

## REGION 10 - MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF

603 Mead Terrace, South Hempstead NY 11550

ALVIN WOLLIN

4 Meadow Lane, Rockville Centre NY 11570

The weather for the winter season was unusual on two counts. First, it was much wetter than normal, almost by half. Then it was very much warmer by a very significant amount. December 31 was the only day in the month under 20°F. January 8 recorded a new high of 65°F. February tied the record for the warmest ever and for the first time no snow fell during the month. With mean temperatures of 40.0° in January and 40.6° in February, this had to be the warmest winter any of us has experienced.

As a result there were many late and unusual wintering birds. A pair of Piping Plovers was seen at Westhampton Dunes on 6 December. The Christmas counts recorded phoebes, lingering warblers, and some unusual wintering birds, namely larger than usual numbers of Wood Duck, an *Empidonax flycatcher* (presumably a Least Flycatcher), and a **White-eyed Vireo** in Prospect Park plus a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at the Montauk dump.

The generally warm weather over the Northeast made this season's northern finch invasion especially unusual. Evidently food supply and not weather is the dominant factor in these irruptions. For the first time in many years there was a major White-winged Crossbill influx along with lesser numbers of Red Crossbills and Common Redpolls. Birds were seen from Staten Island to Montauk Point. This season was no exception to the observation that northern finches can be notoriously unpredictable. Although widespread and consistent at given locations, their movements were certainly erratic. At no time could one be assured that they would be seen. They were in, out, and gone only to be found another place and another day. Because of this, it has been difficult to judge the total overall numbers visiting us this season.

A half dozen Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in the first half of the season, a considerable increase over prior years.

In very recent years there has been an increase in the number of wintering Razorbills at Montauk Point. The trend continued this season with **100+** reported on 8 February. In addition more alcids were seen in areas to the west.

Vagrants included up to three wintering "Black" Brant, the western subspecies *Branta bernicla nigricans*, wintering at Riis Park/Fort Tilden, Queens with the expected huge number of *B. b. hrota*; a possible Ross's Goose seen by single observers on two occasions at Marine Park golf course in Brooklyn (no details), a **Purple Gallinule** found near dead in Breezy Pt mid Feb [carcass to Don Reipe] and a wintering **Black-headed Grosbeak** on Staten Island (details and photo).

**Contributors:** Bob Adamo, Jim Ash, Steven Biasetti, Andy Baldelli, Howard Boltson, Thomas W. Burke, James Clinton, Sr., Joe DiCostanzo, Lester Feldman, Ken Feustel, Tom Fiore, Henry F. Flamm, Sharon Freedman, John J. Fritz, Doug Futuyma, Paul H. Gillen, Issac Grant, Ethel Hill, Robert J. Kurtz, Anthony J. Lauro, Emanuel Levine, Patricia Lindsay, Robert K. Machover, Hugh McGuinness, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Bob Rossetti, Eric Salzman, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Peter Shen, Marty Sohmer, Steve Walter, Angus Wilson (AnW), Alvin Wollin (AW).

**Abbreviations:** APEC-Alley Pond Environmental Center; BP-Breezy Pt; B-Brooklyn; BX-Bronx; CB-Cedar Beach; CBC-Christmas Bird Count; CP-Central Park; CS-Central Suffolk; CLP-Clove Lake Park, SI; CRSP-Connetquot River State Park; DR-Dune Rd, FI-Fire Island; FBF-Floyd Bennett Field; FP-Forest Park; GKP-Great Kills Park, SI; HLSP-Hempstead Lake State Park; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBCH-Jones Beach; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; LI-Long Island; M-Montauk; MEC-Mecox Bay; MOB-many observers; MP-Montauk Point; NN-Northern Nassau; NYRBA-New York Rare Bird Alert; O-Orient, PL-Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP-Prospect Park; PT-Pelagic trip from fishing boat 40 mi southeast of MP; Q-Queens, QW-Quogue/Watermill, RMSP-Robert Moses State Park; SH-Shinnecock; SICBC-Staten Island CBC; VCP-Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx.

#### LOONS-DUCKS

**Red-necked Grebe:** single birds variously from SI to MP; three wintered in Jones Inlet.

**Eared Grebe:** MP 30-31 Dec; Montauk Harbor 2 Jan.

**N. Fulmar:** 7 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**shearwater species:** Tobay sea watch 18 Dec (EL, SS, AW).

