

REGION 10 — MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

We can sum up the weather this season by saying, "We ain't used to this much snow." The weather pattern this year has finally come close to the long term average. There was more snow and more freezing cold than we have seen for some time. The average temperature was considerably colder than normal in each month and the precipitation total was much higher than normal. The winter gave us 14 snow falls, all producing road related problems. The ponds were frozen, the bays were frozen, and to make matters worse for birders, Jones Beach parking lots were unplowed and inaccessible for much of February. At its peak there was an accumulation of close to two feet of snow on the ground from a succession of storms. While not unusual for upstate New York, we have not seen this amount of snow or cold here in at least the last ten years. The combination of frozen normally open bodies of water, inaccessible roads, parking lots filled with ice and snow, and rainy January weekends made birding very different this winter.

The season had two separate birding periods, one ending with the Christmas Bird Count period and the other occupying the rest of the winter. The first was mild like recent winters and the second like the

"good old days." Early reports included several lingering insect eaters, in addition to our usual half-hardy species. No less than nine species of warbler were found on various Christmas Bird Counts, but only Yellow-rumped Warbler was found thereafter. Other late birds recorded on counts were two Eastern Phoebe and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Later reports had significantly fewer small birds and the usual early migrants. Because of the snow cover, birders spent more time at the beaches and less in the woods, where it was more difficult to walk. This probably biased the content of the reports this period.

There were significant numbers of Red-necked Grebe this winter, both in Long Island Sound and off the South Shore. This influx occurred in mid February, with a max of nine at Shinnecock on 20 Feb and eleven in Jones Inlet on 27 Feb. This was followed by huge numbers in March, to be covered in the next report.

The fall also was the first in some years when we saw a significant movement of migrating northern finches. However, only Common Redpoll remained in numbers. For the most part, they were erratic and moved around quite a bit. In the Jones Beach West End area, as many as 150 stayed for the first part of the winter. They were almost always seen in association with the resident House Finch flocks. Other Common Redpoll reports came from Van Cortlandt Park, Staten Island and all parts of Long Island, east to Montauk. Some remained through the period.

The Southern Nassau Christmas Count held on 2 Jan 1994 consisted of nine parties plus a boat in the inland waterways. Five of those parties reported a trio of *American White Pelican* flying along the barrier beach. These birds successively passed each group along the barrier beach. Each group then believed they had seen "the bird of the day." This event marked the first winter record of American White Pelican, which is very rare at any time of year. It was unusual that large groups of isolated observers got to see them. The *Spotted Redshank* in Brooklyn was seen until the end of January and duly noted on the Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count of 18 Dec.

We note the passing of our good friend Richard Edes Harrison on 5 Jan 1994. Rickie's wit and skills made any field trip he was on a birding experience. We will miss him.

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Abbreviations: BCBC – Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; CCBC – Captree Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec; CB – Cedar Beach; CP – Central Park, Manhattan; JBch – Jones Beach; JBWE – Jones Beach West End; LI – Long Island; MCBC – Montauk Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec. MPt – Montauk Point; NYRBA – New York Rare Bird Alert; NNCBC – Northern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, 26 Dec; PtL – Point Lookout; QCBC – Queens Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; RMSB – Robert Moses State Park; ShIn – Shinnecock Inlet; SI – Staten Island; SNCBC – Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, 2 Jan.

Winter reports: **Red-necked Grebe:** *intro.* **Am. White Pelican:** *intro.* **Great Egret:** one SNCBC. **Glossy Ibis:** singles BCBC, QCBC, late. **Tundra Swan:** six Mattituck 16 Jan. **Wood Duck:** several on CBCs. **Blue-winged Teal:** one SNCBC. **Eurasian Wigeon:** ten birds Brooklyn to Montauk. **Com. Eider:** 300 MPt 18 Dec, 200 mid Jan, a few at period's end (NYRBA). **King Eider:** one MPt 23–24 Jan (NYRBA). **Harlequin Duck:** several along the South Shore max nine PtL, one Great Kills Harbor 18 Dec (HF, George Bouquio). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** one Stony Brook Harbor Jan 3 (Paul Steineck), one Tiana Beach, Shinnecock 20–26 Feb (NYRBA).

