

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Another warm winter season gave us little snow cover and an abundance of open water. There were over 40 reports of Bald Eagle, with increased sightings on the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and on reservoirs, birds being more widely distributed due to open water. Well above average numbers of Red-tailed Hawk wintered, and wintering numbers of American Kestrel were average. It was not an invasion year for Black-capped Chickadee or Red-breasted Nuthatch. Carolina Wren was found in increasing numbers scattered through the Region, the least in the northern area. Eastern Bluebird is wintering in increasing numbers throughout most of the Region, including Lake George WARR. American Robin wintered throughout the Region in much higher numbers than usual, widespread and not limited to usual wintering areas but appeared on lawns periodically all winter. Modest numbers of American Pipit were noted. European Starling was down in numbers on CBCs in the Region. The usual numbers of Swamp Sparrow wintering in marshes along the Hudson River were reported. Winter finches were absent or in low numbers.

There were several notable rarities this season. An **Eared Grebe** was discovered on Saratoga Lake on 12 Dec, but its Basic plumage raised questions as to its identification. However, the owner of a camp overlooking the grebe's feeding area had seen the bird throughout the summer and her detailed description of the bird in breeding plumage confirmed it as an Eared Grebe. A **Tufted Duck** was a Regional first. A **Northern Hawk Owl** was found along Town Line Road just east of Fort Edward on 16 Nov and remained in that area throughout this reporting period. The bird was quite unafraid and was enjoyed at close range by many birders. Also observed in the same general area were up to six Snowy Owl and as many as 20 Short-eared Owl, along with Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier and a Northern Shrike. This area of farm fields is proving to be the premier wintering area for raptors in the region. The previously good wintering area on farm land near the village of Coxsackie, Greene County has held declining numbers of raptors for the last several years.

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Abbreviations: ACBC - Albany CBC, 15 Dec; CCCBC - Catskill-Coxsackie CBC, 17 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 14 Dec; FREEC - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 21 Dec; SaraL - Saratoga Lake; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 14 Dec; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 14 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: last Alcove Res 14 Dec (KA), L George 16 Dec (LM), SaraL 22 Dec (BC). Pied-billed Grebe: SaraL 14 Dec (BP). Eared Grebe: *intro*. Red-necked Grebe: five SaraL 14 Dec (BP), one SaraL 22 Dec (BC). Double-crested Cormorant: ad Lock 7 Mohawk R 28 Dec (RY), imm Mohawk R at Cohoes 28 Dec, late. Great Blue Heron: one Cambridge 17 Dec (JS), 13 ScCBC, one Mohawk R 21 Dec (RY), three Hudson Falls 21 Dec (BP), two Schodack RENS 21 Dec (PC), one 10 Feb SCHO (BL). Mute Swan: 12 ChCBC, one Mohawk R 17 Dec (RY), 52 Hudson R at Catskill 3 Jan (KA), one Hudson R at Schuylerville 16 Feb (JS). Snow Goose: one Mohawk R through 14 Dec (RY), one CCCBC, imm L George WARR 13 Jan (BP), one SARA 26 Jan (BP), five WASH 5 Jan (JS), 30 (one white morph) Hudson R at Ft Miller 27 Feb (JS). Canada Goose: large numbers on rivers, lakes and reservoirs. Wood Duck: three Hudson R WASH 16 Feb (JS). Green-winged Teal: ten Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA), two Cohoes 28 Dec (KA). Am. Black Duck: 530 CCCBC. N. Pintail: one Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA), one Cohoes 28 Dec (KA), two Hudson R at Coxsackie 23 Feb (BC), two Hudson R WASH 27 Feb (JS). N. Shoveler: one Cohoes 28 Dec (KA). Gadwall: one SaraL 14 Dec (BP), 12 Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA). Am. Wigeon: three Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA), one Hudson R WASH 27 Feb (JS). Canvasback: eight SaraL 15 Dec (BP), two Hudson R at Coxsackie 23 Feb (BC). Redhead: one Hudson R at Coxsackie 23 Feb (BC). **Tufted Duck**: male SaraL 7-15 Dec (KA). Ring-necked Duck: 330 Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA), two Hudson R WASH 7 Feb (JS). Greater Scaup: six SaraL 14 Dec (BP). Lesser Scaup: Hudson R WASH 28 Feb (JS). Oldsquaw: one Mohawk R Schenectady 8 Dec (RY), one L George 9 Dec (BP). White-winged Scoter: four ChCBC. **Barrow's Goldeneye** Hudson R WASH 22 Feb (BP!). Bufflehead: five Nassau L RENS 5 Dec (PC), one Mohawk R Schenectady 14 Dec (RY), five SaraL 22 Dec (BC), two Lake George 21 Jan (LM). Hooded Merganser: one ScCBC 14 Dec, 14 Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA), two Hudson R WASH 27 Dec (BP), three Hudson R GREE 23 Feb, six Hudson R WASH 27 Feb (JS). Red-breasted Merganser: one Mohawk R Schenectady 14 Dec (RY), two Hudson R WASH 22 Feb. Ruddy Duck: one Alcove Res 15 Dec (KA).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*. N. Harrier: good numbers wintering, 16 Ft Edward 1 Feb (BP). Cooper's Hawk: six reports. N. Goshawk: one SCHO 24 Dec (BB), one WARR 7 Feb. Red-shouldered Hawk: one near Saratoga Spa SP all winter (SZ). Rough-legged Hawk: above average numbers in WASH, max 20 near Ft Edward 13 Dec (KA); below average numbers in GREE. Ring-necked Pheasant: three reports. Am. Coot: two SSCBC. Killdeer: one SSCBC, three COLU 17 Dec, one Coxsackie 22 Feb (BL). Bonaparte's Gull: two SaraL 13 Dec (KA), one Coxsackie 23 Feb (BC). Iceland Gull: one Bas I Mohawk R Schenectady 1 Jan (RY), two Mohawk

