

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK: one was on the RCC and studied by five observers. **DICKCISSEL:** only report was one visiting a Larchmont feeder from 7 Dec-26 Jan. Evening Grosbeak: reported in small flocks everywhere. Max was more than 200 around a feeder next door to the Forestburg Town Hall 30 Jan—a fantastic sight (EDT). Purple Finch: continues to decline, only a few reports, and then only a few each time. House Finch: continues to increase. WCC reported 216 compared to only one Purple Finch. JBCC reported 367 to only 15 Purple Finches. Pine Grosbeak: an excellent season. Most counts had a few. Max 26 on the Ramsey Christmas Count at Suffern 26 Dec. Twenty-three were at Pound Ridge 10 Jan—inc to 29 by Feb. Forty were at Pawling 11 Feb. and 22 at Millbrook 28 Feb. Com. Redpoll: small flocks regularly reported along roadsides. Maximum 100 at Galeville 20 Feb and two flocks each with about 40 near Rio Res 30 Jan. 100-150 were at Monticello Airport 9 Jan. **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH:** an adult was visiting a feeder in Mamaroneck from 11-23 Feb (Claudia Neff). Tom Burke saw it 13 Feb. Crossbills: both species represented, but many more White-wings than Red. At least four reports of Red in flocks of less than ten. Five reports of White-wings in flocks of more than 20. **SHARP-TAILED SPARROW:** two were still hanging on at MC as late as 25 Dec. One was there for the BWCC. Dark-eyed Junco: numbers good thru period. One of the *oreganus* subspecies was well-studied at Blauvelt for the first time on the RCC. **CHIPPING SPARROW:** one was visiting a Rye feeder on 13 Dec, and another appeared at Vaughn Morrison's feeder in Wappinger's Falls 15 Dec and stayed thru the rest of the period. White-crowned Sparrow: one on RCC in north Rock for several weeks in Dec was the tenth time for that count. Another wintered at a Blooming Grove feeder in Orange. **HARRIS' SPARROW:** an imm appeared on 16 Dec at Trixie Strauss' feeder in Amenia and remained thru the period. Lapland Longspur: as many as ten were wintering at the Warren Sod Farm near Pine I. Snow Bunting: at least five reports. Max about 150 in each of two flocks in Dutch during mid-Feb. Several hundred at Warren Sod Farm 26 Feb.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

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The winter started slowly with much of December warmer than normal, but it turned cold in time for the first Christmas Bird Counts. The first two days of the period, 19-20 December, were the coldest days of the month (all temperatures from New York City). Counts after this first weekend experienced milder weather. From 21 December thru 7 January, the daily mean slipped below normal only once, on 3 January, and then only by one degree. On 8 January the big freeze began. For the next three weeks the mean temperature climbed to normal only once, on 20 January. On 11 January the temperature dropped to a mean of 11, twenty-one degrees below normal. Over the next few days it warmed slightly, but in exchange we received over nine inches of snow. From then until 29 January, there were a series of cold waves at roughly four-day intervals: 24 below normal on 18 January, 19 below normal on 22 January and 15 below normal on 27 January. On the nights of 17 and 18 January the temperature plummeted to zero in the city. In late January the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge looked like arctic tundra. After this, the weather turned mild for the rest of the season with February averaging nearly two degrees above normal.

The Montauk count maintained its position as the highest count in the state, but just barely. At 126 species, four below the last two years, Montauk was only one above Central Suffolk. Most of the rest of the counts were about average or above in total species: Brooklyn—113, Captree—115, Northern Nassau—107, Queens—105, Smithtown—88 and Southern Nassau—119. Most counts registered above normal numbers of many land birds, but the Central Suffolk counters really outdid themselves, setting all time count highs for an amazing 23 species. It would be interesting to know how these species fared during the January freeze, particularly Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing and Cardinal. In our area the severe winter weather usually occurs after the Christmas Bird Count period. Anyone for a Valentine's Day Bird Count?

