

REGION 10 — MARINE

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The Winter season was warm and dry in December, exceptionally warm in January, and without snow accumulations until early February. On 5 Feb, eleven inches fell in Central Park. It was followed by two days at 10°F or less, finally warming toward the end of the month. At Brookhaven National Laboratory to the east, the three winter months were +5.4°, +8.0° and -0.4° different from the months' average temperatures. The deviation was somewhat greater and warmer there than in New York City, although the average temperatures in the city are always higher, in part because records at Brookhaven have been kept for a much shorter period. Snowfall at Brookhaven was only six inches. Even less fell to the east for this only storm of the season.

Birding results should have shown some difference after last year's excessive snow, but appeared to be just as dull in terms of passerines. However, because of the mild weather early in the season, several Eastern Phoebe and ten species of warbler, including Yellow-rumped

Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat, were found during the Christmas Bird Count period. Another notable record was a *Wood Thrush* wintering in Manhattan. In contrast, there were no northern finches in our Region this winter.

The Austrian Pine groves on the south shore are dying at an accelerating rate and with them a significant amount of cover for birds. There were almost no Red-breasted Nuthatch this winter, and only a very few were reported on various Christmas Bird Counts. Whether there is a correlation to the dying trees is unknown, but the situation is uncertain and ominous for both.

In NASS a considerable amount of the sand pumped onto the beaches last year at both Tobay on the Jones Beach strip and at Pt. Lookout to the west disappeared in the first winter storm. Both areas suffered severe erosion with the bulk of the property damage confined to public facilities used during the summer months. This was in addition to the loss of beach area. On the other hand, a large sand bar has been growing in Jones Inlet on the Pt. Lookout side, just in front of the town's Fireman's Park, and where the Ross's Gull appeared last spring. It has become an important resting place for wintering gulls and shorebirds. A large flock of Bonaparte's Gull was here all winter. The large flock usually at Captree State Park at the other end of the Jones Beach Strip has been much reduced in the last few years. Consequently, the rare smaller gulls have now become more common on the western end of the strip. This season eight species of gull were found in Jones Inlet on the Pt. Lookout side including Little Gull, Common Black-headed Gull, Iceland Gull and Glaucous Gull. While not totally reliable on any given day, this location offers a very short drive from the Parkway, is conveniently located, and the area is easily scanned for rare gulls. Shorebirds consisted of large numbers of Sanderling and Dunlin with occasional Black-bellied Plover and Red Knot. In addition, Harlequin Duck wintered along the rocks immediately east of this site and Purple Sandpiper were on the jetties on the ocean side early in the season.

A December pelagic trip to Hudson Canyon from Captree SP on 3 Dec found nine species of seabirds, including Dovekie, was reported courtesy of NYRBA. Both Thick-billed and *Common Murre* were reported later in the season as well.

Some very rare and cooperative species spent the entire winter in Bridgehampton. They drew a large group of birding tourists to eastern Long Island. It started when a *Sandhill Crane* was discovered. This species is rare in New York. It drew birders from all over. A group from Delaware stopped to look for the crane and while searching one of the fields, found an even rarer bird, a *Northern Lapwing*. The ensuing hoards looking for the lapwing and the crane then found a Lark

Sparrow in a flock of a dozen White-crowned Sparrow in a neighboring hedgerow. Other birders found a Greater White-fronted Goose nearby. All of these species were still present at the end of the period. For once Montauk was not the star of the season.

Elsewhere an *American White Pelican* appeared for the second winter in a row. A *Townsend's Solitaire* was reported, and a wintering *Varied Thrush*, another rare visitor from the West, was enjoyed by many observers as it subsisted on meal worms provided and the normal things put out by home owners for the local starlings and pigeons. Other unexpected birds include *Eared Grebe*, *Broad-winged Hawk*, and *Black Skimmer*,

The 100 year old Bronx Zoo Aviary collapsed under the weight of the only snow fall on 5 Feb and eight Gray Gull, twelve Andean Gull, one Band-tailed Gull and twelve Inca Tern escaped. Except for lone Andean Gull and Inca Tern found dead, no subsequent reports of these birds within the Region have come to our attention.

