

REGION 10 - MARINE

Seymour Schiff
603 Mead Terrace
S. Hempstead NY 11550

Alvin Wollin
4 Meadow Lane
Rockville Centre NY 11570

The winter was mild and dry. Rain in December and January was somewhat less than normal and February had half its usual amount. We started warm and ended warm with a slug of freezing cold in-between. The winter had little snow. December had only eight days below the freezing mark and February had only six, and all of these above 20°F. December recorded two new daily high temperatures and February one, a 64°F. day on the third. Without January, there would have been no winter. However, from 17 to 22 Jan, the temperature never rose above freezing. This cold snap coincided with the target dates for the Federation Waterfowl Count, and much water was covered with ice.

With November being the seventh warmest month on record and December continuing the trend, it was no surprise that many species lingered. Early Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) came up with many late birds, including a number that remained into January. In some cases, the birds even wintered.

There seemed to be fewer half-hardies this year, maybe because it was warmer and they didn't need the protection that the Region usually supplies. But, on the other hand, just to confuse the situation, we experienced a heavy invasion of northern wanderers and finches, well before the weather turned cool.

Four rare to uncommon subspecies were recorded during the season. With taxonomy in flux, we will continue to include recognizable forms in the interest of preserving records against potential future changes. We'll discuss these in their usual AOU order, but first, **an addition to the New York State list**, New York State's first **Macgillivray's Warbler**, was identified on Staten Island 15 Dec by Richard Veit and remained until 28 Dec. (*Kingbird* 50:2). It was accompanied by an impressive group of other birds including Northern Shrike, Orange-Crowned and Nashville warblers, two Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a Lincoln's and three White-crowned sparrows.

Two Eared Grebes were found on the ocean on the Southern Nassau CBC 2 Jan, one off the Jones Beach center mall and one in Long Beach. On 9 Jan, two Eared Grebes were found in the Point Lookout area. Both birds, separated by the better part of a mile, were feeding along the oceanfront, one west of the westernmost jetty at Point Lookout, the second farther west off the Nassau Beach Club. One bird was present to 22 Jan. An Eared Grebe was also seen at Main Beach in East Hampton on 20 Feb.

A Turkey Vulture was found in Montauk 9 Jan, 2 in Central Park 19 Jan, in Westhampton 29 Jan, and in both Mattituck and Napeague 6 Feb.

On 16 Feb, Tony Lauro found a Black Vulture along River Road south of the Grumman property on the east side of the road. Another, or the same bird, was seen from the Montauk Point parking lot 21 Feb. The bird was relocated in March.

Up to four Greater White-Fronted Geese, two adults and two immatures, visited Marratooka Lake on the North Fork along New Suffolk Avenue in Mattituck from early December. Along the same road, a drake Eurasian Wigeon frequented Deep Hole Creek.

Two "Richardson's" Goose (*Branta canadensis hutchinsi*), a small subspecies of the Canada Goose, were found among the large flock of Canada Geese on Short's Pond along Scuttlehole Road on the Sagaponack CBC 19 Dec.

On 9 Jan, the NYRBA reported an adult "**BLACK**" **BRANT** (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) was found in the Brant flock at Zachs Bay. The bird was most easily spotted when the Brant were on shore.

Uncommon wintering species included numerous Wood Ducks scattered throughout the Region. This undoubtedly is a result of the warm early winter. Jim Clinton found an adult male Tufted Duck in a flock of Ring-necked Ducks on Fox Pond in Calverton on 7 Jan. On Saturday 4 Feb, Andy Baldelli relocated the Tufted Duck in the Peconic River in Riverhead. It remained until 12 Feb. A drake Barrow's Goldeneye again wintered at Ransom Beach in Bayville. A second one was found on Long Island Sound off Caumsett State Park, a third on the Orient CBC in Gardiner's Bay from the bluffs east of Cedar Point, just north of Northwest Harbor, and a fourth at Cedar Point, East Hampton. There were unusually large concentrations of Common Mergansers in several places this winter, e.g. 40 at Hook Pond in East Hampton 15 Jan and 90+ at Hempstead Lake SP on 23 Feb.

