

REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

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The weather this winter in Region 9 was fairly typical of recent previous years — long stretches of warm temperatures, sunshine, with little or no precipitation. What precipitation did occur was generally in the form of rain, with only a few periods with trace amounts of snow. December was downright balmy until 15 Dec, when a massive northwestern front pushed through the Region and sent the mercury into a nose dive. The rest of December was characterized by cold temperatures, with decreasing amounts of open water on lakes and reservoirs. By late January, those bodies of water that had frozen began to thaw. February was, for the most part, unseasonably warm. The lack of precipitation took its toll on area reservoirs such as the Rondout and Neversink, which were virtually empty in early February. If there is no change in reservoir levels by the time you read this, we Downstaters will be in very deep trouble!

Effects of the mild winter are evident in reports of ducks (or rather the lack thereof), raptors, and half-hardy species. No ice meant no waterfowl concentrations this winter. Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Northern Flicker were reported in excellent numbers across the Region. Downy, Hairy and Pileated Woodpeckers also were reported in increased numbers. Will the Ash-Yellow and Woolly Agelid diseases be a boon to woodpeckers? Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch were all present in high numbers this season, as exemplified by the Putnam CBC total of 765 Black-capped Chickadee, 305 Tufted Titmouse and 192 White-breasted Nuthatch. Red-breasted Nuthatch was very scarce in contrast to last winter, when they were abundant. Carolina Wren was extremely abundant. Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush and American Robin were all reported in impressive numbers even in northern sections of the Region. There was a high number of reports of N. Mockingbird, Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher. Northern Cardinal and Rufous-sided Towhee were abundant and common, respectively. American Tree Sparrow was abundant while Field Sparrow numbers were only average. More Fox Sparrow than usual were noted, but Song and Swamp Sparrows were reported in average numbers. White-throated Sparrow was found in high numbers across the Region this winter, and Dark-eyed Junco was present in good numbers. However, numbers of birds at feeders throughout the Region were low.

An amazing occurrence of 20 American Woodcock, which landed on a second-story porch and fed on suet feeders in Callicoon Center after the 26 Feb snowstorm, was related by Lois Burrill. Some woodcock overwintered in the more temperate areas in the southern part of the Region, and spring arrivals were in by 20 Feb at Marshlands Conservancy in Rye.

Turkey Vulture was well reported throughout the Region, and Bald Eagle numbers were almost spectacular. Although Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were too numerous to list, the general feeling was that they were less conspicuous at feeders due to the lack of concentrations of feeder species. Northern Harrier produced many singles throughout the Region, probably a reflection of the general lack of snow. Higher than normal numbers of Red-shouldered Hawk were reported from all counties and many CBCs. Red-tailed Hawk were "more than abundant" this winter in most counties. CBC's showed high numbers because of the mild late fall weather and their failure to migrate earlier. Their migration was obvious during mid December, and a definite migration took place on 22 Dec, when 45 were reported from the WEST section of the Bronx-Westchester CBC. American Kestrel also was reported in good numbers. Eastern Screech and Great Horned Owl well reported. A Snowy Owl reported from downtown Kingston in mid February was the only report for the Region this season (SJS). Considering the numbers of Snowy Owl reported from other Regions, one seems surprisingly low. Many reports of Barred Owl came from the northern section of the Region. Short-eared Owl was scarce.

There was an "invasion" of Great Cormorant into freshwater areas such as the Hudson River and reservoirs. It is seen quite regularly on the shore on Long Island Sound. For example, 100 were censused on the mid Jan waterfowl count along the WEST shore. Although Great Cormorant was first noted away from Long Island Sound in this Region in 1987, they had not been found in large numbers until this winter. By conservative estimates no less than 30 individuals wintered on the Hudson between Croton Point and Bannerman's Island. In addition, this species has been appearing on reservoirs in WEST, although no sightings were obtained this winter. We simply do not know why the recent incursion to freshwater has taken place.

Joining the cormorants on the Hudson River this fall and winter was Bonaparte's Gull. Both the Peekskill CBC and the Rockland CBC recorded this species, four on the former count and 40 on the later. Both counts were done on the same day, which was windy, foggy and rainy. Did these "pseudo"-hurricane conditions drive the birds up the river? Perhaps. But how does one explain the sighting on the Hudson in DUTC in November?

