

REGION 9 - HUDSON - DELAWARE

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The season started with a rain and wind storm on 1 December. The amount of rain was less than expected but the winds made up for it. Gusts up to 69 mph were reported on the Hudson River. An early cold snap from 4 to 9 December saw temperatures plummet to 16° in Poughkeepsie instilling thoughts of a long cold winter. This was far from what happened. The rest of December and all of January saw temperatures remain well above normal, with little precipitation. Poughkeepsie reached a new record high of 55° on 14 December. Both months ended up 7 to 7.7° warmer than normal.

With no snow and spring like temperatures it is no wonder that the female **Rufous Hummingbird** discovered at Lenoir Nature Preserve in November remained till 6 January. Oddly this is the same date that the 2001-2002 immature male Rufous was last seen. The bird was quite healthy and well fed before departing.

The weather finally turned into winter in February, at least in temperature. The month was 4 to 5° colder than normal but with little precipitation. An icy snow fall on 14 February was the first real snow of the season for many people. In all, the season was very dry. Precipitation for the three months was only 5.5" in Poughkeepsie, where the norm is 9".

The winter report usually has a number of rare sightings thanks in part to great coverage afforded by the Christmas Bird Count. But this season many of great sightings came well after the counts. Spectacular sightings for the season included and adult **Ivory Gull**, **Slaty-backed Gull**, **Barnacle Goose**, **Varied Thrush**, and **Bullock's Oriole**.

The first rarity was found by Bob and Doug Gochfeld on the Putnam County Christmas Bird Count held 30 December. A **Barnacle Goose** was within a small flock of Canada Geese at the Tilly Foster Farm Conservation Area. In flight the bird had all of its flight feathers and kept up with the rest of the geese very well, and there were no apparent bands. Then, while Meredith Hudes was photographing the Barnacle Goose on 3 January, she noticed a substantially smaller Canada Goose type keeping company with the Barnacle Goose. It turned out to be a Cackling Goose. Doug Gochfeld's photos taken on 30 December reveal the Cackling Goose was present then, too. Both birds remained during the warm first half of the winter and were seen at or near the farm and sometimes on the nearby Middle Branch Reservoir. Another Cackling Goose was in Marshlands Conservancy 24 January. As with any type of waterfowl, its origin is always suspect.

The next great rarity was found by John Haas on 25 January at the Monticello Landfill. John surveys the gulls here regularly, and while he was trying to get some more pictures of a "Nelson's" Gull (Herring x Glaucous hybrid) a dark backed gull landed nearby. The bird was paler and smaller than a Great Black-backed and larger and darker than a Lesser Black-backed gull. It had a broad tertial crescent and a broad trailing edge to the wing in flight. Its legs were deep bright pink, pinker than any other bird present. The head, nape and upper breast were all heavily streaked and there was a dark smudge surrounding the eye. There was a distinct demarcation between the heavily streaked breast and the white belly. There was a dark smudge on the gonys portion of the bill. The bird looked strikingly like the **Slaty-backed Gull** he had photographed in 2002.

After photographing this bird he called as many people as possible. Only Arlene Borko and Bill Cutler were able to get there before all the gulls kettled and took off. The bird was not seen on the 25th, but John along with Lance Verderame refound the Slaty-backed Gull at the landfill on the morning of 10 February and had good looks at the "string of pearls." The landfill also hosted a number of other gulls including; Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Glaucous Gull.

The next rarity was reported by Richard Guthrie, an adult male **Bullock's Oriole** visiting feeders in a yard in Phoenicia on 6 February. According to the homeowner, the bird has been "around all winter," and possibly as early as October or November. Numerous visiting birders were able to view the bird sporadically all month long in the general area.

A **Varied Thrush** was found and photographed at a private home in Chester on 19 February for Orange County's second record. A report has been submitted to NYSARC.

These four nice finds were topped on 25 February. In the early afternoon, Drew Ciganek found an adult **Ivory Gull** at Piermont Pier. By 4 PM at least 30 experienced birders in the area obtained excellent views of the bird as it loafed on the ice in the company of Ring-billed Gulls near the base of the pier. The Ring-bills took off at about 5:15 PM followed by the Ivory Gull. The Ivory Gull flew north toward the Tappan Zee Bridge, then circled back to the south where it appeared to join a group of Ring-bills floating far out on the river. Excellent photographs of the bird were obtained by a number of people. The gull reappeared the next day at the end of the pier near where the Snowy Owl, first reported by Paul Oehrlein on 7 January, usually roosted. The gull was seen for most of the day, and was repeatedly seen feeding on the remains of the owl's kills. Unfortunately the warmer temperatures had already started to reduce the ice on the river and the gull was not seen the next day. At least one report was submitted to NYSARC. The bird was probably present since that Friday when Photographer Steve Sisti mentioned seeing an unusual gull, very white, with black feet. It was on the ice on the north side. But the gull could not be relocated by birders that afternoon.

