

REGION 9—HUDSON-DELAWARE

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The season was a cold and snowy one; especially compared with the mild winters of the past two decades. December was a mix of extremes. Thanks to the first of a number of intrusions by the polar vortex, the middle two weeks were well below normal in temperatures. This was followed by a warm spell, with White Plains reaching a new high of 68° on 22 December. The month's average temperature ended up as normal, with precipitation three quarters of an inch below normal. A remarkable Arctic cold blast, the most severe since 1996, hit in early January. Poughkeepsie bottomed out at -7° degrees on 4 January; the Cary Institute's weather station recorded -13°. The counter-clockwise flow of air around powerful winter storm Ion pushed frigid air from northern Canada deep into the U.S., bringing freezing temperatures as far south as Central Florida. Mid-January saw an early thaw, but the month was then plunged back into the deep freeze for the last ten days. January was 3.1° below normal and was snowier than normal. February continued with below normal temperatures, with

21" of snow falling on Poughkeepsie on 14 February. The month was 2.6° below normal, and snow depth remained at over a foot into the next season.

The birding season was dominated by a huge Snowy Owl invasion. Region 9 is not known to host this species even in evasion years, but each county had multiple sightings throughout the season. Red-headed Woodpeckers provided a second notable "invasion" with a few overwintering.

The Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count [NYML] was conducted on Saturday 14 December 2013 under very challenging winter weather conditions. 72 species and 14,033 individuals were found. Best birds of the day were a Dickcissel visiting bird feeders in New Paltz (fourth record and first since 1966), and a juvenile Iceland Gull at the Mohonk Preserve composting site in New Paltz (third overall record). Other notable birds were two American Pipits, two Red-headed Woodpeckers, two White-crowned Sparrows, and a lingering Gray Catbird along the rail trail in Kingston. High counts were for Ring-necked Duck, Snow Goose, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, and Dark-eyed Junco.

The Peekskill CBC [NYPE] found 91 species on 14 December. Highlights included 50 Snow Geese, Redhead, Merlin, 156 American Coot, Red-headed Woodpecker, 30 American Pipit, and two Chipping Sparrows.

Other 14 December CBCs included: Dutchess [NYDC], which recorded a Merlin and a Chipping Sparrow, and East Orange [NYEO], with three White-crowned and a Chipping Sparrow.

The Rockland Count [NYRC] on 15 December featured 81 species, with 53 Black Vultures, 12 Common Ravens, and a Red-headed Woodpecker. The 21 December Southern Orange County [NYSU] also had Merlin and Chipping Sparrow along with 11 White-crowned Sparrows.

The Bronx-Westchester Count [NYBW] tallied 120 species on Sunday 22 December, 109 of them in Region 9. It was an incredibly warm day with a high of 70° in the Bronx, easily breaking the old record of 66° in 1990. Highlights in Region 9 included a female **KING EIDER** off Scotch Capp Island in Rye, the first on the count since 1956; a Eurasian Wigeon off Marshland Conservancy; three Red-necked Grebes, Razorbill, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull on the waters off Rye; and four Black Vultures over Hastings and Lenoir Nature Preserve. New high counts were set for Brant, Gadwall, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Monk Parakeet, Fish Crow, and Carolina Wren. Missed species included Green-winged Teal, the first miss in 57 years.

Eighty-seven species were recorded on the Putnam CBC [NYPC] on 28 December including: a Golden Eagle at Breakneck Ridge Mt., Horned Grebe on Lake Mahopac, a Northern Shrike, and two White-crowned Sparrows. Middle Branch & Croton Falls Reservoirs held 3,350 Common Mergansers, and Lake Mahopac had 1,102 Ring Neck Ducks.

Jen Daly photographed a female Northern Bobwhite at her feeders in Ward Pound Ridge Reservation on 26 December. Another N. Bobwhite turned up in Ulster County. It is presumed these are released birds.

The John Burroughs Natural History Society reported a white morph **Gyr Falcon** on 4 January near the Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities in Ulster County.

Michael Britt led a winter raptor trip on 16 February to the Black Dirt region of Orange County and reported 54 Rough-legged Hawk (43 light, 11 dark morph) and 14 Lapland Longspur. John Askildsen birded the area the same day and also reported a high number Rough-legged Hawk, 34, plus 15 Northern Harrier, 19 Red-tailed Hawk, four White-crowned Sparrows, and 10-15,000 Canada Geese.