Many of the season's Highlights are leftovers from the fall season that weren't pushed out owing to the mild winter. Two Eurasian Wigeon were reported. A first year male **Tufted Duck** was certainly quite a Christmas gift for a birder who saw it at the Edith G. Read Sanctuary in Rye (TWB) on Christmas day. This bird was very cooperative, seen by many and stayed through the entire period. It may be the first Region 9 record and is a first for WEST. **Black Vulture** once again appeared at the West Haverstraw dump. A Forster's Tern was noted off Rye on 9 Dec (LB), but was not seen thereafter. Unexpected in fall, the **Western Kingbird** found at Disbrow Park, Rye, on the day of the Bronx-Westchester CBC, 22 Dec (AG, LB, TWB), is almost unthinkable in Region 9 in winter. The bird, surviving on insects that were living in discarded bottles at the dump, was not found again after 23 Dec, and was a first record for the CBC in its 68 years. A **Loggerhead Shrike** was found in the town of Wanasink SULL on 5 Dec (ES). Curiously, the bird was found looking in the observers' window! A Palm Warbler noted on the Dutchess CBC on 17 Dec (ROM) was the first observed on a CBC there in 25 years. A Dickcissel was found on the previously mentioned Bronx-Westchester CBC in Yonkers at the Catskill Aqueduct on 22 Dec (RF). Two **Lark Sparrow** were reported from the Region. Other rarities included in this report are Red-necked Grebe, Blue-winged Teal, Redhead, hybrid **Common X Barrow's Goldeneye**, Osprey, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, **Spotted Sandpiper**, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Raven, Northern Shrike, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Chipping Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and Pine Grosbeak.

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Abbreviations: BBUA - Bog Brook Unique Area, DUTC; BWCBC - Bronx-Westchester CBC, 22 Dec; CIMS - Constitution Island Marsh Sanctuary; CPT - Croton

