



REGION 8—HUDSON-MOHAWK

Tom Williams

153A Consaul Rd., Albany, NY 12205
trwdsd@fastmail.fm

In Region 8, Winter 2015-2016 will long be remembered for being remarkably warm and snow-free, with bare ground and unfrozen water the rule rather than the exception. At Albany, December 2015 averaged 13.3° F above normal; not a misprint, as fourteen days had a high temperature of 50° or more, and only nine nights fell below freezing. Rivers, lakes, and ponds remained largely ice-free, with 3.67" of precipitation falling as rain for the most part and only 2.2" of measurable snow. 24 December may well have been the warmest day in Albany's recorded meteorological winter (Dec.-Feb.) history, with a high temperature of 72° and a daily mean 32° above normal. January remained warm at 5.1° above the norm, and dry with only 1.24" of precipitation, nearly all in the form of rain. Only 3.3" of snow fell in January, and the ground remained bare for the most part. February had a warm start and finish but also the first real cold spell mid-month. 13-15 February all had below 0° minima, hitting -13°F on the 14th at Albany. Nevertheless, the month averaged 4.7° above normal. Precipitation was well above normal, too, at 4.07", which was nearly two inches more than usual. Snowfall was only 4.8", and a snow depth of an inch or more

was only recorded on four days during the month. The cold spell did finally freeze over many bodies of water, but heavy rain and warmer temperatures towards the end of the month quickly began to open them up again.

Some highlights from the Christmas Bird Count season included: On 15 December, Palm Warbler and Virginia Rail, both at RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary in Catskill, Green County, on the Catskill-Coxsackie CBC. On 19 December, Common Yellowthroat at U. of Albany, Albany County, on the Schenectady CBC. On 20 December, American Woodcock and Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Schodack Island SP, Rensselaer County, on the Albany CBC, and eight American Pipits and a Pine Warbler near Saratoga Springs, Saratoga County, on the Saratoga CBC at a very late date for both species. And on 2 January, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, White-crowned Sparrow, Common Redpoll, and a **Lark Sparrow** discovered near Brunswick, Rensselaer County, found by Naomi Lloyd and her field party on the Troy CBC. Photos of the Lark Sparrow were submitted with an eBird checklist summarizing their sector effort.

2 January was also Snow Goose migration day, with flocks finally heading southbound throughout the day. Many observers noted several thousand geese overhead, moving in wave after wave, continuing throughout the day.

On 8 January a report of Red Crossbills was received from Rensselaerville SF in Albany County. The birds had been present for some time, and some indications of breeding behavior were noted. Many observers ventured to the area, and, as of the end of February, as many as eight or more were still present. Many thanks to T. Lloyd Williams for alerting the local birding community and for his faithful monitoring of the status of the crossbills. It will be interesting to see what transpires in the coming months.

At Bell's Pond, near Livingston, Columbia County, Richard Nord observed five Tundra Swans on 11 January, quite unusual for the middle of winter. Another Regionally rare sighting was reported by Jamie Glydon on 7 February in three Sandhill Cranes on a private farm in Halfmoon, Saratoga County.

The three winter-visitant gull species seemed to occur in smaller numbers this season, with reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull, Iceland Gull, and Glaucous Gull mostly confined to a few locations in the Cohoes-Crescent corridor along the Mohawk River between Albany and Saratoga Counties. The frequent lack of a substantial ice cover along the river may have been a factor.

Bruce Dudek continued to monitor a now long-staying immature Red-headed Woodpecker near his home in Colonie, Albany County. The bird was last seen in mid-February; hopefully it will stay in the area into the breeding season.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Alden, Will Aubrey, Ramona Bearor, Susan Beaudoin, Mike Birmingham, Matt Brunelle, Nancy Castillo, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Steve Chorvas, Jeremy Collison, Bill Cook, Alan Devoe Bird Club recent sightings, Amanda

Dillon, Craig Driggs, Bruce Dudek, Lindsey Duval, Larry Federman, Debra Ferguson, Mark Fitzsimmons, Brianna Gary, Jamie Glydon, Bernie & Chris Grossman, Rich Guthrie, HMBirds Yahoo Group, Larry & Barbara Hall, David Harrison, Ron Harrower, John Hershey, John Kent, Nancy Kern, Bill Lee, Naomi Lloyd, Tristan Lowery, Larry Main, Alan Mapes, Leigh McBride, Thom McClenahan, Steve Mesick, Joyce Miller, Frank Mitchell, Frank Murphy, Jenny Murtaugh, Richard Nord, Ellen Pemrick, Will Raup, Gregg Recer, Neal Reilly, John Roosenberg, Jeanette Roundy, Kathy Schneider, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, Marian Sole, George Steele, Scott Stoner, Craig Thompson, Alison Van Keuren, Phil Whitney, Tom & Colleen Williams, Donna Wright, Will Yandik, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

APBP – Albany Pine Bush Preserve, ALBA; AR – Alcove Res, ALBA; BCM – Black Creek Marsh, ALBA; BCR – Basic Creek Res, ALBA; BMB – Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail, SARA; CCGP – Cocksackie Creek Grasslands Preserve, GREE; CF – Cohoes Flats, ALBA; CL – Collins L, SCHE; CRM – Cline Rd. Marsh, FULT; FR – Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, ALBA; FtEG – Ft. Edward Grasslands, WASH; FV – Franklinton Vlaie, SCHO; HP – Huyck Preserve, ALBA; OCA – Ooms Conservation Area, COLU; PRWMA – Partridge Run WMA, ALBA; SNHP – Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; TR – Tomhannock Res, RENN; VFNHP – Vischer Ferry Nature & Historic Preserve, SARA; WMP – Wilson M. Powell Wildlife Sanctuary, COLU.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 5600 Troy CBC RENN 2 Jan.