While observing a gull flock, which included four Iceland Gulls and one Glaucous Gull, at the Mohonk Mountain House composting site in New Paltz on 31 December, Mark DeDea and Wendy Tocci found an adult, non-breeding **Slaty-backed Gull**. One of Mark DeDea's photos of the bird was submitted to the John Burroughs Natural History Society-Ulster County Winter Bird Records report. Most of the gulls dispersed by mid-day including the Slaty-Backed Gull. Mark found the bird later in the day along McKendrick Road, which bisects the Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities in the Town of Shawangunk. Presumably the same individual was observed and photographed again at the Wallkill Correctional Facility pond on 5 January by Jeffery Davis.

Tree Swallows showed up early in the ice and snow at multiple locations on 23 February, with two at Croton Point Park, four at Piermont Pier, six in Croton-on-Hudson, and a single at Liberty Marsh.

A Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club field trip to Norrie Point State Park on 4 December turned up what was believed to be a **Swainson's Thrush**.

A **Harris's Sparrow** was seen at a private residence in Goshen 14 December. Deborah Kral photographed a Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco at her yard feeder in Stanfordville on 10 December. It remained there through the season.

Other notable species include: Greater White-fronted Goose, Tundra Swan, Great Egret, Sandhill Crane, Glaucous Gull, Eastern Phoebe, Lapland Longspur, Common Yellowthroat, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Pine Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Pt P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; JBNHS – John Burroughs Natural History Society; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; NYBW – Bronx-Westchester CBC; NYML – Mohonk L-Ashokan Res CBC; NYRC – Rockland County CBC; RNC – Rye Nature Center; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: Amenia 3 Dec (CV); 4-5 New Hampton 6, 17 Jan (RS, JH, KMc,MZ).

Snow Goose: 870 NYML 14 Dec; 50 Armonk 15 Dec (GSCBC).

Brant: wintered again in good numbers along the Sound; 16 EGR 30 Dec; 850 Glen Island P 30 Dec; 50 MC 22 Feb.

Cackling Goose: 2 Kingston 26 Dec; 2 EGR 24-29 Jan, 2, 3 Feb; Wallkill River NWR 30 Jan; New Hampton 23 Feb. There is enough evidence to support that this species occurs each year in the winter season, so it will not be discussed in detailed in future reports. Care still should be taken not to confuse diminutive or runt Canadas with this species.

Canada Goose: 10,000 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

Tundra Swan: 4 West Harrison GSCBC 15 Dec (DP, TB).

Gadwall: higher numbers than normal; 80 MC 22 Dec; 55 EGR 20 Jan.

Eurasian Wigeon: Deans Bridge, North Salem 11 Dec (BD); Rye 22,26 Dec, 22,25 Jan (TB, AF); Mamaroneck 28 Dec; MC 2,16,17 Jan, 3,5,7,23 Feb (TB).

Green-winged Teal: none on NYBW, 1st miss since 1956

Redhead: Sylvan L 21 Dec; 2 Beekman 23 Dec; Larchmont 31 Dec; 11 Newburgh 7 Jan; 3 Roudout Res 12 Jan; Roudout Res 1 Feb; 2 Beekman 1,2,9 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: 14 NYML 14 Dec; 1102 Lake Mahopac 28 Dec [NYPC].

Lesser Scaup: 300 EGR 4 Dec.

KING EIDER (R9): f off Scotch Capp I, Rye 22 Dec (TB, GB, RK, DFu).

Surf Scoter: 1-2 Rye 16, 27 Jan, 16 Feb.

White-winged Scoter: 16 EGR 4 Dec; 4-9 EGR 19 Dec -15 Feb.

Black Scoter: Larchmont 31 Dec.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 Kingston Pt 28 Dec; Neversink Res 16 Jan; Glasco 18 Jan.

Red-breasted Merganser: Ulster 28 Dec; Kingston 28 Dec; Sleightsburgh 29 Dec; Neversink R 12 Jan.

N. Bobwhite: 10 Ulster Park 7 Dec (FM, DFe); Ward Pound Ridge Reservation 26 Dec (JDel).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Black Dirt Region 23 Feb; 6 Tamarack L 4 Jan; Ten Mile River Preserve, Dover 29 Jan.

Horned Grebe: Beekman 18-22 Dec, 27-31 Jan, 1, 2, 9 Feb.

Red-necked Grebe: Newburgh 2 Dec (KMc); Rye 4,20,25,30 Dec,18,27,28 Jan,17,23 Feb; max 3 EGR 20,22 Dec (TB); Piermont Pier 27 Jan (EMa,AW).

