

near the Tomahawk L. spillway. 22 on WCC was a record high for that count. Usually averages one or none. Ovenbird: one 10 Dec on Main St in Congers (Chas Holbrook). Previous late date for Rock was 22 Nov. Com. Yellowthroat: a male was present at MC from 4 Dec-22 Jan. Yellow-breasted Chat: one at Mamaroneck's Taylor Park 25 Dec (TB). Dickcissel: one at Millbrook School 15 Dec-25 Jan. Rufous-sided Towhee: two thru period in Dutch, one at Pleasant Valley and the other at Salt Point. One spent Jan at Rye Nature Center, and two wintered at Montgomery. Am. Tree Sparrow: 75 on RCC was poor compared to 156 last year, and the counts of 400-500 on the 1950's and 60's. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: three at MC 31 Dec. Swamp Sparrow: one Bashakill 22 Dec. White-throated Sparrow: numbers quite low for a regular winter visitor. White-crowned Sparrow: an imm at Clinton Corners after the snow of 12 Feb. Dark-eyed Junco: 436 on RCC was only half of last year's count, but still better than most recent years. Snow Bunting: unreported from most areas. Observed several times at Warren Sod Farms near Pine I 1 Jan. Flocks of 10 or 12 reported several times along the roadsides near DeBruce. 56 were at Red Hook 18 Jan. Red-winged Blackbird: first migrants were in Nyack by 26 Jan, early. Reported in excellent numbers at feeders in the northern part where they usually do not winter. E. Meadowlark: only one report of a bird wintering in Orange on MCC. Rusty Blackbird: four reports: one from Stony Pt. 8 Jan, 15 near Millbrook School 9 Feb, two at Salt Point 28 Feb, and three at Kingston 18 Feb. Com. Grackle: wintered in good numbers in the southern part. First migrants were on time 15 Feb. Pine Grosbeak: eight were at John Jay High School at Cross River 6 Jan; and 15 visited a feeder at South Salem thru much of Jan. Purple Finch: the only northern finch reported in good numbers. Found at most feeders often to flocks of 50 or more. 100 on RCC was the second highest in 35 counts. The highest was in 1949. House Finch: 246 on RCC was their second high count. MCC had a "whopping" 818. Crossbills: none anywhere of either species. Com. Redpoll: two flocks totaling 87 were on RCC. BMCC produced 38. 20 were at Bashakill and 17 were at Monticello 23 Dec. 30 were on the SCC. Pine Siskin: almost unreported. A flock of 60 at Coldenham 20 Dec and a flock of ten on SCC.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, New York 10928

## REGION 10 -- MARINE

JOSEPH A. Di COSTANZO

There was almost no winter in the Region this year; and very little in the way of birds either. December was very warm--7.3° F. above normal; and dry--only 1.47 inches of rain, 42% of normal. Highs in early December were regularly close to 60° F. or above. It began to look as if the fall would never end, until three inches of snow fell on 12 December. It was the earliest significant snowfall in the Region in years. Temperatures then rose again to a high of 58 on 16 December, promising balmy weather for the first weekend of Christmas Counts, 18-19 December. Alas, it was not to be. Temperatures were below freezing all day on the 18th and only a bit warmer under blustery, overcast skies the 19th. Counts held after this weekend fared much better weatherwise. Temperatures did not drop below freezing again until 4 January. January continued warm with the month's average 2.7° F. above normal. The total rainfall of 5.01 inches was 1.8 above normal. The only snowfall was 1.9 inches on 15-16 January. The weather continued in much the same pattern into February till the 11th when the blizzard of '83 arrived. Snow started falling in New York City at about 2 p.m. By the time it stopped that night there were 16.5 inches on the ground in Central Park. In

the outer boroughs and farther east on Long Island accumulations of two feet or more were not unusual. The best mode of transportation in New York City the next morning was cross-country skis. Despite being one of the worst blizzards of the century, the storm had no reported effect on the Region's birds except to briefly increase numbers at feeders. Most of the rest of February was warmer than normal with the average for the month  $2.2^{\circ}$  F. above normal. Rainfall for February was within a tenth of an inch of normal. (All weather data from New York City.)

