

REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

PETER FEINBERG

The winter season for the region was marked by high species diversity and an unusually low population density. This was probably due to the relatively mild local weather conditions and large wild food crop, allowing individuals to scatter about the area without concentrating at local feeders or protective habitats.

December was cold, average temperatures were ten degrees lower than last year. Precipitation was higher than normal and mostly fell as rain. Despite the cold weather many birders turned out for local Christmas Bird counts. Species numbers were high and individual numbers were low, a pattern which set the scene for the rest of the winter season. Six count reports were received with Greene County reporting an all time high of 78 species and the Alan Devoe Bird Club reporting their third highest count in 26 years with 61 species. The most notable Christmas count species were Tundra Swan (ADCBC), Merlin (GCCBC), Fish Crow (SCCBC), Boreal Chickadee (SRCBC), Water Pipit (SRCBC), and Red Crossbill (SCCBC). Also noted were unusually high numbers of Eastern Bluebirds.

January was also cold and it snowed over 11 days. The hard freeze and snow arrived during the second and third weeks of the month with the highest cumulative monthly snowfall reported at 31 inches. Weather data is courtesy of Bob Kovachik, WTEN News.

February was warmer than normal and most of the precipitation fell as rain. A large wild food crop and mild weather left feeders unattended. Individuals numbers were so low in fact that one reporter, an active bird feeder for many years, called the winter a real drought, a disaster.

Above all the winter season was disappointingly quiet. The Colonie landfill was the only regional area which stayed productive throughout. Herring, Ring-billed, and Great Black-backed Gulls were reported in high and constant numbers; frequent reports of Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were received; and reports of Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls top off the list.

This year brings to a close the New York State Avian Atlas Project. There is still time to watch for fledglings and confirm another species in your block. Good Atlasing!