Point; GSCBC - Greenwich-Stamford CBC, 15 Dec; LIS - Long Island Sound; MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; MPt - Milton Point, Rye; OCBC - Orange County CBC, 14 Dec; PeCBC - Peekskill CBC, 15 Dec; Pld - Playland, Rye; PuCBC - Putnam County CBC, 28 Dec; RCBC - Rockland County CBC, 14 Dec; RLSP - Rockland Lake State Park; SCBC - Sullivan County CBC 28 Dec; UCBC - Ulster County CBC, 28 Dec; WCBC - Waterman CBC, 17 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: seven BWCBC. Com. Loon: ten BWCBC, three PeCBC, one PuCBC. Pied-billed Grebe: many reports from all areas; 12 PeCBC. Horned Grebe: 16 BWCBC, same number just at Pld Beach 31 Jan; one Tomahawk L on OCBC, inland. Red-necked Grebe: one Sylvan L DUTC after 8 Feb (ROM, Linda Gette ,mob), one MPt 22 Dec joined by another 1 Jan (TWB, JPA). Great Cormorant: *intro*. Double-crested Cormorant: too many reports to list. Great Blue Heron: 75 BWCBC, eight WCBC, 13 RCBC. Black-crowned Night-Heron: one Yonkers 22 Dec, five Pld L 28 Dec; one, species uncertain, PeCBC 15 Dec. Mute Swan: max 165 Purdy's WEST early Jan; 62 PeCBC, 66 WCBC, 58 RCBC, 62 PuCBC. Snow Goose: 150-200, including 25 blue morph, Salt Pt 5 Dec (MVW); two Katonah on PeCBC, two Rye 22 Dec, two (one imm blue morph) Pld 4 Jan, eight there 10 Feb. Brant: 147 MPt 7 Dec, down to ten by 17 Feb. Canada Goose: 7500 reported from all WEST CBC's combined; 7500 OCBC, 6700 WCBC, 3338 RCBC. Wood Duck: small numbers reported from many locations throughout Region. Green-winged Teal: two RLSP 12 Jan (PD), nine MC 8 Dec, 19 BWCBC, one L Walton DUTC 21 Feb. N. Pintail: one DuCBC, five PuCBC, three PeCBC and eight BWCBC. Blue-winged Teal: four at the Muscote Res in Katonah on PeCBC, one at nearby Cross River outlet Jan 3 remained there through mid Feb. N. Shoveler: 50 RLSP 14 Dec (FD, FB), 64 Scarsdale 22 Dec (JM). Gadwall: 149 RLSP 15 Dec (FD), 174 total for RCBC!; 165 RLSP 12 Jan (PD). Eurasian Wigeon: drake RLSP to 6 Dec (EDT); drake BWCBC (TWB, mob). Am. Wigeon: 162 BWCBC, 31 PeCBC. Canvasback: 500 in the Bear Mt Bridge area on 30 Dec (EDT); 135 RCBC, 120 PuCBC, 124 PeCBC, 500 Mills Estate DUTC 24 Dec, 500 Beacon Bridge 7 Feb (JMK). Redhead: one RLSP 15 Dec-12 Jan (PD, EDT). Ring-necked Duck: very low numbers reported on many counts, max 142 PuCBC, 62 WCBC; two RCBC and none on the BWCBC. **Tufted Duck:** *intro*. Greater Scaup: one's and two's reported from some inland counts; 4000 BWCBC, 3600 on Pld L. Lesser Scaup: virtually absent from almost all CBC's away from coast; 304 BWCBC at Pld L, one PeCBC, flock of 30 Kensico Res in Armonk all season, 474 LIS shore on mid Jan waterfowl count. Oldsquaw: 85 off Pld Beach 31 Jan; one Sylvan L 7-16 Dec (CP, BM). Surf Scoter: two MPt after 8 Feb. White-winged Scoter: seven Rye 22 Dec. Com. Goldeneye: 244 LIS shore on waterfowl count; 167 BWCBC, otherwise scarce inland. **Com. X Barrow's Goldeneye:** one observed well off Larchmont 11 Jan (TWB, full details sent to waterfowl census compiler). Bufflehead: low numbers inland away from LIS and Hudson River; 21 RCBC, 79 PeCBC, 550 BWCBC. Hooded Merganser: very high numbers on inland lakes and reservoirs; 90 RCBC, 103 BWCBC, 59 PuCBC, 130 PeCBC. Com. Merganser: 2000+ RLSP 5 Jan (FB, CH), 1500+ Muscote Res in Katonah, 1450 BBUA Res 30 Dec (both FN); many smaller flocks of 25 to 300 reported

