

REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

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The winter of 1996-97 was generally warm and cloudy. As reported from the Albany County Airport, December's mean temperature was 33.8°, 7.3° above normal, with no below zero days. Sunshine averaged 17%, 22% below normal. There was 4.99" of precipitation, 2.06" above normal, making 1996 the wettest year of the century and the sixth wettest on record. There was only 11.1" of snow; none stayed on the ground for any length of time. January averaged 22.7°, 2.1° above normal. There were only three sub-zero days. It was a cloudy month, with only 29% sunshine, 17% below normal. Precipitation was a slightly below normal 1.67", with 16.7" of snow, slightly greater than normal. February averaged 30.7°, 6.9° above normal, with 42% sunshine, 10% less than normal. A record high 68° was set on the 22nd; many early migrants arrived on that date. Precipitation measured a slightly below normal 2", with 8.2" of snow.

Lakes, ponds, and rivers remained open through much of January. Wild food crops were good, leading to minimal feeder activity. Birds remained dispersed throughout the period. However, the eleven reporting CBCs had generally high counts both of species and individuals. The Federation Waterfowl Count in January produced only 13 species and 7826 individuals. Bald Eagles continued to winter locally in good numbers, with the numbers of immature birds reported up significantly from last year. Mike Peterson reported to me that 25 eagles were counted between Rhinecliff and Albany on one February 28 train trip. Gulls were concentrated in the usual Colonie landfill/Cohoes areas of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers; in addition, this year good numbers were found on the Hudson River at Coxsackie and Catskill. Lingering land birds were well represented on CBCs, with Eastern Phoebe, Winter and Marsh wrens, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Chipping, Field, Fox and Swamp sparrows being reported. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was seen on the Chatham count, a Regional first for December. Another Regional December first was the **House Wren** seen by Tom Palmer on three different December dates. In addition, a White-crowned Sparrow overwintered at Five Rivers. Except for Purple Finch, there were few winter finches reported.

The rarity of the season was a *Yellow-throated Warbler*, found on December 7 on a Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club waterfowl field trip. The bird, an immature female probably of the *albilora* subspecies, was frequenting a strip of small evergreens on the edge of a Mechanicville shopping center. It remained at least through December 16 and was seen and photographed by many. This is the first appearance of Yellow-throated Warbler in the Region since 1984,

when a pair nested at South Cairo, GREE, and a fourth Regional record. Rarities not previously mentioned include Greater White-fronted Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Thayer's Gull. The 126 species reported included 25 waterfowl, 11 hawks, 7 gulls, 6 owls, 8 sparrows, and 7 finches.

Contributors: Ken Able; Elliott Adams; Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC); Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN); Brad and Beth Bidwell; Robert Budliger; Paul Connor; Bill Cook; Walter Ellison; Larry Federman; Laurie Freeman; Jane Graves; Rich Guthrie; Ron Harrower; Tom Lathrop; William Lee; Andy Mason; Nancy Martin; Laura Meade; Tom Palmer; Ray Perry; William Purcell; Barbara Putnam; David Russell; Jim Sotis; Douglas Steele; Craig Thompson; Alison Van Keuren; Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations: ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 22 Dec; BR - Burgoyne Rd., SARA; CBL - Cossackie Boat Launch, GREE; CCCBC - Catskill-Cossackie CBC, 29 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 21 Dec; CL - Collins Lake, SCHE; FPCBC - Fort Plain CBC, 28 Dec; FR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward area, WASH; FtM - Fort Miller, WASH; GCBC - Galway CBC, 28 Dec; GI - Green Island, ALBA; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 21 Dec; HR - Hudson River; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 29 Dec; JL - Jenny Lake, SARA; L7 - Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7, SCHE; MR - Mohawk River; NB - New Baltimore, GREE; NRRS - Niskayuna Railroad Station, SCHE; NYSWC - New York State Waterfowl Count, 12, 19 Jan; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 21 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, SARA; SL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; SNHP - Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; SPd - Stanton Pond, ALBA; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 28 Dec; SS - Stockport Station, COLU; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 21 Dec; StFl - Stillwater Flats (includes Saratoga Sod Farm), SARA; TCBC - Troy CBC, 4 Jan; TR - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS; VF - Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, SARA; WR - Watervliet Reservoir, ALBA.