Observers were unanimous in their opinions—as far as birding was concerned it was a dull winter. The warm weather meant that all fresh water areas were still open at the time of the Christmas Counts and counts had the mildest weather many birders could remember. But the lackluster fall migration apparently left very few birds to enliven the Counts and there was no winter finch flight. Virtually all Counts had smaller species totals than in recent years: Southern Nassau—123, Central Suffolk—122, Captree and Bronx-Westchester—120, Montauk—115, Brooklyn—113, Quogue-Watermill—103, Northern Nassau—97 and Staten Island—92. (Full summaries were not received for the Brooklyn, Queens and Smithtown Counts.)

The mild weather did result in good numbers of some lingerers and “half-hardies”: a good variety of herons (most on the Southern Nassau count); a good variety and numbers of shorebirds, wrens and blackbirds. Other “half-hardies” in good numbers were: Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Palm Warbler. Late lingerers, some at record late dates were: Green-backed Heron, Tricolored Heron, Semipalmated Plover, American Oystercatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, an unidentified *Empidonax* flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, a reported Yellow Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Species reported in about normal numbers, though there were variations from place to place, and not reported in the main body of this report are: Pied-billed Grebe, Canada Goose, Am. Black Duck, Mallard, N. Pintail, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, both scaup, Oldsquaw, Com. Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Am. Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, N. Bobwhite, Killdeer, Sanderling, Bonaparte's, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls, Rock and Mourning Doves, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, N. Flicker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, Am. Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Am. Robin, Gray Catbird, N. Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, N. Cardinal, Rufous-sided Towhee, Am. Tree, Field, Fox, Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, E. Meadowlark, House Finch and Am. Goldfinch. Including the above, 178 species plus four identifiable races are recorded in this report.

Rarities: Greater White-fronted Goose, Black Guillemot, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow Warbler.

Dates of Christmas Bird Counts: Brooklyn, Montauk, Queens, Quogue-Watermill and Staten Island—18 Dec; Captree—19 Dec; Bronx-Westchester and Northern Nassau—26 Dec; Central Suffolk—27 Dec; Orient—29 Dec; Southern Nassau—2 Jan.

