

REGION 9 — DELAWARE-HUDSON

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December put us in a deep freeze. The record breaking cold made this the coldest December in 55 years. Average temperature was 17°, almost 19° below normal. This record cold was followed by a record warm January which brought above average temperatures, some days in the 50s, and rain instead of snow. February continued the mild trend. The average daily temperature was 33.4°, once again the warmest month in 55 years and more than 8° above normal. There was little snow cover and the Hudson River froze over early and at mid January was still frozen except for channels. The ice went out early and by the end of January and early February the ice was gone. Waterfowl moved steadily northward and there were no great rafts of ducks.

An abundance of wild foods, especially wild berries and seeds, kept the hardier and half-hardy species well fed. Poison Ivy berries were especially heavy, keeping Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy Woodpecker and Black-capped Chickadee busy at the seeds. Christmas Bird Count totals indicated that good numbers of Red-tailed Hawk, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing and

American Tree and Song Sparrows were present in late December and early January.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** was discovered 7 Jan on a little used road in eastern Dutchess County. The birders who found it were on their way to check a report on some hawks when they spotted the bird in a roadside tree. This is a second record for Dutchess. The first was collected in March 1953 in Dover Plains and is a skin in the American Museum of Natural History. This bird was feeding on the black fruits of the Buckthorn, which is often the last fruit eaten by birds at the end of the winter. The bird continued to be observed by many people well into March. There was a plentiful food supply with wild rose, cedar and other wild fruit and seeds. Other birds in the same area were Purple Finch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, E. Bluebird and chickadees. A spruce plantation provided good shelter for these birds.

Another good find was the first **Barnacle Goose** record for Dutchess County. On 11 Feb this bird was spotted with Canada geese. It took a sharp eye and patience to pick him out amongst the thousands of Canada Geese that winter in northeastern part of the county.

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Abbreviations: JBCBC - John Burroughs CBC 23 Dec; OCBC - Orange County CBC 16 Dec; PCBC - Pawling CBC 1 Jan; SCBC - Sullivan County CBC 29 Dec; WCBC - Waterman CBC 16 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two Hudson R at New Hamburg 17 Feb (JMK). Pied-billed Grebe: one Hudson River 18 Feb (JMK). Great Cormorant: three ad, three imm Hudson River off Peekskill 27 Jan (Sullivan Co. Audubon Soc). Great Blue Heron: lingered in many areas. Greater White-fronted Goose: one Dover Plains 13 Feb (MY DF). Snow Goose: two e DUTC 11-24 Feb. **Barnacle Goose**: *intro*. Canada Goose: wintered by the thousands DUTC, PUTN. Wood Duck: one SCBC, last two Pleasant Valley 8 Jan, arr 9 Feb, increased to four Stissing by end of month. Green-winged Teal: three Goshen 17 Feb. Am. Black Duck: widespread and on all CBCs. Mallard: good winter numbers. N. Pintail: three WCBC, four Minisink 10 Feb, two Wappingers area, one 21 Feb. Rhinebeck (SJ). Gadwall: six Wappingers L 1 Dec. Am. Wigeon: two L Walton 12 Feb, two Wappingers L 13 Feb (BM). Canvasback: 44 OCBC, fewer in Hudson R, max 31 mid Jan. Ring-necked Duck: five OCBC; 25-30 wintered Sylvan L; returned to inland ponds DUTC mid Feb, 17 PUTN 31 Jan, 61 WCBC. Greater Scaup: one Kays P 11 Jan (MVW). Lesser Scaup: one Sylvan L 18 Feb (JMK). Com. Goldeneye: three OCBC, two Rondout Res 5 Jan, four New Hamburg 27 Jan (OTW), max ten Esopus 27 Feb (OTW). Bufflehead: two Purdy's Putn 31 Jan (FB), four Vanderburg Cove 13 Feb, six OCBC. Hooded Merganser: 17 PCBC, three

