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REGION 9—HUDSON-DELAWARE

Michael Bochnik

70 Hutchinson Boulevard, Mt Vernon, NY 10552

BochnikM@cs.com

December was 4.6° F warmer than normal, giving plenty of open water for the Christmas Bird Counts. The period between the 24th and 28th saw highs in the fifties, with Poughkeepsie reaching 62° on Christmas Day. Precipitation for the month was normal. The very beginning of January also saw mild temperatures, with a high of 51° on 4 January. Then the overall weather pattern started to change, and the next seven weeks saw plenty of snow and well below normal temperatures. Many bodies of water froze just before the waterfowl count. Poughkeepsie saw lows in the single digits eight days out of the month, with the coldest on 29 January at -5°. The month's average temperature was 1.5° below normal. February was bitterly cold the entire month. Twenty-five days were below normal temperature, and there were 10 days with lows below zero. Poughkeepsie only broke 40° once. The month came in at 12.7° below normal!

The most unusual report of the season was of a **Crested Caracara** that was observed by David Baker, Edwin McGowan, and Gerhard Patsch at Doodletown, Bear Mountain State Park, Rockland County on 5 January. The bird was soaring overhead clearly showing field markings of a Crested Caracara. It had highly contrasting white ovals at the base of primaries on black wings, a long narrow body, overall buff tone on breast and neck, and a pale tail with dark terminal band. Wings had the appearance of being closer to mid-body than other raptors. Even the flattened crest was noted during its flight when the bird was in

profile. It is interesting to note that a caracara was photographed in Berks County, Pennsylvania a week earlier. This bird could be the same individual. If submitted and accepted by NYSARC, this will be New York State's first record. If not, we will have to wait till the spring report when a Crested Caracara is well documented in nearby Orange County.

Notable waterfowl included an immature Greater White-fronted Goose that traveled around the Harrison and Rye area in December and January. An adult made a brief appearance at Larchmont Reservoir. Brant again wintered all season along the Sound, and Cackling Goose sightings continue to increase. Rare in winter, two Blue-winged Teal were found in Round Pond, Amenia on 5 December. More remarkable was the male photographed by Adrienne Popko in Millerton 14-17 January. Other ducks included a Eurasian Wigeon wintering along the Sound, a smattering of Redhead and Northern Pintail, and all three scoter species.

Tait Johansson found a Spotted Sandpiper in Muscoot Reservoir, Somers on 25 January at Deans Bridge. It was relocated later on a rock in the middle of the reservoir where Route 116 crosses the reservoir. This remarkable winter record is the fourth for Westchester County.

The Black-headed Gull found in New Rochelle/Larchmont in November continued to 11 December, mainly in the Five Island Park vicinity. Frank Guida found what was probably the same bird at Five Island Park on 15 February. This bird only remained for the day.

A few Snowy Owls were reported, with one out of place on top of a house in a developed area of Harrison. Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge had a season high of twenty Short-eared Owls on 13 January.

Karen Maloy found and photographed a **Gyr Falcon** at Blue Chip Farm in Ulster County on 6 February, and it was seen well by many birders through many following days. It was last reported north of the location on 28 February.

Half-hardies included three Eastern Phoebe and five species of warbler, most seen on Christmas Bird Counts mentioned below. An Indigo Bunting was in Marshlands Conservancy during December and made it into the first few days on the new year.

Christmas Counts had a mix of weather, but each had its highlights. Most reported good numbers of Red-shouldered Hawks.

The Rockland Christmas Bird Count [NYRC] tallied 88 species on 14 December. Highlights included two Red-necked Grebes, a new species to the count. Also at Piermont was a juvenile Glaucous Gull. The count's other notable birds were Short-eared Owl, Common Loon, and Wilson's Snipe.

The 20 December Peekskill Christmas Bird Count [NYPE] recorded 93 species. Some of the highlights were Northern Saw-whet Owl, Virginia Rail, Snow Goose, four Redhead, Marsh Wren, and an Eastern Phoebe in Yorktown.

The Dutchess Christmas Bird Count [NYDC] recorded Short-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls on 20 December and tallied 76 species.