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

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**LOONS—DUCKS:** After their poor showing in the fall report, Red-throated and Com. Loons and Horned Grebes were recorded in average to good numbers on the local CBCs. The only Red-necked Grebes reported were two on the Montauk count. There were good numbers of N. Gannets thru Dec with 332 counted in one hour at Montauk Pt on 4 Dec (SN); Montauk had a count record high of 1,317 while Quogue-Watermill found 55 the same day, their highest since 1974. Great Cormorants were in about normal numbers in most areas, except for a count record 109 on Bronx-West.; this number was the result of an observer checking offshore islands by boat (PAB). This offshore patrol also resulted in a count record high of 49 Double-crested Cormorants; most other counts reported between two and six birds. With the mild weather good numbers of Am. Bittern might have been expected but they were found only on C. Suffolk and S. Nassau, though S. Nassau's 13 was their highest since 1975. Great Blue Herons were found in good numbers on all CBCs with 152 on C. Suffolk the highest, but far from a record there. Great Egrets lingered to early Jan with seven at S. Nassau not quite a count record. S. Nassau also found one Snowy Egret, but the latest was one at Forge R, Moriches on 22 Jan (GSR). Tricolored Heron has become almost regular on the S. Nassau CBC in recent years, and one was found again this year. Brooklyn and Quogue-Watermill both had single Green-backed Herons. 179 Black-crowned Night-Herons at S. Nassau was that count's highest in over a decade. Three Tundra Swans were at Mecox 1 Jan (GSR) and two were at Oyster Pd. Montauk 15 Jan (J. Clinton). Quogue-Watermill's 114 Mute Swans was about 70% more than in recent years, but they were in normal numbers on other counts. The **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** reported in the fall stayed long enough to be counted on the Brooklyn CBC. Captree, Montauk, S. Nassau and Bronx-West. each reported two Snow Geese: one of S. Nassau's was the "Blue" morph; the highest winter concentration of Snows was 70 at JBWR on 5 Feb (GSR). The S. Nassau CBC reported a count record 30,395 Brant; even allowing for some duplication, an impressive number. Two Brants of the western "Black" (*nigricans*) race were reported: an adult at Jones Inlet 27 Nov-4 Dec (MS, BB); and an imm at JBWR 4-8 Dec (W. Kurau, R. Cook). The mild weather contributed, no doubt, to the wide distribution of Wood Ducks. They were found on the Captree, C. Suffolk, Quogue-Watermill, N. Nassau, S. Nassau and Staten I. counts; 30 on the N. Nassau CBC is quite high for the winter. Two male Green-winged Teal of the "Eurasian" (*crecca*) race were found: 2 Jan at Massapequa on the S. Nassau CBC, in the same place where one was found last year (RS); and 20 Feb at JBWR (RK). Two counts reported Blue-winged Teal, rare in winter: Montauk—three, and C. Suffolk—six. Bronx-West. had a count record 223 N. Shovelers. Eurasian Wigeons were reported in smaller numbers this winter than last but three CBCs found them: C. Suffolk—two; N. Nassau—one; and S. Nassau—one, down from a record five last year. A hybrid Eurasian x Am. Wigeon was reported at E. Moriches 30 Dec (GSR). The male Tufted Duck at the Central Park Reservoir reported in the fall remained there at least till early Feb (mob). The Montauk CBC missed Com. and King Eider for the first time in over a decade. Fourteen Commons were at Montauk Pt 15 Jan and a drake King was there 20 Jan (GSR). The Montauk count did have a Harlequin Duck as did Staten I. The Staten I. bird was a first ever for that count as well as apparently only the second county record (GB); the bird, a female, was first found at Great Kills Harbor 4 Dec (R. Clermont, M. Gage) and remained until 9 Jan (GB). A male Harlequin was at Rockaway 25-30 Jan (G. Horowitz, *et al.*); three males and a female wintered at Montauk Pt (mob). Most CBCs reported all three scoters in lower than

normal numbers. Hooded Mergansers were found in above normal numbers on most counts, the highest being 235 on S. Nassau. One observer reported that 16 Com. Mergansers at Hempstead Lk SP was the "most in my memory" for that location (SBD). Montauk's 3,444 Red-breasted Mergansers was considerably above normal for this count.

