

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

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The Region endured one of the harshest winters on record. December was warmer than normal until the first below freezing high occurred on 24 Dec. From that date through the end of the month below normal temperatures were experienced. The mean temperature was 27.4°F, 0.9° above normal. Sunshine averaged 45%, 7% more than normal. January averaged 12.7°F, 7.9° below normal, making it the third coldest on record.

It was also somewhat sunnier than normal, with 51% possible, 5% greater than usual. The "January thaw" occurred on 28 and 29 Jan, with a high of 48°F, 71° higher than the record setting low of -23°F on 27t Jan. February averaged 18.2°F, 4.3° below normal, with 65% sunshine, 13% greater than normal. With so much sunshine, it is hard to know where all that snow came from, but come it did. December produced only 6.1 inches, 9 inches below the normal 15.1 inches. January, however, was the second snowiest on record, with 42 inches, 25.7 inches greater than normal.. Snow fell on 25 days, with significant amounts on 4, 7, and 17 Jan. And none of it melted! Snowfall in February totaled 20.2 inches, 6.1 inches more than normal. The Dec-Feb winter was the ninth coldest on record and the coldest since 1969-70.

The weather had a major impact on both birds and birders. The earlier CBCs had both still and running water open. The later ones had still water frozen, but the rivers were open. By the end of the first week in January, virtually all bodies of water were completely frozen and stayed that way. The Troy CBC totaled 70 species and 32,157 individuals, the highest numbers for both ever recorded on that count. This was partly due to the concentration of waterfowl in the still open sections of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. By the time of the waterfowl count on 16 Jan, low numbers were reported, a total of 1118 individuals of eight species.

Gulls were generally concentrated on the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers between the Colonie Landfill and Cohoes. Around 2500 Ring-bills, 1600-1800 Herrings and 700-800 Greater Black-backs were to be found there during January and February. On 19 Feb John Askildsen and Andrew Guthrie counted eighteen Iceland and twelve Glaucous gulls roosting on the ice among a flock of 3000 gulls on the Hudson River at Green Island.

Due to the deep snow cover, numbers of wintering raptors were low. The exception was Bald Eagle. An estimated ten individuals were present throughout the season at the Mohawk River between Crescent and Cohoes, Stillwater, and Conklinville. Apparently the limited amount of open water concentrated these birds into confined areas.

Despite the brutal weather, half-hardy species were reported throughout the period. Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, and Swamp Sparrows were all present, many individuals coming to feeders.

Paul Connor reported that from 19 Jan to 11 Feb, two Carolina Wren sheltered beneath a rolled-up awning above his back door in Schodack Center RENS. The birds were observed flying from this shelter to a feeder 15' away.

Numbers of Black-Capped Chickadee were high in early December. At Jenny Lake SARA Robert Yunick banded 86 individuals in December, with 44 of those banded on 4 Dec. CBCs also had high totals, with 727 on the Chatham CBC and 498 on the Albany County CBC. Numbers dropped significantly in early January.

Except for Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak, winter finches made a poor showing. There were no reports of Red Crossbill and only one of White-winged Crossbill. Rarities for the period included Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Bohemian Waxwing and *Hoary Redpoll*.

Contributors: Ken Able; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Bill Graham; Jane Graves; Bill Lee; Alan A. Mapes (AAM); Andy Mason (AM); Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Frank Murphy; Barb Putnam; Jim Sotis; Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations: ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 19 Dec; BCWMA - Black Creek Marsh State Wildlife Management Area, ALBA; BCRes - Basic Creek Res, ALBA; BLCBC - Bolton Landing CBC, 17 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 18 Dec; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward, WASH; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 18 Dec; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 27 Dec; L7/NL - Lock 7 and Niskayuna Landfill, SCHE; SaraL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 18 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, ALBA; SSCBC - Saratoga Springs CBC, 19 Dec; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 26 Dec; TCBC - Troy CBC, 2 Jan; TomRes - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VFNP - Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, SARA.

Winter records: **Red-throated Loon:** one SaraL 4 Dec (D. Beeler). **Com. Loon:** six SaraL 4-5 Dec (BP); two BLCBC. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one Stillwater 19 Feb (WE, NM) only report. **Horned Grebe:** one Cohoes 17 Jan (BL); one grounded Schenectady 19 Jan (BEN). **Red-necked Grebe:** one Lock 5 Hudson R SARA 19 Feb (WE); one Hudson R FtE 26 Feb (BP). **Great Cormorant:** ad Hudson R at Nutten Hook COLU 18 Dec (R. Guthrie, K. Schneider); also seen GREE 25 Dec (R Guthrie) second year in a row. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one Ft Miller 4 Dec (BEN) only report.