Mohonk Lake-Ashokan Reservoir Christmas Bird Count [NYML] was aided by open water and no snow cover. The count found 79 species on 20 December and recorded its second highest bird count with 15,661 individuals. Three Cackling Geese in Kingston were a new addition to the count, and five Northern Pintails were seen for only the second time, with three in New Paltz, and a pair in Marbletown. Record-high counts were established for a remarkable twenty species, including three Iceland Gulls in New Paltz and three Merlins. Other high counts were recorded for Ring-necked Duck (28), Bald Eagle (10), Cooper's Hawk (9), Red-shouldered Hawk (7), Great Horned Owl (7), Northern Saw-whet Owl (3), Red-bellied Woodpecker (85), Downy Woodpecker (161), Hairy Woodpecker (40), Common Raven (25), Tufted Titmouse (364), White-breasted Nuthatch (267), Carolina Wren (68), Eastern Bluebird (195), Savannah Sparrow (14), Northern Cardinal (257), and American Goldfinch (335). Pileated Woodpecker matched their previous high count of 31.

Ulster/Dutchess Christmas Bird Count [NYUD] found 86 species on 27 December including an Eastern Phoebe, Evening Grosbeak in Rhinebeck, and an Orange-crowned Warbler in Sleightsburg.

The Bronx-Westchester Christmas Bird Count [NYBW] on 28 December had 110 of its 124 species in Westchester County thanks to over 100 participants. Highlights for the county were the Indigo Bunting previously mentioned and a Glaucous Gull in Rye. Notable was a 67 year low of Canvasback, with only three off Yonkers. For the second year in a row a new high count was set for Gadwall.

The Putnam County Christmas Bird Count [NYPC] endured snowy weather conditions on 3 January but still managed 77 species. The highlight was a Black-throated Blue Warbler. Bob and Doug Gochfeld discovered it surviving at the Carmel Sewage Treatment Plant. New high counts included eleven Red-shouldered Hawks and thirty-two Pileated Woodpeckers.

Other notable species include: Northern Shrike, Vesper Sparrow, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak.

CONTRIBUTORS

Julie Aitchison, Richard Aracil, David Baker, Scott Baldinger, Andrew Baksh, Karen Beebe, Gail Benson, Kelli Bochnik, Michael Bochnik, Arlene Borko, Alan Boyd, Tom Burke, Brian Calderaro, Dan Ceravolo, Joseph Cherek, Alex Cherviok, Jim Clinton, Jim Closs, William Cook, Renee Davis, Mark Dedeo, Jacob Drucker, Evan Edelbaum, Michael Fargione, Andrew Farnsworth, Ann Gilbert, Bob Gochfeld, Doug Gochfeld, Kenton Gomez, Marge Gorton, Malcolm Grant, Francis Groeters, Frank Guida, Timothy Guida, John Haas, Philip Henson, Tait Johansson, Susan Joseph, Andreas Kanon, Maha Katmani, Rich Kelly, Deborah Kral, Michael Lavin, Paul Lewis, Teresa Loomis, Karen Maloy, Barbara Mansell, John McBride, Curt McDermott, Kenneth McDermott, Edwin McGowan, Michael McIntyre, Tong Mu, Ava Murphy, Bruce Nott,

Suzanne O'Rourke, Gerhard Patsch, Carena Pooth, Adrienne Popko, Myles Robert, Jack Rothman, Matthew Rymkiewicz, Peter Schoenberger, Bob Shriber, Craig Selinger, Donna Seymour, Eileen Stickle, Rob Stone, Anne Swaim, Rich Taylor, Herb Thompson, Larry Trachtenberg, Benjamin Van Doren, Lance Verderame, Chet Vincent, Alan Wells, Matthew Wills, Kate Woods, Matthew Zeitler.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Croton Point P; EGR – Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary; MC – Marshlands Conservancy; SGNWR – Shawangunk Grasslands NWR.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Greater White-fronted Goose: imm Harrison 16 Dec; Rye Brook 27, 31 Dec; EGR 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 23 Jan (TB); ad Larchmont Res 12, 23 Jan (TB).

Snow Goose: 400 Bashkill 13 Dec; NYPE 20 Dec; 250 NYML 20 Dec; Rockefeller SP 24 Dec.

Brant: small flocks 5-82 wintered Dec-Feb off Rye.

Cackling Goose: Blue Chip Farm 13 Dec (MZ); Harrison 16, 31 Dec (TB); Walden 20 Dec (JH); Black Dirt Region 28 Dec (MZ); 3 Kingston 20 Dec; 3 Spring L 1 Jan (JCLI); EGR 12, 16, 18, 23, 29 Jan; New Hampton 21 Jan (JH,BN,MZ); Camel Farm, Westtown 21 Jan (JH,BN); Larchmont Res 21 Jan.

Gadwall: 481 NYBW 28 Dec, count record high.

Eurasian Wigeon: Hommocks Conservation Area, Larchmont 4-11, 25 Dec (SO); EGR 14 Jan, 26, 27 Feb (TB).