**HAWKS—ALCIDS:** The C. Suffolk CBC had two Bald Eagles at Eastport; one was still there 2 Jan (GSR). The Brooklyn count had an imm Bald which was seen intermittently at JBWR during the winter. An adult Bald was at Hempstead Lk SP 13 Jan (K. Kahn). Sharp-shinned Hawks were found on all counts for which full reports were received with a minimum of 45 reported on LI counts. Cooper's Hawks were also widespread: Montauk—one; Orient—one; S. Nassau—one; N. Nassau—two; Bronx-West.—two; and C. Suffolk—four, a count record. There were scattered reports of N. Goshawks: one found on the Staten I. CBC wintered at the High Rock Conservation Center; Captree—two; Bronx-West.—two. S. Nassau had a Red-shouldered Hawk, a rare bird for this count; another was on Staten I. Red-tailed Hawks were in above normal numbers on virtually every count with C. Suffolk's 25 and Bronx-West's 48 both count records. It was only a fair winter for Rough-legged Hawks with seven on the Montauk, six each on the C. Suffolk and Staten I. counts and scattered birds elsewhere. One Golden Eagle was reported: 21 Dec at the Latourette Golf Course, SI (WS, NS). The S. Nassau CBC reported five Merlins; Captree and Orient each found two and Bronx-West. one. The Bronx-West. count found one Peregrine Falcon at Pelham Bay Pk; another was at Cedar Beach 22 Dec-3 Jan (SN). Two Ruffed Grouse were found on the C. Suffolk count, normal for this area. The Wild Turkey flock at Connetquot R SP continues to grow with 43 birds reported there on the Captree CBC, up from 27 last year; 18 on Gardiner's I, on the Montauk CBC is only about half of last year's 34, but adverse weather the day of the count may have held the total down. Single Clapper Rails were found on the C. Suffolk and Quogue-Watermill CBCs; the latest reported was one at Shinnecock 29 Jan (GSR). The Captree and Montauk counts each had one Virginia Rail and C. Suffolk four; one Virginia lingered at Laurel till 17 Jan (RA). A relatively late Com. Moorhen was at Southaven the week of the C. Suffolk CBC but could not be found the day of the count (GSR). As was mentioned in last winter's report Am. Coots continue to be below normal on the Region's CBCs. Black-bellied Plovers were in good numbers on most coastal counts with S. Nassau's 147 far above normal. A lingering Semipalmated Plover found on the S. Nassau count remained at least till 8 Jan at Jones Beach SP (mob, photo by EL). An Am. Oystercatcher present on the S. Nassau CBC also lingered at Jones Beach SP till 8 Jan (mob). Three Lessers were found among 18 Greater Yellowlegs in Massapequa on the S. Nassau count; Quogue-Watermill also had two of each. The S. Nassau and Staten I. CBCs reported 34 and 23 Ruddy Turnstones, respectively; the only other reports were four on Captree and one on Montauk. Two counts reported record numbers of Red Knots: C. Suffolk—98; Quogue-Watermill—92; A flock of 65 at Shinnecock contributed to the Quogue-Watermill total (GSR). S. Nassau reported 235 Purple Sandpipers; Bronx-West's record high of 159 was attributed in large part to the boat patrol mentioned earlier. The 3,774 Dunlin reported on the S. Nassau CBC is apparently a record winter max for the Region. Three Long-billed Dowitchers were at Lawrence 2 Jan for the S. Nassau count (EL); at least two remained there till 20 Feb (RK). Three Com. Snipe was a low number for the C. Suffolk CBC but snipe and Am. Woodcock were in about normal numbers on other counts. A lingering Laughing Gull was found on the Quogue-Watermill CBC and five on the C. Suffolk; there were no later reports. Single Little Gulls were found on the Captree and Montauk CBCs; an adult was at Jones Beach SP 30 Dec (M. Kleinbaum). A Com. Black-headed Gull frequented a sewer outlet at W12th St. in Manhattan 13-19 Feb (mob). Ring-billed Gulls have been increasing fairly steadily on the Region's CBCs in recent years. This year was no exception with both the Bronx-West. and S. Nassau counts reporting all time count highs of 6,262 and 5,039 respectively. Iceland Gulls were found at Montauk—two; S. Nassau—one; and Staten I.—one. The S. Nassau bird was the "Kumlien's" reported in the fall report. A first year Iceland imm was at Montauk Inlet 15 Jan (RA, GSR); another was on a piling in the Hudson R at 130th St. on 23 Dec (JD). An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was found at the Central Pk Reservoir 29 Jan (MS).

Single Glaucous Gulls were found on the Montauk and Quogue-Watermill CBCs. Following good numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes at Montauk Pt last fall, the Montauk CBC reported 1,116 kittiwakes; over 300 were at Montauk 15 Jan (GSR). Three Dovekies were picked up dead or dying on LI this winter. The first was an exhausted, emaciated bird in a backyard in Bayport, the bird later died (E. Austin, *vide* FF). Quite an addition to a backyard list! The second was found dead at Mattituck 17 Dec (*vide* A. Dove); third was picked up dead at the West End, Jones Beach SP (ED). A Thick-billed Murre was found on the Montauk CBC (TWB). One to two Razorbills were seen intermittently at Montauk 8 Dec-29 Jan (mob). An adult **BLACK GUILLEMOT** was at Montauk Pt 19 Feb (MS, BB).

