

REGION 9 — HUDSON-DELAWARE

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December was characterized by continued unseasonably warm weather. The average temperature was 5.1°F above normal, making it the eighth warmest in the last 100 years. It was also a dry month with almost no snow cover. While the state overall received only 79% of normal precipitation, the Hudson Valley region received 97% of normal. The “nor’easter” on 23 and 24 Dec was the worst weather of the month,

with high winds and heavy rain. A cold front on 29 Dec brought in the coldest weather of the month, which ended with rain on 31 Dec. January continued with above normal temperatures that averaged 8.1°F warmer than normal. In contrast, January 1994 had averaged 8.4° colder than usual. What a difference a year makes! Precipitation was below normal in the southern parts of our Region, which received 92% of normal precipitation. The other parts of the Region received normal or slightly higher than normal precipitation. February brought our first and only large snowstorm of the season, followed by a couple of weeks of very cold weather. The storm came on 4 Feb and dumped in excess of 10 inches of snow on most parts of the Region. White Plains experienced blizzard conditions during the storm. The snow then changed to sleet and rain along the coast before the temperature nose dived that night, ushering in strong northwest winds for the following couple of days. That cold snap caused the average temperature for the month to be 2.5° lower than normal. Precipitation was also below normal, averaging 93% of normal.

The species reported this season reflected the weather pattern this winter. Fresh water remained open until mid to late February, resulting in a lack of waterfowl concentrations. Unusual species reported included White-fronted Goose, Tufted Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye. Unfortunately the male Tufted Duck that wintered in Rye the past two years did not reappear this season.

Wintering populations of some raptor species were higher than normal because of the absence of snow cover and severe cold, and winter finches went almost unreported this winter. In keeping with past winters, *Black Vulture* was noted and reports of wintering Golden Eagle were scattered around the Region. The lack of snow cover in the region resulted in high numbers of Short-eared Owl reported this winter. Only one Snowy Owl was reported and it was present for only one afternoon.

On the flip side, many species that normally winter south of the region were found. Many of these reports come from the area Christmas Bird Counts in late December, and most of them left when colder weather set in during late December and January. A *House Wren* remained very late, and a respectable six species of warbler were reported from the Bronx-Westchester Count on 26 December, and two additional warbler species appeared on other Regional Christmas Bird Counts. *Sharp-tailed Sparrow* and *Lincoln's Sparrow* were equally unexpected CBC finds.

Finally, Selden Spencer of Ulster County reports of evidence of a Black-capped Chickadee incursion this winter. He banded 12 in one

day in January, as opposed to the normal 2 or 3. The mean wing chord of these birds was 66 mm, which is longer than the mean of 64 mm for Ulster County chickadees, but is consistent with birds from a more northern population.

Two unexpected boreal species, *Black-backed Woodpecker* and *Boreal Chickadee* were reported. Certainly a nice find was a *Townsend's Solitaire*, which surely eclipsed the normally outstanding *Harris's Sparrow* also present this season. Two reports of Dickcissel were received. Other highlights include Red-necked Grebe, Northern Gannet, Great Egret, Eurasian Wigeon, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, Forster's Tern, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Marsh Wren, Northern Shrike, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow and Common Redpoll.

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Abbreviations: BASH – Bashakill Marsh; BDR - Black Dirt Region, ORAN; BWCBC – Bronx-Westchester Christmas Bird Count, 26 Dec; CIMS – Constitution Island Marsh Sanctuary; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, Rye; KRes – Kensico Reservoir, WEST; LHVBL – Lower Hudson Valley Bird Line; LISS – Long Island Sound shore; MC – Marshlands Conservancy, Rye; EOCBC – East Orange County Christmas Bird Count; PCBC – Pawling Christmas Bird Count, 2 Jan; PCCBC – Putnam County Christmas Bird Count; RTWBC – Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club; RCCBC – Rockland County Christmas Bird Count; RLSP – Rockland Lake State Park; SCBC – Sullivan County Christmas Bird Count, 28 Dec; WSF – Warren Sod Farm, ORAN; WFC – FNYSCB Annual Winter Waterfowl Count.

