

REGION 10 - MARINE

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We started the year with extreme drought; we ended it with the most snow recorded in a winter at the measurement sites of New York City and Brookhaven National Laboratory. The temperatures averaged 4.2F° below normal in December, 1.0° below in January, and a mere 0.5° above in February. On the early date of 10-12 December, the fresh water ponds in Hempstead Lake State Park and other places on Long Island froze over during the first sustained cold snap of the season. The ponds were again mostly frozen in mid-Jan during the FWC period.

The cold ensured that the 12.14 inches of precipitation for the three month season (2.46 inches above normal) mostly came down as snow. There were three snowfalls before the Christmas Count period, four during and sixteen afterwards, some well beyond this reporting period. A lot of snow!

The largest snowfall was 7-8 January, with a total ranging from 15 to 27.5 inches over the Region. Total snowfall for the entire winter was 68 inches at New York City and 94 inches at Brookhaven (including over a foot on 10-11 April). The early December cold and the number of snowfalls appeared to divide the season into two parts separated by the CBCs. Before and during the counts there was a lot of birding activity; afterwards, less.

The Southern Nassau CBC with 141, highest in the state, had its largest list ever. Other CBCs also had high numbers. While winter visitants and northern finches were mostly absent, few, or in some cases none, of the usual half-hardies were missed. This produced large lists with few surprises.

Not new for the CBCs, but certainly unusual, was eight **Black Skimmer** seen by Pat Caro and Jeff Kirk 30 December at Short Beach on the west end of Jones Beach on the S Nassau CBC. Ken and Sue Feustel combing the Oak Beach marshes on the Captree CBC 17 December found a **Yellow**

Rail and a **Sedge Wren**. Other rarely seen count birds were Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Razorbill, **Black Guillemot**, Eastern Phoebe and **Bohemian Waxwing**. This last species was seen by Tom Burke (*et al.*) west of Montauk Pt on 16 December and by Jim Ash on 17 Dec, and the same or another was observed by (Doug

Futuyma *et al.*) in a flock of European Starling on Dune Road west of Shinnecock 1-2 January.

An **Eared Grebe** was found at Pt. Lookout 21 January, which stayed with the 100 + Horned Grebe flock in the inlet and adjacent ocean through the period.

A magnet for rare gulls has always been the Bonaparte's Gull flocks in the South Shore inlets. This year the flocks in Jones, Fire Island and other inlets were much diminished. A large flock (for this year) numbered in the low hundreds, whereas formerly this would have been considered a small group. Rarities are generally seen only when Bonaparte's numbers are large; there were no real rarities this season. In addition, the Bonaparte's flocks departed early this year.

A major event of the season was the *largest invasion* of Northern Shrike ever to be reported in our Region. The influx started in the fall (as reported last season) and widespread reports were still coming in well beyond the end of the season. The CBC's offer the best guide to the magnitude of numbers involved, as they are separated in location and take place over the short period of just over two weeks. If an assumption is made that there was little geographical movement during this time, the total from the Regional CBCs is an impressive 42 individuals. Included were reports from Staten Island to Gardiner's Island, Montauk and Orient Pt. Many of these birds were off the beaten track and discovered only during the intensive searching of the counts, but many were located in places where they could easily be observed. By period's end, anybody who wanted to find one could and probably did.

Contributors: Bob Adamo, Howard Boltson, Hugh F. Boyle, Paul A. Buckley, Thomas W. Burke, James Clinton, Sr., Lester Feldman, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Ken Feustel, Paul H. Gillen, Robert J. Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Peter Martin, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Eric Salzman, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Steve Walter, Alvin Wollin.