**PIGEONS—WOODPECKERS:** A **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** was found and color photographed 27 Dec on the C. Suffolk CBC (F. Mohlmann, D. Schmidt). This represents a new late record for the State by a month; the previous late date was 29 Nov. Com. Barn-Owls were reported on three counts; Captree—one; Montauk—three; Staten I.—one. All CBCs reported E. Screech-Owls in normal to above normal numbers with the highest being C. Suffolk with 12, though this was well below last year's count record of 42; Captree had 11. Last year S. Nassau reported their first ever Great Horned Owl at Lawrence; the bird must have liked it there because it (or another) was back in the same place for this year's count. It was still there 29 Jan (SBD). Snowy Owls were widely reported thru the season. The earliest reported was at the Oakwood Sewage Treatment Plant, SI on 3 Dec (WS, NS); two on the Captree CBC remained in the vicinity of RMSP thru the winter (AJL); one on the Bronx-West. CBC is a very rare bird for this count (IC); two at Lido Beach on the S. Nassau CBC alternated between here and the West End, Jones Beach SP thru the winter (AJL); two were about a mile apart along Dune Rd, Hampton Bays 19 Feb (RA, GSR). One to three Long-eared Owls wintered at JBWR (mob); one to two individuals were reported on most CBCs. Short-eared Owls were also widely reported on the CBCs with the highest total, 12, on S. Nassau, followed by Montauk with ten. As usual there were scattered reports of N. Saw-whet Owls from the pine groves along the beaches. Given all the open water it is not surprising that Belted Kingfishers were well represented on all counts. One Red-headed Woodpecker was on Gardiner's I. on the Montauk CBC; four were in Central Pk 19 Dec (P. Post); aside from occasional reports of the Central Pk birds there were no other reports after this. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were widely reported on the CBCs with the highest totals: Bronx-West.—13; and N. Nassau—seven. Another lingering species no doubt encouraged by the weather was Yellow-bellied Sapsucker with singles found on four counts: N. Nassau, Orient, Staten I. and Bronx-West.

**FLYCATCHERS—STARLINGS:** An Empidonax flycatcher was seen at Tobay 7 Dec (P. Bernarth). Given the extreme lateness of this date one can only wonder which species was involved. A western species perhaps? We'll never know. Surprisingly, given the weather, no E. Phoebes were reported. One observer felt that there were very few Horned Larks this winter (GSR); the CBCs seem to bear this out with the species reported in below normal numbers on most counts. Fish Crows set count records on at least two CBCs. C. Suffolk—50 and S. Nassau—109; other counts were about normal or above. After the past two winters of record and near-record numbers of Black-capped Chickadees, the species was recorded in about normal numbers on most counts this year. Tufted Titmouse continues to increase on eastern LI with both the Montauk and Orient CBCs setting count records of 11 and 77, respectively; as recently as 1978 Orient's record high was seven. Red-breasted Nuthatches were in good numbers for a non-flight year. Brown Creepers: normal to above normal numbers with 19 a count record on the S. Nassau CBC. Carolina Wrens were down on most counts: C. Suffolk—eight, compared to last year's 28; Montauk—two, the lowest of any year in which Gardiner's I. was covered. Bronx-West. had a House Wren, an excellent find in winter. Bronx-West. also had one Winter Wren and Orient three. Three CBCs found lingering Marsh Wrens: C. Suffolk and Orient—three each; and Bronx-West.—two. Golden-crowned Kinglets were above normal on most counts with Captree the leader with 82 followed by S. Nassau with 24. No E. Bluebirds were reported. Four Water Pipits at sand pits in Hempstead Harbor were the first on the N. Nassau count in 24 years; Bronx-West. also had four and S.