LOONS-WATERFOWL: **Com. Loon:** max five SL 7 Dec; four ACCBC; one SSCBC; one TCBC; two s L George 28 Dec; one n L George 8 Jan. **Horned Grebe:** two SL 7 Dec, one still present 29 Dec, only reports. **Red-necked Grebe:** max five SL 7 Dec; one L7 16 Feb. **Double-crested Cormorant:** one T Hague 21 Jan (LM). **Great Blue Heron:** 48 on ten CBCs; high count 14 TCBC; five Jan, three Feb reports. **Mute Swan:** 30 HR on two CBCs; 14 CBL 6 Feb; 25 Dutchman's Landing Catskill thru (L. Federman). **Greater White-fronted Goose:** one WR 28 Feb (M. Woythal to BEN). **Snow Goose:** eight on four CBCs; two NYSWC; 70 HR Stillwater 23 Feb. **Canada Goose:** high counts 7311 TCBC, 4934 NYSWC. **Wood Duck:** seven on four CBCs. **Green-winged Teal:** two FtPCBC; one NYSWC; one overwintered CL/MR Binnekill

(RP). **Am. Black Duck**: 1285 on nine CBCs; 883 NYSWC. **Mallard**: 4981 on 11 CBCs; 1250 NYSWC; low numbers. **N. Pintail**: one-four present at several locations Dec-Jan; eight Hoosic/Hudson RENS 12 Feb; one Hillsdale 22 Feb. **Gadwall**: two ACCBC; one TCBC. **Am. Wigeon**: one StFI 8 Dec; four ACCBC. **Canvasback**: 65 CBL 12 Dec, up to 200 in late Feb; 144 NYSWC; 54 Catskill 6 Jan; reported in several other locations in small numbers throughout period. **Redhead**: four Lock 4 Stillwater 25 Jan (WE, NM); one CBL 6-26 Feb. **Ring-necked Duck**: 110 ACCBC; two SL 26 Dec; one MR Colonie 22 Feb. **Greater Scaup**: max 36 SL 7, 11 Dec; three ACCBC; seven CCCBC; seven NYSWC; one Livingston 12 Jan; one GI 25 Jan. **Lesser Scaup**: six SL 7 Dec; one CBL 23, 26 Feb. **Oldsquaw**: one ChCBC; one Germantown COLU 12 Jan; two NYSWC; one HR n of Hudson Falls 1 Feb. **Surf Scoter**: one TR 3 Dec. **White-winged Scoter**: seven SL 9 Dec. **Com. Goldeneye**: max 450 SL 7 Dec; 527 on five CBCs; 193 NYSWC; 75 FtM 27 Jan; 49 Stillwater 25 Jan; 46 Mechanicville 16 Feb. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: one SL at least through 19 Dec (WL). **Bufflehead**: max 38 SL 7 Dec; three Jan reports; arr two SS 22 Feb (PC). **Hooded Merganser**: max 150 SL 11 Dec; 78 ACCBC; seven NYSWC; three SS 22 Feb. **Com. Merganser**: high counts 500 Round L 19 Dec, c.500 SL 26 Dec; 302 ACCBC; 324 NYSWC; present in moderate numbers thru. **Red-breasted Merganser**: one Mechanicville 14 Dec; one ACCBC; two CCCBC; one HR Albany 31 Jan. **Ruddy Duck**: one SL 7 Dec; eleven ACCBC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture**: arr Kiskatom 17 Feb (L. Federman); arr one Albany 20 Feb; early. **Bald Eagle**: 17 on six CBCs; at least 17 ad, 19 imm Conklingville Dam, HR, MR, L George, Hoosic R all season; max four ad, seven imm Conklingville Dam 17 Jan; five feeding on deer carcass Putnam WASH 16 Jan; 25 bt Rhinecliff-Albany 28 Feb (both reports *fide* M. Peterson). **N. Harrier**: 23 on five CBCs; five-nine present FtE through period; two Coxsackie 6 Feb; ten reports of singles. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 41 on nine CBCs; 16 reports of singles. **Cooper's Hawk**: 19 on seven CBCs; 19 reports of singles. **N. Goshawk**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC; one TCBC; one FtE 23 Jan (WL). **Red-shouldered Hawk**: one FtE 5 Dec; one HFCBC; one SSCBC; one Rt. 50 SARA 23 Jan; one Ballston Spa 25-30 Jan. **Red-tailed Hawk**: max 107 TCBC; 88 FPCBC. **Rough-legged Hawk**: 15 on three CBCs; max 13 FtPCBC; eight FtE throughout period; two T Canajoharie 31 Jan; two Hoosic/Hudson RENS 12 Feb; four Coxsackie 14 Feb; 12 reports of singles. **Am. Kestrel**: ten on six CBCs; eight reports of singles. **Merlin**: one T Hague 7 Dec (ER); one CL 27 Dec (RP); one ad Schodack Ctr 3 Feb (PC). **Peregrine Falcon**: two downtown Albany 21 Dec-6 Feb; one FtM 15 Dec; one ACCBC; one HFCBC; three SRCBC; one Rt32/23A GREE 30 Dec. **Ring-necked Pheasant**: three on three CBCs; three other reports. **Ruffed Grouse**: five JL 7 Dec, two 18 Jan; four reports of singles. **Wild Turkey**: high counts 214 ChCBC, 129 FPCBC.

