

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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After several consecutive mild winters, this season returned to historic normal weather conditions, with only slightly warmer than average temperatures. December temperatures were near historic averages, with significant snow showers at Albany International Airport on 16 and 31 December. Snow quickly covered ground surfaces, and all water but streams froze early in December. Many ground-water seepages in gullies and forest bottoms remained open, however, providing a haven for a number of half-hardies picked up on Christmas Bird Counts. A brief moderating trend occurred in early January, with daytime and nighttime temperatures above freezing, but most calm bodies of water remained frozen and a series of light snow showers soon covered any exposed patches of ground. February ended 1.2° F above average and storms on the 12th, 22nd, and 26th bolstered the Region's snowpack by several inches.

The Hudson and Mohawk rivers remained largely unfrozen throughout the season.

Despite the open rivers, waterfowl were scarce and unimpressive this year. Average numbers of common species appeared on Christmas Bird Counts and January waterfowl counts. Rich Guthrie found a **Cackling Goose** (or rather heard one from the two-way baby monitors he keeps in his house on the Hudson River and confirmed its identity by sight). A hearty Double-crested Cormorant lingered on the Hudson at Peebles Island until 30 December, and Turkey Vultures arrived early this year in late February.

Birders on the Southern Rensselaer CBC were treated to an **Osprey**, and a single location maximum of 27 Bald Eagles at Cohoes Falls is unusual for the Region. Merlins continue to be sighted frequently, and birders reported three Red-shouldered Hawks this winter. The National Aviary, in collaboration with American and Canadian ornithologists, set up an interesting interactive feature on their website, <http://www.aviary.org/csr/eaglePA.php>, where viewers can follow the wanderings of a tagged female Golden Eagle (No. 67) that wintered mostly in western Greene County. The bird was captured on its nest in the summer of 2007 in the Matane Wildlife Refuge in Quebec. During migration it flew south through Maine, down the Presidential ranges of northern New England, spiraling around Connecticut before heading west along the Mass Pike and settling in the northern Catskills.

Nancy Kern and Marion Ulmer found two **Sandhill Cranes** moving south down the Hudson River at Stockport Station in Columbia County. It's exciting to receive multiple reports of this species each year now.

This was a decent winter for gulls. Iceland Gulls were ever present on the large rivers, and birders sent in several reports of Lesser Black-backed and Glaucous gulls. On the New York State Thruway rest stop in New Baltimore, Rich Guthrie spotted a **Laughing Gull** gorging itself on hamburger buns and French fries.

The unchampioned bird of the season is the single **Townsend's Solitaire**, which Rich Guthrie, Jory Langer, and Leroy Suess found feeding on wild grapes in a tangle of sumac in a brushy field at Thompson Lake State Park in Albany County. The troupe observed the bird for 10 minutes before it flew up the road and into obscurity.

A few half-hardies showed up on area Christmas Bird Counts. This year three circles reported **Gray Catbird**. Most counts reported Hermit Thrushes. Schenectady birders picked up a Field Sparrow, and several others reported Savannah and White-crowned sparrows. Cliff Lamere spotted and photographed an **Ovenbird** in Loudonville, Albany County in December. After the count season, an unusually early flock of Tree Swallows showed up in February in Schoharie County, and Chad Witko of Claverack found a **Brown Thrasher** on 26 February. All of the common icterids were present in small numbers throughout the season.

This was a winter for finch enthusiasts to remember. Small flocks of Common Redpolls were reported so widely that the Hudson-Mohawk Birdline resorted to describing them in shorthand as “numerous.” A few careful observers sent in good details for **Hoary Redpolls**. Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were also widely reported, but only a few crossbills were reported from the Johnstown-Gloversville CBC. The big news is, of course, the major irruption of Pine Grosbeaks in the Region. Flock sizes averaged around eight individuals and were reported from Adirondack feeders all the way into the southern river valley lowlands. With some patience and a Sunday to burn, most birders could find them by staking out a good patch of crab apples or mountain ash in exurban areas.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAT – T Catskill GREE; CHA – T Chatham COLU; COX – T Cossackie GREE; FtE – T Fort Edwards WASH; GLO – T Gloversville FULT; HR – Hudson Ri; JOH – T Johnstown FULT; VF – Vischer's Ferry SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 2 Niskayuna SCHE 2 Dec; max 3000 Florida MONT 10 Dec; Ghent COLU 15 Dec; 4 Troy CBC 29 Dec; FtE 5 Jan; COX boat launch 13 Jan; HR COLU 15 Feb.