A Greater White-fronted Goose was found on Round Pond, Sharon Station, on 17 December. Then in January, Rob Stone found a Greater White-fronted Goose on Skinner Lane in Pine Island on the 20th. Others re-found it the next day mixed in with over 5000 Canada Geese. Single reports of Tundra Swan came in from Kiamesha Lake in Monticello on the morning of 9 December, Bashakill Marsh on 21-25 February, and on the Wallkill River for most of February. There was another report from Croton Point Park, 9 and 10 February. The only Eurasian Wigeon report was from Edith G. Read Preserve in early December. The East Orange CBC, held on 16 December, had their first Red-throated Loon in Newburgh along with two Monk Parakeets in New Windsor. Andy Guthrie reported two Razorbills off Edith G. Read Sanctuary on 7 January. A Snowy Owl was found in New Hamburg 6 January. The next day, probably the same bird was discovered at Piermont Pier. The bird was later responsible for providing some easy meals for the Ivory Gull. The bird stayed thru the period.

With a warm December, it was surprising that only one Eastern Phoebe was reported for the season. It was found on the Southern Orange CBC on 23 December. Northern Shrike was reported from the northern counties, with three on the Dutchess CBC. The Putnam County CBC reported several very noteworthy half hardies; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, and Lincoln's Sparrow. The only notable warblers were a Nashville found by Avi Kenny during the Bronx-Westchester count and a Yellow-breasted Chat from the 17 December Rockland count. Usually quite rare for Region 9, a number of Lapland Longspurs were found: two on Southland Farm, Rhinebeck, on 9 December and singles from Croton Point Park on the Peekskill count on 16 December and on the Southern Orange Count on 23 December. The East Orange count had the only Baltimore Oriole.

Winter finches were noticeably absent again this year, with only two reports of Pine Siskin and a single Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Point Park; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; NYBW – Bronx-Westchester CBC; NYDC – Dutchess County CBC; NYEO – East Orange CBC; NYML – Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir CBC; NYMT – Monticello CBC; NYPE – Peekskill CBC; NYPC – Putnam County CBC; NYRC – Rockland County CBC; NYSU – Southern Orange CBC; RNC – Rye Nature Center; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Round Pond, Sharon Station NYRC 17 Dec; Pine Island 20, 21 Jan (RSt,JH,ABo,KMcD).
Snow Goose: numerous reports of a few in Dec, more than normal.
Brant: 620 EGR 22 Dec; 25 EGR 22 Jan.
BARNACLE GOOSE: Tilly Foster Farm, Brewster NYPC 30 Dec – 20 Jan (BG,DG).
CACKLING GOOSE: Tilly Foster Farm, Brewster NYPC 30 Dec – 20 Jan (DG,MH); MC 24 Jan (TB).
Canada Goose: 4500 Round Pond, Sharon Station 17 Dec; 3500 Pine Island 21 Jan.
Tundra Swan: Kiamesha Lake 9 Dec (JH); Bashakill 21-25 Feb (SB,JH,VF,RD); Wallkill R 3-thru Feb (MD, JH, KMcD); CPP 9,10 Feb (BKe).
Eurasian Wigeon: EGR 7 Dec.
Am. Wigeon: 30 EGR 7 Dec.
N. Pintail: Neversink R 18 Jan.
Canvasback: low numbers thru.
Redhead: 2 Beekman 17 Dec.
Ring-necked Duck: 267 NYEO 16 Dec; 50 Sylvan L, Beekman 22 Dec.
Greater Scaup: 5000 EGR 10,13 Dec; 8000 EGR 22 Jan.
Lesser Scaup: 400 EGR 7 Dec; 1000 EGR 22 Jan.
Surf Scoter: EGR 18 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: EGR 2, 25 Dec, 22 Feb; 2 Rhinecliff 13-15 Jan (CP).
Black Scoter: 2 EGR 2 Dec.
Long-tailed Duck: 92 EGR 18 Dec; Yankee L 25 Dec – 14 Jan; Ashokan Res 25 Dec (JD); Oscawana Lake 14 Jan (DG).

Bufflehead: 40 EGR 7 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: 26 Wallkill 8 Feb; 60 Yankee L 26 Dec.
Com. Merganser: 200 Kiamesha L 3 Dec.
Red-breasted Merganser: Kiamesha L 3 Dec; Rhinecliff 6 Jan.
Red-throated Loon: Newburgh 16 Dec NYEO, 1st record (KMcD).
Horned Grebe: Lake DeForest 17 Feb (FB).
Red-necked Grebe: EGR 7 Jan, 22 Feb (AG, TB).
N. Gannet: 3 EGR 2 Dec; EGR 13 Dec.
Double-crested Cormorant: 54 EGR 13 Dec.
Great Blue Heron: 17 EGE 30 Jan.
Black Vulture: 25 New Paltz 10 Dec; 41 NYML 16 Dec; 53 NYRC 17 Dec; 46 NYPE 16 Dec; 19 SGNWR 21 Dec; 45 NYSU 23 Dec.
Turkey Vulture: 108 NYML 16 Dec; 105 NYPE 16 Dec.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Osprey: Rockland Lake 3 Dec (L&SP), very late.
N. Harrier: 4 Pine Island 20, 21 Jan.
Red-shouldered Hawk: Pine Bush 7 Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: NYSU 23 Dec; Harriman SP 8 Jan; Monticello 27 Jan; Bethel 25 Feb; SGNWR 28 Jan.
Golden Eagle: 1-2 Stissing Mt thru.
Merlin: Hook Mt 16 Dec (JW); NYSU 23 Dec; NYPC 30 Dec.
Virginia Rail: 4 MC 23 Dec; 2 Pawling 2 Jan (HVCBC).