Wappingers Creek 18 Feb. Com. Merganser: 80 Rondout Res 5 Jan, 158 OCBC, 1600+ Hudson R mid Jan. Red-breasted Merganser: few L Glenada and L Carmel through period (FB). Ruddy Duck: three hardy birds OCBC, only report.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: a few always seem to linger through the winter, 29 PCBC; arr mid Feb. Bald Eagle: eight wintered at Iona Island; scattered reports of one to three birds along the Hudson R, few strayed inland DUTC; 87 on NYSDEC aerial survey ULST and SULL Res Jan, 39 in Feb. N. Harrier: five ORAN 10 Dec, scattered reports for DUTC. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 11 OCBC, five WCBC, seven PCBC, two BCBC indicating a good winter population. Cooper's Hawk: two WCBC, four OCBC, few others throughout the period. N. Goshawk: singles Claryville 10 Dec, Dover Plains 17 Dec, PCBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: three SCBC, a rare winter record; one through period Wappingers Falls (OTW), singles BCBC and PCBC. Red-tailed Hawk: 51 OCBC, 57 WCBC, 30 BCBC. Rough-legged Hawk: well reported most areas, max 15 Pine Plains 28 Jan, fairly common ORAN, a 6-1 ratio of light to dark morphs (JPT). Golden Eagle: imm wintered near Wawarsing feeding on deer carcass, one SCBC, two Stissing Mt through period. Am. Kestrel: 11 OCBC, eight WCBC, returned to usual haunts by late Feb. **Gyrffalcon:** a very large falcon near Newburg 16 Dec (JPT), observer familiar with this species; if confirmed would have been a local first. Ruffed Grouse: 14 PCBC, few others. Wild Turkey: low numbers noted SULL, poor breeding season with high fox and coyote fall and winter activity (JW), 15 PCBC, seems to be doing well in DUTC. Semipalmated Plover : one WEST Dec. Killdeer: arr Millerton 11 Feb (JMK). Com. Snipe: three WCBC, one SCBC, one wintered Millerton. Am. Woodcock: one Milan DUTC 13 Feb (Steve Keene), returned to some areas ORAN 17 Feb. Iceland Gull: first year bird Stony Point 23 Jan (ET); one flying up the Hudson R 5 Feb. Glaucous Gull: imm Stony Point 23 Jan. (ET).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: one DUTC Dec, none Jan and Feb; three BCBC, very scarce or unobserved in most areas. Great Horned Owl: one or two heard most areas but no nesting noted. Snowy Owl: one not confirmed Millerton early Dec. Barred Owl: one or two most areas. Long-eared Owl: one heard DUTC Jan; at least one pair continues to occupy a large juniper thicket near Florida ORAN (JPT). Short-eared Owl: four wintered near Goshen, one flew over car on Taconic Parkway DUTC 11 Feb (AJ). N. Saw-whet Owl: one Pawling 20 Jan. Red-headed Woodpecker: few noted (JPT), one wintered Rhinebeck (SJ). Red-bellied Woodpecker: 20 OCBC, 16 WCBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: five DUTC 28 Feb. N. Flicker: 14 PCBC, 16 OCBC. Pileated Woodpecker: noted widely throughout period.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: several hundred at farm areas in n DUTC. Tree Swallow: one of these tough little birds at a bluebird box Rhinebeck 9 Feb. Blue Jay: high count on some CBCs, usual numbers at feeders. Am. Crow: over 9000 at Middletown Roost, uncounted numbers near Hyde Park, 1500 crossing the Hudson R at sunset near the Mid-Hudson Bridge (AJ). Fish Crow: not well reported but heard in usual places along Hudson R. Com. Raven: widely reported from at least four Catskill locations, two at feeder SULL

Dec. Red-breasted Nuthatch: 48 PCBC, 23 WCBC, a wonderful invasion. Brown Creeper: 18 PCBC. Carolina Wren: widely reported SULL, ORAN, 13 OCBC, nine WCBC. Winter Wren: two OCBC, three Deer Park Dec PCBC, Golden-crowned Kinglet: eight WCBC, 33 PCBC, 22 OCBC, 15 BCBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one 9 Dec. (CV). E. Bluebird: 56 WCBC, 15 OCBC. **Townsend's Solitaire**: *intro*. Hermit Thrush: one Millerton 17 Dec, one ULST late Dec. Gray Catbird: one or two DUTC mid Jan and mid Feb, one at feeder 15, also 21-22 Jan following ice storm (FB). Brown Thrasher: one at feeder near Goshen 1-5 Dec. **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Middletown 1 Feb (JPT). Cedar Waxwing, max 200 (JPT), 126 WCBC, 164 PCBC, fifty OCBC. N. Shrike: one WCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Cape May Warbler: one Millbrook 13 Dec. Yellow-rumped Warbler: seven in one flock WCBC, 14 PCBC, three OCBC, one or two seen throughout area. Pine Warbler: one through Jan and Feb. at feeder Millerton.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: singles at three different feeders DUTC, two WCBC. Field Sparrow: one 24 Feb (BB), four WCBC, four OCBC. Savannah Sparrow: four to six wintered in Red Hook. Fox Sparrow: one 15-24 Feb, two 27-28 Feb (FB), several SULL Dec, Jan; singles reported around DUTC. Song Sparrow: 30 WCBC. Swamp Sparrow: one Pond Gut 14 Feb (CV). White-throated Sparrow: small numbers but widespread (JPT), good numbers at most feeders, 206 WCBC. White-crowned Sparrow: one Wawarsing mid Dec-mid Jan, one PCBC. Dark-eyed Junco: abundant. Lapland Longspur: nine Red Hook 19 Dec (HM), three to five there all winter. Snow Bunting: four OCBC, flock of 1500 on the farm flats Red Hook, like a blizzard when they flow up and whirled about. Red-winged Blackbird: some wintered, arr mid Feb. E. Meadowlark: eight Millerton 20 Jan, seven wintered near Goshen, three PCBC. Rusty Blackbird: 22 ORAN 16 Dec, record winter number (JPS). Com. Grackle: large flock mixed with Red-winged Blackbird Red Hook 23 Feb (SJ). Pine Grosbeak: four Rhinebeck 2 Feb (SJ), 35 WCBC. Purple Finch: few at some feeders, 17 PCBC. White-winged Crossbill: 15 Duel Hollow Road DUTC 9 Jan (ET, MY). Com. Redpoll: two WCBC. Pine Siskin: 105 PCBC, abundant SULL, few noted ORAN and DUTC, increased in numbers mid Feb. Evening Grosbeak: common to abundant SULL, some flocks up to 120 birds, 81 BCBC, 20 daily Wiccoppee s DUTC and Rhinebeck in n DUTC, virtually unrecorded in ORAN.

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