N. Gannet: 2 EGR 20 Dec; 5 Rye 22 Dec; Glen Island P 30 Dec.

Great Egret: Wappingers Creek 6 Dec (JCo).

Black Vulture: 53 NYRC 15 Dec; 4 Yonkers 22 Dec [NYBW].

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 101 Dunderberg Mt 26 Jan.

N. Harrier: 10 Black Dirt Region 26 Jan; 7 SGNWR 4, 26 Jan; 15 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

N. Goshawk: Teatown L 1 Jan; Mohansic Lake 22 Feb.

Red-tailed Hawk: 19 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb.

Rough-legged Hawk: Ellenville 5 Dec; SGNWR 8 Dec; Pine I 14 Dec; 3 SGNWR 16 Dec; 12 Black Dirt Region 21 Dec; CPP 4 Jan; 7 SGNWR 7 Jan; 5-12 Black Dirt Region 19,26,31 Jan; 54 Black Dirt Region 16 Feb (MBr); many other scattered reports from all counties.

Golden Eagle: Pine Plains 6 Dec, 2 Feb; Millbrook 7 Dec; Crane Pd, Forestburgh 12 Dec; Liberty Marsh 16 Dec; 1-2 Storm King Mt 27 Dec, 1,16 Jan, 7-28 Feb; Tamarack Lake 16 Jan; 1-2 Mashomack 28 Jan, 2,27 Feb; Stissing 20 Feb; Dover Plains 7 Feb.

Clapper Rail: MC 22 Dec.

Virginia Rail: Thompson Pd 8 Feb.

Sandhill Crane: 2 Tivoli Bays WMA 14 Feb (CB, SRo); 2 Ulster Park 14-28 Feb (AMe,MZ,JY), ph.

Killdeer: overwintered in the southern half of the Region; scattered reports north from mid Feb on.

Purple Sandpiper: max 32 Rye 13 Jan.

Wilson's Snipe: SGNWR 28 Dec; Katonah 6 Jan.

Razorbill: Rye 20, 22 Dec, 20 Jan (TB,AF).

Iceland Gull: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 14 Dec; 4 Mohonk Mt House 31 Dec; Monticello 2 Jan; Beacon 4,9 Jan; 2 New Paltz 7 Jan; Newburgh 5-9 Jan; 2 Beacon 17 Jan; 2 Rye 23 Jan; 2 Newburgh 25 Jan; Kingston Pt 2 Feb; 2 Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 4 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Wappingers Lake 7 Dec (JCo); Rye 22 Dec (NYBW, AF); EGR 22 Feb (GN); Beacon 28 Dec (AA).

SLATY-BACKED GULL: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 31 Dec (MD, WT); Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities 31 Dec, 5 Jan (MD,WT, JDav), *intro*, ph.

Glaucous Gull: Mohonk Mt House, New Paltz 31 Dec; Piermont Pier 15 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Snowy Owl: Bethel and Yasgur Rd, Cohecton 1-4 Dec, taken to Delaware Raptor Center, died; Kowawese Park, New Windsor 2 Dec; North of Bannerman's Island, Dutchess Co 2 Dec; Hudson R, Irvington 4 Dec; Hollow Brook Golf Club, Cortlandt Manor 4 Dec, emaciated, captured but died at the vet; Bethel Township 6,7,9 Dec; Dutchess Airport 8 Dec; Tappan Zee Bridge Construction Barge 12,18

Dec; Rye 3 Jan -,23 Feb; New Haamburg 4 Jan; Clermont 5 Jan; Lake Welch 9 Jan; Harriman SP 9,19 Jan; New Paltz 12,15 Jan; 1-2 Black Dirt region 16 Jan-15 Feb; Red Hook 17 Jan; SGNWR 22 Feb; Piermont Pier 22,23 Feb.

Long-eared Owl: EGR 4 Dec; SGNWR 8 Dec; 2 Saugerties 26 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: 7-9 SGNWR 10,16 Dec,29 Jan, 10 Feb; 6 Black Dirt Region 7 Jan; 12-15 Black Dirt Region 26,31 Jan, 15 Feb; 6 Black Dirt Region 23 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Lenoir Nature Preserve 22 Dec.