Osprey: one CCBC (NYRBA). **Bald Eagle:** two Gardiner's I 18 Dec, two CCBC (found 7 Dec), one JBch 16 Jan (NYRBA). **Rough-legged Hawk:** 10–12 scattered across the entire South Shore, more than usual. **Wild Turkey:** 62 MCBC. **Virginia Rail:** one BCBC, four MCBC, one SNCBC. **Semipalmated Plover:** one QCBC. **Am. Oystercatcher:** seven BCBC, others present. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** one QCBC, late. **Spotted Redshank:** *intro.* **Spotted Sandpiper:** one SNCBC, very late. **W. Sandpiper:** four SNCBC. **Purple Sandpiper:** low numbers again this year. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** two Massapequa Preserve 27 Feb (NYRBA). **Little Gull:** one ShIn 27 Feb (MB). **Com. Black-headed Gull:** one BCBC, one PtL after 15 Jan (NYRBA). **Iceland Gull:** 6–8 scattered throughout the Region (NYRBA). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** one NNCBC, one Islip 10 Jan, one Islip 11 Jan (JF), one Sunken Meadow SP 14 Feb (NYRBA), one JBch 20 Feb (SS, mob). **Glaucous Gull:** two MCBC. **Forster's Tern:** one MPt 17 Dec (NYRBA). **Com. Murre:** one Ditch Plains 17 Dec (AB), one Jones Inlet 5–6 Feb (SW, mob).

Thick-billed Murre: one MPt 17 Dec (Hugh McGuinness). **Razorbill:** 36 MCBC; two BCBC; four SNCBC; three MPt 24 Jan, 19–21 Feb, one Shinnecock 20–21 Feb (NYRBA).

White-winged Dove: one CB 19 Dec (Bob Kurtz). **Snowy Owl:** Dec reports from Gardiner's I, Breezy Pt, Democrat Pt and JBWE; Jan reports from JBWE; Feb reports from JBWE, JBWR and one on a building in lower Manhattan 24 Feb (NYRBA). **Long-eared Owl:** a few Jan reports only. **Short-eared Owl:** scarce, one JBWE 30 Jan, one JBWR 19 Feb. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one MCBC, one CB 24 Jan. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** eight SNCBC.

E. Phoebe: *intro.* **Tree Swallow:** three MCBC, two BCBC. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** *intro.* **Veery:** one JBch 13 Dec (JF, JQ), late. **Am. Pipit:** one CB 4 Jan, two RMSP 4–5 Jan (JF, JQ).

Orange-crowned Warbler: singles BCBC, QCBC. **N. Parula:** one Montauk dump 17 Dec (AB). **Yellow-rumped Warbler:** *intro.* **Pine Warbler:** two MCBC, one SNCBC, two RMSP 12 Dec (JQ) and 5 Jan (JF). **Palm Warbler:** three RMSP 17 Dec (JQ). **Black-and-white Warbler:** one CCBC. **Com. Yellowthroat:** one MCBC. **Wilson's Warbler:** male BCBC (NYRBA). **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one SNCBC.

Dickcissel: one JBWE 12 Dec–9 Jan (MOB). **Fox Sparrow:** mostly Dec reports. **Dark-eyed Junco:** one Oregon type in a flock JBWE 12 Dec (SS, AW). **Lapland Longspur:** few reports, two SNCBC, one Long Beach 30 Jan (NYRBA). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** 90 QCBC 18 Dec. **N. Oriole:** one NNCBC 26 Dec; one *Bullock's* race in Tanglewood 2 Jan (mob). **Com. Redpoll:** *intro.* **Pine Siskin:** a few small flocks LI (NYRBA) and SI (HF).

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