Some general observations follow in more or less checklist order. Following a poor fall migration, loons and grebes were scarce on most counts. Perhaps the mild weather in December had not yet frozen them out of the interior? Virtually all hawks, except Rough-legs, were reported in good to excellent numbers. Wintering American Coots appear to be continuing a several year decline on Long Island. Is this also true in other areas or have they merely shifted to someplace else? Were white-winged gulls really as scarce as the reports received would indicate, or are observers just reporting them less? Snowy Owls evidently moved south in the vanguard of the January freeze. How else do we explain their appearance in a number of unlikely places on 9 January? I think it would be stretching things a bit to attribute these sightings to the weekend birder effect. In many places chickadees and titmice surpassed even last winter's excellent numbers. Countering a trend of increasing numbers in recent winters, only two chats were reported this winter.

Rarities were few and far between: Common Murre, Pileated Woodpecker, Varied Thrush and Harris' Sparrow.

Dates of Christmas Bird Counts: Montauk, Queens and Staten Island—19 Dec; Captree—20 Dec; Central Suffolk and Northern Nassau—26 Dec; Bronx-Westchester and Smithtown—27 Dec; Orient—2 Jan; Southern Nassau—3 Jan.

Abbreviations: LI—Long Island; JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; RMSP—Robert Moses State Park; CRSP—Connetquot River State Park; CBC—Christmas Bird Count; mob—many observers.

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LOONS—DUCKS: Com. Loons were low: Montauk CBC reported 48, the lowest in over a decade. The same count reported only nine Red-throated Loons, much lower than their average of 28 over the past ten years. Horned Grebes were also low on the LI counts with Montauk reporting 27 compared to a ten year average of 94, and Captree only recording two. A 12 Feb count of 130 along Jones Beach indicated better numbers later in the winter (LS, *et al.*). Pied-billed Grebes were also reported in smaller than usual numbers with nine on the C. Suffolk CBC, the lowest there in over a decade. No Red-necked Grebes were reported. Great Cormorant numbers seemed a bit below normal. Double-crested Cormorants were reported in all time high numbers on both the Brooklyn (60) and Queens (67) counts; the similarity in numbers makes one wonder if both counts saw the same flock passing over.

