

REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

JANE GRAVES

One of the mildest winters in many years was experienced in the Region. As reported from the Albany County Airport, December's mean temperature was 31.6°F, 5.1° above normal, with no below zero days. Sunshine averaged 44%, 6% more than normal. There was 2.58 inches of precipitation, 0.35 inches below normal. The month was virtually snow free, with only 3 inches total, 16.5 inches below normal. January averaged 31.3°F, a whopping 10.7° above normal, making it the seventh warmest on record and the warmest since 1950. Again there were no below zero temperatures. Between 12 and 22 Jan, the temperature did not go below freezing, and highs on 15 and 16 Jan were 65 and 62°F respectively. It was a cloudy month, with only 33% sunshine, 13% below normal. Precipitation totaled 2.11 inches, slightly below normal. Only 3.9 inches of snowfall was measured for the month, 12.4 inches below normal. It finally got cold in February with a mean of 22.8°F, 0.7° below normal. The first snowstorm of the season occurred on 4 Feb, with 13.3 inches measured. There was little snow the rest of the month. Sunshine totaled 65%, 13% greater than normal.

The mild weather and lack of snow cover meant that there was little feeder activity and that land birds were dispersed and not easy to find. However, several of the ten reporting CBCs had record counts both of species and individuals so the birds were present if sought. Water bodies remained largely open through January. Compared to last year, the Federation's Waterfowl Count on 15 Jan had an excellent count with seventeen species, including such unusual species as Redhead, Hooded Merganser, and an American Coot. Ken Able reported that hundreds of Mallard and American Black Duck were present in the Berne area, foraging in the fields during the day and spending the night on open water. Bald Eagle wintered in good numbers over open lake waters throughout the Region and during the entire season on northern Lake

George, which Laura Meade reports never completely froze over. As with last winter, gulls were generally concentrated on the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers in the Colonie landfill and Cohoes areas. Around 1200 Ring-billed, 4900 Herring and 800 Great Black-backed Gulls were to be found there during January and February. Both Iceland and Glaucous were present throughout the season.

In the southern part of the Region, numbers of Black-capped Chickadee were high in December. CBCs had good totals, with 600 averaged on six counts. Interestingly enough, however, at Jenny Lake, SARA, Robert Yunick had very few present, with no individuals banded in December, only one in January, and five in February. The easy availability of natural food kept large flocks of American Robin here throughout the period. A large flock roosted near Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.

The 129 species reported included 24 waterfowl, 13 hawks, 7 gulls, 7 owls, and 8 fringillids. The most surprising species was a *Northern Gannet* observed at relatively close range for some time but which could not be relocated. An immature male "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco with a black hood, brown back and sides overwintered. Other rarities not mentioned previously included *Ross's Goose*, *Barrow's Goldeneye*, *Golden Eagle*, *Thayer's Gull*, and *Dickcissel*.

Contributors: Ken Able; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Laurie Freeman; Jane Graves; Ron Harrower; Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Cliff Lamere; William Lee; Alan A. Mapes (AAM); Andy Mason (AM); Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Frank Murphy; Barbara Putnam; Dave Russell; Jim Sotis; Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations: ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 18 Dec; CCCBC - Catskill-Coxsackie CBC, 20 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 17 Dec; FiveR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward area, WASH; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 18 Dec; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 26 Dec; ML - Myosotis Lake, ALBA; SaraL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, SARA; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 17 Dec; TCBC - Troy CBC, 2 Jan; TomRes - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VFPS/L7 - Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7, SCHE.

Winter reports: **Red-throated Loon:** one SaraL 6 Dec (CL). **Com. Loon:** five SaraL 17-30 Dec (RH, BP); five other reports of singles. **Pied-billed Grebe:** one TomRes 4 Dec (WE, NM); one Copake COLU 6 Dec (ADBC); one Coxsackie GREE 15 Jan (RG). **Horned Grebe:** one SaraL 17

