

REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

The month of December was the third warmest on record with an average temperature of 42.6° against the normal of 36.2°. January was 3° above normal, and February was the fourth warmest on record with five new daily highs, including four in the first week. However, just to show us that winter was really there, on 22 Jan the temperature fell to 10° and even February had a few days below 20°. As for precipitation, only December had above normal rainfall. February was below normal, with one major snow storm which quickly melted. All in all, the winter was without its usual bitter cold and we didn't have to shovel very much. The long lasting effects of this very warm weather probably will not be known for some time. Whether the weather had anything to do with the birding is also unknown.

There were many unusual waterfowl this winter, including **Pink-footed Goose**, **Greater White-fronted Goose**, **Ross' Goose**, and **Barrow's Goldeneye**. And contrary to what one would expect from the "mild" weather, this was the first winter in at least 25 years when substantial numbers of alcids were seen in the Region. Single **Dovekie** were seen mid and late December, and a single **Black Guillemot** was seen at the Jones Beach Coast Guard Station. **Razorbill** was almost common. They were seen at Montauk Point from early December to late January, with peaks of 28 on 15 Dec and 25 on 19-20 Jan. In addition, they were seen at Jones Beach West End, Captree and Shinnecock Inlet during the winter.

On a positive note, winter raptors are becoming more noticeable. To highlight this fact, *The New York Times*, in an article on 26 Mar 1991, summarized reports of predation by hawks at bird feeders throughout the state as reported to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Raptors were conspicuous in more open areas as well. Up to three Red-tailed Hawk wintered along the Meadowbrook Parkway between Southern State Parkway and the toll booths where they could be seen perched in the trees along the road. They were joined by a Rough-legged Hawk on the Loop Parkway to Long Beach. Other wintering raptors were a pair of Peregrine Falcon seen in the vicinity of the Throgs Neck Bridge, another pair roosting on the Jones Beach water tower, and Northern Goshawk which wintered in Central Park and Tobay. A Cooper's Hawk wintered between South Hempstead and Rockville Centre, visiting feeders at the homes of both your Regional editors. Floyd Bennett Field also harbored this species, where there were at least three on 12 Jan (*per* Jean and Ronald Bourque). The one negative note is that more than one observer reported a decrease in the local wintering American Kestrel population.

Half-hardy species are always present in the Region. This season had greater numbers of these species and other birds which usually are gone by Christmas Bird Count time. In December there were good numbers of House and Winter Wren, and eight species of warbler including ten Orange-crowned Warbler, five on the Southern Nassau Co. Christmas Bird Count and four on the Montauk count. Carolina Wren has benefited noticeably from the milder winters of recent years. It was seen in many areas and in greatly increased numbers. From the partial list of counts we saw, there must be at least 300-500 wintering birds of this species in the Region.

The best land bird reported was a **Black-billed Magpie**, which wintered at the point at Montauk from November through the period and was seen by numerous observers.

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Abbreviations: CP - Central Park; FBF - Floyd Bennett Field; JFKWS - John F. Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary (Tobay); JBch - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; LI - Long Island; MPt - Montauk Point; PBP - Pelham Bay Park; ShIn - Shinnecock Inlet; SNCBC - Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count; SI - Staten Island.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: 77 Cullodin Pt 4 Jan (JR). Red-necked Grebe: one MPt 7 Dec-19 Jan, one FBF 26 Jan, one JBWE 10-18 Feb. **Eared Grebe**: one