as well. Red-breasted Merganser: 233 BWCBC, one at Tivoli Bay DUTC 16 Feb (SJ). Ruddy Duck: 55 RCBC, 109 Yonkers 22 Dec, one Larchmont 11 Jan.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Black Vulture: six W Haverstraw dump, with two Turkey Vulture, 1 Jan (EDT, R. Senerchia); one Tuxedo Park 19 Feb (Joan & Dewey Clark). Turkey Vulture: 31 RCBC, 10 PeCBC, three PuCBC, one BWCBC, where rare, 14 over Bedford Village 15 Dec (FN). Osprey: singles L Tappan and Piermont Pier 14 Dec (both PD), late. Bald Eagle: conservative estimate of about 175 in upper Delaware watershed (Peter Nye); 55 ad, 43 imm on aerial survey 13 Jan; six Iona I on the Hudson sporadically; three CPT infrequently all winter; about five along Hudson R DUTC all winter and even one or two over Hudson R in Yonkers; imm BWCBC (FN, TWB, JPA, mob) first in 40 years; several at reservoirs in Bedford and North Salem. N. Harrier: max 15 hunting at dusk over the "black dirt area" on Mission Lands Rd in Pine Plains on 30 Dec (EDT). N. Goshawk: one Harmony Road DUTC 30 Dec (FN), one Verbank DUTC 15 Jan, imm Yonkers 24 Feb (MB), one Bedford Village 20 Jan (JPA), one OCBC. Red-shouldered Hawk: two reports Rye in Dec; two DuCBC; one BBUA in Jan and five reported various locations DUTC in Feb; three PuCBC; one Bedford Village 22 Feb. Red-tailed Hawk: *intro*; 34 WCBC, 32 RCBC, 26 PuCBC, 69 OCBC Rough-legged Hawk: four in fields along Mission Lands Rd ORAN all season (EDT), three SULL, six DUTC, two WEST reports this winter. **Golden Eagle:** pair remained Stissing Mt through the period, one near the Hudson R in New Hamburg 7 Feb (JMK); ad flying over and hunting along Interstate 684 Bedford 28 Dec (JPA), one near Mt Peter 5 Jan (OCAS). Am. Kestrel: seven DuCBC, one RCBC, one BWCBC, four PeCBC, 18 OCBC; nine DUTC in Dec, 12+ in Jan and 13 in Feb. Merlin: one Rye 22 Dec (AF); one Blauvel ROCK several times after 24 Dec (CH); one Montgomery 14 Dec (EMBC); one Grieg's Farm DUTC 5 Dec (FG, MVW, EP). Peregrine Falcon: ad Pld L on 21 Dec (JPA), probably same bird frequenting downtown Stamford, CT; one Goshen Landfill ORAN 25 Dec (JPT). Ring-necked Pheasant: reported in low numbers. Ruffed Grouse: five DuCBC, 19 PuCBC. Wild Turkey: many reports, 60 Milan DUTC, 62 Bethel SULL and 12+ Ward Pound Ridge Reservation WEST 17 Feb (Gail Benson) all high numbers for the respective localities. Clapper Rail: two MC 22 Dec. Virginia Rail: three MC 22 Dec, one Thompson Pd DUTC early Jan (CV, EDT, JPA), one BBUA 1 Jan (FN). Am. Coot: present in very good numbers, 88 DuCBC, 60+ RLSP through the period, 70 Sylvan L all Jan, 35 Kensico Res all season (JPA, DQ). Killdeer: absent in many areas, especially inland; eight RCBC, seven OCBC; seven Pld L 29 Feb. **Spotted Sandpiper:** one Pld L 11-18 Jan, very late. Ruddy Turnstone: four Rye on 22 Dec. Sanderling: three Rye 22 Dec. Purple Sandpiper: 12 each in Rye and Larchmont 22 Dec, 42 Pld 4 Jan. Dunlin: 22 Rye 22 Dec. Com. Snipe: good numbers present at many locations through the end of Dec; up to four were present at CIMS until late Jan (JR), one MC 22 Dec, one Yonkers 22 Dec. Am. Woodcock: *intro*. Bonaparte's Gull: up to 12 off Port Chester 15 Dec, 16 off Rye 22 Dec. Ring-billed Gull: 5000 OCBC, a dramatic increase from previous years. Iceland Gull: one Pawling 1 Jan (SG), imm on ice at W Haverstraw Marina 10 Feb, another at Minnisceongo Creek, Grassy Pt 14 Feb (EDT). Lesser