Winter reports: **Com. Loon:** nine BWCBC, one White's Hudson Marina DUTC 7 Feb, six EGR 24 Dec. **Red-throated Loon:** eight BWCBC, three EGR 22 Jan. **Horned Grebe:** ten BWCBC, 12 EGR 26 Jan. **Red-necked Grebe:** one EGR 24 Dec, 9 Jan and 22 Jan (TWB). **N. Gannet:** one EGR late Dec, seven EGR 24 Dec, one 25 Dec, and two 7 Jan. **Great Cormorant:** 35 LISS 22 Jan, scarce; almost none reported from freshwater areas. **Double-crested Cormorant:** 35 BWCBC, one SCCBC. **Great Blue Heron:** 21 EGR 22 Dec, 32 BWCBC, one on nest DUTC 28 Feb. **Great Egret:** two MC, BWCBC. **Brant:** 481 BWCBC, 279 EGR 22 Dec;

present LISS throughout the period. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** one Greenland race WSF 8 Dec-3 Feb (Ed Treacy). **Canada Goose:** high concentrations inland, max 10,000 Round Pd DUTC (RTWBC), >10,000 WSF 25 Dec. **Green-winged Teal:** one SCCBC, four KRes 5 Jan, five Muscote Res 15 Jan. **N. Shoveler:** four Yonkers 26 Dec, one Orange 28 Dec. **N. Pintail:** five Muscote Res 15 Jan, four LISS 22 Jan. **Gadwall:** 26 BWCBC, two PCBC; 18 EOCBC; 35 Muscote 15 Jan; 18 Delaware R SULL 18 Jan. **Eurasian Wigeon:** one Monroe 6 Dec, one RLSP 5 Jan-mid Feb. **Canvasback:** down overall, 156 BWCBC, lowest in 45 years; 12 PCBC, low; 245 Hudson R Newburgh 18 Jan; 67 Rye 22 Jan, very low. **Redhead:** one Wurtsboro 14-18 Feb; one BWCBC; two EGR 9 Jan, nine KRes most of Jan and into early Feb, only two by 16 Feb. **Tufted Duck:** female KRes 16 Feb (MU). **Greater Scaup:** 1457 LISS 22 Jan, low. **Lesser Scaup:** 305 BWCBC, high; max 380 EGR 22 Jan, high, indicative of mild winter. **Oldsquaw:** max 380 EGR 20 Jan. **Surf Scoter:** one EGR late Dec. **White-winged Scoter:** one BWCBC and count week; imm. Kamesha L SULL 28-30 Dec (VF); female KRes 8 Dec (MU). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** female with Com. Goldeneye EGR 1-8 Jan (TWB). **Com. Merganser:** 2000 Bog Brook Res PUTN 22 Dec;

Turkey Vulture: max six MC in Dec. **Black Vulture:** two Haverstraw Landfill Rock 2 Jan; one Galeville Airport ULST 8 Jan. **Bald Eagle:** record max 119 total (74 ad, 45 imm) se New York including the Hudson River, highest concentration of 89 along Delaware R SULL (Peter Nye, NYSDEC), scattered reports on inland lakes and reservoirs, numbers nothing like last winter's. **N. Harrier:** 15 Galeville Airport ULST 9 Jan, max 16 Ehners Farm DUTC in Feb (Gary & Adrienne Zylhuski), one EGR 6 Feb, several BDR throughout the period. **N. Goshawk:** one PCCBC. **Red-shouldered Hawk:** one-two MC through Dec, pair copulating near nest DUTC 16 Feb (RTWBC). **Red-tailed Hawk:** 103 BWCBC, high; albino spent part of the period at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation WEST. **Rough-legged Hawk:** one Neversink Res Dam 16 Feb (VF), two Ehmer Farm DUTC 26 Feb (Greg & Adrienne Zylkuski); several of both morphs throughout period BDR. **Golden Eagle:** two Stissing Mt DUTC throughout the period; imm Fir Brook Swamp SULL 26 Feb (VF); imm over Pawling on PCBC (SG, BB, CL); one Thompson Pd DUTC 11 Feb (RTWBC). **Merlin:** one BWCBC, one Milton Pt Rye 26 Dec. **Peregrine Falcon:** one Newburgh 25 Dec, one PCCBC. **Virginia Rail:** one MC 12 and 25 Dec (TWB). **Killdeer:** two EOCBC, 12 BWCBC. **Greater Yellowlegs:** two Larchmont 26 Dec; two MC 20 Dec. **Ruddy Turnstone:** 48 BWCBC with 15 at Mamaroneck Yacht Club; Dunlin: 67 BWCBC, 50 MP 26 Dec, 30 EGR 31 Dec, 60 on 7 Jan and 40 on 6 Feb. **Am. Woodcock:**

one Hurleyville 3 Dec; one KRes 19 Dec; one MC 26 Feb. **Boneparte's Gull**: 88 BWCBC, max 20 EGR 26 Dec, irregular throughout the period. **Ring-billed Gull**: max 10,000+ Ashokan Res mid Dec (CN). **Herring Gull**: 1500 Ellenville, SULL 22 Jan, 1105 New Paltz Landfill Mohawk L-Ashokan Res CBC (SS). **Iceland Gull**: one Basic I Goshen 11 Jan; one Basic I WSF 8 Jan (JPA, TWB, AG); one Basic II Manguap Falls Res SULL 25 Jan; one-two Basic I Haverstraw Landfill ROCK 17 Feb (LHVBL). **Lesser Black-backed Gull**: two Rye sporadically all winter; one Haverstraw Marina 8 Dec; one Basic III WSF 8 Jan; one Bowline Pt ROCK 25 Jan; one Wallkill R SULL 25 Jan; **Glaucous Gull**: ad Woodbourne 2 Dec (VF). **Great Black-backed Gull**: 115 Ellenville 22 Jan. **Forster's Tern**: last EGR 2, 7 Dec.