An immature Bald Eagle was seen from 4 Dec through early January from Hempstead Harbor and Manorville on the west and then east to both the North and South Forks. Although sightings were widespread in both time and place, it is presumed to be the same bird. Rough-legged Hawks are another irruptive species that is considered rare to uncommon on the coast. There was an amazing invasion of them throughout the Northeast this winter, and Region 10 had more than its share of these uncommon buteos. An all time high may have occurred for the Region when at least 13 were reported during the Christmas Count period. More were reported during February. Reports came from virtually every part of the Region.

Several dozen American Oystercatchers wintered. 31 were counted on 9 Jan from the Coast Guard station at Jones Beach. This large group attracted a **Whimbrel** that stayed with the group at least until 7 Jan. This is the 6th winter record.

Uncommon wintering gulls included one or more Little Gulls, several Black-headed Gulls, Iceland Gulls, and more than the usual number of Glaucous Gulls. But the best was a **Mew Gull**, possibly the same individual observed the previous year in the same locale and described as *Larus c. canus*, "Common" Gull (*Kingbird* 49:286). This one was spotted by the sharp-eyed youth brigade of Mike Anderson, Nick Laviola, Chris Jager, and Paul Anderson. It was found on 30 Jan on the beach in Southampton east of the Shinnecock Inlet and stayed into mid February. A late Common Tern was seen at Montauk Point on 3 Jan.

Angus Wilson and Andy Guthrie left Montauk on Friday, 3 Dec for a 48-hour pelagic trip. The first day of their trip was spent approximately 65 miles south of Moriches Inlet, the second day 50 miles SSE of Montauk Point. The highlights of the trip were 3-4 *GREAT SKUAS*, 2 seen each day, and huge numbers of Black-Legged Kittiwakes, 1000 on 4 Dec and 3427 on 5 Dec. Saturday's other sightings of interest included one Greater Shearwater, 84 Red Phalaropes, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls (both 60-65 miles offshore), and 2 Razorbills. On Sunday they found 3 Greater Shearwaters, 1 Manx Shearwater, 78 Red Phalaropes, 1 Parasitic Jaeger, 1 Iceland Gull, 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 Razorbill, and 1 unidentified large alcid. Other alcid reports consisted of Dovekies and Razorbills from Montauk Point, Shinnecock Inlet, and Jones Inlet, and a fly-by **Black Guillemot** recorded by Ken and Sue Feustel on 8 Jan at Montauk Point.

A very cooperative Barred Owl wintered in Prospect Park, a most unusual find.

An Eurasian Collared-Dove stopped briefly at Jeff Stetson's feeder on Staten Island on 7 Feb and was photographed; details and photos to us. This wandering species is not currently on the NYS list, because of the uncertain provenance of the individuals reported. The species is a common cage bird in the metropolitan area.

A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was seen at Riis Park by Glen Davis and Peter Joost on the Brooklyn CBC 18 Dec (details supplied). This is the third and the latest winter record for the state and the Region.

Since the split, the status of wintering sharp-tailed sparrows is not yet clear. Local observers reported both species and their identifiable subspecies this season, as follows: Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows from Staten Island, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow from Jamaica Bay, and both species from Dune Road east of Shinnecock Inlet. The Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows there included *nelsoni*, *subvirgatus*, and perhaps *alterus*, all difficult to separate from our breeding species (Saltmarsh) even with good views. A Lincoln's Sparrows spent the early part of the winter on Staten Island and another spent most of the winter in Prospect Park. A White-crowned Sparrow of the "**Gambel's**" race was found with other white-crowns along Scuttlehole Road at Butter Lane on the Sagaponack CBC 19 Dec. Paul Buckley and Richard Veit found a Dark-eyed Junco of the "**Pink-sided**" race in Riverdale Park on the Bronx CBC 26 Dec. It was seen until 30 Dec. Full details were supplied to the CBC compiler who sent us a copy. Both observers have had extensive experience banding juncos.

An **INDIGO BUNTING** wintered at a feeder in Central Park. This is the 5th winter record for the state and the first bird that spent the entire

winter. Prior records include three in December and one mid February through March.