**Great Egret:** 3 SI CBC 20 Dec; 5 Weesuck Creek, East Quogue 31 Dec; others.

**Black Vulture:** 2 Fresh Kills Landfill, SI 21 Dec (RM).

**Turkey Vulture:** MP 7 Dec; Democrat Pt. 21 Dec; Holbrook 24 Jan.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Mattituck 17 Dec; Watermill 18 Dec; 3 Calverton 2 Jan; Marine Park Golf Course and environs most of Dec and Jan; some others out east.  
**Snow Goose:** large flocks Eastern LI; 1 blue morph CS CBC 27 Dec; 3 blue morph in flock JBWR 4 Jan.

**Ross's Goose:** 1 reported in a flock of Snow Geese by two separate single observers on separate dates, 23 and 28 Dec (IG) and (ES), respectively. [No details].

**Brant:** 1 to 3 of subspecies "Black" Brant wintered Riis Park/Fort Tilden, Queens among the Brant from early Dec on.

**Tundra Swan:** Connetquot State Park Jan 25; Hook Pond late November on.

**Wood Duck:** wintering birds widespread CP, HLSP; 25 on Bronx River mid Jan (TF).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** 1 PP; 2 JBWR; others.

**Blue-winged Teal:** Bergen Beach; B CBC 20 Dec, Pond X; Lawrence Jan into Feb.

**Green-winged "Eurasian" Teal:** 2 Speonk 12 Dec thru.

**Tufted Duck:** 1 drake wintered on Swan Pond in East Patchogue; 2 Wildwood Lake, Riverhead 17 Dec.

**King Eider:** 4 PL 7 Dec, then 1 thru; 5 M CBC 20 Dec; other single birds throughout the season..

**Com. Eider:** up to 9 PL early Dec; lesser numbers there thru; 1000+ MP 8 Feb, in general numbers were more normal following the huge concentration of last winter

**Harlequin Duck:** up to 7 PL thru; others.

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** Northwest Harbor late Feb.

**Com. Merganser:** HLSP; 30+ Sunken Meadow SP mid Jan; others.  
**Ruddy Duck:** 1,000 in the Reservoir CP 15 Dec; increasing to 2500 CP 16 Dec, possibly just the difficulty of estimating numbers.

#### HAWKS-ALCIDS

**Bald Eagle:** CRSP 21 Dec; M CBC 20 Dec, same bird?; imm Bronx River, BX CBC 20 Dec.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Gramercy Park, NY City 11 Feb.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** 5 B CBC 20 Dec.

**Wild Turkey:** 30+ CRSP and environs, VCP early Feb.

**PURPLE GALLINULE:** 1 found in yard at Breezy Pt mid Feb, died at rehab center a few day's later.

**Piping Plover:** 2 Westhampton Dunes, west of the spit 6 Dec (DF).

**Am. Oystercatcher:** 3 Q CBC 20 Dec; 2 JBWR 2 Jan; 5 Oak Beach 1 Feb; 3 JBWE 28 Feb.

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Q CBC 20 Dec.

**Red Knot:** a small number wintered in the Black-bellied Plover/Dunlin flock JBWE.

**Purple Sandpiper:** wintered on jetties PL, JBWE, Atlantic Beach, MP.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** sub-adult light morph BP 1 Dec (TF).

**Laughing Gull:** B CBC 20 Dec; Ft Tilden 2 Jan.

**Little Gull:** BP 1 Dec; PL 18 Dec; BP 24 Feb.

**Black-headed Gull:** 2 imm wintered in the Bonaparte's Gull flock PL; SH 7 Feb thru.

**Mew Gull:** possible 2<sup>nd</sup> year at PL till 2 Dec, this is the bird discussed in last season's report.

**Iceland Gull:** widespread and numerous; max 6 Fresh Kills Landfill SI CBC 20 Dec.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** widespread and more numerous this year; max 18 Fresh Kills Landfill SI CBC 20 Dec; 10 BP 17 Jan.

**Glaucous Gull:** MEC 6 Dec; PP 17-20 Dec; Mattituck 25 Dec; SH 1 Jan thru; RMSP 26 Jan; BP 19-24 Feb.

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** 2 Amagansett 7 Dec; 22 there 11 Dec; 1 Breezy Pt; B CBC 20 Dec; 2 MP 8 Feb; 13 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**Dovekie:** 1 fly-by M CBC 20 Dec.

**Com. Murre:** 13 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**murre species:** 5 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**Razorbill:** 33 MP 6 Dec; 5 Amagansett 7 Dec; 33 MP 7 Dec; 11 E. Hampton 11 Dec; 104 M CBC 20 Dec; 4 CS CBC 27 Dec; 44 E. Hampton 19 Jan; 70+ MP 7 Feb; 100+ MP 8 Feb; 1 Breezy Pt 24 Feb; 55 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**Black Guillemot:** 1 fly-by M CBC 20 Dec.