Am. Coot: 13 SL 7, 9 Dec; one Copake 16 Dec; one HFCBC; 14 SSCBC; one CBL 26 Feb. **Killdeer:** arr VF 22 Feb; one Delmar 25 Feb; one Greenport 27 Feb; one BR 27 Feb. **Am. Woodcock:** one displaying Albany 27 Feb. **Ring-billed Gull:** max 869 CCCBC; 200+ Catskill 6 Jan. **Herring Gull:** max 2648 CCCBC, 2264 TCBC; 1000+ near Colonie Landfill 25 Jan. **Thayer's Gull:** one SI 2 Jan (WL); one TCBC. **Iceland Gull:** one-eleven CBL thru; five SI 2 Jan. **Lesser Black-backed Gull:** two Colonie/Crescent area 9 Dec-15 Feb; one CBL 6-15 Feb. **Glaucous Gull:** one-two Colonie/SI area 9 Dec-2 Jan; one-two CBL 26 Dec-26 Feb. **Great Black-backed Gull:** max 416 CCCBC; 306 TCBC; 400-500 MR Crescent 1-9 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Rock Dove:** high counts 1591 FPCBC; 1402 TCBC. **Mourning Dove:** high counts 979 TCBC, 879 FPCBC. **E. Screech-Owl:** 28 on eight CBCs; one FR 1 Jan; three Feb reports of singles. **Great Horned Owl:** 37 on nine CBCs; eight other reports. **Snowy Owl:** one Van Eps Rd MONT 23 Dec (W. Greene to BEN); one FtE 19-27 Jan, 21 Feb (BP). **Barred Owl:** six on five CBCs; one Grapeville GREE 26 Jan (PC); one T Hague 19 Feb (LM); one dead on road Rt. 29 T Saratoga 22 Feb; only reports. **Short-eared Owl:** eight FtE 23 Dec-21 Jan, four still present 26 Feb (BP); three Coxsackie 26 Jan, 6 Feb; one SNHP 31 Jan; six T Sharon thru (EA). **N. Saw-Whet Owl:** one FPCBC; one JGCBC; two T Sharon 8 Feb (AM); one Poestenskill 28 Feb (J. Marx to BEN). **Belted Kingfisher:** 26 on seven CBCs; three Jan, two Feb reports. **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** 62 on eight CBCs, high count 18 ChCBC; 16 reports of singles. **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** one ACCBC; one Austerlitz 27 Dec (ADBC); one Burnt Hills 8 Jan (D. Beeler to BEN). **Downy Woodpecker:** 570 on ten CBCs; max 197 TCBC. **Hairy Woodpecker:** 132 on ten CBCs; max 28 TCBC. **N. Flicker:** 135 on ten CBCs; max 32 CCCBC; seven Jan, six Feb reports. **Pileated Woodpecker:** 46 on nine CBCs; 18 reports of singles.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **E. Phoebe:** one ACCBC; one SRCBC; one FR 25 Dec-1 Jan; arr GREE 19 Feb (ADBC). **Horned Lark:** 167 on six CBCs; seen in good numbers Jan-Feb; max 300+ FtE 29 Jan; 500 Petersburg RENS 8 Feb. **Blue Jay:** 2520 on 11 CBCs; numbers seem low. **Am. Crow:** max 3184 TCBC, 2526 SRCBC; 3000 Schenectady GE plant 27 Dec, 2000+ Delmar 10 Jan, 3000+ Troy 20 Feb coming to roosts. **Fish Crow:** nine TCBC; three Jan, six Feb reports. **Com. Raven:** nine on four CBCs; 15 other reports. **Black-capped Chickadee:** max 653 JGCBC, 625 ScCBC, 519 SRCBC, 526 TCBC; few at feeders. **Tufted Titmouse:** max 140 ScCBC, 91 CCCBC. **Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 109 on 11 CBCs; max 41 JGCBC. **White-breasted Nuthatch:** max 82 ChCBC. **Brown Creeper:** 67 on ten CBCs; max 12 TCBC. **Carolina Wren:** one ACCBC; two CCCBC; one NB 22 Jan, 15 Feb; one Delmar 18, 30