An impressive flock of an estimated 25,000 Common Grackles and 5,000 Red-winged Blackbirds was seen feeding in Cutchogue's cornfields in late December. This is certainly an all-time high for downstate. On the morning of 26 Feb, an adult male **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, was present in the Prentice backyard in Cutchogue.

This year's list of northern passerine wanderers included Northern Shrike, **Bohemian Waxwing**, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, and Common Redpoll.

Finally, some notes on the mating behavior of Red Crossbills from *East End Birds* on the internet by Hugh McGuinness: -- In Quogue on 22 Jan, Tom Burke, Andy Baldelli, Gail Benson, and Hugh McGuinness found an amorous male singing repeatedly from the tops of the pitch pines as an attentive female fed nearby. At one point, after several minutes of singing, the female approached and the male fed her (or at least attempted to feed her), a clear demonstration of courtship. The birds were relocated the next day, and 4 were found on 25 Jan. The male was still singing. Since this species is known to nest at all times of the year, these observations indicate possible breeding.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bob Adamo, Mike Anderson, Paul Anderson, Seth Ausabel, Andy Baldelli, Steven Biasetti, Michael Bochnik, Paul A. Buckley, Orhan Birol, Thomas W. Burke, Ben Cacace, James Clinton, Sr., Mike Cooper, Glen Davis, Robert DiCandido, Lester Feldman, Sue & Ken Feustel, Tom Fiore, Henry F. Flamm, John J. Fritz, Paul H. Gillen, Andrew Guthrie, Chris Jager, Peter Joost, Greg Kunkel, Robert J. Kurtz, Ed Lam, Anthony J. Lauro, Nick Laviola, Emanuel Levine, Patricia Lindsay, Christopher Lyons, Hugh McGuinness, Shaibal Mitra, Al Ott, Beverly Prentice, Joan Quinlan, Herbert H. Roth, Eric Salzman, Starr Saphir, Seymour Schiff, Lore J. Schore, Marty Sohmer, Jeff Stetson, Diana Teta, Richard Veit, Steve Walter, Angus Wilson (AnW), Alvin Wollin (AW).

ABBREVIATIONS

APP-Alley Pond Park; B-Brooklyn; BX-Bronx; C-Captree; CB-Cedar Beach; CP-Central Park; CBC-Christmas Bird Count; CLP-Clove Lake Park, SI; CS-Central Suffolk; Freeport; DP-Democrat Pt, FI; DRSH-Dune Road, Shinnecock; FI-Fire Island; FTP-Fort Pond, Montauk; HLSP-

Hempstead Lake State Park; HP-Hook Pond, Southampton; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBCH-Jones Beach; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; LI-Long Island; ML-Marratooka Lake, M-Montauk; MP-Montauk Point; NYRBA-New York Rare Bird Alert; NN-Northern Nassau; O-Orient; PEL-Pelagic trip, 60-65 miles offshore from Montauk; PBP-Pelham Bay Park; PL-Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP-Prospect Park; Q-Queens; QW-Quogue /Water Mill; RP-Riis Park; RMSP-Robert Moses State Park; SG-Sagaponack; SN-Southern Nassau; SHIN-Shinnecock Inlet; S-Smithtown; SI-Staten Island; SS- Shu Swamp, Mill Neck ; WD-Westhampton Dunes; ZB-Zachs Bay.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: uncommon to fairly common off South Shore beaches; 1283 M CBC 18 Dec an extraordinary number on the coast.

Red-necked Grebe: PBP 4 Dec; FTP 4 Dec; 3 FTP 5 Dec; off the Horton Point Lighthouse in Southold 8 Dec; B CBC 18 Dec; C CBC 19 Dec; 8 M CBC 18 Dec; 2 SG CBC 19 Dec; BX CBC 26 Dec; SHIN 31 Jan; 7 in flock of 41 Horned Grebes Main Beach, East Hampton 13 Feb.

Eared Grebe: JBCH center mall 2 Jan; Long Beach 2 Jan; 2 PL area 9 Jan; Main Beach, East Hampton 20 Feb.