head. Five at Jones Beach 30 Jan was a good mid-winter count (GSR). Great Egrets lingered long enough to be picked up by the Queens, Staten Is. and S. Nassau counts with the Staten Is. bird remaining until 9 Jan (M. Weingartner, *vide* GB). The S. Nassau CBC recorded a remarkable three Louisiana Herons; it has only been a few years since this species was first recorded on any LI count. The high count of Whistling Swans reported was ten at Hook Pond 5 Dec; five were still present 27 Feb at Mecox (GSR). Canada Geese and Brant were reported in about normal numbers on the counts. Snow Geese were sparingly reported with three each on the Captree and N. Nassau counts and only scattered reports after. The Brooklyn CBC reported an all time high, 124, of Green-winged Teal, but numbers were normal elsewhere; an individual of the Eurasian race was found on the S. Nassau CBC (R. Sloss, *et al.*). European Wigeons were widely reported with at least eight drakes found in Dec (*vide* THD); S. Nassau set an all time high with five. The peak count of Canvasbacks at Jerome Park Reservoir was 1350 on 27 Dec (WS), about normal, but the Queens count of 935 was their lowest since 1972 (535). Two female Tufted Ducks were present at the Central Park Reservoir 15 Dec-10 Jan (L. Pohner, *et al.*, *vide* THD). On most counts Com. Goldeneyes were low with Captree reporting an "all time" low of nine. At least two drake Harlequin Ducks wintered at Montauk Pt. (mob) with six reported there 9 Jan (GSR). Forty Com. Eiders on the Montauk CBC was the highest since 1977 when 200 were found, but adult males were very scarce; two Commons at Captree were good for this count. Six King Eiders on the Montauk CBC was about normal; two at Jones Inlet 30 Jan was very good since they are uncommon this far west on LI (RA, GSR).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: There were scattered reports of Goshawks on the counts: Brooklyn, Montauk, N. Nassau and S. Nassau; an imm. wintered at Muttontown Preserve (AL, WP). Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported on all counts for which reports were received: C. Suffolk was the leader with an all time count high of ten; a minimum of 37 were reported on LI counts. Cooper's Hawks were also widely reported: three on the Brooklyn CBC and one at Montauk; one wintered at JBWR (mob) and one at Manorville 3 Jan caught and ate a Bobwhite (GSR). C. Suffolk set a count high of 24 Red-tailed Hawks but they were in about normal numbers elsewhere. Continuing their excellent year C. Suffolk had their first ever Red-shouldered Hawk. Other reports received were two on the N. Nassau and one on the Brooklyn counts. It was, at best, a fair winter for Rough-legged Hawks with six on the Montauk count, seven in C. Suffolk and scattered reports elsewhere. Several Bald Eagles, or one or two very busy imm., were reported wintering on LI; one on Gardiner's Is. on the Montauk CBC was traditional, another was at Tobay 24 Dec-13 Jan (P. Martin, *et al.*). Other reports were of a bird at Patchogue 18 Feb (GSR) and a bird in the Roslyn Harbor area 23-27 Feb (*vide* RC). Peregrine Falcons were reported from several locations in the early winter: a subadult was present at JBWR thru much of Dec (mob) and lingered for the Brooklyn count. Queens reported two more the same day in other areas. The latest report was of one on the S. Nassau CBC 3 Jan. Merlins were widely reported with singles on the Brooklyn, Queens and C. Suffolk counts. In addition N. Nassau reported two and Captree three. The latest reports were one at West End, Jones Beach 24 Jan (JD, SF) and one 17 Feb at Muttontown Preserve (AL). Last winter's report recorded a Merlin taking a Mourning Dove at a feeder in Southold; this Jan an Am. Kestrel was seen at Southold trying to carry off a dead Mourning Dove (RA). Southold is evidently a pretty rough area for Mourning Doves. The Turkey flock at CRSP is doing very well; from 1970 to 1979 the flock fluctuated between four and nine, last year the Captree CBC reported 17 there and this year it was up to 27. Montauk's total of 34 on Gardiner's Is. was their lowest since 1975 when 26 were reported. A King Rail found at Westhampton Beach on the C. Suffolk CBC was still there 30 Dec (GSR). The only Virginia Rails reported were two each on the Montauk and C. Suffolk counts. What is happening to the wintering Am. Coots on LI? C. Suffolk declined for the fourth straight year to 142, the lowest number in over a decade. Montauk fluctuates a lot, but also reported the lowest numbers in over a decade, ten birds, compared to an average of 192 over the last ten years. Only Captree, with 232, reported good numbers, but this is less

than two-thirds their average of 378 in 1971-1975. Three late Am. Oystercatchers were seen flying over Oak Beach 26 Dec (LB). Lesser Yellowlegs remained till early Jan with three found on the S. Nassau CBC. Lingering Red Knots were reported in good numbers with 14 and one on the Queens and Brooklyn counts, respectively, and another nine at Shinnecock the same day (GSR). The high count of Purple Sandpipers reported was 200 at Jones Inlet 30 Jan (RA, GSR). Three Long-billed Dowitchers remained at Lawrence until 31 Jan (E. Levine, *et al.*). Very few white-winged gulls were reported. A second year imm Glaucous Gull was at Great Kills 6 Feb (GB, BS). Two Iceland Gulls were found on the Brooklyn CBC and another two at Montauk 9 Jan (GSR). The "Kumlien's" Gull was back at the Jones Beach restaurant for the sixth winter. The only Lesser Black-backed Gull report received was an adult seen with thousands of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls at the Muldoon Ave. landfill on Staten Is. 27 Feb (GB, BS). The C. Suffolk and S. Nassau counts supplied the only reports of Laughing Gulls. The spring return of Bonaparte's Gulls to Jones Inlet was 20 Feb (RA). They brought with them an adult Black-headed Gull (TWB) and two adult Little Gulls (mob). Black-legged Kittiwakes were in very short supply on the counts with only four at Montauk; one at Brooklyn was a good find for this area. One of the very few rarities reported this winter was a breeding-plumaged COMMON MURRE 19 Dec on the Montauk CBC (S. R. Drennan, K. C. Parkes, S. Sutcliffe), details to NYSARC.