Abbreviations: CB-Cedar Beach; XCBC-Christmas Bird Count, where X= B-Brooklyn, C-Captree, F-Central Suffolk, G-Sagaponack, M-Montauk, N-No. Nassau, Q-Queens, S-So. Nassau, T-Staten Island; CLP-Clove Lake Park, SI; CP-Central Park; FBF-Floyd Bennett Field; FP-Forest

Park; * GKP-Great Kills Park, SI; HP-Hook Pond, East Hampton; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; JIN-Jones Inlet; LI-Long Island; MP-Montauk Point; NYRBA-New York Rare Bird Alert; PP-Prospect Park; SHIN-Shinnecock Inlet; SI-Staten Island.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-necked Grebe:** several dozen birds distributed SI to MP mid Dec thru, more evident this season than usual. **EARED GREBE:** DuBoise Pt 18 and 25 Dec (SW); JIN and adjacent ocean 10 Jan thru. **Tricolored Heron:** SCBC 30 Dec. **Tundra Swan:** six HP to 19 Dec; three 29 Dec; two CCBC 17 Dec. **Mute Swan:** continue to increase, as reported on various CBCs. **Greater White-fronted Goose:** two HP 17 Dec; Kelly's Pond, Water Mill 4 Feb. **Barnacle Goose:** MP to 16 Dec (of unknown origin). **Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal:** Short's Pond, Bridgehampton 3 Dec; Mill Pond, Bellmore 1 Jan (PM). **Eurasian Wigeon:** three HP 5 Dec to 20 Jan and 24 Feb; CCBC 17 Dec; Cutchogue to 31 Jan; PP 18 Feb; Peconic 29 Feb. **Tufted Duck:** JBWR 3 Dec; Riverhead mid-Jan; Westhampton Beach 23 Jan; Bay Park, NASS 13 Feb, most years have only single reports. **Com. Eider:** est. of 2-5000 MP 3 Dec to 24 Feb; others in small numbers. **King Eider:** two and then one MP 11 Dec to 27 Jan. **Harlequin Duck:** seven wintered PL jetty; two Mattituck 29 Dec (PG); Fort Schuyler, Bronx 21 Jan (SW *et al*). **Barrow's Goldeneye:** two Lake Montauk 16 Dec (PB); off Wolf Pond Pk; SI 11 Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Osprey:** Mecox to 4 Dec and Mill Neck 9 Dec (Barbara Conolly), late birds; arr 4 Feb (LF), early [or a wintering bird?]. **Bald Eagle:** SCBC 30 Dec. **N.Goshawk:** a few wintered. **Rough-legged Hawk:** scattered individuals along the South Shore of LI. **Merlin:** a few wintered. **Gyr Falcon:** a gray morph was seen at various times and places and may be the same bird; at the same time a very large *tundrius* subspecies of Peregrine Falcon, which might be confused with this bird, was on the Jones Beach strip. The following reports are considered reliable: Centerport 24-25 Dec (photos by A. Wilson); Meadowbrook Dump 11, 25 Feb; Cedar Beach 12, 15 Feb. **YELLOW RAIL:** Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (Ken & Sue Feustel). **Am. Golden-Plover:** two Mecox 1-7 Dec. **American Oystercatcher:** six SCBC 30 Dec. **Red Knot:** 25 BCBC 16 Dec; 200 SCBC 30 Dec. **Purple Sandpiper:** MP, PL, Atlantic Beach. **Little Gull:** reports from Breezy Pt., PL, and SHIN. **Black-headed Gull:** two MCBC 16 Dec; PL 6-25 Feb. **Bonaparte's Gull:** numbers much decreased this winter, most left the area early, and there were few or no lingering flocks into the spring. **Iceland Gull:** dozen reports SI to Orient Pt. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:**

half a dozen reports SI to MP. **Glaucous Gull**: SI 16 Dec; PL 17 Dec; MP 23 Dec; NCBC 23 Dec; Babylon 1 Jan to 4 Feb; JBWE 2-4 Feb. **Common Tern**: SI 16 Dec (Bob Clermont). **BLACK SKIMMER**: Pat Caro and Jeff Kirk eight SCBC 30 Dec. **Razorbill**: MP max ten 11 Dec-21 Jan; two SCBC 30 Dec. **BLACK GUILLEMOT**: MP 16 Dec (T. Burke *et al.*).

