

REGION 9 – HUDSON-DELAWARE

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This was by far the warmest winter on record and one of the driest. The incredibly warm season resulted in many unusual species reaching many Christmas Bird Counts. But surprisingly, many winter finches and other northern species made appearances, too. The out-of-range birds were spectacular as well.

December averaged 7.1° to 7.8°F higher than normal. Both Poughkeepsie and White Plains reached 70° in early December. Precipitation ranged from 2" to 3.7", with Dutchess and Westchester counties 1" drier than normal and Sullivan County near normal. But Sullivan County only managed 6.5" of snow for the month. Westchester County recorded no measurable snow for December.

January was even higher above normal in average temperature. Poughkeepsie was 8.5° above normal for the month, with the city reaching 50° or higher for four straight days at the end of January. White Plains reached 67° on 29 January. The northern sections of the Region had less than 1.5" of rain for the month. White Plains had its only significant snowfall for the entire season when only 4" fell on 20 January.

February was just as bizarre. White Plains reached at least 50° on 10 of the 28 days in the month. Poughkeepsie was 7.1° warmer than average, and less than 1" of precipitation fell over the entire Region for the month.

The number of wintering Black Vultures continues to astound. The Southern Orange CBC broke its own record with **182**, along with 80 Turkey Vultures. The Putnam Count has also gone to the vultures, with 76 Black and 60 Turkey vultures. They also reported a Red-throated Loon on the Hudson River.

An unusual gull was found by Valerie Freer at Kiamesha Lake in Monticello, Sullivan County, on 4 February, which she tentatively identified as a **Slaty-backed Gull**. Its identification could not be verified that day and attempts to locate the bird the next day were fruitless. John Haas relocated the bird in the same place on 8 February but again, definitive looks at the bird were not obtained. Then, on 20 February, the gull was refound at the Neversink Reservoir and five lucky birders were able to verify its identification. Attempts at finding the bird in the days following were again fruitless. (See article elsewhere in this issue.)

Another gull found in the same area, with many characteristics of Black-headed Gull, appeared to be a hybrid. Kevin McGowan suggested that it might be mixed with a Ringed-billed Gull.

The **Rufous Hummingbird** found at Lenoir Nature Preserve in Yonkers on 17 November continued through December. The bird initially disappeared in the new year only to be found about 200 yards away from the butterfly garden it had been visiting, on 5 and 6 January. This is the latest date for any species of hummingbird in the state.

A second hummingbird was found by Hugh Martin at the same garden on 7

December. The bird was identified as a female *archilochus hummingbird*. It was seen sporadically until 23 December. The bird was continually chased off by the Rufous Hummingbird. There continues to be disagreement on whether the bird was a Ruby-throated or a Black-chinned hummingbird. There is one point on which nearly all observers agree: vigorous tail-pumping seen on most Black-chinned Hummingbirds was never observed. But due to the great difficulty of separating the females of the two species, this editor will leave it at *archilochus* sp. and let others debate its identity.

Indicative of the warm weather, the East Orange County CBC had a Wood Thrush and the Dutchess count found an Osprey.

Despite many reports farther north, the only report for **Bohemian Waxwing** came from Steve Carlin (via Sullivan County Audubon Society): four were in Willowemoc on 22 December.

A female Black-throated Blue Warbler was coming to a feeder in Rockland County in February. This was Rockland's first winter record. An Ovenbird, seen during count week, failed to show up the day of the Putnam CBC.

A Lapland Longspur was at the Neversink Reservoir 26-27 February for Sullivan's second county record.

The Bronx-Westchester CBC broke its all time high with 125 species, highlighted by the two hummingbirds. Three Nashville Warblers were found, with two of them in Region 9, both in Yonkers. Other highlights from the count that occurred on the Region 9 side included Red-necked Grebe off New Rochelle, American Bittern in Rye, Snowy Egret and Black-bellied Plover in Larchmont, Red-headed Woodpecker in Scarsdale, Seaside Sparrow in Rye, Baltimore Oriole in Hastings-on-Hudson and Common Redpolls. An interesting side note was that more Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen on the count than Downy Woodpeckers (295 vs. 225). First time ever!

Other notable species included: Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Northern Shrike, Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BWCBC – Bronx-Westchester CBC; EGR – Edith G. Read Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; PCBC – Putnam County CBC; RCCBC – Rockland County CBC; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR; SOCBC – Southern Orange CBC; WRNWR – Wallkill River NWR.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 36 EGR 16 Dec; 18 Rye 23 Dec; Little Stony Pt PUTN 29 Dec.

