

REGION 10—MARINE

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Winter in Region 10 started out deceptively warm. Islip's mean temperature for December was 39.6° F, a significant 4.0° above normal. On 9-10 December, a nor'easter brought buckets of rain and a huge wind to the Region, causing significant flooding and travel delays. Precipitation totals for the month were 6.12", 2.06" above normal, and JFK Airport recorded its wettest December on record, but snowfall was noticeably absent.

In January, winter tightened its grip. Mean temperatures were almost 2° below normal at Islip, at 28.7°, and 2.7° below normal at 29.9° in Central Park. Precipitation totals were 5.25", 1.61" above normal, with what seemed like one snowfall after another. Frigid temperatures set in, and by mid January, local ponds and creeks were frozen over. For the second year in a row, Great South Bay was almost entirely frozen as well, an event rarely seen in recent years. A strong nor'easter hit the Region on 26-27 January, with blizzard conditions, heavy snow, and significant flooding. The eastern end of Long Island was hardest hit, receiving 24-30" of snow. Some mid-Island locations got up to 24" of snow as well, a harbinger of the series of snowstorms and bitter cold blasts that would continue to plague us through the end of the season.

Islip recorded its coldest start to February on record and it remained cold and snowy through the month. The mean temperature was 21.6°, a whopping 11.2° below normal. Precipitation totals measured 2.69", 0.57" below normal.

The Christmas Bird Counts, conducted earlier in the season, had decent weather for the most part, and good coverage. Even the Southern Nassau CBC, the last count of the season on January 3rd, saw above freezing temperatures, and despite being marred by a half day of steady rain, came in with an impressive 132 species. Soon after, the deep snow and treacherous ice at inland parks and natural areas made birding difficult if not impossible, and most certainly resulted in reduced effort at these parks. Even along the coast, access roads and parking lots to state, county and local parks were closed off and unplowed for extended periods of time.

American Bitterns and Great Egrets did not persist to the end of the season. There were several singular reports of half-hardy birds around 18-21 Feb, possibly representing desperate refugees fleeing the terrible conditions throughout the Northeast: Virginia Rail, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet. Half-hardy landbirds were generally poorly reported, especially toward the end of the period, probably due to a combination of genuine scarcity and reduced effort.

Foremost among the season's rarities was the first state record of **Couch's Kingbird**, in lower Manhattan, from an indeterminate date in late November or

early December through 8 January. Zack Winestone noted an odd yellowish bird from his West Village balcony over a period of several weeks prior to 23 December. On that date, he emailed Gabriel Willow of New York City Audubon, who encouraged him to obtain photos. Zack was able to take several excellent photos, which he emailed to Gabriel on Christmas morning—a great Christmas present! Recognizing the bird as apparently a Tropical or Couch's Kingbird, Gabriel obtained Zack's permission to share the photos, posted them to Facebook, along with directions to the area near where the bird had been seen. Early the next morning (26 December), Jacob Drucker beat the crowds down there, and recorded video of the bird calling, proving it to be a Couch's. Crowds of birders arrived that day and on subsequent days and it even made it on the nightly news. The bird was seen through 8 January, most often from the intersection of West 4th Street and West 11th Street to the area around Washington Street and Jane Street, including Abingdon Square Park.

Other Regionally unprecedented reports involved a **Crested Caracara** photographed behind a residence in Seaford, Nassau County, on 10 January, and another (or the same?) photographed perched behind a residence in West Babylon in January or February. In both cases, unfortunately, the birds were never seen again.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CR – Cemetery of the Resurrection, RICH; JBSP – Jones Beach SP, NASS; JBWE – West End, Jones Beach SP, NASS; JBWR – Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, QUEE; Mass – Massapequa Preserve, NASS; MLUA – Mt. Loretto Unique Area, RICH; OMNSA – Marine Nature Study Area, Oceanside, NASS; NYCA – Captree CBC, NYMK – Montauk CBC, NYSA – Sagaponack CBC, NYSN – Southern Nassau County CBC, RI – Randall's I, NEWY; RMSP – Robert Moses SP, SUFF.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE: Riverhead, SUFF area, thru end of Feb (mob, ph.).

Gr. White-fronted Goose: at least 10 reported from four sites: 4 each Hook Pd & Belmont Lake SP, plus singles Riverhead & Meadowbrook Polo Club, NASS 4 Jan (P. Palladino).

ROSS'S GOOSE (R10): two reports of ads 10 Jan: Riverhead (JGL, T. Dunn) & Southaven CP (DR et al., ph.).

BARNACLE GOOSE: Belmont Lake SP 10 Dec (MC) thru 18 Jan (mob).

Cackling Goose: widely reported, including single reps from BRON, NEWY, & KING, plus at least 4 sites SUFF, max 5 Riverhead 3 Jan (AnW, J. Shemilt).

Canada Goose x Snow Goose: West Sayville, SUFF 18 Jan (DR ph.); rare and seldom documented.

TUNDRA SWAN (R10): 2 Hook Pd thru 25 Jan (mob), only reps.

Eurasian Wigeon: Very well reported Dec, RICH, KING, QUEE, NASS and widely in SUFF.

King Eider: JBSP 26 Dec (S. Perrault); Shinn 14 Dec (J. Levin, H. Bohne); 2+ Montauk area 20 Dec thru (PJL, TWB, mob).

Harlequin Duck: present at traditional sites such as Jones Inlet, NASS, Shinn, Montauk.

Barrow's Goldeneye: most notable were females south and west at Fire I Inlet, SUFF 14 Dec (PJL, SSM, NYCA) & 21 Feb (PJL, SSM) and Moravian Cemetery, RICH (mob), *intro*.