Dec (RP). **Red-necked Grebe**: one 18 Dec (ACCBC). *N. Gannet*: imm SaraL 4 Dec (CL, NYSARC). **Double-crested Cormorant**: six Coeymans ALBA 26 Dec (W. Raup to BEN) only report. **Great Blue Heron**: 22 reported including one overwintering Collins L SCHE (WL, RP); one dying on ice Hudson R near Catskill GREE (BC). **Mute Swan**: 71 Stockport Station COLU 18 Dec (BC); 122 CCCBC; two Ft Miller 4 Jan (RB, JG). **Snow Goose**: seven JGCBC; 120 Ft Miller 28 Dec (D. Beeler to BEN); 47 TomRes 7 Jan (RB, JG); five Cheviot COLU 15 Jan). **Canada Goose**: max 6810 CCCBC. *Ross's Goose*: one Ft Miller 28 Dec (D. Beeler to BEN) with flock of 120 Snow Geese; also seen by Barb Putnam on 31 Dec; NYSARC report requested. **Wood Duck**: one VFPS/L7 31 Dec, 29 Jan (WL, RY); two Mohawk R ALBA 15 Jan (PG); three Livingston COLU 8 Feb (BC). **Green-winged Teal**: four Dec reports; three Jan reports. *N. Pintail*: 19 ACCBC; four CCCBC; one TCBC; arr Hudson R Stillwater 11 Feb (WE, NM). **Gadwall**: two ACCBC; three CCCBC; two TCBC; one VFPS/L7 31 Dec (WL); one Stillwater 8 Jan (RB, JG). **Am. Wigeon**: three ACCBC. **Canvasback**: 2000 CCCBC; two TCBC; 375 Waterfowl Count 15 Jan. **Redhead**: seven Waterfowl Count 15 Jan. **Ring-necked Duck**: 245 ACCBC; one Stillwater 8 Jan (RB, JG); four TomRes 21 Jan (WE, NM, mob). **Greater Scaup**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC. **Lesser Scaup**: nine ACCBC; one CCCBC. **Oldsquaw**: one Germantown 6, 17 Dec (ADBC); one Catskill 20 Dec (BC). **Black Scoter**: one SRCBC. **White-winged Scoter**: one SaraL 6 Dec (CL); one CCCBC; one TomRes 21 Jan (WE, NM, mob). **Com. Goldeneye**: widespread entire period. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: two males SaraL 18 Dec (BP); two TCBC. **Bufflehead**: ten reports. **Hooded Merganser**: ten reports, max 92 TomRes 4 Dec (WE). **Com. Merganser**: max 370 Nassau L RENS 8 Dec (PC); 403 CCCBC. **Red-breasted Merganser**: three ACCBC; one 15 Jan. **Ruddy Duck**: five ACCBC; one Copake COLU 4, 6 Dec (ADBC).

Turkey Vulture: four reports throughout period. **Bald Eagle**: at least 13 ad, four imm Conklinville Dam, Hudson and Mohawk R, n L George all season. **N. Harrier**: 16 ACCBC; 25 CCCBC; 19 ChCBC; six Brookview area 9 Jan (PC); 18 FtE 20 Jan (K. Hanson to BEN); good numbers. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 14 on three CBCs; 12 other reports. **Cooper's Hawk**: 11 on seven CBCs; seven other reports. **N. Goshawk**: six reports. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one overwintered Route 50 Saratoga Springs SARA; one Kinderhook COLU 1 Dec (ADBC), only reports. **Red-tailed Hawk**: max 94 ACCBC; 100 ChCBC. **Rough-legged Hawk**: 15 HFCBC; 20 FtE 5 Feb (D. Beeler to BEN); 17 other reports. **Golden Eagle**: one imm Stephentown RENS 24 Feb (*fide* RB). **Am. Kestrel**: 24 on seven CBCs; 11 other reports. **Merlin**: one Watervliet Res ALBA 3 Dec (WE, NM); one

FtE after 26 Dec (C. Fosdick to BEN); one TCBC; one Leeds GREE 6 Jan (BEN); one Cambridge WASH 4 Feb (D. Moulton *fide* JS) preying on pigeons. **Peregrine Falcon**: two reports, one CCCBC; one Duaneburg bridge SCHE 16 Dec (BEN), no details. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: three reports. **Wild Turkey**: many reports of large flocks throughout period. **Am. Coot**: 15 ACCBC; eight other reports. **Killdeer**: one ACCBC. **Com. Snipe**: one CCCBC. **Thayer's Gull**: one TCBC. **Iceland Gull**: nine reports, max five SI 25 Feb (WL). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: one Cocksackie Boat Launch GREE 25 Dec (RG to BEN); two TCBC; one Green I ALBA 11 Feb (WE, NM). **Glaucous Gull**: seven reports.

E. Screech-Owl: 27 on three CBCs, high. **Snowy Owl**: one T Florida MONT 28 Dec (T. Palmer to BEN); one Ft Plain CBC 31 Dec; one Albany 4 Feb (BEN); one FtE 9 Feb (BP). **Great Horned Owl**: four ACCBC; seven JGCBC; five TCBC. **Barred Owl**: one CCCBC. **Long-eared Owl**: one SSCBC. **Short-eared Owl**: two CCCBC; max 31 FtE 16 Jan (B. Bidwell *fide* BP) good numbers throughout period. **N. Saw-Whet Owl**: one ACCBC; one S Cairo GREE 6 Jan (BEN); one Rensselaerville ALBA 17 Feb (K. Omland *fide* WE). **Belted Kingfisher**: ten ChCBC; overwintered widely. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: 15 reports, max 25 CCCBC; one T Kingsbury/Argyle WASH 17 Dec (BP) has overwintered past three years. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: one CCCBC; one TomRes 8 Jan (RB, JG); one Schodack Center RENS 19 Feb, 2 Mar (PC), one at Galway feeder throughout winter (RH). **Downy Woodpecker**: max 113 CCCBC. **Hairy Woodpecker**: max 30 SCCBC. **N. Flicker**: max 31 ACCBC, 56 CCCBC. **Pileated Woodpecker**: max ten ACCBC, 16 CCCBC.