Jan; only reports. **HOUSE WREN**: one Palmer's Ravine MONT 23, 25, 31 Dec (TP!); first Dec Regional report. **Winter Wren**: max three CCCBC; one NRRS 15 Dec; one FR 4-5 Jan, 9, 15 Feb; one BR 22 Dec-3 Jan. **Marsh Wren**: one CCCBC; one ChCBC. **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: 185 on ten CBCS; max 30 ACCBC; reported in small numbers thru. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**: one CCCBC; three New Salem ALBA 24 Dec; only reports. **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**: one ChCBC; first Dec Regional report. **E. Bluebird**: max 68 CCCBC, 45 ChCBC, 41 ACCBC; present in moderate numbers through period. **Hermit Thrush**: one ChCBC, only report. **Am. Robin**: max 5213 ChCBC, 2161 ACCBC; wintered widely. **Gray Catbird**: one ACCBC; one CCCBC; one FR 5 Feb. **N. Mockingbird**: 45 on seven CBCs; three Jan, two Feb reports. **Cedar Waxwing**: high counts 159 ACBC, 138 CCCBC, 129 FPCBC. **N. Shrike**: one ChCBC; one FPCBC; one GCBC; one ScCBC; seven reports of singles. **European Starling**: high counts 9940 TCBC, 5165 SRCBC.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: seven CCCBC; one FPCBC; one TCBC. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER**: one Mechanicville 7-16 Dec (HMBC field trip, mob, NYSARC). **Com. Yellowthroat**: one ScCBC; one TCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **N. Cardinal**: high counts 116 ScCBC; 94 TCBC; 13-14 at feeder Guilderland 28 Jan, 15 Feb; began singing Broadalbin 26 Feb. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: 246 FPCBC; 171 TCBC; numbers down. **Chipping Sparrow**: one FR 22-30 Dec (KA, RP); one JGCBC, first Dec reports since 1977. **Field Sparrow**: one SRCBC, only report. **Fox Sparrow**: one CCCBC, only report. **Song Sparrow**: 196 on ten CBCs, high count 45 TCBC. **Swamp Sparrow**: 11 on four CBCs; one Guilderland Ctr ALBA 19 Jan (L. Alden to BEN). **White-throated Sparrow**: max 162 CCCBC, 134 ACCBC. **White-crowned Sparrow**: one overwintered FR. **Dark-eyed Junco**: max 536 ACCBC; 418 ChCBC. **Lapland Longspur**: three FPCBC; 12 FtE 1 Feb. **Snow Bunting**: max 1000 Petersburg 8 Feb. **Red-winged Blackbird**: 159 on five CBCs; arr 22 Feb throughout Region. **E. Meadowlark**: three CCCBC; seven-eight FtE 8 Dec-2 Feb (BP); six-seven T Canajoharie 31 Jan-16 Feb (WP); two Ames MONT 11 Feb; three FR 3 Jan, 6 Feb. **Rusty Blackbird**: two CCCBC; one SRCBC; one TCBC; one Staats I RENS 24 Feb (PC). **Com. Grackle**: max 1017 CCCBC; arr 60+ Castleton 15 Feb (PC). **Brown-headed Cowbird**: 121 on six CBCs; max 60 ChCBC; arr two FR 9 Feb. **Purple Finch**: 293 on ten CBCs; 50 T Dresden WASH 19 Jan (BP); 30-40 daily in Feb at feeder (KA); present in good numbers throughout season. **House Finch**: max 285 TCBC; 269 ScCBC; 221 FPCBC; newly-banded birds at Tom Palmer's showing signs of conjunctivitis (RY). **Red Crossbill**: one Thurman WARR 15 Feb (DR); regularly occurring JL (RY). **White-winged Crossbill**: one River Rd WARR 15

Feb (DR), only report. **Com. Redpoll**: no reports. **Pine Siskin**: 53 on four CBCs; max 28 Fox Hill Rd. SARA 9 Feb; present in small numbers thru . **Am. Goldfinch**: max 704 FPCBC; 635 JGCBC. **Evening Grosbeak**: two FPCBC; two JGCBC; five New Scotland 4 Jan; conspicuous by their almost total absence. **House Sparrow**: max 356 FPCBC; 766 SRCBC.

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