EARED GREBE (R10): Pt. Lookout, NASS 10 Jan (M. Andersen, T. Lenz) to 25 Jan (mob), joined by a second bird in some later reports.

Little Blue Heron: OMNSA 26 Dec (L. Zirlin) & 3 Jan (PJL, SSM), NYSN.

Green Heron: CR 1 Jan (AC, M. King), very late.

Turkey Vulture: widely reported throughout Region.

Osprey: Cold Spring Harbor 26 Dec-5 Jan (C. Turner; S. Schellenger).

No. Goshawk: RMSP 7 Dec (C. Cammarotta); JBWE 12 Dec and frequently thereafter (K&SF, mob); CR 25 Dec (AC); Montauk 20 Dec (B. Horwith, SSM), NYMK.

Bald Eagle: widely reported all counties throughout period; status utterly changed from just 15 years ago—a fairly common species now.

Red-shouldered Hawk: well reported w part of Region (RICH, NEWY, KING, QUEE); most

unusual was one on barrier beach JBWE 13 Dec (SSM, mob, ph.).

Rough-legged Hawk: Napeague 20 Dec (J. Ross et al.), NYMK; Gardiner's I 20 Dec (M. Scheibel), NYMK; Jam Bay area 4 Dec thru (SBL, mob).

Clapper Rail: recorded into Feb.

Virginia Rail: last 18 Feb MLUA (AC), *intro*.

American Oystercatcher: Absent after mid Jan.

Semipalmated Plover: SMSP 1 Dec (K&SF).

Greater Yellowlegs: last 20 Feb Marine P, KING (SBL et al.), *intro*.

Willet: Pt. Lookout 21 Feb (D. Anderson), *intro*.

Marbled Godwit: JBWE thru 4 Dec (SSi).

Ruddy Turnstone: recorded into Dec.

Red Knot: recorded into Dec.

Western Sandpiper: JBWE 12 Dec (K&SF).

Long-billed Dowitcher: William Floyd Estate, SUFF 25 Jan (MLL, M. Michaelis, ph), rare in winter.

Wilson's Snipe: recorded into Jan & early Feb along many south shore creeks, QUEE to Mecox Bay and thru end of period Marine P, KING (mob).

Am. Woodcock: very few reps after early Jan. **Dovekie:** MP 25 Dec (J. Ake).

Common Murre: small numbers encountered widely over shelf waters southeast of Freeport, NASS 11 Jan, where regular in recent years; by coincidence, one was seen that very day at Jones Inlet (SA, SBL), where onshore occurrence is extremely rare.

Thick-billed Murre: in addition to several reps of single birds in the Montauk area, singles were recorded along Dune Rd, SUFF 8 Feb (K&SF) and Coney I Creek 12 Feb (SBL et al.); not recorded on 11 Jan pelagic out of Freeport.

Black-legged Kittiwake: apart from widespread observations over shelf waters 11 Jan (out of Freeport), relatively few shore-based reports: 5 RMSP 14 Dec (PJL, SSM), NYCA; 2 Main Beach, Easthampton, SUFF 22 Dec (AG, J. Pawlicki); Amagansett 19 Jan (AnW); 3 L Montauk Inlet 24 Jan (PMo et al.); 3 MP 25 Jan (PJL, SSM).

Black-headed Gull: Sagaponack 21-22 Dec (AG et al.), NYSA; Setauket Mill Pd/Setauket Harbor, SUFF 25 Dec (T. Kernan)-3 Jan (mob); JBWE 15 Dec (BAn) & 1 Jan (SBL et al.); Upper West Side, NEWY 28, 30 Dec, 15 Jan (J. Drucker et al.); Randall's I, NEWY 19 Jan (D.

Barrett); Harlem Ri Dr, NEWY 12 Feb (A. Farnsworth).

Little Gull: MP 25 Jan & 8 Feb (B. Schweinhart et al.; TWB et al.).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Chelsea Waterside P, NEWY thru, from Nov (mob).

CO. GROUND-DOVE: JBWE thru 8 Dec (K. McDermott et al.), from fall.

CRESTED CARACARA: Seaford, NASS, 10 Jan (Charles Sammut, ph, fide S. Schellenger); another was reportedly photographed behind a residence in West Babylon, SUFF in Jan or Feb (fide PM).

COUCH'S KINGBIRD: Greenwich Village, NEWY through 7 Jan (Z. Winestine, mob, ph, vid), *intro*.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD: Floyd Bennett Field through 5 Jan (mob), from fall.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (R10): four reports: Miller Place, SUFF 8-11 Jan (A. Perkins, mob ph.); Sands Pt. Pres., NASS 25 Jan (SP); JBWE 12-14 Feb (R. Proniewych, mob ph.); Plum I, SUFF 13 Feb (J. Seopenoski).

Tennessee Warbler: RI 1 Jan (JD, NS, MMcB ph.); very unusual date.

Nashville Warbler: long-staying bird Mass last reported 25 Jan (JGI, TS).

Co. Yellowthroat: 6 reports 1st week of Jan, widely spaced NEWY, KING, NASS, & SUFF, but none thereafter.

Lincoln's Sparrow: late singles Battery Park City, NEWY 11 Jan (JD ph.) & Fort Wadsworth, RICH 1-2 Jan (AC et al., MSh ph.).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 3 reps from Bronx Zoo: **28 Dec** on NYBW, then **17 & 20 Feb** (N. O'Reilly, ph; Todd Olson), very rare winter.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: Northville, SUFF 1 Jan (K&SF).

Baltimore Oriole: at least 5 reports of birds at feeders, including 3 at two sites that survived at least to the end of February.

Co. Redpoll: numerous (flocks up to 60) and very widespread throughout Region mid Jan through Feb.

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