

REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

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Winter 2013-14 ended as one of the coldest in several decades at Albany International Airport. December produced a foot of snow in the middle of the month, with higher accumulations in the higher elevations and several smaller snow showers at the end of the month. The month ended 1° F colder than average. January produced no major snowstorms after the first week but ended nearly 3° colder than average. The lowest temperature of the season was -12° on

4 January. February produced many small snow and sleet storms and ended 4° below average.

The cold temperatures froze many rivers, lakes, and bays, reducing the number of waterfowl reported. A pair of Barrow's Goldeneyes is the only unusual waterfowl species of the season. Most of the other typical winter waterfowl were reported but in far lower numbers.

Nancy Kern reported a Golden Eagle picking scraps from a discarded deer carcass she placed on her property, making for a rather original feeder. This anecdote reminds one of the road-killed deer Rich Guthrie used to throw onto the Hudson River ice near his New Baltimore home to attract Bald Eagles. Who says that feeder birds are boring?

One of the biggest surprises of the season is a **Sora** found on the Hyuck Preserve Christmas Bird Count, a photographed bird hiding in a mere square foot of vegetation on a small stream entirely surrounded by deep snow. One does not envy the bird, but it underscores the power of survival and that one never knows where unusual birds will show up.

This will come as no news to anyone who pays attention to birds, but Region 8 shared in the historic regional irruption of Snowy Owls. One could find a Snowy Owl in just about all the counties of Region 8 this winter, many lingering for several weeks in conspicuous locations. The owls delighted the photography staff of most local newspapers who reported "giant ice owls," and "Harry Potter owls" in plain sight of iPhone-clicking residents who rarely give a second look at birds.

Old timers would describe this year's winter as a real old-fashioned upstate New York winter, but the Regional data show no strong difference in the presence of half-hardies compared with milder winters. The same few catbirds, wrens, thrushes, icterids, and sparrows appeared in typical numbers. What did stand out is the sheer volume of Yellow-rumped Warblers. This far inland, a few yellow-rumps are reported each winter and some years none at all. Birders who have compiled records longer than me report that they cannot remember a year where so many were reported during all three winter months in locations across the Region. For example, the Alan Devoe Bird Club, which tracks monthly reports for its club newsletter, has not had a Yellow-rumped Warbler in January since 2004. The Yellow-rumped Warblers listed in the species account are but a smattering of the many reports of singles that came in from December to March.

This was not the winter of the finch. One would have to similarly go back a decade to find a winter with zero siskins, zero redpolls, zero crossbills, and only one lucky flyby Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Abrahamsen, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports, Larry Alden, Dave Baim, Hope Batcheller, Mona Bearor, Barbara Brabetz, Mimi Brauch, James Coe, Gerry Colborn, Bill Cook, eBird.org, Gordie Ellmers, Larry Federman, Peter Feinberg, Corey Finger, Elizabeth Grace, Jane Graves, Bernie Grossman, Richard Guthrie, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, *The Kingbird* 2014 June; 64 (2)

Drew Hopkins, Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Larry Main, David Martin, Andrew Mason, Matthew Medler, Roger Miller, Jeff Nadler, Gail & Rich Nord, Paul Novak, Jeff Novick, Tom Palmer, John Piwowarski, Barb Putnam, Gregg Racer, David Rankin, Will Raup, Tom Salo, Kathryn Schneider, Helen Specht, Marion Ulmer, Alison Van Keuren, Carol & Owen Whitby, Phil Whitney, T. Lloyd Williams, Chad Witko, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

CBC – Christmas Bird Count; COX – T Cossackie, GREE; FtE – T Fort Edwards, WASH; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENS; VF – Vischer's Ferry, SARA.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 250 COX grasslands 5 Dec.

Brant: 2 Northumberland SARA 8 Dec.

Gadwall: 2 Coeymans ALBA 17 Jan.

N. Pintail: Cohoes ALBA 12 Jan.

Canvasback: Crescent ALBA 17-19 Feb.

Redhead: Stafford Bridge SARA 19 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 7 Crescent ALBA 10 Jan.

Ring-necked Duck: last Copake COLU 12 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 25 Stillwater SARA 24 Feb.

Lesser Scaup: max 5 Albany 9 Feb.

Surf Scoter: Ft. Miller WASH 3 Dec.

White-winged Scoter: Ft. Miller WASH 1 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; VF 4-9 Feb; 3 Amsterdam MONT 16 Feb.

Long-tailed Duck: New Baltimore GREE 10 Dec; Troy CBC 4 Jan; Cohoes ALBA 12 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 20 Tomhannock Res RENS 8 Dec; Chatham CBC 14 Dec.

Barrow's Goldeneye: 2 Amsterdam MONT 16 Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 6 N Troy RENS 10 Jan.