Com. Loon: 9 Rye 23 Dec; New Hamburg DUTC Jan.

Pied-billed Grebe: more reports than usual.

Red-necked Grebe: New Rochelle 23 Dec.

Northern Gannet: 2 EGR 1 Dec; 2 Rye 23 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: 70 WEST 23 Dec.

Great Cormorant: 70 WEST 23 Dec.

Am. Bittern: MC 23 Dec.

Great Blue Heron: 16 EGR 8 Jan.

Great Egret: WEST 23 Dec.

Snowy Egret: WEST 23 Dec; Larchmont 20 Jan (TB).

Black Vulture: 182 ORAN 22 Dec (SOCBC); 76 PUTN 29 Dec (PCCBC); 17 Pawling CBC 1 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: 83 Peekskill CBC 15 Dec; 80 ORAN 22 Dec (SOCBC); 60 PUTN 29 Dec (PCCBC).

Greater White-fronted Goose: Rockland L 17 Dec (RAS).

Snow Goose: numerous scattered reports, more than most winters.

Canada Goose: small form Waryas P DUTC 28 Jan (CV); 22,422 Waterfowl Count DUTC Jan.

Wood Duck: 10 Wappinger L 8 Jan, 7 Feb.

Am. Wigeon: 2 Wappinger L 26 Feb.

N. Shoveler: 112 Larchmont Res 2 Dec.

N. Pintail: 24 Bashakill 26 Feb; 19 Six-and-a-half Station Marsh ORAN 24 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: Wappinger L 26 Feb.

Canvasback: very low numbers in Dec; 300 Newburgh Jan; 1200 Croton Pt P 18 Jan.

Redhead: Croton Pt P 18 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: very common this season; 50 Abels pd 29 Jan; 43 Round Pd DUTC 8 Feb.

Greater Scaup: very low numbers in Dec.

Lesser Scaup: 35 EGR 23 Dec; 340 EGR 20 Jan.

scoter sp: Rye 23 Dec.

Ruddy Duck: 30 Sylvan L 6 Feb.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Hopewell Junction 15 Dec (PF).

Bald Eagle: low numbers on Hudson due to warm winter; 50-60 ORAN and SULL 2-3 Feb (BAS).

N. Harrier: 6-17 SGNWR thru (SK,KH); 2-13 WRNWR thru (SK,KH).

N. Goshawk: Mohonk/Ashokan CBC 15 Dec; Scarsdale 23 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: more reports than previous winters.

Rough-legged Hawk: DUTC 15 Dec; Chestnut Ridge Rd DUTC 5 Jan (BK); SGNWR 8, 12 Jan (JH,OCA); 1-2 WRNWR 12 Dec thru (SK,KH).

Golden Eagle: 1-3 Stissing Mt thru; Bashakill 18 Feb (SG).

Merlin: EGR 23 Dec; Pine Plains 2 Feb (ND).

Peregrine Falcon: Ellenville 8 Dec; Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge thru; Sprain Parkway 26 Jan.

N. Bobwhite: RCCBC 16 Dec.

Am. Coot: 107 Sylvan L 19 Feb.

Black-bellied Plover: Larchmont 23 Dec.
Killdeer: arr WRNWR 26 Feb (SK,KH).
Am. Oystercatcher: EGR 1 Dec; MC 24 Feb.

Greater Yellowlegs: 1-6 EGR thru.
Ruddy Turnstone: 7 Rye 23 Dec, 21 Jan.
Purple Sandpiper: 59 Rye 23 Dec.
Dunlin: 20 Rye 23 Dec, 21 Jan; 15 MC 24 Feb.

Com. Snipe: Piermont Pier 3 Feb (RAS).
Am. Woodcock: WRNWR 29 Jan; 3 MC 17 Feb; WRNWR 20 Feb; DUTC 24 Feb.
Black-headed x ? Gull hybrid: Kiamasha L Monticello 4 Feb (VF); Woodbourne 22, 23 Feb (KM); intro.

Bonaparte's Gull: 8 WEST 23 Dec.
Iceland Gull: 1-2 Monticello, Woodbourne area Jan-Feb (VF,JH).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: ad Neversink Res 20 Feb (VF).

SLATY-BACKED GULL: 1 ad Kiamasha L SULL 4 Feb (VF), 8 Feb (JH), Neversink Res 20 Feb (VF,JH,RD,MG,PBu); intro.