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Abbreviations: BCBC - Brooklyn Christmas Bird Count, 17 Dec; CCBC - Captree Christmas Bird Count, 18 Dec; HLSP - Hempstead Lake State Park; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBch - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; JIn - Jones Inlet; MeB - Mecox Bay; MASS - Massapequa Preserve; MCBC - Montauk Christmas Bird Count, 17 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, 17 Dec; RMSP - Robert Moses State Park; SNCBC - Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, 2 Jan; SI - Staten Island; ZB - Zachs Bay.

Winter reports: *Red-necked Grebe*: a few widely scattered from JBWR to MPt early to late Dec, six Smithtown CBC 26 Dec, others MPt to early Feb (NYRBA). *Eared Grebe*: one PtL 2-23 Jan (Angus Wilson, mob). *Greater Shearwater*: 14 Hudson Canyon 3 Dec. *Sooty Shearwater*: one Hudson Canyon 3 Dec. *Manx Shearwater*: two Hudson Canyon 3 Dec; one MPt 11 Dec (AL). *N. Gannet*: 150 Hudson Canyon 3 Dec. *Am. White Pelican*: one mouth of Patchogue R 10 Dec (Paul Vaccar). *Great Cormorant*: 27 South Beach SI 23 Dec, 37 on 24 Jan (HF). *Am. Bittern*: a few overwinter. *Great Egret*: BCBC, SNCBC (NYRBA). *Tundra Swan*: seven Hook Pd 11 Dec, three or four there through the season (mob). *Greater White-fronted Goose*: ad Mt Loretto SI 27-29 Dec (HF, Tom Brown), ad MeB 19-27 Feb (NYRBA). *Green-*

winged Teal: Eurasian race John Burns P Massapequa 28 Feb (Pat Jones). **Blue-winged Teal:** BCBC, four SNCBC, late. **Eurasian Wigeon:** eight-ten scattered from Brooklyn to Hook Pd after early Dec (NYRBA). **Tufted Duck:** Calverton late Dec (JC); ad Agawam L Southampton 14-21 Jan (Ari Gilbert), imm there 28-30 Jan (Bill Boyle). **Com. Eider:** 272 MCBC and two BCBC 17 Dec, CCBC 18 Dec, 1000 MPt 24 Dec, 2000 1 Jan, 3000 18 Feb, and lesser numbers there after (NYRBA). **King Eider:** MPt 1 Jan, four MPt 5 Feb (NYRBA). **Harlequin Duck:** eight JIn on PtL side; Shinnecock Inlet 21 Dec-6 Mar (PG); three NNCBC; SI 30 Dec-1 Jan (*fide* HF). **Com. Merganser:** three Wolfe's Pd P SI 19 Dec, infrequent on SI (HF); as usual, a small group wintered in HLSP.

Turkey Vulture: Oakdale 18 Dec (KF), Pelham Bay P 21 Jan (SW), late. **Osprey:** CCBC 17 Dec, Connetquot R SP 18 Dec (JQ), late. **Bald Eagle:** QCBC; Garvies Pt 2-3 Feb (Walter Paddison, Sue Ahern). **Broad-winged Hawk:** SNCBC, very late. **Sora:** MCBC 17 Dec. **Sandhill Crane:** imm Bridgehampton after 1 Jan (Larry Penny, mob). **N. Lapwing:** one Bridgehampton after 28 Jan (mob, NYSARC). **Am. Oystercatcher:** ten Long Beach 14 Jan, others wintered. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** MASS 8-23 Jan (KF, mob). **Marbled Godwit:** four JBWR 3 Dec, three BCBC (NYRBA). **W. Sandpiper:** 20+ with Dunlin ZB 10 Dec (EL, SS, AW), 50 Kennedy Airport 17 Dec, max 150 SNCBC, very high counts. Dunlin: 350 ZB 10 Dec (EL, SS, AW). **Long-billed Dowitcher:** four SNCBC, five MASS 15 Jan (NYRBA), late. **Red Phalarope:** 108 Hudson Canyon 3 Dec; MPt 24 Dec (AL). **Pomarine Jaeger:** one, plus three unidentified to species, Hudson Canyon 3 Dec. **Laughing Gull:** 27 Dosoris Pd 7 Dec (RC), one Hix I Long Beach 14 Jan (NYRBA). **Little Gull:** two PtL all season (mob), MPt 16 Jan (JF). **Com. Black-headed Gull:** a half dozen widely scattered from JIn to MPt. **Bonaparte's Gull:** max 1000-1500 PtL all winter. **Iceland Gull:** a half dozen widely scattered from JIn to MPt (mob). **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** two MPt 4-10 Dec, MPt 19 Feb (KF), Morgan I Glen Cove 26 Dec (Steven Radziol), others to 19 Feb (NYRBA). **Glaucous Gull:** MPt 10 Dec to 22 Jan (NYRBA), PtL 11 Dec (SS, AW), three MCBC 17 Dec. **Black-legged Kittiwake:** 308 Hudson Canyon 3 Dec; MPt 7 Dec (JQ); SNCBC 2 Jan. **Black Skimmer:** one Hix I, Long Beach 14 Jan (NYRBA), very rare in winter. **Dovekie:** one Hudson Canyon 3 Dec; 15 MPt 24 Dec, one 29 Dec to 13 Jan, one MPt 19 Feb (NYRBA). **Com. Murre:** two MPt 1 Jan (AL). **Thick-billed Murre:** two MPt 1 Jan (John Askildsen). **Razorbill:** two, plus eight other alcids, Hudson Canyon 3 Dec; one MPt 11 Dec; 100 MCBC; CCBC; SNCBC; 80 MPt 14 Jan; 32 MPt 21 Jan (KF); some at MPt to end of season.