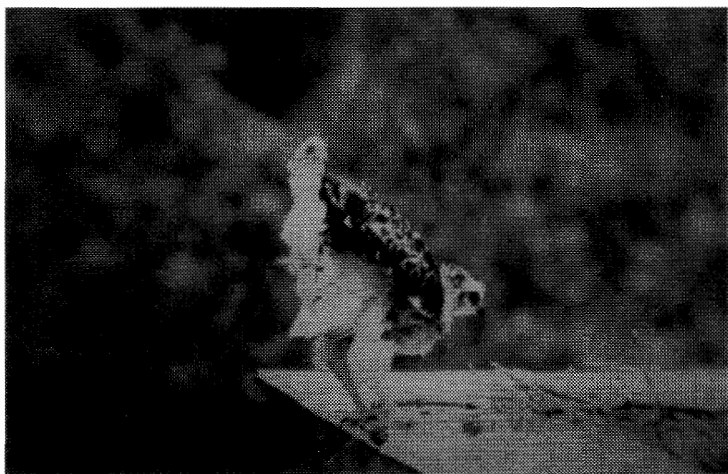
PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl**: Atlantic Beach 16-18 Dec; Breezy Pt 17 Dec; JBWE 18 Dec (PM); PL 31 Dec-22 Jan; Cupsogue Co Park; Moriches 1 Feb; Dune Road, Shinnecock 11 Feb; on balcony 116 St and Riverside Dr, Manhattan 22 Feb (Robert Paxton). **Long-eared Owl**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Short-eared Owl**: a half dozen widely scattered wintering birds on South Shore marshes. **N. Saw-whet Owl**: two JBWR 10 Dec; PP mid Dec; four BCBC 16 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec; two SCBC 30 Dec. **Red-headed Woodpecker**: CP entire period.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: **E. Phoebe**: SI 16 Dec; two MCBC 16 Dec; CCBC 17 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec. **Tree Swallow**: SCBC 30 Dec. **SEDGE WREN**: Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (Ken & Sue Feustel). **Marsh Wren**: Oak Beach marsh 17 Dec (RK). **Eastern Bluebird**: 65 BCBC 16 Dec. **Swainson's Thrush**: CP 17 Dec. [Ed: no details!] **American Pipit**: SI 16 Dec; JBWE 5 Feb. **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**: west of MP 16 Dec (TB *et al.*), 17 Dec (Jim Ash); the same or another in a flock of European Starling on Dune Road west of Shinnecock 1-2 January (Doug Futuyma *et al.*). **Northern Shrike**: *many birds*, many locations, thru; CBC summaries: for 16 Dec: thirteen MCBC, six BCBC, two TCBC; for 17 Dec: seven CCBC, two GCBC; for 23 Dec: two NCBC; for 30 Dec: nine SCBC, one Quogue CBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Orange-crowned Warbler**: SI 16 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec; DuBoise Pt, Rockaway 1 and 21 Jan. **Nashville Warbler**: CCBC 17 Dec. **Pine Warbler**: Long Beach feeder early Jan (NYRBA). **Palm Warbler**: CB 17 Dec. **Com. Yellowthroat**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Yellow-breasted Chat**: JBWR to 16 Dec.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Dickcissel**:. Willowbrook, SI feeder 27 Dec to Jan (Jeff Stetson *vide* HF). **Vesper Sparrow**: MCBC 16 Dec. **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow**: SI 16 Dec. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: Mill River, Rockville Centre 4 Jan (SS,AW). **White-crowned Sparrow**: six at feeder Jamesport (BP). **Lapland Longspur**: SI 16 Dec; two FBF 20 Dec; four after 14 Jan; Breezy Pt 14 Jan; PL 14 Jan; JBWE 6-19 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird**: four Twin Lakes Preserve 1 Jan (PM), 14 Jan (SS,AW). **Boat-tailed Grackle**: SI 16 Dec; four Ponquogue Bridge 6 Dec and one 6 Jan (PG); Shinnecock 19 Feb. **Common Grackle**: Kissena Park, Queens 1 Jan (Ian Resnick).

Baltimore Oriole: two MCBC 16 Dec; SCBC 30 Dec. **Red Crossbill:** 12 JBWE 2 Dec (RK). **Com. Redpoll:** MP 4 Dec; CP 3 Dec; two CP 25 Dec; BCBC 16 Dec; JBWR 4 Feb; SI feeder 18 Feb (Gloria Deppe).
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Five-week old Red-tailed Hawk contributing to a well kept home.



At six weeks of age the young Red-tailed Hawk tries its flying skills before leaving the nest the following day.

Photos by Harry F. Herbrandson