R Colonie 13 & 17 Feb, two RENS 24 Feb. Lesser Black-backed Gull: Mohawk R Colonie 13 & 17 Feb. Glaucous Gull: one Mohawk R Schenectadt-Albany 28 Dec, two there 1 Jan, one 25 Jan, and one 17 Feb (RY).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barn Owl: one Shamrock Hill WARR 3 Feb (GL). Snowy Owl: up to six near Ft Edward all winter (BP); six scattered reports of single birds. N. Hawk Owl: *intro*; one Hague 20 Jan (LM). Short-eared Owl: three Ft Edward 7 Dec (BP), max 20 there 12 Jan and remaining through period. N. Saw-whet Owl: one Saratoga 1 Dec (G&KH), one WASH 9 Feb (BP), one calling Petersburg 22 Feb (AR). Belted Kingfisher: six ScCBC, three other reports. Red-bellied Woodpecker: one COLU throughout period, one FREEC 8 Dec, three ChCBC, two CCCBC, four Livingston-Greenport 16 Feb. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: one CCCBC, one New Scotland 19 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Horned Lark: 35 CCCBC, 214 HFCBC, scarce. Fish Crow: three ScCBC. Com. Raven: 15 at deer carcass T Berlin RENS 25 Jan (PC); two Jenny L SARA 27 Dec, one each 11 Jan and 22 Feb (RY), increasing there. Black-capped Chickadee: low numbers Jenny L (RY). Red-breasted Nuthatch: scarce at Jenny L and FREEC, one ChCBC. Carolina Wren: two at Lake George Village 2 Dec (BP), one Gallupville 31 Dec (BB). Winter Wren: two CCCBC, four sightings Niskayuna 8 Dec-1 Jan. Marsh Wren: four CCCBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: three CCCBC. Hermit Thrush: one ACBC (KA). Gray Catbird: one Gallupville 1 Dec (BB), one ScCBC 14 Dec. Brown Thrasher: one Niskayuna 31 Dec (RY). Am. Pipit: one ACBC. Cedar Waxwing: 150 Knox 19 Jan (KA), 62 HFCBC. N. Shrike: reported from 11 locations SARA, WASH, ALBA, COLU after 7 Dec; one FREEC, where present five of last six winters.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Com. Yellowthroat: one ChCBC, one CCCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: one SARA 1 Jan (BL). Vesper Sparrow: two near Ft Edward 22 Dec (RG). Savannah Sparrow: two near Ft Edward 22 Dec (RG). Fox Sparrow: two CCCBC. Snow Bunting: numbers very low, 20 WASH 8 Feb (BP), 35 Ft Edward 28 Dec (JS), 60 Jefferson COLU 3 Feb (A. Mason). Red-winged Blackbird: arr FREEC two days earlier than average, one Gansevoort SARA 19 Feb (BP). E. Meadowlark: seven HFCBC (BP). Rusty Blackbird: one Gallupville 22 Dec (BB), one Saratoga 1 Jan (SZ). Com. Grackle: one ACBC. Purple Finch: scarce early in period, increasing later. Com. Redpoll: one Gansevoort 23 Dec (BP), 14 Schodack RENS 30 Dec (PC). Pine Siskin: scarce for most of period, increasing later in period but generally low in numbers except at Petersburg, where they appeared 26 Dec and built up to 100 daily, decreasing to 30 by end of period (AR); one SCHO 9 Dec (RY), one SARA 31 Dec (BP). Evening Grosbeak: scarce, three SCHO 9 Dec (RY), three ScCBC, 20 E Berne through the period (KA), 40 L George WARR 16 Feb (LM), 100 E Poestenkill through Dec and Jan, diminishing in numbers during Feb (AR); one white (albinistic) Hague 17 Feb (LM).

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