

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

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The Region enjoyed an exceptionally mild and open winter. At Albany, December temperatures averaged 7° above normal, it was 64° on 23 Dec, and new record high temperatures were recorded on two dates. Precipitation was just slightly above normal for the month, but the year ended at a very wet 10.27 inches above normal. Snowfall totalled only 8.5 inches (6.8 inches below normal) and that which fell disappeared quickly. This trend continued through the remainder of the winter with well above normal temperatures, well below normal snowfall, and no accumulation of snow on the ground over much of the Region.

Reporters were in general agreement that birds were rather scarce. Feeders were ignored and land birds were often hard to find in numbers. That is to be expected given the mild and open conditions which make food available and do not drive birds into feeders. These are also the kinds of conditions that encourage so-called half-hardy species to linger in fall and attempt to overwinter north of their usual ranges. This season, that trend was evident only among waterbirds (from loons and grebes to coots) and Eastern Phoebe. The other species that typically fall into this category were not reported in greater than usual numbers.

It was an excellent winter for Short-eared Owl and Northern Shrike, but other northern irruptive species were in short supply. Winter finches were almost absent. At Jenny L in the southern Adirondacks, Yunick monitored a very intense and unusual irruption of Black-capped Chickadees. In December he captured 186, most in the last half of the month. By January the numbers were back down. This invasion rivalled those of 1971-72 and 1980-81 in magnitude, but differed in that the flight comprised mostly adults. Whether the young birds emigrated earlier is not known. Unusual numbers or activity were not noted elsewhere.

The only rarity reported was a possible Varied Thrush.

Thanks to Bill Cook for compiling the fall report while I was off having fun in the antipodes.

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Abbreviations: Alcove - Alcove Res, ALBA; Cat-Cox - Catskill-Coxsackie; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; HudR - Hudson R; SaraL - Saratoga L; SaraSpa - Saratoga Spa State Park.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: two SaraL 2 Dec (BP); singles Cat-Cox CBC 18 Dec (BC), grounded SCHO 19 Dec (KEP), Hague 6, 22 Jan (AC,BCr,LM); rare in winter. Pied-billed Grebe: singles SaraL 2 Dec (BP), Alcove 16 Dec (ALBA CBC); rare in winter. Red-necked Grebe: one Alcove 16 Dec (ALBA CBC); rare in winter. Great Blue Heron: 11 reports include singles at TomR 1 Jan (BB,KB,AGR), near Greenwich WASH 6 Jan (JS), WASH 13 Jan (BP), Cambridge 29 Jan (JS). Mute Swan: 58 HudR in COLU 13 Jan (BC); continues to increase. Snow Goose: two Kinderhook 15 Dec (AL), one TomR 1 Jan (BB,KB); unusual in winter. Canada Goose: high counts, 1200 Cat-Cox CBC 18 Dec; 1330 HudR in COLU 13 Jan (BC). Wood Duck: singles HudR at Ft Edward WASH 15 Dec (BP), SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec (fide SZ). Green-winged Teal: male Schuylerville 15 Feb (BP). N. Pintail: two males, one female Niskayuna 15 Dec (RPY); two ALBA CBC 16 Dec; two Cat-Cox CBC 18 Dec (BC); two Linlithgo 13 Jan (BC). N. Shoveler: one female FiveR 23 Dec through freeze-up (AM). Gadwall: five SaraL 9 Jan (RPG), one Germantown 13 Jan (BC). Canvasback: 2000 Germantown 6 Feb (AL), large count. Ring-necked Duck: arr COLU 26 Feb. Greater Scaup: 31 ALBA CBC 16 Dec; one Cohoes 29 Dec (BC); uncommon in winter. White-winged Scoter: male Lock 7 Mohawk R 9 Dec (RPY); rare in winter. Hooded Merganser: five L Lonely SARA 9 Dec (BP), four ALBA CBC 16 Dec., pair Silver Bay WARR 18 Feb (LM), one Castleton COLU 24 Feb (PFC), no.? Granville WASH 25 Feb (JS). Ruddy Duck: two SaraSpa CBC, four ALBA CBC, 16 Dec; rare in winter.