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Abbreviations: ADCBC-Alan Devoe Bird Club Christmas Bird Count, 17 Dec 61 sp.; SCCBC-Schenectady County Christmas Bird Count, 17 Dec 64 sp.; CCBC-Cobleskill Christmas Bird Count, 17 Dec 52 sp.; GCCBC-Greene County Christmas Bird Count, 21 Dec 78 sp.; SRCBC-Southern Rensselaer Christmas Bird Count, 26 Dec 56 sp.; and FPCBC-Fort Plains Christmas Bird Count, 31 Dec 43 sp.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: one SCCBC. Pied-billed Grebe: one GCCBC. Horned Grebe: one Saratoga Springs 28 Dec. Red-necked Grebe: one Mohawk R 27 Nov; one Hudson Falls 15 Jan. Great Blue Heron: one Ghent 8 Dec; one SCCBC; one Mohawk R 14 Feb. **TUNDRA SWAN:** one adult ADCBC. Snow Goose: three CCBC; six GCCBC; and one Schroon L 10 Jan. Canada Goose: abundant thru; max 1,700 ADCBC; Berne 1 Jan (KA), flying S. (by calls) at six p.m. - nocturnal migration in Jan; and Cocksackie 23 Feb (RG), first migrants. Wood Duck: one ADCBC; SCCBC; GCCBC; and one Cohoes 22 Jan. Green-winged Teal: one GCCBC (BC). No. Pintail: 15 GCCBC. Gadwall: two Cohoes 5 Feb. Am. Wigeon: one GCCBC; and ten Embough Bay 10 Dec. Canvasback: 200 New Baltimore 2 Dec; one ADCBC; two Embough 10 Dec; eight GCCBC; and 16 Hudson 29 Feb. Redhead: max 12 Cohoes 7, 14, 22 Jan. Scaup sp: one GCCBC. Com. Goldeneye: two ADCBC; one Copake L 13 Dec; 13 GCCBC; and three New Baltimore 12 Feb. Bufflehead: max two Cohoes 14, 22 Jan. Hooded Merganser: one Duck Count 15 Jan; and four New Baltimore 12 Feb. Com. Merganser: reports thru.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: one adult and one imm Hoosick R 11 Feb.-No. Harrier: four ADCBC; one CCBC; two SCCBC; one Hudson 9 Jan; five Cocksackie Flats 11 Feb; and one Ghent 27, 29 Feb. Sharp-shinned Hawk: reports thru. Cooper's Hawk: reports thru. No. Goshawk: reports thru; max three ADCBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: one GCCBC; and one SRCBC. Rough-legged Hawk: max 12 Cocksackie Flats 11 Feb, low year. Merlin: one Becraft Mt 8 Jan (KD & EG); and one Bethlehem 16 Jan (AM). Ring-necked Pheasant: one ADCBC; four CCBC; four SRCBC; and three Ballston L 3-6 Jan. Ruffed Grouse: six ADCBC; six CCBC; and 14 SRCBC. Wild Turkey: reports thru; max 30 Hillsdale 26 Jan. **SANDHILL CRANE:** one Cairo 14 Jan (BP); and one Albany 1 Feb (PF); one New Scotland 3, 4 Feb, probably same bird as above. Killdeer: two Cocksackie 23 Feb, first arrivals. **THAYER'S GULL:** one Colonie 8, 13 Jan (LT, ST, & KA), first winter bird; one Colonie 11 Feb (ST); and one Colonie 18 Feb (ST). Iceland Gull: many reports; max seven Colonie 8-14 Jan, includes two adult *kumlieni* (KA). **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:** one Crescent 27 Nov (KA); one Crescent 23, 24 Feb (KA & ST). Glaucous Gull: reports thru; max seven Cohoes Falls 13 Jan.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: only one reported Albany 27 Dec (PF). Barred Owl: one ADCBC; one SRCBC; and one Embough 28 Dec. Long-eared Owl: two Athens 7 Jan; and two Saratoga 23-30 Jan. Short-eared Owl: Cocksackie Flats 12 Dec thru 11 Feb. 13 max 7 Jan; one FPCBC; and one Ghent 3-10 Dec and 1 Jan. No. Saw-whet Owl: one Amsterdam 21 Jan, road kill. Belted Kingfisher: reports thru. Red-headed Woodpecker: one ADCBC; one Ghent 2 Jan; and one wintering thru Cocksackie Flats. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one GCCBC; one thru Montgomery Co. feeder; and one thru Voorheesville. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one ADCBC; one SCCBC; one GCCBC; and one Greenport 23 Dec. No. Flicker: reports thru; nine max ADCBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: reports thru; 380 max GCCBC. Fish Crow: one SCCBC; and one Albany 24 Feb (ST). Com. Raven: one border Warren-Essex Co. 2 Jan; one Clifton Pk 3 Jan; two Gore Mt 10 Jan; and one Guiderland Center 20 Jan. **BOREAL CHICKADEE:** one Albany 28 Nov; and one SRCBC. Red-breasted Nuthatch: reports thru; 15 max SRCBC. White-breasted Nuthatch: reports thru; 93 max SRCBC. Brown Creeper: reports thru; 14 max GCCBC. Carolina Wren: two Catskill 10-21 Dec; three GCCBC; two Cocksackie Flats 12 Feb; and two Catskill 18 Feb. Winter Wren: only one reported SRCBC. Golden-crowned Kinglet: two Columbia Co thru 31 Dec; four SRCBC; one FPCBC; 10-15 Thacher Pk 15 Jan; and one Five Rivers Env. Ed. Center 23 Jan. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: two Castleton 1, 2 Dec; and one Cohoes 17, 18 Jan. E. Bluebird: 14 reports thru; 7 ADCBC; 17 GCCBC; and 11 SRCBC. Hermit Thrush: one Schenectady 21 Dec thru 28 Jan; one Chatham 5 Jan; one Glenville 14 Jan; and one Scotia 14 Jan. Gray Catbird: one GCCBC; one West Sand L 24 Feb; and two SRCBC. **WATER PIPIT:** one SRCBC (RG). Cedar Waxwing: reported on all CBCs. 66 max SRCBC. No. Shrike: one Berne 16 Dec; one CCBC; one Columbia Co 27, 28 Dec; one Cocksackie Flats 12 Feb; and one Athens 18 Feb.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: one Columbia Co 3 Dec; and two GCCBC. Com. Yellowthroat: one GCCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: No. Cardinal: reports thru; 127 max SRCBC. Rufous-sided Towhee: eight Old Chatham 2-19 Jan; and one Clarksville 22, 23 Feb. Field Sparrow: one Columbia Co 8 Dec; one Ghent 1-30 Jan; and one Five Rivers 16 Jan. **VESPER SPARROW:** one SCCBC. Savannah Sparrow: one SRCBC; and one FPCBC. Fox Sparrow: three CCBC. Song Sparrow: reports thru; 17 max SRCBC. White-throated Sparrow: reports thru, 24 max SRCBC. White-crowned Sparrow: two FPCBC; one Ghent 26, 28-31 Jan and 5 Feb. Lapland Longspur: only one report Amsterdam 18 Jan. Snow Bunting: reports thru; 300 max Cocksackie Flats 11 Feb. Red-winged Blackbird: reports thru; flock Cocksackie Flats 12 Feb, first spring arrivals. E. Meadowlark: one CCBC; 20 GCCBC; two FPCBC; one Old Chatham 8 Jan; one Castleton 25, 27 Jan; and one Castleton 7 Feb. **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:** one male Fonda 28 Feb (FG). Rusty Blackbird: one Ghent 29 Dec and 3, 8 Jan. Com. Grackle: reports thru. Brown-headed Cowbird: reports thru; 103 max SRCBC. Pine Grosbeak: seven CCBC; Old Chatham 8 Jan; 10-15 Partridge Run 22 Jan; and ten Malden Bridge 23 Jan. Purple Finch: reports thru; 93 max FPCBC. Red Crossbill: one SCCBC; and two Stillwater 25 Feb (AR). Com. Redpoll: one Altamont 12, 31 Dec; and seven CCBC. Pine Siskin: reports thru; 20 max Altamont 20 Jan thru 9 Feb. Am. Goldfinch: reports thru. Evening Grosbeak: reports thru; 492 max SRCBC.

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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The general consensus was "a lousy season in almost every way." The weather, although not too cold for too long, was generally raw and damp with too many dark and cloudy days. And, to add insult to injury, many of the species to be expected failed to appear. Rarities which are needed to quicken the pulse during the dismal winter days failed to show, and with the exception of one or two individuals, the longed for winter finches did not come south. After a season like this we deserve a decent spring.

The year 1983 ended one of the wettest on record with more than 80 inches of precipitation (45 being average). December helped this record with at least one good rain each week for a total of nine inches (three inches is average). About one inch of snow fell on 2, 3 December and 23 December saw two inches more. Each week of January had some snow, and four inches on 5 February was the only snow for that month. It did rain at least once in each of the remaining weeks of February. Mid-December temperatures dropped to the mid-20's F., and lakes and streams which were open for most Christmas Counts were frozen by the Waterfowl Count 15 January. Moderating temperatures in February had the lower Hudson open by 5 February, and the upper river open by 20 February.