Blue-winged Teal: 2-3 Round Pond, Amenia 4, 5 Dec (CV,CP,AP); male Millerton 13-17 Jan, 1, 6 Feb (AP,BM,DK), ph.

N. Pintail: MC 8 Dec; 3 New Paltz 20 Dec; 2 Marletown 20 Dec; 10 Millerton 4, 6 Feb.

Redhead: 4 Croton Bay 20 Dec; Five Island Park 22 Jan; Roundout Res 1 Feb; 4-6 Croton Bay 7-28 Feb; 2 Croton R 23 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: 28 NYML 20 Dec.

Greater Scaup: no huge rafts, seem to winter further south off the Bronx.

Surf Scoter: Glen I 18 Jan.

White-winged Scoter: 3-22 EGR 6, 25, 27 Dec, 6 Jan, 10 Feb; 5 Sackett L 21 Dec (JH).

Black Scoter: Croton Bay 22 Dec; Rye 20 Jan.

Long-tailed Duck: 3 Sackett L 21 Dec; Croton Bay 22 Dec; Kingston 24 Dec; 2 Esopus 25 Jan.

Com. Goldeneye: max 44 Manor P 21 Jan.

Com. Loon: 14 Dec (NYRC).

Horned Grebe: Sylvan L 1-4 Dec; 6 Ashokan Res 27 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 Piermont Pier 14 Dec; 2 Sylvan L 24 Dec; EGR 27 Dec; New Rochelle 22 Jan; 2 Georges I, Montrose 26 Feb; New Hamburg 27 Feb.

N. Gannet: ad EGR 28 Dec.

HAWKS - LARIDS

Bald Eagle: 10 NYML 20 Dec.

N. Harrier: max 7 SBNWR 1 Feb.

Cooper's Hawk: 9 NYML 20 Dec.

Red-shouldered Hawk: 7 NYML 20 Dec; 9 NYUD 27 Dec; 11 NYPC 3 Jan.

Red-tailed Hawk: 23 Pine Island 14 Dec; leucistic Clinton Corners Dec, 7 Jan.

Rough-legged Hawk: Ellenville 5 Dec; 2 Pine Island 14 Dec; 4 SGNWR 2 Jan, 1 Feb; Millbrook 9 Jan; Millerton 16 Jan; Amenia 29 Jan; Dover 1 Feb; CPP 14 Feb.

Golden Eagle: Wingdale 2 Dec; White Lake 11 Dec; Pine Plains 18 Dec, 3, 29 Jan, 11 Feb; Stissing Pond 3 Jan, 11 Feb; 2-3 Dover Plains 25, 31 Jan, 13, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28 Feb; Southfields 13 Feb; 2 Blue Chip Farm 16-28 Feb; Claryville 21 Feb; Wurtsboro 24 Feb; SGNWR 28 Feb.

Virginia Rail: CPP 20 Dec.

Am. Coot: max 75 Sylvan L 1 Dec.

Killdeer: Larchmont 18 Jan.

Spotted Sandpiper: Somers 25 Jan (TJ), intro.

Purple Sandpiper: 12 EGR 6 Dec; 2 EGR 6 Jan; 5 Larchmont 21 Jan; 3 EGR 26 Feb.

Wilson's Snipe: SGNWR 1 Dec; 14 Dec (NYRC); MC 28 Dec; Millerton 14, 16 Jan.

Black-headed Gull: Five Island Park, New Rochelle 1-11 Dec (FGU, JR, RA) ph; Five Island Park, New Rochelle 15 Feb (FGU).

Iceland Gull: NewPaltz 2, 3 Dec; 1-3 Newburgh 15 Dec – 8 Jan; 3 New Paltz 20 Dec; 4 Mohonk Mt House compost 30 Dec; 1-2 Beacon 1, 3, 20-22 Jan; 2 Newburgh 1 Feb; Wallkill 5 Feb; EGR 23 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Beacon 22 Jan (CM).

Glaucous Gull: Piermont 14 Dec (NYRC); New Paltz 24 Dec; Rye 28 Dec; Newburgh 1 Feb.

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Barn Owl: Oil City road 29 Jan.

Great Horned Owl: 7 NYML 20 Dec.

Snowy Owl: Wallkill 3 Dec; Swan Lake, Bethel Township 11-15 Dec; 14 Dec NYRC; Kingston 27 Dec; Harrison 4 Jan, ph; Willow 10 Jan; Wallkill NWR 14 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: Verbank 20 Dec; 20 SGNWR 13 Jan; 13 SGNWR 1 Feb.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 NYPE 20 Dec; 3 NYML 20 Dec; NYDU 20 Dec; New Paltz 2 Jan.