Black-backed Gull: one at MPt, another Pld L (TWB, mob); one at Piermont Pier 12 Jan (CW). Glaucous Gull: 2nd year bird Minnisceongo Creek 27 Jan; ad at W Haverstraw Marina 28 Feb (EDT). Forster's Tern: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owl: *intro*. Barred Owl: one Bedford Hills 15 Dec (THM) and a pair continues at the Mianus River Gorge in North Castle. Long-eared Owl: one MC 7 Dec (TWB), one found dead in yard of Edna Hommel DUTC (fide MVW). Short-eared Owl: three-seven at Mission Lands Rd Pine Island all season (EDT), two Galeville Airport T Shawangunk all season (SJS, JPT), one Piermont Pier on RCBC (ED, PD, CH). N. Saw-whet Owl: one Yonkers 22 Dec, one Bedford Village 18 Feb; one Thompson Pd 30 Jan-20 Feb (JMK). Belted Kingfisher: quite numerous, ten DuCBC, 12 PuCBC. Red-headed Woodpecker: four at NPSP DUTC all season; imm at Rhinebeck feeder 19-21 Dec (fide HM), another at a different Rhinebeck feeder daily during Feb, same bird? Pileated Woodpecker: 23 PuCBC.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: E. Phoebe: one DuCBC (CV). **W. Kingbird:** *intro*. Horned Lark: 50 UCBC (SJS); 800 Grieg's Farm in Red Hook 5 Dec (EP, MVW, FG), 300 there on 31 Dec (HM); 300 Dover Plains 15 Dec (MVW). Am. Crow: 9000 Middletown roost. Fish Crow: 12 RCBC, one Yonkers 22 Dec. Com. Raven: reported daily at Claryville SULL (JW), seven Debruce early Feb, first there (FC); one near Pawling 1 Jan (PCBC). Carolina Wren: 34 DuCBC, 75 PeCBC, 139 BWCBC and 56 OCBC. House Wren: one UCBC. Winter Wren: five PuCBC. Marsh Wren: one PuCBC, three MC 8 Dec. Golden-crowned Kinglet: seven WCBC, ten SCBC, 15 PeCBC, 14 BWCBC. Ruby-crowned Kinglet: one UCBC, three PeCBC, five BWCBC. Brown Thrasher: one PuCBC, three BWCBC, one Carmel 16 Jan. Am. Pipit: one Piermont Pier 8 Jan (CH), one MC 8 Dec (TWB), 33 OCBC. Cedar Waxwing: flocks of 100s commonly reported. N. Shrike: eight singles, Kripplebush, Woodstock and New Paltz ULST and Galeville Airport Shawangunk (all *fide* SJS), PuCBC, Larchmont B-W late Dec, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation 16 Dec-late Feb (DP, TB, JPA, TWB, mob). **Loggerhead Shrike:** *intro*. Shrike, species: singles Callicoon SULL 22-26 Dec and OCBC (EMBC). European Starling: 13548 RCBC, 3950 BWCBC, 3945 DuCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-rumped Warbler: too many to list-reported from all areas. Palm Warbler: *intro*. Com. Yellowthroat: one BMSP 6 Jan (EDT, Jack Focht), one Bashakill 28 Dec, one PeCBC. Yellow-breasted Chat: one Harrison 22 Dec, another at Edith G. Read Sanctuary in Rye 1 Mar (Ken Soltesz, TWB).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Dickcissel: *intro*. Chipping Sparrow: one Armonk on GSCBC (B & SL); a phenomenal six BWCBC, all from Scarsdale area. **Lark Sparrow:** one SUNY Purchase campus 15 Feb through the end of the period (Kevin Fung & Stefan Woltman, mob), found by two natural sciences students, first record for WEST; one at a DUTC feeder 29 Feb (*fide* MVW), first DUTC since May 1966. Savannah Sparrow: one Haight Hill 5 Feb (FT), two Pawling 1 Jan (SG), six PeCBC, two Yonkers 22 Dec. Sharp-tailed Sparrow: one MC 22 Dec. Lincoln's Sparrow: two Pawling 1 Jan (SG). White-throated Sparrow: 484 PeCBC, 358 DuCBC, 1400 BWCBC, 342 PuCBC. White-crowned Sparrow: two OCBC. Dark-eyed Junco: 342 PeCBC, 840 WCBC, 352 RCBC, 800 BWCBC, 765 PuCBC. Snow Bunting: one Pld L BWCBC, one MC 8 Dec,

one PeCBC; two Grieg's Farm DUTC 5 Dec, five there 31 Dec. Red-winged Blackbird: some over wintered, most arr in Region on 20 Feb. E. Meadowlark: one RCBC in Ramapo. Rusty Blackbird: one Stissing 6 Jan (TH), 12 PeCBC, 58 roosted in Patterson swamp on evening of 1 Jan (FN); most arr by late Feb. Com. Grackle: few overwintered; arr 23 Feb. Brown-headed Cowbird: present in lesser numbers, 127 DuCBC, 140 Poughquag 22 Dec (CP). Pine Grosbeak: ten feeding on Mountain Ash fruit Millbrook 7 Jan (*fide* FG). Purple Finch: almost absent in coastal part of Region, better numbers reported in northern areas. Com. Redpoll: three PuCBC. Pine Siskin: four PuCBC, five BWCBC, "dozens" reported from Claryville in early Dec (JW). Am. Goldfinch: quite abundant, 110 WCBC, 178 RCBC, 284 PuCBC, 460 BWCBC, 204 PeCBC. Evening Grosbeak: many reports of scattered flocks numbering from 10 to 30 birds across the n tier of Region, absent from PUTN, WEST and ROCK; 50 at Debruce in early Jan and 29 in Monticello same time period. House Sparrow: 316 DuCBC, 186 PeCBC, 460 PuCBC, 1100 BWCBC.

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