Glaucous Gull: Neversink Res and Woodbourne 10 Feb (VF).

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 5 Rye 23 Dec.
Barn Owl: Rhinebeck 15 Dec.
E. Screech-Owl: record numbers on some CBCs.

Long-eared Owl: Red Hook 7 Dec, 1 Jan.
Short-eared Owl: 1-9 SGNWR thru; 1-7 WRNWR thru; m in courtship display SGNWR 28 Feb (SK,KH).

N. Saw-whet Owl: DUTC 31 Dec; EGR 1-28 Jan; Eastchester 29 Jan.

ARCHILOCHUS SP: Lenoir Nature Preserve 7, 8, 23 Dec (HM,MB,TB).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Lenoir Nature Preserve 1-30 Dec, 5-6 Jan (MB); intro.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Scarsdale 23 Dec.

Belted Kingfisher: more reports than usual.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: Baird P 23 Jan (RTWBC); Swan L SULL 27 Feb (VF).

Fish Crow: Yonkers 10 Jan; 5 Croton Pt P 26 Jan; Poughkeepsie 25 Feb.

Com. Raven: nest Pine Plains 28 Feb.

Horned Lark: 200 Red Hook 2 Dec, 2 Jan; 75 Orange Co Airport 8 Jan; 12 EGR 23 Jan; 25 WRNWR 29 Jan.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: many reports throughout.

Carolina Wren: well reported even from northern counties.

House Wren: MC 10 Dec; Lenoir Preserve 1-20 Dec.

Marsh Wren: 3 MC 10 Dec; 2 Rye 23 Dec; Cornwall 24 Dec (WC).

Wood Thrush: East Orange CBC 15 Dec.

Am. Robin: high counts for many CBCs.

Brown Thrasher: 4 BWCBC 23 Dec; Nyack Beach SP 5 Jan (RAS).

Am. Pipit: EGR 11 Dec, 10 Jan; 20 Croton Pt P 12 Jan (RJ).

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: 4 Willowemoc 22 Dec (SC).

Cedar Waxwing: 200 Vassar Farm 16 Feb.

WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler: 2 Yonkers 23 Dec.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: f at feeder ROCK 21 Dec (DC,CW).

Ovenbird: PUTN late Dec.

Com. Yellowthroat: Hastings-on-Hudson 23 Dec.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: many reports this season, nearly absent in recent winters.

Am. Tree Sparrow: many departed early.

Chipping Sparrow: Lenoir Nature Preserve 1-20 Dec; Hastings-on-Hudson 23 Dec; Pawling CBC 1 Jan; Poughquag Jan-Feb (CP).

Seaside Sparrow: MC 23 Dec.

Fox Sparrow: high counts for many CBCs.

White-crowned Sparrow:

Mohonk/Ashokan CBC 15 Dec.

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: ULST 3 Dec (SS).

Lapland Longspur: Neversink Res 26-27 Feb (VF).

Snow Bunting: EGR 1 Dec; 18 East Orange CBC 15 Dec; 24 RCCBC 16 Dec; Red Hook 2 Jan (RTWBC); 25 Orange Co Airport 8 Jan (JH).

Rusty Blackbird: 56 Peekskill CBC 15 Dec; 21 RCCBC 16 Dec; 10 BWCBC 23 Dec; 14 Millerton DUTC 20 Feb.

Com. Grackle: 2000 heading SW Yonkers 20 Feb.

Baltimore Oriole: Hastings-on-Hudson 23 Dec.

Pine Grosbeak: 2 Parksville 22 Dec (BG).

White-winged Crossbill: 3 Monticello 10

Dec (DM); Poughkeepsie 9 Jan (B&DL).

Com. Redpoll: 2 Callicoon early Dec; Claryville early Dec; 6 WRNWR 12 Dec; 6 Horseshoe L Rd SULL 13 Dec; 7 Rye 23 Dec; 8 Putnam Co CBC 29 Dec; 3 Verbank DUTC 11, 24 Feb.

Pine Siskin: 10 Verbank 3 Dec; 41 Claryville 8 Dec; 18 Yankee L 8 Dec; 15 ULST 15 Dec; RCCBC 16 Dec; 15 Stissing Mt 9 Feb; few at feeder Mt Kisco thru.

Evening Grosbeak: 81 Horseshoe L Rd SULL early Dec; 19 Claryville early Dec; 3 Woodbourne early Dec.

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