CACKLING GOOSE: New Baltimore GREE 14 Dec.

Canada Goose: max 8777 SARA CBC 15 Dec.

Tundra Swan: HR at Germantown COLU 2 Feb (MBr).

Wood Duck: Rexford SARA 15 Dec; 3 SARA CBC 15 Dec; SCHE CBC 15 Dec; arr Hillsdale COLU 24 Feb.

Gadwall: COX boat launch 11-15 Feb.

Am. Wigeon: Rt 9 COLU 29 Feb.

Am. Black Duck: max 30 Mechanicville SARA 19 Jan.

N. Pintail: MR at Lock 7 18 Dec; JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec; 2 S RENS CBC 22 Dec.

Canvasback: HR SARA 13 Dec; 3 SARA CBC 15 Dec.

Redhead: Hudson Falls CBC 22 Jan; 2 FtE 15 Feb; HR COLU 20 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: max 50 Loughberry L SARA 1 Dec.

Lesser Scaup: Ooms Pd COLU 8 Dec; CHA CBC 15 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 3 VF 10 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: 3 SARA CBC 15 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck: SCHE CBC 15 Dec; VF 15-21 Dec; MR Lock 7 18 Dec.

Bufflehead: max 10 Waterford SARA 21 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 200 FtE 21 Feb.

Hooded Merganser: max 50 Tomhannock Res RENS 8 Dec.

Com. Merganser: max 1000 Cohoes ALBA 25 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: 3 Saratoga L 9 Dec; SARA CBC 15 Dec; Troy CBC 29 Dec; L George WARR 22 Jan.

Ruddy Duck: max 12 ALB CBC 22 Dec; 12 Troy CBC 29 Dec.

Ruffed Grouse: max 4 ALB CBC 22 Dec.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 3 FtE 19-24 Jan; Partridge Run ALBA 2 Feb, only reports.

Com. Loon: New Baltimore GREE 5 Dec; max 3 L George WARR 8-30 Dec; SARA CBC 15 Dec.

Horned Grebe: Troy CBC 29 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant: Peebles I SARA 30 Dec.

Great Blue Heron: max 3 Collins L SCHE 13 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: arr Troy RENS 31 Jan; Hillsdale COLU 19 Feb; COX grasslands GREE 28 Feb; Copake L COLU 29 Feb.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

OSPREY: S RENS CBC 22 Dec.

Bald Eagle: max 27 Cohoes Falls ALBA 7 Jan, high count.

N. Harrier: max 10 CHA CBC 15 Dec.

Cooper's Hawk: max 9 SAL CBC 5 Jan.

N. Goshawk: Providence SARA 10 Dec; 2 Troy CBC 29 Dec; E Jewett GREE 19 Feb.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Florida MONT 8 Jan; Delmar ALBA 3 Feb; FtE 24 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 20 Hudson Falls CBC 22 Dec.

Golden Eagle: mostly SW GREE 6 Dec-10 Feb, see notes.

Merlin: New Baltimore GREE 5 Dec; SARA CBC 15 Dec; SCHE CBC 15 Dec; CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec; 3 S RENS CBC 22 Dec; ALBA CBC 22 Dec; 3 Troy CBC 29 Dec; Papscanee RENS 25 Jan; FtE 25-26

Jan; Meadowdale ALBA 3 Feb; Niskayuna SCHE 24 Feb.

Peregrine Falcon: 2 Troy CBC 29 Dec, several other reports of singles near HR. **Am. Coot:** VF 10 Dec; SARA CBC 15 Dec. **SANDHILL CRANE:** 2 Stockport COLU 9 Jan (NK, MU).

LAUGHING GULL: New Baltimore GREE 2 Jan (RG), rare in winter.

Iceland Gull: 2 Cox boat launch 7-18 Dec; 5 Cox boat launch 20 Dec; 2 Cohoes ALBA 21-29 Dec; S RENS CBC 22 Dec; MR Lock 7 28 Dec; 5 Troy CBC 29 Dec; max 7 Cohoes ALBA 10 Jan, several other reports of singles.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: CHA CBC 15 Dec; CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec; Cohoes ALBA 21 Dec.

Glaucous Gull: CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec; Cohoes ALBA 21 Dec - 6 Jan; 2 Troy CBC 29 Dec; 2 Cohoes ALBA 10 Jan.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 250 MR Crescent 20 Jan.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: max 8 SCHE CBC 15 Dec.