E. Phoebe: one TomRes 4 Dec (WE, NM); one FiveR 9 Jan (AAM), late. **Horned Lark**: max 200 FtE Jan 8 (BP). **Fish Crow**: two SCCBC; 20 SI/Peebles I SP SARA 19 Feb (WE, NM) many reports of wintering individuals. **Com. Raven**: 18 reports. **Black-capped Chickadee**: *intro*. **Carolina Wren**: seven reports. **Winter Wren**: max ten CCCBC; eight other Dec reports; one Indian Kill SCHE 10 Feb (RP). **Marsh Wren**: one Stuyvesant COLU 17 Dec (BC); three CCCBC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: max 55 ACCBC, 45 CCCBC, 43 JGCBC; 12 other reports. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: four reports; one overwintered S.U.N.Y. at Albany (KA). **E. Bluebird**: good numbers, max 75 ChCBC. **Hermit Thrush**: one ACCBC; ten CCCBC; one Christman Sanctuary SCHE 11 Jan (RP); one Saratoga Battlefield National Historic P SARA 12 Feb (BP). **Am. Robin**: max 2400± FiveR 18 Dec, 5000± on 29 Jan. **Gray Catbird**: one CCCBC. **N. Mockingbird**: max 23 CCCBC; one regular at feeder Guilderland defending winterberry and buckthorn from House Finch and European Starling (WE). **Cedar Waxwing**: 106 ACBC; 244 CCCBC; 119 ChCBC; 50

Galway SARA 16 Jan (RH); 20 Windham High Pk GREE 13 Feb (BEN). **N. Shrike**: six reports.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: five ACCBC; 35 CCCBC; one Mill Creek Marsh COLU 8 Jan (PC). **Com. Yellowthroat**: three Dec reports.

Dickcissel: one at feeder with House Sparrow T Argyle WASH 17-21 Dec (BP). **Am. Tree Sparrow**: max 348 CCCBC, 240 ChCBC, 309 SCCBC, 391 TCBC. **Field Sparrow**: seven reports. **Savannah Sparrow**: five CCCBC. **Fox Sparrow**: three Dec, three Feb reports. **Swamp Sparrow**: six ACCBC, 13 CCCBC; two Galway SARA 17 Jan (RH). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 271 CCCBC. **Dark-eyed Junco**: *oreganus* type at feeder after 17 Dec (KA). **Lapland Longspur**: six FtE 8 Jan (BP); one FtE 5 Feb (D. Beeler to BEN). **Snow Bunting**: max 260 HFCBC; 250 Palmers Ravine MONT 9 Feb (T. Palmer to BEN); 100 FtE 10 Feb (BP). **Red-winged Blackbird**: arr 10 Feb Livingston COLU (ADBC); reported throughout period. **E. Meadowlark**: four FtE 9 Feb (BP). **Rusty Blackbird**: four SSCBC; still present 13 Feb. **Com. Grackle**: reported throughout period. **Brown-headed Cowbird**: reported throughout period. **Pine Grosbeak**: no reports. **Purple Finch**: max 45 JGCBC; 15 Route 112 FULT 15 Jan (RB, JG); 15-20 regular at feeder Huyck Preserve ALBA (K. Omland *fide* WE). **Red Crossbill**: max 51 JGCBC; ten Pinnacle Road FULT 15 Jan (RB, JG). **White-winged Crossbill**: eight-nine Jenny L SARA 7 Jan (RY); seven Crane/Huckleberry Mt area WARR 11 Feb (DR). **Com. Redpoll**: ten JGCBC; four Crane/Huckleberry Mt area WARR 11 Feb (DR). **Pine Siskin**: 11 JGCBC; 16 Pinnacle Road FULT 15 Jan (RB, JG); one Gansevoort SARA 16 Jan (BP); "numerous" Crane/Huckleberry Mt area WARR 11 Feb (DR). **Am Goldfinch**: good numbers at feeders through period. **Evening Grosbeak**: low numbers all winter.

Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866-1632

EMail: jgraves@skidmore.edu