Am. Coot: 150 Sylvan L, Beekman 17 Dec.
Greater Yellowlegs: 2 MC 1 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: 8 EGR 2, 25 Dec.
Dunlin: MC 23 Dec.
Wilson's Snipe: NYML 16 Dec; 3 MC 23 Dec; Campbell Hall 7 Feb.
Am. Woodcock: arr 25 Feb.
IVORY GULL: Piermont Pier 26-27 Feb, see intro.
Bonaparte's Gull: 7 EGR 11 Dec.
Iceland Gull: 1-4 Monticello area including the landfill and Kiamasha Lake 16 Dec thru (JH), 4 Monticello Landfill 10 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: Monticello 12-13 Dec (JH); 2 Monticello Landfill 8 Feb; Monticello Landfill 16-17 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: Monticello Landfill 31 Jan, 3, 8, 16, 17, 19 Feb (JH); 2 Monticello Landfill 10 Feb (JH).
"Nelson's" Gull: Monticello Landfill 22, 24 Jan, 8, 10 Feb (JH).
SLATY-BACKED GULL: Monticello Landfill 24, 30 Jan, 10, 17, 24 Feb (JH, ABo, BCu, LV).
Razorbill: 2 EGR 7 Jan (AG).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Monk Parakeet: 2 New Windsor 16 Dec NYEO (KMCD); 12 New Rochelle 17 Jan.
Snowy Owl: New Hamburg 6 Jan (ML, B&AM, DF, CV); Piermont Pier 7 Jan - 27 Feb (PO).
Long-eared Owl: 2 CPP 11 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: Shawangunk Grassland 17, 29 Dec; CPP 16 Dec, 26 Feb; 2 Smithville 31 Dec; Piermont Marsh 25 Feb.
N. Saw-whet Owl: Rhinebeck 11 Dec; 6 Smithville 29 Dec.
RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD: Lenoir Nature Preserve 1 Dec - 6 Jan (EH, MB, KJ).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: NYSU 23 Dec.
N. Shrike: 3 NYDC 16 Dec; Robinson Lane RA, Wappingers 17, 20, 22, 23, 30 Dec (B&AM m.o.b.); NYMT 27 Dec; SGNWR 12, 29 Dec, 7 Jan (RT, CG).
Am. Crow: 8000 Rinaldi Blvd, Poughkeepsie 6, 30 Dec (CV).

Horned Lark: 60 Pine Island 20, 21 Jan; 150 Verbank 31 Jan.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: Lenoir Nature Preserve Dec, Feb, fewer reports than in most years.
Winter Wren: 11 Rye 23 Dec.
Marsh Wren: MC 19 Dec.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: NYPC 30 Dec.
E. Bluebird: 77 NYPE Dec 16; 20 Harriman SP 29 Dec.
Wood Thrush: NYPC 30 Dec.
VARIED THRUSH: Chester 19 Feb (KMCD).
Brown Thrasher: Montgomery 7 Feb (KMCD).
Am. Pipit: 15-20 CPP 4, 11 Feb; 3 EGR 27 Feb.

WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler: Greenburgh, NYBW 23 Dec (AK).
Yellow-breasted Chat: NYRC 17 Dec.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Lincoln's Sparrow: NYPC 30 Dec.
White-crowned Sparrow: 2-4 Millerton 9, 17, 31 Dec; 40 Skinner Lane near Pine Island Feb (KMCD).
Lapland Longspur: 2 Southland Farm, Rhinebeck 9 Dec (MP); CPP 16 Dec (MB, KJ); NYSU 23 Dec.
Snow Bunting: Southland Farm, Rhinebeck 10 Dec (CV); 30 Saugerties 20 Feb (ABe); 2 Monticello 24 Feb (JH, LV, ABo).
N. Cardinal: 16 Mt Rest Rd, New Paltz.
E. Meadowlark: 3 CPP 11 Feb.
Rusty Blackbird: 2 Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, New Paltz 8 Dec.
Baltimore Oriole: NYEO 16 Dec.
BULLOCK'S ORIOLE: Phoenicia 5 Feb thru (BR, RG, mob).
Purple Finch: very few reports.
Pine Siskin: 3 Greenfield Park 5 Dec (AC); 2 Harriman SP 29 Dec.
Evening Grosbeak: Callicoon 1, 2 Feb (MW).

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