Cackling Goose: Corning Preserve ALBA 9 Jan (TL); max 2 Ft Plain MONT 20 Jan (LBH); Ft Miller WASH 11 Feb (TW).

Tundra Swan: 5 Bells Pond, Livingston COLU 11 Jan (RN), uncommon.

Wood Duck: max 14 Schodack RENN 24 Feb.

Gadwall: max 59 Stanton Pond ALBA 23 Dec.

Am. Wigeon: max 35 Stanton Pond ALBA 9 Dec.

N. Shoveler: Guilderland ALBA 1 Jan.; Stanton Pond ALBA 2 Jan., late.

N. Pintail: max 50 Schodack RENN 25 Feb.

Green-winged Teal: max 6 Schodack RENN 26 Feb.

Canvasback: max 4 Saratoga L SARA 19 Dec.

Redhead: 7 reports 5 Dec - 27 Feb.

Ring-necked Duck: max 850 Loughberry L SARA 5 Dec.

Greater Scaup: max 45 Loughberry L SARA 5 Dec.

Lesser Scaup: max 375 Loughberry L SARA 24 Dec.

Black Scoter: Green I ALBA 7 Jan.

Long-tailed Duck: 3 reports 5 Dec - 4 Feb.

Bufflehead: max 120 Saratoga L SARA 12 Dec.

Com. Goldeneye: max 275 Saratoga L SARA 19 Dec.

Hooded Merganser: max 250 Galway L SARA 9 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser: 3 reports 12 Dec - 19 Feb.

Ruddy Duck: max 135 Copake L RENN 24 Dec.

Wild Turkey: max 132 Valley Falls RENN 9 Jan.

Red-throated Loon: Blenheim Gilboa Upper Res SCHO 10 Dec; AR 3 Jan

Horned Grebe: 2 reports 5 Dec - 17 Dec.

Red-necked Grebe: 2 reports 5 Dec - 20 Jan.

Double-crested Cormorant: last South Bay WASH 25 Dec.

HAWKS – LARIDS

Black Vulture: max 44 HVCC campus RENN 9 Feb.

Turkey Vulture: last Westmere ALBA 13 Dec; arr Glenmont ALBA 20 Feb.

Golden Eagle: 9 reports 4 Dec - 22 Feb.

N. Harrier: max 10 FtEG 21 Feb.

Virginia Rail: RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary GREE 15 Dec, late.

Am. Coot: AR 24 Jan., late.

SANDHILL CRANE (R8): 3 Halfmoon SARA 7 Feb (JG), regionally rare.

Killdeer: arr Selkirk ALBA 25 Feb.

Am. Woodcock: Schodack I SP RENN 20 Dec, late.

Iceland Gull: max 2 Cohoes ALBA 30 Dec - 26 Feb.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 2 Cohoes ALBA 28 Dec - 14 Feb.

Glaucous Gull: arr The Crossings ALBA 4 Dec.

PIGEONS – PARROTS

Snowy Owl: 5 reports 2 Dec - 9 Jan.

Short-eared Owl: max 4 FtEG 18 Dec.

N. Saw-whet Owl: 2 reports 2 Jan - 30 Jan.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER (R8): Old Valley Rd., Colonie ALBA 11 Dec - 12 Feb., continuing regional rarity

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 5R 4 Dec - 17 Jan., late.

N. Shrike: arr T Broome SCHO 4 Dec.

Horned Lark: max 270 FtEG 30 Dec.

Am. Pipit: 3 reports 20 Dec - 28 Feb.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 6 Hague WARR 23 Jan.

Cedar Waxwing: max 80 FR 20 Dec.

LONGSPURS – WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 2 reports 2 Jan - 13 Jan.

Snow Bunting: max 150 Northumberland SARA 2 Jan.

Com. Yellowthroat: U Albany ALBA 14 Dec - 24 Dec (TL), late.

Pine Warbler: Saratoga CBC SARA 20 Dec (SM), late.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 4 reports 5 Dec - 24 Jan.

SPARROWS – WEAVERS

LARK SPARROW: Troy CBC Brunswick RENN 2 Jan (NL), NYSARC, *intro*

Fox Sparrow: 3 reports 14 Dec - 6 Jan.

White-crowned Sparrow: 2 reports 18 Feb - 21 Feb.

Vesper Sparrow: 2 Ft. Plain CBC MONT 2 Jan.

Red Crossbill: Rensselaerville SF ALBA 8 Jan - 28 Feb, breeding behavior.