Greater Shearwater: PEL 4 Dec; 3 PEL 5 Dec (AG,AnW).

Manx Shearwater: PEL 5 Dec (AG,AnW).

N. Gannet: 3862 M CBC 18 Dec, large number so late in the season; scarce in the western part of the Region.

Great Cormorant: wintered at Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, FTT, PL, SHIN, MP, and other locations.

Am. Bittern: 6 SN CBC 2 Jan; wintered DRSH.

Great Egret: QW CBC 18 Dec; NN CBC 26 Dec; O CBC 1 Jan; SN CBC 2 Jan; DRSH to 8 Jan.

Tricolored Heron: Tobay 25 Dec.

Green Heron: wintered Georgica Pond.

BLACK VULTURE: River Road south of the Grumman property 16 Feb (AL); another, or the same bird M SP parking lot 21 Feb.

Turkey Vulture: QW CBC 18 Dec; PBP

29 Jan; M Village 9 Jan; 2 CP 19 Jan;

Dune Rd. Westhampton 29 Jan;

Mattituck 6 Feb; Napeague 6 Feb.

Greater White-fronted Goose: 2 ad, 2 imm Marratooka Lake, tuck from early Dec; 1 - 2 there thru.

Snow Goose: CP to mid Jan; others.

Canada "RICHARDSON" Goose: SG CBC 19 Dec, among the large flock of Canada Geese.

"BLACK" Brant: ad ZB 9 Jan (NYRBA), with Brant flock.

Tundra Swan: 4-5 Hook Pond, Easthampton thru.

Wood Duck: wintered CP, PP, SS.

Eurasian Wigeon: a few wintered across Region and were found at various times at Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn; JBWR; PP; Patchogue; and Southaven County Park

Blue-winged Teal: SG CBC 19 Dec; CS CBC 26 Dec; SN CBC 2 Jan; Swan Pond in Patchogue 5 Feb; CP 27 Feb.

Redhead: 4 wintered in ZB, usually not seen on salt water.

Tufted Duck: Riverhead 4 - 12 Feb (AB).

King Eider: several wintered at MP.

Com. Eider: single widely scattered birds along the South Shore west to PL; est 200-300 wintered at MP; max count 243 on M CBC.

Harlequin Duck: sev at MP, Southold on the North Fork; 4 building to 12 PL.

Surf Scoter; White-winged Scoter; Black Scoter: all three scoters in some numbers at MP increasing starting late Jan, White-winged the most numerous; a few others

elsewhere.

Barrow's Goldeneye: males at 1) Ransom Beach; Bayville; 2) LI Sound off Caumsett State Park; 3) O CBC Gardiner's Bay ; 4) just north of Northwest Harbor; Cedar Point, East Hampton.

Com. Merganser: 40 HP 15 Jan; 90+ HLSP 23 Feb, unusually large concentrations.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: Captree CBC 19 Dec.

Bald Eagle: imm Hempstead Harbor & Manorville 4 Dec-late Jan. Possibly just one bird

Rough-legged Hawk: at least 13 CBC period; more Feb. Reports came from virtually every part of the Region.

Wild Turkey: 3 Inwood Pk, Northern Manhattan 18 Dec; QW CBC 18Dec.

N. Bobwhite: dozen resident WD; very scarce.

Clapper Rail: wintered DRSH.

Virginia Rail: 6 SG CBC 19 Dec; NN CBC 26 Dec; 2 O CBC 1 Jan; wintered SS

Am. Oystercatcher: several dozen wintered JB area; 50+ 24 Dec, 31 9 Jan; others along the South Shore.

WHIMBREL: JBCH Coast Guard Station thru 7 Jan (AW), with Am Oystercatchers, 6th winter record.

Long-billed Dowitcher: 5-6 in Westhampton, CS CBC 26 Dec; 2 Tobay, SN CBC 2 Jan.

Red Phalarope: 84 PEL 4 Dec; 78 PEL 5 Dec.

GREAT SKUA: 3-4 PEL, 2 each 4, 5 Dec (AG,AnW).

Parasitic Jaeger: PEL 5 Dec (AG,AnW).