Snowy Owl: on roof tops and vicinity of Bellerose, Queens 14-30 Jan (mob), JBWR 26 Feb (NYRBA). **Long-eared Owl:** CCBC, MCBC (NYRBA). **Short-eared Owl:** Captree Marsh 28 Jan (JQ), two JBWR 25 Feb (NYRBA). **N. Saw-whet Owl:** one NNCBC, two SNCBC. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** Central P 20 Dec (NYRBA).

E. Phoebe: two NNCBC. **Tree Swallow:** 13 overwintered in the marina area behind the Tobay Beach parking lot. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** scarce. **House Wren:** a few on CBC. **Townsend's Solitaire:** one JBWR 3 Dec (Carl Jaslowitz, NYSARC), also logged at JBWR on 25 Nov by a J. Nugent. **Wood Thrush:** one St. Bartholemew's Church at 50th and Park Ave Manhattan 13 Jan into March (Steve Walter, mob). **Varied Thrush:** one at feeder in Flatbush section of Brooklyn after 21 Dec (Robert H. Clark, Donna Honicker, mob). **Am. Pipit:** six RMSP 6 Dec (JQ), seven QCBC.

Orange-crowned Warbler: Jones Beach 7 Jan (NYRBA). **Nashville Warbler:** QCBC (NYRBA). **Prairie Warbler:** Ferry Pt P Bronx 26 Dec (SW.CJ). **Palm Warbler:** RMSP 6 Dec (JQ), ZB 8 Dec (SS, AW), Garvies Pt 26 Dec (Bob Dieterich), two Deer P 12 Jan (JF). **Am. Redstart:** JBWR 10, 16, 18 Dec (SW). **Ovenbird:** one in SI backyard during CBC period (Howard Fischer *fide* HF). **Com. Yellowthroat:** BCBC, NNCBC, SNCBC (NYRBA). **Wilson's Warbler:** BCBC (NYRBA). **Yellow-breasted Chat:** wintered at MPT; MeB 21 Jan (NYRBA).

Chipping Sparrow: Heckscher SP 18 Dec, late. **Lark Sparrow:** one Bridgehampton after 30 Jan (Hugh McGuinness, mob). **White-crowned Sparrow:** about 12 Bridgehampton after 30 Jan (Hugh McGuinness, mob). **Lapland Longspur:** Great Kills P 28 Dec (Ed Johnson, HF), 17 Feb (NYRBA). **E. Meadowlark:** absent from s parts of Region, but some winter to the east and on the North Fork. **Rusty Blackbird:** 12 Shu Swamp 25 Feb (KF). **Boat-tailed Grackle:** 262 QCBC (NYRBA), one SI 17 Dec (*fide* HF). **Com. Grackle:** a roost of 2000-2300 Baiting Hollow Riverhead all winter (BP).

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