Great Blue Heron: fifteen reports including one Schenectady 18 Jan (BEN), one Albany 30 Jan (BEN), one Ghent 2-12 Feb (ADBD). **Mute Swan:** twenty Stockport Station COLU 18 Dec (ChCBC); eleven Four Mile Pt GREE 2 Jan (RB); 22 Catskill 28 Feb (PC), standing on ice. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** three SaraL 2 Dec (W Corbett), found while censusing Canada geese. **Snow Goose:** max 1002 SaraL 4-7 Dec (BP). **Brant:** SaraL 7 Dec (BEN). **Canada Goose:** max 12,160 TCBC. **Wood Duck:** five ScCBC; one FiveR 1 Jan (BEN). **Green-winged Teal:** five ACCBC. **N Pintail:** three ACCBC; two TCBC; arr Hudson R at Mechanicville 22 Feb (D. Beeler). **Gadwall:** five ACCBC; three TCBC; three SI 16 Jan (BL). **Redhead:** five TomRes 15 Dec (BEN); three Stillwater 6 Feb (BEN). **Ring-necked Duck:** ten ACCBC; three Stillwater 19 Feb (WE, NM); female L7/NL 21 Jan-15 Feb (BL, RY). **Oldsquaw:** two SaraL 22 Dec (BEN). **Black Scoter:** female Cohoes throughout period (RB, WE, BL, NM). **White-winged Scoter:** one HFCBC; one Vischer Ferry Power Station SCHE 6-21 Feb (BY); one L7NNL 19 Feb (WE). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** imm male Cohoes 5 and 18 Feb (WE, NM); ad male Stillwater 18-19 Feb (WE, NM). **Hooded Merganser:** six reports, including 25 BLCBC. **Com. Merganser:** max 93 TCBC. **Red-breasted Merganser:** one Cohoes Falls ALBA 20 Feb (BEN).

Bald Eagle: *intro*. **N. Harrier:** nine FtE 11-18 Dec (BP); one Guilderland 4 Jan (WE, NM); last FtE 7 Jan (BP). **N. Goshawk:** imm Kingsbury 1 Jan (WE, NM); one Conklinville Dam SARA 17 Jan (BEN); ad w Saratoga Springs 29 Jan (BY); one Greenwich 3 Feb (BEN); one Canajoharie 5 Feb (AM); one Sabbath Day Pt WARR 14-15 Feb (LM); one Chatham 23-26 Feb (ADBC) feeding on woodpeckers and mourning doves in a backyard. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one ACCBC; one SSCBC; imm Cape Cod Village WARR 15 Jan (LM). **Rough-legged Hawk:** 22 Canajoharie 5 Feb (AM); max twelve FtE 19 Feb (WE, NM). **Golden Eagle:** one JGCBC. **Merlin:** three reports, one Athens 2 Jan (BEN); one Westerlo ALBA 8 Jan (BEN); one imm Kingsbury 6 Feb (BL, BP, mob). **Peregrine Falcon:** four reports, one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie); one Wyantskill RENS 24 Jan (BEN); one Corning Preserve ALBA 16 Feb (BEN); one Glens Falls 15-16 Feb (BP). **Ring-necked Pheasant:** two reports. **Wild Turkey:** many reports of large flocks throughout period. **Am. Coot:** one Mohawk R at Niskayuna RR Station SCHE 18 Dec (BY); one Green I ALBA 18 Feb (WE, NM). **Killdeer:** one ChCBC; one flying upriver, calling Stillwater 18 Feb (WE, NM), early. **Iceland Gull:** two

imm Waterford 6 Dec (WE, NM); imm SRCBC; ad Cohoes 17 Jan (BL); ad Crescent 1 Feb (RB); 18 Green I ALBA 19 Feb (J. Askildsen, A. Guthrie); imm Fort Miller 19 Feb (WE, NM); imm Crescent 22 Feb (RB). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: ad Cohoes 4 Dec (WE, NM); one ACCBC. **Glaucous Gull**: one TCBC; two Green I RENS 24 Jan-Feb (BEN); three Cohoes 1 Feb (BEN); twelve Green I ALBA 19 Feb (J. Askildsen, A. Guthrie); imm Crescent 22 Feb (RB).