Red-headed Woodpecker: Shenorock 1, 4 Dec; Ellenville 5 Dec, 5 Feb; 4 Weston Rd Swamp 2 Dec.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 85 NYML 20 Dec.

Downy Woodpecker: 161 NYML 20 Dec.

Hairy Woodpecker: 40 NYML 20 Dec.

Pileated Woodpecker: 31 NYML 20 Dec; 32 NYPC 3 Jan.

CRESTED CARACARA: Doodletown 5 Jan (DB, EM, GP), 1st State record pending NYSARC approval, *intro*.

Am. Kestrel: only a few reports.

Merlin: MC 1,4 Dec, 15 Jan; 3 NYML 20 Dec; NYUD 27 Dec; Wappingers Falls 30 Dec; Poughquag 1 Jan; Tivoli 10 Jan; Town of Northeast 13 Jan; Kingston 13,19 Jan; Lagrangeville 29 Jan; CPP 21 Feb.

GYRFALCON: Blue Chip Farm 6-28 Feb (KMa, CM); Montgomery 20 Feb (KMc); Gardiner 28 Feb.

Monk Parakeet: max 30 New Rochelle 22 Jan.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Yorktown 20 Dec (NYPE); NYUD 27 Dec; Unionville 1 Feb (AIB).

N. Shrike: SGNWR 5 Dec (KMa); Bethel 12 Dec (JH); Milan 6 Jan (SJ); Curry 2 Feb (KBe); Kingston 13 Feb (MD); Wallkill 14 Feb; Clinton Corners 27 Feb (JCLi).

Com. Raven: 25 NYML 20 Dec.

Horned Lark: max 500 Amenia 31 Jan.

Tufted Titmouse: 364 NYML 20 Dec.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: less common this season.

White-breasted Nuthatch: 267 NYML 20 Dec.

House Wren: Harrison 14 Dec, ph.

Marsh Wren: CPP 20 Dec.

Carolina Wren: 68 NYML 20 Dec.

E. Bluebird: 195 NYML 20 Dec.

N. Mockingbird: leucistic Lagrangeville 19 Dec (CV).

Brown Thrasher: NYPE 20 Dec; Cary IES 19 Jan; Norrie Pt 21 Jan.

Am. Pipit: 41 CPP 20 Dec; Blue Chip Farm 8 Feb.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: Amenia 15 Dec; 2

Amenia; 6 Pine Plains 27 Jan; 19 Pine Plains 3,4 Feb; SGNWR 7 Feb; 2 SGNWR 28 Feb.

Black-and-white Warbler: Sleightsburgh Spit, Port Ewen 30 Dec (JH).

Orange-crowned Warbler: Sleightsburgh Spit, Port Ewen 27, 28, 30 (MD, DS, PS, JH).

Black-throated Blue Warbler: ad m Carmel wastewater treatment plant 3 Jan (DG).

Palm Warbler: MC 17 Dec (TB).

Pine Warbler: East Fishkill mid Dec-3 Feb (RT).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: NYML 20 Dec.

Chipping Sparrow: 3 Rockefeller SP Preserve 1 Dec; Ossining 20 Dec; Hartsdale 28 Dec; Pruyn Sanctuary 18 Jan; MC 27 Jan.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Millerton 25 Jan (CP, HT); Dover Plains 3, 6 Feb (DK).

Savannah Sparrow: NYML 20 Dec; 12 CPP 20 Dec.

White-throated Sparrow: leucistic Red Hook Dec (AG).

White-crowned Sparrow: Poughkeepsie 4, 23, 28 Dec; White Plains 14 Dec; CPP 20 Dec; 2 Marletown 20 Dec; Millerton 13 Jan; 5 Millerton 29 Jan; 1-2 Millerton 6, 8, 20 Feb; Shenorock 12-17 Feb; Pine Island 14, 16 Feb; New Hempstead 15 Feb; Yonkers 15 Feb.

N. Cardinal: 257 NYML 20 Dec.

Indigo Bunting: MC 11, 17, 22, 25-28, 30 Dec- 3, 4 Jan.

E. Meadowlark: 7 SGNWR 27 Dec; 5 SGNWR 17 Jan.

Com. Redpoll: many scattered reports, no large numbers. 24 CPP 24 Jan; 30 CPP 16-23.

Am. Goldfinch: 335 NYML 20 Dec.

Evening Grosbeak: Rhinebeck 27 Dec (DK).