

REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

JOHN P. ASKILDSEN

December's weather was slightly warmer than normal, ending a nine month long cooling trend. Precipitation was well above normal due largely to the nor'easter that struck the Region 11 through 13 Dec. Northern ULST received 12 inches of snow on 13 Dec, boosting their monthly total snow accumulation to 22 inches. Their total precipitation reached 4.5 inches in December. Further south, the Westchester County Airport recorded almost 2.5 inches of rain on 11 Dec, totaling over six inches of rain but only five inches of snow for the month. That's quite a contrast! The storm devastated the Long Island Sound shore in WEST, destroying beaches and parks, leveling houses, and most saddening was the loss of several lives. January was the most placid of the three month period. The "January thaw" came on 5 Jan with a monthly maximum high of 62°F at the Westchester County Airport. Precipitation levels were one inch below average at 2.74 inches for the Region. The Poughkeepsie Airport reported an average temperature of 21.7°F for February, down 4.8° from the norm. The coldest day was 7 Feb, with a reported -6°F. Many locations in the lower Hudson Valley reported below normal precipitation levels.

Great Cormorant was detected in the highest numbers ever recorded inland in New York. This editor and Andrew Guthrie found 20 Great and one Double-crested Cormorant at Peekskill-on-the-Hudson during the waterfowl survey. Jim and Mary Key reported two Great Cormorant from Dutchess-on-the-Hudson on 6 Jan, providing a third county record. The last time one was recorded in DUTC was 1969!

The annual residency by the pair of **Golden Eagle** in Pine Plains DUTC is even more noteworthy now that they have constructed a nest! The paired adult and subadult began construction of a large stick nest in a White Pine in early December and completed work on it about mid January. There are historical records of Golden Eagle nesting in the Adirondacks as late as the early 1960s. Winter nest building is part of the courtship process for Golden Eagle. Although it would be nice to have them back as nesters, we should not count on it. This Editor would like to take a moment to comment on birding ethics. Although no incidents have been reported as of yet, I must remind all readers that these birds are extremely sensitive to human disturbance. If you do travel to see these majestic creatures at any time, please give the birds a break and keep your distance. The NYSDEC has been notified of this development and hopefully will protect the birds from harassment if they do nest. If

you see anyone near the nest when you visit, you should take action to see that intruders are removed from the area. Eighty-two Bald Eagle were counted in Region 9 on 19 Jan. Most probably, many more wintered than were counted

The local Mute Swan population continues to escalate at an alarming rate. *The New York Times* reports that the species has become so sedentary that our local New York City reservoirs are showing signs of elevated bacteria counts. A total of 618 were counted in Region 9 during the winter waterfowl survey. Approximately 550 were enumerated in West and Putn. Surf and White-winged Scoters were reported in small numbers from Rye, but Black Scoter was absent this season.

Once again winter finches, especially Purple Finch and Pine Siskin, were almost completely absent.

Rarities reported for the season were more or less what is to be expected but with just a few quality winter specialties. Among them are **Greater White-fronted Goose** and **Barrow's Goldeneye**. The **Tufted Duck** continued through mid December at Playland Lake in Rye. Approximately ten days before the local CBC it was chased off by a human intruder to the lake's edge. Luckily, it returned for the count day, but its appearances were much less frequent in Rye after the incident. Six **Black Vulture** were reported, and there were three different, but poorly documented, reports of **Gyr Falcon**. Probably the most unusual report of the season was of a **Common Black-headed Gull**. There were four reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, one apparently of the rare dark race *fuscus* from Scandinavia. Two Snowy Owl were reported. A **Loggerhead Shrike**, meticulously examined and identified by Richard Beemer(!) on 26 Feb, was possibly an early spring migrant. More expected seasonal highlights were Eurasian Wigeon, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Barn and Long-eared Owls and Orange-crowned Warbler. Species found out of season included Great Egret, Broad-winged Hawk, Spotted Sandpiper, Eastern Phoebe, House Wren, Pine Warbler, Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow and Northern Oriole.

Contributors: John P. Askildsen, Andrew Baldelli, James A. Beemer, Michael Bochnik, Doug Bloom, Frank Bonanno, J&D Bradley, Thomas W. Burke, Mark De Dea, Georges Dremeaux, Alan Fowler, Dr. Valerie Freer, Roger Frost, Nancy Graza, Lindsay Green, Andrew Guthrie, Carol Jack, Anthony Lauro, Helen Manson, Thomas H. Meyer, Barbara Michelin, John Moyle, Drew Panko, Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, James Riordan, Dr. Selden J. Spencer, Langdon Stevenson, Dr. Andrew Taylor, Edward D. Treacy, Henry Turner, Michael Usai, Dorothy Wohlbach.

Abbreviations: BDR - Black Dirt Region, T of Florida, ORAN; EGR - Edith G. Read Sanctuary, Rye; LIS - Long Island Sound, WEST; MC - Marshlands Conservancy, Rye.

