adult there. The latter bird was seen only by BSe, but the imm was studied by many observers on Jan. 11-13, and again on Jan. 18-20. Many photos were taken, some as close as 20 ft.

PIGEONS--WOODPECKERS: Mourning Dove: exceptionally high numbers thru period. MCC had a record high of 1093. Screech Owl: RCC had second highest count of 13. Great Horned Owl: good numbers. Seven reports in Dutch dur Dec. Most were calling and may well have been nesting by end of period. **SNOWY OWL**: one standing beside the Palisades P'kway just south of the Nanuet exit Feb. 4, another on a church roof in Newburgh Jan. 11, and two Dutch records: one Dec. 30 and the other Jan. 17. Barred Owl: a good find any time and place in the area, especially so in Rock where one was found by PD and VS at Palisades Jan. 7. Long-eared Owl: one Jan. 21 at Stewart Airport remained there thru period. Waterman Club reports five in Dec., three in Jan. and one in Feb. Short-eared Owl: nine spent Jan. on the former Buttonwood Tree Farm property at Hamptonburgh (Fred & Wava Abbott). BSe had 11 at Galeville Airport Feb. 24, and there were reports of as many as 20 there. Saw-whet Owl: one dead in the road near Stonykill, Dutch in Feb. was the only report. Common Flicker: more winter records than usual. Pileated Woodpecker: incredible as it seems, it was missed on the BMCC, WCC and only one on the MCC. Meanwhile RCC had a record high of ten. Their previous high was six in 1978. Red-bellied Woodpecker: now out-numbers the Red-headed in most of the latter's territory. Reported at many suet feeders in the area. Mentioned by at least six reporters.

FLYCATCHERS--STARLINGS: Horned Lark: most reports from Dutch. Several flocks of more than 200 reported there each month. Fish Crow: one can hardly spend a day along the Hudson R. and not see or hear several. EDT reports a roost of several dozen near St. Francis Hosp., P'kpsie Jan. 9. Black-capped Chickadee: MCC had a record high of 494. Red-breasted Nuthatch: coming back to usual numbers from lows of recent years. 14 on WCC

was unusually high. Brown Creeper: more than usual. M, JK note a good movement on Feb. 26, 27. **HOUSE WREN:** one near Goshen Dec. 20, unusual in winter (Roger Robb). Carolina Wren: in good numbers thru period, withstood the -20° F. temp. in the northern part. **LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN:** also rare in winter. One at MC Jan. 1 (TB). Mockingbird: a new high of 112 on MCC. Gray Catbird: three together near Goshen on MCC was most unusual. One on RCC. Brown Thrasher: several reports of single birds that made it through the winter. Am. Robin: flocks of 30 to 40, and many reports of single birds. Max 350 Feb. 12 near P'kpsie. Hermit Thrush: max four on Bronx Westchester CC. Several other reports of single birds. **SWAINSON'S THRUSH:** on BMCC, Phil Meisner and Jack Focht carefully studied one at L. Sebago, the fourth winter record for Rock. E. Bluebird: at least 20 wintered along the nest box trail in Clinton Corners. Most CC reported their numbers up. MCC had a record high of eight. Golden-crowned Kinglet: none on RCC or BMCC. Only one on MCC, seven on WCC and nine on JBCC were a bit more hopeful. Cedar Waxwing: usual small flocks reported, but max 350 Jan. 16 at Vassar College. Another group of 107 at Mountainville, Jan. 1. Starling: more than 11,900 on RCC with one roost near Tappan Zee Bridge containing more than 10,000.

VIREOS—WARBLERS: BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER: John LeMaire had an unmistakable bird near his home in Suffern Dec. 18. Yellow-rumped Warbler: six reports and several of these were of multiple birds: three at Stony Pt. Park Jan. 19, eight on RCC was their best since 1963, six on MCC, four at Crugers I. Dutch, six reports from Dutch in Dec. Palm Warbler: two at MCC on Dec. 13. Com. Yellowthroat: one at Orangetown on RCC was the third record for that count.

WEAVERS—SPARROWS: YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: one at Trailside Museum, Bear Mt. Pk. Jan. 13 frequented a feeder for about one hour and then disappeared, well observed by Mark Reynolds who found it, and Jack Mead, the park Naturalist. Red-winged Blackbird: many reports and some sizeable flocks in the southern part of the Region. Migrants everywhere by Feb. 21. No. Oriole: at least two reports, one at a Port Chester feeder from Nov. thru Jan. 7, and another wintered at a Newburgh feeder. Brown-headed Cowbird: anywhere from one to one hundred reported by many, but max was more than 5000 at Stissing Dec. 12 (P, TH). Cardinal: back to normal numbers of several years ago, 267 was the highest on RCC since 1962. **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK:** a male at the feeder of Ev Rifenberg at Woodstock Dec. 10. Evening Grosbeak: usual small scattered flocks reported thru Region. Max about 70 near L Tiorati Jan. 6. 29 on JBCC was unusually high. Purple Finch: 12 near Rye Nature Center and 20 at a feeder in Clinton Corners were winter residents. House Finch: a record high of 467 on MCC, 472 on JBCC. Most other counts had unusual highs. **PINE GROSBEAK:** only report eight near Woodstock Jan. 10 (FM). Com. Redpoll: a few small flocks and several single birds reported, mostly at feeders. Largest flocks were 35 at Cross River on Jan. 17; 50 near Watch Tower Farms, Wallkill Feb. 14; and 55 feeding on white birches off Rt. 28 in the Town of Ulster Dec. 10. Pine Siskin: more than 100 in hemlocks at Frost Valley Dec. 27. Four other reports in Dutch dur Dec., three in Jan. and three in Feb. Rufous-sided Towhee: at least a dozen reports, too many to repeat here. Most were single birds at feeders. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: two at MC Jan. 2. Tree Sparrow: well reported from most areas with numbers low. Exception was MCC where a record high of 699 was reported. Field Sparrow: max eight on Mine Rd. USMA Jan. 17. White-crowned Sparrow: two on MCC were the only report. White-throated Sparrow: below usual numbers. RCC had 100 which was one-third their usual count. Fox Sparrow: ten at Rye Nature Center, and 14 at MC Jan. 24 were max. Lapland Longspur: at least four wintered at Blue Chip Farm, Wallkill, and 22 at Warren Sod Farm near Pine Island Dec. 14. Eleven birds were reported from the Blue Chip-Galeville region Jan. 31. Snow Bunting: max 250 at Stewart Airport Jan. 25 were flying along the main runway when the plane carrying the returning hostages touched down. 400 at Ashokan Feb. 14 may well have been migrating.

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