Red-headed Woodpecker: CPP 1 Dec - 28 Feb; Staatsburgh 1 Dec, 1,9,23 Feb; 2-4 Weston Swamp 4 Dec - 1 Feb; Montrose 14 Dec; 2 Tarrytown 19 Dec; West Harrison GSCBC 15 Dec; RCCBC 15 Dec; Ellenville 5 Jan, 5 Feb; 2 Rosendale 8 Jan; Blue Mt Reservation 1 Feb.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 77 NYML 14 Dec; 186 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 16 NYML 14 Dec; 23 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

N. Flicker: 36 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Merlin: Vassar Farm 13 Dec (JCI); 3 NYUD 28 Dec; EGR 18 Dec (TB); Orange Co Airport 13 Jan (KM); Forsyth Nature Center 14 Jan (MD); Rhinecliff 18 Jan (RJ); SGNWR 8 Feb (JN); Baird P 26 Feb.

GYRFALCON: white morph Wallkill/Shawangunk Correctional Facilities 4 Jan (MD, JP, JBNHS).

Monk Parakeet: 22 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Salt Point 17 Dec (BM); Cold Spring 5, 19 Jan (TB).

N. Shrike: Millbrook 27 Dec, 6, 26 Feb (DK,AP).

Fish Crow: 130 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

Com. Raven: 12 NYRC 15 Dec.

Horned Lark: 100 Black Dirt Region 26 Jan.

Tree Swallow: 2 CPP 23 Feb (MR); Liberty Marsh 23 Feb (SL,JE); 4 Piermont Pier 23 Feb (LS); 6 Black Rock Park, Croton-on-Hudson 26 Feb (AS).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: absent all winter in many places, only a few reports.

Carolina Wren: 158 WEST 22 Dec [NYBW].

SWAINSON'S THRUSH: Norrie Point SP 4 Dec (CP, HT), well described.

Hermite Thrush: 14 NYML 14 Dec.

Gray Catbird: only northerly reports cited; Kingston 14 Dec; Ulster 30 Jan; Grahamsville 4 Feb; Beacon 20 Feb.

Brown Thrasher: MC 16 Dec - 7 Jan.

Am. Pipit: EGR 17, 20 Dec; 6 Jan; 2
Lomontville 14 Dec; 30 CPP 14 Dec.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Bethel 9 Dec (JH);
Callicoon 19 Dec (JH); EGR 3,5,7 Jan (TB,
EK); Greig Farm 27 Jan (ESh); 14 Black Dirt
Region 16 Feb (MBR); 3 Millerton 17 Feb
(AP); Millbrook 18 Feb (AP); 3 Millbrook 26
Feb (AP).

Snow Bunting: 100+ EGR 16 Dec, 3,5,7,10
Jan; 200 Millerton 7 Jan; 70 Amenia 7 Jan; 55
Greig Farm 5 Jan; 50/29 Shunpike 29 Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: Somers 8 Dec (TJ).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: f Sarah
Lawrence College, Yonkers 6 Dec (MF).

Pine Warbler: Ward pound Ridge Reservation
26 Dec (JDal); Myers Corner 23 Jan (ESt).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Saugerties 8 Feb (SSc).

Chipping Sparrow: Westmoreland Sanctuary
11 Dec; 2 Muscote Farm 14 Dec; Armonk
GSCBC 15 Dec; EGR 9, 12, 26 Jan; Armonk
14 Feb; Kingston 15 Feb (LF).

Field Sparrow: 19 Sprain Ridge P 22 Dec.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Rhinebeck 13 Dec (JCI);
Myers Corner 18 Dec (ES); near feeders
Poughkeepsie 7 Jan (K&CF).

HARRIS'S SPARROW: Goshen 14 Dec- 15
Feb (KM, SB, JFi), ph.

White-crowned Sparrow: more reports than
usual; 2 NYML 14 Dec; 7 Shawangunk 15
Dec; EGR 18,20 Dec; 6 Poughkeepsie 25 Dec;
2 Liberty Marsh 1 Jan; Millerton 23 Jan,
Domin Farm 30 Jan; 5 Millbrook 31 Jan; 4
Black Dirt Region 16 Feb; 9 Goshen 24 Feb.

Dark-eyed Junco: 1722 NYML 14 Dec.

Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco: Stanfordville 10
Dec-28 Feb (DK), ph.

Dickcissel: New Paltz 14 Dec (NYML).

E. Meadowlark: CPP 21 Dec, 17, 27 Jan; 9
SGNWR 27 Jan.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: ad
Randall Airport, Middletown 5 Dec (KM).

Rusty Blackbird: 12 NYUD 28 Dec.

Pine Siskin: 2 Ellenville 5 Feb.

EXOTICS

Chukar: Millbrook 8 Dec (AP).

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