Winter reports: **Red-throated Loon:** max three Rye Feb. **Com. Loon:** scarce, max two EGR, no inland reports. **Pied-billed Grebe:** well reported WEST, scarce elsewhere. **Horned Grebe:** average numbers from LIS, max 41 on 17 Jan (TWB). **GREAT CORMORANT:** *intro*; 62 LIS 27 Dec. **Am. Bittern:** one chased by Great Horned Owl MC 8 Dec. **Great Egret:** two Larchmont 27 Dec (DP, DB), late. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** singles EGR and MC through period. **Mute Swan:** *intro*. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** two Tamarack DUTC 13 Dec (Dot Fleury). **Snow Goose:** small groups reported throughout Region. **Brant:** groups up to 25 reported from LIS. **Canada Goose:** about 15,500 WFC. **Green-winged Teal:** ten Rye 27 Dec. **Am. Black Duck:** scarce. **N. Pintail:** up to four Rye all season. **N. Shoveler:** 11 s WEST Jan. **Eurasian Wigeon:** one MC through late Dec (TWB). **Canvasback:** max 2946 Dutc 16 Jan. **Redhead:** one Rye all season, two there 17 Jan. **Ring-necked Duck:** low numbers reported. **TUFTED DUCK:** *intro*. **Greater Scaup:** 2,200 on LIS 16 Jan. **Lesser Scaup:** 185 LIS 16 Jan. **Oldsquaw:** up to 100 seen moving past EGR 27 Dec (AL, AB), a very high count for w LIS. **Com. Goldeneye:** 68 EGR 16 Jan; 60 DUTC 17 Jan. **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE:** female Edith G. Read Sanctuary Rye 28 Feb (TB!). **Hooded Merganser:** 221 WEST 16 Jan. **Com. Merganser:** thousands on Hudson R 16 Jan, perhaps as many as 4,000 birds in WEST alone.

BLACK VULTURE: three WEST (!), one ROCK, and two ORAN. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*. **N. Harrier:** more than 20 at one location in BDR; 36 Galeville ULST 24 Jan. **N. Goshawk:** scattered reports throughout Region. **Broad-winged Hawk:** one Yonkers 26 Dec (RF!), one Bear Mt SP 4 Jan (EDT). **Red-tailed Hawk:** heavy influx to region in mid Jan; 49 BDR 23 Jan. **Rough-legged Hawk:** arr ORAN 15 Dec (EDT); 13 (11 light, two dark morph) ORAN and ULST 24 Jan; two reports DUTC, one report PUTN. **GOLDEN EAGLE:** *intro*; two overwintered SULL. **Merlin:** two reports ROCK Dec and Feb. **Peregrine Falcon:** ad female wintered on Beacon-Newburgh Bridge; imm ORAN 23 Jan. **GYRFALCON:** one PUTN, two DUTC (mob). **Clapper Rail:** one MC Dec. **Virginia Rail:** several MC throughout period. **Am. Coot:** Up to 30 coastal WEST; up to 80 Sylvan L DUTC all season. **Black-bellied Plover:** one LIS 27 Dec. **Killdeer:** 21 LIS 27 Dec. **Spotted Sandpiper:** one Rock 20 Dec. **Ruddy Turnstone:** 53 LIS 27 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** 23 EGR 27 Dec. **Dunlin:** 31 LIS 27 Dec. **Com. Snipe:** one WEST 27 Dec; one DUTC 14 Feb. **Am. Woodcock:** scattered reports throughout Region until late Dec. **Laughing Gull:** one EGR 30 Dec (TWB). **COM. BLACK-HEADED GULL:** one Kiamesha L SULL 26 Dec (VF!).

Bonaparte's Gull: 12 EGR 13 Dec; two Hudson R ROCK 20 Dec. **Iceland Gull:** one Basic II Cornwall ORAN 22 Jan (J&D Bradley *fide* EDT); one Yonkers 27 Dec; one Monticello 5 Feb (VF). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one *graellsii* Hudson R at Haverstraw ROCK and two *graellsii* LIS Rye all winter; ad winter *fuscus* Hudson R at Haverstraw ROCK 26 Jan (ET, JS, FB!). **Glaucous Gull:** one Basic II ORAN 23 Jan (AG, JPA), ad EGR 17 Jan (TWB); one Monticello 6 Feb (BL).

Barn Owl: one at MC 6 Dec (AG, JPA); one found dead n WEST 25 Dec (AT). **E. Screech-Owl:** red morph DUTC all season, uncommon. **Snowy Owl:** one near Galeville Airport ULST for a two week period (mob!); one atop a ROCK mountain, tree-covered save for a small grassy patch, 24-25 Jan (PD). **Long-eared Owl:** one-three Thompson Pd DUTC all season. **Short-eared Owl:** two Galeville ULST all season (JPA, AG); up to six BDR during late Feb (EDT). **N. Saw-whet Owl:** three DUTC. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** two WEST early Dec, one lingered for about a month; one ULST at regular breeding locale. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** numbers increasing in the Catskills.

E. Phoebe: one Scarsdale WEST 27 Dec (JM), late. **Horned Lark:** over 1000 at Warren Turf Farm ORAN in mid Jan. **Am. Crow:** 10,000+ at roost ROCK again this year; 5,000 at Poughkeepsie DUTC roost. **Fish Crow:** one report PUTN; several reports WEST, many reports ROCK. **Carolina Wren:** large numbers reported from all areas of Region. **House Wren:** one MC 27 Dec, late. **Marsh Wren:** three MC 27 Dec. **Hermit Thrush:** high numbers reported. **Cedar Waxwing:** well reported. **Am. Pipit:** three Piermont Pier ROCK 14 Dec. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** *intro*.

Orange-crowned Warbler: one near Hudson R ULST through late Jan (MDD). **Pine Warbler:** one visiting feeder n WEST early Dec (THM). **OVENBIRD:** one in a birder's backyard DUTC 4-6 Dec (Dorothy Wohlbach). **Com. Yellowthroat:** one Rye 27 Dec. **Chipping Sparrow:** one Yonkers 27 Dec (RF!). **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one MC 27 Dec (TWB). **Rusty Blackbird:** reports scattered throughout Region, seemed to be more numerous this winter. **N. Oriole:** one at a n WEST feeder early Dec for one week (THM). **Evening Grosbeak:** scattered reports from n border of Region; one large flock SULL.

P.O. Box 32, Chappaqua, New York, 10514-0032