Snowy Owl: one ScCBC count week. **Barred Owl**: one ACCBC. **Long-eared Owl**: one FiveR 9 Feb (AAM). **Short-eared Owl**: max five FtE 8-18 Dec; four Cocksackie Flats GREE 28 Dec (R. Guthrie); two FtE 20 Jan (BP). **Belted Kingfisher**: four ChCBC; one Loudonville 11 Jan (FM). **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: eight reports, max 16 ChCBC; one Cohoes 17 Feb (PC). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one imm Schodack Center 28 Dec (PC); one Clermont 16 Jan (ADBC).

Fish Crow: two Waterford (WE, NM) three L7/NL 18 Dec (RY); one Cohoes Falls 5 Feb (WE, NM); one Cohoes 17-18 Feb (RB); one Delmar 24 Feb (RB). **Com. Raven**: six reports, max six+ Nassau Landfill RENS 13 Jan (PC). **Black-capped Chickadee**: *intro*. **Winter Wren**: one ACBC. **Carolina Wren**: fifteen reports, including several at feeders during Jan-Feb; *intro*. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: four reports. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one ChCBC. **E. Bluebird**: good numbers, max 99 ChCBC; 13 Guilderland 20 Jan (BEN). **Hermit Thrush**: one Watervliet 8 Dec (BEN); one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie); one Clermont 16 Jan (ADBC). **Am. Robin**: arr Menands ALBA 19 Feb (FM). **Gray Catbird**: two ChCBC. **Brown Thrasher**: one GREE 25 Dec (R. Guthrie). **Cedar Waxwing**: 66 ChCBC; 455 ACBC; 90 Brookview 25 Dec (PC); 80 Mariaville 25 Jan (BEN). **Bohemian Waxwing**: one Whitehall 2 Dec (WE, NM); two Saratoga Spa SP 21 Feb (G. Hanson). **N. Shrike**: one Guilderland 7 Jan (WE, NM), only report.

Yellow-rumped Warbler one Chatham 30 Dec-25 Feb (ADBC).

Chipping Sparrow: one at feeder Nassau 16 Feb (BEN); one at feeder Saratoga Springs 20-26 Feb (JG). **Field Sparrow**: four ACBC; one at feeder FiveR 1-29 Jan (RB); one Ghent 15 Jan-16 Feb (ADBC). **Savannah Sparrow**: one Delmar at feeder 18 Jan (S. Madison). **Fox Sparrow**: one Kinderhook 3-29 Jan, 9-24 Feb (ADBC). **Swamp Sparrow**: two COLU 18 Dec (ChCCC); one Burgoyne Road SARA 15 Jan (C. Fostick). **White-throated Sparrow**: one Rotterdam 17 Jan (T. Colburn). **White-crowned Sparrow**: one Austerlitz 2-7 Dec (ADBC). **Lapland Longspur**: one Stuyvesant 18 Dec (ChCBC); four FtE 27 Jan through Feb (BP). **Snow**

Bunting: one BCRes 2 Jan (RB); 70-80 Ann Lee Pd ALBA 14 Jan through Feb (RB); many reports at feeders Jan-Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird:** arr Ghent 21 Feb (ACBC). **Rusty Blackbird:** one Chatham 18 Dec (ChCBC); one Ghent 17-31 Jan (ADBC). **Com. Grackle:** three at feeder Hannacroix 26 Feb (BC). **Brown-headed Cowbird:** arr Ravena 11 Feb (W. Raup). **Pine Grosbeak:** reported nine localities, 3 Dec through period; max 21 FiveR (RB). **Purple Finch:** few reports, two ACCBC. **White-winged Crossbill:** seven JGCBC, only report. **Com. Redpoll:** many reports throughout period; max 579 on HFCBC. **Hoary Redpoll:** one Northumberland 19 Dec (BG, BP); one Ravena 18 Dec (W. Raup). **Pine Siskin:** five reports, low numbers. **Am. Goldfinch:** noted absence during period. **Evening Grosbeak:** present in moderate numbers, max 189 JGCBC; 75-100 Locust Grove Road SARA throughout period (JG).

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