PIGEONS--WOODPECKERS: C. Suffolk had the dubious distinction of setting a count high of 1373 Rock Doves. Screech Owls were in very good numbers with C. Suffolk offsetting its pigeon count with an impressive 42 Screech Owls, a count record. Seven, nine and ten were reported by Captree, N. Nassau and Smithtown, respectively. C. Suffolk recorded ten Great Horned Owls, another count high; S. Nassau reported their first ever. A max three Snowy Owls were found at JFK Airport this winter (S. Chevalier). One was seen intermittently at JBWR thru Dec and Jan (mob). Individuals were reported 9 Jan at Cedar Beach (I. Parks), Forest Park (M. Sohmer) and East River Park at 6th Street in Manhattan (D. Rodriguez) (all *fide* THD). A Barred Owl, always a rare bird on LI, was reported heard on the S. Nassau CBC (J. Yrizarry). Wintering Long-eared Owls were widely reported in about average numbers. C. Suffolk found 12 Short-eared Owls, yet another count record, but Brooklyn passed them with 14. Saw-whet Owls were reported wintering in pine groves as usual at JBWR and Jones Beach. A rare bird reported on LI this winter is one that breeds in the inland portions of our region: **PILEATED WOODPECKER**. A female was discovered 11 Dec in Forest Park, Queens (P. Bernarth). Though often elusive, the bird remained thru the period (mob). This represents only the second LI record of this century, the only other was at Sag Harbor in 1947. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were widely reported, with the highest numbers, seven on the Queens CBC and 13 in N. Nassau.

FLYCATCHERS--STARLINGS: No E. Phoebes were reported. C. Suffolk posted yet another count high with 645 Com. Crows but N. Nassau outdid everyone with 2519. Black-capped Chickadee: highs or near highs were set by a number of counts, N. Nassau (1116) and Brooklyn (246), were records and C. Suffolk with 588 was only one below its 1972 total. Other counts were also well above normal. With all these Black-caps, only one Boreal Chickadee was found: 2 Jan at Shelter Is. (GSR, *et al.*). The Tufted Titmouse also broke many count records with N. Nassau (166), C. Suffolk (83) and Brooklyn (75) all setting new highs. On far eastern LI, where it has remained an uncommon bird, Montauk had their second highest total, six, compared to last year's record ten. White-breasted Nuthatches were also at above normal levels everywhere with 41 in Brooklyn a record, and yes, you guessed it, C. Suffolk set another count high with 115. Unsurprisingly, Red-breasted Nuthatches were also high on most counts: Captree's 233 was the highest number reported, more than double their 1980 total. Winter Wrens were considered scarce by at least one observer (GSR) but two at CRSP 20 Dec for the Captree CBC were about normal (SBD). For perhaps the first time the Montauk CBC, which includes Gardiner's Is., did not have the highest total for Carolina Wren. A windy day held Montauk's total to 17 while C. Suffolk found 28, another count record. Two in Riverdale 26 Dec were the first seen there in several