**Atlantic Puffin:** 2 PT 28 Feb (DF, BR).

**alcid species:** PT 28 Feb (DF, BR)

#### PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

**Barn Owl:** JBWR 15, 20 Dec; FBF 19 Dec.

**Snowy Owl:** 1 JBWE mid Dec; M CBC 20 Dec; Crooke's Pt; SI 26 Dec.

**Long-eared Owl:** Sagaponack 21 Dec; 2 wintered CP.

**Short-eared Owl:** Riis Park/Fort Tilden 7 Dec; JBWR 15 Dec; GKP 25 Dec; VCP 28 Dec; wintered JBWE

**N. Saw-whet Owl:** CP early to mid Dec; Ft. Tilden B CBC 20 Dec.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** 5 wintered CP.

#### FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

**EMPIDONAX SPECIES:** 1 wintered at APEC (mob), presumably a Least Flycatcher.

**E. Phoebe:** Clay Pit Pond SI CBC 20 Dec; Woodlawn Cemetery, BX CBC 28 Dec; Blue Heron Park, Staten Island 1 Feb.

**Western Kingbird:** Breezy Pt 1 Dec; Douglaston Marsh to Dec 19.

**N. Shrike:** 1 at Democrat Pt. 21 Dec; 2 RMSP 21 Dec; Dune Rd, Hampton Bays 28 Nov; PP 29 Dec; Short Beach, Smithtown 2 Feb.

**White-eyed Vireo:** wintered PP.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** APEC 25 Dec (SW).

**Tree Swallow:** groups wintered at GKP, PL/JBWE, and Breezy PT.

**House Wren:** 2 SI CBC 20 Dec.

**Winter Wren:** Shu Swamp, Mill Neck 1 Feb; others.

**Marsh Wren:** PP 4 Jan.

#### WARBLERS

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** wintering PP, PL, APEC, Riis Park, and a few others.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** Inwood Park, Manhattan 1 Feb (JD).

**Pine Warbler:** MP CBC 20 Dec; CP mid Jan; 3 CRSP Jan 25; PP 1 Feb.

**Prairie Warbler:** 1 at the RMSP administration bldg 21 Dec  
**Palm Warbler:** Q CBC 20 Dec; 3 CS CBC 27 Dec.  
**Black-and-white Warbler:** Pelham Bay Park 6 Dec.  
**Ovenbird:** PP TO 2 Feb  
**Com. Yellowthroat:** MEC 7 Dec; 3 CS CBC 21 Dec; 2 Riis Park 17 Dec; QW CBC 20 Dec; NN CBC 27 Dec; CB 29 Dec; VCP 10 Jan; PP 17 Jan.  
**Yellow-breasted Chat:** wintered PP; others.

#### TANAGERS-WEAVERS

**Chipping Sparrow:** 2 Q CBC 20 Dec; 2 CS CBC 27 Dec; O CBC 3 Jan.  
**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** Montauk Dump Feb 8-22 (DF *et al*).  
**Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** no winter reports.  
**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** Q CBC 20 Dec.  
**Lincoln's Sparrow:** PP 17 Dec; M CBC 20 Dec; B CBC 20 Dec.  
**Dark-eyed "Pink-sided" Junco:** JBWR 15 Dec.  
**Lapland Longspur:** up to 9 wintered JBWE.  
**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:** imm at SI feeder early Dec to mid Jan.

**Dickcissel:** 1 with House Sparrows at a feeder Sagaponack Pond 31Dec; Long Beach 4 Jan.  
**Rusty Blackbird:** 45 to 60 wintered Shu Swamp, Mill Neck, the most reliable spot in the Region to find this species in winter; several dozen VCP; others.  
**Com. Grackle:** 8100 SI CBC 20 Dec; 502 Q CBC 20 Dec.  
**Boat-tailed Grackle:** 350 JBWR vicinity; 20 SH; 3 CB 20 Feb  
**Purple Finch:** early in season  
**Red Crossbill:** fewer and smaller flocks than White-winged Crossbill, less common toward end of season.  
**White-winged Crossbill:** widespread and erratic on South Shore in small to large flocks; max 135 Sunken Forest, FI 21 Dec.  
**Com. Redpoll:** many birds widespread and early; 12 CP 1 Dec; 9 PP 15 Feb.  
**Pine Siskin:** winter CP; 3 M CBC 20 Dec.  
**Evening Grosbeak:** Sands Pt. Preserve feeder 8 Dec.

#### Late Fall Additions

**Red-throated Loon:** 560+ off Atlantic Avenue, Amagansett 30 Nov (HMG), a very large number.  
**Semipalmated Plover:** DR 16 Nov.  
**Parasitic Jaeger:** 2 MP 25 Oct (SB).  
**Com. Tern:** 30 MP 25 Oct.

Syschiff@ascensionet.com

==