SNOWY OWL: 2 JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec; Clifton Pk SARA 15 Jan; FtE 21 Jan-23 Feb.

Long-eared Owl: CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec, count week.

Short-eared Owl: 4 FtE 8 Dec; 2 FtE 10 Dec; 2 CAT-COX CBC 18 DEC; COX grasslands 21 Jan.

N. Saw-whet Owl: CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec; JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 7 SCHE CBC 15 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: FtE 10 Dec thru; Papscanee RENS 21 Dec; Florida MONT 21 Dec; ALBA CBC 22 Dec; S RENS CBC 22 Dec; Cambridge WASH 28 Dec; COX flats 28 Dec-15 Jan; Petersburg RENS 3-15 Jan; Gansevoort SARA 3 Feb.

Fish Crow: max 23 Troy CBC 29 Dec.

Com. Raven: max 7 Burnt-Rossman Hills SF SCHO 15 Dec.

Horned Lark: max 108 CHA COLU 8 Dec.

Tree Swallow: arr Cobleskill SCHO 13 Feb, early.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 723 JOH-GLO 22 Dec.

Tufted Titmouse: max 203 SARA CBC 15 Dec.

Carolina Wren: max 9 S RENS CBC 22 Dec; 9 Troy CBC 29 Dec.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: SCHE CBC 15 Dec; Rexford SARA 25 Dec-18 Jan.

E. Bluebird: max 137 SAL CBC 5 Jan.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE: Thompson L SP ALBA 20- Feb (RG, JL, LS).

Hermit Thrush: CHA CBC 15 Dec; 2 SCHE CBC 15 Dec; ALBA CBC 22 Dec; JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec; S RENS CBC 22 Dec; Troy CBC 29 Dec; Five Rivers ALBA 17 Feb.

GRAY CATBIRD: Rotterdam SCHE 13 Dec; 2 SCHE CBC 15 Dec; ALBA CBC 22 Dec; SAL CBC 5 Jan.

BROWN THRASHER: Claverack COLU 26 Feb (CW).

Am. Pipit: 2 CHA CBC 15 Dec.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Livingston COLU 2 Dec; 4-mile Pt GREE 6 Dec.

OVENBIRD: Loudonville ALBA 18 Dec, photographed (CL).

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Field Sparrow: SCHE CBC 15 Dec.

Savannah Sparrow: Ghent COLU 15 Dec; 3 SARA CBC 15 Dec; 2 Papsanee RENS 20 Dec; 2 S RENS CBC 22 Dec.

Fox Sparrow: E Greenbush RENS 4-5 Dec; CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec.

Swamp Sparrow: SCHE CBC 15 Dec; S RENS CBC 22 Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: CAT-COX CBC 18 Dec; S RENS CBC 22 Dec; SAL CBC 5 Jan; max 4 Kinderhook COLU 29 Jan.

Lapland Longspur: SARA CBC 15 Dec; 12 Petersburg RENS 19 Dec; max 21 Florida MONT 21 Dec; Five Rivers ALBA 1 Jan; FtE 5 Jan.

Snow Bunting: max 180 Glen MONT 6 Dec.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 32 New Baltimore GREE 29 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: Taghkanic COLU 1-3 Dec.

Com. Grackle: max 10 Wildwing Pk GREE 18 Feb.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 154 Livingston COLU 3 Dec.

Pine Grosbeak: monthly max 31 Partridge Run ALBA 29 Dec; monthly max 41 Partridge Run ALBA 19 Jan; monthly max 16 E Greenbush RENS 16 Feb, widespread reports of flocks of fewer than 10 individuals throughout Region.

Purple Finch: max 15 Claverack COLU 17 Jan.

Red Crossbill: 4 JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec, only report.

White-winged Crossbill: 3 JOH-GLO CBC 22 Dec, only report.

Com. Redpoll: max 226 S RENS CBC 22 Dec, abundant and widespread throughout Region Dec thru.

HOARY REDPOLL: Malta SARA 6 Jan (GR); Galway SARA 3 Feb; Berne ALBA 16 Feb-1 Mar (TW).

Pine Siskin: max 20 Malta SARA 9 Dec.

Evening Grosbeak: 5 Partridge Run ALBA 2 Dec; max 27 Providence SARA 17 Dec; 14 SAL CBC 5 Jan; max 280 Batchellerville FULT 3 Feb, high count (RH).

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