Ruddy Duck: last Copake COLU 16 Dec.

Com. Loon: Tomhannock Res RENS 8 Dec; Copake L COLU 12 Dec.

Horned Grebe: Troy RENS 12 Jan; Stockport COLU 19 Jan; Green I SARA 4 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 Cohoes ALBA 1 Feb; Vischer's Ferry SARA 1-4 Feb.

Black Vulture: max 14 Albany 26 Dec.

Turkey Vulture: Livingston COLU 10 Jan.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: Greenport COLU 11 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Albany CBC 21 Dec; S RENS CBC 28 Dec; Athens GREE 26 Jan; 4-mile Pt GREE 4 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: max 4 Northumberland SARA 15 Dec, widespread but generally low in numbers.

Golden Eagle: Austerlitz COLU 8 Jan; 2 Ancram COLU 12 Jan.

SORA (R8): Hyuck Preserve CBC 14 Dec, photographed.

SANDHILL CRANE (R8): 2 Halfmoon SARA 12 Dec; 2 Crescent ALBA 15 Jan; Halfmoon SARA 18-22 Jan.

Killdeer: arr Hollowville COLU 23 Feb.

Iceland Gull: Crescent ALBA 1 Dec; 3

Crescent ALBA 21 Dec; 5 Crescent ALBA 27 Dec; Halfmoon SARA 30 Dec; 6 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 10 Crescent ALBA 4 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Crescent ALBA 27 Dec.

Glaucous Gull: Tomhannock R RENS 8 Dec; Halfmoon SARA 20-21 Dec; Cohoes-Crescent Road 21 Dec; Crescent Power Plant 21-31 Dec; 2 Halfmoon SARA 30 Dec; 2 Lock 6 Mohawk Ri 1 Jan; 6 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 9 Colonie landfill ALBA 3 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Claverack COLU 2 Dec; Hunter GREE 7 Dec; Troy RENS 10-15 Dec; Ballston SARA 15 Dec; COX grasslands 18 Dec; FtE 18-31 Dec; Albany airport 19 Dec; Livingston COLU 27 Dec; max 4 Albany Airport 27 Dec-1 Jan; Fort Plain SCHO 28 Dec; SCHE airport 15-21 Dec; Malta SARA 2 Feb.

Short-eared Owl: max 3 FtE 28 Dec; 2 County Rt 21 and Ridge Rd Stuyvesant COLU 1 Jan, previously unreported locations.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: FtE 1 Dec-4 Jan; Chatham COLU 13 Dec; Hoosick Falls WAS 31 Jan; COX Grasslands 2-4 Feb; FtE 2-5 Feb.

Fish Crow: 12 S RENS CBC 28 Dec; 15 Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Horned Lark: max 250 Northumberland SARA 16 Feb.

Winter Wren: 2 SCHE CBC 14 Dec.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: SCHE CBC 14 Dec.

Hermit Thrush: last 3 Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Gray Catbird: Brunswick RENS 31 Dec; New Baltimore GREE 9 Feb.

Am. Pipit: COX grasslands 9 Dec.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (R8): Glenmont ALBA 2 Feb.

LONGSPURS -WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 2 COX 19 Dec; 2 Albany Airport 29 Dec; 5 Troy CBC 4 Jan; 2 Stuyvesant COLU 21 Jan; Florida MONT 20 Feb.

Snow Bunting: max 110 Northumberland SARA 1 Jan.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 12 Greene L GREE 3 Dec; 2 Livingston 8 Dec; 3 Greenport COLU 13 Dec; Albany CBC 21 Dec; 2 Livingston COLU 10 Jan; Selkirk ALBA 27 Jan; 2 Claverack COLU 9 Feb; 3 Catskill COLU 22 Feb.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: New Lebanon COLU 15 Dec; Hoosick Falls WASH 3 Jan; Troy CBC 4 Jan.

Field Sparrow: last Stuyvesant COLU 15 Dec.

Vesper Sparrow: Copake COLU 31 Dec.

Savannah Sparrow: Taghkanic COLU 2 Dec; max 9 Troy CBC 4 Jan; max 6 COX 8 Feb.

Fox Sparrow: Greene L GREE 3 Dec; Chatham CBC 14 Dec; Albany CBC 21 Dec; S RENS CBC 28 Dec.

White-crowned Sparrow: Chatham COLU 14 Dec; Clarksville ALBA 22 Dec; 3 Delmar ALBA 7 Feb.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 120 Livingston COLU 22 Feb.

Rusty Blackbird: Chatham CBC 14 Dec; 4 Troy CBC 4 Jan; 18 Germantown COLU 10 Jan.

Com. Grackle: max 600 Livingston COLU 29 January, large winter flock.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 45 Livingston COLU 22 Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: Ballston SARA 9 Dec.

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