years (WS). Mockingbirds appear to have more than recovered from the severe winters of several years ago with C. Suffolk, again a record, reporting 236, but edged out by N. Nassau with 249. Of course these counts were before the big Jan freeze. Brown Thrashers were widely distributed with at least individuals on nearly every count. A female **VARIED THRUSH** was present at a feeder at Orient from late Feb to 7 Mar (GSR, D. Terry, *et al.*). Individual Wood Thrushes lingered til 27 Dec at the Bronx Botanical Gardens (*vide* P.A. Buckley) and on the C. Suffolk and Orient counts. Three E. Bluebirds wintered in Latourette Park, Staten Is. (*vide* GB) while three were found on the Montauk CBC (JA, *et al.*) and another four at Muttontown Preserve 8 Jan (AL *et al.*). Cedar Waxwings were found in good numbers on a number of counts: 73 in N. Nassau, 40 in C. Suffolk (another high), 35 at Captree and 20 at Montauk. The only N. Shrikes reported were two on the Montauk CBC (TWB).

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Single Orange-crowned Warblers were reported on the Captree, N. Nassau and S. Nassau counts. A lingering Nashville Warbler was present in a suburban garden 11 Dec to at least 18 Dec (W. Pasfield, *vide* FF). Yellow-rumped Warblers were in about average numbers. Most counts reported at least one Palm Warbler, but eight at Montauk was exceptional, five of them at the Montauk dump (ROP). Single Ovenbirds were found on the Montauk (ROP) and Captree (SBD) counts. S. Nassau reported three Com. Yellowthroats and individuals were found lingering in Queens, Captree and C. Suffolk. Only two Yellow-breasted Chats were reported this winter: singles on the Bronx-Westchester and Brooklyn counts.

WEAVERS-SPARROWS: For the second year in a row a N. Oriole was found lingering for the N. Nassau count; C. Suffolk also found one. In a sure sign of spring, 30 Com. Grackles returned 27 Feb to Glenwood Landing (J. Doran). Cardinals were in above normal numbers on all counts with 235 in C. Suffolk (yes, a record) surpassed by 382 in N. Nassau. The only Dickcissel reported was on the Bronx-Westchester CBC. Amidst widespread "winter finches" reports, only one Pine Grosbeak report was received: a single bird at Lloyd Harbor on the N. Nassau CBC (C. Loscalzo). Widely scattered reports of individuals and small groups of Com. Redpolls were received with a max of 80 at RMSP on 30 Jan (RA, GSR) and at least 20 more at Montauk the same day (H. Roth). Pine Siskins were widespread, usually in groups of four-20 individuals. Though there were isolated reports of both crossbills in late Dec, they did not reach LI in numbers until Feb. The earliest report of Red Crossbills was seven on Gardiner's Is. on the Montauk CBC (J. Trimble). Twenty were at Bronx Park 31 Jan (B. Renshaw, *vide* LS); the largest flock reported was 26 at Muttontown Preserve 11 Feb (WP). White-winged Crossbills outnumbered Reds this winter. The earliest report was of six at Easthampton 26 Dec (JA). Many small flocks of up to 20 birds were seen throughout Feb. Larger groups included 48 at Welwyn 11 Feb (AL) and approximately 85 at various locations on Staten Is. 2-13 Feb (W & N Siebenheller, *vide* GB). C. Suffolk set another count high with 26 Sharp-tailed Sparrows. One Vesper Sparrow was found on the C. Suffolk CBC. Montauk found its first ever Lark Sparrow (TWB). Single Chipping Sparrows were found on the Montauk, Captree and N. Nassau counts. An imm **HARRIS' SPARROW** was discovered with White-throats at Gilgo Beach 30 Jan (ROP). The bird remained there thru the period (mob). Only two reports of Lapland Longspurs were received: four at Bay Park 10 Jan, down from 120 there last year (SBD); and two at West End, Jones Beach 24 Jan (JD, SF). The earliest Snow Bunting reported was a single bird 20 Oct at RMSP (FF). They were in normal numbers on the local counts.

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