South Beach SI 13 Jan (Bob Claremont). N. Gannet: 4-5,000 MPt 1-2 Dec. Tricolored Heron: one JFKWS 2 Dec, 20 Dec; one Oceanside P 19 Dec (PM), SNCBC 30 Dec, late. Glossy Ibis: MPt 1 Dec. Tundra Swan: eight ad, one imm Hook Pd East Hampton 1 Dec (JR), four still there 28 Feb (JF, PG). **Pink-footed Goose**: one Spring Lake Golf Course, Middle Island, and nearby ponds 16 Jan through the month (JC, JR, mob). **Greater White-fronted Goose**: one Mecox Bay 27-28 Jan (Bill Lee, mob); two were shot by hunters on e LI in early Jan (Jim Ash). Snow Goose: one to two dozen wintered on the s shore of LI, including up to five Blue morphs. **Ross' Goose**: one Watermill 5 Jan, Hook Pd 15 Jan (Jim Ash). Wood Duck: one Hempstead L SP (SS,AW), five Kissena L, one CP 21 Feb (JR). Blue-winged Teal: ten Central Suffolk CBC, one JFKWS 1 Jan, one E Patchogue 16 Jan (JF). Eurasian Wigeon: a few widely scattered birds. Tufted Duck: one CP Reservoir. Com. Eider: 70 MPt 2 Dec; three female, one subad male MPt 4 Dec (JF); one MPt 19 Jan (JR). King Eider: one JBWE early Dec (SW), five MPt 20 Dec (PG), 19 MPt 19 Jan (JR), 7-10 MPt 24 Jan (JF), five MPt 17 Feb. Harlequin Duck: up to 14 wintered off the JBch/LB jetties; one South Beach SI 23 Dec to 20 Jan (Bob Claremont, HF). **Barrow's Goldeneye**: male East Hampton, female Whitestone all winter (mob).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: one Orient 4 Feb (GR), one Mastic (Janet & Kevin Barry). Bald Eagle: one Jamaica Bay Wildlife Sanctuary 1 Dec; one Lawrence 9 Dec; imm Cox Lane, Cutchogue 20 Feb (PG). Cooper's Hawk: *intro*. N. Goshawk: *intro*. Red-shouldered Hawk: one wintered Muttontown Preserve. Red-tailed Hawk: *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: *intro*. Am. Kestrel: *intro*. Peregrine Falcon: *intro*. **Black Rail**: one JFKWS 2 Dec (John & Ellen Caspars). Clapper Rail: reported on several counts. Virginia Rail: reported on several counts. Sora: one Napeaugue SP 15 Dec (JF). Semipalmated Plover: two Glenwood Landing 11 Dec (June & Robert Wood). Long-billed Dowitcher: one Brooklyn 15 Dec, six SNCBC 30 Dec. Little Gull: one Fire I inlet 11-13 Dec (AL). Com. Black-headed Gull: one ShIn 20 Jan (TB) to 2 Feb (JF). Iceland Gull: one MPt; imm ShIn 12 Dec to 2 Feb; ad ShIn 9 Dec to 17 Feb; others present. Lesser Black-backed Gull: one Dosoris Pd 19 Jan (HR). Glaucous Gull: one MPt 4 Dec to 24 Jan; imm ShIn 2-15 Dec; one Greenport 19 Dec (GR), JBch Inlet 29 Dec (SW); others present. Black-legged Kittiwake: 12+ MPt 4 Dec (JF). Forster's Tern: one JBch inlet 2 Dec (SW). **Dovekie**: one MPt 12 Dec (AL), seen 1 Jan; one SNCBC 30 Dec. **Razorbill**: *intro*. **Black Guillemot**: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barn Owl: wintered at FBF (J&RB). Snowy Owl: one MPt 15 Dec; one JBch mid Dec to late Jan; one to two Cedar Beach late Dec early Feb (mob); one Dune Road 5 Feb (JR); one ShIn 18 Feb. Long-eared Owl: one JBWE 9 Dec (SS,AW), one Oak Beach 6 Dec (JF), one Bronx 23 Dec, one CP early Jan, two PBP late Jan-Feb. Short-eared Owl: singles seen at all the south shore beaches in both SUFF and NASS. N. Saw-whet Owl: a dozen sightings from CP to mid SUFF. Red-headed Woodpecker: ad and imm CP all season. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: four SNCBC 30 Dec, one CP in Jan, others present.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: E. Phoebe: one PBP 23 Dec-6 Jan. W. Kingbird: one Gardiner Co P, West Islip 3 Dec (JF); one Captree CBC. **Black-billed Magpie**: *intro*. Am. Pipit: Ward's Pt SI 30 Dec (HF). Carolina Wren: *intro*. House Wren: *intro*. Winter Wren: *intro*. Marsh Wren: a few seen in marshes on CBCs. **Northern Shrike**: one JFKWS 2 Dec (PM); one at entrance to Heather Hills SP all winter; one Wantagh Highway 21 Dec (JF).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Orange-crowned Warbler: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: W. **Tanager**: one CP 1-27 Dec. E. Meadowlark: wintered at JBWE and FBF. Lapland Longspur: 22 St. Charles Cemetery mid Feb. Snow Bunting: flocks at various locations on the south shore and SI beaches. Rusty Blackbird: a number wintered. Boat-tailed Grackle: 58 Queens CBC 15 Dec. Red Crossbill: 13 JBch 7 Jan (SS, AW, mob), seven Hither Hills 26 Jan (JF). Pine Siskin: seven MPt 15 Dec. Evening Grosbeak: four Ridge 1 Jan (John Ruscica).

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