Laughing Gull: RMSP 4 Dec; MP 12 Dec.

Little Gull: 2 imm MP 2 Jan; Dune Road 5-19 Feb; PL 8 Jan.

Black-headed Gull: "old one foot" SG CBC 19 Dec; 1-3 PL early Jan on; 1-2 SHIN mid Jan on;

MEW GULL: Southampton east of the SHIN, 30 Jan - mid Feb (MA,PA,CA,NL) probably "Common" Gull (*Larus c. canus*).

Iceland Gull: wintered DRSH, MP; GKP mid Feb; CP late Feb; JBWE/PL mid Feb

thru.

Glaucous Gull: up to 4 SHIN area; MP; PL, and JBCH early in season only; Breezy Pt 19 Feb.

Black-legged Kittiwake: 1000 PEL 4 Dec; 3427 PEL 5 Dec (AG,AnW); found in varying numbers at MP thru.

COM TERN: MP 3 Jan (AB, OB).

Dovekie: 1-2 MP 7-29 Jan; SHIN & Quogue mid Jan - mid Feb; PL 15 Jan - mid Feb

Razorbill: 2 PEL 4 Dec; 1 PEL 5 Dec (AG, AnW); many wintering at MP; max 125+ MP 7 Jan; small numbers SHIN; a few JBCH & PL.

BLACK GUILLEMOT: fly-by MP 8 Jan (S & KF).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 1 Staten Island 7 Feb (JS)

Monk Parakeet: 4 Whitestone 5 Dec, at feeder; 4 Q CBC 18 Dec; 3 south of Forest Park, Queens 23 Feb.

Snowy Owl: RMSP to CB 4-19 Dec; Gardiner's Island 19 Dec; Marine PK to JBWR 18 Dec - 5 Feb

Barred Owl: 1 Prospect Park

N. Saw-whet Owl: wintered PBP, others in Dec.

Red-headed Woodpecker: M CBC 18 Dec; Dyker Beach Golf Course B CBC 18 Dec; Wertheim NWR, CS CBC 26 Dec; Nissequogue River Park, CS CBC 27 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: mostly imm's - SI 15 Dec; 3 SI 18 Dec; 2 SG CBC 19 Dec; C CBC 19 Dec; CC CBC 26 Dec; Southaven County Park, NN CBC 26 Dec; east of Mattituck 9 Jan; Calverton 13-20 Jan; 1-2 causeway at Orient Point SP early to mid Feb; Jamesport 19 Feb; Cutchogue 26 Feb.

Tree Swallow: , SG CBC 19 Dec; CS CBC 26 Dec.

Brown Creeper: wintered PP & CP, NN CBC 26 Dec.

House Wren: 8 on CBC's NN to M; some seen later.

Winter Wren: CP 2-19 Dec; PP 12 Dec; 8 NN CBC 26 Dec; SI 29 Dec; MP 12 Feb.

Marsh Wren: APP 1 Jan; O CBC 1 Jan; SN CBC 2 Jan.
Am. Pipit: JBWE 15-23 Jan; PBP 15-16 Jan; MOR 23 Jan; 26 Jan-6 Feb; SI 31 Jan.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Westhampton Dunes 30-31 Jan (AL, AG); East Moriches 7 Feb (AB).

WARBLERS

TENNESSEE WARBLER: Inwood Park 18 Dec (CL), very late date.
Orange-crowned Warbler: many widely scattered reports, there appeared to be more birds than usual.
Nashville Warbler: B CBC 18 Dec; SI thru 6 Jan, very late date.
N. Parula: PP 12 Dec, latest coastal date is 17 Dec.
Magnolia Warbler: CP 12 December, latest date 12-13 December.
CAPE MAY WARBLER: 6 Jan CP
Latest date except Penn Yan feeder 12 Jan-7 Feb (KB 33:122) record omitted
Bull's Birds of New York State (1998)
Black-throated Blue Warbler:
Bridgethampton 27 Dec, very rare in winter.
Pine Warbler: several early Dec; 7 Quogue CBC 18 Dec, high count this late; CS CBC 26 Dec; one wintered CP.
Prairie Warbler: MP 4 Dec, very rare in winter last 10 years.
Palm Warbler: JBCH 4 Dec; SC CBC 27 Dec
MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER, SI 15 Dec - 1 Jan (RV), *1st NY State record.*
Com. Yellowthroat: CP 6 Dec; SI 7 Dec; B CBC 18 Dec.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW: RP, B CBC 18 Dec (GD, PJ), 3rd and latest winter record for the state and Region.
Vesper Sparrow: M CBC 18 Dec; SG CBC 19 Dec.
Savannah "Ipswich" Sparrow: wintered JCBH, DRSH.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Jamaica Bay; Dune Road

Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: Staten Island;.

Seaside Sparrow: DRSH mid to late Jan.
Lincoln's Sparrow: SI thru Jan; PP to early Feb.

White-crowned "GAMBEL'S" Sparrow: SG CBC 19 Dec, with other White-crowned.

Dark-eyed "PINK-SIDED" Junco: Riverdale Park, BX CBC 26 - 30 Dec (Paul Buckley, Richard Veit)

Lapland Longspur: 1 JBWE Dec; **Snow Bunting:** 100+ JBWE; 100+ RMSP, smaller numbers other locations.

INDIGO BUNTING: feeder in Central Park thru; 5th winter record for the state, first to spend the entire winter.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: ad male Cutchogue 26 Feb (BP)

Rusty Blackbird: CP, feeder; Sg Harbor 6-8 Feb; Van Cortland Pk; SI 17 Feb; Northport 23 Feb,

Com. Grackle: approx 25,000
Cutchogue's late Dec, with 5,000 Red-winged Blackbirds

Boat-tailed Grackle: main group at Jamaica Bay; approx 15 Dune Road; Riverhead 13 Jan

Baltimore Oriole: B CBC 18 Dec; Q CBC 18 Dec; M CBC 18 Dec; SG CBC 19 Dec; SN CBC 2 Jan; Sands Pt 16 Jan.

Purple Finch: CP Dec; 6 M CBC 18 Dec; B CBC 18 Dec; Sag Harbor 26 Dec; 13 NN CBC 26 Dec; 2 DRSH 11 Feb.

Red Crossbill: up to several dozen wintered Dune Rd SHIN area, erratic and wandering; others on CBC's.

White-winged Crossbill: 5 JBWE 5 Dec (RK); East Quogue 18 Jan to 10 Feb (OB), feeding on black-oil sunflower seed.

Com. Redpoll: CP 2-4 Jan; Jamesport feeder 4 Jan; PL 2 Feb; flock wintered Dune Rd SHIN area and a few in the M area, erratic and wandering; Pine Siskin: on sev CBCs; single birds thereafter from the East End.

Evening Grosbeak: 2 CS CBC 26 Dec, scarce.

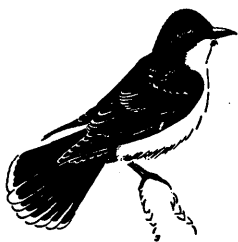
syschiff@ascensionet.com

INVITING NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Readers are urged to submit short pieces of interesting sightings, observations, incidents, etc., that do not require full-blown article treatment. Note the items on pgs 17 and 18 of this issue. This is the type of thing being sought. Most birders have had some unique experience, amusing, puzzling or informative. Why not share that experience with the rest of us?

If there is a photograph involved, all we need is a slide or a print.

If the Editor believes the item should be expanded to a full article, you will be invited to do so.



FEEDBACK

The Editor would very much like to hear from the readers of *The Kingbird*. There is an enormous amount of work involving a number of people, all of whom are volunteers, that goes into the production of this quarterly. The actual printing and distribution of the four issues per year consumes the greatest part of the FNYSBC annual budget.

With all of this effort and expense, I would like to be certain that you, the reader is getting what he wants. I cannot know that unless you tell me. Is there some aspect of birding that we are missing that you would like to see included?

All suggestions will be acknowledged and seriously entertained.

Manny Levine
585 Mead Terrace
So. Hempstead, NY 11550
516-486-5854
e-mail Harpia1@aol.com