Nassau one. Several counts had good numbers of Cedar Waxwings: S. Nassau-73; C. Suffolk-58; Orient-23. No reports of shrikes were received.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** The Brooklyn, Captree, Queens, and Bronx-West. CBCs each had one Orange-crowned Warbler. For Bronx-West, it was their first ever, certainly long overdue. An Orange-crowned wintered, 19 Dec-13 Feb, at the Helgeson's feeder in Elm Park, SI where its favorite food was grape jelly (mob); about a week before it was last seen it was joined by a second "dingier" bird (*fide* GB). The Queens count had a late lingering Nashville Warbler in Flushing (R. Dieterich, *et al.*). On 27 Dec an observer on the C. Suffolk CBC reported a **YELLOW WARBLER** (Peter Stoutenberg). If correct this would be a record late date for the State by better than two months, the previous late date being 24 Oct. Both the Orient and C. Suffolk counts reported high numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers: 1,030 and 544, respectively. Two counts reported Palm Warblers in considerably above normal numbers: Quogue-Watermill-16; S. Nassau-12. Aside from these counts the species did not seem to be as widespread as last winter. Single Com. Yellowthroats were reported on the Montauk, Quogue-Watermill, S. Nassau and Bronx-West. counts. The only Yellow-breasted Chat report received was of one in Central Pk 15-19 Dec (M. Gambichler). This is considerably below recent winters.

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** A late lingering male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found in the NY Botanical Gardens on the Bronx-West. CBC (JD). At least one to two Chipping Sparrows were recorded on six CBCs: Captree, C. Suffolk, Orient, Quogue-Watermill, Bronx-West. and N. Nassau. A Chipping, very rare in mid-winter, was at a feeder in Brooklyn 8-11 Feb (JY). Vesper Sparrows were also widespread with singles on the Orient, Quogue-Watermill and Staten I. counts as well as two on the Montauk and three on the N. Nassau CBCs. The "Ip-swich" (*princeps*) race of the Savannah Sparrow was reported in good numbers with Montauk and S. Nassau counts tying for the most with five each. The unfrozen marshes provided good numbers of Sharp-tailed Sparrows: Captree-two, C. Suffolk-four, Montauk-one, and Quogue-Watermill-two: and Seaside Sparrows: Captree-two, C. Suffolk-one, Quogue-Watermill-three, and Bronx-West.-one. A late Lincoln's Sparrow was found at a feeder on Fire I. on the Captree CBC (M. Cooper). Following a poor fall migration no White-crowned Sparrows were reported. Only two reports of Lapland Longspurs were received, both from CBCs: Captree-one, Montauk-three. Red-winged Blackbirds were in above normal numbers on most counts, probably because of the unfrozen marshes. A Rusty Blackbird at Manorville 21 Feb may have been a spring arrival or may have wintered in the area; they were reported in small numbers on several CBCs. Bronx-West. reported a count record high of 4,588 Com. Grackles, most in a single roost in Van Cortlandt Pk. This is a record high winter count for anywhere in the Region. With the grackle count above, Bronx-West. reported 331 Brown-headed Cowbirds, far above normal but not a record. The N. Nassau count had a N. Oriole for the third year in a row; another was found on S. Nassau. A N. Oriole appeared at a feeder in Floral Park 9-15 Feb (B. Craig). Good numbers of Purple Finch were found on the C. Suffolk-36, and N. Nassau-23, counts, elsewhere they were only in small numbers. There were two reports of Red Crossbills: 20 at Tobay 1 Jan (AJL) and six at Cedar Beach 7 Jan (S. Terrill). Pine Siskins were almost totally lacking; the Captree and N. Nassau counts each reported three; Staten I. one and Bronx-West. the only small group-45. Evening Grosbeaks were reported only a handful of times, usually ones and twos.

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