E. Screech-Owl: four PCCBC; several in DUTC, two EOCBC, nine BWCBC, two Bash 3 Feb. **Great Horned Owl**: four PCCBC; several DUTC; four EOCBC, 13 BWCBC; two MC through the period. **Snowy Owl**: one at a farm Bedford Hills 9 Jan, after a cold snap. **Barred Owl**: two PCCBC, one EOCBC. **Short-eared Owl**: max 21 Galeville Airport ULST, 16 still there 16 Feb; max 24 BDR until snowstorm of 4 Feb, after which none were reported; one MC 21 Dec; scattered reports from DUTC (RTWBC). **N. Saw-whet Owl**: one Wurtsboro 19 Jan, one Westbrookville 1 Feb, one Fir Brook Swamp SULL 18 Feb. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: one Bloomingburg early Jan; one EOCBC; one-two Blue Chip Farms ULST through the period; one Bedford WEST 10 Jan. **Black-backed Woodpecker**: one at Mt Kisco feeder for about 15 minutes 10 Jan (KK, NYSARC). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: three PCCBC; three EOCBC; one KRes 9 Dec; one Wiccipee 3 Feb (RTWBC). **Downy Woodpecker**: 167 PCCBC, high.

E. Phoebe: two SCCBC, one Orange 18 Dec, late. **Fish Crow**: 17 BWCBC; **Com. Raven**: four PCCBC, one Breakneck PUTN 5 Jan. **Black-capped Chickadee**: intro. **Boreal Chickadee**: one appeared sporadically at same suet feeder Patterson mid Nov through the period (Hunter Pollock) where one spent last winter. **Red-breasted Nuthatch**: nine PCCBC. **House Wren**: Rockefeller SP WEST 18 Dec (Richard Nelson); one BWCBC. **Winter Wren**: 24 BWCBC, high. **Marsh Wren**: one BWCBC, one MC 12, 25 Dec; one MC 18 Feb. **Townsend's Solitaire**: one PCBC, again on 3 Jan (SG, NYSARC); not found subsequently. **Am. Robin**: 300-500 Baird Pk DUTC 15 Feb. **Gray Catbird**: one PCBC, 15 BWCBC. **N. Shrike**: one irregularly Galeville Airport until early Feb.

Nashville Warbler: one BWCBC. **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: eight BWCBC. **Palm Warbler**: singles PCBC, RCCBC. **Pine Warbler**: one PCBC. **N. Waterthrush**: one BWCBC. **Com. Yellowthroat**: one BWCBC.

Wilson's Warbler: one BWCBC. **Yellow-breasted Chat:** one near Saw Mill R BWCBC

N. Cardinal: 289 PCCBC, high. **Dickcissel:** one PCBC; imm in House Sparrow flock White Plains after 18 Dec (Michael Lolya). **Chipping Sparrow:** two SULL early Dec. **Savannah Sparrow:** two BWCBC. **Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** one Hen I Rye 26 Dec, late. **Fox Sparrow:** scattered reports. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** one, first ever, Peekskill CBC (George Dremeaux), unusual anywhere in the Northeast in winter. **White-crowned Sparrow:** one SCCBC, one BWCBC, six Wallkill R Valley ORAN most of Jan. **Harris's Sparrow:** imm at a parking area Bash SCCBC, remained for two weeks. **Lapland Longspur:** six-ten BDR Jan. **Snow Bunting:** 50 SCCBC, 11 EGR 16 Dec, two Hunter Road DUTC 28 Dec. **E. Meadowlark:** max 30 Galeville Airport ULST through period. **Red-winged Blackbird:** eight Taylor Pd WEST 31 Dec; two MC 2 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird:** 40 at a feeder DUTC all period (Thelma Haight); roost of 55 Patterson Swamp PUTN early Jan. **Com. Grackle;** arr DUTC 5 Feb. **Purple Finch:** 19 PCCBC; one DUTC 1 Feb; three pair DUTC 26 Feb. **Com. Redpoll:** three Wanasink L. SULL early Feb; 12 Livingston Manor early Feb. **Pine Siskin:** six PCBC. **Evening Grosbeak:** 20 EOCBC

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