HAWK-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: singles ALBA CBC 16 Dec, Greenport COLU 20 Feb (BC); two Schodack Ctr COLU 26 Feb (PFC). Osprey: one Hague 14 Dec (DD), very late. Bald Eagle: 11 ad, six imm, four unknown age reported. N. Harrier: 21 SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec, 13 Coxsackie Flats GREE 3 Feb (RPG), nine WASH; ca 12 other reports; numerous this winter. Sharp-shinned Hawk: 35 reports. Cooper's Hawk: 14 reports. N. Goshawk: singles Niskayuna 17 Dec (BL), Greenfield SARA 10 Jan (CF), SaraSpr 3 Feb (RB); rather scarce recently. Red-tailed Hawk: numerous winter SARA; carrying nesting material SCHE late Feb. Rough-legged Hawk: 23 reported, largest concentration 12 Ft Edward WASH 3 Feb (CF). Merlin: singles Cohoes 29 Dec (BC), New Baltimore 3 Feb (RPG). Peregrine Falcon: imm Scotia 30 Dec (BL). Ring-necked Pheasant: pair Cambridge 29 Jan (JS); Colonie 17 Feb (RPY), first there in years. Wild Turkey: increasing; large counts 20 Greenport area (BC), 85 WARR 26 Dec (BP), 48 Gallupville ALBA 23 Feb (BB, KB). Am. Coot: two SaraSpa CBC, one ALBA CBC, 16 Dec; rare in winter. Killdeer: one SCHE CBC 16 Dec; rare in winter. Lesser Black-backed Gull: adult Cohoes 29 Dec (BC).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: one Gansvoort SARA 20 Jan through period (BG, mob). Short-eared Owl: up to 15 wintered near Ft Edward WASH, 6 SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec, two Coxsackie Flats Jan (RPG), one Stuyvesant COLU 8 Feb (AL). N. Saw-whet Owl: singles Greenport COLU 8 Feb (KEP), dead on road SARA 27 Feb (SZ). Belted Kingfisher: 13 reports. Red-bellied Woodpecker: outside usual range in COLU, GREE, male near Amsterdam and

three on SaraSpa CBC suggest continuing expansion. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one Clermont 23 Feb (KD, EG, BC, PI), only report.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Phoebe: singles FiveR 8 Dec-11 Jan (AM), Colonie 17 Feb (RPY), Gallupville ALBA 22 Feb (BB, KB) would seem to be overwintering birds; most unusual. Fish Crow: increasing; 7 SCHE CBC 16 DEC. Com. Raven: 9 reported, about normal. Black-capped Chickadee: intro. Tufted Titmouse: doing well Jenny L SARA (RPY). Red-breasted Nuthatch: high counts, 20 ALBA CBC, 24 SCHE CBC, 16 Dec; otherwise not noted in unusual numbers. Carolina Wren: singles in SaraSpr (BJ) and at feeders in Queensbury and Assembly Pt WARR (fide BP) were all near the northern limit of the range. Hermit Thrush: one Cat-Cox CBC 18 Dec (BC); only report. Varied Thrush: a bird seen briefly in Greenfield SARA 12 Jan (CF) was probably this species. Gray Catbird: one Chatham 15,17 Dec (KD,EG). Am. Pipit: 20 Ghent 15 Dec (BC); always rare in winter, very large number. Cedar Waxwing: 40 Nuten Hook COLU 6 Jan (PFC), 55 Greenfield 28 Feb (CF), the only large numbers reported. N. Shrike: 18 reports 2 Dec - 24 Feb.

VIREOS-WARBLED: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Field Sparrow: one at feeder SCHE CBC 16 Dec. White-crowned Sparrow: six-eight Kinderhook 2-26 Dec; large no. in hedgerow until road crew cut it down. Dark-eyed Junco: reported present in good numbers. Lapland Longspur: eight SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec.; high count. Red-winged Blackbird: arr 8-11 Feb. E. Meadowlark: one near Bacon Hill SARA 26 Jan (BP). Rusty Blackbird: two SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec, three Austerlitz 4 Jan (BMU). Com. Grackle: arr COLU 21,23 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: 70 Stuyvesant 2 Dec (PFC), large number. Pine Grosbeak: six SaraSpa CBC 16 Dec, no.? Chatham 31 Dec (Austin); only reports. Pine Siskin: seven reports, max 15 Schodack Ctr COLU 21 Jan (PFC). Evening Grosbeak: present in moderate numbers, max 439 SaraSpa CBC, 100 Greenfield 24 Dec (CF).

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